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When and where students engage in recreational reading

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Abstract

Students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades of Eagle Grove Community Schools in Eagle Grove, Iowa, responded to a questionnaire seeking to ascertain where the students were and what time it was when they engaged in recreational reading. Responses were categorized by the researcher and analyzed by grade level and sex. Location categories, from the highest percentage of responses to the lowest included: "bedroom", "school", "living room", "kitchen", "other home", "outdoors", "transportation", "library", "bathroom", "other buildings", and "don't read". Time period categories, from the highest percentage of responses to the lowest included: "evening", "school", "afternoon", "morning", "vacations", "qualified time periods", "meal times", "bored", and "don't read". No single location or time period category received over a 40% response rate from the students.

When and Where
Students Engage In Recreational Reading

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades of Eagle Grove Community Schools in Eagle Grove, Iowa, responded to a questionnaire seeking to ascertain where the students were and what time it was when they engaged in recreational reading. Responses were categorized by the researcher and analyzed by grade level and sex. Location categories, from the highest percentage of responses to the lowest included: "bedroom", "school", "living room", "kitchen", "other home", "outdoors", "transportation", "library", "bathroom", "other buildings", and "don't read". Time period categories, from the highest percentage of responses to the lowest included: "evening", "school", "afternoon", "morning", "vacations", "qualified time periods", "meal times", "bored", and "don't read". No single location or time period category received over a 40% response rate from the students.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

Reading is one of the fundamental skills developed in school curriculums. By providing exercises to improve reading skills and by providing the opportunity to engage in reading both inside and outside of the classroom, educators strive to help students develop life-long reading habits. One objective of most reading programs is for the student to read for his/her own pleasure. Because recreational reading is so highly desired, many studies about recreational reading have, therefore, been undertaken to determine the factors influencing this form of reading. Most of these studies have focused on what types of books are read.

This study instead focused on when and where students read. Such information is needed for the promotion of recreational reading during the time periods reading is most likely to occur and for the development of environments conducive to recreational reading. By ascertaining the locations and time periods that students most prefer to read, teachers, administrators, and parents of Eagle Grove students could encourage recreational reading by responding to these preferences. Information about the student's time and location preferences could have impact on the design of media centers, the scheduling of reading times, and the locations where reading materials need to be placed for best student usage.

The purpose, then, of this study was to investigate two factors related to recreational reading. More specifically, the following questions were answered.

1. In what locations do students in grades four, eight, and twelve of the Eagle Grove Community Schools engage in recreational reading?
2. During what time periods do students in grades four, eight, and twelve of the Eagle Grove Community Schools engage in recreational reading?

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were tested.

1. No one location for recreational reading will represent a majority of the responses from females in the
 - a. fourth grade
 - b. eighth grade
 - c. twelfth grade.
2. No one location for recreational reading will represent a majority of the responses from males in the
 - a. fourth grade
 - b. eighth grade
 - c. twelfth grade.

3. No one time period for recreational reading will represent a majority of the responses from females in the
 - a. fourth grade
 - b. eighth grade
 - c. twelfth grade.
4. No one time period for recreational reading will represent a majority of the responses from males in the
 - a. fourth grade
 - b. eighth grade
 - c. twelfth grade.

Assumptions

Two assumptions regarding recreational reading are inherent to this study. One basic assumption is that most students engage in recreational reading and that they choose a variety of times and places for this activity. This leads to a second assumption which is that most students have adequate reading skills to allow them to read for their own recreation. In addition, all of the underlying assumptions regarding the use of a questionnaire as a data gathering instrument are understood.

Limitations

This study was limited by the geographical location and by the class levels selected. Therefore, conclusions drawn from this study are only appropriate for students in the

fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades attending Eagle Grove Community Schools in Eagle Grove, Iowa, in 1986.

This study excluded reading required for course assignments or activities, and it did not include the motivations and attitudes connected with reading. Familial and other environmental influences associated with reading were not investigated. Whether students have access to materials for recreational reading was not investigated in this study and neither was the appropriateness or quality of the recreational reading materials. The reading ability of the students was not considered as a factor contributing to recreational reading.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, recreational reading was defined as the term is utilized in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system. Recreational reading is defined as the "...reading that is done for relaxation or amusement, or to satisfy interests unrelated to educational or vocational obligations".¹ Within the review of the related literature, however, the terms leisure reading, recreational reading, and voluntary reading are used interchangeably.

¹James E. Houston, ed., Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors, 10th ed. (Phoenix, Arizona: Dryx Press, 1984), p. 215.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Related Literature

Many studies have been conducted about recreational reading. However, most empirical studies have focused on the factors influencing the amount of recreational reading with little work undertaken on determining when and where students engage in recreational reading. Of necessity then, this review will focus on what is known about recreational reading and, more specifically, on those studies dealing with adult's recreational reading habits, the types of books students prefer to read, the space requirements for reading areas, and finally a report on the few available studies dealing directly with the time periods and the locations where students engage in recreational reading.

