

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF READING ATTITUDE
AND HOME ENVIRONMENT**

A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Submitted to the Department of Education,
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Whole Language**

by

**Ann Elizabeth Findley
School of Education
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio
May 2, 1996**

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON ROESCH LIBRARY

Approved by:

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My love and thanks go to my husband, David, for his enthusiasm, support, and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I	1
Introduction	1
Purpose of Study	1
Problem Statement	1
Methodology	1
Assumptions	2
Limitations	2
Chapter II	4
Review of the Literature	4
Chapter III	9
Methodology and Results	9
Case Study I: Pam	9
Case Study II: Lisa	11
Case Study III: Sandy	15
Discussion	16
Chapter IV	18
Conclusions	18
Implications	20
Future Research	20
References	21
Appendix A	23
Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey	24
Appendix B	30
Sample Interview Questions	31
Appendix C	33
Sample Interview	34

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

"A child lives in many worlds. Home, family, school, neighborhood, and society shape the contours of childhood and adolescence. Action in one sphere ripples through the others. In the best of circumstances, these realms are complementary and reinforcing" (Edwards and Young, 1992, p. 72). Home environment has a tremendous impact on a child's attitude, whether positive or negative. Decades of research show that parents are their children's first teachers, and studies have documented the important role that they play in literacy development throughout their children's lives (Gandara, 1989). The researcher has found this to hold true in these recent case studies involving students' attitude toward reading and their home environment.

Problem Statement

The purpose of the research project was to study the home reading environment of three third grade students, each of whom evidences a different level of reading proficiency.

Methodology

The purpose of the study, "Time Spent Reading and Reading Growth," was to investigate the effects of time spent in silent reading at school and at home on intermediate grade students' reading achievement (see Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama, 1990). The subjects were in two intermediate schools in a suburban school district. Of the eleven classes studied, three consisted of above average readers, six consisted of average readers, and two consisted of below average readers. Students completed their reading logs daily at the end of each fifty minute reading class. The students recorded the minutes they spent on reading an assigned book and reading a book for pleasure at school. The

students also recorded in their logs minutes spent reading an assigned book and reading a book for pleasure at home. The comprehension section of the Gates-MasGinitie Reading Tests, Level D, Form One (see Appendix A) was administered to all students at the end of the study in order to better understand the students' growth in reading. That information became an informal, not a formal, part of the overall data interpretation process. The SRS Achievement Series had already been administered to subjects prior to the study and the scores from the comprehension subtests were used as a covariate.

During a thirty minute recreational reading block at school, data were collected by the researcher, observing individually each subject. Data focused on body language, body position, and distractibility. Data were then collected during an informal interview session with each student. Open-ended questions were asked to enlighten the researcher about the subjects' reading attitudes and interests.

After each student observation and student interview, an interview was conducted with each subject's mother. Information was collected in relation to the parents' attitudes and involvement with their children's reading. Data were collected with open-ended questions.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the subjects and their parents responded honestly to questioning. The questions focused on relatively anonymous aspects of the students' and parents' lives and did not represent a significant infringement on their personal lives. Moreover, based on limited interaction with each of the females in the study, an interpretation of each student's experiences was rendered, and it is assumed that the interpretation is a reasonable evaluation of what the student experiences as a reader.

Limitations

Due to time constraints, only one observation and interview were possible. Also, the researcher was unable to view directly the home environment. Taking these factors into account, a true relationship was not developed between the researcher and the

subjects. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other settings or subjects.

Further, only female subjects were interviewed. The findings only have applicability to the subjects interviewed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Studies have been done time and again to show a correlation between reading achievement and other factors, such as recreational reading, home environment, paired reading, small group reading, and academic attitude. The following studies examine an array of relationships that may effect reading proficiency. The research suggests that the more exposure a child has to reading before school entry, the better chance he has of becoming a proficient reader. Moreover, the literature implies that the more proficient a parent is at reading, this behavior is modeled and also encouraged to a child. In general reading is the gateway to other learning and academic success.

Anglum, Bell, and Roubinex (1990) attempted to determine the relationships between reading achievement and certain aspects of the home and school environment. They also attempted to determine which specific aspects of home environment predict success in reading achievement. The subjects of the Anglum et al. study consisted of 492 elementary school students and their parents. Standardized testing and parent surveys were used to conduct the research. The results showed that the education level of the father was the most significant factor in predicting reading achievement. Reading to the child before his or her admission to school and the amount and variety of literature in the home also proved to be significant predictors of reading achievement.

Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) reported a study of children's out of school activities. The subjects were 155 fifth grade students from two different communities in East Central Illinois. The sample was made up of 85 boys and 70 girls. The socioeconomic level varied among the sample subjects. The subjects completed daily activity forms where they answered a number of questions related to the time spent doing activities out of school. These forms were completed for a time frame ranging from eight

to twenty-six weeks. The results showed that time spent in particular out of school activities does affect reading proficiency. The association was found between reading books outside of school and reading proficiency. Time invested in reading outside of school yields considerable returns in reading proficiency at a young age.

