A summary of research in interests and preferences of school children.

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Thesis
A Summary of Research in
Interests and Preferences of School Children

Submitted by
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Grateful acknowledgement is made for the help and guidance of our advisor, Dr. Donald D. Durrell.
This study is part of a summary of research in the reading and language arts fields in which the experimental studies done at Boston University between 1930 and 1953 were reviewed. The complete study was done by: Evelyn Crocker, Ruth Cullen, John Deasy, Marjorie Follansbee, Sylvia Gavel, Claire Grossman, Mary Holmes, Ruth Lurie, Anne Melker, Viola Petrocelli, and Harriett Wilcox.
The interests and preferences of pupils have been a subject of investigation at Boston University since 1934. In that year a study of children's newspaper reading interests was made. From 1934 to 1953, thirty-two studies have been completed in this field. These studies fall into three general categories: studies of (1) reading interests and preferences, (2) pupil preferences for types of assignments, and (3) subject preferences. The variety of approaches employed in these investigations, included questionnaires, balloting on representative stories, a library survey, and direct observation of reading programs.

Reading Interests and Preferences

Studies of pupil preferences in stories and titles demonstrated the importance of considering the likes and dislikes of pupils when preparing materials for their use. Roberts (26), Mitchell (22), and Scipione, Droney, and Cucchiara (27) used questionnaires to investigate interest in titles and stories. Roberts (26) employed three questionnaires to investigate the reading interests of 505 middle-grade children. The first presented a list of fifty real and fifty fictitious
book titles. The children indicated which books they would like to read, which they would neither like nor dislike, and which they would dislike to read. The second questionnaire was used by teachers to rate each child on the amount and type of reading done, and the third elicited from the children the amount and quality of their reading. Although the instrument did not prove to be predictive of the amount and types of reading that could be expected from each child, it did serve to emphasize sex as an important factor in determining children's preferences for books. Interest in types of stories ran as follows: both boys and girls showed high interest in stories about animals, and mystery and detective stories; boys liked history, biography, and stories about inventions and discovery; and girls showed interest in tales of fun and fancy, rhyme and rhythm, children of other lands and travel.

Scipione, Droney, and Cucchiara (27) reported on a study of pupil preferences for the titles and stories found in fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade basal readers. Lists of titles of all the stories in 15 basal readers were presented to 1498 fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade pupils. The pupils checked the five titles from each book which most appealed to them. From the results of this survey, a second questionnaire was drawn up. It consisted of the ten most highly rated titles from each book. On this second questionnaire, 744 middle-grade children indicated whether they liked, were indifferent to, or disliked each title. They checked whether or not they had read each story. Findings in this study indicated that these pupils preferred stories they had read to titles of stories
they had not read. Pupil selections of both individual stories and story types were influenced by sex. Among boys, stories suggesting a girl character were markedly unpopular, and most children avoided titles containing meaningless, strange or foreign words.

Mitchell (22) constructed seven tests to measure the extent and variety of the reading interests of intermediate-grade children. These tests sought to determine (1) interest in reading topics, (2) interest in reading as compared with interest in other subjects, (3) interest in types of reading, (4) background experiences, (5) interest in personal identification with characters in stories, (6) interest in descriptive reading topics, and (7) interest in activities. The battery was administered to 210 fifth- and sixth-grade pupils. Results showed a wide range of interest in the reading topics. The pupils ranked types of reading in this order: book, story, cartoon, play, article, and poem. There were strong indications that the children tested liked to identify themselves with the character in the story they were reading.

A library survey was conducted by O'Toole (24) for the study of the voluntary reading habits of intermediate grade children. For a period of six weeks, a record was kept of all the books taken home by 167 pupils in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades of an elementary school. The total was 1019. Comparisons were made to determine the effect of chronological age, sex, mental age, and reading level on the choice of books. Of the total number of books selected, stories of mystery and adventure comprised more than 50 per cent; animal stories,
mythology, fables, and fairy tales, about 30 per cent; and the remaining 20 per cent was made up of biography, history and travel, sports and hobbies, science and mechanics, and poetry, music, and the fine arts.

The ballot method of recording pupil interest in types of stories was used by Boland (2), Woodward (32), Sullivan (29), McManus (21), Lynch (18), and Colavita (5). After representative stories had been presented to pupils, they marked a ballot to indicate whether they (1) liked a story with enthusiasm, (2) liked it, or (3) disliked it. With the exception of Boland's first grade study, three types of narrative stories and three types of informational stories were used on each grade level. The total percentage of children liking each story was tabulated and comparisons were made to determine the preferences of the children for individual stories and story types. The preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence were also compared. When no test results were available the teacher's opinion of the pupil's class standing was used in establishing the upper and lower quartiles. All the stories used in the studies were cut directly from basal readers and enclosed in separate folders.

In the Boland study (2), four types of stories, selected from first-grade readers, were presented to 391 first-grade children. Each child heard 20 stories read and recorded his preferences on a ballot. Results showed that all types of stories were well received with little difference in preference.
The percentage of children liking the story-types ranked them in this order: child experience stories and old tales, first; nature and science next; and animals last.

One hundred and twenty children in twelve second-grade classrooms listened to the narrative stories which were selected by Woodward (82) for her study. Another group of 279 children were presented informational stories. The ballots showed that fairy stories were preferred to the informational material. The children preferred fairy stories in this order: stories involving children, folklore, and animated animal stories. The informational stories were preferred in this order: stories of child experience, stories of workers and helpers, and science stories.

Sullivan (29), working on a fourth-grade level, selected four classics, three stories about children of other lands, and three adventure stories for her narrative material. Her informational selections consisted of four biographical, three science, and three social studies stories. Two hundred children listened to the narrative stories and an equal number heard the informational stories read. The majority of the children liked the types of material presented. They preferred the story-types in this order: classics, stories of adventure, biography, children of other lands, social studies, and science.

In a fifth grade study by McManus (21), the 249 pupils in the narrative survey, and the 204 pupils in the informational survey read the stories themselves. McManus reported that the stories were liked by most of the children. The rank order of preference for all selections was: fairy tales, adventure,
historical stories, children of other lands, biography, and social studies.

Lynch (18) investigated the preferences of 250 sixth-grade children for narrative stories and of an equal number for informational stories. The pupils read the stories and recorded their preferences for each on a ballot. They preferred the stories in this order: biography, classics, adventure and science (tie), children of other lands, and social studies.

Colavita (5) selected her material from ninth-grade literature books. She used ten narrative stories and ten informational stories. The stories were read by 254 ninth-grade children. An analysis of their preferences established this order of preference: humor, adventure, biography, family life, science, and vocation.

Bowen, Cauley, Howard and Lombardi (4) also used ballots to determine the reactions of first and second grade children to a cross section of current children's literature. Nineteen books were selected containing stories that could be read in one sitting. The stories, nine for each grade with one read on both levels, were read to 295 children in four first and five second grade classrooms. After all the stories had been read, the children indicated on a ballot which story they (1) liked the best, (2) would like to be able to read, (3) disliked, (4) would like to hear read again, (5) would like to own, and (6) thought contained the best pictures. The results showed that the children liked humorous stories the best with
animal stories their second choice.

Precise information about the reading interests of pupils in ungraded elementary classrooms was sought by Morrison (23). He selected 27 children's stories and read them to the pupils in ten ungraded classrooms. There were three stories from each of the following categories: funny stories, poems, animal stories, ghost stories, sport stories, stories of familiar experience, nature and science stories, adventure stories, and fairy stories. The 190 ungraded pupils who participated (children retarded two or more years in school work) listened to three stories at a time and recorded their reactions on a ballot. They indicated whether they (1) liked each story very much, (2) liked it a little, or (3) disliked it. Morrison concluded that the children did not show a marked preference for the stories in any one category. They liked all the stories.

Seeking to evaluate the comic book situation, Harrington (14) presented a questionnaire to 770 fifth-, and sixth-grade pupils. The questionnaire elicited information about both comic book reading and general reading interests through questions about the following things: attitude toward reading, number of books read recently, number of books owned, favorite type of book, possession and use of library cards, frequency of comic book reading, purchase and trade of comic books, favorite comic book, and creative activities, such as drawing, stimulated by comic book reading. He discovered that over 90 percent of the boys and girls read comic books, but only 62 per
cent read them regularly. He also noted that there was a strong preference for comics containing animal characters, that only a very small proportion could be considered harmful, and that the reading of comics had little effect on the amount of general reading done.

McCormack (20), surveying the magazine-reading interests of 362 secondary-school pupils, found that magazine reading was almost universal among this group, that girls at all levels read magazines more regularly than boys, and that over 80 per cent of the pupils did their magazine reading at home. The study was conducted by means of a questionnaire which investigated these factors: frequency of magazine reading, place of reading, preference between magazines and books, favorite magazines, and most highly valued magazines. A check list was included in order to ascertain the titles of all magazines read by these pupils. These reasons were given by the pupils for preferring magazines to books: pictorial appeal, brevity, variety, fiction, and timeliness of material. The study also disclosed that these secondary children selected their magazines chiefly for entertainment.

To discover the extent and nature of children's newspaper-reading interests, Winkler (31) presented a check-list-type questionnaire to 2363 pupils in grades four through twelve. The questionnaire contained three check lists: one made up of the names of newspapers, another composed of noted columnists, and a third listing the sections of a newspaper. After checking the type and amount of their reading, the children
were asked to list other papers and columnists they read, and their favorite comic strip. The study concluded that newspaper reading was almost universal among school children; that, in general, interest in newspaper reading increased as pupils matured; and that the pupils' favorite sections were the comics, sports, news and fiction.

The likes and dislikes of primary children for stories in basal readers were investigated in a series of studies (1, 3, 6, 7, 13, 15). These studies attempted to find the reasons for children's likes and dislikes, and the element of the stories most interesting to them. The stories used in the studies were read by the teacher and the pupil's responses were recorded in one of three ways: picture, comprehension check, or oral response. Each study surveyed three classrooms. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story but the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways. For the picture response each child drew a picture and explained it. Comprehension was checked on a yes-no answer sheet by simple recall questions read by the teacher. The oral responses were given by each child individually to the teacher at her desk. Throughout the studies, comprehension checks indicated that the stories were understood and findings showed that most children liked the stories.

Blandford, Growe, and Ulton (1) used the 44 stories in On Cherry Street, Ginn and Company first reader, to investigate the likes and dislikes of 80 first grade children in three
classrooms. They found that the elements of greatest interest were plot and humor. When a story was disliked it was because of unpleasant personal associations of individual children.

Corson, Curran, Spivack and Sullivan (6) investigated the likes and dislikes of 94 children from three first grades, using the 24 stories in *Down Our Street*, Macmillan first grade basal reader. The study revealed plot to be the element of greatest interest with humor, second and ending, third. Personal association was the least interesting element.

Cronin, Listernick, and Whelan (7) using the 24 stories in *Round About, Row, Peterson First Reader*, checked the reactions of 90 first grade children in three classrooms. They found that the stories were liked because of plot, character, humor, and personal associations in that order. Some stories were disliked because of unpleasant personal associations.

The likes and dislikes of second grade children were studied by Boutin, Donald, and Leach (3). They read the 45 stories in *We Are Neighbors*, Ginn and Company second reader, and found that plot was the element of greatest interest and that humor rated second. The stories were also liked because of personal associations, rhyme, and characters. The stories were disliked because of sadistic tendencies in the plots and lack of humor.

