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Preferences of sixth grade children for certain social studies activities

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Thesis

PREFERENCES OF SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN FOR
CERTAIN SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Submitted by

Francis X. Fandel

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First Reader: W. Linwood Chase, Professor of Education

Second Reader: Gilbert M. Wilson, Associate Professor of
Education

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE RELATED LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE RELATED LITERATURE

The Problem

A concern for children's preferences and interest in social studies has been brought out by children's indifference for the social studies in the classroom. By determining a child's interest the teacher can plan a more fruitful program.

A pupil may only be truly helped after his interest has been aroused. To arouse a pupil's interest one must have some knowledge of children's preferences.

The objectives of this study were:

1. Determination of subject preference.
2. Determination of dislikes for subjects.
3. Determination of preference of social studies activities.
4. Determination of differences in selection of activities between boys and girls.

Related Literature

In 1960 Hill¹ wrote about social studies as associated with children's experiences. She feels that school activities can spread until they involve the entire community, that children love to become active in the planning. Pupils are creative and it would be a pity not to have the advantage of

¹Wilhelmina Hill. "Teaching Social Studies," School Life, 42:24-26; February 1960.

their constructive ideas in a project or unit of work.

Hill goes on to say that most children need assistance in learning to participate: they need to learn how to work with others, and how to assume responsibility, how to lead and how to follow at the appropriate times.

Ragan¹ tells us that the primary object of the social studies program in the modern elementary school is the improvement of group living. He feels that the programs are designed to develop intelligent, responsible, self-directing citizens.

The formulation of objectives for the social studies program is the responsibility of the staff of each elementary school.² Children must participate in activities to receive experience but there must be no extremes. Activities are not ends in themselves; they are means to learning, just as subject matter is a means to learning.³

The programs of activities are usually stated in terms of formulated desirable objectives. Social studies objectives are usually given in terms of desirable behavior traits, social attitudes, and useful information. Ragan goes on to state that duplication of experiences must be avoided in order to provide proper balance of the entire program. He suggests

¹William B. Ragan. Modern Elementary Curriculum. New York: The Dryden Press, Incorporated, 1953, p. 292.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 300.

the development of a "scope-and-sequence chart" that would enable teachers to relate sequential units to the maturity levels of the children at various stages.

Jackson¹ worked with a group of seventh grade children from one city in 1942 to determine their interest in social studies activities. The boys and girls had not experienced many of the activities listed. The 1007 children were given a questionnaire containing one hundred activities that had been used in other social studies classrooms. The questionnaire covered these areas of activities: oral, written, drawing, meditative, general, visual, and manual.

The results revealed that children had a high interest in many activities that could be used in social studies classrooms. Boys felt that they would like to try new activities. The most popular activity was listening, while oral was the least popular. Children desired a longer period of time for preparation of oral activities. Less than half the class had had time to dramatize scenes or to make an outline to help classes study or recite.

Wallenthin² in her 1945 study on preference in written

¹Margaret M. Jackson. "Children's Interest in Activities in Their Social Studies Classes, Grade VII." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1942, p. 37.

²Doris Wallenthin. "Preferences of Fifth and Sixth Grade Pupils in Written Activities of the Social Studies." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1945.

activities at the fifth and sixth grade levels found that boys' and girls' preferences were for working with others and for writing a report. To write a question and to write a summary were the least liked. Preferences between the boys and girls of the two grades showed little likeness. Although there was no proof, writing a committee report was the most popular activity of the children under study.

Subject preference was again investigated in 1947¹ by a group of fifteen Boston University graduate students. They carried on their investigation in sixty New England cities and towns on the fifth grade level. The total fifth grade population of the study was 13,483 pupils. A check list was used by the children to indicate their preferences for school subjects. The results of the survey indicate reading and arithmetic to be the best liked subjects. Art, spelling, and music were revealed to be the next best liked in that order. Social studies and science had a low preference with the children. Language received the lowest rank of all the subjects in this particular study.

Chase² reports that this same check list was given to a group in a southwestern city to determine if the choices had

¹Helen C. Blanchard. "Subject Preferences of Fifth Grade Children." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1948.

²W. Linwood Chase. "Subject Preferences of Fifth-Grade Children," Elementary School Journal, 50:204-211; December 1949.

been peculiar to New England. Reading and arithmetic stayed in the first two places with art remaining in the third place. These were the same as the New England study's results. Social studies, spelling, and music were in the next three places in that order. Combined results placed music a little higher and social studies a little lower.

Analysis showed that boys prefer content subjects more than girls do and that girls prefer skills and aesthetic subjects more than boys do. Another aspect of the study determined that when a subject was disliked it was found "hard." Social studies fell into the above classification of "hard." Boys did not dislike social studies as much as girls and therefore did not find social studies as difficult to do.

The 1947¹ study was repeated by a group of sixteen graduate students in 1957.² The problem was again to investigate the subject preferences of fifth-grade children in 83 New England cities and towns, and to compare this survey with the 1947-1948 survey. When the group was ready to tabulate, it had inventories from 78 communities with a reported fifth grade population of 19,169.

Chase and Wilson,³ in comparing the 1947 and 1957 studies,

¹Blanchard, loc. cit.

²Richard Cobleigh et al. "Subject Preferences of Fifth-Grade Children." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1957.

³W. Linwood Chase and Gilbert M. Wilson. "Preference Studies in Elementary School Social Studies," Journal of Education, 140:1-28; April 1958.

pointed out that the boys' rank order of subject preference was unchanged from 1947 except that spelling and science changed places, with spelling moving down and science moving up. Investigating the girls they found scarcely any growth in preference for social studies during the ten year period.

