


12-1979

An Investigation to Determine the Relationships between College Students' Attitudes toward Reading and Their Reading Habits

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AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD
READING AND THEIR READING HABITS

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Faculty of Education
State University College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education: Reading Teacher

by

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December, 1979

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of two distinct groups of freshman college students. One hundred students enrolled in classes in the Learning Skills Center and one hundred students enrolled in classes in the General Education Program were involved in this study.

A second purpose was to determine if a significant difference, in relation to reading attitudes and reading habits, existed between the two groups.

Statistical analysis strongly revealed that a significant correlation exists between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of the two groups of freshman college students. The results also demonstrated that no significant difference exists between the two groups of freshmen.

It appears that a relationship exists between how students think about reading and their actual reading habits but the exact nature of that relationship is unknown.

Acknowledgments

The investigator wishes to acknowledge those individuals who have been of assistance in conducting this study.

Sincere appreciation is given to Dr. Arthur Smith for his time and advice.

Deepest appreciation is given to Dr. Gerald Begy. Through his enthusiastic support and encouragement this thesis was made possible.

Acknowledgment is extended to all the students who participated in the study.

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Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Reading is the key tool that eventually affects proficiency in all academic learning. Freshman students in college face a more difficult reading task than in high school as their education moves in the direction of more learning from books rather than from instructors. Philip Shaw states in his review of the research pertaining to college reading that a majority of entering freshmen lack the reading-study skills requisite for academic success (Shaw, 1968).

At a time when educators are placing so much emphasis on the cognitive components of reading, researchers are pointing out the need for work in the affective domain. In many schools today three skill components receive the major portion of time and effort devoted to reading instruction: word attack skills, comprehension skills and study skills. While these cognitive skills are highly important, affective components: attitudes, interests and habits are also important (Alexander & Filler, 1976). Smith, Drummond and Pinette (1975) also emphasize the need to consider affective factors as well as cognitive factors when planning instructional programs for college students. An investigation of community college reading students conducted by Smith, Drummond and Pinette (1975) reveals that students were knowledgeable of

efficient reading techniques contradicting the authors' previous assumptions about students' negative reading attitudes and lack of efficient reading techniques. The authors indicate the perils of making assumptions about students' reading attitudes and habits without prior investigation.

By investigating the relationships between freshman college students' attitudes toward reading and their reading habits it is hoped that additional information about the affective factors of reading might be provided.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of two distinct groups of freshman college students. Students enrolled in classes in the Learning Skills Center (LSC) and students enrolled in classes in the General Education Program (GEP) constituted the two groups. The LSC provides instruction to all students who wish to improve their basic learning skills such as reading, grammar, spelling, writing, mathematics and study skills. The Center personnel diagnose for skill needs and the instruction is individualized for each student and is carried out in small groups. The GEP is that portion of the undergraduate curriculum which includes a certain commonality of experience and helps to define the extent and nature of the intellectual community. The "core" portion of the GEP focuses on those skills and understandings most essential for lifelong learning, common citizenship, and active, productive participation in society.

While the major field aims more at disciplinary competence and/or occupational preparation, general education is more concerned with enabling students to view their concentration and themselves in larger and more meaningful contexts.

The questions to be answered were:

1. Does a significant correlation exist between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of freshman college students enrolled in the LSC?
2. Does a significant correlation exist between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of freshman college students enrolled in the GEP?
3. Is there a significant difference between the derived mean correlated scores of students in the LSC and students in the GEP? The derived score is determined by subtracting the mean scores of students in both groups and running an independent two sample t test on the results.

Need for the Study

There is little disagreement relative to the importance of positive attitudes in assuring success with reading (Alexander & Filler, 1976). Wilson and Hall (1976) consider a positive attitude essential for successful mastery of the printed page. Yet the research investigating the relationships between attitudes and habits has generally not received the attention it deserves.