The 43 stories in *Over a City Bridge*, American Book Company second reader, were read to 84 children by Healy, McGovern, and Pugatch (15). The responses of these children, who
were from two second and one third grade classrooms, showed that plot was the element of greatest interest with humor second. Length, rhyme, and ending were of least interest. Some stories were disliked due to plot, personal association, and length.

The study by Gibbons, Hanscom, and Paige (13) employed the 12 stories in *Looking Ahead*, Houghton, Mifflin Company third reader. The stories were read to 80 pupils in three, third-grade classrooms, and their responses established humor as the strongest element of interest. Suspense was second, satisfactory ending, third, and personal association, fourth.

The influence of free reading on achievement in that subject was studied by Welch (30). The free reading of 549 intermediate-grade pupils was checked by means of a questionnaire. Each pupil reported on his own free reading under five headings: books, comic books, magazines, newspapers, and "other reading". Teacher estimates of the amount of free reading done by each pupil were used as a check on the pupil's own appraisal. Forty pupils who did much free reading were paired with 40 who did little free reading. These pairs were equated on age, mental age, and sex. Welch found that the extensive free readers were significantly superior in speed of reading. There were also differences favoring the extensive free readers in general reading ability, and paragraph comprehension.
Pupil Preferences for Types of Assignments

Lyons (19) constructed a test containing reading assignments built around six types of activities: namely, writing, entertaining, talking, constructing, going on excursions, and reading without an added activity. The assignments were arranged in groups of three and 300 sixth grade children indicated their first, second, and third choices in each group. The results were analyzed to discover the relative appeal of these types of reading assignments, and to note how pupil choices were influenced by sex, reading ability, intelligence, and type of school (conservative or progressive). The study established this rank order of preference: excursions, reading with no activity, construction, entertaining, talking, and writing. The only difference between the types of schools was the preference of progressive-school children for assignments involving talking.

Stewart (23) reported on children's preferences in respect to these types of assignments: the use of one text versus several texts; group participation versus partner participation; pupil selection versus teacher selection of materials; and reading, writing, talking, drawing, and constructing. She constructed a test which presented assignments and asked the pupil to check the method he would prefer to use in carrying them out. Analysis of the test results of 546 pupils in grades four, five, and six revealed that (1) the use of multiple texts was favored over single texts, (2) self-direction was preferred to
teacher-direction, (3) group participation was given a slight preference over partner participation, and (4) construction ranked first in preference and drawing, second.

Jameson, Nager, and Zervas (16) also sought to determine how children preferred to carry out assignments. Their test contained 15 reading assignments. Five offered a choice of using one text or many different texts; five, a choice between finding their own materials or having the teacher provide them; and five, a choice among working in groups, in pairs, or individually. The test was administered to 1632 middle-grade children and the results confirmed Stewart's findings that children favored the use of multiple tests and that the majority of children preferred self-direction. Both partner and group participation were substantially preferred to individual participation.

In order to compare voluntary reading with other voluntary activities, Ralston (25) administered a test to 281 pupils in grades four, five and six. The test consisted of twenty assumed situations, each with a choice of five types of activities. The activities were reading, writing, observation, indoor activities, and outdoor activities. She found that children preferred the activities in this order: outdoor activities, indoor activities, observation, reading, and writing.

Subject Preferences

During the school year 1947-48, a large scale subject preference study was conducted at Boston University. As
reported by Blanchard (33), this study investigated the subject preferences of 13,483 fifth-grade pupils in 65 New England public school systems. A questionnaire was employed which listed these subjects: reading, arithmetic, English or language, penmanship or handwriting, spelling, geography, history, social studies, art or drawing, music, science or nature study, and health education. The pupils were asked to (1) indicate their first, second, and third choices; (2) check whether they liked or disliked each subject; and (3) check whether they thought each subject was easy or hard. Adjustments were made for differences in curricula by the classroom teachers who crossed out subject names that did not apply to their individual situations. For example, if geography and history were taught as separate subjects, the term social studies was crossed out before the questionnaire was administered.

As part of this study, Cusack (8) sought relationships between subject preferences and achievement. Using the total fifth grade population of one of the participating towns, she tried to discover if children who preferred reading and arithmetic achieved better in those subjects than did the total fifth grade population. Achievement was derived from school records of the pupils' scores on the Iowa Every-Pupil Tests of Basic Skills. When complete data had been secured on 225 pupils in reading and 224 in arithmetic, comparisons showed that the achievement of those pupils who made reading their first choice was significantly better than that of the total
population. No significant differences were found for arithmetic.

The investigation initiated by the Subject Preference Study (33), was extended by several other studies. Dooley (11) repeated the study on a group of Oklahoma school children. Donahue and Dyer (10) compared the subject preferences of seventh-grade children with their fifth-grade choices. Dean (9) and Edwards (12) investigated relationships between subject preferences and achievement. Jenkins (17) studied the characteristics of reading programs in 20 classrooms where reading had been rated high in the Subject Preference Study.

Dooley (11) found that, among the fifth grade children in Oklahoma City, reading was the favorite subject, with art, second, arithmetic, third, and music, fourth. English ranked lowest. A questionnaire, similar to the one used in New England was presented to 2,496 children in 51 schools.

Donahue and Dyer (10) readministered a subject preference questionnaire to 763 seventh-grade pupils who had taken part in the Subject Preference Study (33) two years earlier. The questionnaire, making allowances for seventh-grade curricula, listed art, English, general science, handwriting, mathematics, music, social studies, and spelling. Results led to the conclusion that the order of preference for the top three subjects changed from arithmetic, reading, and art, in the fifth grade, to English, art, and social studies in the seventh.

Edwards (12) submitted the Subject Preference questionnaire
to 577 fourth-grade pupils. In order to study the effect of preference on achievement, she divided her subjects into preference and non-preference groups. The 293 children who made reading their first, second, or third choice comprised the preference group. Those who preferred other subjects constituted the non-preference group. Comparisons were made between preference and non-preference groups of (1) boys and girls, (2) pupils equated for sex, chronological age, intelligence, and (3) pupils classified by intelligence as dull, average, and superior. These comparisons revealed that pupils who preferred reading achieved better than those who did not. Among the equated groups, differences in achievement and in gains during a school year favored the preference group but were not statistically significant.

In another effort to determine what relationships exist between subject preferences and achievement, Dean (9) compared both the preferences of high achievers with the preferences of low achievers and the achievement of those who preferred a subject with the achievement of others who did not. Using the data gathered in the Subject Preference Study (33), he selected a sample of 2281 fifth-grade pupils in nine representative communities. A partial battery of the Metropolitan Achievement Test was administered to measure reading, arithmetic, spelling, and language. The sample population was then equated by sexes on chronological age, and composite achievement. When first preferences only were analyzed, no significant differences were found. Among boys, when first, second,
and third choices were combined, significant differences were found which indicated relationships between preference and achievement in favor of preference. These indications were also found in the cases of arithmetic and spelling.

Jenkins (17) evaluated reading programs in 20 fifth-grade classrooms where reading was ranked high in the Subject Preference Study (33). She constructed an interview guide and an observation guide. She then visited each classroom, observed the teaching procedures, and interviewed the teacher. The observation guide was a check list covering materials of instruction, techniques of instruction, evidence of pupil interest, and characteristics of the environment. The interview guide contained check lists of materials and techniques, and administrative resources and policies. Notable among the findings were these facts:

1. A wide variety of materials and techniques were used.
2. Basal readers on at least two levels were used in most classrooms.
3. Many reading skills were emphasized.
4. Good provision was made for individual differences.
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Mentioned but not reviewed.

Problem: To determine the likes and dislikes of first grade children for the stories in a basal reader. To find the reasons for their preferences and the elements of the story most interesting to them.

Materials and Procedure: The 44 stories in On Cherry Street, Ginn and Company first reader, were presented to all the children in three first grade classrooms. After each story, the children's responses were recorded in one of three ways: pictures, comprehension check, and oral response. The 44 stories were divided into three groups. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story but the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways.

For the picture response, the children drew pictures about the story. Each child then told what the picture was about and this was recorded on the back of the picture. The comprehension check was a number of recall questions read by the teacher. The children responded by marking a yes-no answer sheet. The oral responses, which were given by each child individually to the teacher at her desk, were listed under these headings: humor, plot, character, and personal association.
The 30, first grade children participating in the study represented three classrooms from three communities suburban to a large eastern city.

Conclusions: 1. The scores on the comprehension check indicated that the stories were understood.

2. Most of the children liked the stories. Of the 44 stories presented, 27 had only positive reactions. Seventeen had some negative responses with four being the greatest number for a single story.

3. The stories were liked because of the elements of plot, humor, character, and personal association in that order.

4. Some stories were disliked because of unpleasant personal associations.

*Blandford, Elizabeth Martha; Growe, Edith Eldracher; Ulton, Olive Richardson*
Problem: To discover the preferences of children in grade one for individual stories and four story types. To compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Forty stories were cut directly from first grade books and hinged in separate folders. These stories represented these four types: child experience stories, old tales, animal stories, and nature and science stories. The forty stories were divided into two equal groups. These groups contained five stories of each type. Ten sets of material were prepared, five duplicate sets of each group. Each set contained 20 stories and was equal in (1) number of types of stories, (2) number of stories, and (3) mechanical difficulty.

These ten sets were issued to ten first-grade teachers, and later to six more. The teachers were instructed to read the stories to the children and then allow them to indicate on a ballot whether they liked each story with enthusiasm, liked it without enthusiasm, or disliked it. The reliability of the ballots was checked by having the children whisper their votes to the teacher when they passed in their ballots.

The 16 participating classrooms contained 391 children,
191 boys and 200 girls. They were located in Metropolitan Boston and eight suburban areas. These areas included both industrial and professional communities. In determining the upper and lower quartiles, the teacher's judgment and the child's class standing were used when test results were unavailable.

Conclusions: 1. Based upon the combined percentage of pupils liking each type with enthusiasm and those liking without enthusiasm, this was the order of preference: child experience, 90.8 per cent; old tales, 90.8; nature and science, 90.4; animal, 88.

2. The order and combined percentages for each of the following groups were:

a. boys - child experience, 91.5; old tales, 91.4; nature and science, 89.7; animal, 88.6.

b. girls - nature and science, 90.3; old tales, 90.1; child experience, 90; animal, 87.4.

c. upper quartile - old tales, 91.8; child experience, 90.8; animal, 90; nature and science, 90.

d. lower quartile - child experience, 94.9; animal, 91.9; old tales, 88.8; nature and science, 87.8.

3. All types of stories were well received. When ranked on the basis of liking with enthusiasm, there was only a difference of 3.1 per cent between the first choice and the last choice.

Problem: To discover whether second-grade children like the stories in a basal reader, why they like them, and which qualities of the stories most interest them.

Materials and Procedure: The 45 stories in We Are Neighbors, Ginn and Company second reader, first level, were presented to all the children in three second-grade classrooms. After each story, the children's responses were recorded in one of three ways: pictures, comprehension check, or oral response. The stories were divided into three groups. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story, but the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways.

For the picture response, the children drew pictures about the story. Each child told what his picture was about and this was recorded on the back. The comprehension check was a number of recall questions read by the teacher. The children responded by marking a yes-no answer sheet. The oral responses were given individually to the teacher at her desk. Each child told why he liked or disliked the story. In tabulating these responses, the following elements of interest were considered: humor, plot, character, rhyme,
and personal association.

