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A STUDY OF HOW RELUCTANT, REMEDIAL SIXTH
GRADE READERS RESPOND TO HIGH INTEREST,
LOW VOCABULARY TRADE BOOKS

By

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The purpose of this study was to examine reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers' book choices of high interest, low vocabulary trade books to determine what aspects of difficulty level, interest, format and content characteristics influence reluctant, remedial students' decisions to initially select, finish, and reject books. Research questions were formulated to determine the differences of these four factors among book selection categories of selected and finished books, selected but unfinished books, or rejected books. Rejected books were defined as books which the students indicated that they definitely did not want to read.

One hundred sixty-four high interest, low vocabulary trade books were selected by the researcher according to specific criteria for difficulty levels, interest levels, content and format characteristics for inclusion in the study.

The subjects, eight girls and ten boys, were sixth graders in two remedial classes at a middle school situated in a rural mid-Michigan community. The students' reading levels, ranging from 2.0 to 6.0, were determined by the California Achievement Test, Form 16C. The study occurred at the end of the school year.

The Estes Reading Attitude Scale: Elementary Version (Experimental Version) was administered to the remedial readers and to another group of sixth graders reading at or above grade level. Comparison of mean scores for the two groups indicated that the remedial readers' mean score was significantly lower. This appeared to indicate that the remedial readers possessed more negative attitudes toward reading.

The high interest, low vocabulary trade books were made available to the students for a period of six weeks. After a book had been selected and finished or selected but not finished, the students completed an interest inventory designed by the researcher. Interviews were taped to record information about rejected books and to collect additional student responses about the books within the other two categories.

Data were analyzed by mean scores, frequency counts, and chi-square. The significance level for chi-square was set at .05.

Characteristics of selected and finished books indicated that the books were of low difficulty levels and high interest. Books rated as being most interesting had appearances and subjects/contents perceived as being appropriate for students slightly older than sixth graders. The books were most often profusely illustrated or picture books, and less than one hundred pages.

Characteristics of selected but unfinished books indicated that the books were of higher difficulty levels and less interesting. Books rated as being most interesting had appearances and

subjects/contents appropriate for sixth graders. The books contained various content and format characteristics which were similar to either the selected and finished books or the rejected books.

Characteristics of the rejected books indicated that these books had the highest difficulty levels. Books most frequently rejected were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated and longer than 176 pages.

Regardless of book selection category, the amount of illustration appeared to be a more influential factor than the style of illustration.

It was concluded that certain characteristics of the selected and finished books do motivate reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers to initially choose and subsequently sustain enough interest to complete high interest, low vocabulary trade books.

Dedicated
to the memory of
my father
Lawrence Allen Rauner
- August 14, 1975 -

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Dr. George Sherman, who introduced me to the challenge and reward of teaching children to read; and

Dr. Louise Sause, who showed me how to appreciate the worth and individuality of every child.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educators have long been aware that there are many students who cannot read well, do not like to read, and are not motivated to do so on their own. Reluctant, remedial readers often do read more than many educators suspect;^{1,2} however, these materials often are of a non-school nature such as comics, theme magazines, or pulp novels. Classroom and library reading materials are usually designed to try to appeal to students; that is, to motivate students to read them. However, the specific characteristics that motivate reluctant, remedial readers to choose certain free choice reading materials over other materials are not clearly understood.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

Much has been written about various characteristics that are thought to influence reluctant, remedial readers' book selection of high interest, low vocabulary trade books; however, little research has been done. This study will examine the book selection

¹Daniel Fader, The Naked Children (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1971), p. 30.

²Aidan Chambers, The Reluctant Reader (New York: Pergamon Press, 1969), p. 63.

choices and rejections by reluctant, remedial sixth graders of various high interest, low vocabulary trade books to determine what aspects of difficulty level, interest, format and content characteristics influence their decisions to read or not to read specific books and types of books.

Background of the Problem

The term "reluctant reader" can be applied to two distinct groups. One group is composed of students who are able to read at approximately grade level but who are not interested in reading on their own.^{3,4} The second group is composed of students who are remedial or retarded readers who also read infrequently on their own.⁵

This latter category of students - reluctant, remedial readers - is of concern here. This is the student who is reading below grade level and is "turned off" by reading. He/she considers reading to be a distasteful activity, one which is to be avoided as much as possible, and tends to view reading as related only to school; that is, it is not relevant or useful to his or her own personal life.

³Richard S. Alm, "Causes of Reluctance," Remedial Reading Classroom and Clinic, 2d ed., eds. Leo M. Schell and Paul M. Burns (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1972), pp. 95-105.

⁴Jean E. Lowrie, "Helping the Reluctant Reader," The Underachiever in Reading, Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading held at the University of Chicago, ed. Alan H. Robinson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 109-115.

⁵Jerry L. Johns, "Motivating Reluctant Readers," Journal of Research and Development in Education 11 (Spring 1978):69-74.

Publishers are attempting to produce high interest, low vocabulary trade books in an attempt to motivate reluctant readers to read on their own. The various book characteristics which frequently are thought to influence reluctant, remedial readers' book selection are largely supposition. Little research has been reported regarding the influence of difficulty level, interest, content or various selected format characteristics on the book choices of reluctant, remedial middle school aged readers.

Total Definition of Readability

The total readability of a book is more than the difficulty level. It also encompasses factors of interest, various content and format features.

Jean Chall and Edgar Dale (1949) have described a book's readability in the following way:

In the broadest sense, readability is the sum total (including the interactions) of all those elements within a given piece of printed material that affects the success a group of readers have with it.⁶

In other words, the interrelation of legibility, content and its effect on interest, as well as ease of understanding due to the internal factors of the printed material are involved in a student's ease or difficulty of reading a book. Similarly, Harris defined readability as the "qualities of reading material which determine

⁶Jeanne S. Chall, Readability, An Appraisal of Research and Application (Columbus, Ohio: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 1958), p. 7.

how easy it is to understand, how fluently it can be read, and how much interest it generates."⁷ In the following sections these four components--difficulty level, interest, content and format characteristics--that compose the total definition of readability will be discussed.

Difficulty Level.--The difficulty level of a book has often been the only criterion used when teachers or librarians match students to books or recommend books for students to read. The difficulty level of books is frequently determined by readability formulas which measure only the internal aspects of the print.

Many teachers believe that a child's free or recreational reading must be at the child's independent reading level which permits the student to read materials well within his/her reading ability.⁸ Some teachers believe that children, especially reluctant, remedial readers, cannot and will not read books that are too difficult for them. It is further presumed that a reluctant, remedial reader's encounters with books that are beyond his/her independent reading level may create further alienation from reading.

As a result of these beliefs, book difficulty levels as reported by the book publishers may be the only criterion used when

⁷Albert J. Harris, "Some New Developments on Readability," New Horizons of Reading, Proceedings of the Fifth International Reading Association World Congress on Reading, ed. John E. Merritt (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1976), p. 331.

⁸Lynnda Williams, "Reading Interest in Free Choice Books, Readability and the Readability Principle" (Masters thesis, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1979), ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 166 657.

a teacher or librarian recommends library or reading books for children to read. In fact, some school libraries set aside separate sections containing specific titles for each grade level which are chosen largely on the criterion of difficulty levels established by readability formulas.

Various readability formulas (Fry, SMOG, Wheeler, Dale-Chall, Spache) have been devised to measure the ease or difficulty of printed material. These formulas measure various aspects of the internal factors of the writing such as word difficulty or diversity, sentence length and structure, number of syllables or idea density.⁹ However, these formulas give a readability level which is only an approximation of the materials' difficulty.^{10,11} Other book factors and characteristics that the reader brings with him/her enter into the reader's perception of the ease or difficulty of the reading material. One characteristic brought with the reader that influences readability is his/her interest toward the written selection.

In summary, difficulty of a selection determined by readability formulas, is often a major factor when teachers or librarians recommend books or make reading assignments. Other factors, especially those brought by the reader, also influence the

⁹Chall, op. cit., pp. 41-47.

¹⁰Edward Fry, "The Readability Principle," Language Arts 52, (June 1975):847-51.

¹¹Timothy C. Standal, "Readability Formulas: What's Out, What's In?" The Reading Teacher 31 (March 1978):642-46.

student's decision to select a book and consequent decision to finish the book or leave it unfinished.

Interest.--Interest can be described in totally personal terms as that which gives meaning or satisfaction to an individual. A high degree of interest toward a difficult selection may help a student overcome the high difficulty level of the material.

Ruth Strang described interest as being intertwined with the self and one's hopes, aspirations, needs, feelings and values. The more interested one is in something, the more fulfilling and satisfying the experience becomes. Interest is also related to the meaningfulness that an experience has for an individual. It affects reading by allowing an individual to be selective in that which he/she chooses to read. Interest determines the degree of attention given to a situation and the amount of time spent reading.¹²

Several noted authorities of reading believe that the difficulty level of a selection is not the sole criterion affecting student motivation towards reading. George Spache maintains that interest, and not difficulty, is the primary factor in motivating book reading. He reports that if children who have acquired basic word analysis skills and sight word vocabularies have sufficient interest in books, they can read books having difficulty levels

¹²Ruth Strang, "Interest as a Dynamic Force in the Improvement of Reading," New Horizons of Reading, Proceedings of the Fifth International Reading Association World Congress on Reading, ed. John E. Merritt (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1976), pp. 212-219.

above their independent reading levels.¹³ Fry (1975) supports this concept, proposing a Readability Principle to be used in combination with his readability formula which states, "High motivation overcomes high readability level, but low motivation demands a low readability level."¹⁴ Klare stated that difficulty levels are only approximations of the material's difficulty and need to be considered along with human judgments; that is, if interest is high, the difficulty level of a selection may be overestimated by the applied readability formula.¹⁵

Interests are also defined as tendencies toward specific topics and content; that is, "topics and content which children actively choose to read."¹⁶ Interests, according to this definition, will be discussed later in the section about content/theme and subject matter.

In summary, interest was described as being personal; that is, closely intertwined with the personality of the individual. Several reading authorities maintain that a high amount of interest can help overcome a high difficulty level of a selection.

¹³George Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers, 8th ed., rev. (Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Publishing Co., 1972), p. 2.

¹⁴Fry, op. cit., p. 847.

¹⁵George R. Klare, "A Second Look at the Validity of Readability Formulas," Journal of Reading 8 (February 1976):129-152.

¹⁶Helen M. Robinson with Samuel Weintraub, "Research Related to Children's Interests and to Developmental Values of Reading," Library Trends 22 (October 1973):81-108.

Format Characteristics.--Format characteristics may play a significant role when students are involved in book selection decision making. Much has been written about the format characteristics thought to be important to reluctant, adolescent readers; however, these statements are often based on opinion rather than research.

Past efforts to attract reluctant, remedial readers frequently failed because of the format characteristics that appeared in many high interest, low vocabulary books. The philosophy of the basal reading approach, which stressed controlled vocabulary, simplified sentence patterns, short sentences, and large print, was considered desirable for the young beginning reader and was often adapted into the instructional materials and trade books written for the older remedial reader. Consequently, these earliest high interest, low vocabulary materials often were stilted in language and appeared childish in format to the older student.

Some format characteristics that are believed to appeal to reluctant readers include thin books, frequent illustrations, short chapters and wide margins. Although much has been written regarding format characteristics that appeal to reluctant or remedial readers, these articles appear to be based largely on the opinions and suppositions of the authors.^{17,18,19} Little research is available

¹⁷Elizabeth Ring Hennefrund, "Writing for the Reluctant Reader," Writer's Digest 58 (August 1978):30-35.

¹⁸Barbara S. Bates, "Identifying High Interest/Low Reading Level Books," School Library Journal 24 (November 1977):19-21.

¹⁹William D. Boutwell, "Motivating the Slow Learner," Wilson Library Bulletin 40 (September 1965):75-77.

regarding format characteristics of high interest, low vocabulary trade books that actually appeal to reluctant, remedial readers.

Content/Theme and Genre/Topic.--Books' themes, content, genres, and topics have long been recognized as important motivators for reading.²⁰ Much has been written about the content, themes, topics and genres of high interest, low vocabulary trade books that are thought to appeal to reluctant, remedial readers;^{21,22} but little actual research is available. However, various research studies have been completed about the reading preferences and interests of students at different age levels and grades as well as different reading abilities.

Studies such as these have attempted to establish general reading interest categories and patterns for the variously defined groups of pupils. However, educators have long been aware of individual differences within their students. Students vary widely among such characteristics as their value systems, attitudes, self-concepts, motivation towards education and reading, and experiential backgrounds they bring with them. Consequently, despite general reading interest patterns for variously defined groups, students' interest in different topics and the degrees of perceived interest within a topic can differ greatly from student to student.

²⁰Marie Rankin, Children's Interests in the Library Books of Fiction, Contributions to Education #906 (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944), p. 92.

²¹Hennefrund, op. cit., pp. 30-35.

²²Bates, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

In summary, reading interests are the themes, content, genres, and topics which students choose to read. General interest patterns for groups defined by different variables have been established. However, individual students within variously defined groups can differ widely in their range of interests and degree of interest toward specific content and topics.

History of High Interest,
Low Vocabulary Trade Books

The need for specially written and adapted materials reflecting high interest for remedial readers was voiced as early as 1937 by Harold Postel:

What is urgently needed for . . . a large number of pupils struggling in regular classrooms is reading material of interest to the pupil of more advanced years, whose tastes in literature resemble those of an adult and whose reading ability is at the third grade level or below.²³

Bruning and Ridgway, in the 1950s, used purported high interest, low vocabulary materials that were published for use in classrooms and remedial reading settings.^{24,25} The late 1950s saw the first

²³Harold Postel as quoted in Robert Ridgway, "A Study of Readability, Interest, and Usefulness of Selected Materials for Retarded Readers in Grades Four to Eight" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1955).

²⁴Herbert I. Bruning, "A Study of the Readability, Interest, and Usefulness of Selected Materials for Retarded Readers in Grades Seven to Twelve" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1954).

²⁵Robert Ridgway, "A Study of the Readability, Interest and Usefulness of Selected Materials for Retarded Readers in Grades Four to Eight" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1955).

vocabulary controlled trade books (The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss and Little Bear by Elsa Minarik) being published and added to library collections. These early vocabulary controlled trade books, aimed at the young beginning reader, were sometimes used with older remedial readers despite their childish format. High interest, low vocabulary trade books written especially for the older remedial reader soon appeared. However, many of the early materials met the criterion of lower difficulty levels but frequently failed to take into account the more mature interests and mental and developmental levels of the older reader. Older readers often judged these high interest, low vocabulary books as being childish because of their format characteristics and because they failed to reflect their interests. These books were frequently judged by adults as being of poor quality including characteristics such as poor writing style, inadequate characterization, or unesthetic illustrations.

Conclusion

Publishers recently have been flooding the market with high interest, low vocabulary trade books designed to motivate reluctant, remedial readers to read on their own. Much has been written about the factors of difficulty level, interest, format, and content characteristics of high interest, low vocabulary trade books that are assumed to appeal to these readers; however, little research has been done to substantiate these claims.

This research will attempt to study each of these factors--difficulty level, perceived interest, format and content characteristics--as it relates to the book selection of high interest, low vocabulary trade books by a group of sixth grade reluctant, remedial

readers. Little research is available that has studied these factors as they relate to adolescent reluctant, remedial readers' responses to high interest, low vocabulary trade books. This research study will attempt to add information to the limited body of existing research.

Design of the Study

The population for this study consisted of two remedial reading (deficiency) classes composed of a total of eighteen sixth grade subjects. The two classes were from the same building in a small rural mid-Michigan community.

The Estes Attitude Scale was administered at the beginning of the study to the remedial sixth grade readers and to another group of sixth grade students functioning at and above grade level for comparison. The remedial students were met by the researcher twice weekly for six weeks. During this time students selected books to read from approximately 165 high interest, low vocabulary trade books which represented a range of various difficulty levels and eight different topics/genres. For every book selected and finished and every book selected but unfinished, each student recorded his/her degree of interest toward the book, perception of difficulty, appropriateness of content and book appearances for sixth graders, evaluation of format characteristics, and influence of the title, cover, or book jacket on an interest inventory. Students also indicated the number of pages read. Interviews were taped regarding some of the books selected as well as rejected books chosen not to be read.

The data were analyzed by comparing the three different categories of books--selected and finished, selected but unfinished, and rejected--to note differences and similarities of difficulty levels, interest, format and content characteristics among the three categories.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be analyzed during this research study:

1. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books selected and finished by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty level, interest, content and format?
 - a. What is the difficulty level?
 - b. Does a relationship exist between the students' reading levels and the books' difficulty levels?
 - c. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and the books' difficulty levels?
 - d. What is the level of interest?
 - e. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and their interest scores?
 - f. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' appearances and their interest scores?
 - 1) Are the books' appearances considered appropriate for sixth graders?
 - g. Does a relationship exist between the perceived appropriateness of the books' contents/subjects and their interest scores?
 - 1) Do the books possess subject/content considered appropriate for sixth graders?