Summers (1976) reports that research on attitude development is still in its infancy. Only a limited number of studies have

focused on attitudes toward reading and reading habits. Most of the studies have investigated a number of variables thought to be associated with attitudes. These include: achievement, self concept, parents and the home environment, teachers and the classroom environment, instructional practices, special programs, sex, intelligence, socioeconomic status, and student interests.

Adequate definition and conceptualization of reading attitude constructs is still a major problem in the field of reading. Summers (1976) states that school and reading activities are appropriate areas for attitudinal assessment because they are salient factors in the life of every student. Research on attitudes will be an important dimension in the study of affective functioning. Attitude research may help to explain a wide range of behavior, and the study of reading attitudes, in particular, could play a major role in research which concerns affective functioning.

Educators vary in their opinions of the nature of reading attitudes and good reading habits. Only limited numbers of studies have attempted to explore the relationships between reading attitudes and reading habits. The purpose of this study was to determine what relationships exist between attitudes toward reading and reading habits.

Limitations of the Study

This study included 120 students enrolled in freshman courses at a State University College in upstate New York. Results may have varied with a larger population or with subjects in the

sophomore, junior or senior classes at this institution or subjects at other colleges. The study was limited by the items on the two instruments.

Summary

This study was an investigation of the relationships between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of two distinct groups of freshman college students. The results were examined and possible recommendations for instruction strategies were made. It was theorized that students who demonstrated a positive attitude toward reading also demonstrated, as shown by the instruments, good reading habits.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this review is to report an analysis of recent research related to the affective domain of reading. The emphasis is on the measurement of reading attitudes and habits with a brief discussion of definitions and the relationships between the affective and cognitive factors of reading.

Definitions

As stated earlier, adequate conceptualization and definition of reading attitude constructs are still a major problem in the field of reading. Several technical definitions of attitude have been put forth. Campbell (1963) suggested that psychologists use eighty concepts that share the operational definition of the concept of attitude. All the concepts suggested by Campbell deal with phenomena that are acquired. These phenomena modify responses to the organism. The most influential definition was proposed by Allport (1967), "An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related." Most definitions of attitude contain features of Allport's definition (Summers, 1976).

Reading attitudes exist within the individual and cannot be seen directly. The presence of attitudes toward reading, however, can be inferred from behavioral samples. A person's attitude toward reading will tend to cause that person to notice things selectively and to respond accordingly. A person's attitude may be inferred and elicited by providing appropriate verbal and non-verbal stimuli since attitude is a response (Summers, 1976).

Ewing (1977) defines attitude toward reading as "a combination of all the components of beliefs, experiences, etc. which contribute to the child's or adult's underlying disposition to reading, just as it includes motives and interests which determine the individual's behavior toward reading." Mathewson (1976) adopts a fairly narrow definition of attitude which excludes motivation and action. Thus a child may have a positive attitude toward books but not be interested in reading them.

Alexander and Filler (1976) consider attitudes as systems of feelings related to reading which cause students to approach or avoid reading situations. A student's attitudes may vary with his personal predispositions and may be affected in unique ways by variables within the learner and his environment.

Not only do educators vary in their definitions of reading attitudes, they also differ in their definitions of reading habits. This conflict is evidenced by the lack of information available in the literature regarding good reading habits. Most researchers concerned with the affective factors of reading have attempted to

measure only attitudes toward reading since they are more likely to favor proper motivation toward reading as the key to success in reading. They tend to feel that reading habits are of secondary importance. This controversy is probably due in part to the absence of research instruments which may be used to measure good reading habits. Recently, the development of The Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (Shepps & Shepps, 1971) gave researchers an instrument which attempts to measure some aspects of a student's attitude toward reading and his actual reading habits, but the instrument is primarily concerned with gathering information about the student's attitude toward study and study habits.

A review of the literature reveals that most researchers rely on a fairly narrow definition of reading habits. Reading habits are often measured by the number of books read in a period of time, the types of materials students read--books, magazines, newspapers or the genre of materials read such as essays, short stories, novels, biographies, etc. The obvious oversimplification of the definition of reading habits is surprising and disappointing since research and reading has established the kinds of habits which are often associated with superior reading achievement.