There were 74 children in the three participating classrooms. They came from suburban areas which included both industrial and professional communities and from home conditions which ranged from underprivileged to average.

Conclusions: 1. The scores on the comprehension checks indicated that the stories were understood.

2. Most of the children liked the stories.

3. The stories were liked because of plot, humor, personal association, rhyme, and characters in that order.

4. Stories were disliked because of sadistic tendencies in the plot and lack of humor.

5. Of the 45 stories, 26 had only positive reactions. Nineteen had some negative responses with ten being the greatest number of dislikes for a single story.

*Boutin, Marian Elodia; Donald, Mary Elizabeth; Leach, Maybelle Elizabeth.
Problem: To discover the reactions of first and second grade pupils to some of the current literature for children.

Materials and Procedure: Nineteen books were selected for this study, nine for the first grades and nine for the second grades with one book being used on both levels. On each grade level, two books were chosen in each of the following categories: adventure, fantasy, animals, realistic stories, and humorous stories. Only books which had been published since 1949 and which could be read in one sitting were considered.

All the children in four, first- and five second-grade classrooms heard the stories read by their teachers. The teacher read one story a day for a period of two weeks. A lapse of two days was allowed before checking pupil preferences. The names of the ten stories for each grade and six questions were listed on a ballot. The children were asked to indicate which story they (1) liked the best, (2) would like to be able to read, (3) disliked, (4) would like to hear read again, (5) would like for their very own, and (6) thought contained the best pictures. Participating in the study were 295 children from classrooms located in three cities in the metropolitan area.

Conclusions: 1. The children preferred humorous stories to
the other classifications. Both grades chose animal stories as their second choice. First grade pupils ranked adventure stories in third place while second graders chose fantasy third.

2. Adult standards for good illustrations did not correlate with the children’s. Children preferred pictures that were alive with action. They showed little enthusiasm for *Finders Keepers*, the Caldecott Award winner for 1951.

*Bowen, M. Eleanor; Cauley, Margaret E.; Howard, Mary G.; Lombardi, Dorothea A.*
Problem: To determine the preferences of ninth-grade pupils for (1) individual narrative stories, (2) three types of narrative stories, (3) individual informational stories, and (4) three types of informational stories. To compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Ten narrative stories were cut from ninth-grade literature books and enclosed in separate folders. These stories represented the following types: four adventure, three humorous, and three family stories. Five duplicate sets of these booklets were distributed to five ninth-grade teachers with instructions to allow their students to read the stories and indicate their preferences on a ballot by liking with or without enthusiasm or by disliking. The same procedure was followed in the selection, preparation, distribution, and presentation of the informational material. The ten informational selections were made up of four biography, three science, and three vocational stories.

The population consisted of 115 boys and 139 girls from several communities near a large eastern city. Socio-economic conditions varied greatly. When no test results were
available, the teacher’s judgment and the pupil’s class standing were used to establish the upper and lower quartiles.

Conclusions: 1. These were the combined percentages of children liking the story types with and without enthusiasm: humor, 90.8; biography, 90.3; adventure, 88.6; family life, 85; science, 66.7; vocational, 65.

2. When comparisons were made for sex and intelligence, the combined percentages of children liking with and without enthusiasm were as follows:

   a. Boys - adventure, 93.1; humor, 89.9; biography, 88.7; family life, 73.1; science, 69; vocational, 65.5.
   b. Girls - family life, 95; humor, 94.2; biography, 91.4; adventure, 84.9; vocational, 64.8; science, 64.7.
   c. Upper quartile - humor, 90.6; family life, 90.1; biography, 89.4; adventure, 87.1; vocational, 66.1; science, 64.1.
   d. Lower quartile - humor, 37; adventure, 35.1; biography, 35.1; family life, 30.7; science, 69.3; vocational, 66.6.

3. The pupils enjoyed the narrative types of stories more than the informational types.

Problem: To discover the likes and dislikes of first-grade children for the stories of a basal reader. To find the reasons for their likes or dislikes, and the elements of the stories most interesting to them.

Materials and Procedure: The 24 stories in Down Our Street, Macmillan Company first-grade basal reader, were presented to all the children in three, first-grade classrooms. After each story was read, the children's responses were recorded in one of three ways: pictures, comprehension check, or oral response. The stories were divided into three groups. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story, and the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways.

For the picture response, the children drew pictures about the story. Each child told what his picture was about and this was recorded on the back. The comprehension check was a number of recall questions read by the teacher. The children responded by marking a yes-no answer sheet. The oral responses were given individually to the teacher at her desk. Each child told why he liked or disliked the story. In tabulating these responses, the following elements of
interest were considered: humor, plot, ending, characters, personal association, setting, and length.

The 95 first-grade children in the study were from three suburban areas, one a low-income, industrial area and the other two middle class residential areas.

Conclusions: 1. The scores on the comprehension checks indicated that the stories were understood.

2. Most of the children liked the stories.

3. The stories were liked because of these elements: plot, mentioned orally on the average of 23 times per story; humor, mentioned five times per story; characters, five times; ending, three times; personal association, two times.

4. The stories were disliked because of plot and ending.

5. Out of the 24 stories, 18 had only positive reactions. Six had some negative responses, with four being the greatest number of negative responses for a single story.

*Corson, Alice; Curran, Sara Frances; Spivak, Barbara Marylin; Sullivan, Louise Marie.*

Problem: To determine the likes and dislikes of first grade children for the stories of a basal reader. To find the reasons for their likes and dislikes, and the elements of the story most interesting to them.

Materials and Procedure: The 24 stories in Round About, Row Peterson First Reader, were presented to all the children in three first grade classrooms. After each story, the children's responses were recorded in one of three ways; pictures, comprehension check, or oral response. The stories were divided into three groups. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story, and the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways.

For the picture response, the children drew pictures about the story. Each child told why he liked or disliked the story. The responses were considered under these headings: humor, character, plot, ending, and personal association.

Participating in the study were 90 children in three, first grades in suburban areas including both residential and industrial communities. These were considered average socio-economic areas.
Conclusions: 1. The scores on the comprehension check indicated that the stories were understood.

2. Most of the children liked the stories in *Round About*.

3. The stories were liked because of plot, character, humor, and personal association in that order.

4. Some stories were disliked because of unpleasant personal experiences.

5. Of the 24 stories, 14 had only positive reactions. Ten had some negative responses, with ten being the greatest number of negative responses for a single story.

*Cronin, Charlotte C.; Listerick, Mildred M; Whelan, Doris.*

**Problem:** To discover if fifth-grade pupils who preferred reading and arithmetic achieved better in those subjects than did the total fifth-grade population of their school system.

**Materials and Procedure:** This study was part of the Subject Preference Study, which investigated the subject preferences of 13,483 fifth-grade children in 65 New England communities. The data used in this study was obtained from the records of the total fifth-grade population of Town No. 63. Complete data was available for 225 pupils in reading and 224 in arithmetic. Achievement scores were obtained from records of the pupils' performances on the Iowa Every-Pupil Tests of Basic Skills which had been administered the previous spring when the pupils were in the fourth grade. Using grade scores, comparisons were made between the reading achievement of the total fifth-grade population and that of 115 children who made reading their first, second, or third choice. Similar comparisons were made between the total population and the 137 children who preferred arithmetic.

**Conclusions:** 1. The mean grade levels of the first choice group was 6.47 on the reading comprehension test and 6.58 on the reading vocabulary test. This compared with means of 5.65
and 5.75 for the total population. These differences resulted in critical ratios of 3.15 and 3.07.

2. The mean grade level of the first choice group on the reading comprehension test was 6.47. The mean grade level of the total population was 5.65. The difference, 8.2 months, resulted in a critical ratio of 3.15.

3. The mean grade level of the first choice group on the reading vocabulary test was 6.53. The mean for the total population was 5.75. The difference, 8.2 months resulted in a critical ratio of 3.07.

4. No other significant differences were found but all differences favored the groups who chose reading among their three favorite subjects.

5. No significant differences in achievement were found between those who preferred arithmetic and the total group. With the exception of the group making arithmetic their second choice, the differences were in favor of the total population.

**Problem:** To determine what relationship exists between the preferences of fifth grade pupils for school subjects and their achievement in those subjects. Comparisons were made of

1. the preferences of the high achievement group with the preferences of the low achievement group, and
2. the achievement of those who preferred a subject with the achievement of all others who did not.

Sex differences were studied in both analyses.

**Materials and Procedure:** This investigation was based upon data gathered in the Subject Preference Study. The Subject Preference Study was conducted in 65 New England public school systems with the cooperation of the New England School Development Council. Subject preferences were elicited from 13,483 fifth-grade children in 543 classrooms representing the entire fifth-grade population of these systems. The 65 communities ranged from large cities to remote rural sections. There were participating schools in each of the New England States.

The questionnaire used in the Subject Preference Study listed reading, arithmetic, English or language, penmanship or spelling, geography, history, social studies, art or drawing, music, science or nature study, and health education. The pupils were asked to (1) number their first, second, and
third choices; (2) encircle L, N, or D to show whether they liked, neither liked nor disliked, or disliked each subject; and (3) encircle the words EASY or HARD to show their feelings toward the difficulty of the subject.

In investigating the relationship between preference and achievement, the author decided to limit the study to "skills" subjects. Comparisons were made only in reading, arithmetic, language, and spelling. A sample group of students was selected from the total population of the Subject Preference Study. Nine communities were chosen, offering a total population of 2231. A partial battery of the Metropolitan Achievement Test, measuring reading, arithmetic, spelling, and language, was administered to these pupils.

Data from the achievement tests was organized under the following categories: reading comprehension, reading vocabulary, combined reading, arithmetic fundamentals, arithmetic problems, combined arithmetic, English, and spelling. The composite achievement of each pupil was derived by computing the median achievement score of all the test scores. The sample population was then equated by sexes on chronological age and on composite achievement. In so doing, 537 cases were withdrawn, leaving matched groups of 847 boys and 847 girls. The first achievement quartile constituted the high achievement group and the fourth quartile made up the low achievement group.

Conclusions: 1. In determining the relationships existing between the preferences of high achievement groups and low
achievement groups, three significant differences were found out of a possible eight.

a. With first, second, and third preferences combined, comparisons were made between the preferences of the first achievement quartile and the preferences of the fourth achievement quartile. Twenty-four critical ratios were computed. The mean of these critical ratios was 3.57.

b. The percentages of all preferences of high achievement boys were compared with those of low achievement boys. Sixteen critical ratios were computed. Their mean, 2.73 was considered statistically significant.

c. All preferences for arithmetic of the first and fourth quartiles were compared and 18 critical ratios were computed. The mean of these critical ratios was 3.38.

2. In determining the relationships existing between the achievement of preference groups and the achievement of non-preference groups, four significant differences were found out of a possible eight.

a. With first, second, and third preferences combined, the mean scores, all subjects, of the preference groups were compared with the mean scores, all subjects of the non-preference groups. Twenty-four critical ratios were computed and their mean critical ratio was 4.14.

b. The mean scores, all subjects, of preference and non-
preference groups of boys were compared and 16 critical ratios were computed. The mean critical ratio, 2.95, was considered significant.

c. The mean scores of all arithmetic tests of the preference and non-preference groups were compared and 18 critical ratios computed. The mean critical ratio was 3.75.

d. The mean scores of the spelling test of the preference and non-preference groups were compared and six critical ratios were computed. The mean critical ratio, 2.68, was considered significant.