- h. Do the titles, covers, or book jackets influence selection?
 - i. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, and length)?
 - j. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?
 - k. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?
2. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books selected but unfinished by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty level, interest, content and format?
- a. What is the difficulty level?
 - b. Does a relationship exist between the students' reading levels and the books' difficulty levels?
 - c. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and the books difficulty levels?
 - d. Does a relationship exist between the proportions of the books read and their interest scores?
 - 1) What is the level of interest?
 - e. Does a relationship exist between students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels and the interest scores?
 - f. Does a relationship exist between the perceived appropriateness of the books' appearances and their interest scores?
 - 1) Are the books' appearances considered appropriate for sixth graders?
 - g. Does a relationship exist between the perceived appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents and their interest scores?
 - 1) Do the books possess subject/content considered appropriate for sixth graders?
 - h. Do the titles, covers, or book jackets influence selection?

- i. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, length)?
 - j. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?
 - k. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?
3. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books rejected by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty level, content, and format?
- a. What is the difficulty level?
 - b. Does a relationship exist between the students' reading levels and the books' difficulty levels?
 - c. Does a relationship exist between students' perceptions of the difficulty levels of the books and the books' difficulty levels?
 - d. Are the books' appearances considered appropriate for sixth graders?
 - e. Do the books possess subject/content considered appropriate for sixth graders?
 - f. Do the titles, covers or book jackets influence book selection?
 - g. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, length)?
 - h. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?
 - i. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?

Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions were present within this study:

- 1. The different reading formulas and methods for determining book difficulty levels yielded approximately equivalent scores.
- 2. The interest levels given by the various sources accurately reflected interests which appeal to sixth graders.

- i. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, length)?
 - j. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?
 - k. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?
3. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books rejected by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty level, content, and format?
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Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions were present within this study:

- 1. The different reading formulas and methods for determining book difficulty levels yielded approximately equivalent scores.
- 2. The interest levels given by the various sources accurately reflected interests which appeal to sixth graders.

The following limitations were present in this study:

1. The subjects were from one school building rather than being randomly selected from a larger population.
2. The small sample size of eight girls and ten boys may have influenced the results attained for the entire group as well as those attained for boys and girls.
3. The twice-weekly fifty-minute reading sessions may not have been long enough to allow students to become involved in sustained reading.
4. All books utilized in this study were hard covered. No paperbacks were used.
5. It was possible that individual interests in combination with individual reading levels were not represented.
6. Although the book titles were selected to be representative of the format and content variables, the possibility does exist that some of the variables may have been uncontrolled.
7. Characteristics of specific high interest, low vocabulary trade books which appealed to a specific group of reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers were the foci of this study. Generalizations of the results of this study to other groups of students who are not remedial readers as well as to other groups of remedial readers is inappropriate.
8. It is acknowledged that the results may have been influenced by factors operating within the particular classroom including characteristics of the teacher's effectiveness as well as students' previous educational experiences. However, these factors were not within the scope of this particular study.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this study were defined as follows:

Reluctant, remedial readers - The eighteen students in this study who were in two sixth grade remedial reading (deficiency) classes. These students were reading below their grade placement and did not like to read.

Difficulty level - A score reported in a grade level that reflects an approximation of the difficulty of a selection's internal factors derived by Fry's Readability Formula (Booklist, Top of the News), Spache Formula (Good Reading for Poor Readers), and a "composite score derived from estimates of various catalogues and books, from calculation of a reading index representing structural difficulty of a limited number of titles, according to reading formulas, and from the judgments of experienced persons."²⁶

Interest level - Grade level at which students should find the books' topics and content appealing. Interest level is reported in a grade score, usually within a range of grades, by Booklist, Top of the News, Good Reading for Poor Readers, and Gateways to Readable Books. A book's interest level is "determined by . . . actual subject matter, its scope, and the complexity of presentation."²⁷

High interest, low vocabulary books - These are books designed to appeal to older remedial and/or reluctant readers. The reading levels of these books are below the readers' interest levels.

Readability - This is the interaction of four factors--difficulty level, interest, format and content characteristics--which influences a reader's success with the selection.

Interest - The score derived by adding the results of questions one, two, and three on the interest inventory.

Picture book - A book in which the pictures are integrated with the text; together they relate the story. There are more pictures than text.

Profusely illustrated book - A book that has a more complex plot, longer text and fewer illustrations than does the picture book.

Sparsely illustrated book - A book that has more text and fewer illustrations than does the profusely illustrated book.

Unillustrated book - No illustrations are included. The book is composed of only text.

²⁶Dorothy E. Withrow, Helen B. Carey and Bertha Hirzel, Gateways to Readable Books, 5th ed., rev. (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1975), p. 21.

²⁷Judith Goldberger, "Easy to Read, Hard to Review," Booklist 73 (November 15, 1976):481.

Significance of the Problem

As there has been little previous research reported about high interest, low vocabulary trade book choices as it relates to reluctant, remedial middle school readers, the results of this study may have implications for librarians, teachers and publishers. The resulting information may aid the decision making process of librarians when purchasing high interest, low vocabulary trade books. Teachers, when interacting with reluctant, remedial readers, may have additional insight for offering reading and book selection guidance. Publishers may utilize the results of this study in establishing or reformulating existing criteria for acceptance and/or rejection of high interest, low vocabulary manuscripts for publication. The findings may also suggest hypotheses which should be extensively tested regarding current format and content criteria believed important to motivate reluctant, remedial readers to read.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter II includes a review of pertinent research. A description of methods and procedures which were used in data collection is discussed in Chapter III. Presentation and analysis of data comprises Chapter IV while Chapter V consists of a summary, findings, conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this section is to review the pertinent research relating to this study. The research will be reviewed in two major sections. The first section will review factors which influence a student's book selection including difficulty level, interest, various format features, and content and genre/topic characteristics. The second section will survey other studies that have used similar methodology including the Estes Attitude Scale, interest questionnaires, and interviews.

Factors Which Influence Book Selection

Difficulty Level

Several studies have attempted to determine the reading levels of free choice books selected by students. Other research studies have attempted to ascertain if relationships exist among difficulty level estimates derived by various readability formulas. A study researching the effect of the difficulty level on the amount of physiological indications of emotional stress exhibited during reading will also be included in this section.

Grover studied library book circulation records to determine what characteristics influence second graders' book choices. In

addition, fifty-two second graders were interviewed to discover information regarding their book selection preferences. The information from the interviews was used to establish criteria to evaluate the twenty books most frequently circulated (high preference) and twenty books which circulated only once (low preference). These books were also categorized into male preferred and female preferred groups. The book characteristics analyzed included difficulty level as well as format characteristics comprising amount of illustration, illustrative style, type size, content characteristics including characters, theme, outcome and setting, and library classification.

Overall, it appeared that the second graders preferred books that were easy for them to read (1.8 grade level). A moderate, negative Pearson r between difficulty level and library circulation was reported. Consequently, ease of reading appeared to be a factor which influenced the second graders when selecting library books. Boys chose books of slightly greater difficulty than did girls.²⁸

Anne Ferguson studied the library book choices of thirty sixth graders to determine what proportion of choices were at the independent, instructional or frustrational reading levels as measured by a cloze procedure. The data was further analyzed by sex and reading ability. Results showed that 57% of all books

²⁸Robert J. Grover, "The Relationship of Readability, Content, Illustrations, and Other Format Elements to the Library Preferences of Second Grade Children" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1976).

chosen were within the independent reading levels of the students, followed by 43% at the instructional level. There was no significant difference between boys and girls. Low readers tended to select books at their instructional rather than independent level.²⁹

In a similar study, Athol Packer attempted to determine if fourth graders chose free reading books at their independent reading level and if there were any relationships between book selection choices and IQ, interest categories, or number of books chosen by a student and other students named on a sociometric test. Lists of books that forty-four fourth graders checked out for ten weeks were compiled by librarians. From each student's list, six books were selected for analysis. Students answered comprehension questions about a section they had read silently and read a different section aloud to determine their ability to pronounce words. A book was considered in a student's independent reading level if the student scored 85% or better on comprehension and 98% or better on the vocabulary ability task.

It was reported that 62% of the books were at the students' independent reading levels. Students with higher intelligence scores chose more books at their independent reading levels than students with low intelligence scores. The researcher suggested that this may have been due to the smaller number of library books available to children with lower intelligence at their independent reading levels.

²⁹ Anne M. Ferguson, "Children's Self-Selection of Trade Books: Measured by the Cloze Procedure" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1977).

The main reasons given by students for choosing books were that they were interested in the topic and that a friend had recommended the book.³⁰

In a related study, two researchers reported that stress occurred when students read materials that were more difficult than their instructional reading levels. Third graders' indications of emotional stress occurring during the reading of informal reading inventories were measured by polygraph recordings in a study by Davis and Ekwall. It was reported that children reading at their frustrational level exhibited signs of emotional stress. This was assumed to reflect anxiety toward the reading situation. An implication from this study, made by the authors, was that reading instruction should be at the children's instructional level to prevent negative emotions from interfering with the reading instruction. It should be noted that the children, while reading the graded passages aloud, were attached to a polygraph during which time their errors were being recorded. This atypical situation itself may have produced some of the stress despite the researchers' attempt to control for it. The informal reading inventories were assigned; children had no free choice or self-selection.³¹

³⁰ Athol Packer, "A Study of Factors Involved in the Selection of Free Reading Materials by Fourth Graders" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas, 1967).

³¹ Everett E. Davis and Eldon E. Ekwall, "Mode of Perception and Frustration in Reading," Journal of Learning Disabilities 9 (August/September 1976):448-454.

Conflicting results regarding the reliability of different readability formulas used at the primary grades have been reported. Harris and Jacobson compared the difficulty levels obtained using the Spache, Fry, and Harris-Jacobson readability formulas on pre-primer through 3² basals of Houghton Mifflin (1981) and Economy (1980). The publishers' designation of difficulty levels were compared to the difficulty levels derived by the three readability formulas. Results showed that the Spache and Harris-Jacobson formulas were in closer agreement to the publishers' designation of difficulty levels than was the Fry readability formula. It was reported by the researchers that the Spache and Harris-Jacobson readability formulas measure similar variables.³²

Other researchers report that various readability formulas achieve similar difficulty levels. Laughlin studied the difficulty levels of seventy-nine easy-to-read trade books using the Fry, Spache, and Wheeler-Smith readability formulas. It was reported that there was a moderate relationship among them.³³

Another researcher examined the relationship between the Fry readability formula and the scores of first and second graders' oral reading errors according to criteria established by Emmett Betts. The Fry readability formula was applied to easy-to-read trade books to obtain a difficulty level for each book. Five first

³²Albert J. Harris and Milton D. Jacobson, "A Comparison of the Fry, Spache, and Harris-Jacobson Readability Formulas for Primary Grades, Reading Teacher 33 (May 1980):920-924.

³³Mildred Knight Laughlin, "The Readability of the Easy-to-Read Trade Books" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1973).

and second grade students read selections from thirty easy-to-read books. Results reported a relationship between the difficulty level obtained by the Fry formula and the students' oral reading errors.³⁴ As a result of the conflicting findings reported, more data is needed to substantiate or refute the reliability of the various readability formulas for purposes of comparison.

In summary, some evidence exists that children exhibit physiological indications of emotional stress when they are instructed at their frustrational reading level. More research is needed to determine if different readability formulas yield equivalent difficulty levels on given reading selections. It appears that students frequently select books at their independent and instructional reading levels. Consequently, the difficulty level of a selection does appear to be a factor involved in student book choice.

Interest

The importance of interest for motivation and promotion of success has been acknowledged by some.^{35,36} However, the ability to isolate the interest factor from other variables such as difficulty level, content, or style has proven largely unsuccessful.³⁷

³⁴Margaret Fleming Paola, "A Comparison of Readability Graph Scores and Oral Reading Errors on Trade Books for Beginning Readers" (Masters thesis, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1977) ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 145 398.

³⁵Strang, op. cit., p. 212.

³⁶Spache, op. cit., p. 1.

³⁷Robert F. Beauchamp, "Selection of Books for the Culturally Disadvantaged Ninth Grade Student" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1970).

Research about the role of interest in reading and its relationship to difficulty level will be reviewed in this section.

Both Bruning and Ridgway studied the influence of difficulty level and interest on the selection and completion of various high interest, low vocabulary materials. Bruning studied the responses of 92 seventh through twelfth grade remedial readers while Ridgway studied the responses of 113 fourth through seventh grade remedial readers. The researchers reported that, when perceived interest of a book was high, the difficulty level assumed a minor role. Consequently, children were able to successfully read books that were thought to be too difficult for them. They also had a tendency to rate these books' difficulty levels as being "just right." Similarly, books which were of low interest but were below the students' reading levels were rated as being "too hard." Books that had highest average difficulty, greatest ranges of difficulty, and hardest sample passages were significantly unfinished.^{38,39}

Williams researched the relationship of books' difficulty levels and high school students' reading levels of free reading choices in an attempt to validate the Fry Readability Principle. This principle states "high motivation overcomes high readability level, but low motivation demands a low readability level." Fifty-eight students chose seventy-five books from the school library, fifty-six of which were completed. Each book's difficulty level was

³⁸Bruning, op. cit., pp. 107-113.

³⁹Ridgway, op. cit., pp. 101-106.

compared to the student's reading level, either forming a positive match or a negative match. A positive match was defined as when the student's reading level was equal or greater than the book's difficulty level; a negative match was when the student's reading level was below the book's difficulty level. Forty-three of the matches were positive and thirty-two were negative. Students who rated their books as having high interest, regardless of being positively or negatively matched, read more pages than books that were ranked low interest.⁴⁰

Students did not choose books at their own reading levels; instead it appeared that another factor such as interest was responsible for the book selection of high school students. Fry's readability principle--"high motivation overcomes high readability level, but low motivation demands a low readability level"--was confirmed. Students, however, with positive matches read more pages than did students with negative matches indicating that difficulty level may have also influenced the amount read.

Beauchamp sought to discover a list of trade books based on students' interests that would be appropriate for impoverished ninth graders who were at least three years retarded in their reading ability. Groups of teachers and librarians suggested books that they believed would appeal to entire classes. Experimental classes of ninth grade remedial readers, after reading the books, were interviewed regarding their reactions to these books. The books were

⁴⁰Williams, op. cit., p. 1 ff.

then analyzed according to various content and format characteristics. Books that were most accepted were those that had difficulty levels not above sixth grade. Students could and did read books that were above their instructional reading level if the books were of very high interest to the students.⁴¹

In another study, fifty-seven third grade remedial readers rated selected library books and serial books according to interest, and perceived difficulty for six weeks. A readability match category, a comparison of a book's difficulty level to a student's reading level, was found for each book selected by each student.

The scores for the books' difficulty levels, interest, and completion, and the readability match categories were analyzed in the following ways: completion, interest; completion, difficulty, assessments; completion, readability match categories; interest, difficulty assessments; interest, readability match categories; and difficulty assessments, readability match categories. Books that were rated as having high interest were more frequently finished than those that were rated as being low in interest. Books that were below the students' reading levels were rated as being "too easy" while those that were within and above their reading levels were rated as being "just right." It was suggested that rating books in the latter category may be the function of interest; that is, a book's difficulty level became less of an influencing factor when

⁴¹Beauchamp, op. cit., p. 1 ff.

interest in the book was high.⁴² This agreed with Ridgway's and Bruning's conclusions.^{43,44}

In summary, the research about difficulty levels indicates that when interest is high, the material's difficulty assumes less of a role. The amount of interest toward a book influences the amount of a book finished; that is, books rated as having high interest have greater proportions read than books rated as low in interest. Consequently, interest and difficulty level appear to be factors in students' book selection.

Interest and its Effect on Comprehension

The degree of interest students have toward a selection has been cited as a factor affecting comprehension in a number of studies. However, other research has reported that the degree of interest has no effect on students' comprehension. The following section will first review studies that reported interest affects comprehension followed by two studies that reported conflicting results.

In an early study that researched the relationship of interest on comprehension, Bernstein rewrote two stories to make

⁴²Gloria Dorwart, "A Comparison of Trade Books and Special Books for Remedial Readers" (Masters thesis, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1976), ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 124 891.

⁴³Ridgway, op. cit., p. 104.

⁴⁴Bruning, op. cit., p. 112.

them of equal difficulty but of varying interest. The story that was considered to be interesting to adolescent readers had a teenage hero and retained much of its original action, suspense, and frequent dialogue while the other, written to be uninteresting, was devoid of most human activity. The latter story consisted of lengthy description and many dull words substituted for colorful words. One hundred ninth graders read both stories, answered comprehension questions and indicated their interest for each story. Significantly higher comprehension scores were recorded for the story ranked as being more interesting. Both low and high readers achieved higher comprehension scores on the selection considered as having high interest.⁴⁵

Estes and Vaughan studied the effect of high/low interest on the results of informal reading inventories. Forty-six fourth grade students, all of whom had reading levels of at least 4.0, indicated a topic of high interest and one of low interest from a list of topics. All paragraphs used for reading material were written at a higher difficulty level (5.5) to permit interest to have an effect on comprehension. Results showed comprehension scores of high interest content significantly higher than comprehension scores of low interest content. The researchers suggested

⁴⁵Margery R. Bernstein, "Relationship Between Interest and Reading Comprehension," Journal of Educational Research 49 (December 1955):283-288.

that "reading expectancy would not be some single number; it would 'float,' varying as a direct function of interest."⁴⁶

In another study, seventy-five fifth grade students ranked topics of high interest and low interest after viewing twenty-five slides representing various topics. The students were randomly divided into two groups; one group received five cloze passages reflecting their five high interest topics, the other group received five cloze passages reflecting their low interest topics. The results showed that students who had completed the high interest cloze passages performed better than students who had the low interest cloze passages. The researchers concluded that students' performance on high/low interest materials is not dependent on a contrast effect but is, instead, dependent on the interest level of the material itself. Both boys and girls performed better on high interest materials than on low interest.⁴⁷

Other research has studied the effect of interest on comprehension of students of differing reading abilities. Walker researched the influence of high and low interest content on the instructional levels in informal reading inventories of fifth and sixth graders of various reading abilities. The researcher reported that reading inventories composed of high interest content resulted

⁴⁶Thomas H. Estes and Joseph L. Vaughan, "Reading Interest and Comprehension: Implications," Reading Teacher 73 (November 1973):149-153.