Chase and Wilson¹ went on to say that activities, which are good in themselves, appeal to both boys and girls, although there are some sex differences which still cannot be accounted for. They also found that the weight of evidence points to the conclusion that reading achievement does not significantly affect fifth-grade pupils' preferences for social studies.²

Jersild and Tasch³ in 1946 directed a study on children's interest. The findings indicated that many common tendencies were to be found among the interests of various groups of boys and girls, as well as many variations. Some of the more important results of the study showed: children's interests are learned, "educational morale" declines as children grow older, social studies topics are not favorably referred to by most children.

Jersild⁴ further stated that the percentage of children

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Arthur T. Jersild and Ruth J. Tasch. Children's Interest and What They Suggest for Education. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1949, pp. 71-83.

⁴Ibid., p. 28.

asking to know and learn more about topics that fall into the area of social studies was the largest, 28.6 per cent, in the range between grades four and six, in which the children complained about the material they were being taught in social studies.

The various findings of studies may be interpreted in many different ways.¹ Children are listed as liking action and adventure. Most studies are indefinite in their findings and do not present enough proof to make their conclusions useful. Children's interest studies are restricted because they are both scarce and have only a qualified usefulness.²

Hanna³ believes that the individual differences in each classroom must be recognized before the teacher may plan activities and select content material to meet the needs of the different members of the various groups. The more facts the teacher has about the group, the better she knows each child, the better she will be able to correctly analyze differences and adjust learning situations to individual pupils.

Stewart⁴ approached her study of children's preferences

¹Mary G. Kelty. "The Selection and Adoption of Subject Matter in the Social Sciences." Twelfth Yearbook The Social Studies in the Elementary School. Washington, D.C.: National Council for Social Studies, 1941, p. 96.

²Ibid.

³Lavone Hanna. "Extent of Individual Differences." Fifteenth Yearbook Adapting Instruction in the Social Studies to Individual Differences. Washington, D.C.: National Council for Social Studies, 1944, p. 16.

⁴Dorothy H. Stewart. "Children's Preferences in Types of

in terms of types of assignments. She drew these conclusions: children liked to use many textbooks rather than just one text, group and partner work were favored over working alone, pupils preferred self-directing in finding materials, and teachers should plan work along lines which inspire interest. It was also determined that provision should be made for individual differences in order to develop critical evaluation, leaders and followers, and to encourage pride in each individual's contribution.

Dean¹ in his study attempted to determine relationships between children's subject preferences and their achievement in these school subjects. He concluded that the relationships brought out by this study were insufficiently decisive to predict applications of these relationships.

In Denver, Colorado, Holmes² carried out a subject preference study at the Wyman School, in 1932. The survey covered 186 children over a period of years. The most negative votes were received by social studies. Social studies was one of the least liked subjects. Grades three to six ranked social studies from third place down to sixth place. It was noted that where work was more interesting the placement was higher.

Assignments," Elementary School Journal, 47:93-97; October 1946.

¹Stuart E. Dean. "A Study to Determine the Relationships between Preferences and Achievement." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1949, p. 205.

²Ethel E. Holmes. "School Subject Preferred by Children," National Elementary Principal, 16:337-342; July 1937.

Some of the conclusions drawn by Holmes were: books were few and old, work was difficult, monotonous, long, too much writing, of no value, and too many questions.

Pupils learn by doing, and a variety of activities and experiences should be provided if learning is to be effective.¹ Children are much more interested in things they do than in things they hear or read about. The social studies teacher must develop the technique of applying the appropriate pupil activity to the appropriate phase of the content material at the appropriate time.

Moffatt² states that activities for social studies instruction are many. They may be classified as individual, small group, or committee, and those that include the entire class. He goes on to say that there are teacher activities that include situations in which the teacher is the center or focal point for directing learning and the students are actively listening, observing, and learning.

The basic purpose of this pattern (the experience curriculum) as stated by Moffatt³ is to insure learning by engaging only in those activities that are related to the real interest or needs of the pupil. Granted this fundamental purpose, another aspect of the activity curriculum becomes apparent:

¹Maurice P. Moffatt. Social Studies Instruction. New York: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1954, p. 96.

²Ibid., p. 130.

³Ibid., p. 19.

the curriculum can be planned only by a teacher with a particular class. Any other planning will be restrictive of pupil needs and must therefore be eliminated. The classroom teachers must be free to assist pupils with those activities which they think are desirable. Any curriculum guide, course of study, or general framework is considered undesirable. The curriculum is not to be considered planless since pupils and teacher spend many hours in careful planning.

Kelty¹ states that some of the benefits that have been gained from the activity movement are greater active participation on the part of all the children and an increasing consciousness of the importance of process in learning and growth.

¹Mary G. Kelty. "Curriculum Development in Social Studies for the Middle Grades: Differing Factors During the Past Twenty-Five Years Which Have Led to the Present Confusion." Social Studies for Older Children. Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1953, p. 9.

CHAPTER II

PLAN OF STUDY

CHAPTER II

PLAN OF STUDY

A check list was used to obtain the necessary information.

An investigation into unpublished theses in the Boston University School of Education library brought several theses to light with information vital to this study. One study, completed in 1951 by Foley,¹ contained an excellent check list. This check list covered most areas desired. Only one major change was made in the check list, this a selection of two disliked subjects.