3. When first preferences only were considered, no significant differences were found.

4. No significant differences were found for girls.

5. No significant differences were found in reading and language.

These findings led the author to conclude:

1. The relationships between preference and achievement were not sufficiently conclusive to warrant predictive applications of these relationships.

2. There were, however, decided enough trends in favor of the preference groups to make these relationships of value in educational planning.

3. Among boys, when first, second, and third preferences were combined, and in arithmetic and spelling, significant
differences were found which indicated conclusive relationships between preference and achievement in favor of preference.
Problem: To investigate subject preferences of seventh-grade pupils, ascertaining their first, second, and third choices, and to compare these with the preferences indicated when they were in grade five.

Materials and Procedure: Two communities which participated in the 1948 Subject Preference Study were selected. A questionnaire, corresponding as closely as possible to the form used in the former study, was employed. It listed art, English, general science, handwriting, mathematics, music, social studies, and spelling. The pupils were asked to number their first, second, and third choice in subjects. Reading was not listed as a separate subject because, in the seventh grade, it was part of the English course.

The questionnaire was administered to the entire seventh-grade population of the two communities. Comparisons were based on only those who had taken the questionnaire in both the fifth and seventh grades. In Community A this was 559 pupils, 293 boys, and 266 girls. In Community B comparisons were made on 204 pupils, 102 boys and 102 girls.

The results were tabulated and an analysis made of:
1. the seventh-grade study in Community A.
2. the seventh-grade study in Community B.
3. the combined seventh-grade studies in Communities A and B.
4. comparisons between the fifth- and seventh-grade studies in Community A.
5. comparisons between the fifth- and seventh-grade studies of Community B.
6. comparisons between the combined fifth-grade and combined seventh-grade studies in Communities A and B.

Conclusions: When the combined seventh-grade studies of Communities A and B were compared with their combined fifth-grade studies, these findings resulted:

1. Based upon the percentages of pupils making a subject their first choice, this was the order of preference in the seventh grade: English, 28.86 per cent; art, 20.12; social studies, 19.86; mathematics, 18.33; music, 12.98.
This was the order in the fifth grade: arithmetic, 26.63; reading, 22.94; art, 20.97; spelling, 11.51; music, 6.82; social studies, 6.43; science, 2.23; writing, 1.84; health education, 1.18; language, 0.00.

2. Considering first choices only, boys' preferences ranked the subjects in this order:
   a. seventh grade - social studies, English, art, arithmetic, music.
   b. fifth grade - arithmetic, art, reading, spelling, social studies, music, . . . . language.

Girls' choices established this order:
a. seventh grade - English, art, mathematics, music, social studies.

b. fifth grade - arithmetic, reading, art, spelling, music, social studies, . . . language.
Problem: To investigate the preferences of the fifth-grade children of Oklahoma City for school subjects and to determine the patterns of their likes and dislikes.

Materials and Procedure: This study was an extension of the Subject Preference Study, which surveyed the preferences of 13,483 public school children in 65 New England communities. A questionnaire, similar to the one in the New England study, was employed. It listed arithmetic, reading, English, handwriting, spelling, social studies, art, music, science, and health education. The pupils were asked to (1) number their first, second, and third choices; (2) encircle L, N, or D to show whether they liked, neither liked nor disliked, or disliked each subject; and (3) encircle EASY or HARD to show their feelings toward the difficulty of the subject. Teachers were also asked to indicate which subject they most enjoyed teaching.

The questionnaires were presented to 2,496 pupils in 51 schools; 44 Majority (white) schools with 1163 boys and 1137 girls, and seven Separate (negro) schools with 75 boys and 71 girls.

Conclusions: 1. Based upon the percentage of pupils making a subject their first choice, this was the order of preference:
reading, chosen first by 28.29 per cent of the pupils; art, 21.36 per cent; arithmetic, 19.51; music, 13.66; spelling, 7.65; social studies, 4.77; writing, 2.08; science, 1.00; health, .88; English, .30.

2. These were the percentages of pupils liking each subject: art, 85.14; music, 78.97; reading, 78; spelling, 71.91; arithmetic, 63.90; writing, 62.90; health, 59.53; social studies, 55.53; science, 51.56; English, 46.51.

3. Considering first choices only, these were the percentages of boys preferring each subject: reading, 28.75; art, 22.94; arithmetic, 21.81; music, 8.97; spelling, 7.35; social studies, 4.35; writing, 1.86; science, 1.78; English, .97; health, .72.

4. The percentages of girls preferring subjects ran as follows: reading, 27.82; art, 19.79; music, 16.28; arithmetic, 17.25; spelling, 7.95; social studies, 4.69; writing, 2.30; health, 1.03; English, .64; science, .24.

5. The percentages of teachers preferring each subject were as follows: social studies, 27.91; reading, 22.09; arithmetic, 22.09; health, 9.14; music, 8.14; art, 6.93; English, 2.33; spelling, 1.16; science, 1.16; writing, 0.
Problem: To compare reading interest with reading achievement in grade four. Comparisons were made between preference groups and non-preference groups of

1. girls, boys;
2. pupils equated for sex, chronological age, and intelligence; and
3. pupils classified by intelligence as dull, average, and superior.

Comparisons were also made to determine

1. differences in achievement resulting from degree of interest, and
2. differences in gains in reading for one year by the equated groups.

Materials and Procedure: A questionnaire, similar to the one used in the Subject Preference Study, was administered to 600 fourth-grade pupils. Reading grades were derived from the scores on the Intermediate Batteries of the Stanford Achievement Test, Intelligence Quotients from the results on the Kuhlmann-Anderson mental test. Complete data was secured on 577 pupils, 272 girls and 305 boys. The 293 children who checked reading as their first, second, or third choice comprised the preference group and the 284 who preferred other subjects were the non-preference group. The entire fourth-grade population in 19 elementary schools was utilized in this survey.
Conclusions: 1. The mean reading grade of the children who preferred reading was 5.17. The mean grade of those who did not was 4.90. The critical ratio was 3.14.

2. The difference in the mean reading grades of preference and non-preference groups of girls was .13 with a critical ratio of 1.11. The difference for preference and non-preference boys was .37 with a critical ratio of 2.98.

3. Among the equated groups, girls who preferred reading averaged a mean gain of 7.3 months in a year; non-preference girls gained 5.6 months. The critical ratio was 3.01. The difference in the gains made by preference and non-preference boys was only 1.6 months, resulting in a critical ratio of 1.57.

4. The degree of interest affected achievement but not significantly.

5. Between groups equated for age, sex, and intelligence, there was little difference in achievement.

6. When children were divided into dull, average, and superior groups, all preference groups showed greater achievement than non-preference groups. The only significant difference in reading gains for a year was between the average preference and non-preference groups.

Problem: To determine third-grade children's likes and dislikes for the stories in a basal reader. To find the reasons for their likes and dislikes, and the elements of the stories that most interested them.

Materials and Procedure: The twelve stories in Looking Ahead, Houghton Mifflin Company, third grade, first level, were read to all the children in three, third-grade classrooms. After each story had been read, the children's responses were recorded in one of three ways: pictures, comprehension check, or oral response. The stories were divided into three groups. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story and the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways.

For the picture response, the children drew pictures about the story. Each child told what his picture was about and this was recorded on the back. The comprehension check was a number of recall questions read by the teacher. The children responded by marking a yes-no answer sheet. The oral responses were given individually to the teacher at her desk. Each child told why he liked or disliked the story. In tabulating these responses, the following elements were considered: plot, humor, characters, suspense or surprise, satisfactory ending, and personal association.
The classrooms surveyed contained 80 children from three suburban, residential areas.

Conclusions: 1. The children liked all the stories. Of the 80 children surveyed, not one disliked any of the stories.

2. The children liked the stories because of the elements of humor, suspense, satisfactory ending, personal association, plot, and characters in that order.

*Gibbons, Lois Ann; Hanscom, Katherine Eleanor; Paige, Kathryn Scannell*
Problem: To make a study of the comic book reading situation in general and the reading interests of the boys and girls in grades five and six in a large city in Massachusetts.

Materials and Procedure: A questionnaire was prepared and presented to 770 pupils; 408 boys and 362 girls. The questions covered the following:

1. Do you like to read?
2. How many books do you own? (not comic books)
3. About how many books have you read since September? (not comic books)
4. What is your favorite type of story book?
5. Do you have a Public Library card?
6. Do you use it weekly, monthly, less often?
7. Do you read comic books daily, weekly, not very often?
8. Do you buy or trade comics?
9. Why do you like to read comics?
10. What comic books do you like best of all?
11. Do you ever make or draw comics of your own?

The questionnaires were tabulated and then general conclusions drawn.

Conclusions: 1. Comic books were read by 96.8 per cent of the children surveyed. Thirty-one per cent indicated that they read comic books every day, 30.7 per cent said once or
twice a week, and 38.2 per cent said not very often.

2. About 76 per cent buy comic books while 71 per cent trade them.

3. The five top favorite comic books and the number of children liking each were: "Donald Duck," 187; "True Comics," 93; "Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies," 76; "Tip Top Comics" (Nancy), 48; "Crime Does Not Pay," 27.

4. These were the reasons most frequently checked for liking comic books: they are funny, they are thrilling, they solve crimes, they tell about history; they tell about patriotism.

The author also concluded that:

1. Comic books have large appeal because they are timely and humorous.

2. After examination as to content, a very small proportion could be considered harmful to the reader.

3. The reading of comics has little effect on the amount of general reading done.

4. Drawing interest is stimulated from reading comic books.
Healy, Therese Jane, et al.* A Survey of the Likes and Dislikes of Children of Grades Two and Three for the Stories in the American Book Company Basal Reader "Over a City Bridge."

Problem: To determine the likes and dislikes of second- and third-grade children for the stories in a basal reader. To find the reasons for their likes and dislikes, and the elements of the story most interesting to them.

Materials and Procedure: The 48 stories in Over a City Bridge, American Book Company reader, grade two, level two, were read to the children of three classrooms. After each story was read, the children's responses were recorded in one of three ways: pictures, comprehension check, or oral response. The stories were divided into three groups. Each class used a different method of responding for a single story, and the methods were rotated. Thus each class used all three methods and every story was checked in three ways.

For the picture response, the children drew pictures about the story. Each child told what his picture was about and this was recorded on the back. The comprehension check was a number of recall questions read by the teacher. The children responded by marking a yes-no answer sheet. The oral responses were given individually to the teacher at her desk. Each child told why he liked or disliked the story.

In tabulating these responses, the following elements
of interest were considered: plot, character, humor, ending, length, rhyme, and personal association.

The three participating classrooms, one third and two second grades, contained a total of 46 boys and 33 girls from areas suburban to a large eastern city. These areas included both industrial and professional communities and home conditions varied from average to above average.

Conclusions: 1. The high scores on the comprehension checks showed that the stories were understood.

2. Most of the children liked the stories.

3. The stories were liked because of the elements of plot, humor, personal association, length, rhyme, and ending in that order.

4. Some of the stories were disliked due to plot, personal associations, and length.

5. Of the 43 stories, 21 had only positive reactions. Twenty-two had some negative responses, with seven being the greatest number of negative responses for a single story.