⁴⁷Steven R. Asher, Shelley Hymel, and Allan Wigfield, "Influence of Topic Interest on Children's Reading Comprehension," Journal of Reading Behavior 10 (Spring 1978):35-47.

in higher scores for both comprehension and word recognition, although somewhat higher for comprehension. In other words, high interest content may have had an effect in raising children's instructional reading scores. It was also reported that high interest content had a greater effect on raising scores of both low and average readers while having little effect on above average readers.⁴⁸

Shnayer studied the relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension of 578 sixth graders who were divided into seven ability groups based on the reading scores from standardized tests. Each group read fifteen stories, all of which were two grade levels higher than each group's mean reading score. The students rated interest for each story on a four-item Likert scale and answered comprehension questions about each selection. Comprehension scores of material rated as being high interest were compared to scores of material rated as low interest.

The results showed that reading comprehension appeared to vary as a function of both interest and ability. Stories rated as having high interest received higher comprehension scores than stories rated as having low interest. Students were able to read stories that had difficulty levels greater than their reading levels. High interest affected the performance of low and average readers more than above average readers who were able to compensate

⁴⁸Martha Susan Motley Walker, "The Effect of High and Low Interest Content on Instructional Levels in Informal Reading Inventories" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Auburn University, 1976).

for the low interest of the materials. Consequently, the role of interest appeared to be a more important factor for poor readers.⁴⁹

Vaughan measured the effect of high/low interest on comprehension of good, average and poor readers in grades four, six, eight, and eleven. Students, after reading a selection reflecting a high interest area and a low interest area, completed cloze tests. Results showed that the effect of interest was inversely proportional to reading ability. Vaughan suggested that poor and average readers may be able to improve their reading skills if high interest material is used for their reading instruction.⁵⁰

Other studies have used low achieving readers as subjects to determine the effect of interest on their comprehension. Belloni studied the relationship of comprehension and interest on the performance of fifty low achieving, reluctant seventh grade readers. Twelve stories were chosen to fit into one of four categories: interesting to both boys and girls, interesting to boys, interesting to girls, interesting to neither boys or girls. The stories, according to Dale-Chall and Fry readability formulas, were from two to four grade levels more difficult than the mean reading score of

⁴⁹Sidney W. Shnayer, "Relationships Between Reading Interest and Reading Comprehension," Reading and Realism, Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention, ed. J. Allen Figurel (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1969), pp. 698-702.

⁵⁰Joseph Lee Vaughan, Jr., "The Effect of Interest on the Reading Comprehension of Good, Average, and Poor Readers in Grades Four, Six, Eight and Eleven" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, 1974).

the students. After reading summaries of each of the selections, each student indicated two stories, one of high interest and one of low interest. A week later students read the two stories and completed cloze tests on each. Conclusions reported that students performed better on the cloze tests for high interest stories, thereby showing a greater comprehension of the selections rated as having high interest than the selections rated as having low interest. Consequently, low achieving students may have better comprehension of reading materials that they find highly interesting.⁵¹

Allen attempted to determine if high preference reading material resulted in higher comprehension scores than low preference materials and if high preference materials could affect the comprehension scores at either the independent or frustrational reading levels. Sixty-one Upward Bound high school students, after indicating their preferences regarding sixteen topics, completed four cloze passages, one from each of the following categories: high preference, independent reading level; high preference, frustrational reading level; non-expressed preference, independent reading level; non-expressed preference, frustrational reading level.

Results showed that the students achieved higher comprehension scores on preferred material than non-expressed, comprehension scores at each independent reading level were higher than the frustrational score of the same category, and there was no significant

⁵¹ Loretta Frances Belloni and Eugene A. Jongsma, "The Effects of Interest on Reading Comprehension of Low-Achieving Students," Journal of Reading 22 (November 1978):106-109.

difference on the effect of high preference on the students' independent and frustrational reading levels. In other words, preference affected the comprehension scores at both the independent and frustrational reading levels. Allen suggested that high preference reading materials be used in reading instruction with remedial readers.⁵²

A few investigators have reported no difference in comprehension scores of high/low interest materials. Two of these studies will be reviewed here.

One hundred and ten fifth graders first indicated their interest on a seven-item Likert scale regarding paragraph topics taken from McCall-Crab Standard Test, Lessons in Reading. Each paragraph had a fifth grade difficulty level. After reading the paragraphs, the students answered comprehension questions for each paragraph. The data were analyzed by comparing the mean score of the lowest ranked selections and the mean score of the highest ranked interest selections. It was reported that there was no significant difference in the mean comprehension scores between low interest and high interest materials.

Because the fifth graders' mean reading score was 5.9 at the time of the study, it was suggested that the similarity of the comprehension scores between high/low interest passages might have been due to the factor of the fifth grade difficulty level of

⁵²Lina Lusk Allen, "The Effect of Reading Preference on Reading Comprehension of Low Socioeconomic High School Students" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Texas State University, 1979).

the selections. That is, the interest factor did not have a chance to operate because the passages were of such low difficulty; students managed to answer the questions solely on the basis of difficulty regardless of interest. The fact that the students had a high mean reading score also may have suggested that the students were knowledgeable in the comprehension skills being tested.⁵³ Other research has shown that the factor of interest affects the performance of low achieving readers more than of high achieving readers.^{54,55,56,57}

Stevens studied the effect of interest on the comprehension scores of ninety-three fifth and sixth graders. Students indicated their degree of interest for thirty topics by ranking pictures and on written lists. Students were then given two passages reflecting their high interests and two reflecting their low interests. Comprehension questions were answered for each paragraph. Results reported no significant relationship between amount of interest and comprehension scores or between interest, comprehension or sex.

⁵³Ann Judith Scholtz, "An Investigation of the Role of Interest as a Factor in Reading Comprehension" (Masters thesis, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1975), ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. Ed. 116 152.

⁵⁴Belloni, op. cit., p. 108.

⁵⁵Walker, op. cit., p. 62.

⁵⁶Vaughan, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵⁷Shnayer, op. cit., p. 700.

However, the comprehension scores of students with high reading levels were significantly affected by high interest.⁵⁸

Several reasons could explain the differences in results of this study and the majority of the other studies. The population, consisting of students from above average socio-economic status, had a mean reading score and mean intelligence score above the national average. Because the researcher was concerned about the reliability and validity of the passages of the McCall Crab Standard Test, Lessons in Reading, an effort was made to have each paragraph used approximately the same number of times for both high interest and low interest categories. Consequently, those topics which were overwhelmingly popular or unpopular were discarded. Therefore, paragraphs with topics representing a narrower range of interests were used. Differing results between this study and the others cited may have been due to these reasons.

To summarize, two studies reported that the degree of interest a student has toward a selection has no effect on comprehension. Methodology may have accounted for the differences in the results of these studies. However, most studies reported that interest is positively related to comprehension.

Summary of the Factor of Interest

Interest is a factor in the book selection process and also appears to influence the amount of a book read. The amount of

⁵⁸Kathleen Charlotte Stevens, "The Relationship Between Interest and Reading Comprehension" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1979).

interest toward a selection also affects perception of the selection's difficulty. Most research reports that the degree of interest is positively correlated to comprehension scores. High interest content may affect the comprehension scores of average and low achieving readers more than high achieving readers. Interest, as well as the factor of difficulty level, appears to be a major factor in the decision making process regarding book selection.

Format Characteristics

It has been assumed by librarians, teachers, and publishers that format features influence reluctant readers' selection of high interest, low vocabulary trade books. However, there is little research available to substantiate these assumptions.

One study did research various content and format characteristics of library books that appealed to adolescent readers. Rankin researched the problem from two directions. First, she observed children's procedures as they selected books in libraries, then interviewed the students regarding format and content characteristics that appealed or did not appeal to the students. Secondly, the content and format characteristics of the most frequently circulated books from eight libraries were compared to the libraries' infrequently circulated books to ascertain differences of features between the books. It was reported that the popular books appeared to look more adult-like in format than the less popular. Students did not like picture books that reminded them of the picture book format used with younger children.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Rankin, op. cit., p. 1 ff.

Other research reported similar conclusions. Ridgway reported that fourth through eighth grade retarded readers showed a lack of interest in books which contained type size, illustrations and format usually associated with younger children.⁶⁰ Similarly, Bruning reported that eighth through twelfth grade retarded readers preferred books that appeared adult-like in format.⁶¹

Little research has been reported regarding format features that appeal to adolescent, remedial readers. However, adolescent readers appear to prefer books that look more adult-like in format while rejecting books whose format reminds them of younger children.

Length of the Book

Several studies have researched the format factor of book length and its influence on book selection or completion.

Ridgway and Bruning reported that retarded readers disliked thick high interest, low vocabulary books.^{62,63} Fenwick stated that the books not finished by ten and eleven-year-olds had more words and were longer than the books recorded as being finished.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Ridgway, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶¹Bruning, op. cit., p. 109.

⁶²Ridgway, op. cit., p. 105.

⁶³Bruning, op. cit., p. 112.

⁶⁴G. Fenwick, "Junior High School Pupils' Rejection of School Library Books," Educational Research 17 (February 1975): 143-149.

However, Rankin reported that the mean number of pages of the most popular adolescent books was greater than the mean number of pages in less popular books.⁶⁵ The factor of interest might explain this; that is, high interest may have motivated students to read longer books. The second graders in Grover's study disliked both very short books and very long books, preferring books somewhere in the middle range. The high preference books, however, did have a higher mean number of pages than did the low preference books.⁶⁶

Conflicting results have been reported regarding student preference for book length. Some students seem to prefer short books rather than longer books; however, when interest is high, the length of a book may assume a minor role.

Type Size

Type size has been extensively studied by Miles Tinker in addition to other aspects of typography such as length of line, leading between lines, type style, and color of paper. This research is specifically concerned with the element of type size.

On the basis of research results and experience, Tinker has suggested that first grade materials be printed in fourteen to eighteen point (.19 to .25 inch) to aid students in visual discrimination between letters and words. Second and third grade materials can be written in fourteen to sixteen point while materials for grades

⁶⁵Rankin, op. cit., p. 84.

⁶⁶Grover, op. cit., p. 127.

four through eight can be written in ten, eleven or twelve point. Much adult material is printed in this latter category of type size. Research has reported that oculomotor patterns stabilize between the end of fourth grade and eighth grade; therefore, the mechanical characteristics of reading also stabilize during this time.⁶⁷

Tinker tested a group of fifth-sixth graders and a group of seventh-eighth graders using speed reading techniques to test legibility of print for various elements of typography including print size. Results showed students performed in the same patterns as did adults to various changes in type size. Therefore, materials printed for fifth graders can resemble adult material in elements such as size of print and be effectively processed by the students.⁶⁸

Grover reported that second grade boys preferred a mean of .09 inch (x-height) type while girls preferred a mean type size of .11 inch.⁶⁹ Beauchamp reported that disadvantaged remedial ninth graders did not reject print of fourteen point or larger if the other format characteristics appeared adult-like.⁷⁰

In summary, student oculomotor patterns stabilize during the adolescent years causing adolescent readers to respond to reading material in patterns similar to adults. Consequently, middle

⁶⁷Miles A. Tinker, Bases for Effective Reading (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965), p. 151.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 150.

⁶⁹Grover, op. cit., p. 128.

⁷⁰Beauchamp, op. cit., p. 122.

school students can effectively process materials resembling the adult format of print size. Little research is available regarding remedial adolescent readers' preference of type size.

Amount of Illustration

In her study of acceptance/rejection of library books by ten and eleven-year-olds, Fenwick reported that books that contained a high proportion of illustrations were finished significantly more than books containing few illustrations.⁷¹ The proportion of illustrations in a book was the strongest predictor of library circulation of all the format features examined by Grover in his study of second graders' book preferences.⁷²

Illustrative Preferences

Research has studied illustrative preferences of students by analyzing their responses to various elements such as form and color. Preferences for different illustrative styles have also been researched.

Stewig isolated five visual components (color, shape, proportion, detail, and space) to enable him to study elementary children's preferences in illustrations. Aspects of the components were presented in pairs of slides allowing for only one variable to be manipulated at a time while other components stayed constant. Students indicated their preferences by a forced choice format. Older students preferred realistic colors more than the younger

⁷¹Fenwick, op. cit., p. 147.

⁷²Grover, op. cit., p. 126.

students. Younger students' preferences regarding detail revealed they liked less details in illustrations than older children.⁷³

Rudisill studied the influence of color and degree of realism on children's illustrative preferences. The subject matter remained constant for each set of the three sets of illustrations; however, the color and amount of realism were varied. Illustrative techniques used included black and white photographs, color photographs, color drawings realistic in color and form but unrealistic in the color used in outlining, and colored drawings, realistic in form but unrealistic in color. The students indicated their preferences in a forced choice format. Twenty-seven kindergarteners and 150 to 200 children from each grade first through sixth participated. The classes, except kindergarten and first grade, expressed their choices by voting in class situations. Results showed that students preferred pictures that were realistically colored to uncolored pictures. Pictures illustrated in the realistic style were preferred to those illustrated unrealistically. Photographs were preferred as students increased in age.⁷⁴

In a similar study, twenty-five different photographs were each reproduced as a line drawing, a wash drawing, a black and white illustration using three colors, an illustration with red predominant,

⁷³John Warren Stewig, "Children's Picture Preferences," Elementary English 51 (November/December 1974):1012-1013.

⁷⁴Mabel Rudisill, "Children's Preferences for Color Versus Other Qualities in Illustrations," Elementary School Journal 52 (April 1952):444-445.

and an illustration with blue predominant, thereby keeping the illustration's content constant but varying the illustrative technique and the colors used. One hundred children from the first through the third grade indicated which picture (technique) in each set of illustrations they liked best. Results showed that the full colored illustration was preferred by more than half of the participants, followed by the illustration with red, photographs, and the illustration with the blue. The photograph was preferred more frequently as the students' ages increased. More boys than girls preferred photographs.⁷⁵

Smerdon researched children's responses to illustrations as they vary as a function of age, ability and experience. The factors of size, color, content and artist were controlled; that is, twelve black and white pictures of castles were illustrated by one artist on foot square cards. The pictures differed in their styles ranging from abstract to representational. The children's responses were analyzed by age and sex, and comparisons with a group of judges' rankings of representational qualities. Three hundred and eighty-one students, divided into five groups with average ages of 6.7, 9.7, 12.10 and 14.9 years, were subjects. Results showed that all groups, excluding the youngest group, preferred the most representational picture while least preferring the abstract picture. There was only slight difference between preferences of style across age levels,

⁷⁵William Miller, "The Picture Choices of Primary-Grade Children," Elementary School Journal 37 (December 1936):273-282.

most noticeably at the youngest group. There was no difference between preferences of boys or girls.⁷⁶ Possible explanations why the youngest children preferred an illustration different from the other age groups were that the younger students preferred pictures with less detail and the children were more familiar with the one illustrative technique as it was frequently used to illustrate children's picture books.

Lam studied the preferences of second grade students toward four illustrative styles (realistic, muted realistic, semi-abstract, cartoon) used in basal readers. Ninety second grade students were shown four groups of four illustrations and asked to rank the pictures they liked best to least for each set. Each set had one picture representing each form and was controlled for content topic. The results indicated that second graders liked realistic art the best and muted realistic art second best regardless of picture content.⁷⁷ Rankin supported the conclusion that realistic art was preferred with her adolescent subjects.⁷⁸ Similarly, the second grade boys in Grover's research also preferred realistic illustrations.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Gerald Smerdon, "Children's Preferences in Illustration," Children's Literature in Education 19 (Winter 1975):17-31.

⁷⁷Charlotte Dawson Lam, "Pupil Preference for Four Art Styles Used in Primary Reading Textbooks," Reading Teacher 23 (November 1969):137-143.

⁷⁸Rankin, op. cit., p. 64.

⁷⁹Grover, op. cit., p. 126.

In summary, colored illustrations appear to be preferred to uncolored illustrations; realistic coloration appears to be preferred to the unrealistic coloration. Photographs gain in acceptance as students increase in age. The representational (realistic) style appears to be preferred regardless of age.

Summary of the Factors of Format Characteristics

The various format characteristics of book length, type size, amount of illustration and illustrative style influence students' book selection. Consequently, format features as well as the factors of interest and difficulty level influence students' reading choices.

Content, Genre, and Topic

Studies have investigated students' reading to determine preferences of content, subject matter, topics and genres. Much has been written about the content, genres, and topics thought to appeal to reluctant, remedial adolescent readers; however, little actual research is available.^{80,81} Reading interests of students having different reading abilities have been investigated and compared. Similarities and differences of preferences of content and genre have also been analyzed by sex.

⁸⁰Hennefrund, op. cit., pp. 30-35.

⁸¹Bates, op. cit., pp. 19-21.