Elley (1989) presented two studies whose purpose was to assess one of the potential benefits of listening to stories - the acquisition of new vocabulary. The subjects of the studies were seven and eight-year old English speaking children in various New Zealand classes. In both studies, books were chosen to be read aloud to the students and vocabulary tests of unfamiliar words from the selections were devised. These vocabulary tests were then administered to the students as pretests seven days before the story was actually read. The story was then read three times to each class over a period of one week. Each time the story was read, the reader and the focus of the story was a bit different, but at no point were the targeted vocabulary words discussed. The same test was then given as a posttest, two days after the third reading. The biggest difference in the two studies was the absence of a control group in the first study and the use of two contrasting storybooks with a second administering of the posttest in the second study. The second study also focused on controlled differences in the readers and how the story was read. The results from both studies concluded that children scored higher on the posttest than on the pretest. Also, the words most readily learned were those for which surrounding context and pictures were provided. Those words which occurred more than once in the story were also learned better. Another notable result occurred when the vocabulary gain was calculated for each of the four ability groups and the low-scoring students gained at least as much in vocabulary knowledge as their more knowledgeable peers.

Topping and Whitley (1990) conducted a study to find the effectiveness of a paired reading project. The subjects were 83 schools in the Kirklees Local Education

Authority School District in England. A full range of socioeconomic levels was represented and both boys and girls were included in the investigation. The tutors and tutees were trained in the project and then were given about seventeen weeks to work together. A follow up was done after seventeen weeks to note student progress. The results showed that students were progressing at more than twice normal rates in both accuracy and comprehension. After a second follow up, conducted more than seventeen weeks after the students had been working together, students were still progressing at above normal rates.

The research project conducted by Morrow (1990) investigated the effects of frequent small group reading to lower socioeconomic students at school. The researchers explored the interaction between teacher and children and between the children themselves. The subjects of this study were 108 children randomly selected from six kindergarten classrooms in one urban, public school. Fifty-four (54) subjects were randomly selected for the experimental and control groups. The groups were further randomly divided into eighteen groups of three children. Research assistants read a picture book to the experimental groups once a week. Throughout the course of the story the research assistants employed interactive behavior including prompting, supporting, and informing with the students. The subjects in the control group were also read to once a week. The research assistants reading to the control group, however, used a commercially prepared reading readiness program. Results of the study indicated that children in the experimental group asked more questions, made more comments, focused more on structure, print, and illustrations, and comprehended more than three students in the control group.

Neuman (1986) explored six home processes and their effect on children's leisure reading. The subjects of this study consisted of the parents of 84 fifth grade students (45 girls and 39 boys) from nine schools in the Boston metropolitan area. The research team

conducted a one hour phone interview with the parents. The interview consisted of 93 questions that measured the following home behaviors: work habits, parental academic guidance, diverse leisure activities, parental expectations, independence and responsibility, and parental encouragement of reading. Of the six home behaviors examined, independence and responsibility, diverse leisure activities, and parental encouragement of reading, correlated the most with leisure reading. That is, students who received parental encouragement to read were inclined to read more than those who did not receive such support.

In their study, Hildebrand and Bader (1992) describe children's emergent literacy. The subjects were seventy-four children, ages three, four, and five. They were observed and interviewed as were their parents. The results showed that many factors are important to a child's emerging literacy. Those children with higher emerging literacy measures had parents who provided more alphabet books, alphabet blocks, cards, shapes, trips to the library, reading to the child, stories on tape or record, and discussion of television shows. On the other hand, children with lower emerging literacy measures were being given more gifts other than books and they were watching television more hours a week than their more reading-oriented peers.

Walberg and Tsai (1985) extended the analysis of the National Assessment of Educational Progress data in math and science to reading achievement and attitude among nine-year olds. The subjects were 1,459 nine-year old students, composed of almost equal numbers of boys and girls, with a majority being white. Other ethnic groups were represented roughly proportionate to the national population. They were randomly selected from public and private schools. The subjects were administered test booklets consisting of a general reading/literature achievement test as well as the most complete representation of items related to productivity factors. Principals at each school were also asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding school resources related to reading and

literature. A comprehensive analysis then proceeded. In terms of the simple and partial correlations, the strongest correlates of reading achievement appeared to be reading attitude, stimulus materials, the use of English in the home, and kindergarten attendance. Children with more highly educated parents also had higher achievement and attitude scores. Girls scored higher and expressed more interest in reading than did boys, and whites scored considerably higher than blacks and Hispanics on the achievement test.