Measurement in the Affective Domain

A number of assessment measures are available for measuring affective factors in reading. Affective assessment measures can be classified under two headings, those evaluative measures that are reactive and those that are nonreactive. Reactive measures

are those in which participants are aware that the measurement is being taken. Nonreactive measures are those in which participants are not aware that they are being assessed. The most commonly used reactive measures of affective reading are the self-reporting questionnaire or inventory. Other reactive measures include teacher interviews, student journals and diaries. In interpreting the results of reactive measures it should be recognized that responses may not be a true indication of participants' behavior. Nonreactive measures include physical evidence regarding library use; systematic planned observation of students; spontaneous observation and archival records reporting student attendance and library circulation.

The form of assessment most widely used by researchers and classroom teachers is the self-reporting questionnaire or inventory. Self-reporting forms allow a relatively quick and inexpensive way of measuring attitudes. Questionnaires enable researchers to collect and process a great deal of data about attitudes and habits from a large number of people in a short period of time. Currently, there are a number of affective measuring inventories and questionnaires that adequately serve the needs of reading educators (Reed, 1978).

The Reading Attitude Inventory developed by Sartain measures four aspects of reading: recreational reading, work-type reading, learning to read and the social values of reading. In answering the questionnaire, which has been validated for the elementary grades, students are forced to choose between two paired sentences

such as "I do not read books from the classroom table or shelf every day" or "I read something from the classroom table or shelf every day" (Sartain, 1974).

The seventy item Student Views on Reading constructed by Kennedy and Halinsky measures secondary school students' interests and feelings toward reading in both leisure time reading and required reading. This measure is meant to assess a student's attitude toward a total school reading program (Kennedy & Halinsky, 1975).

The Estes Reading Attitude Scale, a twenty item scale, has been validated for students in grades 3-12. The scale assesses a student's feelings toward and interest in reading by checking the amount of agreement the student has with such statements as "Sharing books in class is a waste of time." Dulin and Chester conclude, "The Estes Scale is a very powerful instrument for measuring levels of positive attitude toward books and reading" (Dulin & Chester, 1974).

Numerous other methods of assessment exist although the self-reporting questionnaire is the quickest and most inexpensive method of assessing affective growth. The interactions between teacher and student should provide opportunities for interchanges about students' feelings toward reading and reading habits. Conferences with students should deal with the reader's reactions to the book or reading assignment. Questions such as "Would you like to read another book by this same author?" can be used to measure a student's affective response to his/her reading. Other possible

sources of measuring students' reading attitudes and habits are student journals or diaries. Long and Henderson (1971), in an attempt to determine how much leisure time students spent reading, asked their students to record in their journals how they spent their time outside of school. Leisure activities were classified and the researchers determined the amount of time spent reading.

While there is no question about the importance of reactive measures as a means of collecting data about students' affective responses to reading, caution must be taken in interpreting the results. It should be recognized that responses may not be a true indication of a participant's behavior. Since the subject knows that his/her feelings or attitudes are being measured, the subject may modify his/her responses. Estes suggests, "People may choose to lie on such scales for fear of admitting dislike for a socially and academically accepted behavior." Students may fake their responses even in the most carefully designed instruments (Reed, 1978).

Nonreactive assessment measures of the affective components of reading do not have to rely on the cooperation of the respondents during the collection of data. The participants are not aware that they are being measured or assessed. Physical evidence, observation and archival records have the outstanding advantage of inconspicuousness.

The possibility of gathering physical evidence in assessing students' feelings toward reading and their reading habits exists

in schools. The relative popularity of books or magazines could be determined by checking school library records. The replacement rate of both soft and hardback books in the school library could be used as an index to the amount of reading which occurs in the school or specific classrooms. Systematic observation can add to our knowledge of students' attitudes toward reading and their reading habits. Observers may be positioned so that the participants are unaware that they are being observed. Data may be collected on the amount of recreational type reading students do during their free time and the nature of reading materials.