Beauchamp reported that remedial ninth graders preferred to read books with themes of perseverance, physical strength, triumph over adversity, and detective stories and tended to reject love stories.⁸² In his study of seventh to twelfth grade retarded readers, Bruning stated that although the students had not yet established definite interest patterns, they appeared to like books with fast moving action, adventure, and excitement.⁸³

The reading interests and preferences of students of the same age but possessing differing reading abilities have been studied by various researchers. Wallace Ramsey investigated the reading interests of sixty-one poor readers and eighty-one good readers in grades four through six. Poor readers were defined as students reading at least one grade below grade placement while good readers were reading at least one grade level above grade placement. The students indicated a preferred area of reading from a list of eight topics. Results showed that 61% of the girls chose the topic of mystery regardless of their reading ability. Although boys chose more varied topics, the choices between the good and poor readers were also similar. The researcher concluded that sex differences rather than reading ability affected book choices.

⁸²Beauchamp, op. cit., p. 121.

⁸³Bruning, op. cit., p. 111.

Poor readers reported reading significantly fewer books during the school year than did the good readers.⁸⁴

Chiu studied ninety-nine fourth grade students' reading preferences in relationship to the students' sex and reading ability. A forty-five item questionnaire, designed in a forced choice format, was administered to ascertain students' preferences about ten categories of books. Results reported that students of differing reading abilities had similar reading preferences. Similarly, as in Ramsey's study, the largest difference in preferences was between boys and girls. Boys preferred books about sports, biography, science, and social studies with poetry as their least preferred topic. Girls preferred adventure, fantasy, humor, poetry with sports as their least preferred.⁸⁵

In a related study, Lamme researched the influence of reading ability on reading habits. Sixty-five students kept reading records of library books for three years while they were in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. These records were then compared to the scores of a reading comprehension test. Results showed that there was a low positive correlation between reading achievement and the number of books read.⁸⁶

⁸⁴Wallace Ramsey, "A Study of Salient Characteristics of Pupils of High and Low Reading Ability," Journal of Developmental Reading 5 (Winter 1972):87-94.

⁸⁵Lian Hwong Chiu, "Reading Preferences of Fourth Grade Children Related to Sex and Reading Ability," Journal of Educational Research 66 (April 1973):369-373.

⁸⁶Linda Leonard Lamme, "Are Reading Habits and Abilities Related?" Reading Teacher 30 (October 1976):21-27.

In summary, reading preferences as they pertain to content, genres and topics have been investigated. It was reported that differences in sex affected preferences more than differences in reading ability. Students with high reading achievement read more books than students with low reading achievement.

Fiction and Nonfiction

The categories of fiction and nonfiction have been studied in students' book selection. Eight thousand Welsh and English students aged ten, twelve and fourteen years completed questionnaires about voluntary reading habits and titles of books they had read. Of the titles mentioned only 14.5% of the titles were nonfiction; however, boys read many more nonfiction choices than did girls.⁸⁷ Similarly, Packer reported that fourth grade boys chose more non-fiction books than girls did.⁸⁸

Other studies report conflicting results. Ferguson reported that both sixth grade boys and girls chose more fiction than non-fiction while the second grade students preferred nonfiction over fiction in Grover's research.^{89,90}

⁸⁷Frank Whitehead et. al., Children and Their Books (London: MacMillan Education, 1977). pp. 271-292.

⁸⁸Packer, op. cit., p. 96.

⁸⁹Ferguson, op. cit., p.

⁹⁰Grover, op. cit., p. 126.

Research about student preferences regarding book categories of fiction versus nonfiction have produced conflicting results. Boys may have a tendency to prefer nonfiction to fiction.

Summary of the Factor of Content, Genre/Topic

Research has reported that the factor of content, genre/topic also affects book selection. Differences of sex appear to influence preferences toward content, genres, and topics more than differing reading abilities. Conflicting results are reported regarding preferences toward the categories of fiction and nonfiction. Consequently, the four factors of the total definition of readability--difficulty level, interest, format features, and content, genre/topic--may interact when students make book selection decisions.

Summary of Factors Which Influence Book Selection

Research studies relating to the four factors of the total definition of readability--difficulty level, interest, format characteristics, and content, genre/topics--were reviewed in the previous section. These factors do not act separately, but interact to influence decision making regarding book selection.

Little research has been reported regarding reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers' responses to the four factors. However, some research has been reported for students of other ages and/or abilities.

The difficulty level of materials does influence some book selection; that is, students frequently choose books at their independent or instructional reading levels. However, if interest is high in selections, the difficulty level may assume a minor role. The amount of interest toward a selection may also affect comprehension scores in a positive relationship. Various format features such as length of book, size of print, amount of illustrations, and illustrative style appear to influence book selection. Patterns of content, genres and topics appeal to variously defined groups; however, differences among individual students can vary greatly within these general patterns.

Methodology

Similar methodology utilized in other studies will be described here. This includes the Estes Attitude Scale, interest questionnaires, and the interview technique which was used to determine students' format and content preferences.

Estes Attitude Scale

One hundred forty eleventh graders were administered the Estes Attitude Scale--Secondary Version for a validation study by Dulin and Chester. In addition to the Attitude Scale, students completed a self-report form (five-item Likert) where they reported how well they thought they read, how well they liked to read, how much they actually read and how much value they placed on reading. Teachers answered the same questions with the exception of the latter question. Results showed the Estes Attitude Scale and the

student's self-report correlated significantly for each student. The students were then divided into five varying attitude groups ranging from very high to very low. The scores of the Estes Scale showed significant differences between the attitude groupings. Teacher estimations of student attitude also were reported to be statistically significant in four of the five ability groupings. The authors suggested that the Scale could be used as a valid instrument to measure reading attitudes of similar populations.⁹¹

Oliver and Brown researched the similarities of two different attitude scales (Estes and Powell) to ascertain if children achieved similar attitude scores on both tests, if average and high achieving readers scored higher on the tests than low achieving readers, and if students who had gained one year of reading growth scored higher than students who did not grow in reading ability. Ninety-nine fourth graders were administered the Powell test, then three years later administered the Estes Scale and Gates MacGinitie Reading Test.

Results of both scales reported significant differences between high and low achievers. Students whose reading scores had gained one year or more scored significantly higher scores on the attitude scale than those students who had not. A low correlation was reported for the scores between the two tests. This was suggested to be caused by the differences in the tests; that is, the

⁹¹Kenneth L. Dulin and Robert D. Chester, "A Validation Study of the Estes Attitude Scale," Journal of Reading 18 (October 1974):56-57.

Powell Attitude test measured actual reading habits and behavior while the Estes Scale measured emotions and feelings toward reading.⁹²

In summary, the Estes Attitude Scale has been used as an instrument in a limited amount of research. Research indicated that the Estes Scale resulted in significantly different scores for high achieving readers compared to low achieving readers.

Interest Inventory

Several studies have used some form of a questionnaire to ascertain the degree of interest students have toward various selections. Students' perceptions of difficulty levels were also determined by some of these questionnaires.

Bruning and Ridgway determined student interest toward a selection by asking students if they liked the book, had finished the book, and would like to read similar books. One point was scored for each "yes" answer to the questions. A score of three indicated a student had high interest toward a book. Students also stated what they liked best or least about the book as well as identifying the person in the book they liked best.^{93,94}

Dorwart's interest instrument consisted of two questions and an item on which the student ranked the book as being "too easy,"

⁹²Jo Ellen Oliver and Mary Jo Brown, "A Comparison of Two Attitude Scales as Related to Reading Achievement and Reading Gain," Ad-Sig Journal 2 (November 1979):14-20.

⁹³Bruning, op. cit., p. 131.

⁹⁴Ridgway, op. cit., p. 138.

"just right," or "hard." Questions asked if the student had finished the book and if he/she had liked the book. A "yes" answer on the latter item indicated that a student had high interest toward a specific book.⁹⁵

High school students indicated their degree of interest on a five-item Likert scale ranging from "not interested" to "very interested." High interest was defined as a score of four or five while low interest was a score of one or two. Students also indicated if they had finished reading the book and the number of pages they had completed.⁹⁶

In summary, interest inventories have been used in a limited number of studies. Determination of an interest score in the various studies ranged from students responding to one to three questions.

The Interview Technique

Only two research studies used the interview technique. Grover did not use a written questionnaire with the second graders, but did interview fifty-two students in-depth regarding their likes and dislikes about specific titles. Questions asked students to indicate their likes and dislikes about the book's subject, pictures, and amount of pictures. Students were also asked if they were able to read the book, amount of the book they had read, and if

⁹⁵Dorwart, op. cit., p. 39.

⁹⁶Williams, op. cit., p. 24.

someone had helped them read the book. Grover requested the children on four items to test for reliability of the children's answers.⁹⁷

Rankin also interviewed students during her study of reading interests and preferences of adolescents. From a group of books representing the six most popular books and the seven least popular books compiled from her library circulation study, Rankin asked students to rank the books in the order they would like to read them. She asked students to explain their selection of their highest and lowest ranked books. Students were also asked to indicate the kinds of books they liked to read best. Information from the interviews was compiled to determine the similarities and differences of the format features present in the highest ranked books and in the lowest ranked. Book choice preferences were also compared to expressed reading genre/topic preferences.⁹⁸

In summary, interviews have been used in a limited number of studies. Information was gathered regarding format preferences and perceptions of difficulty.

Summary of Methodology

The Estes Attitude Scale has been used to determine high and low readers' attitudes toward reading. Several other studies have reported using interest questionnaires to ascertain the amount of

⁹⁷Grover, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

⁹⁸Rankin, op. cit., p. 47.

student interest toward specific books. Interviews were used to determine format preferences and students' perceptions of difficulty.

Conclusion

Research studies about the four factors that comprise the total definition of readability--difficulty level, interest, format features and content, genre or topics--were reviewed in Chapter II. These four factors appear to interact; it is impossible to state that book choice is the result of only one of these factors.

In summary, it appears the difficulty of a book is often a factor in the book selection process; however, it is not the sole factor. High interest in a particular book or its content can override a book's high difficulty level and/or length as well as increasing comprehension scores. Students of all ages appear to prefer the representational art style and increasingly like photographs as they grow older. Limited research suggests students prefer illustrated instead of unillustrated reading materials. Little research has been reported about adolescent remedial readers' preferences of type size while conflicting results have been reported about the format feature of book length. An adult-looking format seems to be preferred by the adolescent remedial reader.

Remedial readers often have the same reading preferences of content and genre/topics as do achieving readers. The greatest differences of preferences appeared to be caused by sex.

Studies using similar methodology were also reviewed in Chapter II. Previous studies researching students' preferences of

various readability factors utilized both the interview technique and the questionnaire to determine amount of interest, perceptions of difficulty, and likes and dislikes of various format features. It was reported that the Estes Attitude Scale can differentiate between readers having positive attitudes toward reading and those having negative attitudes.

Little research has been reported about sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers' responses to high interest, low vocabulary trade books. This research study will attempt to substantiate or refute widely held suppositions regarding the factors that influence reluctant, remedial sixth graders' selection of high interest, low vocabulary trade books.

CHAPTER III

DATA COLLECTION

This research study was conducted to examine the responses by sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers to high interest, low vocabulary trade books. Various factors of readability--difficulty level, interest, format and content features--were analyzed.

This section will describe the high interest, low vocabulary books chosen for the study and the procedures for their selection. The population will be discussed as well as the devices and instruments that were used to gather information about the population. The procedures employed when the researcher was present and those employed when she was not present will also be discussed. A description of a pilot study is also included here.

Description of the Books

The researcher brought in eight titles of high interest, low vocabulary trade books per student. The books were selected from four sources: the "High-Low Reading" columns and "Easy Reading" columns (Booklist), Good Reading for Poor Readers, an article titled "Getting Reluctant Readers to Read: A Hi-Low

Booklist" (Top of the News) and Gateways to Readable Books.^{99,100,101,102,103}

Booklist and Top of the News are sources frequently used by librarians when ordering books while Good Reading for Poor Readers and Gateways to Readable Books are often utilized by teachers as guides to high interest, low vocabulary books for motivating reluctant and/or remedial readers in classrooms. Both Good Reading for Poor Readers and Gateways to Readable Books are included in the "Book Selection Guide" in Children and Books by Sutherland and Arbuthnot.¹⁰⁴

The books' difficulty levels, given by the four sources, ranged from one grade level below the lowest reader's reading score to one grade level above the highest reader's score. An attempt to get equal number of books at each difficulty level was made. The interest level of each book, which was approximately sixth grade, was also given by Booklist, Top of the News and Good Reading for Poor Readers. The interest level of all the books listed in

⁹⁹Barbara Duree, "High-Low Reading" columns, Booklist, issues beginning with October 1, 1977 to February 15, 1980.

¹⁰⁰Judith Goldberger, "Easy Reading" columns, Booklist, monthly issues beginning with September 15, 1975 to February 15, 1980.

¹⁰¹YASD High-Interest/Low-Literary Level Materials Evaluation Committee, "Getting Reluctant Readers to Read: A Hi-Lo Booklist," Top of the News 36 (Winter 1980):197-201.

¹⁰²Spache, op. cit., p. 41 ff.

¹⁰³Withrow, op. cit., p. 27 ff.

¹⁰⁴Zena Sutherland and May Arbuthnot, Children and Books, 5th ed., Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman & Co., 1972, p. 630.

¹⁰⁵Withrow, op. cit., p. 22.

Gateways to Readable Books was described as being at a level adolescents would find interesting.¹⁰⁵ The researcher tried to obtain an equal proportion of fiction and nonfiction. Within the fiction category, an effort was made to choose approximately the same number within the classifications of historical fiction, contemporary fiction, mystery, and science fiction/fantasy. Within the category of nonfiction, the researcher strived to choose approximately the same number within the classifications of modern biographies, sports books, transportation, and occult/crime.

Book Selection Procedures

A preliminary list was first made by recording books meeting specific criteria from Booklist's "Easy Reading" columns between September 15, 1975 to February 15, 1980 as well as books from the "High Interest, Low Vocabulary" columns from October 1, 1977, through February 15, 1980.^{106,107} The specific criteria used included the following: difficulty levels ranging from grades one through seven and interest levels of approximately sixth grade interest. Therefore, some books were also included that had an interest level range including fourth or fifth grade (i.e., second through fifth) and those that had an interest level range starting with seventh grade (i.e., seventh to tenth; seventh to twelfth). Both difficulty levels and interest ranges were given in the columns' reviews.

¹⁰⁵Withrow, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁰⁶Goldberger, "Easy Reading" columns, op. cit., Sept. 15, 1975 ff.

¹⁰⁷Duree, "High-Low Reading" columns, op. cit., Oct. 1, 1977 ff.

These book titles were first divided into fiction and nonfiction, then into appropriate difficulty levels for each grade level.

The books were next subdivided into the various classifications in fiction--mystery, contemporary, historical fiction, science fiction/fantasy; and in nonfiction--occult/crime, transportation, sports, and modern biography. The length of each book was also recorded. The researcher later recorded the style of illustration and amount of illustration for the books that could be found in local libraries. An attempt was made to get a minimum sample of four books for each classification at each difficulty level. When the number could not be filled because of unavailability in local libraries, books that met the needed criteria were chosen from an article titled "Getting Reluctant Readers to Read: A Hi-Lo Booklist," Good Reading for Poor Readers or from Gateways to Readable Books.^{108,109,110} An attempt was made to have a minimum number of four books for each cell. However, it was not possible to meet this number for all the cells. In an attempt to have more variables included, some cells contained five books. (See Appendix A).

¹⁰⁸YASD High-Interest/Low Literary Level Materials Evaluation Committee, op. cit.

¹⁰⁹Spache, op. cit., p. 57 ff.

¹¹⁰Withrow, op. cit., p. 27 ff.

Population

The population consisted of students in two deficiency classes in a middle school. Students were placed in these classes because of low reading scores or lack of study skills by teacher or by parental requests.

The number of students in the two classes totaled twenty students. However, two students who achieved grade level reading scores on the California Achievement Test were excluded from the data. The remaining eighteen students had grade level reading scores ranging from 2.0 to 6.0 according to the test. The students ranged in age from 12 years, 1 month to 13 years, 11 months with an average age of 12 years, 8 months.

This middle school was situated in a small rural mid-Michigan community. Most of the students were bused to school.

Sixth grade was selected for this study because these students often are at an age where their interests may be changing from elementary associated interests to those of a more adolescent nature.

Devices for Gathering Information

This section will describe the various devices for gathering information about the students' attitudes toward reading and their reactions to the high interest, low vocabulary trade books. The procedure for ascertaining the students' reading levels will also be described.

Estes Attitude Scale

The students were met for one testing situation at which time the Estes Attitude Scale was administered. This occurred during the first session.

The Elementary Form (Experimental Version) for second grade through sixth grade was administered. Pupils marked their responses on a three-item Likert scale ranging from "disagree" to "agree." The Estes Attitude Scale has five items worded in a negative manner to prevent students from becoming set in their responses. The scale was read to the students by the researcher; consequently, the students' reading ability did not interfere with the testing.

This Attitude Scale is an instrument designed to measure students' attitudes toward reading. Scores can range from a low of 0, indicating an extreme negative attitude toward reading, to a high of 28, indicating a high positive attitude toward reading. The manual does not suggest which numerical scores constitute negative or positive attitudes; therefore, the Estes Attitude Scale was administered to a group of average and high achieving readers who were judged as having positive reading attitudes by their teacher. The mean scores of the group of remedial readers and the group of high achieving readers were compared. It was thought that the mean score of the remedial readers might be lower, thereby showing that the remedial readers possessed more negative attitudes (reluctance) than did the average and high achievers.