Gray (1988) observed two pre-school age children to determine their reading readiness. The two subjects, Tom and Margery, were selected because of their similarities in five areas. That is, children had a good home environment, knowledge of alphabet letters, awareness of print in the environment, awareness of print in books, magazines, and newspapers, and were learning how to write. The researcher's literature search and observation of these five factors demonstrate that the children are ready to read. This research project shows that, "The major key to a child's reading success is found in the home" (pp. 27-28).

Research does indicate that a variety of variables account for reading proficiency and reading attitude. The underlying message in all the research suggests that the more exposed a child is to a variety of reading materials (and at the youngest age possible), the better chance that that child will have to be a proficient reader.

CHAPTER III

Methodology and Results

The purpose of this research project was to complete a qualitative study of the home reading environment of three third grade students. Before the researcher began the study, the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (GERAS) was administered to an entire third grade class of 21 students. Based on the results of this survey, three females with high (above normal), average (moderate or normal), and low (below normal) attitudes toward reading were chosen for observation and interview. Parental permission was obtained before continuing this study. Each child was observed for thirty minutes during a recreational reading activity in their third grade classroom. The researcher took notes during the recreational reading period focusing on body language, body position, and distractibility. Following the observation, the researcher interviewed the child. The interview consisted of open-ended questions (see Appendix B) designed to give the researcher insight into the subjects' reading attitudes and interests. Following this interview, a telephone conversation between the researcher and each subject's parents was conducted. Similar questions were asked of the parents to determine their attitudes and involvement with their child's reading.

RESULTS

Case Study I: Pam

The researcher conducted the first study of a white, female, middle class, third grader with a high attitude toward reading as evidenced on the GERAS. The subject is eight years old and her name is Pam. Pam's father is employed by Delta Airlines as a pilot, and her mother does not work outside the home. Pam has been attending the same elementary school, East Fayette Elementary School, for three years.

The researcher began the study with a thirty minute observation of the student during recreational reading time in her classroom. The observer noticed that the student quickly chose to read a fiction chapter book, which she had obviously checked out from the school library. She found a place to sit against the wall and spread her legs out in front of her. She began reading at the beginning of the story and read for only about five minutes. She then returned the book to her book bag and pulled another school library book out. It appeared as though she had already begun reading the book because when she started to read she turned to a bookmark and began reading in the middle of the text. During the course of her reading, a student came and sat very close to her. Pam did not interrupt her reading to look at the other student. After about five minutes of reading, the researcher noticed Pam smiling and giggling. She continued reading the same book until the end of the observation and was reluctant to put away the book when her teacher called her back to her desk.

Following the observation, the researcher interviewed the subject. The subject's answers gave insight about her interest and attitude toward reading. She shared with the researcher many ways in which she was involved with books and reading. The subject spoke openly about her love for reading and even said that many times she chooses reading over watching television. She claimed that the characters in books are more interesting than the characters on television. She also reminded the researcher that one can make characters in books look however one wants them to look, while on television it is decided for you. When asked how many books she had in her home, she replied, "lots!" The subject was unable to give an exact number; rather, she claimed that books were everywhere in her house. The subject also stated that she prefers to read alone rather than read to someone or have someone read to her. She even shared with the researcher her favorite place to read. She described it as a small space underneath her staircase in the basement where her little sister couldn't find her. The interview came to a close as the subject shared her favorite genre (mystery) and her favorite books (Sweet Valley Kids).

The researcher also interviewed Pam's mother to gain insight about Pam's home environment. Pam's mother described her home as one that is full of books and other types of literature. She stated that both she and her husband thoroughly enjoy reading and consider it a hobby. They have a variety of genres in their home; her husband enjoys non-fiction best, while she and Pam enjoy fiction. The family subscribes to several different magazines ranging from pilot magazines to home decorating magazines. Pam's mother said they have accumulated most of the books in their home from spending a lot of time in mall bookstores.

When Pam's mother was asked specifically about Pam's involvement with books and reading, she said it dated back to when her daughter was a baby. Pam's mother stated that she began reading aloud to Pam when she was a baby and continued until Pam reached the age that she could read to her mother instead. At the present, Pam's mother said that Pam enjoys reading alone better than reading aloud to others. However, due to a school assignment, Pam and her mother do read together once a week. Pam's mother seemed please with the fact that Pam often chooses to read instead of watching television or playing outside. She feels her daughter is an above average reader and attributes this to her positive attitude and love for reading.

Case Study II: Lisa

The researcher conducted the second case study on Lisa, a white female, middle class, third grader with an "average" attitude toward reading (based on her GERAS score). Lisa is eight-years old and has spent all eight of those years living in the same house. She lives with both her natural parents and is an only child. Her mother, who is 37, is a special education teacher at a local high school and has been teaching for the past fifteen years. Lisa's dad, who is also 37, has worked at Delta for fourteen years in the

Shipping and Receiving Department. Having attended East Fayette since kindergarten, Lisa seems to be well adjusted to the school climate and readily accepted by her peers.