Since children imitate adults, it is assumed that the reading habits of parents and other adults in the student's life will serve as a model for children's reading habits. Charles Koepke contends that "...the Hawthorne effect of parents walking around with books reading or playing like they are reading is significant in a child's development."² In recognition of this effect the results of several adult reading research studies are of importance to this study.

²Charles A. Koepke III, "The Bathroom Library, A Study In Modeling Behavior," in Claremont Reading Conference, Thirty-ninth Year-Book, ed. Malcolm F. Douglass (Claremont, California: Claremont Reading Conference, 1975), p. 62.

Based on the results of a 1971 interview study with a random sample of 5,067 adults over sixteen years of age, Amiel Sharon reported that the average American adult reads one hour, forty-six minutes per day with 73 percent of the adults reading newspapers, 39 percent reading magazines, and 33 percent reading books.³ Most studies agree with the Sharon results that newspapers, magazines and books are the most frequent types of leisure reading materials for adults.

John P. Robinson echoed the Sharon findings in his report of a nation-wide survey of adults in which he duplicated previous studies to determine trends of adult reading. In 1977 newspapers were read by 63 percent of the American adult population daily, down from 73 percent in 1967 and from 77 percent in 1957. The same downward trend was reported in the percentages of people reading magazines, 28 percent in 1976, 25 percent in 1965, 27 percent in 1957, and 38 percent in 1946. But the trend does not hold true for the number of minutes per day spent reading print materials such as pamphlets and newsletters. In 1965 the average American adult spent 22 minutes per day on these materials as opposed to 27 minutes per day in 1975.⁴

For more current statistics, the results of a telephone survey of a randomly selected sample of 1,450 people sixteen

³Amiel T. Sharon, "What Do Adults Read," Reading Research Quarterly, 9, no.2 (1973-1974), p. 157-59.

⁴John P. Robinson, "The Changing Reading Habits of the American Public," Journal of Communication, 30 (Winter 1980), p. 141-52.

years and older during May and June of 1978 indicated that 6 percent of the adult population read no recreational materials on a daily basis. Of the 94 percent who did read, almost 40 percent of those adults never read books. Of the book readers only one-third of them read at least a book a month with over three-fourths of them choosing reading materials for the subject or content area rather than for pleasure. The motivation for non-readers to read is specific knowledge needs, whereas a reader's main motivation is the pleasure associated with reading.⁵

When looking specifically at books, reports of adult reading habits are even more dismal. In a January, 1964, Gallup poll, 46 percent of adults admitted not reading a book all the way through in the past twelve months. Furthermore the poll revealed that 10 percent of the American population reads 80 percent of the books.⁶ Yankelovich concurred in a report of a 1978 questionnaire survey of a representative random sample of adults over sixteen years of age. She reported 94 percent of the adult population reading but only one-fourth of

⁵Kathryn LeGrand-Brodsky, "Hope For Reading In America: Practically Everyone Reads," Reading Teacher, 8 (May 1979), p. 948-49.

⁶George H. Gallup, The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1959-1971, Vol. 3 of The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971 (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 1805.

this population was involved in a substantial level of book reading.⁷

Adults do have specific locations in which they like to read. In the survey conducted by Yankelovich most adult reading takes place in the reader's home during the evening with the living rooms, dens, and family rooms being the key reading locations. Books are most often read in bed before going to sleep, but magazines and newspapers are more likely to be read in the morning or afternoon within the confines of the kitchen or dining room. Very few people read any type of material enroute to work or school. Libraries are reported by 6 percent as a locale where they read and the bathroom is the choice of 7 percent of the population.⁸

Children may mimic adults in many ways, but they have their own unique patterns in the selection of the types of reading material. Elementary students tend to be more homogeneous in their selection of types of materials to read. Almost all research indicates that younger elementary students prefer imaginative stories such as fairy tales and fantastic adventures. By age nine some differences between the sexes begin to appear. Boys of that age are beginning

⁷Yankelovich, Shelly and White, Inc., Consumer Research Study On Reading and Book Purchasing (Danien, Connecticut]: Book Industry Study Group, Inc., 1978), p. 60.

⁸Yankelovich, p. 86-88.

to prefer more realistic stories." Between the fourth and sixth grade, girls show an increasing preference for books about problems of growing up, books about animals, and mystery/suspense books.¹⁰ At all levels in school girls read more than boys.¹¹ Sex differences are also apparent in the selection of general categories of reading. Boys favor reading of non-fiction books while girls tend to choose fiction materials.¹²

The trend for diversity continues into the junior high/middle school years. A content analysis of top rated stories for junior high students showed that students of this age prefer realistic stories in a contemporary setting written in narrative form.¹³ Boys in junior high, as well as all other school ages, prefer reading about sports.¹⁴ In addition to sports the boys as well as the girls of

¹⁰Lewis M. Terman and Margaret Lima, Children's Reading (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1925), p. 68.