Teacher observations may also prove helpful as a means of gathering data about the affective components of reading. Checklists and scales to aid the educators in observations exist. Rowell (1972) developed A Scale of Reading Attitude Based on Behavior which gives the observer the opportunity to rate students in a variety of reading experiences. Heathington and Alexander (1978) have developed a ten question observation checklist which can be used by classroom teachers for assessment measurement. The Mikulecky Behavioral Reading Attitude Measure attempts to identify attitudes toward reading in behavioral terms, and it also attempts to identify the stage of attitude development according to Krathwohl's Taxonomy of the Affective Domain (Reed, 1978).

Spontaneous observation by the classroom teacher can also give significant information about students' reading attitudes and habits. Because observation is so versatile teachers can design observations

to meet their objectives for assessing attitudes or habits. Observations can be structured to assess attitudes or habits in a specific program or instructional procedure.

Attendance reports and library circulation figures may be used as indices of student attitudes toward reading. There are several advantages in using data of this nature. The data already exist within the school records and there is little expense in collecting the existing information. The "Hooked on Books" program developed by Fader and McNeil (1968) used the number of books read by students as a measure of affective growth. Lawshe and LaBrant (1936) used library circulation figures as a measure of the effectiveness of a curriculum design that emphasized extensive reading. In discussions of the limitations of nonreactive means of assessment researchers indicate the importance of controlling for possible sources of internal and external validity.

Reed (1978) advocates a research design that makes use of multiple measures since no research method is without bias. By using a variety of methods the chances for success in assessing affective factors--attitudes and habits--are greater. The multiple measurement model which includes reactive and nonreactive measures of affective factors is the model which holds the greatest promise for the future.

Correlates

Although there is a great deal of discussion about the probable correlation between reading attitudes and habits, and

academic achievement, the active research in this area is less copious than would be expected. Considerable importance is given to the relationship between affective factors and reading achievement yet the information available in the literature is scanty. The studies which have been conducted have resulted in conflicting evidence.

A 1976 study by Pierog revealed that there was a definite positive correlation between York University students' grade point average and the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes. An earlier study by Pierog (1972) indicated a significant difference in the pretest-posttest scores of students who took the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes and participated in a study skills workshop.

Two studies by Caple (1969) found that there was no significant difference in grade point averages between groups of students who attended study skills workshops designed to encourage positive reading attitudes and habits and those who did not attend the sessions. Caple concluded that organized study sessions which encourage positive reading attitudes and habits do not have an effect upon the academic achievement of the student participants. The effect of the sessions on students' attitudes and habits was not discussed.

A study conducted by Wilson (1968) at the University of Mississippi yielded similar results. The experimental group attended study skills classes and the control group did not. Wilson reported no significant difference in academic achievement

between the two matched groups of Liberal Arts students. No information was given regarding the effects of classes on students' attitudes and habits.

A University of Connecticut study (Kaye, 1972) used two matched groups of failing students. The experimental group received study skills counseling which included affective components from one-and-one-half hours weekly. The results indicated that at the end of the term both groups had improved but members of the experimental group had more than doubled their grade point averages. The experimental group was significantly superior to the control group on mean grade point average.

Mikulecky (1978) studied the reading attitudes and habits of tenth and eleventh grade students in two midwestern high schools. While he was primarily concerned with the ability of teachers to predict students' reading attitudes and habits, Mikulecky's results also revealed a slight positive relationship between the students' attitude toward reading and their reading habits.

The aforementioned studies have shown varied results with regard to the correlations between attitudes and habits on one hand and the affective factors of reading and academic achievement on the other.