During the thirty minute observation, the researcher noticed that the subject seemed eager to get started reading and already had her book in hand when the teacher signaled for the students to begin. Lisa chose to move to the floor of the reading center and once there, she sat Indian style with her back against the wall. Several other students joined Lisa in the center and with the arrival of each one, Lisa would look up at them, smile, and then take a few minutes to get herself settled again before she would actually resume reading. The book Lisa was reading was an American girl chapter book. She appeared quite interested in it, and the researcher noticed the subject mouthing the words as she read. The illustrations seemed of particular interest to Lisa as each time she came to one, she would smile and bring the book in for a closer look. Lisa seemed to read several chapters during the duration of the observation, and because the researcher was familiar with the book, the researcher tried to discuss it with her during the interview. The subject could not really tell the researcher much about what she had read.

Following the observation, the researcher interviewed the subject. Lisa was excited about being interviewed, but when she found out the topic was reading, she became a bit less enthusiastic. Although one of the first things Lisa said was that she loved reading, the researcher noticed a discrepancy between her love of reading as a subject and reading as an activity she would choose to do. Lisa first talked about what she liked to do in her free time. She said that during free time at school, she played checkers, and when at home, she would go outside and play without friends. If it were raining outside, Lisa stated that she would play with her make-believe children. When pressed by the researcher on how she would play school, Lisa stated that she might read books to them.

In terms of reading as a school subject, Lisa said, "I like when my teacher reads aloud to the class, kind of." The subject also liked reading in group situations better than

individual silent reading time because when others read it kept the reading more interesting. Lisa indicated that she did not like being asked to read aloud a lot because she is easily distracted, when someone moves, she tends to look up to see what is going on; she then loses her place. Lisa also said that her teacher does not make her answer questions about what she has read or do any kind of workbook pages related to reading skills. The subject really likes going to the media center because it gives her a chance to check out books she has never read, especially chapter books by Beverly Cleary.

When outside reading was discussed, the researcher noticed Lisa's answers became very short and the researcher had to get her to elaborate on them by giving Lisa examples of how she might respond. Lisa told the researcher that a typical afternoon would consist of homework, practicing the piano, and then watching television or playing until dinner. After dinner, she would watch a little bit of television, eat a snack, and then get ready for bed. She does not usually read at bedtime, but two afternoons a week, when she is getting tired, her mom reads aloud to her. Lisa remembers her mom reading more to her when she was younger and cannot ever really remember her dad reading aloud to her. Lisa likes her mom reading to her but doesn't like it when her mom asks her questions about what they have read. Lisa indicated that she has a lot on her mind, and after she and her mom have read a paragraph or two, she often forgets what was read. She feels her mom then gets frustrated with her, and reading together is no longer fun.

Lisa does not do much reading over school breaks and summer vacations. When asked about the public library, she says she doesn't use either resource very much. She remembers applying for her own library card but never going to pick it up. The researcher then mentioned bookstores, and Lisa said she doesn't go in them. When Lisa and her mom go shopping, if Lisa's mom goes into the bookstore, Lisa waits outside. Lisa said she has not been given a book as a present, but if she were given one, she would like it. She has never given a book as a gift either and would not want to because the receiver would probably not read it.

After talking to Lisa about reading, the researcher called Lisa's house and spoke to her mother about reading and the role it played in their home. Lisa's mother said she loves reading and spends as much time as possible engrossed in romance novels or with authors such as Mary Higgins Clark. She admits that Lisa's father does not spend much time reading books, but he does read two newspapers daily and also subscribes to Sports Illustrated and other football related magazines. Lisa's grandmother subscribes to everything, Lisa's mother observed, and when she is finished reading the materials, she sends them to Lisa's house. The reading materials are stored on bookshelves in the living room and in the bedrooms. In addition, there is always the overflow storage place (i.e., all available tables), which always seem to be full. Lisa is exposed to models of people reading on a daily basis and is encouraged to read on her own. Lisa's mom admits that Lisa would rather be watching television or playing outside. She said that she and Lisa read together about twice a week, but not always successfully. Sometimes the teacher in her takes over and she begins questioning or correcting Lisa about something that has been said. Lisa then becomes frustrated and wants to stop. Lisa's mother said that Lisa has no decoding skills and does not make a transference of letter sounds to words she is reading. Lisa does everything by sight, including reading and playing the piano. Lisa's mom also observed that Lisa memorizes everything, and when she encounters a word or piece of music that is unfamiliar, she simply skips it. Lisa does not try to attack or decode unknown words. Thus, her mother thinks her reading does not really flow; it is choppy and Lisa derives no real meaning from what she has read unless the piece is full of familiarity for her. When the researcher asked Lisa's mom what she thought her daughter's attitude toward reading was, she replied, "Lisa loves to think she is reading." Lisa's mother said she does buy Lisa books as presents, although not as often as she used to. The interview was concluded with Lisa's mom admitting that most of Lisa's free time is spent watching television, and that the older Lisa has gotten, the less time they have spent reading aloud together.