¹¹Donald R. Gallo, Student's Reading Interests: A Report of a Connecticut Survey (ERIC ED 232 143), p. 2.

¹²Terman, p. 68.

¹³J.J. Taylor, "The Voluntary Book Reading Habits of Secondary School Pupils," The Use of English, 25 (Autumn 1973), p. 6.

¹⁴Anthony T. Soares, "Salient Elements of Recreational Reading of Junior High School Students," Elementary English, 40 (December 1963), p. 844.

¹⁵Gallo, p. 2.

middle school and junior high age like books about animals, teen-age problems, and mysteries.¹⁵

A descriptive research project undertaken in two small Iowa towns revealed the other highly preferred categories for junior high students are romance, careers, and comedy with boys showing preference for science fiction, adventure, and sea categories.¹⁶ Girls responding to a questionnaire revealed that romances were their first choice followed by mystery.¹⁷ Readers in junior high have dislikes as well as likes. They tend to stay away from stories with younger children as characters, and do not necessarily enjoy stories with the author as a character.¹⁸

A national survey of thirteen-year-olds revealed that 71.8 percent of this age group reported reading for their own enjoyment more than once a week.¹⁹ Students who are essentially non-readers do show a preference for

¹⁵Soares, p. 844.

¹⁶Mary L. Smith and Isabel V. Eno, "What Do They Really Want To Read?" English Journal, 50 (May 1961), p. 344.

¹⁷Smith, p. 344.

¹⁸Soares, p. 844.

¹⁹National Assessment of Educational Progress, Reading Comprehension of American Youth: Do They Understand What They Read? Results From the 1979-1980 National Assessment of Reading and Literature (Denver, Colorado: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1982), p. 3.

specific types of leisure reading materials such as comics, paperbacks, and magazines.²⁰

Senior high students are even more diverse than junior high students in their choice of reading materials. In a questionnaire completed by 510 students in Iowa, boys in high school made the following choices of types of materials in order of highest choice first: adventure, mystery, sea stories, comedy, historically related, and science fiction. Senior high girls were more homogeneous with romance the overwhelming favorite. Girls also liked career, mystery, adventure, and comedy materials.²¹

After students have chosen the type of material to read, the next logical decision to make is when and where to read the selected material. Readers choose their environments in which to read very carefully.²² At all ages "...readers are deliberate about selecting the settings, sounds, and tastes that will accompany their reading."²³ Allowances must be made for the space in which reading takes place as most readers view reading space as personal territory. An experimental study at an academic

²⁰Sarah Landy, An Investigation of the Relationship Between Voluntary Reading and Certain Psychological, Environmental, and Socio-economic Factors in Early Adolescence (ERIC ED 145 409), p. iii.

²¹Smith, p. 344.

²²Katherine K. Newman, "Do You Eat Potato Chips When You Read?" Language Arts, 55 (November/December 1978), p. 978.

²³Newman, p. 979.

reading room confirmed the idea of personal space. When a researcher sat as close to a subject as possible, the subject first changed body posture, then turned direction to face away, and finally moved to a new location where the subject could have his/her own territory.²⁴ Other studies reported taking only five to fifteen minutes to dislodge a subject by invading his/her space.²⁵

In allowing for personal reading space within public buildings it should be kept in mind that people prefer to sit with their backs and sides protected.²⁶ This is important for people concerned with recreational reading since readers make "...highly specialized decisions about circumstances under which they will encounter their chosen print."²⁷

Children can be and are very particular about when and where they read. A study in Great Britain based on interviews with 199 primary school children found that much of the children's reading was done in bed before going to sleep. Weather was a factor for British students with more reading during inclement weather and in winter months. Saturday and Sunday afternoons were other popular times for leisure reading. Almost one-quarter of the British students interviewed revealed they engaged in no leisure reading with

²⁴Aaron Cohen and Elaine Cohen, Designing and Space Planning For Libraries (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1979), p. 3.

²⁵Cohen, p. 3.

²⁶Cohen, p. 5.

²⁷Newman, p. 979.

49 percent of the poor readers doing no leisure reading but all of the good readers reading for their own pleasure.²⁸

Children prefer to be comfortable when they read as is indicated in a questionnaire study given to third graders in four elementary schools in Cedar Falls, Iowa. By an overwhelming response rate of 92 percent, children said their favorite way to read was to be very comfortable such as sitting in an easy chair or lying in bed.²⁹

Two studies revealed specific information on when and where children in two countries do their leisure reading. Greaney reported from daily diaries kept by pupils in America. Pupils in his study spent 5.4 percent of their leisure time in recreational reading with the three major categories of reading including books, comics, and newspapers. As much as 50 percent of the leisure reading occurred in bed especially late at night, late in the afternoon, and early on Sunday morning. Students recorded that their leisure reading increased by approximately one-third on Sundays. This indicates that students read when fewer events relating to them are taking place.³⁰

²⁸Joyce M. Morris, Standards and Progress in Reading (The Mere, Upton Park Slough Bucks: National Foundation for Education Research in England and Wales, 1966), p. 216-17.