Results of the Estes Attitude Scale showed that the mean score was 19.9 for the average and high achieving readers and 16.6

for the remedial readers. Using a t-test, the difference in these scores is significant at the .05 level.

The Elementary Form (Experimental Version) was developed from the Secondary Form (Grades Seven to Twelve); consequently, final data for the convergent and discriminant validity is not complete. However, some preliminary information is reported by the test makers for convergent validity. It was reported that correlations with the scale of two student samples were .33 and .31 with self ratings of ability, .60 and .48 with self ratings of liking to read, .42 and .57 with self ratings of importance of reading, and .43 and .42 with self ratings regarding amount of leisure reading. Similarly, teachers' ratings reported from one of the samples correlated with each criterion .47, .57, .59, .58 respectively. Each of these "validity correlations" was significant ($p < .0.$). Internal consistency between the two student samples with alpha reliabilities was reported at .86 and .85. The factorial similarity was reported as being .91.¹¹¹

This scale was chosen because it is purported to measure actual attitudes and feelings toward reading. Other scales often measure behaviors such as amount and kind of reading which may or may not be associated with reading achievement.¹¹²

¹¹¹Thomas H. Estes et. al., Estes Attitude Scales: Elementary Form (Experimental Version), Manual for Administration and Interpretation (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia, 1976), pp. 17-18.

¹¹²Oliver, op. cit. p. 18.

Interest Inventory

During session #1, the students were introduced to the procedures of the interest inventory (see Appendix B) which was to be filled out for each book a student selected and finished or selected but did not finish. The students were told to (1) circle the numbers that corresponded closest to their impressions of the book and (2) to record the number of pages completed if the book was unfinished. To qualify for a form, the student had to take the book away from the book selection site. This eliminated forms being filled out for selection techniques (i.e., skimming, reading a short amount, looking at pictures, reading the book jacket) which students often do before they make a choice.

The researcher was cautious not to influence the readers' decisions about finishing or not finishing books, and did not offer suggestions or reasons for not finishing books. The students were also informed that this was not considered a race; that is, the number of books read was not an important factor. Instead, the reflections about the book(s) as they pertained to the students, both as individuals and as representatives of middle school students, were the crucial factors.

Interviews

The students were interviewed about books (1) selected and finished, (2) selected but unfinished and (3) rejected. The interest inventory served as a basis of the interview; that is, interview questions were asked to probe for additional information

which may have been involved during the book selection/rejection process. Specific questions were asked for each category (see Appendix C). These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

The interviews were recorded in another classroom. This prevented disturbing the other children who were reading.

During the interview session, the students were able to look at the book they had selected to assist them in answering the questions. This helped the students remember specific characteristics about the book rather than relying on their memories. The students' responses recorded on the interest inventories formed the basis of the interviews for books in the categories of selected and finished and selected but unfinished.

The books used for the rejected category were chosen by the students from any of the books on the tables. The students were told, "Show me a book that you did not choose to read or you think you do not want to read."

A total of ninety-six interviews were recorded including forty about selected and finished books, eighteen about selected but unfinished books, and thirty-eight about rejected books. The number of interviews was small for the category of selected but unfinished because there were only a total of twenty-eight books in this group. A sample interview for each category of books is included in Appendix D.

A master chart was made for each class listing each member of the classroom. Each name was followed by three columns--selected and finished; selected but unfinished; rejected. A different colored

pencil for each week was used to mark off each completed interview, thereby ensuring an equal sampling of each category and student. This chart served as a guide for the researcher.

Transcriptions of the Interviews

The interviews of the students' responses to the three categories of books--selected and finished, selected but unfinished, rejected--were later transcribed and analyzed.

The transcriptions were analyzed in three steps. First, the data were read and the interviews were divided into the three book categories. Next, the questions from the interest inventory for the rejected classification were identified and the answers to these questions were noted by margin markings. This information was then transferred onto an interest inventory for each rejected book. Finally, the entire transcript was re-analyzed to gather additional information about students' statements regarding various readability characteristics for each of the three categories of books. Similarities and differences among the book categories of the various factors were then determined and compiled.

The Students' Reading Levels

The students' reading levels were based on scores derived from a standardized test administered by the school district. The California Achievement Test, Form 16C was administered the week before the research started.

Each student's reading level was determined by converting the combined raw score from the reading vocabulary test and the raw score from the reading comprehension test. This total raw score was then converted to grade equivalent scores as provided in the manual. (See Appendix E).

In summary, this section described the devices that were utilized to gather information about the students. The Estes Attitude Scale was administered to ascertain students' attitudes toward reading. Interest inventories and interviews were used to gather students' reactions and responses to high interest, low vocabulary trade books. Transcriptions were later made of the interviews and analyzed. Students' reading levels were based on California Achievement test scores.

Procedures

This section will describe the general procedures including those that were followed both when the researcher was present and not present. The procedures of the first day will be discussed as well as the instructions and directions that were given to the students during the course of the research study.

General Procedures

The students were met twice weekly in forty-five minute sessions for six weeks. During each session, the students selected and read the high interest, low vocabulary trade books. They also recorded their responses on interest inventories and

participated in interviews with the researcher during these class periods.

First Day Procedures

During the first class period the Estes Attitude Scale was administered. The students were told that they were participating in a study to help determine why sixth grade students chose certain books to read while rejecting others. The interest inventory was introduced item by item during this first session. It was stressed that reflection about each item was extremely important. There were no right or wrong answers; the answers should reflect a student's individual thinking and evaluation. Each person was his/her own expert.

The students were also told that they were to be interviewed regarding the books they chose and rejected. It was stated that the interviews would be based on the questions from the interest inventory.

The books were introduced by classifications, first by identifying the books as fiction and nonfiction, then further identifying the fiction as mystery, contemporary, historical fiction, fantasy/science fiction while nonfiction was further identified as occult/crime, transportation, modern biographies, and sports. The students were told that they were free to choose any book that they wanted to read. Some books might take them as long as two weeks to read while other books might take less than a day to complete.

Taking Books Home

Each student could check out one book at a time to take from the room. The title and student's name was written by the student on a sign-out sheet. When the book was returned, the student crossed off his/her name.

Procedures When Researcher Was Present

Each session, beginning after the teacher took attendance, started with a short "business" period at which time the researcher determined if there were any concerns or questions about procedures. When this was over, the students who needed new books selected them while the other students continued their reading. At this time, the researcher quickly checked the status of books still recorded as being checked out. The remainder of the period was spent conducting interviews about the books the students had (1) selected and finished, (2) selected but did not finish, and (3) rejected during the previous week.

The books were displayed randomly on four tables during the sessions with the covers exposed. The students were allowed to choose one book at a time. For the two categories of books selected and finished and books selected but unfinished, the students recorded their responses on an interest inventory for each book. These inventories were filed by the researcher in individual folders for each student.

The teacher remained in the room during the research periods. She was in charge of maintaining classroom order and discipline and taking care of any problems of this nature which occurred.

Procedures When Researcher Was Not Present

The books were available for exchanging when the researcher was not present. During this time, the students were able to exchange their books by choosing another book from the storage boxes. The teacher gave interest inventories to the students who needed them. These forms were then filed by the teacher in a class folder.

Books that were selected but not taken home were stored in a separate box which was considered "off limits" to other students. Each book in this box was identified by a bookmark that had the student's name clearly written on it. The book stayed in the "off limits" box until the following research period when the student made a decision to continue reading it or to choose a different book. The book could be removed from the box any time during the week if the book was properly signed out by the student.

In summary, this section described general procedures that were followed during the research including first day procedures and the instructions that were given to the students. Procedures that were followed when the researcher was present and not present were also described.

The Pilot Study

The interest inventory was piloted with ten middle school remedial readers during March. After the students read a book selected from a group of easy-to-read books and high interest, low

vocabulary books, they recorded their responses on an interest inventory for each book. The form itself seemed to present no difficulty to the students who ranged in reading ability from third through fifth grade. However, question #4 should have been explained in more detail during the pilot; four of the students thought they were required to count the actual number of pages that were in print to answer the question asking how many pages they had read. The question was rewritten as a result of this pilot study.

Data Collection Procedures for Format and Content Features

This section will describe the criteria used for categorizing the format and content features of the various books. The books were analyzed by the various format features (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, and book length) and content features (genre/topics and fiction or nonfiction) for the three categories of books--selected and finished, selected but unfinished, and rejected. In addition, the format features of the remainder of the books not chosen for any of the three groups were also analyzed.

Illustrative Style

Three art styles were utilized for this study. They included photographs, representational and expressionistic style. These

styles can be described in their amount of iconicity--the degree in which a pictorial subject resembles its subject in real life.¹¹³

Photographs usually have a high degree of iconicity. They often are an exact replication of their subjects.

Representational illustrations also have a high degree of iconicity. The artist portrays his subject much as it appears in real life. Cianciolo (1976) described representational illustrations as being:

. . . concerned with details and facts of the object itself.
Outlines are precise, as if one is viewing the scene closely
. . . although a limited amount of distortion is permitted
to emphasize the artist's message.¹¹⁴

Representational art is frequently referred to as realistic art.

Expressionistic illustrations have the least amount of iconicity. The artist alters subjects by manipulating colors, lines, shapes, light, textures and space. Cianciolo (1976) stated that "the essential or structural quality of the object, as opposed to the outward aspects of the object, is a primary concern to the expressionist."¹¹⁵ Expressionism is an expression or statement of an artist's emotions; it may be a comment on society.¹¹⁶

Expressionistic art is often referred to as abstract art.

¹¹³Grover, op. cit., p. 62.

¹¹⁴Patricia Cianciolo, Illustrations in Children's Books, 2d ed. (Dubuque, Ia.: Wm. C. Brown Co. Publishers, 1976), p. 32.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 35.

¹¹⁶Donnarae MacCann and Olga Richard, The Child's First Books: A Critical Study of Pictures and Texts (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1973), p. 33.

The high interest, low vocabulary trade books which contained illustrations were categorized according to the criteria described. Illustrations were classified as being photographs, representational (realistic) or expressionistic (abstract) illustrations.

Amount of Illustration

The amount of illustration was classified into four groups-- picture books, profusely illustrated books, sparsely illustrated books, and unillustrated books. A picture book was defined as a book in which the pictures are integrated with the text; together, they tell the story. There are more pictures than words. A profusely illustrated book has numerous illustrations but a more complex plot and longer text than does a picture book. A sparsely illustrated book has more text and fewer illustrations than does a profusely illustrated book. An unillustrated book has all text and no illustrations.

The number of pages containing illustrations was counted to determine the classification in which the books belonged. The following criteria were established: 90-100% of the number of pages containing illustrations was classified as a picture book, 40 to 89% as a profusely illustrated book, 1 to 39% as a sparsely illustrated book, 0% as an unillustrated book.

Size of Type

Tanselle suggested measuring both x-height and ascenders and descenders to determine print size. However, as not all the books in the study contained the letter "x," the lower case "l" was chosen

as the unit to be measured.¹¹⁷ The "l's" were measured in hundredths of an inch, using a steel engineer's rule with divisions of hundredths of an inch. Using this method, the estimated accuracy of plus or minus a hundredth of an inch was attained.

Book Length

The length of each book was determined by noting the last numbered page. If a book was not numbered, the pages were counted beginning with the first page of print or illustration and concluding with the last page of print or illustration.

Genre/Topic

The high interest, low vocabulary trade books were originally assigned to one of eight genre/topic classifications for selection in the study. Fiction was originally classified as fantasy/science fiction, contemporary, historical, mystery/adventure. Nonfiction was originally classified as modern biography, sports, transportation, occult/crime related topics.

Book Classification - Fiction or Nonfiction

When the high interest, low vocabulary books were being initially selected for inclusion in the study, they were classified as being fiction or nonfiction. Library classification was used as the criterion for the majority of the books with the exception of some books in the categories of fantasy and historical fiction.

¹¹⁷G. Thomas Tanselle, "The Identification of Type Faces in Bibliographical Description," Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America 60 (1966):188-91 as cited by Grover, op. cit., p. 66.

Two books that had a library classification of nonfiction were assigned to the fantasy section in the classification of fiction due to their fanciful content. Similarly, three books classified as historical biographies or having historical settings were classified as historical fiction because the books' plots were largely fictionalized.

Data Analysis

Discussion of the procedures utilized to analyze the data will be presented in this section. These procedures included mean scores, frequencies, and the chi-square statistic. This section will be divided into three parts; first, procedures used to analyze the data for selected and finished books will be described, followed by procedures used for selected but unfinished books, and lastly by methods used for the rejected books. Tests of significance were only applicable to the data results of the chi-square statistic, and were not determined for the mean scores or frequency tables because of overlapping data.

Selected and Finished Books

Mean scores were computed to determine book difficulty levels, interest scores, students' perceptions of appropriateness of books' appearances, students' perceptions of the appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents, and the influence of the books' titles, covers, or jackets on selection. Means were also utilized to determine if relationships existed between students' perceptions of difficulty levels and interest scores, perceptions of

appropriateness of books' appearances and interest scores, and students' perceptions of the appropriateness of the books' subjects/ contents and interest scores. The use of mean scores summarized the data and enabled comparisons to be made among the book selection categories.

First, the mean difficulty score for selected and finished books was determined. The difficulty level for each selected and finished book was recorded from the sources used to obtain the titles of the high interest, low vocabulary books that were included in this study. These sources, including Booklist, Top of the News, Good Reading for Poor Readers, and Gateways to Readable Books, reported a difficulty level for each book.^{118,119,120,121} The mean score of these difficulty levels for selected and finished books was then calculated.

Second, the mean interest score of the selected and finished books was determined. The interest score for each book was ascertained by adding the points of interest inventory items #1, #2, and #3. The mean interest score of the selected and finished books was then calculated.

Third, the mean scores of responses from the interest inventory were determined for students' perceptions of appropriateness of

¹¹⁸Goldberg, Duree, op. cit., September 15, 1975, ff.

¹¹⁹YASD, op. cit., p. 197-201.

¹²⁰Spache, op. cit., p. 41 ff.

¹²¹Withrow, op. cit., p. 27 ff.

books' appearances, appropriateness of books' subjects/contents, and influence of books' titles, covers, on selection. To ascertain the students' perceptions of the appropriateness of the books' appearances, the numerical responses from interest inventory item #6 were first recorded for all selected and finished books. A mean score was computed from these numerical responses. To determine the students' perceptions of the appropriateness of the subjects/contents, numerical responses from interest inventory item #7 were recorded for all selected and finished books, from which the mean score was then computed. An identical method was used to determine the influence of the books' titles, covers, or jackets on selection decisions. The numerical responses from interest inventory #8 were recorded for selected and finished books, from which the mean score was then computed.

Fourth, to determine if relationships existed between students' perceptions of difficulty levels and their interest scores, a table with five categories was constructed, with each category representing numerical responses from interest inventory item #5. These responses ranged from "way too easy" through "way too hard." Next, the previously determined interest scores were recorded within the appropriate response category and, lastly, the mean interest score for each category was computed.

Fifth, a similar analysis method was utilized to determine if a possible relationship existed between students' perceptions of the appropriateness of books' appearances and their interest scores. Another five category table was constructed. Each category represented a numerical response from interest inventory item #6, ranging

from "way too young" through "way too old." The interest scores that were within each numerical response category were recorded and a mean interest score for each category was then computed.

Sixth, the same method was utilized to ascertain if a relationship existed between the students' perceptions of the books' appropriateness of subjects/contents and their interest scores. A five category table was again constructed, with each category representing a numerical response from interest inventory item #7, ranging from being appropriate for "way younger students" to "way older students." Interest scores were once again recorded within the suitable response category and a mean interest score was calculated for each.

Two frequency tables were compiled to determine if relationships existed between book difficulty levels and students' reading levels and between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of the book difficulty levels. Frequency tables were selected as a method of analysis to summarize the data and to also enable comparisons among the three selection categories.

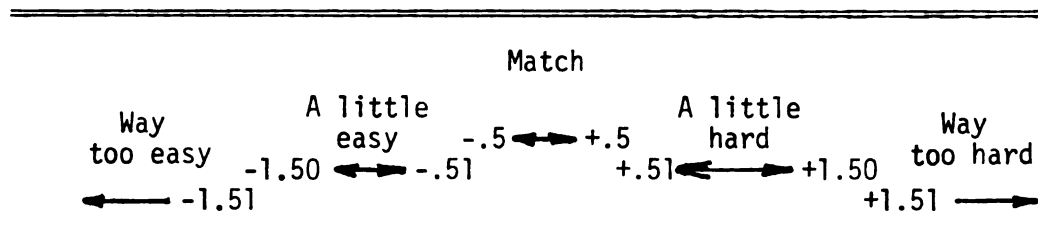
First, the factors of book difficulty levels and students' reading levels were examined to determine if any relationship existed between the two factors. For each selected and finished book, the difficulty level of the book as reported by one of the four book sources, was recorded. Each student's reading level had been determined by his/her score on the California Achievement Test, Form 16C. Next, the book difficulty level was compared to the reading level of the student who had selected and finished the book. The

results of this comparison were then tallied into one of three appropriate readability match index categories; the difficulty level being above the student's reading level, matching the student's reading level, or being below the student's reading level. For a match to occur, the student's reading level had to have been within five months above or below the book's difficulty level. This comparison of the book's difficulty level to the student's reading level was referred to as the readability match index. A similar variable was utilized in Dorwart's study.