Case Study III: Sandy

The researcher conducted the third case study of a white, female, middle-class third grader who exhibited a poor attitude toward reading (based on her GERAS score). The subject's name is Sandy, she is eight years old and is one of three children. She has one older brother and a younger sister. Sandy lives with both of her natural parents. Sandy's mother works in a bank while her father attends college. This year is Sandy's second year at East Fayette Elementary School.

The researcher first observed Sandy for thirty minutes during a recreational reading activity. During the thirty minute observation, the researcher noticed that the subject took considerable time to select a book to read. Once the subject chose a picture book, she moved to an isolated part of the room, stretched out on her stomach, and began to read. The subject mouthed the words as she read and appeared to pay close attention to the illustrations. Throughout the observation, the subject changed her reading location once and selected a different book twice. Additionally, the researcher noticed that the child was distracted several times by other children moving around the room. The subject quickly returned to her seat at the conclusion of the recreational reading activity. Immediately following the observation, the researcher spoke with the subject about her feelings toward reading. The researcher asked open-ended questions that were designed to allow the subject to clearly communicate her reading attitude. When asked whether she enjoyed reading, the subject quickly answered yes; however, when asked whether she would rather read or play, the subject answered "play." This reply set the precedent for the remainder of the interview. The subject claimed to enjoy leisure reading at school but said she did not enjoy reading class. She said she felt unsure of herself when asked to read aloud or answer questions about a story she had read. The subject claimed to spend free time at home watching television and playing with her brother and sister. She also said she rarely read at home. In fact, the subject said she read with parents only once a week in

order to complete a teacher-assigned weekly reading activity. When asked about the number of books in her home the subject answered "I don't know." Sandy indicated that she did not visit the public library and did not enjoy visiting a bookstore. Despite this, Sandy said she enjoyed getting books as gifts.

The researcher concluded the case study with a phone interview with the subject's mother. She corroborated much of what Sandy mentioned in her interview. Sandy's mother agreed that her daughter did not enjoy reading; this disturbed her since she herself enjoys reading. Sandy's mother could not estimate the number of books in the house, but she did mention that they were "numerous." Most of the reading materials in the house are adult fiction and magazines although the children do have their own "libraries" in their rooms. Sandy's mother also indicated that she and her husband began reading to Sandy when she was very young. This practice continued until Sandy entered school and her mother returned to work. The mother told the researcher that she now reads with the subject at least once a week. Unfortunately, she could not increase the frequency of these reading activities because of her work schedule. When asked how her daughter uses her free time, Sandy's mother responded, "She likes to watch television and play with her brother." Sandy's mother also reported that the family did not visit the public library or the local bookstore. Sandy occasionally did receive books as gifts, but she never chose to purchase a book as a gift.

Discussion

Reading proficiency and reading attitude are two different things; however, the two things are not unrelated. The researcher noted that the child who scored high on the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey gave insightful answers to the interviewer's questions and often constructed well thought-out sentences. The other students who did not score high on the GERAS did not seem as proficient in the same skills. This relationship needs to be explored in the future by other researchers. Children who are

good readers may be encouraged by their proficiency and enjoy reading more than a child who is a less capable reader.

Parental involvement may be a factor in a student's reading attitude. Both parents working outside the home was a factor in the students who exhibited average and poor reading attitudes. The students may not have had recreational reading modeled to the extent of a stay-at-home parent. Lack of parental time and actual parental supervision may diminish how much a child spends reading, as well. Subjects with average and poor reading attitudes and in homes where both parents worked outside the home also watched more television and did not visit bookstores.

It appears that a child who has exposure to many forms of literature at an early age and has parental encouragement through developmental years may develop reading proficiency and a love for reading.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research project was to conduct a qualitative study of the home reading environment of three third grade students. The results of this study of home environment showed that there are factors within the home that may substantially impact a child's reading attitude. The researcher found several common factors in the home environment of the subjects. For example, the parents frequently modeled reading; the parents began reading to their child at an early age, and, all the homes contained a great number and variety of reading materials. Other factors found to be constant in the three homes were infrequent use of the public library and less time spent reading with their child. Reading material from the home (i.e., books, magazines, etc.) replaced frequent trips to the public library. Moreover, all three students usually read with a parent once a week to complete a school-related assignment, but by choice did not read with a parent at other times. Differences were also found in the individual homes of the subjects. Specifically, the subject with the highest positive attitude toward reading spent the least amount of time watching television, had one parent who was not employed outside the home, and enjoyed frequent visits to the bookstore. On the other hand, the subjects with average and poor attitudes toward reading spent a great deal of time watching television and playing; they lived in homes where both parents worked outside the home, and they did not visit bookstores.