The check list as presented to the sixth grade children contained thirty-eight activities. The children were asked to show their preference for an activity by circling a letter after each activity. The letters and statements follow:

- A I have not done this
- B I like it very much
- C I neither like nor dislike it
- D I dislike it very much

A teacher's instruction sheet accompanied each grouping of the check list. The sheet explained the purpose of the

¹Harriet M. Foley. "Preferences of Sixth Grade Children for Certain Social Studies Activities." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1951, p. 54.

check list and gave the teacher's directions for the children.

The children were asked to indicate first, second, and third choice on subject preference.

Secondly, the class was then asked to place an X (X) beside the two subjects disliked most.

Thirdly, the children were asked to indicate their feelings about each of the thirty-eight activities on the check list.

Fourthly, each child was told to recheck the activities and select the best liked. Number your first three choices.

This check list was given to all children in the sixth grade in a town outside of Boston. It was given to a total of two hundred and fifty boys and girls (139 girls and 111 boys).

To the Sixth Grade Teachers:

In 1951 a social studies preference study was made of the sixth grade pupils in West Hartford by Harriet Foley.

The enclosed check list is an attempt to discover sixth grade preference for social studies.

The following are suggestions for each of the three sections. Some children may need further explanation of the directions.

1. The subject preference is to be indicated by numbering 1, 2, or 3 for first, second, and third place. Also put X (X) before the two subjects disliked the most.
2. Activities in teaching the social studies are to be indicated by circling one of the following:
 - A I have not done this
 - B I like it very much
 - C I neither like nor dislike it
 - D I dislike it very much

Be sure that the pupils go ahead to the second page.

3. After the entire second section has been marked as described in 2 above, the pupils are to mark with 1 the best liked activity, with 2 the best liked, and 3 the third choice. All of the items should be considered, not just those on the first page. The number 1, 2, 3 for these preferences are to be placed in the column in front of the numbers for the items.

Please be sure each pupil completes all three sections. There is no time limit on the whole nor on any part of the check list. It will take approximately fifteen minutes.

Your interest and co-operation will be very much appreciated.

These forms will be collected soon through the person from whom you received them.

Thank you for assisting in this project.

Frank Fandel
Newhall School
Waltham, Mass.

Name _____

Girls and Boys: On this paper tell what you like best about your social studies and those things which you enjoy doing better than others.

DO THIS FIRST

Choose your favorite studies from those named in the list at the right.

Put 1 before your first choice
 Put 2 before your second choice
 Put 3 before your third choice
 Put X before the two subjects
 you dislike the most

_____ History
 _____ Arithmetic
 _____ Reading
 _____ Language
 _____ Penmanship
 _____ Spelling
 _____ Geography
 _____ Art
 _____ Music
 _____ Science
 _____ Health Education

DO THIS SECOND

In this section below, put a circle around the letter which tells how you feel about each way of working in social studies.

A I have not done this
 B I like it very much
 C I neither like nor dislike it
 D I dislike it very much

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Use the same social studies book that each child in the class has- | A | B | C | D |
| 2. | Use many different books in social studies- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 3. | Work by myself on an assignment - | A | B | C | D |
| 4. | Work in committees on a project or assignment - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 5. | Prepare reports for the class - - | A | B | C | D |
| 6. | Give reports to the class - - - - | A | B | C | D |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Listen to reports- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 8. | Have quiz contests on the most interesting facts- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 9. | Have short tests on the day's discussion - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 10. | Have a test on the unit when it is finished- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 11. | Learn new words- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 12. | Study Maps of the country being talked about - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 13. | Draw a map and show products, important cities, etc. - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 14. | Fill in an outline map - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 15. | Make a relief map, using materials such as salt, flour, etc. - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 16. | Read social studies and answer questions made by the teacher- - | A | B | C | D |
| 17. | Read social studies and answer questions made by the pupils - - | A | B | C | D |
| 18. | Use a question guide made by the class for discussion - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 19. | Use an outline made by the class for study- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 20. | Make individual outline for study- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 21. | Write out answers to questions placed on the blackboard - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 22. | Write summaries of important ideas- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 23. | Make up your own stories about the unit - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 24. | Make up plays about interesting happenings - - - - - | A | B | C | D |

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25. | Dramatize important events studied in a unit- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 26. | Find a play and act it out - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 27. | Collect pictures, poems, and stories to go with the unit- - - | A | B | C | D |
| 28. | Make exhibits to go with the study- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 29. | Study exhibits which go with the unit - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 30. | Make individual booklets on the unit - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 31. | Make a class booklet about the unit - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 32. | Draw pictures to illustrate the unit - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 33. | Work with the group on a mural or picture - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 34. | Have discussions in charge of pupils - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 35. | See films, filmstrips, and slides about the unit- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 36. | Discuss films, filmstrips, and slides about unit- - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 37. | Take a trip to the museum in connection with unit - - - - - | A | B | C | D |
| 38. | Construct models of interesting things studied - - - - - | A | B | C | D |

DO THIS THIRD

Go back over these 38 items. Choose that which you like best to do in studying social studies, and in the column in front of the numbers-

- Put 1 before your first choice
- Put 2 before your second choice
- Put 3 before your third choice

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

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ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table I shows clearly that sixth grade children have a very wide range of interest. The children indicated definite dislikes for certain activities. Neither liked nor disliked activities showed an increase of almost three and one-half times over definite dislikes. The children had not experienced many of the activities listed on the check list.

The girls have a higher percentage of liked activities than the boys. The stress for the girls is not too dissimilar from that of the boys.

The boys preferred the activities of: seeing films and filmstrips, listening to reports, map study, a museum field trip, and drawing maps and pictures.