Summary

Although we have shelves filled with writing proclaiming the desirability of developing positive attitudes and habits toward books and reading, educators still need to develop adequate

definitions of reading attitudes and reading habits. More attention is being given to the development of affective domain objectives in education. However, measurement of affective factors is still admittedly primitive. Khan and Weiss (1973) report that research on affective behavior is still in its infancy. Instrumentation and quantification procedures are proving to be more complex than they have been in the study of cognitive variables. More research studies which demonstrate the relationships between affective factors and reading achievement are needed. Also necessary is research which investigates the nature of the relationships between reading attitudes and reading habits.

Chapter III

Design of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of two distinct groups of freshman college students.

A second purpose was to determine if a significant difference, in relation to reading attitudes and reading habits existed between the two groups.

Methodology

Subjects

One hundred and twenty students enrolled in the freshman class in a New York State University College were employed as subjects. Sixty students enrolled in classes in the Learning Skills Center (LSC) and sixty students enrolled in classes in the General Education Program (GEP) were involved.

A screening formula devised by Dudley (Note 1) was used to select the target population of students who were designated to register for LSC classes. The predictor equation uses scores from the verbal portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the American College Test, and the high school average of each student. This group of students has been characterized as

lacking in the communication skills necessary for an academically successful college experience.

The GEP students were randomly selected from the remaining students after the LSC group was defined. It is believed that students in this group represent a cross section of the freshman class. Enough information on these students was not available to apply the predictor equation (Leffler, Note 2).

Instruments

1. Estes' Reading Attitude Scale was used to measure attitudes toward reading.
2. The Survey of Reading Habits Questionnaire was used to measure reading habits. This is a researcher-designed instrument.

Procedure

Eight participating faculty members distributed the questionnaires to students in their classes. An explanation of the study and specific directions were made available to faculty prior to distribution.

Students were given the following directions by each instructor:

Please consider each question thoughtfully. Do not sign your name. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements--therefore no judgments are being made about you as individuals. Code both questionnaires by using three numbers and three letters. The purpose is to learn more about students' reading attitudes and reading habits.

After completion, the questionnaires were matched by the codes and each questionnaire was scored. The data were collected from the two instruments and analyzed by means of a correlational statistic and a t test.

Summary

One hundred and twenty students were asked to complete a reading attitude survey and a reading habits survey. They were instructed to do so anonymously, but to code both questionnaires using the same three numbers and three letters. After completion each questionnaire was scored and matched by code. Correlations were determined between attitudes and habits for both groups. The derived mean scores of the two distinct groups were compared.

Chapter IV

Findings and Interpretation of Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of two distinct groups of college freshmen.

A second purpose was to determine if a significant difference, in relation to reading attitudes and reading habits, existed between the two groups.

Analysis of Data

Table 1 includes the scores of the 60 LSC students on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Reading Habits. The mean score for the LSC group on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale was 57.406 with a standard deviation of 8.26. The mean score for the group on the Survey of Reading Habits was 54.984 with a standard deviation of 7.51.

A statistically significant correlation ($r = +.694$; $p < .001$) was found to exist between the reading attitudes and habits of the LSC students.

Table 1

LSC Student Raw Scores on the Estes' Reading AttitudeScale and the Survey of Reading Habits

| <u>Ss</u> | <u>Estes' Reading Attitude</u> <u>Scale</u> | Survey of Reading Habits | <u>r</u> |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1 | 59 | 58 | |
| 2 | 62 | 59 | |
| 3 | 38 | 51 | |
| 4 | 54 | 54 | |
| 5 | 60 | 51 | |
| 6 | 50 | 48 | |
| 7 | 56 | 52 | |
| 8 | 49 | 43 | |
| 9 | 54 | 49 | |
| 10 | 55 | 57 | |
| 11 | 58 | 45 | |
| 12 | 59 | 59 | |
| 13 | 60 | 51 | |
| 14 | 54 | 61 | |
| 15 | 62 | 54 | |
| 16 | 45 | 49 | |
| 17 | 69 | 69 | |
| 18 | 54 | 55 | |
| 19 | 41 | 43 | |
| 20 | 50 | 59 | |
| 21 | 70 | 64 | |
| 22 | 52 | 48 | |
| 23 | 63 | 63 | |
| 24 | 59 | 54 | |
| 25 | 55 | 57 | |
| 26 | 59 | 57 | |
| 27 | 65 | 59 | |
| 28 | 72 | 67 | |
| 29 | 63 | 53 | |
| 30 | 46 | 37 | |