Current research indicates that many factors in the home influence a child's reading interest and attitude. According to Hildebrand & Bader (1992), children who are provided with reading materials and reading experiences in the home obtain higher scores on emerging literacy skills. Some of these materials and experiences include providing children with alphabet books, blocks, cards, and shapes, and trips to the library; reading aloud to the child; providing stories on tapes or records; and discussing television shows. In addition, their results also showed that children with lower emerging literacy scores

were being given more gifts other than books and watching more television (Hildebrand & Bader, 1992).

With regard to reading materials, Anglum (1990) found that the variety of materials found in the home was a strong predictor of reading achievement and attitude. Neuman (1986) corroborates Hildebrand and Bader's belief that parental encouragement of library use significantly correlated with students' recreational reading and interest. However, the findings in this qualitative study do not seem to associate reading attitude with library use as none of the three subjects utilized it.

On the other hand, reading aloud played an important role in the three subjects' attitudes toward reading. Morrow's (1990) study supports these findings. He concluded that frequent small group readings in school increase comprehension scores and enhance the number and complexity of comments and questions from students. Other researchers concur that time spent in classroom reading contributed significantly to gains in students' reading achievement (Taylor, 1990). Another benefit from reading aloud in school is that it fosters vocabulary acquisition in all students, and the new learning is relatively permanent (Elley, 1989). Anderson (1988) noted that "more interesting, and important, is the fact that time spent reading books outside of school was the best predictor of a child's growth as a reader" (p. 297). Gray (1988) agrees with Anderson (1988) that reading aloud builds the best foundation for reading involvement. Not only is out of school oral reading important, but one-on-one situations can cause gains in reading accuracy and comprehension (Topping, 1990). Therefore educators must continue to reaffirm the importance of reading aloud to young children to teachers and parents.

The final influencing factor was the amount of time spent viewing television. Studies show that children spend an average of 3.63 hours watching television per day (Neuman, 1986). Watching television was even found to have a negative relationship with measures of reading proficiency (Anderson, 1988). Taking these facts into account, optimum viewing times and terms for viewing were suggested by Walberg and Hildebrand

(1985 & 1992). For example, Walberg (1985) found ten weekly hours of television viewing optimal for learning due to the fact that additional time spent in front of the television takes away from other more educational activities. Hildebrand (1992) encourages families to discuss and read about television programs as ways to improve oral language which contributes to the child's ability to read in later years.

Implications

The most important implication of the findings from this qualitative study is the prominent role that parents seem to play in providing the necessary beginnings to a lifelong commitment and love of reading for children. Parents must be willing to invest time in their child's development in order to nurture an interest in reading. Teachers who receive proficient readers can expand on that knowledge and contribute to a successful learned adult. Reading plays an important role in the foundation of each and every child.

Future Research

A future research study should focus on a comparison of subjects from one group that is being enriched with all of the materials and experiences that positively impact attitudes toward reading and another other group that does not have access or exposure to such experiences. This type of study would provide more concrete data regarding the two groups' reading habits and achievement. In closing, Gray (1988) notes: "It seems that the person most often credited with the child's success or failure in learning to read is the teacher. In reality, the major key to a child's success in reading is found in the home, as a great deal of the prerequisite of learning, including mastery of oral language, is acquired before the child reaches school age" (p.27).

REFERENCES

- Anglum, B.S., Bell, M.L. & Roubinex, D.L. (1990). Prediction of elementary student reading achievement from specific home environment variables. Reading Improvement, 27, 173-184.
- Anderson, R.C., Wilson, P.T., & Fielding, L.G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. Reading Research Quarterly, 23, 285-302.
- Demos, E.S. (1987). Parents, an untapped resource. Reading Horizons, Fall, 35-37.
- Edwards, P.A., & Young, L.S. (1992). Beyond parents: family, community, and school involvement. Phi Delta Kappan, 74, 72-78..
- Elley, W.B. (1989). Vocabulary acquisition from listening to stories. Reading Research Quarterly, 24, 174-187.
- Gandara, P. (1989). Those children are ours: Moving toward community. Today, January, 38-43.
- Gray, M. (1988). The reading process for the beginning reader. Reading Horizons, 3, 22-34.
- Hildebrand, V.L., & Bader, L.A. (1992). An exploratory study of parents' involvement in their child's emerging literacy skills. Reading Improvement, 29, 163-170.
- Morrow, L. (1990). Small group reading: he effects on children's comprehension and responses to literature. Reading Research and Instruction, 29, 1-17.
- Neuman, S. (1986). The home environment and fifth-grade students' leisure reading. The Elementary School Journal, 86, 335-343.
- Taylor, B.M., Frye, B.J., & Maruyama, G.M. (1990). Time spent reading and reading growth. American Educational Research Journal, 27, 351-362.
- Topping, K., & Whiteley, M. (1990). Participant evaluation of parent-tutored and peer-tutored projects in reading. Educational Research, 32, 14-32.