*Healy, Therese Jane; McGovern, Jeanne Maureen; Pugatch, Dorothy Frances.

Problem: To determine how children prefer to carry out assignments and to examine their preferences in relation to grade, sex, intelligence, and age.

Materials and Procedure: The study employed a questionnaire constructed by the authors. It presented 15 assignments and asked the pupils to check the method they preferred to use in carrying them out. Five offered a choice between all pupils reading one text and using many different texts; five a choice among working in groups, in pairs, and individually; and five a choice between finding their own materials and having the teacher provide them.

The questionnaire was administered to 1632 children in grades four, five and six. These pupils constituted a representative population over a wide area and were distributed by grades and sex as follows: grade six, 506; grade five, 566; and grade four, 560; boys, 875; and girls, 756. Mental ages were derived from Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence and Inglis Intelligence Quotient Values.

Conclusions: 1. The use of multiple texts was preferred by 87 per cent of the pupils. The critical ratio was 67.27.

2. Self-direction was preferred to teacher-direction by 74 per cent of the pupils. The critical ratio was 32.00.
3. Working in partners was favored by 43 per cent, group work by 34 per cent, and individual work by 23 per cent. The difference of nine per cent between partner and group work resulted in a critical ratio of 5.29. The critical ratio for the difference between group and individual work was 7.33.

4. Sex did not significantly affect preference. Girls and sixth-grade pupils did show more definite preferences.

5. Sixty-seven per cent of the average fourth-grade group (the nine-year-old group) preferred teacher-direction but this variation from the general trend was not significant.

*Jameson, Vivian; Nager, Eleanor; Zervas, June.
Problem: To determine through interviews and direct observation the characteristics of the reading programs in 20 fifth-grade classrooms where reading was rated high as a preferred subject of at least 50 per cent of the pupils.

Materials and Procedure: Two instruments, an observation guide and an interview guide, were constructed for this study. The observation guide was a check list covering these areas: materials of instruction, techniques of instruction, evidence of pupil interest, and characteristics of the environment. It contained more than 80 specific items. The interview guide contained a check list of materials and techniques used, and a list of administrative resources and policies. Each item was to be checked with a numerical rating indicating whether the teacher employed this material or technique never, sometimes, often, or always. Provision was made on both guides for listing additional items and for brief descriptions. Each set of guides was accompanied by a class record which requested such information as the number of boys and girls who rated reading high; the results (range and median) of reading and intelligence tests; and the favorite subject, training, and experience of teachers.

Twenty-fifth-grade classrooms were selected on the basis of data secured in the Subject Preference Study, a study which
investigated the subject preferences of 13,483 fifth-grade pupils in 65 New England communities. The 20 classrooms were ones in which at least 50 per cent of the children rated reading as a first or second choice. The author visited each classroom, observed for an average of two and a half hours, and interviewed the teacher. The observation guide was checked during the visit and the interview guide after leaving the school.

The classrooms observed were located in 12 different cities and towns. They contained 261 boys and 281 girls. A sampling of intelligence test results indicated a wide range of native ability. Only 15 per cent of the participating teachers rated reading as their favorite subject.

Conclusions: 1. Tabulations were made of the number of classrooms using each material and technique. These items ranked high: (The percentages are weighted ratings which represent both the extent and the frequency of use for each item.): school or room library, 96 per cent; small group instruction, 91 per cent; basic readers, 88; special instruction for some pupils, 88; specific analysis of individual needs, 86; bulletin boards, 86; blackboards, 83; differentiated assignments, 81; previous experience of pupils, 79; previous experience of teacher, 78; dictionaries, 76; story telling or reading by teacher, 75.

2. These reading skills were emphasized: Good oral reading, emphasized in 100 per cent of the classrooms, Use of index and table of contents, 100 per cent,
Following directions, 100,
Locating specific information, 100,
Comprehension, 95,
Vocabulary enrichment, 95,
Use of dictionary, 95,
Use of glossary, 85,
Organization, 80,
Evaluation of material read, 80;
Research, 70,
Outlining, 70,
Skimming, 60,
Speed, 60.

Other findings indicated that in the rooms observed:
1. A wide variety of materials and techniques were employed.
2. Basal readers on at least two levels were used in most classrooms.
3. Good provision was made for individual needs.
4. Excellent library facilities were provided within the classroom.
5. Administration resources and policies were such as to encourage the development of good reading programs.

Problem: To determine the preferences of sixth-grade children for (1) individual narrative stories, (2) three types of narrative stories, and (3) three types of informational stories. To compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Twelve narrative stories (four classics, four children of other lands, and four adventure stories) were cut directly from sixth-grade basal readers and enclosed in separate folders. Twelve informational stories (four biography, four science, and four social studies) were similarly prepared. Nine duplicate sets of narrative booklets were distributed to nine, sixth-grade teachers with instructions to permit all the children in their rooms to read the stories, and indicate their preferences for each on a ballot by liking it with or without enthusiasm or by disliking it. The same procedure was used with nine other sixth grades for the informational material.

Two hundred and fifty children participated in each survey. These sixth grades were located in ten communities suburban to a large eastern city. This area included both industrial and professional communities and home conditions varied widely. When no test results were available, the teacher's judgement
and the pupil’s class standing were used to establish the upper and lower quartiles.

Conclusions: 1. This order of preference was established based upon the combined percentages of pupils liking each type with and without enthusiasm: adventure, 90.1 per cent; biography, 90; classics, 89.9; science, 89; children of other lands, 86.6; social studies 84.5.

2. The order and combined percentages for each of the following groups were:

   a. boys - classics, 91.3; adventure, 90.2; biography, 89.6; science, 89.6; children of other lands, 86; social studies, 83.2.

   b. girls - biography, 91.6; children of other lands, 91.2; adventure, 89.9; science, 88.3; classics, 88.2; social studies, 85.7.

   c. upper quartile - classics, 95.9; adventure, 95.5; children of other lands, 94.8; biography, 93.2; science, 90.4; social studies, 88.4.

   d. lower quartile - biography, 91.7; classics, 85.6; adventure, 85.3; science, 84; social studies, 82.5; children of other lands, 81.7.

Problem: To discover the relative appeal of various types of reading assignments. Three subordinate problems were also studied:

1. To note the effect of these factors on interest: sex, reading ability, intelligence, and type of school (conservative or progressive).
2. To discover the preference for assignments when rated against one another in various combinations.
3. To observe individual differences in the selection of assignments.

Materials and Procedure: An interest test was constructed for this study. It consisted of 108 reading assignments, each with a stated purpose in the form of an activity; e.g., read so that you can make a notebook, read to get ready for a visit to a museum. These assignments were built around six types of activities - writing, entertaining, talking, constructing, going on excursions, and reading without an activity. Their subject matter was drawn from six categories - science, social studies, literature and language, music and art, vocational interests, and sports and hobbies. For each category there were 18 assignments representing the six types of activities. These assignments were organized in groups of three and the pupils were asked to indicate their first, second
and third choice for each group. The combinations of activities were rotated.

The test was given to ten, sixth grades containing 300 children from areas suburban to a large eastern city. Of this total 125 pupils represented conservative schools, that is, schools where the textbook method was used almost exclusively. The number from progressive schools (schools where teaching was not so restricted) was 175. The results from Kuhlmann-Anderson and Henmon-Nelson mental tests provided intelligence quotients, and reading levels were computed from scores on Stanford and Metropolitan Achievement tests.

Conclusions: 1. This was the order of preference for the types of assignments: excursion, chosen first a mean number of 9.16 times; reading with no activity, first 7.54 times; constructing, 5.88; entertaining, 5.13; talking, 4.33; and writing, 3.98. The difference between excursion and no activity resulted in a critical ratio of 5.22; between no activity and constructing, a critical ratio of 5.72; constructing and entertaining, 3.41; entertaining and talking, 3.24; and talking and writing, 1.73.

2. The children in progressive schools chose talking first a mean number of 5.13 times. Those in conservative schools chose it a mean number of 3.35 times. The critical ratio, 5.76, represented the only significant difference between the two schools.

3. The only significant difference between girls and boys was in writing. Girls chose it first 4.56
times and boys, 3.43 times. The critical ratio was 3.64.

4. Good readers chose constructing first 5.84 times and poor readers, 3.98 times. The critical ratio was 5.81. This was the only significant difference between the groups.

5. Bright and dull children showed the same order of preference.

6. Many children varied from the general trend. Some showed consistent preferences for activities not preferred by the group as a whole.

**Problem:** To determine the magazine-reading interests of secondary-school pupils and to note the relationship of sex and grade to magazine-reading habits and preferences.

**Materials and Procedure:** The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire constructed by the author. The questionnaire elicited the following information: frequency of magazine reading by pupils (regularly, frequently, occasionally, not at all); place where they were read (home, school, town library); preference between magazines and books and the reasons for such preference; favorite magazine, how often it was read, and why it was liked; most valuable magazine read, and the reasons for this choice; magazine reading in connection with hobbies; and all magazines read. This final item was obtained by means of a check list containing 106 titles. Space was provided at the end of the list for additions.

The questionnaire was submitted to 362 junior and senior high school pupils in the English classes of nine teachers. This population, 437 boys and 425 girls, constituted the secondary population of the public schools of a residential-industrial community in eastern Massachusetts. They were from families representing all levels of income.

**Conclusions:** 1. Among the secondary-school pupils surveyed,
magazine reading was almost universal. Only four pupils did not read magazines. Magazines were read regularly by 31 per cent of the pupils; frequently by 39 per cent, and occasionally by 29 per cent.

2. Of the magazines most regularly read, *Life* was read regularly by 45 per cent of the boys and 43 per cent of the girls; *Saturday Evening Post* by 37 per cent of the boys and 30 per cent of the girls; *Reader's Digest*, boys, 26 per cent, girls, 29 per cent; *Look*, boys, 38 per cent, girls, 9 per cent. The remaining top six favorites of the boys were sports magazines; of the girls, teen-age, feminine-interest, and motion-picture kinds.

3. Boys read an average of six magazines regularly and 21 occasionally; girls, seven regularly and 25 occasionally.

4. Over 80 per cent of the pupils did their magazine reading at home. Among the small percentage that did their reading elsewhere, the library was favored slightly higher than the school.

5. Magazines were preferred to books by 61 per cent of the boys and 55 per cent of the girls. The exception to this trend was the tenth-grade girls.

6. Reasons given for preferring magazines were: pictorial appeal, brevity, variety, fiction, and timeliness of the material.

7. The secondary school pupils surveyed tended to select their magazines chiefly for entertainment purposes.

8. The ten magazines that the pupils valued the
most were Life*, Reader's Digest*, Saturday Evening Post*, National Geographic, Time, Seventeen*, Sport*, Holiday, Senior Prom*, and Fortune. Those marked with an asterisk were also among the best liked magazines.

9. Boys showed a wider and more active interest in hobbies. Although 75 per cent of the pupils reported having hobbies, only 50 per cent read magazines related to them.