Table 1 (Continued)

| <u>Ss</u> | <u>Estes' Reading Attitude Scale</u> | <u>Survey of Reading Habits</u> | <u>r</u> |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 31 | 75 | 61 | |
| 32 | 58 | 61 | |
| 33 | 58 | 59 | |
| 34 | 56 | 56 | |
| 35 | 65 | 49 | |
| 36 | 49 | 46 | |
| 37 | 60 | 68 | |
| 38 | 64 | 53 | |
| 39 | 60 | 59 | |
| 40 | 67 | 54 | |
| 41 | 43 | 44 | |
| 42 | 67 | 54 | |
| 43 | 56 | 53 | |
| 44 | 51 | 52 | |
| 45 | 58 | 53 | |
| 46 | 58 | 54 | |
| 47 | 52 | 58 | |
| 48 | 60 | 55 | |
| 49 | 60 | 54 | |
| 50 | 61 | 69 | |
| 51 | 37 | 34 | |
| 52 | 70 | 68 | |
| 53 | 68 | 57 | |
| 54 | 62 | 64 | |
| 55 | 66 | 57 | |
| 56 | 53 | 61 | |
| 57 | 57 | 58 | |
| 58 | 71 | 66 | |
| 59 | 54 | 64 | |
| 60 | 58 | 57 | |
| | | | <u>.694</u> |

df = 118

$r_{crit} = .2546$

$p < .001$

Table 2 includes the scores of the 60 GEP students on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale and the Survey of Reading Habits. The mean score for the GEP students on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale was 59.083 with a standard deviation of 6.64. The mean score for this group on the Survey of Reading Habits was 54.883 with a standard deviation of 6.65.

The correlation between the reading attitudes and habits of the GEP group was statistically significant ($r = +.544$; $p < .001$).

An independent t test of the difference between two means was used to analyze the derived mean correlated scores. The difference was not found significant. (Table 3)

Table 2

GEP Student Raw Scores on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale
and the Survey of Reading Habits

| <u>Ss</u> | <u>Estes' Reading Attitude Scale</u> | <u>Survey of Reading Habits</u> | <u>r</u> |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | 45 | 51 | |
| 2 | 60 | 52 | |
| 3 | 59 | 60 | |
| 4 | 55 | 46 | |
| 5 | 63 | 61 | |
| 6 | 52 | 44 | |
| 7 | 72 | 68 | |
| 8 | 49 | 52 | |
| 9 | 52 | 50 | |
| 10 | 66 | 40 | |
| 11 | 52 | 60 | |
| 12 | 75 | 72 | |
| 13 | 69 | 59 | |
| 14 | 63 | 55 | |
| 15 | 54 | 59 | |
| 16 | 50 | 49 | |
| 17 | 67 | 60 | |
| 18 | 54 | 57 | |
| 19 | 66 | 56 | |
| 20 | 48 | 44 | |
| 21 | 55 | 53 | |
| 22 | 59 | 58 | |
| 23 | 65 | 50 | |
| 24 | 55 | 59 | |
| 25 | 57 | 54 | |
| 26 | 53 | 49 | |
| 27 | 56 | 44 | |
| 28 | 59 | 59 | |
| 29 | 55 | 49 | |
| 30 | 64 | 55 | |