The girls preferred the activities of: seeing films and filmstrips, acting out a play, listening to reports, learning new words, committee work, and map study.

The boys and girls indicated a definite dislike for testing in its various forms.

The girls disliked reporting to the class, making of outlines, and discussion in charge of pupils.

The only significant difference between the boys' and girls' dislikes is the rank awarded each activity.

TABLE I
 PREFERENCES OF 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN FOR
 THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Item	A*	B	C	D	E
1.	5	129	103	13	
2.	71	119	52	8	
3.	27	110	87	26	
4.	18	163	47	22	
5.	33	132	66	19	
6.	19	137	65	29	
7.	4	184	58	4	
8.	100	84	51	15	
9.	39	58	101	52	
10.	1	83	113	53	
11.	4	165	70	10	1
12.	2	177	54	17	
13.	18	152	62	18	
14.	10	151	69	20	
15.	125	75	37	13	
16.	2	92	122	34	
17.	36	115	76	23	
18.	148	45	47	10	
19.	117	65	63	5	
20.	49	92	80	29	
21.	28	75	114	33	
22.	50	68	96	36	
23.	129	70	39	12	
24.	123	100	14	13	
25.	164	47	27	12	
26.	37	164	36	13	
27.	64	110	62	14	
28.	72	141	34	3	
29.	55	121	69	5	
30.	127	64	46	13	
31.	152	51	37	10	
32.	54	151	41	4	
33.	87	113	40	10	
34.	31	125	69	25	
35.	21	204	22	3	
36.	51	130	63	6	
37.	86	150	12	2	
38.	104	111	28	7	
Totals	2,263	4,323	2,272	641	1

- A* I have not done this
 B I like it very much
 C I neither like nor dislike it
 D I dislike it very much
 E Failure to mark

TABLE II

PREFERENCES OF 111 SIXTH GRADE BOYS FOR
THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Item	A*	B	C	D	E
1.	3	51	48	9	
2.	32	46	29	4	
3.	14	51	33	13	
4.	8	68	25	10	
5.	18	54	29	10	
6.	12	56	33	10	
7.	2	88	18	3	
8.	43	39	21	8	
9.	15	26	42	28	
10.	1	35	45	30	
11.	1	69	34	7	
12.	2	86	19	4	
13.	4	68	29	10	
14.	4	63	32	12	
15.	56	31	18	6	
16.	2	39	48	22	
17.	20	42	33	16	
18.	64	19	22	6	
19.	49	30	31	1	
20.	23	34	41	13	
21.	15	33	45	18	
22.	21	29	47	14	
23.	54	33	16	8	
24.	47	46	8	10	
25.	65	24	13	9	
26.	18	64	20	9	
27.	27	45	29	10	
28.	29	66	14	2	
29.	22	58	29	2	
30.	55	22	28	6	
31.	67	19	19	6	
32.	23	68	18	2	
33.	32	52	19	8	
34.	18	52	30	11	
35.	8	95	7	1	
36.	24	58	27	2	
37.	30	78	2	1	
38.	40	60	9	2	
Totals	968	1,897	1,010	343	0

- A* I have not done this
 B I like it very much
 C I neither like nor dislike it
 D I dislike it very much
 E Failure to mark

TABLE III
 PREFERENCES OF 139 SIXTH GRADE GIRLS FOR
 THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Item	A*	B	C	D	E
1.	2	78	55	4	
2.	39	73	23	4	
3.	13	59	54	13	
4.	10	95	22	12	
5.	15	78	37	9	
6.	7	81	32	19	
7.	2	96	40	1	
8.	57	45	30	7	
9.	24	32	59	24	
10.	0	48	68	23	
11.	3	96	36	3	1
12.	0	91	35	13	
13.	14	84	33	8	
14.	6	88	37	8	
15.	69	44	19	7	
16.	0	53	74	12	
17.	16	73	43	7	
18.	84	26	25	4	
19.	68	35	32	4	
20.	26	58	39	16	
21.	13	42	69	15	
22.	29	39	49	22	
23.	75	37	23	4	
24.	76	54	6	3	
25.	99	23	14	3	
26.	19	100	16	4	
27.	37	65	33	4	
28.	43	75	20	1	
29.	33	63	40	3	
30.	72	42	18	7	
31.	85	32	18	4	
32.	31	83	23	2	
33.	55	61	21	2	
34.	13	73	39	14	
35.	13	109	15	2	
36.	27	72	36	4	
37.	56	72	10	1	
38.	64	51	19	5	
Totals	1,295	2,426	1,262	298	1

A* I have not done this
 B I like it very much
 C I neither like nor dislike it
 D I dislike it very much
 E Failure to mark

TABLE IV

PER CENT IN PREFERENCE CATEGORIES OF 111 BOYS AND
139 GIRLS FOR THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

	A	B	C	D	E
Boys	22.95	44.97	23.94	8.13	
Girls	24.52	45.93	23.89	5.64	0.02
Total	23.74	45.45	23.62	6.89	0.02

In no category is there more than a 2 1/2 per cent difference between boys and girls. However, it is indicated through an item analysis that boys and girls indicate a marked difference in preferences.

TABLE V

THE TEN SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES MOST OFTEN CHOSEN
AS LIKED BY 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN

250 Boys and Girls			111 Boys			139 Girls		
Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen
1	35	204	1	35	95	1	35	109
2	7	184	2	7	88	2	26	100
3	12	177	3	12	86	3.5	7	96
4	11	165	4	37	78	3.5	11	96
5	26	164	5	11	69	5	4	95
6	4	163	7	4	68	6	12	91
7	13	152	7	13	68	7	14	88
8.5	14	151	7	32	68	8	13	84
8.5	32	151	9	28	66	9	32	83
10	37	150	10	26	64	10	6	81

Table V shows activities that were most often chosen as liked by 250 sixth grade boys and girls.