Problem: To determine the preferences of fifth-grade children for (1) individual narrative stories, (2) three types of narrative stories, and (3) three types of informational stories. To compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Twenty narrative stories were cut directly from fifth grade basal readers and enclosed in separate folders. The stories were divided into two groups, each containing four fairy tales, three stories of children of other lands, and three adventure stories. Five duplicate sets of each group were made. Similarly twenty narrative stories were prepared and divided into groups, each with three social studies stories, four biographical stories, and three stories with historical backgrounds. These materials were taken from:

- Merry Hearts and Bold, D. C. Heath and Company
- Tales and Travels, Houghton, Mifflin Company
- Let's Go Ahead, Macmillan Company
- Days and Deeds, Scott, Foresman and Company
- Frontiers New and Old, Silver Burdett and Company

Two separate sets of teachers and pupils took part in this project. The ten sets of narrative booklets were
distributed to ten fifth grade teachers with instructions to permit all the children in their rooms to read the stories, and indicate their preferences on a ballot by liking each with or without enthusiasm or by disliking it. The same procedure was used with ten other fifth grades for the informational material.

There were 249 children, 135 boys and 124 girls, in the narrative survey. The number taking part in the informational survey was 204, 104 boys and 100 girls. These children attended schools in 13 areas suburban to a large city.

Conclusions: 1. These were the combined percentages of children liking story types with and without enthusiasm: fairy tales, 94.5; adventure, 94; stories with historical backgrounds, 92.9; children of other lands, 92.3; biography, 89.9; social studies, 81.8.

2. When comparisons were made for sex and intelligence, the combined percentages of children liking with and without enthusiasm were as follows:
   a. Boys - adventure, 94.3; fairy tales, 94.2; stories with historical backgrounds, 92.9; children of other lands, 92.1; biography, 87.7; social studies, 87.4.
   b. Girls - fairy tales, 93.7; adventure, 93.5; stories with historical backgrounds, 93.3; children of other lands, 92.4; biography, 90; social studies, 75.8.
   c. Upper quartile - adventure, 97.5; fairy tales, 96.9; children of other lands, 96.4; stories with historical backgrounds, 93.6; biography, 92.5; social studies, 88.1.
   d. Lower quartile - stories with historical backgrounds,
93.4; adventure, 92.5; children of other lands, 91.3; fairy tales, 90; biography, 90; social studies, 82.

3. All the stories offered in this study were liked by over 80 per cent of the children.

Problem: To construct and evaluate a measure of the extent and variety of the reading interests of fifth- and sixth-grade pupils. These subordinate problems were also investigated:

1. To secure reactions of pupils in specific reading interest situations.

2. To analyze data in terms of age, grade, sex, intelligence, and reading achievement.

3. To analyze the consistency of response in test situations.

4. To determine which test approach, or combination of approaches, are most effective.

5. To secure information helpful in planning a well-balanced reading program.

6. To suggest methods of determining what interest patterns in reading exist in each of the two grades studied, and to suggest methods of analyzing individual differences in interest patterns.

Materials and Procedure: The author constructed a battery of seven tests to measure the extent and variety of reading interests.

Test I. "Extent and Variety of Reading Interests": Three hundred and fifty topics, of presumed interest to
intermediate-grade boys and girls, were selected and alphabetized. The topics, 100 to a page, were arranged in two columns. Each topic was preceded by the symbols "L", "I", and "D". The directions asked the pupil to indicate whether he liked, was indifferent to, or disliked each topic by encircling the appropriate symbol.

**Test II.** "Interest in Reading vs. Interest in Other School Subjects". In this test reading was paired with each of these combinations of subjects: language and spelling, history and geography, music and art, health and physical education, arithmetic and penmanship, current events and citizenship, science and nature, construction or creative activities. The pupil was asked to show by a check which one of the two items in each set he preferred; e.g.

( ) reading
( ) language and spelling

**Test III.** "Interest in Types of Reading". A list of twelve types of reading was developed and divided into two parts. Part I listed book, story, poem, play, cartoon, article; Part II, description, narration, information, directions, drama, poetry. The items were presented in groups of three. Each item appeared six times, each time in comparison with a different combination of two other items. The meaning of each type of reading was explained in the directions. The pupils responded by placing a check mark in the parenthesis at the left of the item he liked best in each group, and another check mark in the parenthesis at the right of the item he liked least; e.g.
Test IV. "General and Reading Interest Inventory". This test was constructed to investigate the experiences which had enriched the reading of pupils or broadened their reading interests. The test was divided into eight sections. The first section elicited information about library cards, ownership of books and magazines, and individual needs in reading material. Section VII dealt with hobbies and social interests. The remaining sections presented lists of items and asked each pupil to number the items to indicate his order of preference. The categories were types of books and stories, parts of a newspaper or magazine, types of radio programs, types of movies, enriching experiences (museum, camp, travel, parties, etc.), activities, games, and sports. The pupil was also asked to underline items which had broadened his reading interests.

Test V. "Interest in Personal Identification with Characters in Reading". The pupil was asked to place himself in the position of the subject mentioned in the test item and then decide whether he would like, be indifferent to, or dislike that situation. Forty situations were presented; e.g.

L I D An entertainer telling good jokes.

Test VI. "Interest in Descriptive Reading Topics". This test listed 40 descriptive reading topics. The pupil indicated whether or not he would like to read about the topic by underlining the words "yes" or "no" which preceded
each item; e.g.

Yes No Popular Radio Personalities.

Test VII. "Interest in Reading vs. Interest in Activities". Each of the ten items in this test presented a reading activity together with one or two other activities. The pupil was asked to number the activities to show his order of preference.

The author established ten categories and used them in classifying the results of some of the tests. These categories were: animals, biography, familiar experiences, informational fiction, mystery and detective, myths and legends, peoples and customs, recreation and hobbies, science and invention, and travel and adventure.

The tests were administered over a two-week period to 210 fifth- and sixth-grade pupils. Data on achievement (Stanford Achievement Tests) and intelligence (California Short Form Test of Mental Maturity) was secured from the school records.

The population of this study consisted of all the fifth- and sixth-grade pupils in the five elementary schools of the system of a small urban community. The fifth grades contained 92 pupils, 46 boys and 46 girls, and the sixth grades contained 118 pupils, 71 boys and 47 girls.

Conclusions: 1. The results of Test I were analyzed to establish the order and per cent of preference. The ten most popular topics and the number and percentage of students liking each were:
Camps and camping, 191, 90.96
Winter sports, 187, 89.05
Marines, 136, 88.57
Pets, 136, 88.57
Swimming, 186, 88.57
Navy, 185, 87.90
Circus, 184, 87.31
Dogs, 184, 87.81
Skating, 184, 87.81
Needs of man, 133, 87.14

The least liked subjects were:
Basketry, 67, 31.90
Buttons, 49, 23.33
Ants, 43, 20.48

2. In Test III, Part I, this was the order of preference based upon first choices: book, preferred by 42.24 per cent of the pupils; story, 38.44 per cent; cartoon, 32.48 per cent; play, 21.45 per cent; articles, 17.97 per cent; and poem, 15.23 per cent.

3. The results of Test IV showed that, of the 210 children tested, 138 had library cards, 103 said that they lived the part of the important character in a story, 45 would like easier reading material, and 166 would like more available reading material. The children owned a total of 7192 books and read 1045 books per month.

Other Conclusions:

1. The five most popular situations of personal identification with a story character were these:
A winner in a winter sports contest
An entertainer telling good jokes
A cowboy on a Colorado ranch
A fisherman who usually has good luck
A scout training for life-saving.

2. These topics were most preferred in Test VI:
   Children's part in winning the war
   Training dogs for war service
   Enjoyable, practical jokes to play
   Methods of caring for pets
   Services of the F.B.I.

3. Music and art, arithmetic and penmanship, construction or creative activities were preferred to reading, while reading was preferred to science and nature, language and spelling, and history and geography.

4. The pupils did not seem to understand the term "broadening of reading interests" as it was used in Test IV.
Problem: To acquire precise information relative to the reading interests of the pupils in lower ungraded classrooms.

Materials and Procedure: The author selected 27 children’s stories, three from each of the following categories: funny stories, poems, animal stories, ghost stories, sport stories, stories of familiar experience, nature-science stories, adventure stories, and fairy stories. Ten ungraded classrooms were chosen for the study. These were rooms containing pupils retarded two or more years in their schoolwork because of absence, poor health, or low mental ability. Within such ungraded classrooms, pupils are divided into arbitrary grades according to ability. Pupils in the lower ungraded classrooms of the elementary schools are usually working at a level from pre-primary through grade 4B.

The author visited each of the ten classrooms once a week for nine weeks, reading three stories during each visit. After listening to the three stories, the children recorded their reactions on an answer sheet. The stories were listed by number and the children indicated whether they liked a story very much (V), liked it a little (L), or disliked it (D) by encircling the V L or D which followed each number. Five classes were selected to complete the form on the reverse side of the answer sheet. Here, the key numbers for each group of three
stories were paired (e.g., 1,2; 2,3; 1,3). The pupils were asked to put an X beside the number in each pair of the story they liked better.

The study was conducted in a large industrial city in southern New England. The nine schools participating were located in areas whose economic status ranged from medium high to low. Final tabulations were based on approximately 190 pupils. The reading ages, chronological ages, and IQ's of the pupils involved were taken from the school records.

Conclusions: 1. The children did not show a marked preference for the stories in any one category. They liked all types of stories.

   a. In only one instance did the difference between the first and last ranking categories exceed 15 per cent.

   b. When the 27 stories were ranked in the order of their appeal, the first seven stories represented six different categories.

   c. Twenty-four of the 27 stories were liked by more than 90 per cent of the children. All stories were liked by more than 80 per cent of the children.

2. When the percentage of pupils liking very much and liking a little were combined, this was the order of preference: adventure, liked by 98 per cent of the pupils; animal 97.1 per cent; science-nature, 96.9; fairy, 96.3; funny, 96.5; sports, 96.3; ghost, 95.2; familiar experience,
93.3; and poetry, 85.

3. Comparisons were made between types of stories based upon the results from the five classes where the pupils rated the stories one against another. This was the order of preference and the per cent of pupils preferring each type: fairy, 16.5; adventure, 14.4; funny, 12.9; animal, 11.3; sports, 10.6; nature-science, 10.5; ghost, 9.7; familiar experience, 9.5; poetry, 4.6.

4. In comparisons between types of stories boys preferred adventure, sport, nature-science, while girls preferred funny stories and familiar experience. Both preferred fairy stories first.

5. Stories that were liked most featured these elements: a happy ending, humor, animalness, fantasy, suspense, surprise, and a perspicuous style. These elements seemed to diminish the children's liking for a story: unhappy or confused endings, gruesome or eerie details, overdone moral, complicated style, involved plot, and lack of surprise or humor.
Problem: To survey the types of books voluntarily chosen in a public library by pupils in grades four, five, and six. This investigation sought to determine the types of books most frequently chosen, and the influence of these factors on the type of book selected: sex, chronological age, mental age, and reading level.

Procedure: The survey was conducted in an elementary school where each class visited the library weekly with a teacher during school hours for a period of free reading. During this period the teacher and librarian rendered any assistance the children needed. The children were free to read whatever they chose and they used this period to return books and select others. The library had a permanent collection of 2500 juvenile books and a constantly changing loan collection of 200 children's books.

For a period of six consecutive weeks, a record was kept of all the books taken home by 167 pupils in grades four, five and six. The total was 1019 books. The pupils were unaware that the survey was being conducted.