Walberg, H. J., & Tsai, S.L. (1985). Correlates of reading achievement and attitude: a national assessment study. Journal of Educational Research, 78, 159-167.

APPENDIX A

ELEMENTARY READING ATTITUDE SURVEY

School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

GARFIELD: © 1979 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?



JTM ©1979

2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?



3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?

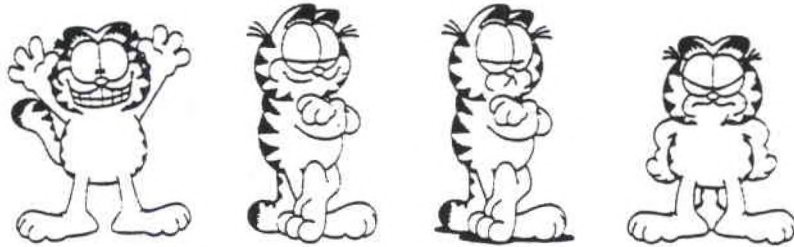


4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

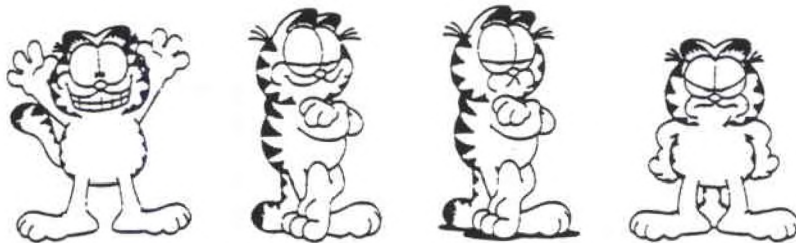


GARFIELD: © 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?



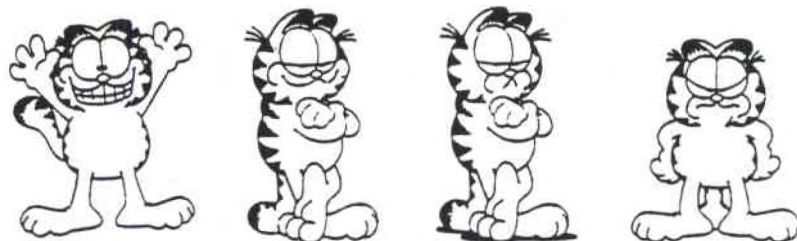
6. How do you feel about starting a new book?



7. How do you feel about reading during summer vacation?



8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?



9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?



1.1. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?



12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?

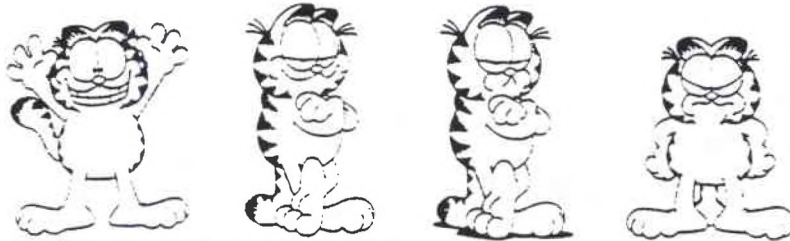


GARFIELD © 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

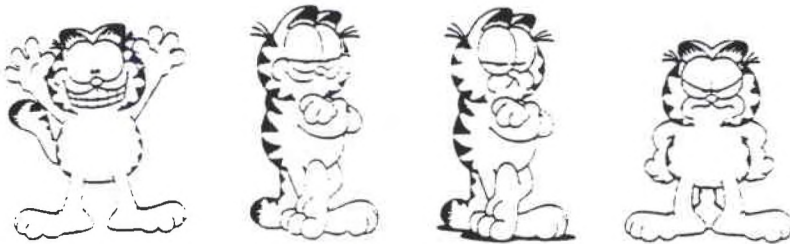
13. How do you feel about reading in school?



14. How do you feel about reading your school books?



15. How do you feel about learning from a book?




16. How do you feel when it's time for reading class?




GARFIELD © 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

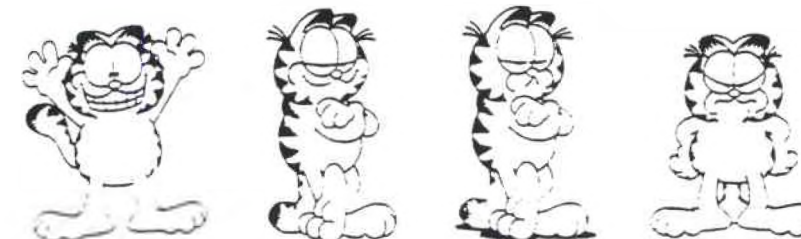
17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?