²⁹Irene Anna Nissen, "A Survey of Factors That Influence Third Grade Children's Leisure Reading Habits," M.A. paper, University of Northern Iowa, 1976, p. 30.

³⁰Vincent Greaney, "Factors Related To Amount and Type of Leisure Time Reading." Reading Research Quarterly, 15, no.3 (1979-1980), p. 337-57.

British students in their final year of junior school and first year of secondary school responding to a questionnaire revealed similar choices of reading times and locales. Students in Great Britain, like those in America, listed the bedroom as the first choice of reading places with 84 percent reading before going to sleep and 44 percent reading in the morning. Weekends were second in popularity which again was reflected in the American findings. Reading in the bathtub was selected by 14 percent of the children. An encouraging statistic was that a total of 40 percent of the 476 subjects read at any time they possibly could. Other choices of reading places were the toilet, the bus, the library, under the bed covers, and during lunch hour.³¹

Specific studies regarding where and when children read are not numerous. However, many studies have been conducted on factors influencing recreational reading such as where, when, and what adults read, what types of materials children prefer, and the space requirements for reading. It appears that the primary place for children to read for their recreation is in bed, and the most frequent time for reading is at night and on the weekends.

³¹A. Geden, "And Now I'll Begin...When and Where Children Read," Children's Literature In Education, 23 (1976), p. 183-86.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In order to ascertain where and when children of the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades in Eagle Grove Community Schools engage in recreational reading, a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was designed to fit each of the grade levels in the survey, but in essence students in all three grade levels responded to the same requests for information.

After securing approval of the building-level administration on May 7, 1986, to gather data, the cooperation of teachers at each level was requested. All four teachers involved received a letter explaining the research project, asking for their assistance, and giving them instructions for administering the questionnaire to their students. Teachers administered the questionnaire to the students in order to eliminate any effects of the researcher's presence.

At the fourth and eighth grade levels, the questionnaire was administered during the regularly scheduled language arts classes. All students in the selected grades who were present in school the day the survey was administered completed the forms. Only the special education students who were mainstreamed into the regular language arts classes were included in this survey. No attempt was made to give the survey to students absent

from school on the day that the questionnaire was administered.

At the twelfth grade level, students completed the survey in the Government/Political Issues class since this was the only required class at the senior level. All instruments were administered on May 12, 1986, the same day for all grade levels to eliminate discussion of the questionnaire prior to completion of the survey. The number of students in the three grade levels and the names of their respective teachers were obtained from master lists in the superintendent's office.

The day for administering the questionnaire was chosen carefully to eliminate as many interruptions as possible. Care was exercised so that no scheduled interruptions occurred such as assemblies, fire drills, and the like.

After preliminary paragraphs of instructions dealing with filling out the questionnaire, necessary definitions, and acknowledgment of assistance, the survey began with a request to list two locations where the student did his/her recreational reading. A few examples were given in the explanation. A request for two time periods when the student engages in recreational reading followed the question on location. Examples of time periods were also given in the explanation. The data gathering instrument also asked for an identification of the respondent's sex. Grade level designations were not requested since each class

level had the questionnaire printed on a different color of paper.

The categories of time and location necessary for analysis of data were determined by the researcher after the questionnaires were administered and examined. The categories were based on other research, but were designed to meet the unique responses of the Eagle Grove students.

Eleven location categories were established. They were the bedroom, the bathroom, the kitchen, the living room, other home locations, school, the library, other buildings, various forms of transportation, in the outdoors, and the don't read category. The bedroom category included responses of bed, my room, and the bedroom. Included in the bathroom category were the toilet, the bathtub, the tub, in the john, and the bathroom. Designations of the kitchen table, the kitchen, at breakfast, at meals, during supper, and at the table were included in the kitchen category. Responses grouped in the living room category included the family room, in front of the T.V., the living room, by the T.V., in my little corner, in the easy or lazyboy or lounge chair, and in my favorite sofa or couch or davenport. Other home locations were comprised of the basement, at home, in my house, anywhere at home, on top of my house, in the sitting room, downstairs, and on the front porch. The school category consisted of study hall, the classroom, at my desk, during classes, and in school. Two responses were included in the library category, at the library and in the

media center. The other buildings category included responses of the machine shop, at Casey's, waiting at the barber shop, at the grocery store, at a friend's house, at work, at the store, in the barn, and at my grandma's house. On the bus, in the car, and on trips were included in the transportation category. Several responses were placed in the outside category including under a tree, at the park, outdoors, outside, in the backyard, sunbathing, lying out, and sitting in the grass. The don't read category included the responses of never read and don't read.