Second, to determine if a relationship existed between the students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels and the readability match index, a five category table was constructed. Each category represented a numerical response from interest inventory item #5 ranging from "way too easy" to "way too hard." Each of these numerical response categories was divided into three sections: categories in which the books were actually easier than the students perceived them, categories in which the books matched the students' perceptions of difficulty levels, and categories in which the books were more difficult than the students perceived them. Next, a scale of the readability match index was formulated. The difficulty level of a book being within a student's reading level was defined as the book being five months above or below the student's reading level; a little easy if the book was between five months to one year and five months below the student's reading level, and way too

easy if the book was over one year and five months below the student's reading level. Similarly, a book was considered a little too hard if the book was between five months to one year and five months above the student's reading level and way too hard if the book was over one year and five months above the student's reading level. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1.--The Readability Match Scale.



NOTE: Numbers represent months and years below and above students' reading levels.

Next, each student's perception of book difficulty level for each selected and finished book was compared to the readability match index. A match occurred when the student accurately perceived the book's difficulty level in relation to his/her own reading level in any one of the five categories. A negative response occurred when the student perceived the book as being too difficult in relation to his/her own reading ability when, in actuality, the book was below his/her reading level. Similarly, a positive response occurred when the student perceived the book's difficulty level as being too easy in relation to his/her reading ability when, in fact, the book was above the student's reading level.

The chi-square statistic was utilized to analyze the format and content characteristics of the selected and finished books. For

each of the 164 books the following information had been recorded: style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, book length, genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications. Five of these characteristics were further categorized. Style of illustration was categorized into photographs, representational and expressionistic styles; amount of illustration into picture books, profusely illustrated, sparsely illustrated and unillustrated; size of type into categories of .09-.12, .13-.15, .16-.19, and over .20 inches; book length into categories of 25-50, 51-75, 76-100, 101-125, 126-150, 151-175, and over 176 pages; and genre/topic into science fiction/fantasy, contemporary fiction, historical fiction, mystery/adventure, modern biography, sports, transportation, and occult/crime. The data were recorded for the entire group as well as for boys and girls. The computer program SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) was utilized for the cross-tabulations.¹²² Cross-tabulations were formulated for these independent variables crossed by the dependent variables of the selection status categories of selected and finished, selected but unfinished, rejected, and ignored books. The significance level was set at .05. Chi-square was selected as a statistical test because the format and content characteristics were available as frequencies. Chi-square was used to determine to what degree the crossed variables were dependent on each other for occurrence beyond chance.¹²³

¹²²Norman H. Nie et. al., SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Second Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1975), p. 280.

¹²³Ibid., p. 222.

Selected but Unfinished Books

The data analysis for selected but unfinished books was exactly the same as described for the selected and finished books. However, within this book selection category, the relationship between proportions of books completed and interest scores was examined.

To examine this relationship a five category table was constructed. Each category, representing a percentage score of the proportion of books read, consisted of 20% increments. These ranged from 1% through 99%. Next, for each selected but unfinished book, the amount of the book that had been recorded as being completed (interest inventory item #4) was converted into a percentage. The interest score of each selected but unfinished book was then recorded within the appropriate category representing the proportion of the book finished. The mean interest score for each of these proportion categories was then computed.

Rejected Books

The procedures utilized to analyze the data for the rejected books was similar to the procedures discussed for selected and finished books. However, because students did not read the rejected books, no interest scores were collected. Consequently, rejected books could not be analyzed to determine if relationships existed between perceptions of difficulty levels and interest scores, perceptions of books' appearances and interest scores, and perceptions of books' subjects/contents and interest scores. A mean interest score of the rejected was also undeterminable.

In summary, this section described the procedures of analysis utilized for the three book selection categories. Means were calculated to determine books' difficulty levels, interest scores (selected and finished books, selected but unfinished books) and similarities and differences among the interest inventory items of appropriateness of the books' appearances, appropriateness of the subjects/contents, and the influence of the books' titles, covers, or jackets on selection. Mean interest scores were also utilized to determine if relationships existed between students' perceptions of difficulty levels and interest scores, perceptions of the appropriateness of the books' appearances, and the perceptions of the books' subjects/contents for the book selection categories of selected and finished and selected but unfinished, as well as proportions of books read for selected but unfinished books. Frequency tables were used to examine the relationships between book difficulty levels and the students' reading levels (readability match index) and the readability match index and the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels for all three book selection categories. Chi-square was used to determine the similarities and differences of the format and content characteristics of illustrative style, amount of illustration, book length, type size, genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications among the three book selection categories.

Summary

This research study was conducted to examine the selection and responses of reluctant, remedial sixth graders to high interest,

low vocabulary trade books to various factors of readability of difficulty level, interest, content and format characteristics. Eighteen sixth grade students participated in the study.

One hundred sixty-four high interest, low vocabulary trade books were selected by the researcher for specific variables of difficulty level, interest level, format and content characteristics for inclusion in the research study. The students reacted to these books during the six week research period recording their responses on interest inventories and by interviews.

Several methods were utilized to analyze the data. Means were computed to determine book difficulty levels, interest scores, and mean scores of various items from the interest inventory as well as determining if relationships existed between book difficulty levels and interest scores, appropriateness of books' appearances and interest scores, appropriateness of books' subjects/contents and interest scores, and proportions of books completed and interest scores. The chi-square statistic was used to determine the specific content and format characteristics that influenced the book selection decision-making by reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers of high interest, low vocabulary trade books.

CHAPTER IV

THE DATA RESULTS

Summary of the Research Project

This researcher examined the selection and responses of sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers to high interest, low vocabulary trade books. Four factors of readability--difficulty level, interest, content, and format characteristics--were of specific concern.

One hundred sixty-four books were made available over a period of six weeks to eight girls and ten boys. After each book selection, the student completed an interest inventory on which he/she indicated degree of interest, amount of book read, and perceptions about difficulty level, appropriateness of book's appearance and subjects/contents for sixth graders. Interviews were taped to gather information about rejected books and to gather additional information about students' responses to selected books.

The data were tabulated and classified by the type of decisions the students made regarding the books. The students were asked to make one of four types of decisions for each book: to select and read a book to completion, to select but not finish a book, to indicate a book to the researcher that the student did not want to read (rejected book), and to totally ignore a book. For each

student, this latter category consisted of decisions regarding all the remaining books which were not in one of the first three selection categories. Consequently, each student made 164 various decisions (one decision for each book); a total of 2,952 book selection decisions were made by the eighteen students during the six weeks. The group made seventy-one decisions to select and finish books, twenty-eight decisions to select but not finish books, thirty-five decisions to reject books and 2,817 decisions to ignore books.

Data were analyzed in several ways to determine the similarities and differences of the readability factors among the three selection categories of selected and finished, selected but unfinished, and rejected books. Frequency counts were tallied to determine the relationship between the difficulty levels of the books and reading levels of the students (readability match index), between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of difficulty levels, and between the proportions of selected but unfinished books read and the interest scores for each book. In addition, mean interest scores were determined for each response category of the interest inventory for students' perceptions of book difficulty levels, appropriateness of appearances for sixth graders, and appropriateness of subjects/contents for sixth graders. Means were also calculated to determine further similarities and differences regarding interest inventory items among the book categories. The extent to which the format and content characteristics

appealed or did not appeal to the reluctant, remedial readers were determined by chi-square.

The data will be presented by mean scores, frequency counts, or percentages. The data results of the statistic chi-square will be presented by percentages representing the numbers of books containing the characteristic being examined. Tests of significance were only applicable to the data results of chi-square. These were set at the .05 level.

The Results of the Data Analysis

This chapter will present the results of the data analysis for the three categories of books--selected and finished, selected but unfinished, and rejected. The data will be cited in two sections for each book category. First, the factors that distinguished the books in that category from the other book categories will be addressed; then the factors that failed to distinguish the books in that category from one or both of the other categories will be cited. In addition, differences and similarities of the format and content characteristics between boys' and girls' book selection will be discussed. The results of these interest inventory and interview responses as well as characteristics of books which appealed and did not appeal to this group of reluctant, remedial sixth grade students will also be analyzed.

Research Question #1 Selected and Finished Books

In this section, data regarding the nine characteristics which distinguished the selected and finished books from the

categories of selected but unfinished and/or rejected books will be analyzed. The nine characteristics included mean difficulty score, the readability match index, mean interest score, student perceptions between appropriateness of books' appearances and interest scores, subjects/contents and interest scores, difficulty levels and interest scores, student perceptions between the book difficulty levels and the readability match index, book length and amount of illustration.

First, the mean difficulty level of selected and finished books was 3.6 which was the lowest difficulty level of the three book selection categories. (See Table 2, pg. 89). The range of book difficulty levels for selected and finished books ranged from the first through the seventh grade. In contrast, the mean difficulty levels for both the selected but unfinished books and rejected books were higher than for the selected and finished books (4.7 and 4.9, respectively). The range of difficulty levels was first through seventh grade for the selected but unfinished books and second through seventh grade for the rejected books. Further, of the forty interviews conducted regarding selected and finished books, twenty-six of the interviewees mentioned book difficulty as being of concern to them. Eleven of these students stated that they believed short words indicated that books were easy to read. In addition, three of the interviewees selected books solely on the basis of the ease of difficulty level. One girl, explaining her reasoning for choosing The Rocking Chair Ghost by Mary C. Jane (3rd grade

categories of selected but unfinished and/or rejected books will be analyzed. The nine characteristics included mean difficulty score, the readability match index, mean interest score, student perceptions between appropriateness of books' appearances and interest scores, subjects/contents and interest scores, difficulty levels and interest scores, student perceptions between the book difficulty levels and the readability match index, book length and amount of illustration.

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difficulty level) said, "I can read it faster and get it done with quicker." Examples of books which were selected and finished included The Haunted Motorcycle Shop by Hariette Abels (4) and The Greatest Monsters in the World by Daniel Cohen (6).

TABLE 2.--Mean Difficulty Levels of the Three Book Selection Categories.

Selected and Finished	Selected but Unfinished	Rejected
3.6 S. D. 1.67	4.7 S. D. 1.96	4.9 S. D. 1.89

Second, the relationship between the difficulty levels of books and students' reading levels distinguished selected and finished books from both of the other book selection categories. Of the seventy-one decisions made to select and finish books, fifty-four of these decisions were to finish books below the students' reading levels, nine matched the students' reading levels while only eight were above the students' reading levels. (See Table 3, pg. 90.) Two examples of selected and finished books which had difficulty levels below the students' reading levels included The Plant People by Dale Carlson (2) and Bicycles by Alan Dahnsen (2). For the category of selected but unfinished books, on the other hand, nine decisions were made to select books that were below the students' reading levels, seven decisions were made to select books that matched the students' reading levels, while twelve decisions were made to select books that were above the students' reading levels.

Within the category of rejected books, fifteen of the decisions were to reject books having lower difficulty levels than the students' reading levels, five were within the students' reading levels, and fifteen were above the students' reading levels.

TABLE 3.--Relationship of Book Difficulty Levels to Students' Reading Levels.

	<u>Readability Match Index</u>		
	Selected and Finished	Selected but Unfinished	Rejected
+			
above	8	12	15
0			
match	9	7	5
-			
below	54	9	15

A third distinguishing characteristic of the selected and finished books was the mean interest score. The mean interest score of 13.13 for selected and finished books was higher than for selected but unfinished books (11.33). The interest scores for selected and finished books ranged from seven to fifteen points while they ranged from three to fourteen points for the selected but unfinished books. (See Table 4, pg. 91.) Interest scores were not gathered for rejected books because the students did not read these books, and, therefore, could not respond to items #1, #2, #3 on the interest inventory.

TABLE 4.--Mean Interest Levels of Selected and Finished and Selected but Unfinished Books.

Selected and Finished	Selected but Unfinished	Rejected
13.13 S. D. 2	11.33 S. D. 9.2	Not Applicable

The next three characteristics which distinguished selected and finished books from the selected but unfinished books regarded students' perceptions of various factors of books' appearances, subjects/contents and difficulty levels of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books as they related to interest scores. Data were not available for the rejected books because no interest scores were gathered for this category.

The fourth and fifth characteristics which distinguished the selected and finished books from selected but unfinished books were the relationship between perceptions of the appearances and interest scores of the books and the relationship between the perceptions of subjects/contents and interest scores of the books. For the fourth characteristic, interest scores increased as the appearances of the books were perceived as becoming less appropriate for younger (11) and slightly younger students (12.5) and more appropriate for sixth graders (13.5), with the highest interest score occurring for books perceived as "looking a little old for sixth graders (14.2)." (See Table 5, pg. 93.) Two examples of selected and finished books which received high interest scores and

were simultaneously perceived as having appearances appropriate for slightly older students included Vans, The Personality Vehicles by Paul Dexler and Ghosts I Have Been by Richard Peck. The pattern, however, for selected but unfinished books was different. The interest scores for these books also increased as the appearances became less appropriate for younger (3) and slightly younger (9.4) students and more appropriate for sixth graders (9.8), but then decreased as the appearances of the books were perceived as being appropriate for slightly older children (7).

The relationship of the appropriateness of subjects/contents and interest scores also distinguished selected and finished books from selected but unfinished books. Patterns were similar to the above described relationship between perceptions of appearances and interest scores. For the selected and finished books, the interest scores increased as the students perceived the books' subject/contents becoming less appropriate for younger (10.9) and slightly younger students (13.1) and more appropriate for sixth graders (13.2). Those books which were perceived as having subjects/contents appropriate for students slightly older than sixth graders received the highest interest scores for finished books (14.5). (See Table 6, pg. 94.) Examples of selected and finished books which received high interest scores and whose subjects/contents were simultaneously perceived as appropriate for students slightly older than sixth graders included The Ape Inside of Me by Kin Platt (15 points) and CB Radio by Edward Radlauer (15 points). For the

TABLE 5.--Relationship of Students' Perceptions of Books' Appearances and Mean Interest Scores.

	Looks way too young for a 6th grader #1	Looks a little young for a 6th grader #2	Looks just right for a 6th grader #3	Looks a little old for a 6th grader #4	Looks way too old for a 6th grader #5
Selected and Finished	11	12.5	13.5	14.2	--
Selected but Unfinished	3	9.4	9.8	7	--

TABLE 6.--Relationship Between Students' Perceptions of Appropriateness of Subjects/Contents and Mean Interest Scores.

	Best for students much younger than I am #1	Best for students a little younger than I am #2	Just right for 6th graders #3	Best for students a little older than I am #4	Best for students a lot older than I am #5
Selected and Finished	10.9	13.1	13.2	14.5	--
Selected but Unfinished	3	9.4	9.8	7	--

selected but unfinished books, however, the mean scores were also lower than for the selected and finished books. The interest scores increased as the students perceived the subjects/contents becoming less appropriate for younger (3.0) and slightly younger (9.4) students and more appropriate for sixth graders (9.8), then decreased as they were perceived as being appropriate for slightly older students (7.0).

The sixth characteristic which distinguished selected and finished books from selected but unfinished books was the relationship between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and the mean interest scores. Two differences between the two book selection categories were noted. The selected and finished books had higher interest scores than did the selected but unfinished books and second, distinct patterns emerged within each category of books. For the selected and finished books, the interest score was the lowest for the books perceived as being "way too easy," (10.9) increased but were equal (13.2) for books that were perceived as being "a little easy" and "just right," and highest for books perceived as being a "little hard" (14.4) for the students. (See Table 7, pg. 96.) Examples of selected and finished books which received high interest scores and were simultaneously perceived as being slightly difficult for the readers included Motorcycle Motocross School by Edward and Dan Radlauer (13 points) and Mustang Wild Spirit of the West by Marguerite Henry (15 points). A different pattern, however, was noted for the

category of the selected but unfinished books. Here, the interest score was lowest for the books perceived as being "way too easy" (3), increased for books "a little easy" (8.5) and "just right" (9.9) until the perception category of "a little hard" where the interest score decreased slightly (8.8). Books perceived as being "way too easy" were rated as having much less interest than those in the other perception categories of increasing difficulty levels for both selection categories.

TABLE 7.--Relationship of Students' Perceptions of Books' Difficulty Levels and Mean Interest Scores.

	Way too easy #1	A little easy #2	Just right #3	A little hard #4	Way too hard #5
Selected and Finished	10.9	13.2	13.2	14.4	--
Selected but Unfinished	3	8.5	9.9	8.8	--

Seventh, the characteristic of the comparison of the readability match index and the students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels indicated that patterns emerged which distinguished the selected and finished books from the other two categories of books. The students frequently overestimated the book difficulty levels (58%) for the selected and finished books; that is, they perceived the books' difficulty levels as being harder than they actually were. (See Table 8, pg. 98.) Examples of selected and finished books whose difficulty levels were overestimated

included Don't Shoot by Roxane Chadwick and Great Unsolved Cases by Arnold Madison. However, for the selected but unfinished books, the students' underestimated the books' difficulty levels; that is, they perceived 43% of the books' difficulty levels as being below the actual stated difficulty levels. The perceptions of difficulty levels for the rejected books were more evenly divided than in the other two categories--31% for overestimations, 34% for underestimations. Overall, the readability match index and the students' perceptions of book difficulty levels showed that these students could not accurately perceive the books' difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels. Only 27% of the perceptions of the selected and finished books were accurate, 36% of the selected but unfinished, and 34% of the rejected books.