The children, 77 boys and 90 girls, attended a public elementary school in a residential community whose economic status was above average. Comparisons were made to determine the effect of chronological age, mental age, and reading level
on the choice of books. The influence of chronological age was studied by comparing the choices of the fifty oldest pupils with those of the fifty youngest. Comparisons were made between the children with the fifty highest mental ages and the children with the fifty lowest, as determined by the Kuhlmann-Anderson Tests. Pupils with the fifty highest reading grades were compared with pupils with the fifty lowest grades as indicated by scores on the Stanford Achievement Tests.

Conclusions: 1. Of the total number of books selected, 561 were mystery and adventure stories; 155, mythology, fable, and fairy tales; 139, animal stories; 55, biography and autobiography; 48, history and travel; 40, sports and hobbies; 19, science and mechanics; and 3, poetry, music, and fine arts.

2. The mean number of mystery and adventure stories selected by girls was 3.83 and by boys was 2.80. The critical ratio of 2.64 was considered by the author to be significant. Other categories which revealed a significant difference between the choices of girls and boys were mythology, fables, and fairy tales - girls 1.37, boys .42, critical ratio 4.62; science and mechanics - boys .28, girls 0, critical ratio 2.71; and sports and hobbies - boys .44, girls .07, critical ratio 2.95.

3. When choices were compared according to chronological age, the older children favored history and travel, biography and autobiography, science and mechanics,
sports and hobbies. The younger children favored mythology, fable, and fairy tales. There was little difference in the other categories.

4. Children in the higher mental age group preferred books of history and travel, biography and autobiography, science and mechanics, sports and hobbies. Children in the lower mental age group selected more books of mythology, fable, and fairy tales, and animal stories.

5. When comparisons were made by reading level the better readers selected more books of history and travel, biography and autobiography, science and mechanics, sports and hobbies, and poetry than did the children in the lower reading level.
Problem: To compare voluntary reading with other voluntary activities in grades four, five, and six; and to note the influence of sex on the choice of reading as a voluntary activity.

Materials and Procedure: A survey test was constructed to measure children's preferences for five types of voluntary activity. The test consisted of 20 assumed situations. A choice of five types of activities was offered with each situation. They were writing, reading, observation, indoor or non-active activities, and outdoor or active activities. The position of each activity was rotated to prevent over-emphasis by its placement. The pupils were asked to number their first and second choices in each list of activities.

This test was administered to 72 children in grade four, 68 in grade five, and 141 in grade six. The 281 children, 137 boys and 144 girls, attended nine public schools in areas suburban to a large eastern city. These were residential and industrial communities where the socio-economic status and cultural backgrounds varied greatly.

Conclusions: 1. Based upon the percentages of first choices, the activities were ranked in this order: outdoor activities, 49.35 per cent of the first choices; indoor activities, 16.33
per cent; observation, 16.12; reading, 12.34; writing, 5.78. The differences between the activities resulted in these critical ratios:

a. the difference between outdoor activities and indoor activities, 36.6;
b. between indoor activities and observation, .37;
c. between observation and reading, 5.40;
d. between reading and writing, 10.93.

2. The difference between the percentage of boys preferring outdoor activities and the percentage of girls preferring them was 4.81 in favor of the boys. The critical ratio was 3.43. There were no other significant differences between the preferences of boys and girls.

3. Of the 281 pupils given the test, 249 chose outdoor activities the greatest number of times, 20 chose reading, 13 chose observation, 12 chose indoor activities, and one chose writing.
Problem: To investigate the interests of middle-grade children in literature by means of a questionnaire and to discover whether such an instrument can measure and predict the amount and kinds of reading to be expected from each child.

Materials and Procedure: Three questionnaires were constructed for this study. The first was a list of book titles - fifty real and fifty fictitious - organized under these classifications: Young Americans; Tales of Everywhere (Children of Other Lands and Travel); Animals, Real and Imaginary; People of the Past (History, Biography); The World About You (Science, Nature); Pleasures and Pastimes (Sports, Hobbies); Invention and Discovery; Rhyme and Rhythm, Tales of Fun and Fancy (Humorous Stories, Fairy Tales, Myths, Legends, and Fables, Fantastic Stories); Mystery and Detective.

Titles were chosen which would reveal the nature of the book. Their order was randomized, but the real and fictitious types were kept separate. The child indicated which books he would (1) like to read, (2) neither like nor dislike, and (3) dislike to read by encircling one of the symbols, "L", "N", and "D", which preceded each title. The child was also asked to check the real titles which he had actually read.

On the second questionnaire, the teacher rated each
child on the amount and type of reading done. A five point rating scale was used ranging from "Does not read at all except under pressure" to "Reads a great deal and with wide interests". The third instrument was a general questionnaire in which the children indicated the amount and quality of their reading by answering a number of specific questions.

Do you like to read?
How much do you read? (more than, about the same as, less than most boys and girls your age)
How much reading do you do every day?
Do you have a library card? How often do you use it?
How much of your reading is comic book reading? (most of it, half of it, little of it, none)
How many magazines do you read?

The examiner used this questionnaire to rate each child on a number scale similar to the teacher's scale.

The investigation was conducted in all the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade classrooms of a single community. The tests were administered in the middle of the school year when the teachers had had ample opportunity to observe the reading habits of their pupils.

Conclusions: 1. Under the category People of the Past, boys liked a mean number of 6.39 titles. Girls liked a mean of 4.66 titles. The difference, 1.73, resulted in a critical ratio of 8.24.

2. Under the category, Invention and Discovery, boys liked a mean of 2.79 more titles than girls. The critical
ratio was 12.68.

3. In the category, Rhyme and Rhythm, girls liked a mean of 2.90 more titles than boys. The critical ratio was 11.60.

4. In the category, Tales of Everywhere, the mean number of titles liked by girls exceeded that of boys by 1.00. The critical ratio was 4.76.

5. In the category, Tales of Fun and Fancy, girls liked a mean of 2.02 more titles than boys. The critical ratio was 9.18.

6. In the other categories, there were no significant differences between the likes of girls and boys.

7. The instrument did not prove to be predictive of the amount and types of reading that could be expected from each child. Then teachers' ratings for each child were compared with the number of titles liked by the child, the group rated highest liked a mean of 48.95 titles. The group rated lowest liked a mean of 51 titles.

8. There was little change of interest from the fourth to the sixth grade. A small loss was noted among sixth graders for stories of nature and science, fairy stories, stories of other lands, and biography and poetry. A small increase was noted for mystery stories.

9. The tabulation of individual titles re-emphasized the strong influence of sex on choice in books. Boys showed little interest in stories about girls, but girls displayed considerable interest in stories of boy adventure. Boys' choices revealed a greater desire for
action and adventure. Girls apparently liked quieter and more imaginative titles. Animal and mystery stories were extremely popular with both boys and girls.
Problem: To determine which story titles in basal readers appeal to children in grades four, five, and six; to discover whether children select a title because of title appeal or story appeal; and to compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Two questionnaires were constructed for this study. The purpose of the first was to determine the ten most popular titles in each of 15 basal readers: namely, the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade readers of Ginn and Company, D. C. Heath and Company, The Macmillan Company, Scott, Foresman and Company, and Silver Burdett Company. A separate list of titles was prepared for each book. Each list contained all the titles from the book in random order. The five lists of titles for each grade level were stapled together. One list was presented each day and the pupils were asked to indicate with an X the five titles which most appealed to them.

From the results of the first survey, a second questionnaire was drawn up. It consisted of the ten most highly rated titles from each of the five basal readers. The 50 titles on each level were arranged in random order and presented on two pages, 25 per page. After each title, the children placed an
X in the proper column to show whether they liked, were indifferent to, or disliked the title. They were also asked to check "Yes", "No", or "Don't Know" under the heading, "Have you read the story?"

Packets containing the questionnaires were distributed to intermediate-grade classrooms in seven communities. The first questionnaire was presented on five consecutive days, and the second in two sittings. The population for the first survey was 1498 children, 771 boys and 727 girls. The second survey involved 744 children, of whom 377 were boys and 367, girls.

Conclusions: 1. The children preferred stories they had read to titles of stories they had not read. The median in the fourth grade was 62.6 for stories and 49.2 for titles; in the fifth grade, 79.5 for stories and 55.8 for titles; and, in the sixth grade, 79.1 for stories and 50.3 for titles.

2. Children's selections of both individual stories and story types were influenced by sex. Boys liked stories about adventure, the out-of-doors, exploration, and heroes; girls, stories dealing with other girls, the imaginative, the emotional, and homelife and familiar experiences. Both liked animal and mystery stories. Girls often selected stories that appealed to boys but boys showed no interest in stories about girls.

3. The choices of the upper and lower quartiles in intelligence were, in general, similar. Dull children showed greater preference for stories about familiar exper-
ience while bright children expressed a greater liking for factual materials.

4. Some titles were markedly unpopular.
   a. Boys continually rejected titles suggesting a girl character.
   b. The children avoided titles containing meaningless, strange, or foreign words.

*Scipione, Alice Marguerite; Dronen, Margaret Louise; Cucchiara, Stella Mary.*
Problem: To determine children's preferences in respect to these types of assignments: the use of one text versus several texts; group participation versus partner participation; pupil selection versus teacher selection of books and materials; and reading, writing, talking, drawing, and constructing. To study these preferences in relation to grade, sex, intelligence, and chronological age.

Materials and Procedure: The author constructed a four-part test which presented assignments and asked the pupils to check the method they preferred to use in carrying them out.

Section I contained five assignments offering a choice between the use, by all the children, of one text and of many different texts.

Section II contained five assignments offering a choice between working in small groups and working in pairs.

Section III contained five assignments offering a choice between having the teacher find and hand out materials and having the children themselves search in many different places for a variety of material.

Section IV contained ten assignments, each with three choices. These choices concerned reading, drawing, writing, construction, and talking activities. A rotation was used so that each item occurred five times in the test and was
paired with every other item at least once.

The test was administered by the author to 546 children in grades four, five, and six. Socio-economic backgrounds varied from underprivileged through average to privileged. The results of the Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Tests were used to establish quartiles.

Conclusions: 1. The use of multiple texts was favored by 85 per cent of the total population. Fifteen per cent favored a single text. The critical ratio of 33.33 was significant.

2. Eighty per cent of all the children preferred self-direction over teacher direction. The critical ratio was 23.08.

3. Group participation was chosen over partner participation by 54.5 per cent of the pupils. The critical ratio of 3.10 was significant. When this was broken down by grades, ages, intelligence, and sex, only three significant differences were found. Group assignments were preferred by fourth-grade boys, the second quartile of intelligence in grade six, and 13 year-old pupils.

4. Construction ranked first in preference and drawing ranked second in all grades.
Problem: To determine the preferences of fourth-grade children for (1) individual narrative stories, (2) three types of narrative stories, and (3) three types of informational stories. To compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Ten narrative stories (four classics, three children of other lands, and three adventure stories) were cut directly from fourth grade basic readers and enclosed in individual folders. Ten informational stories (four biographical, three science, and three social studies stories) were similarly prepared. These materials were taken from:

Distant Doorways, Silver Burdett and Company
Exploring New Fields, Houghton, Mifflin Company
Let's Look Around, The Macmillan Company
Luck and Pluck, D. C. Heath and Company
Then and Now, Lyons and Carnahan.

Ten duplicate sets of each type of material were made and distributed to 20 fourth-grade teachers. Ten teachers and 200 pupils worked with the narrative stories, and an equal number of teachers and pupils worked with the informational material. Each child heard the story read and expressed a preference on a ballot by liking it with or without enthusiasm.
or by disliking it.