35. See films, filmstrips, and slides about the unit.
7. Listen to reports.
12. Study maps of the country being talked about.
11. Learn new words.
26. Find a play and act it out.
4. Work in committees on a project or assignment.
13. Draw a map and show products, important cities, etc.
14. Fill in an outline map.
32. Draw pictures to illustrate the unit.
37. Take a trip to the museum in connection with unit.

Looking at Table V it is quite apparent that the children by almost a unanimous choice have selected activity number 35, "see films, filmstrips, and slides about the unit," as the first choice. Activity thirty-five was also selected first by a majority of the boys and girls of the 1951¹ and 1952² studies.

Audio-visual aids have helped children to associate themselves with activities and events that have taken place in the past. The aids help to create interest and bring about understanding of social studies concepts. Almost every child today has been brought up with some source of active communication in the home. Some examples of this would be: television, radio, home movies, and home slides or filmstrips. Therefore, this type of activity is a natural one in which children would show interest.

The second choice was listening to reports. As Table V shows, 184 of the 250 children selected activity number seven. Therefore, a majority of the children preferred this activity. In the two previous studies activity number seven was fourth in 1951 and seventh in 1952.

Listening to reports being given by children afford an

¹Harriet M. Foley. "Preferences of Sixth Grade Children for Certain Social Studies Activities." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1951, p. 25.

²David P. Duval. "Preferences of Fifth Grade Children for Certain Social Studies Activities." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1952, p. 32.

opportunity to widen each child's resources. It also broadens the children's information for present and future knowledge.

Third choice of boys and girls together and of girls, and a sixth choice of boys, was map study of area being talked about. The 1951 study's boys and girls placed this activity ninth and in 1952 the activity was not placed among the combined first ten choices of the boys and girls.

Map study helps children acquire a more secure understanding of the material being discussed.

Fourthly the boys and girls together, and the girls tied this with another activity for third place, and fifth place for the boys was to learn new words. This was the fifth choice of the combined choices of boys and girls in both previous studies.

The girls recognize the learning of new words as essential to new understandings, the boys thought other things to be more necessary.

Fifth place for boys and girls together, and second for the girls, and tenth place of the boys, was finding a play, and acting it out. Third place was given to this activity in 1951 and sixth place was awarded it in the 1952 study.

Four out of the first five unpopular activities have to do with measurement of learning. This certainly is an indication that new methods of measurement are needed.

In the third place of "Least Popular" activities was the writing of summaries of important ideas. The children's learn-

ing can be organized through the use of summaries. Therefore this activity, although not popular, is essential to learning.

Table VII is interesting when compared with Table VI. It can be seen that three of the first four items listed on Table VI as least popular activities are listed as the first three items on Table VII as neither liked nor disliked by the boys and girls. This was also found to be true in Duval's thesis.¹

Table VIII shows areas that have rarely been attacked by teachers. These are activities which could be of high interest for children. The activities listed on this table could be used for motivational techniques that would be different and challenging for the children.

The first, second, and third choices, and a combination of these are indicated in Table IX. This Table gives an individual breakdown of the children's choices. All of the preceding Tables can be compared to Table IX and further study or detail can be extracted.

Item thirty-five, see films, filmstrips, and slides about the unit, is the most popular in all three categories and a combination of these categories. The large number of boys selecting this activity made this interesting result.

This was also found to be true in the Duval² and

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 38.

TABLE VI
THE TEN SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES LEAST POPULAR
WITH 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN

250 Boys and Girls			111 Boys			139 Girls		
Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen
1	10	53	1	10	30	1	9	24
2	9	52	2	9	28	2	10	23
3	22	36	3	16	22	3	22	22
4	16	34	4	21	18	4	6	19
5	21	33	5	17	16	5	20	16
6.5	6	29	6	22	14	6	21	15
6.5	20	29	7.5	3	13	7	34	14
8	3	26	7.5	20	13	8.5	3	13
9	34	25	9	14	12	8.5	12	13
10	17	23	10	34	11	10	4	12

Table VI shows the least popular activities with the sixth grade children.

10. Have a test on the unit when it is finished.
9. Have a short test on the day's discussion.
22. Write summaries of important ideas.
16. Read social studies and answer questions made by the teacher.
21. Write out answers to questions placed on the blackboard.
6. Give reports to the class.
20. Make individual outline for study.
3. Work by myself on an assignment.
34. Have discussions in charge of pupils.
17. Read social studies and answer questions made by the pupils.

TABLE VII

THE TEN SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES MOST OFTEN MARKED AS
NEITHER LIKED NOR DISLIKED BY 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN

250 Boys and Girls			111 Boys			139 Girls		
Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen
1	16	122	1.5	1	48	1	16	74
2	21	114	1.5	16	48	2	21	69
3	10	113	3	22	47	3	10	68
4	1	103	4.5	10	45	4	9	59
5	9	101	4.5	21	45	5	1	55
6	22	96	6	9	42	6	22	49
7.5	3	80	7	20	41	7	3	47
7.5	20	80	8	11	34	8	17	43
9	17	76	10	3	33	9	7	40
10	11	70	10	6	33	10	29	40
			10	17	33			

Table VII shows activities that were most often marked as neither liked nor disliked by 250 sixth grade children.