Eighth, book length distinguished the selected and finished books from the selected but unfinished books and rejected books. Books of the shortest lengths (twenty-five to fifty pages) were the most frequently finished, followed by books within the next category (fifty-one to seventy-five pages). As the books became longer, they were chosen less frequently. In fact, while 88.8% of the decisions were made to select and finish books of twenty-five to one hundred pages, only 11.2% of the decisions were made to select and finish books having more than one hundred pages. (See Figure 3, pg. 131.) Examples of selected and finished books of less than one hundred pages included Football's Greatest Passer, Fran Tarkenton by Thomas Braun (32 pages) and The Disco Kid by Curtis Gathje (88 pages). In contrast, for the selected but unfinished books and rejected books,

TABLE 8.--Relationship of Readability Match Index and Students' Perceptions of Book Difficulty Levels.

	RAW DATA									
	Perception #1	Perception #2	Perception #3	Perception #4	Perception #5					
	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +	- m +
Selected and Finished	0 9 2	10 4 0	25 6 7	6 0 2						
Selected but Unfinished	0 3 0	2 2 3	1 3 6	3 1 3	1					
Rejected	0 2 3	2 3 2	7 0 2	6 5 1	1 1					

	PERCENTAGES OF BOOKS WITHIN CATEGORY			
	- Overestimated	Accurately Perceived	+ Underestimated	
Selected and Finished	58%	27%	15%	
Selected but Unfinished	21%	36%	43%	
Rejected	31%	34%	34%	

approximately equal percentages of decisions were made to stop reading or reject books containing less than one hundred pages and those over one hundred pages. However, 37% of the rejected books were over 176 pages. The characteristic of book length was statistically significant.

Amount of illustration was the ninth characteristic which distinguished finished books from selected but unfinished and rejected books. Profusely illustrated books were the most frequently finished books (42.3%), closely followed by picture books (40.8%). Together, these two categories comprised 83% of the selected and finished books. As the amount of illustrations within the books decreased, the books were selected less often. (See Figure 2, pg. 130.) An example of a selected and finished picture book was Little Runner of the Long House by Betty Baker while an example of a selected and finished profusely illustrated book was Football's Powerful Runner, Franco Harris by Thomas Braun. For the selected but unfinished books and rejected books, more decisions were made to stop reading and to reject books that were sparsely illustrated and unillustrated (57.1% and 62.8%, respectively). The amount of illustration was statistically significant.

Although statistically insignificant, both type size and genre/topic may have influenced the students' decisions about book selection. Over 56% of the selected and finished books contained average type size (.13 to .15 inches) while only 25% of these books contained the smallest size (.09 to .12 inches) and 18%

contained the larger sizes (.16 to .19 and over .20 inches). (See Figure 4, pg. 132.) Selected and finished books containing average type size (.13-.15 inches) included Encyclopedia Brown Finds His Man by Donald Sobol and Godzilla by Ian Thorne. However, both selected but unfinished books and rejected books most frequently contained the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches).

The students also chose mystery/adventure most frequently (22.5%) followed by the topic of transportation (18.3%). An example of a selected and finished mystery was The Rocking Chair Ghost by Mary C. Jane while an example of a selected and finished book about transportation was Diesel Trucks by Mark Rich. However, the frequencies within the genre/topic classifications were relatively well distributed; thereby indicating a variety of reading interests were present within this group. (See Figure 6, pg. 133.) In contrast, fantasy/science fiction, occult, and contemporary fiction (each 17.9%) were left unfinished most frequently while modern biographies (22.9%) were most frequently rejected.

The content characteristic of fiction/nonfiction failed to distinguish between this book category and the selected but unfinished category; that is, the data for both the selected and finished books and the selected but unfinished books were similar. Fiction was selected more frequently than nonfiction (57.7% for the selected and finished, 57% for the selected but unfinished) regardless of whether the book was finished or not. (See Figure 5, pg. 132.) Examples of selected and finished books of fiction included

The Homework Caper by Jean Lexau and Run for Your Life by Kin Platt. In contrast, rejected books were more frequently nonfiction (57.1%). The characteristic of nonfiction classification was statistically insignificant.

Some of the data results, including a format characteristic as well as items from the interest inventory, failed to distinguish the selected and finished books from both of the other book selection categories. The format characteristic of style of illustration, which was statistically significant, failed to distinguish among categories. More decisions were made to choose books containing photographs than the other illustrative styles within each book selection category. (See Figure 1, pg. 130.) Examples of selected and finished books which contained photographs included Ballooning Wild and High by Irene Adler and Flying High by Bill Powers.

It was thought, at the beginning of the research study, that the students' responses on the interest inventory regarding book appearances (item #6), appropriateness of subjects/contents (item #7) and the influence of the books' titles, covers, and jackets (item #8) would differentiate among the three book selection categories. However, the students rated the books' appearances, subjects/contents and influence of cover, title, book jacket as being similar in all three book categories. The average rated book appearance score on the interest inventory for the selected and finished books was 2.7, selected but unfinished books 2.5, and rejected books 2.6 while the appropriateness of the subjects/

contents for selected and finished books was 2.7, for selected but unfinished was 2.7 and rejected books 2.8. (See Table 9 below.) All of these scores indicated that the students perceived these books' appearances and subjects/contents being at about the sixth grade level, regardless of the book selection category. The mean score of the influence of the books' titles, covers, or book jackets on selection for selected and finished books was 3.6, for selected but unfinished books 3.4, and rejected books 3.4 indicating that these factors had some influence on selection but were not one of the main reasons for selection. Other factors, therefore, influenced the students' decisions about the books.

TABLE 9.--Mean Scores of Interest Inventory Items #6, #7, #8.

	Item #6 Appropriateness of Books' Appearances to 6th Graders	Item #7 Appropriateness of Books' Subjects/Contents to 6th Graders	Item #8 Influence of Books' Titles, Covers, or Jackets on Selection
Selected and Finished	2.7 S. D. .68	2.7 S. D. .66	3.6 S. D. 1.15
Selected but Unfinished	2.5 S. D. .97	2.7 S. D. 1	3.4 S. D. 1.42
Rejected	2.6 S. D. 1.4	2.6 S. D. 1.4	3.4 S. D. 1.85

In summary, there were nine factors which distinguished selected and finished books from one or both of the other two categories. These included mean difficulty score, the readability match index, mean interest score, student perceptions between appropriateness

of books' appearances and interest scores, subjects/contents and interest scores, difficulty levels and interest scores, student perceptions between the book difficulty levels and the readability match index, book length and amount of illustration. The mean difficulty level was the lowest for all three book categories; however, the mean interest score was higher for selected and finished books than for selected but unfinished books. Students overwhelmingly selected and finished books which were written at levels below their reading levels. Books between twenty-five and fifty pages as well as books having lengths of less than one hundred pages were also overwhelmingly selected as were profusely illustrated and picture books. The characteristics of book length and illustrative style were statistically significant.

Although statistically insignificant, some patterns were noted for type size, genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications that also distinguished these books from the other book categories. Books containing average type size (.13 to .15 inches) were the most frequently finished. Books with the genre/topic classifications of mystery and transportation were the most frequently selected as were books within the fiction classification.

Students' perceptions also provided some insights into what distinguished the finished category from one or both of the other book selection categories. Within the selected and finished category, interest scores increased as the books' appearances and subjects/contents were perceived as becoming appropriate for sixth graders

and slightly older students. Books which had difficulty levels perceived as being "a little hard" received the highest interest scores. The students were not able to accurately perceive the books' difficulty levels for the selected and finished books; that is, they frequently overestimated the difficulty levels.

Some of the data failed to distinguish selected and finished books from the other categories. Within the characteristic of illustrative style, which was statistically significant, photographs were most frequently selected in all three book selection categories. In addition, several items from the interest inventory failed to distinguish selected and finished books from the other two categories. These included the mean appearance scores, appropriateness of subjects/contents and influence of title, cover, or jacket on book selection. The mean scores within each one of the three items were approximately the same, regardless of the book selection category. Table 10 summarizes the characteristics which appeared to influence completion of the books. (See Table 10, pg. 105.)

TABLE 10.--Summary Characteristics of Selected and Finished Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED BOOK COMPLETION	
Books' Difficulty Levels/ Students' Reading Levels	Difficulty levels below students' reading levels
Readability Match Index/ Perception of Difficulty Levels	Difficulty levels overestimated
Mean Interest Score (Range 3-15)	13.13
Perception of Difficulty Levels/Interest Score	Highest interest score (14.4) for books whose difficulty levels were perceived as being slightly too hard
Perception of Books' Appearances/ Interest Scores	Highest interest score (14.2) for books whose appearances were perceived appropriate for slightly older students
Perception of Appropriateness of Subjects-Contents/Interest Score	Highest interest score (14.5) for books whose subjects/con- tents were perceived appropriate for slightly older students
Book Length	Books less than one hundred pages, many books within the twenty-five to fifty page cate- gory
Amount of Illustration	Profusely illustrated and picture books
Type Size	Medium (.13-.15 inches)
Genre/Topic Classifications	Mystery/adventure and transpor- tation
Fiction/Nonfiction Classifi- cations	Fiction

TABLE 10.--Continued.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE BOOK COMPLETION	
Illustrative Style	Photographs
Mean Appearance Score (Range 1-5)	2.7 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Subjects/Contents Score (Range 1-5)	2.7 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Influence of Books' Titles, Covers, Jackets (Range 1-5)	3.6 Some influence

Research Question #2 Selected but Unfinished Books

After analysis of the data, it was determined that there were a number of characteristics which distinguished the selected but unfinished books from the finished and/or rejected books. In this section the researcher will first present data that distinguished selected but unfinished books from the other two categories, then present the data that resembled the selected and finished books, followed thirdly by data which resembled the rejected books. In the final section the researcher will present data which failed to distinguish the selected but unfinished books from the other categories.

Seven characteristics distinguished selected but unfinished books from one or both of the other book selection categories. These included the mean difficulty level, the relationship of the books' difficulty level and the students' reading levels, the mean interest scores, the relationships between the perceptions of the appearances of the books and interest scores, perceptions of appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents and interest scores, and perceptions of book difficulty levels and interest scores.

First, the mean difficulty level of selected but unfinished books was 4.7, which was higher than the mean score determined for selected and finished books, but lower than the score for rejected books. The range of difficulty levels for selected but unfinished books ranged from first through seventh as did the range for selected and finished books. However, the difficulty levels for

rejected books ranged from second through seventh grade. (See Table 2, pg. 89.) Further, of the eighteen interviews conducted about selected but unfinished books, eleven interviewees mentioned difficulty level as being of concern. Only one student admitted she stopped reading a book because it became too difficult; however, five other students also did mention that the books became too difficult for them. Two examples of selected but unfinished books included The Giant Book by Beatrice de Regniers (4) and Larry Csonka by Marshall and Sue Burchard (5).

Second, the relationship between books' difficulty levels and the students' reading levels (readability match index) distinguished selected but unfinished books from both selected and finished books and rejected books. Of the twenty-eight decisions to leave books unfinished, nine of these decisions involved books that were below the students' reading levels, seven decisions were made involving books that were within the students' reading levels, while twelve decisions involved books that were above the students' reading levels. (See Table 3, pg. 90.) This is in contrast to the selected and finished books which overwhelmingly had difficulty levels below the students' reading levels and to the rejected books which had equal numbers of books with difficulty levels below and above the students' reading levels. Two examples of selected but unfinished books whose difficulty levels were above the students' reading levels included Witches' Sabbath by Alexander Cordell (6) and Appalachian Ghosts by Nancy Roberts (7).

Third, the mean interest score for the selected but unfinished books was 11.33. This was lower than the mean interest score of the selected and finished books. (See Table 4, pg. 91.) The interest scores of selected and finished books ranged from three to fourteen points while the interest scores of selected and finished books ranged from seven to fifteen points. Interest scores were not gathered for rejected books. In addition, the main reason given during twelve of the eighteen interviews as to why they stopped reading books was that the books became boring and uninteresting. Students were unable to verbalize any further explanation for their decisions.

The three relationships between students' perceptions and books' appearances and interest scores, appropriateness of subjects/contents and interest scores, and difficulty levels and interest scores distinguished selected but unfinished books from selected and finished books. The fourth distinguishing characteristic, the relationship between students' perceptions of books' appearances and interest scores, resulted in mean interest scores for each of the perception categories being lower than the selected and finished books. The unfinished books receiving the highest interest scores were those that had appearances perceived as being "just right" for sixth graders (9.8) while books which were perceived as looking a little younger (9.4) and looking a little older (7) received lower mean interest scores. Books' appearances perceived as looking "way too young" received the lowest score (3). (See Table 5, pg. 93.) This is in contrast to the interest score for selected and

finished books being the highest for books perceived as having appearances appropriate for slightly older students (14.2).

Examples of selected but unfinished books whose appearances were perceived as being appropriate for sixth graders included Real Ghosts by Daniel Cohen and The Empty School House by Natalie Carlson.

The fifth characteristic which distinguished selected but unfinished books from selected and finished books was the relationship between the students' perceptions of the appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents and interest scores. The lowest mean interest score was within the perception category of the subjects/contents being appropriate for much younger students (3). The mean interest scores increased as the subjects/contents were perceived as becoming less appropriate to younger students (9.4) and more appropriate to sixth graders (9.8). However, the interest score decreased when the books' subjects/contents were perceived as being appropriate for students slightly older than sixth graders (7). (See Table 6, pg. 94.) In contrast, this characteristic also produced lower mean interest scores for the selected but unfinished books than for the selected and finished books. Also, the mean interest score for the selected and finished books was the highest for books perceived as having subjects/contents appropriate for slightly older students (14.5). Examples of selected but unfinished books whose subjects/contents were perceived as being appropriate to sixth graders included Major Corby and the Unidentified Flapping Object by Gene DeWeese and Janet Guthrie by Edward Dolan and Richard Lyttle.

The sixth characteristic that distinguished selected but unfinished books from selected and finished books was the relationship between the students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels and their interest scores. The mean interest scores increased as the books' difficulty levels were perceived as increasing from "way too easy" (3), to "a little easy" (8.5) to becoming appropriate for the students' reading levels (9.9). However, the interest scores declined for books considered slightly difficult for the students (8.8). Once again, the lowest mean interest score occurred for books within the first perception category which were perceived as being "way too easy." (See Table 7, pg. 96.) These mean interest scores were lower for the unfinished books than for the selected and finished books. Also in contrast, the mean interest score for selected and finished books was highest for books whose difficulty levels were perceived as being slightly too hard (14.4). Examples of selected but unfinished books which were perceived as having difficulty levels appropriate for the students' reading levels included The Men From P.I.G. and R.O.B.O.T. by Harry Harrison (6) and Race Car Driver School by Edward and Dan Radlauer (6).

Selected but unfinished books which were considered too easy, looked way too young for sixth graders and contained subjects/ contents deemed appropriate for students much younger than sixth graders consistently received the lowest mean interest scores as did the books in the selected and finished book categories. In contrast, the selected but unfinished books which were considered slightly too difficult, looked a little old for sixth graders and

contained subject/contents deemed appropriate for slightly older students received lower interest scores while the finished books within these perception categories received the highest interest scores of the selected and finished books.

A seventh characteristic which distinguished selected but unfinished books from both the categories of selected and finished and rejected books was the relationship between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels. The students tended to underestimate the difficulty levels for 43% of the unfinished books; that is, they perceived the books' difficulty levels as being easier than they actually were. This was in contrast to the selected and finished books whose difficulty levels were overestimated 58% of the time. (See Table 8, pg. 98.) Two examples of selected but unfinished books whose difficulty levels were underestimated included UFOs and IFOs by Gardner Soule (6) and Dracula by Ian Thorne (4). Of the selected but unfinished books, only 36% were accurately perceived in relation to the students' reading levels, while 27% of the selected and finished category and 34% of the rejected category were accurately perceived. Regardless of the book selection category, students had difficulty accurately perceiving the books' difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels.

The eighth characteristic of genre/topic classification, although statistically insignificant, also distinguished selected but unfinished books from the other two categories. The classifications of books most frequently selected but unfinished, included

fantasy/science fiction, contemporary fiction, and occult/crime (each 17.9%). An example of a selected but unfinished fantasy/science fiction was Black and Blue Magic by Zilphia Snyder; an example of a selected but unfinished contemporary fiction was Ten Speed Taylor by Leila Boyle Gemme, and a selected but unfinished occult/crime title was Appalachian Ghost by Nancy Roberts. In contrast, the genre/topic most frequently selected and finished were mysteries (22.5%) and transportation (18.3%); the most frequently rejected was modern biography (22.9%). (See Figure 6, pg. 133.)

Only one characteristic of the selected but unfinished books resembled the selected and finished books. This was the content characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification. Although the characteristic was statistically insignificant, a pattern between the two categories of books was discernible. More fiction was chosen for both selected but unfinished books (57) and selected and finished books (57.7%) than nonfiction was in either category. (See Figure 5, pg. 132.) Examples of selected and unfinished fiction included Danny Dunn on the Ocean Floor by Jay Williams and Clipper Ship by Thomas P. Lewis. For rejected books, however, nonfiction (57.1%) was rejected more frequently than fiction.

Three characteristics of selected and unfinished books resembled those of rejected books. These characteristics included the format characteristics of book length, amount of illustration and type size. Both book length and amount of illustration were statistically significant; type size was not.