The population was composed of children in areas suburban to a large eastern city. This area included both industrial and professional communities and home conditions varied widely. In establishing the upper and lower quartiles, the teacher's opinion and the pupil's class standing were used when no test results were available.

Conclusions: 1. These were the combined percentages of children liking story types with and without enthusiasm: classics, 93.6; adventure, 92; biography, 90.7; children of other lands, 88.9; social studies, 88.9; science, 77.3.

2. When comparisons were made for sex and intelligence, the combined percentages of children liking with and without enthusiasm were as follows:
   
a. Boys - adventure, 96.3; classics, 93; children of other lands, 90; social studies, 87.8; biography, 87; science, 76.3.

   b. Girls - biography, 94.4; classics, 94.2; social studies, 90; adventure, 87.7; children of other lands, 87.7; science, 79.4.

   c. Upper quartile - classics, 93; biography, 90; social studies, 89.5; adventure, 87.4; children of other lands, 84.7; science, 80.

   d. Lower quartile - classics, 90.5; biography, 89.3; children of other lands, 85.3; social studies, 84; adventure, 81.4; science, 72.
3. The majority of the children liked the types of material presented. Individually the narrative stories were the more popular.
Problem: To determine whether children in grades four, five, and six who do much free reading, have (1) a higher reading grade, (2) a larger silent reading vocabulary, (3) greater speed in silent reading, and (4) better comprehension in silent reading, than children who do little free reading.

Materials and Procedure: A questionnaire was constructed to check the amount of free reading done by pupils. A preliminary form was administered to over 700 middle grade pupils. The returns were checked, criticisms considered, and a new questionnaire was prepared. It had two parts, the questionnaire to be filled in by the pupil and an explicit set of directions for the teacher to read to the pupils. The pupil was asked to list the number and names of all the books he had read during a two and a half month period. The pupil also checked whether the book was completely read, half read, or read a little. The same information was requested for comic books read during the preceding two weeks. Provision was made for magazines, newspapers, and other reading.

Eighteen teachers administered the questionnaires to their classes. On a separate check list each teacher indicated her estimate of the amount of free reading done by each child - much, average, or little. The questionnaires were divided into three groups on the basis of the amount of reading done by
each pupil. The highest 25 per cent were classified as MUCH readers and the lowest 25 per cent as LITTLE readers. The middle 50 per cent were eliminated from the study. Questionnaires were compared with the teacher's estimates and those not in substantial agreement were discarded.

Because of the great differences in the mean mental ages of the MUCH group and the LITTLE group, as indicated by the Otis Quick Scoring Test of Mental Abilities, comparisons in reading ability could not be made. As a result, 80 pupils from these two groups were equated on the basis of chronological age, mental age, and sex. Comparisons were made of general reading ability and of each reading skill separately tested by the Iowa Silent Reading Tests.

The questionnaire was administered to all the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade pupils in two eastern Massachusetts towns. Complete data was secured on 549 children. The equated group, 21 pairs of boys and 19 pairs of girls, was drawn from 135 MUCH readers and 120 LITTLE readers.

Conclusions: 1. Between the MUCH and LITTLE readers who were equated on sex, chronological age, and mental age, there was a difference of 1.12 grades in mean reading grades. The critical ratio was 2.73.

2. The MUCH readers were superior to the LITTLE readers in speed of reading. The difference was 2.96 and the critical ratio was 3.89.

3. The MUCH readers were superior in paragraph comprehension. When speed was an important factor the differ-
ence was 1.27 grades (critical ratio 2.27). When speed was not a factor the difference was 1.43 grades (critical ratio 2.51).

4. In word meaning, sentence meaning, and directed reading the MUCH readers were also superior but the differences were not statistically significant.
Problem: To discover the extent and nature of children's reading interests in newspapers; and to evaluate children's newspaper reading in respect to (1) types of newspapers, (2) extent of daily and occasional reading, (3) sections of the newspaper, (4) individual columnists, (5) comic strips, and (6) story appeal.

Materials and Procedure: A check-list type questionnaire, constructed by the author, was employed in this study. The questionnaire presented the names of newspapers, noted columnists, and sections of the newspaper. The pupils were asked to indicate (1) the papers read and the amount of reading (everyday, twice a week, Sunday, once a week, once in a while); (2) columnists read and their first and second favorites; and (3) sections read and their first and second preferences. Space was provided for writing in the names of other newspapers and columnists which they read, and their favorite comic strip. The final item on the questionnaire sought to determine picture appeal.

The questionnaire was administered to 2863 pupils, 1433 boys and 1430 girls. This population included all the pupils in grades four through twelve in the entire school system of an urban community of the residential type near a large eastern city.
Conclusions: 1. Of the 2863 pupils who filled out the questionnaire, only three did not read newspapers.

2. The average number of newspapers read daily was 1.91. The average number read daily and occasionally was 4.22.

3. In general, interest in newspaper reading increased as the pupils matured. The average number of papers read daily increased through the grades as follows: fourth grade, 1.87; fifth, 1.72; sixth, 1.71; seventh, 1.84; eighth, 1.95; ninth, 1.97; tenth, 2.11; eleventh, 1.99; twelfth, 2.12.

4. Newspapers of the average type, neither too conservative nor too sensational, were the most widely read. Boys' interests differed from those of girls, the interests of the former being wider and favoring the more sensational papers while the latter favored the average or conservative type.

5. Children read the comic, radio news, and sports sections in great numbers. The order of popularity, judged by first choices, was comics, sports, news, and fiction.

6. Interest in individual writers increased markedly from grade to grade.

7. The choice of comic strips showed a taste for realism and adventure. Girls liked strips named by boys but boys avoided any comic strip with a girl heroine.

8. Picture appeal was an important factor with 2143 of the pupils. All other factors being equal, these pupils
said that, given a choice of two stories, they would read the story that was accompanied by a picture first.

Problem: To determine the preferences of second-grade children for (1) individual narrative stories, (2) three types of narrative stories, and (3) three types of informational stories. To compare the preferences of boys and girls, and upper and lower quartiles in intelligence.

Materials and Procedure: Twenty-two narrative stories were cut directly from second grade readers and enclosed in separate folders. The stories were divided into two groups, each containing four animated animal stories, four fairy stories involving children, and three folk tales and stories of the "wee folk." Six duplicate sets of each group were made. Twelve sets of informational material were made by cutting selections from second grade readers. No sets were duplicated and few duplicate individual selections were used. Each set contained three nature and science stories, three helpers and workers stories, and three stories of child experience.

Two separate sets of teachers and pupils cooperated in this survey. The 12 sets of narrative booklets were distributed to 12 second grade teachers with instructions to read the stories to the children and allow them to indicate their reactions on a ballot by liking each with or without enthusiasm or by disliking it. The twelve teachers who were issued the
informational material, used this material with their own
and other second grades. In latter cases, free access to
the material was allowed and the selections were read independ-
dently, either individually or by one child to a group.

The population of the study included 120 children in
the narrative survey and 279 in the informational one. These
children attended school in areas suburban to a large eastern
city. The region included both industrial and professional
communities and home conditions varied widely. When no test
results were available, the teacher's judgment and the pupil's
class standing were used to determine the upper and lower
quartiles.

Conclusions: 1. These were the combined percentages of
children liking story types with and without enthusiasm:
fairy stories involving children, 96.8; folk lore, 95.2;
child experience, 95.2; workers and helpers, 93.2; science,
92.3; animated animals, 88.1.

2. When comparisons were made for sex and
intelligence, the combined percentages of children liking
with and without enthusiasm were as follows:
a. Boys - child experience, 95.6; fairy stories in-
volving children, 94.8; folk lore, 93; science, 92.8; workers
and helpers, 91.6; animated animals, 90.2.
b. Girls - fairy stories involving children, 98.5;
folk lore, 97.9; child experience, 95.2; workers and helpers,
94.4; animated animals, 92.5; science, 91.
c. Upper quartile - fairy stories involving children,
98; folklore, 97.5; child experience, 96.8; workers and helpers, 94.4; science, 94.3; animated animals, 89.2.

d. Lower quartile - fairy stories involving children, 96; workers and helpers, 93.2; child experience, 93.1; science, 92.8; folklore, 91.3; animated animals, 89.3.

3. The fairy stories were preferred to the informational material.
These are sample questions from the four tests which were constructed to measure children's preferences in types of assignments.

Lyons (19)

Group 13

Read to get help in making scenery for a play about the history of the American flag.

Read so you can make a notebook about the history of the American flag.

Read to get ready for your visit to a museum to see an exhibition on the history of the American flag.

Group 14

Read so you can give a short talk to the class on the history of the American flag.

Read to get help so you can give, for a visiting class, a short play about the history of the American flag.

Read to learn about the history of the American flag.

Stewart (23)

1. Your class is to study about cotton. Would you like best to:

   ( ) Have all the children read the same book to find out about raising cotton, the cotton gin, cotton prints.

   ( ) Have each child read many different books to find out about raising cotton, the cotton gin, cotton prints.
1. The class is preparing to give talks on airplanes. Would you like best to:

( ) Have small groups look up material about spotting airplanes in war, rocket planes.

( ) Choose a partner and look up material about spotting airplanes, airplanes in war, rocket planes.

2. You are going to invite another grade in to hear you tell about what you have learned about Indians. Which way would you choose to work?

( ) Find books yourself about Indian hunters, life with the Indians, Indian games.

( ) Use some books the teacher looked up for you about Indian hunters, life with the Indians, Indian games.

1. If you were studying about dogs, would you like to:

( ) Read about My Eskimo Dog.

( ) Draw a poster about Be Kind to Dogs.

( ) Write a story about Bingo, My Pet Dog.

3. The class is going to give a program about hobbies. Which would you like to do best?

( ) Write a story about My Hobby.

( ) Make a model of soap or clay of your favorite hobby.

( ) Give a talk about your hobby.

3. Your class wants to learn about lumbering in New England. Which would you like to do?
( ) Have all the children read the same story to find out about the ways of lumbering and the kinds of lumber found in New England.

( ) Have everyone read out of many different books to find out about the ways of lumbering and the kinds of lumber found in New England.

9. We are interested in learning about cattle raising in our West. Which would you rather do?

( ) Study all by yourself to learn about the work of a cowboy and life on a ranch.

( ) Work with your chum and read about the work of a cowboy and life on a ranch.

( ) Work with a small group of children to learn about the work of cowboy and life on a ranch.

11. We are planning an assembly program on Memorial Day for the school. How would you choose to work?

( ) Have the teacher find books and give them to you to read about the first Memorial Day and ways of observing Memorial Day.

( ) Look in different places yourself to find what you can about the first Memorial Day and ways of observing Memorial Day.

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Raiston (25)

1. On a cold winter night would you prefer
   ___ to write letters to a friend
   ___ to go ice skating
   ___ to listen to the radio
   ___ to read a library book
   ___ to play anagrams
**FIGURE I**

| Name ______________________________ |
| School ____________________________ |
| Town ______________________________ |
| Mark with an "X"  Girl__  Boy______ |
| Teacher's Name _____________________ |

**COLUMN I**

**DIRECTIONS:** Choose your favorite studies from those named.

Put 1 before your first choice.

Put 2 before your second choice.

Put 3 before your third choice.

(Mark these 3 choices in Col. I)

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<tr>
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<th>Col. II</th>
<th>Col. III</th>
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