Table 2 (Continued)

| <u>Ss</u> | <u>Estes' Reading Attitude Scale</u> | <u>Survey of Reading Habits</u> | <u>r</u> |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 31 | 64 | 56 | |
| 32 | 64 | 55 | |
| 33 | 60 | 63 | |
| 34 | 59 | 47 | |
| 35 | 48 | 48 | |
| 36 | 61 | 63 | |
| 37 | 56 | 46 | |
| 38 | 50 | 62 | |
| 39 | 59 | 52 | |
| 40 | 58 | 49 | |
| 41 | 63 | 54 | |
| 42 | 64 | 65 | |
| 43 | 63 | 51 | |
| 44 | 59 | 60 | |
| 45 | 66 | 57 | |
| 46 | 53 | 53 | |
| 47 | 69 | 50 | |
| 48 | 55 | 53 | |
| 49 | 55 | 52 | |
| 50 | 50 | 49 | |
| 51 | 59 | 56 | |
| 52 | 60 | 55 | |
| 53 | 65 | 63 | |
| 54 | 50 | 46 | |
| 55 | 64 | 58 | |
| 56 | 68 | 63 | |
| 57 | 62 | 59 | |
| 58 | 58 | 54 | |
| 59 | 63 | 60 | |
| 60 | 71 | 69 | |
| | | | <u>.544</u> |

df = 118

$r_{crit} = .2546$

$p < .001$

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of the Derived Mean
Correlated Scores for the GEP and LSC Groups

| Group | \bar{X} | s.d. | |
|-------|-----------|------|--------|
| GEP | 4.200 | 6.35 | (N.S.) |
| LSC | 2.3667 | 6.37 | (N.S.) |

df = 118

p = .1170

$t_{crit} = 1.980$

$\alpha = .05$

Summary

The mean score for the LSC students on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale was 57.406 and the mean score on the Survey of Reading Habits was 54.984. The mean score for the GEP students on the Estes' Reading Attitude Scale was 59.083 and the mean score for this group on the Survey of Reading Habits was 54.883. The results demonstrate that a significant correlation exists between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of the students in the LSC and the GEP.

An independent t test of the difference between two means revealed that the difference between the scores of the LSC students and the GEP students was not significant.

Chapter V

Conclusion and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between freshman students' reading attitudes and reading habits.

A second purpose was to determine if a significant difference, in relation to reading attitudes and reading habits, existed between the two groups.

Conclusion

The results of this investigation strongly revealed that a significant correlation exists between the reading attitudes and the reading habits of freshman college students in the LSC and the GEP. The results also demonstrated that no significant difference exists between the two groups of freshmen.

From the data collected, it appears that a relationship exists between how students think about reading and their actual reading habits but the exact nature of that relationship is unknown.

Implications for Research

Since some instruments are available to measure students' attitudes and habits, it might be valuable to investigate and describe the nature of the relationships between the affective factors. Only limited number of studies have attempted to compare

attitudes and habits. Most of these are based on correlational data and some of the findings are contradictory. Valid generalizations are difficult to make.

Further research dealing with instrument development would be beneficial since refined assessments of affective factors will add an important dimension to attitude research. The conclusion that subjects in this study are knowledgeable of positive attitudes and good reading habits is only as valid as the assessments used to measure attitudes and habits. Replication of this study should not be attempted without consideration for possible refinements of the instruments.

Adequate conceptualization and definition of reading attitude constructs is still a major research problem in the field. Since attitudes constitute a significant source of behavioral variance, further research could serve to integrate and explain a wide range of behavior. Patterns which develop in the study of reading attitude could play a significant role in such research.

Finally, investigations which examine the relationships between affective factors and a student's degree of academic success may be beneficial. A longitudinal study of the same subjects would be valuable in determining attitude change over a period of time and its relationship to reading achievement.

Implications for Classroom Practice

Students' performance on attitude and habit assessments would provide valuable information to the classroom teacher. Low scores

may be indicative of the need to add affective components to reading courses which already exist. Scores may show the need for programs to develop good reading habits.