Responses for the time periods were assigned to nine categories. These included morning, school hours, afternoon, evenings, meal times, vacation periods, qualified time periods, when bored, and the don't read category. The morning category included answers of morning, before school, and 7-8 am. Responses of during free time, in study hall, during school, when done with work or homework, during SSR (Silent Sustained Reading), during the day, midmorning, at library time, during A/A (Advisor/Advisee period), and any other period designation were included in the school hours category. The afternoon category included answers of after school, in the afternoon, on the bus, when home from school, when the paper comes, on the bus ride home from school and any clock hours between 3-5 pm. Responses of bed time, before bed, before sleeping, at night, in the evening, after supper, night time, weeknights, and any time designation between 5-12 pm were included in the evening category. At

noon, during breakfast, and while eating were the responses included in the meals category. Vacation periods included weekends, Saturday, Sunday afternoons, and days during the summer. Qualified time periods included when laying out, when sick, when it's cold outside, when the good shows aren't on, when not tired, on rainy afternoons, at work, driving, and when going to the bathroom. The bored category included when there is time, when there is nothing else to do, when mom tells me to do something else and anytime. The don't read category included never read and don't read responses.

After placing the responses in the appropriate time period or location category the number of responses were converted to percentages. By utilizing the percentages the hypotheses were accepted on the basis of the data analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

After the questionnaires were returned to the researcher via school mail, the responses were examined. There were no blank questionnaires; therefore all responses were included in the data analysis because all questionnaires had at least one response for a location or a time period. No responses were eliminated due to illegibility or vulgarity; hence, all responses were placed in the appropriate category. No fourth grade students were absent on the day the questionnaire was administered. There were, however, two eighth grade and nine twelfth grade students absent. The number of students responding to the survey are listed in Table 1. Included in this table are the number of students in each grade level completing the survey, the number of female and male respondents in each class, and the total number of students responding to the survey.

Table 1
Number of Students Completing Questionnaire
By Sex and Grade Level

Grade Level	Sex		Total
	Female	Male	
Fourth	49	33	82
Eighth	34	30	64
Twelfth	33	32	65
Total	116	95	211

Questionnaires were sorted by sex and by grade level. Response data for location and time period categories were then compiled. Numbers of responses for each of the categories were converted into a percent of total response by sex and by grade level in order to determine if the hypotheses should be accepted or rejected. The number of responses is greater than the number of students who responded to the survey because each student could list two responses for the time period question and two responses for the location question. Data results from the location question are compiled in Table 2 and data results from the time period question are compiled in Table 3.

Hypothesis 1 stated that no one location for recreational reading would represent a majority of the responses from females in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Since no location category received more than 37.7% of the responses from females in any grade level, Hypothesis 1 was accepted for all grade levels.

Females in every grade level selected the "bedroom" as the prime location for recreational reading with "school" receiving the second highest number of responses for fourth and eighth grade girls. Twelfth grade girls listed "school" third, with the "living room" receiving the second highest number of responses. The high rating of "outdoors" responses could possibly be explained by the warm temperatures on the day of the survey. Overall, females listed the "bedroom" as the location for recreational

Table 2
 Number and Percent* of Student Responses About Locations
 For Recreational Reading by Grade Level And Sex

Locations	4th Grade				8th Grade				12th Grade				Total			
	Sex				Sex				Sex							
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bedroom	32	32.9	13	19.7	24	32.9	13	21.0	26	37.7	16	28.6	82	34.3	42	22.8
Bathroom	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	5	8.1	2	2.9	3	5.4	3	1.3	8	4.3
Kitchen	5	5.2	6	9.1	5	6.8	7	11.3	4	5.8	12	21.4	14	5.9	25	13.6
Living	15	15.5	7	10.6	12	16.4	8	12.9	11	16.0	6	10.7	38	15.9	21	11.4
Other Home	5	5.2	12	18.2	6	8.2	6	9.7	2	2.9	4	7.1	13	5.4	22	12.0
School	16	16.5	16	24.2	18	24.7	17	27.4	7	10.1	5	8.9	41	17.1	38	20.7
Library	3	3.1	4	6.1	1	1.4	1	1.6	4	5.8	2	3.6	8	3.3	7	3.8
Other Buildings	1	1.0	5	7.6	1	1.4	1	1.6	2	2.9	0	0.0	4	1.7	6	3.3
Transportation	9	9.3	1	1.5	2	2.7	3	4.8	4	5.8	2	3.6	15	6.3	6	3.3
Outdoors	11	11.3	2	3.0	3	4.1	1	1.6	7	10.1	1	1.8	21	8.8	4	2.2
Don't Read	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	5	8.9	0	.0	5	2.7
Total	97	100.0	66	100.0	73	100.0	62	100.0	69	100.0	56	100.0	239	100.0	184	100.1

*Percentages rounded to nearest tenth

reading most often, followed in order by "school", "living room", "outdoors", "transportation", "kitchen", "other home locations", "library", "other buildings", and the "bathroom". All females reported reading for recreational purposes in at least one location with no females reporting "don't read".

Hypothesis 2 stated that no one location for recreational reading would represent a majority of the responses from males in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Since no location category received more than 28.6% of the responses from the males in any grade level, Hypothesis 2 was accepted.