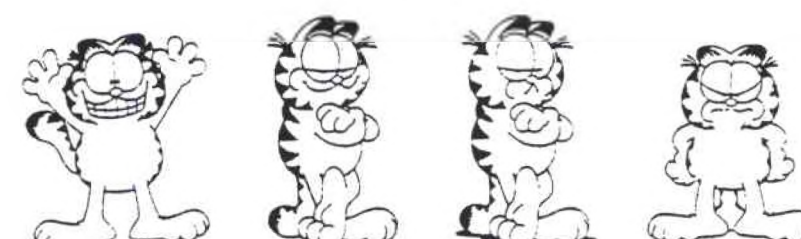
18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?



19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?



20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?



**Elementary Reading Attitude Survey
Scoring sheet**

Student name _____

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Administration date _____

Scoring guide	
4 points	Happiest Garfield
3 points	Slightly smiling Garfield
2 points	Mildly upset Garfield
1 point	Very upset Garfield

Recreational reading

Academic reading

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____
- 16. _____
- 17. _____
- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____

Raw score: _____

Raw score: _____

Full scale raw score (Recreational + Academic): _____

Percentile ranks

Recreational

Academic

Full scale

APPENDIX B

Sample Interview Questions

The following Interview Questions were asked to both parent and child and adapted as necessary. Not all questions were asked.

- * What were you reading during Recreation Reading?
- * Are you currently reading a novel?
- * Are you enjoying the book? Why or why not?
- * Do you like to read? Why or why not?
- * How do you decide upon a book when choosing one?
- * What types of books do you enjoy most (genre)?
- * Do you have a lot of books at home that belong to you?
- * Do your parents read to you?
- * Do your parents enjoy reading?
- * Does your family subscribe to any magazines? Do you read magazines?
- * Do you go to the public library? Who usually takes you when you go to the library?
- * Do you go to the bookstore?
- * Do you like buying books as gifts?
- * Do you enjoy receiving books as gifts?
- * Would you spend your own money on a book?
- * Do you spend time reading with your parents?
- * What do you enjoy most about reading?
- * Have you ever authored a book?
- * Where is your favorite place to read?
- * How much time do you spend a day reading?
- * What is your favorite recreational thing to do?
- * Would you rather read or watch television?

* Do you enjoy reading aloud in class or at home?

* How long have you been reading books by yourself?

APPENDIX C

Sample Interview

I denotes interviewer

S denotes student

I: Hi. Thanks for spending some time with me today. We are going to talk a little bit about reading if that's okay.

S: Okay. I like to read.

I: You looked like you were enjoying your book during recreational reading.

S: It's good. I read these all the time.

I: You read that particular book all the time or that series of books?

S: No, I read Sweet Valley all the time. I try not to read the same book over but sometimes I forget which ones I've read.

I: It sounds like you like to read quite a bit?

S: I read at home too, not just at school.

I: Do you like to read to your mom or dad?

S: Not really. Sometimes I will, but I'd rather read by myself.

I: What about your mom or dad reading to you, do you like that?

S: It's alright. I used to like it more when I was in first grade.

I: Do you have a lot of books at home?

S: Lots. I have my own bookshelf.

I: Do you know how many books you have at your house?

S: They're everywhere. My mom likes to read too. I'm not sure about my sister. She doesn't really read anyway. She just thinks she does. Sometimes I have to hide to get away from her. She will grab my books and try to put them in her mouth. I go to the basement if she is being a pain. I read under the stairs. Nobody bothers me. That's the best place if you want peace and quiet.

I: Sounds like you have a great secret reading place! Would you say reading is one of your favorite hobbies?

S: Yes, it's one of my favorite things to do. I would rather read than watch TV but most of my friends watch TV all the time. But books can be any way you want them to be and they're more interesting.

I: What do you mean?

S: You can pretend what people look like in a book. You can make them look however you want them to. The bad thing about TV is that you already know what everybody looks like cause it's already been decided when they come on TV.

I: I see what you mean. You're right about that. So you can use your imagination more when you read a book.

S: Yep.

I: What is your favorite type of book to read?

S: I like mysteries cause I like to figure out the end before I finish. Sometimes I can but sometimes it hits me hard what happened.

I: So you like to try and figure out who did it before the book tells you?

S: Yeh and sometimes I have no idea.

I: But sometimes that is the fun of the book. You are surprised at the end. It has been nice chatting with you. I appreciate you talking with me. Keep reading.

S: I also like Sweet Valley Kids.

I: They are fun, aren't they? Have a great day.