It is important that teachers look at the affective needs of students as well as the students' immediate reading-study needs. It seems likely that significant changes in habits and attitudes must occur if lasting changes in reading proficiency are to become a reality. Giving students time to read and discuss a variety of periodicals and novels in class may further this objective. How material is presented must be considered in relation to affective change. If an open and honest atmosphere exists within the classroom, creative and critical thinking is encouraged. Attitudes are likely to be more positive where students are allowed to express their ideas more freely.

Knowledge of students' reading attitudes and habits may be beneficial to the instructor in designing comprehensive instructional plans that result in lifelong benefits for each student enrolled in reading courses. If it is assumed that information about students' reading attitudes and habits has limited value and that instruction should deal strictly with reading and studying textbook material, the overall impact and results of a reading course would be severely limited. Incorporating affective dimensions into the curriculum may aid students in developing positive reading attitudes and good reading habits which are necessary if reading is to become a means by which students can discover insights about themselves and their world.

This study has been a primary investigation of the relationships between freshman college students' reading attitudes and their reading habits. It could possibly be used as a foundation for further reading research in the affective domain.

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Appendix A

Estes' Reading Attitude Scale

ESTES' READING ATTITUDE SCALE

- A: strongly agree
 B: agree
 C: disagree
 D: strongly disagree

DIRECTIONS: Place a check mark in the appropriate box.

| STATEMENTS | A | B | C | D |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Reading is for learning but not for enjoyment. | | | | |
| 2. Money spent on books is well spent. | | | | |
| 3. There is nothing to be gained from reading books. | | | | |
| 4. Books are a bore. | | | | |
| 5. Reading is a good way to spend spare time. | | | | |
| 6. Discussing books in class is a waste of time. | | | | |
| 7. Reading turns me on. | | | | |
| 8. Reading is only for grade grubbers. | | | | |
| 9. Books aren't usually good enough to finish. | | | | |
| 10. Reading is rewarding for me. | | | | |
| 11. Reading becomes boring after about an hour. | | | | |
| 12. Most books are too long and dull. | | | | |
| 13. Free reading doesn't teach anything. | | | | |
| 14. There are many books which I hope to read. | | | | |
| 15. Books should not be read except for class requirements. | | | | |
| 16. Reading is something I can do without. | | | | |
| 17. A certain amount of summer vacation should be set aside for reading. | | | | |
| 18. Books make good presents. | | | | |
| 19. Reading is dull. | | | | |

Appendix B
Survey of Reading Habits

SURVEY OF READING HABITS

DIRECTIONS: Place a check mark in the appropriate box.

| STATEMENTS | RESPONSES | | | |
|---|-----------|--------|-----------|-------|
| | NEVER | SELDOM | SOMETIMES | NEVER |
| 1. I use the library resources at least once a week. | | | | |
| 2. I read textbooks at a different speed than I read fiction and light magazine articles. | | | | |
| 3. I know specifically why I am reading an assignment. | | | | |
| 4. I read a daily newspaper or weekly magazine. | | | | |
| 5. I read a variety of material which may include fiction or nonfiction--biography, poetry, plays or technical and scientific publications. | | | | |
| 6. I look for the important points in my reading. | | | | |
| 7. I set aside time each day for personal reading. | | | | |
| 8. I write an outline or summary of what I have just read in a textbook. | | | | |
| 9. I see relationships between ideas in my reading. | | | | |
| 10. I tend to read anything that looks interesting. | | | | |
| 11. I compare and contrast pieces of writing (e.g. two books or magazine articles on the same subject. | | | | |
| 12. I share books which I enjoy with my friends. | | | | |
| 13. I take time to read tables, charts and graphs which appear in my reading. | | | | |
| 14. I remember what I read. | | | | |
| 15. As I read I determine the difference between fact and opinion. | | | | |
| 16. I annotate (e.g. highlight, underline, mark) what I read in a textbook. | | | | |
| 17. I would give books as gifts. | | | | |
| 18. I take something to read if I know I am going to be kept waiting (e.g. doctor's appointments. | | | | |
| 19. I have read more than one of my favorite author's works. | | | | |