16. Read social studies and answer questions made by teacher.
21. Write out answers to questions placed on the blackboard.
10. Have a test on the unit when it is finished.
1. Use the same social studies book that each child in the class has.
9. Have short tests on the day's discussion.
22. Write summaries of important ideas.
3. Work by myself on an assignment.
20. Make individual outlines for study.
17. Read social studies and answer questions made by the pupils.
11. Learn new words.

TABLE VIII

THE TEN SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES LEAST FREQUENTLY
DONE BY 250 SIXTH GRADE BOYS AND GIRLS

250 Boys and Girls			111 Boys			139 Girls		
Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen
1	25	164	1	31	67	1	25	99
2	31	152	2	25	65	2	31	85
3	18	146	3	18	64	3	18	82
4	23	129	4	15	56	4	24	76
5	30	127	5	30	55	5	23	75
6	15	125	6	23	54	6	30	72
7	24	123	7	19	49	7	15	69
8	19	117	8	24	47	8	19	68
9	38	104	9	8	43	9	38	64
10	8	100	10	38	40	10	8	57

Table VIII shows the activities least frequently done by the 250 sixth grade boys and girls.

25. Dramatize important events studied in a unit.
31. Make a class booklet about the unit.
18. Use a question guide made by the class for discussion.
23. Make up your own stories about a unit.
30. Make individual booklets on the unit.
15. Make a relief map, using materials such as salt, flour, etc.
24. Make up plays about interesting happenings.
19. Use an outline made by the class for study.
38. Construct models of interesting things studied.
8. Have quiz contests on the most interesting facts.

TABLE IX

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD CHOICES OF ACTIVITIES MADE BY 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN
FOR THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Item	First Choice			Second Choice			Third Choice			Combined First, Second, Third Choices		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1.	4	1	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	1	6
2.	1	3	4	2	1	3	2	3	5	5	7	12
3.	1	3	4	2	0	2	3	0	3	6	3	9
4.	7	14	21	5	8	13	2	4	6	14	26	40
5.	1	4	5	5	7	12	2	4	6	8	15	23
6.	5	4	9	2	5	7	6	3	9	13	17	30
7.	3	4	7	2	1	3	0	3	3	5	8	13
8.	3	1	4	2	0	2	2	2	4	7	3	10
9.	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	3	1	4
10.	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	5
11.	1	1	2	0	3	3	0	3	3	1	7	8
12.	0	1	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	4	1	5
13.	9	5	14	6	6	12	6	6	12	21	17	38
14.	0	4	4	1	6	7	3	2	5	4	12	16
15.	1	4	5	5	1	6	1	3	4	7	8	15
16.	1	0	1	1	3	4	2	0	2	4	3	7
17.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2
18.	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3
19.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2
21.	1	0	1	1	4	5	0	0	0	2	4	6
22.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23.	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	3

TABLE IX (continued)

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD CHOICES OF ACTIVITIES MADE BY 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN
FOR THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

Item	First Choice			Second Choice			Third Choice			Combined First, Second, Third Choices		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
24.	2	5	7	0	2	2	1	4	5	3	11	14
25.	1	0	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	3	1	4
26.	3	13	16	2	10	12	9	5	14	14	28	42
27.	0	1	1	1	4	5	2	2	4	3	7	10
28.	2	2	4	1	4	5	6	3	9	9	9	18
29.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
30.	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	4	4	0	7	7
31.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
32.	2	3	5	5	6	11	3	6	9	10	15	25
33.	1	2	3	3	1	4	0	2	2	4	5	9
34.	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	2	3	1	5	6
35.	12	7	19	14	7	21	8	10	18	32	24	56
36.	2	0	2	4	1	5	2	3	5	8	4	12
37.	13	4	17	6	6	12	4	10	14	23	20	43
38.	3	0	3	4	0	4	5	3	8	12	3	15
Not Marked or Marked All	30	45		30	45		30	45		90	135	225

Foley¹ theses. The same item and for the same reason the results are similar.

Table X should be compared with Table IX. The boys and girls selected item four, work in committees on a project or assignment, as first choice. This group of children have been exposed to the delight of committee work. In second place item thirty-five once again proves to be popular. The third position went to taking a trip to the museum in connection with a unit. This activity helps children obtain a better concept of the area being studied.

Tables XI, XII, and XIII give rank order, number of choices, per cent of first choices, percentage comparison between this study, the 1951² and 1952³ studies.

It must be first noted that under social studies as listed on the charts, History and Geography have been combined. Without combining these two areas no comparison could be made with the two previous studies.

Arithmetic was preferred first in all cases. This was a first as compared to the other studies.

Social Studies was preferred second by the boys and girls. Individually the boys preferred Social Studies second and the girls placed it fourth. This is an improvement over past

¹Foley, op. cit., p. 35.

²Ibid., pp. 37-42.

³Duval, op. cit., pp. 41-43.

studies. In the 1951 study social studies placed fifth and in the 1952 study social studies placed fourth.

The boys and girls chose Art third, the boys placed Art fifth, the girls third.

In the last two studies Art held first place.

Reading has moved from being preferred second in the Foley¹ and Duval² studies to fourth position in this study.

Health Education was seventh in the other studies, fifth in this one.

Science was in sixth place as compared to last position in the 1951 study and second from last in the 1952 study.

Language changed from last place in the Duval³ study to second from the last in this study and the Foley⁴ study.

The girls preferred Reading fourth, the boys sixth, combined second place.