Males in fourth and eighth grade listed "school" most often as their choice of location for recreational reading while the twelfth grade males gave the response of "bedroom" most frequently. Fourth grade males listed a large variety of "other home locations" to read for recreation which was not true of the eighth and twelfth grade males. One large difference between male and female responses to location for recreational reading was in the "kitchen" category. While 5.9% of the females listed "kitchen" as a place to read, more than twice as many males (13.6%) engage in recreational reading in the "kitchen". However, four times as many females (8.8%) listed "outdoors" as a location for reading than did males (2.2%). This could perhaps be explained by the popularity for laying out in the sun by females. As a group the males listed "bedroom" most often as the place

they engage in recreational reading followed by "school", "kitchen", "other home locations", "living room", "bathroom", "library", "other buildings" and "transportation", "not reading" and "outdoors".

Hypothesis 3 stated that no one time period for recreational reading would represent a majority of the responses from females in each of the three grade levels surveyed. Since no time period category received more than 40.0% of the responses from females in any grade level Hypothesis 3 was accepted.

"Evening" was the time period response listed most often by the females in all three grade levels answering this survey. Fourth and eighth grade girls listed "school" second in responses followed closely by "afternoon". Twelfth grade girls reversed this order by listing "afternoon" slightly more frequently than "school". Twelfth grade females listed "morning" almost twice as frequently (12.3%) as did the fourth grade females (7.3%) and more than double the response of the eighth grade females (6.0%). Overall, the females in the survey gave the response of "evening" most frequently, a result found in other research. "School" was listed second which is also predictable since the survey was conducted during school hours. Other time periods selected by the females for recreational reading, in order of highest to lowest percentage of responses include: "afternoon", "morning", "vacations", "qualified time period", "bored", and "meal

Table 3
 Number and Percent* of Student Responses About Time Periods
 For Recreational Reading By Grade Level and Sex

Time Periods	4th Grade				8th Grade				12th Grade				Total			
	Sex				Sex				Sex							
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Morning	7	7.3	6	8.7	4	6.0	4	6.9	8	12.3	7	13.5	19	8.3	17	9.5
School Hours	19	19.8	16	23.2	18	26.9	17	29.3	10	15.4	4	7.7	47	20.6	37	20.7
Afternoon	18	18.8	12	17.4	10	14.9	7	12.1	11	17.0	7	13.5	39	17.1	26	14.5
Evening	34	35.4	16	23.2	22	32.8	20	34.5	26	40.0	15	28.8	82	36.0	51	28.5
Meal Times	3	3.1	2	2.9	3	4.5	5	8.6	1	1.5	4	7.7	7	3.1	11	6.1
Vacations	5	5.2	6	8.7	6	9.0	4	6.9	3	4.6	2	3.8	14	6.1	12	6.7
Qualified Time Periods	7	7.3	7	10.1	1	1.5	1	1.7	4	6.2	3	5.8	12	5.3	11	6.1
Bored	3	3.1	4	5.8	3	4.5	0	0.0	2	3.1	5	9.6	8	3.5	9	5.0
Don't Read	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	9.6	0	0.0	5	2.8
Total	96	100.0	69	100.0	67	100.1	58	100.0	65	100.1	52	100.0	228	100.0	179	99.9

*Percentages rounded to nearest tenth

times". All females reported at least one time period for recreational reading with no females reporting a response of "don't read".

Hypothesis 4 stated that no one time period for recreational reading would represent a majority of the responses from males in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Since no time period category received more than 34.5% of the responses from males in any grade level, Hypothesis 4 was accepted.

Although males in the eighth and twelfth grades listed "evening" most frequently in their responses to the survey, fourth grade males gave "evening" and "school" the same number of responses. Twelfth grade males had the same number of responses for the categories listed second most frequently; "afternoon" and "morning". Twelfth grade males gave the response of "school" more than two-thirds less frequently (7.7%) than did eighth grade males (29.3%) or fourth grade males (23.2%). One discouraging response was that 9.6% of the twelfth grade males "don't read" for recreational purposes at all.

Overall the males listed "evening" as a time to read for recreational purposes most often followed by "school", "afternoon", "morning", "vacations", "meal times" and "qualified time periods", "bored", and "don't read". The order of the response categories for females and males was virtually the same for all time periods.

There were several interesting comments and responses on the survey instrument most of which came from the fourth grade classes. One student commented about times when she did not read - in the dark. Another said the absolutely best place to read was in her own little corner. One qualified her time for recreational reading to when her mother tells her to do something else. Another interesting comment came from a fourth grade male who stated that . . . "when I'm sick I read because it helps ignore that your (sic) sick". Several students listed locations where they would not be disturbed. One male student stated that he read in his hideout outside where no one could bother him, one student read in the basement in one of the empty rooms where no one could disturb him, and yet another read for recreational purposes on the top of his home.