Science was popular with the boys third place. It was unpopular with the girls, ninth place. Spelling was in seventh place with the boys and girls. The boys preferred Music eighth, the girls fifth, combined selection of boys and girls it went into seventh place. Lastly, the girls preferred Penmanship tenth, the boys placed it above language in tenth place.

¹Foley, op. cit., p. 42.

²Duval, op. cit., p. 41.

³Ibid.

⁴Foley, loc. cit.

Table XIV shows dislikes for various subjects. The most often marked was Language. This was the most disliked of the group. Second and third place went to History and Geography. If these two subjects were combined as Social Studies, as they were in Tables XI, XII, and XIII, then Social Studies would be in first place. Comparison with the previously mentioned Tables shows that Social Studies was second place with boys and fourth place with the girls. The girls once again showed their strong dislike for History and Geography in Table XIV.

All tables indicate the children's low opinion of Language.

Foley¹ and Duval² found that Language was preferred least by the sixth and fifth grade children used in their studies.

¹Ibid.

²Duval, loc. cit.

TABLE X
 THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES (FIRST CHOICE)
 WITH 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN

250 Boys and Girls			111 Boys			139 Girls		
Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen	Rank	No. of Item	Times Chosen
1	4	21	1	37	13	1	4	14
2	35	19	2	35	12	2	26	13
3	37	17	3	13	9	3	6	9
4	26	16	4	4	7	4	35	7
4.5	6	14	5	6	5	4.5	13	5
4.5	13	14				4.5	24	5

Table X shows the first choice of the 250 sixth grade children.

- 4. Work in committees on a project or assignment.
- 35. See films, filmstrips, and slides about the unit.
- 37. Take a trip to the museum in connection with unit.
- 26. Find a play and act it out.
- 6. Give reports to the class.
- 13. Draw a map and show products, important cities, etc.

TABLE XI

RANK ORDER OF SUBJECT PREFERENCE, NUMBER, AND PER CENT OF
FIRST CHOICES OF 250 SIXTH GRADE CHILDREN COMPARED WITH
PER CENT OF FIRST CHOICES IN 1951 AND 1952
PREFERENCE STUDIES*

250 Boys and Girls	No. of Choices	Per Cent This Study	Per Cent 1951 Study	Per Cent 1952 Study
Arithmetic	74	29.60	16.88	18.54
Social Studies**	38	15.20	9.82	8.99
Art	31	12.40	20.15	26.59
Reading	28	11.20	17.13	19.48
Health Education	23	9.20	3.02	3.74
Science	22	8.80	4.54	4.31
Music	16	6.40	13.10	7.86
Spelling	11	4.40	9.82	6.74
Language	5	2.00	2.52	0.75
Penmanship	2	0.80	3.02	3.00

*1951 Harriet M. Foley and
1952 David P. Duval

**Social Studies = History and Geography

TABLE XII

RANK ORDER OF SUBJECT PREFERENCES, NUMBER, AND PER CENT OF
FIRST CHOICES OF 111 SIXTH GRADE BOYS COMPARED WITH
PER CENT OF FIRST CHOICES IN 1951 AND 1952
SUBJECT PREFERENCE STUDIES*

111 Boys	No. of Choices	Per Cent This Study	Per Cent 1951 Study	Per Cent 1952 Study
Arithmetic	31	27.93	17.32	18.92
Social Studies**	23	20.72	11.88	11.07
Science	19	17.12	7.94	7.34
Health Education	13	11.71	2.97	4.63
Art	11	9.91	25.24	23.94
Reading	7	6.31	13.86	16.22
Spelling	3	2.70	5.94	6.56
Music	3	2.70	8.91	6.56
Penmanship	1	0.90	2.97	3.01
Language	0	0.00	2.97	1.77

*1951 Harriet M. Foley and
1952 David P. Duval

**Social Studies = History and Geography

TABLE XIII

RANK ORDER OF SUBJECT PREFERENCES, NUMBER, AND PER CENT OF
FIRST CHOICES OF 139 SIXTH GRADE GIRLS COMPARED WITH
PER CENT OF FIRST CHOICES IN 1951 AND 1952
SUBJECT PREFERENCE STUDIES*

139 Girls	No. of Choices	Per Cent This Study	Per Cent 1951 Study	Per Cent 1952 Study
Arithmetic	43	30.94	16.41	18.18
Reading	21	15.11	20.50	22.55
Art	20	14.39	14.87	29.09
Social Studies**	15	10.79	7.69	6.18
Music	13	9.35	17.43	9.09
Health Education	10	7.19	3.07	2.91
Spelling	8	5.76	13.89	6.91
Language	5	3.60	2.05	0.73
Science	3	2.16	1.02	1.45
Penmanship	1	0.72	3.07	2.91

*1951 Harriet M. Foley and
1952 David P. Duval

**Social Studies = History and Geography

TABLE XIV

RANK ORDER OF SUBJECT DISLIKES, NUMBER OF TIMES CHOSEN
BY SIXTH GRADE BOYS, GIRLS, AND COMBINED BOYS AND GIRLS

Subject	250 Boys and Girls	111 Boys	139 Girls
Language	85	45	40
History	80	22	58
Geography	70	25	45
Science	56	14	42
Spelling	41	28	13
Penmanship	39	28	11
Arithmetic	30	19	11
Music	26	17	9
Art	15	8	7
Reading	11	4	7
Health Education	9	4	5
No Dislikes	16		
Only One Dislike	6		

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Restatement of the Problem

The objectives of this study are:

1. Determination of subject preference.
2. Determination of dislikes for subjects.
3. Determination of preference of social studies activities.
4. Determination of difference in selection of activities between boys and girls.

Summary of the Procedure

Foley's¹ check list was used with but one major change, this being a selection of two disliked subjects. Foley used the check list in a sixth grade. A year later Duval² used the check list at a fifth grade level.

The check list as presented to the sixth grade children contained thirty-eight activities. The children were asked to show their preference for an activity by circling a letter after each activity. The letter and statements follow:

¹Harriet M. Foley. "Preferences of Sixth Grade Children for Certain Social Studies Activities." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1951, p. 54.

²David P. Duval. "Preferences of Fifth Grade Children for Certain Social Studies Activities." Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Boston University, Boston, 1952, p. 38.

- A I have not done this
- B I like it very much
- C I neither like nor dislike it
- D I dislike it very much

A teacher's instruction sheet accompanied each grouping of check lists. The sheet explained the purpose of the check list and gave the teacher's directions for the children. The children were asked to indicate first, second, and third choice on subject preference. The class was then asked to select two subjects they disliked most. Their feelings were then to be indicated on the various activities listed. Lastly, the children were to select the best liked activities and number them one to three. Explanations were allowed and there was no time limit on the check list.

This check list was given to 250 sixth grade students in a town of 21,450 in a suburb of Boston. The town has rapidly increased in population during the past few years.

Conclusions

Conclusions may be drawn from the available facts. Some of the noteworthy findings of this study are:

1. Almost 46 per cent of the activities were chosen as liked very much by the children.
2. Nearly 24 per cent of the activities had not been within the experience of the boys and girls.
3. Slightly under 7 per cent of the activities were disliked by the children.

4. Almost 24 per cent of the activities were neither liked nor disliked by the combined groups of boys and girls.

5. Activities most often chosen as liked by the children were: seeing films, listening to reports, map study, learning new words, acting out a play, working in committees on a project or assignment, and drawing a map and show products, important cities.

6. Girls liked the activities best in this order: committee work, acting out a play, giving reports to the class, seeing films about the unit, drawing maps showing products, important cities, etc., and making up plays about interesting happenings.

7. Boys found the following activities more preferable: taking a trip to a museum, seeing films about the unit, drawing a map and showing products, important cities, etc., working in committees on a project or assignment, and giving reports to the class.

8. The per cent of activities neither liked nor disliked and of activities disliked taken together is slightly under 31 per cent.

9. Well over three times as many activities are marked as neither liked nor disliked than are marked as disliked by the children.

10. The most popular of all activities is to see films, filmstrips, and slides about the unit.

11. Boys and girls combined preferred listening to

reports second but placed preparing reports fifteenth.

12. The most often circled as disliked activities by both boys and girls are: having a test on the unit when it is finished, having short test on the day's discussion, and writing summaries of important ideas.

13. Not one of the activities most often chosen as liked are found among those checked as neither liked nor disliked.

14. The first four least popular activities are measurement devices.

15. The activities most disliked were: reading social studies and answer questions made by the teacher, and writing out answers to questions placed on the blackboard.

16. The activities most often marked as not having been done by the children are dramatizing events, making a class booklet, using a question guide made by the class for discussion, and making up your own story about the unit.

17. Many similarities may be found between this study and the 1951 preference study of Foley¹ and the 1952 preference study of Duval.² In both previous studies, social studies ranks fourth for boys and girls. Social studies in this study (combining history and geography) ranks second and is ranked second by the boys and fourth by the girls.

18. This study has added more up-to-date information to

¹Foley, loc. cit.

²Duval, loc. cit.

the existing materials of previous studies on activities and subject preferences. It also has given an insight into the area of disliked subjects.

Implications for Teaching

1. The children have indicated through their selection of various activities the desire to work together in groups and committees. This type of grouping will help reduce competition and provide for individual differences.

2. The children's grave dislike and indifference toward evaluation instruments of various types have been indicated on different parts of the check list. This suggests a need for new forms of acceptable evaluations.

3. Greater correlation of social studies with other popular subjects such as arithmetic, art, and reading, could help cultivate a more enjoyable atmosphere for social studies.

4. Since seeing films is the most popular activity among the boys and girls, it should not be difficult to increase both the range and depth of audio-visual aids to include greater motivational materials and experiences.

5. Children's wide range of interest should be satisfied with an even wider range of instructional materials that may be investigated. Teaching materials should contain provisions for map study, vocabulary development, play acting, committee work, and listening to reports.

6. Since listening to reports is the second best liked

activity it would not be too difficult to stimulate the children to increase the amount of research in individual reports.

7. Since dramatization, making of a class booklet, using a question guide, and making up a story about the unit are the top four least frequently done by the children, a great deal could be added to any unit's motivation by adding one or more of these activities.

8. Meaning and interest are derived from doing what one prefers to do. Meaning and interest help create a favorable situation for learning. This situation may be supported through a more clear understanding of children's preferences.

9. If there be values in the activities not well liked then the teacher should work at developing interest in them.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. This check list may be given to other boys and girls in various sections of the East so that a comparison may be made with this study which was carried out in Massachusetts and the two previous studies which were carried out in Connecticut.

2. This check list could be used in various sections of the country so that a study of preferences could be made on a larger scale.

3. It may prove interesting to give this check list to a third and fourth grade to try and determine where some of the dislikes start.

4. It may prove interesting to follow a grade in a particular school system and reuse the check list two or three years later to determine possible changes in preferences.

5. Further study might be conducted to determine the reasons for particular dislikes of subjects and/or activities.

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