One final unique finding was that no student reported reading anywhere and anyplace that she/he could. Perhaps the students were trying to be very specific as the directions asked. Perhaps they responded to the teachers' requests to give precise location and time periods. Perhaps there are no students involved in this survey who could be classified as avid readers.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Recommendations, Summary

Conclusions

Students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades of Eagle Grove Community Schools chose a wide variety of locations and time periods to engage in recreational reading. Overall, the "bedroom" was the response listed most frequently which mirrors the trend of adult reading. Males in the survey listed the "bedroom" less frequently than their female classmates. Perhaps this is a result similar to other studies which show that females engage in more reading than males. Only a small number of students reported reading in the "bathroom". No fourth grade students reported reading in the "bathroom", with only six eighth grade students listing the "bathroom", and five twelfth grade students listing this response. As students grow older and spend more time in the bathroom as part of their growing awareness of personal cleanliness and the opposite sex, perhaps they realize that the bathroom is also a suitable place for recreational reading. Twelfth grade males listed the "kitchen" almost twice as often as any other grouping of students. Since many of the twelfth grade males have extra-curricular activities and part-time employment, maybe the kitchen is one of the few places where they have the time to engage in reading. However, the response rate to the category of "meal times" was approximately half of the response rate of the location

category "kitchen". Some of the recreational reading occurring in the "kitchen" must happen at times other than at meals. The "other home" location category had the highest response rate from fourth grade males. Possibly the males in fourth grade are more creative or less inhibited than the other students participating in the survey, or perhaps fourth grade males have less demands placed on their time and can, therefore, engage in recreational reading in a wider variety of locations. The responses to the "school" category were fairly consistent for both females and males at the fourth and eighth grade levels, but dropped dramatically at the twelfth grade level. This finding may be explained by the fact that reading times are required during the day at both the fourth and eighth grade levels. In fourth grade there is SSR (Silent Sustained Reading) and in eighth grade there is A/A (Advisor/Advisee) time. No such programs exist at the twelfth grade level and this was probably reflected in the findings. More fourth grade females read while being transported from place to place than any other group. Younger students who cannot drive themselves and rural students that have to ride the school bus may read to make the riding time seem shorter.

The response of "evening" was most often listed by students which reflects findings in other surveys and mirrors adult reading habits. "School" hours received the second highest response which is probably explained by the required reading at fourth and eighth grades and by the fact

that the survey was administered during school. The response of "afternoon" was highest in fourth grade and was lower at the other two grade levels. Perhaps this could best be explained by recognizing that fourth grade students do not have much homework or have any extra-curricular activities to compete with their desire to read. A low response to the time period category of "vacations" was found. It is interesting to note that during leisure time when the opportunity to read for recreation would seem to be at its highest point, only 12.8% of the students indicated they read during these times. Since this survey was issued during nice spring weather maybe the students forgot that they read during vacation periods especially during inclement weather, or perhaps since this survey was administered during the school week, maybe the students forgot that they read the Sunday "funnies". Younger students were more likely to list time periods that fell within the "qualified time periods" category. Once again perhaps younger students are less inhibited and more creative than older students.

The highest response in the "bored" time period category came from twelfth grade males. One possible explanation for this may be that twelfth grade males often peruse magazines when the demands on their time are lessened and when they desire to update information on cars, computers, rock groups, and the like. The only respondents to the "don't read" category were five twelfth grade males.

Multiple reasons for them not reading for recreational purposes may include being turned off by the required reading times at lower grade levels, having poor reading skills, participating in athletics which reduces time available for reading, and concentrating on homework to the exclusion of recreational reading.

As an overall composite picture of the recreational reading of Eagle Grove fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students, they appear to choose comfortable locations and convenient time periods which mirror adult reading habits. Eagle Grove students also show their individuality by selecting a wide variety of locations and time periods to engage in recreational reading.

Recommendations

In order to promote recreational reading for fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students in Eagle Grove, Iowa, print materials should be made readily available in both the home and in school, especially in the bedroom, living room, and kitchen areas at home as well as in all areas of the school. Outside of school hours, Eagle Grove's fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students are most likely to read for recreational purposes in the evening, late afternoon, and early evening. If reminded of the opportunity to read during these time periods, perhaps the amount of time spent in recreational reading would increase. Since the number of students reporting that they read for recreation in school dramatically decreased in twelfth grade where reading is not

mandatory, the possibility of requiring a certain amount of reading time at high school could be investigated.

If this study were to be replicated it might be beneficial to include other grade levels and/or to compare the responses of students in two or more school systems. Instead of asking respondents to list location and time periods for recreational reading, categories could be listed with respondents simply marking answers that apply to them. A study seeking to ascertain if the amount of time spent in recreational reading increases if reading materials are located in the places students designate as their preferred locations might be indicated by this study. A study might also be undertaken to determine the amount of time spent in recreational reading during the various time period classifications indicated by this study. Two final suggestions would be to limit the study to locations and time periods outside of school or to limit the study to locations and time periods within the school building and during the school day.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the various time periods and locations where students in fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades of the Eagle Grove Community Schools engage in recreational reading. Students were given a questionnaire in Language Arts or Political Issues/Government class on which they listed time periods and locations of their recreational reading as well as

identifying their sex. Each response was then placed in one of nine time periods or in one of eleven location categories for analysis.

The responses to the location question were as follows in order of the category receiving the largest percentage of responses listed first: "bedroom", "school", "living room", "kitchen", "other home locations", "outdoors", "transportation", "library", "bathroom", "other buildings" and "don't read". No one location category received more than 40% of the responses from females or males. Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were accepted because no one location for recreational reading represented a majority of responses from females and males in each of the grade levels surveyed.

The responses for time period question were as follows in order of the category receiving the highest percentage of responses listed first: "evening", "school", "afternoon", "morning", "vacations", "qualified time periods", "meals", "bored" and "don't read". No one time period received more than 40% of the responses from either the females or males. Therefore, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were accepted since no one time period for recreational reading represented a majority of responses from females or males in each of the three grade levels surveyed.

Sample Letter To Teachers

To: Rhonda Michaelson, Evelyn Wangeland, Ardith Jenkins,
Dennis Gonnerman

From: Harriet Adams

Re: Recreational Reading Questionnaire

I am requesting your cooperation in the administering of the enclosed questionnaires. The questionnaires, a part of my research project requirements at the University of Northern Iowa, will seek to ascertain when and where students in the fourth, eighth and twelfth grade of Eagle Grove Community Schools engage in recreational reading.

I am requesting that you administer the questionnaire on Monday, May 12, 1986, during your Language Arts or Government/Political Issues classes. There will be no follow-up questionnaires for students who are absent on May 12, but I do ask that you note the number of students absent when you return the questionnaires to me via the school mail.

Please advise students not to write their names on the survey instrument and to fill out the questionnaire as completely as possible. The examples included in the introductory material are to serve as guides, but encourage the students to think of other locations and time periods that are appropriate for their individual reading habits. Since it is imperative that the sex identification question is completed, please remind students to circle the appropriate response.

If you have any questions concerning the questionnaire please contact me at 448-5143 during school hours or at 448-4581 in the evenings. If you wish to have the results of this questionnaire I will be glad to provide you with the information after the data has been analyzed.

Thank you for the opportunity to utilize your class time for this research. I am very grateful for your efforts on my behalf.

Fourth Grade Questionnaire

READING FOR ENJOYMENT

All of us read, not just for school work, but also because we enjoy reading. Reading for enjoyment includes all the reading you do simply because you enjoy it. Some examples are reading comic books, magazines, the funnies, cereal boxes and, of course, books. Each of us chooses to read for enjoyment at different places such as at the kitchen table, on the school bus, in the bathtub, or in the outdoors. We also like to read for enjoyment at different times during the day such as at breakfast, in the evening, on weekends, or at school.

In order to find out where you are reading for enjoyment and what time it is when you read, please fill out this paper. Please write down two places AND two times that you read for enjoyment. Thank you for your help.

Places where I read for enjoyment

1. _____

2. _____

Times when I read for enjoyment

1. _____

2. _____

Circle one. I am a: girl boy

LEISURE READING

While some reading is undertaken to fulfill school assignments, other reading is of our own choice. Leisure reading includes the reading you do simply because you wish to read. When you read comic books, magazines, the newspaper funnies, cereal boxes or books chosen for your own reasons, you are leisure reading. There are other choices associated with leisure reading. One such choice involves the location where you do your leisure reading. Some examples include the kitchen table, the bathtub, the bus, the outdoors, and many other locations. Another choice involves the time of day when you leisure read. Examples would include times such as in the evenings, on the weekends, at school, during noon hours, or at breakfast.

In order to determine where you do leisure reading and during what time periods you prefer to do leisure reading, please fill out this survey. Write two locations AND two time periods that you do your leisure reading. Thank you for your help.

Locations where I leisure read

1. _____

2. _____

Time periods when I leisure read

1. _____
2. _____

Circle one.

Female

Male

Twelfth Grade Questionnaire

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RECREATIONAL READING

Recreational reading is reading undertaken for your own interests, relaxation or amusement. Examples include reading the funnies, the latest Hot Rod or Teen magazine, comic books, the labels on the cereal boxes, and books that are unrelated to class assignments. The type of material is only one decision you make when you decide to engage in recreational reading. Two other decisions include the location where you will read and the time of the day when you will do your recreational reading. A few examples of various locations include the bathtub, the school bus, the kitchen table, and the outdoors. You may prefer to read for recreational purposes at breakfast, in the evening, at school, or on weekends, just to name a few time periods.

To find out where you are when you read for recreational purposes and to determine the time period when your recreational reading occurs, please fill out this questionnaire as completely and honestly as you can by writing two locations AND two time periods when you do engage in recreational reading. Thank you for your time and assistance in completing this questionnaire.

Locations where I do recreational reading

1. _____
2. _____

Time periods when I do recreational reading

1. _____
2. _____

Circle one.

Female

Male

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