The first format characteristic of selected but unfinished books which resembled rejected books was book length. Approximately the same number of decisions were made to leave books of less than one hundred pages unfinished as were made for books over one hundred pages. This was very similar to the pattern evident for rejected books. However, for selected but unfinished books an equal number of decisions were made to stop reading the books of shortest length (25 - 50 pages) and books of the longest length (over 176 pages). (See Figure 3, pg. 131.) An example of a selected but unfinished book containing between twenty-five to fifty pages was Don't Shoot by Roxane Chadwick (38 pages) while Crazy Eights by Barbara Dana (194 pages) was an example of a selected but unfinished book over 176 pages. Further, five of the eighteen students interviewed about selected but unfinished books mentioned book length as being of concern to them. However, all five of the students stated that the book length of these unfinished books were of satisfactory lengths for them. Book length, for these students as a group, did not appear to be a contributing factor to their decision to stop reading the books. However, length appeared to be a more influential characteristic for boys' book selection than girls. This will be discussed later in the section regarding boys' and girls' book selections. In contrast, the greatest number of book length decisions made for the selected and finished books were for books containing less than one hundred pages (88.8%).

The characteristic of amount of illustration of selected but unfinished books resembled those in the rejected category. Both

the selected and unfinished and rejected categories indicated that sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books were more frequently unfinished or rejected (57.1% and 62.8% respectively). (See Figure 2, pg. 130.) Consequently, the lack of illustrations might have been a factor influencing a remedial, middle school student's decision to either stop reading a book or reject it. An example of a selected but unfinished book which was sparsely illustrated was Drag Racing for Beginners by I. G. Edwards; an example of a selected but unfinished unillustrated book was The Undertaker's Gone Bananas by Paul Zindel. In contrast, selected and finished books were overwhelmingly profusely illustrated or picture books (83.1%).

Although type size was statistically insignificant, some data should be noted. Within both the selected but unfinished and rejected categories, the smallest type size (.09 to .12 inches) was the most frequently unfinished or rejected (46.4% and 54.3% respectively). (See Figure 4, pg. 132.) Examples of selected but unfinished books containing type size within the smallest sized category (.09-.12 inches) included Crazy Eights by Barbara Dana and Vans, The Personality Vehicles by Paul Dexler. However, the type size most frequently represented of the selected and finished books was the medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches) (39.3%).

Several characteristics failed to distinguish selected but unfinished books from the selected and finished and the rejected categories. Within the characteristic of illustrative style, which was statistically significant, photographs were the most frequently represented style of all three book selection categories. Selected

but unfinished books with photographs included The Plant People by Dale Carlson and Dorothy Hamil by S. H. Burchard. Items gathered from the interest inventory also failed to distinguish among the categories. The mean score of the books appearances for selected but unfinished books was 2.5, for selected and finished books 2.7, for rejected books 2.6, while the mean score for the appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents for the selected but unfinished books was 2.7, for selected and finished books also 2.7, and for rejected books 2.8. These mean scores of the interest inventory items indicated that the students judged these books, regardless of category, as being appropriate to students of about the sixth grade. The mean score of the influence of the books' title, cover, or jacket on initial selection of unfinished books was 3.4, for selected and finished books 3.6 and for rejected books also 3.4. (See Table 9, pg. 102.) These mean scores indicated that, regardless of book selection category, the books' titles, covers or jackets had some influence on book selection but were not one of the main reasons. Other factors must have influenced book selection.

In summary, seven characteristics distinguished selected but unfinished books from selected and finished and/or rejected books. These included the mean difficulty level, the relationship of the books' difficulty level and the students' reading levels, the mean interest scores, the relationships between the perceptions of the appearances of the books and interest scores, perceptions of appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents and interest scores, and perceptions of book difficulty levels and interest scores. In addition, although

statistically insignificant, genre/topic classifications also appeared to have influenced decisions to leave books unfinished.

The mean difficulty level of selected but unfinished books was higher than for the selected and finished books, while the mean interest score was lower than for the selected and finished books. Interviews indicated that the main reason students decided to stop reading the books was because the books became boring or uninteresting.

Students' perceptions provided some insights into what distinguished selected but unfinished books from one or both of the other categories. Books whose appearances were perceived as "just right" for sixth graders received the highest interest scores, while the lowest interest score was given to books whose appearances were perceived as being "way too young." A similar pattern existed for the relationship between the appropriateness of subjects/contents and interest scores. Books perceived as being at the students' reading levels were evaluated as having the most interest. The interest scores for the three relationships were all lower for the selected but unfinished books than for the selected and finished books. Students frequently underestimated the unfinished book difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels.

The content characteristics of genre/topic, although statistically insignificant, also distinguished selected but unfinished books from the other categories. Equal proportions of fantasy/science fiction, contemporary fiction, and occult/crime remained unfinished.

The content characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification, although also statistically insignificant, was the only characteristic that resembled the selected and finished books. More decisions were made to select fiction for both the selected but unfinished books and the selected and finished books.

Three characteristics of the selected and unfinished books resembled rejected books. These characteristics included book length, amount of illustration, which were both statistically significant, and type size, which was statistically insignificant. An approximately equal number of decisions were made to stop reading books of less than one hundred pages and those more than one hundred pages. Within both book selection categories, more decisions were made to stop reading and reject sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books. Books containing the smallest size type (.09 to .12 inches) were most frequently unfinished and rejected.

Several characteristics failed to distinguish selected but unfinished books from the other two categories. Within the illustrative style, which was statistically significant, photographs were the most frequently selected style. Items from the interest inventory also failed to distinguish among the three book selection categories. These included the mean appearance scores, appropriateness of subjects/contents, and influence of the titles, covers, or jackets on book selection. The mean scores within each one of the three interest inventory items were approximately the same, regardless of the book selection category. Table 11 summarized characteristics which appeared to influence decisions to stop reading books. (See Table 11, pg. 119.)

TABLE 11.--Summary Characteristics of Selected but Unfinished Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO STOP READING BOOKS	
B ooks' Difficulty Levels/ S tudents' Reading Levels	Difficulty levels above students' reading levels.
R eadability Match Index/ P erception of Difficulty Levels	Difficulty levels underestimated
M ean Interest Score (Range 3-15)	11.11
A mount of Illustration	Sparsely illustrated or unillus- trated
S ize of Type	Small (.09-.12 inches)
G enre/Topic Classifications	Fantasy/science fiction, con- temporary fiction, and occult/ crime
F iction/Nonfiction	Fiction
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO STOP READING BOOKS	
B ook Length	Approximately the same number of books less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages
I llustrative Style	Photographs
P erception of Difficulty L evel/Interest Scores	Highest interest score (9.9) for books whose difficulty levels were perceived being within the students' reading levels.
P erception of Books' Appearances/ I nterest Scores	Highest interest score (9.8) for books whose appearances were perceived being appropriate for sixth graders
P erception of Appropriateness O f Subjects-Contents/Interest S core	Highest interest score (9.8) for books whose subjects/contents were perceived appropriate for sixth graders

TABLE 11.--Continued.

Mean Appearance Score (Range 1-5)	2.7 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Subjects/Contents Score (Range 1-5)	2.7 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Influence of Books' Titles, Covers, Jackets (Range 1-5)	3.4 Some Influence

Research Question #3 Rejected Books

This section will present data regarding the three characteristics which distinguished rejected books from both selected and finished books as well as selected but unfinished books. These included the mean difficulty level, the relationship between books' difficulty levels and students' reading levels (readability match index) and the relationship between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of difficulty levels in relation to their reading levels. Several characteristics of rejected books that resembled selected but unfinished books will also be discussed. These included book length, amount of illustration and type size of rejected books. The final section will report the characteristics which failed to distinguish rejected books from the other two categories including illustrative style and items from the interest inventory.

The first characteristic which distinguished rejected books from both selected and finished books and selected but unfinished books was the mean difficulty level. The mean difficulty score of the rejected books was 4.9, which was the highest of the three book selection categories. (See Table 2, pg. 89.) The difficulty scores for the rejected books ranged from second through seventh grade. Examples of rejected books included The Robot People by Anne Bunting (4) and Football Talk for Beginners by Howard Liss (4). In contrast, the mean difficulty score for selected and finished books was 3.6; for selected but unfinished 4.7.

The second characteristic which distinguished the rejected books from the other two categories was the relationship of the book difficulty and the students' reading levels. Equal numbers of decisions (fifteen) were made to reject books below the students' reading levels and those above the students' reading levels, while only five decisions were made to reject books that were within the students' reading levels. An example of a rejected book that was below a students' reading level was The Easy Hockey Book by Jonah Kalb (2) while Looking On by Betty Miles (5) was a rejected book which was above a student's reading level. Further, only one student mentioned he rejected a book which was below his reading level because it was too easy. In contrast, five books which were above the students' reading levels were reported to be rejected because the books were perceived as being too difficult for the students.

Besides difficulty levels being one of the reasons for rejection of books, the main reason for rejection for eleven of the thirty-five interviewees was dislike of the subjects/contents of the books. Statements referring to these dislikes included comments such as, "I don't like Walter Cronkite" (Walter Cronkite by Paula Taylor and Norita Larson), "I don't like race cars" (Race Car Driver School by Edward and Dan Radlauer), "I hate tennis" (Martina Navratilova by Edward Dolan and Richard Lyttle). Two boys and one girl rejected books solely because they believed the books were for the opposite sex -- "It's for boys" (The Easy Hockey Book by Jonah Kalb), "It's about a girl" (Jenny Kimura by Betty Cavana and Iron Peacock by Mary Stetson Clark).

The third characteristic which distinguished rejected books from both the selected and finished books and the selected but unfinished books was the relationship between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels. The difficulty levels of the books in relation to the students' reading levels were accurately perceived by the students for 34% of the rejected books, and overestimated and underestimated for 33% of the rejected books. (See Table 8, pg. 98.) An example of a rejected book's difficulty level being overestimated was Mystery Ranch by Gertrude Warner (2); a book's difficulty level being underestimated was Walter Cronkite by Norita Larson and Paula Taylor (7); and a book's difficulty level being accurately perceived in relation to the student's reading level was "Me and You and a Dog Named Blue" by Barbara Corcoran (6). Two points should be noted regarding the rejected books. First, these books were never read by the students other than glancing at pages or skimming paragraphs; consequently, students appeared to have made decisions regarding difficulty levels by using mostly format characteristics. It is interesting to note that partially reading the books or reading the books to completion did not increase the students' ability to accurately perceive the difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels.

In addition to the three characteristics previously discussed which distinguished rejected books from both selected and finished books and selected but unfinished books, the content characteristics of genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications, although

statistically insignificant, also distinguished rejected books from the other two categories. Modern biography was most frequently rejected (22.9%) within the genre/topic classifications while nonfiction (57.1%) was rejected over fiction. (See Figure 6, pg. 133 and Figure 5, pg. 132.) Examples of rejected modern biographies included John Denver by Linda Jacobs and Martina Navratilova by Edward Dolan and Richard Lyttle. Examples of rejected nonfiction included Helicopters and Airplanes of the U.S. Army by Frank Declear and Hockey Hotshots by Bennett Wayne.

Three format characteristics of rejected books resembled the characteristics of selected but unfinished books. These included book length and amount of illustration, and size of type, which, although was statistically insignificant, may have influenced book rejection.

First, book length of rejected books resembled lengths of books which were selected but unfinished. Decisions to reject books containing one hundred or less pages were made approximately as often as decisions to reject books containing over one hundred pages. A similar pattern was also evident for selected but unfinished books. However, it should be noted that 37% of all the rejected books contained over 176 pages. (See Figure 3, pg. 131.) Examples of two rejected books longer than 176 pages included C. C. Poindexter by Carolyn Meyer (208 pages) and Introduction to Backpacking by Robert Colwell (191 pages). Further, five of the fourteen interviewees who indicated length was of concern to them rejected books solely on the

basis of the books being too long or too thick. The characteristic of book length was statistically significant.

Second, the amount of illustration of the rejected books also resembled those books which were selected but unfinished. Amount of illustration was also statistically significant. Within both book selection categories, more decisions were made to reject or stop reading sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books (62.8% and 57.1% respectively) than the profusely illustrated books and picture books (37.2% and 42.9% respectively). (See Figure 2, pg. 130.) An example of a rejected sparsely illustrated book was Henry Kissinger by Paula Taylor; a rejected unillustrated book was Jenny Kimura by Betty Cavana. In addition, three of ten interviewees who mentioned amount of illustration as being of concern, made decisions to reject books because they contained no illustrations. In contrast, the selected and finished books were profusely illustrated or picture books (83.1%) as were the selected but unfinished books (57.1%).

Although statistically insignificant, type size of rejected books also resembled the selected but unfinished books. Fifty-four percent of the books were rejected and forty-six percent of the books remained unfinished that contained the smallest sized type (.09 to .12 inches). (See Figure 4, pg. 132.) Examples of rejected books which contained the smallest type (.09-.12 inches) included The Iron Peacock by Mary Stetson Clarke and The Supernatural: From ESP to UFOs by Melvin Berger. In contrast, 56.3% of the selected and finished books contained medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches).

Several characteristics failed to distinguish the rejected books from the other categories. These characteristics included style of illustration and items from the interest inventory. The characteristic of illustrative style, which was statistically significant, indicated that books which contained photographs were the most frequently rejected as well as being represented most frequently in books selected and finished and selected but unfinished. Rejected books which contained photographs included Winners in Gymnastics by Frank Litsky and Mario Andretti by Marshard Burchard. Items gathered from the interest inventory also failed to distinguish among categories. The mean scores for each item was approximately the same, regardless of category. The mean score of the books' appearance for rejected books was 2.6, for selected but unfinished 2.5, and for selected and finished books 2.7. The mean score for the appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents for the rejected books was 2.8, for the selected but unfinished 2.7, and for the selected and finished also 2.7. (See Table 9, pg. 102.) These mean scores indicated that the students judged these books' appearances and appropriateness of subjects/contents as being suitable to students of about the sixth grade. The mean score of the influence of the books' title, cover, or jacket for rejected books was 3.4, for selected but unfinished books 3.4, and for selected and finished books 3.6. These mean scores indicated that regardless of book selection category, the books' titles, covers, or jackets had some influence on book selection but were not the main reason. Other factors besides these must have influenced book selection.

In summary, three characteristics distinguished rejected books from both selected and finished books and selected but unfinished books. These included the mean difficulty level, the relationship between books' difficulty levels and students' reading levels (readability match index) and the relationship between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of difficulty levels in relation to their reading levels. First, the mean difficulty level was the highest for the three book selection categories. Second, equal numbers of decisions were made to reject books below the students reading levels as well as above their reading levels. And third, students tended to equally overestimate, underestimate, and accurately perceive the books' difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels. Although statistically insignificant, genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications also distinguished among the book selection categories. Modern biography was most frequently rejected as was nonfiction.

The main reason given for the students' rejection of books was a dislike of the subjects/contents. Books that were too long or too thick accounted for the next reason for rejection of books, followed by books that had too few illustrations.

The three characteristics of book length, amount of illustration and type size of rejected books resembled the selected but unfinished category. Both book length and amount of illustration were statistically significant; type size was statistically insignificant. Within both book selection categories, students rejected and selected but left unfinished approximately equal numbers of books

containing over one hundred pages. However, one-third of the rejected books contained over 176 pages. Within both categories, books that were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated were more frequently rejected or selected but not finished than were profusely illustrated or picture books. Type size indicated that students made more decisions to reject and select but not finish the smallest sized type (.09 to .12 inches).

Several characteristics failed to distinguish rejected books from selected and finished books and selected but unfinished books. The illustrative style, which was statistically significant, indicated that photographs were most frequently represented in all three categories. The mean scores derived from the items from the interest inventory regarding students' perceptions of books' appearances, appropriateness of subjects/contents, and influence of the books' titles, covers, or jackets resulted in similar scores, regardless of book selection status. Table 12 summarizes characteristics which appeared to influence decisions to reject books. (See Table 12, pg. 129.)

TABLE 12.--Summary Characteristics of Rejected Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS	
Book Length	Books over 176 pages
Amount of Illustration	Sparsely illustrated and un-illustrated books
Type Size	Small (.09-.12 inches)
Genre/Topic Classifications	Modern Biography
Fiction/Nonfiction Classifications	Nonfiction
Books' Difficulty Levels/ Students' Reading Levels	Equal numbers of books below and above students' reading levels
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS	
Readability Match Index/ Perception of Difficulty Levels	Approximately equal number of perceptions that overestimated, accurately perceived and underestimated difficulty levels
Illustrative Style	Photographs
Mean Appearance Score (Range 1-5)	2.6 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Subjects/Contents Score (Range 1-5)	2.6 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Influence of Books' Titles, Covers, Jackets (Range 1-5)	3.4 Some influence

TABLE 12.--Summary Characteristics of Rejected Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS	
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Type Size	Small (.09-.12 inches)
Genre/Topic Classifications	Modern Biography
Fiction/Nonfiction Classifications	Nonfiction
Books' Difficulty Levels/ Students' Reading Levels	Equal numbers of books below and above students' reading levels
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS	
Readability Match Index/ Perception of Difficulty Levels	Approximately equal number of perceptions that overestimated, accurately perceived and underestimated difficulty levels
Illustrative Style	Photographs
Mean Appearance Score (Range 1-5)	2.6 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Subjects/Contents Score (Range 1-5)	2.6 Appropriate to students of about the sixth grade
Mean Influence of Books' Titles, Covers, Jackets (Range 1-5)	3.4 Some influence

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WHOLE GROUP RESULTS

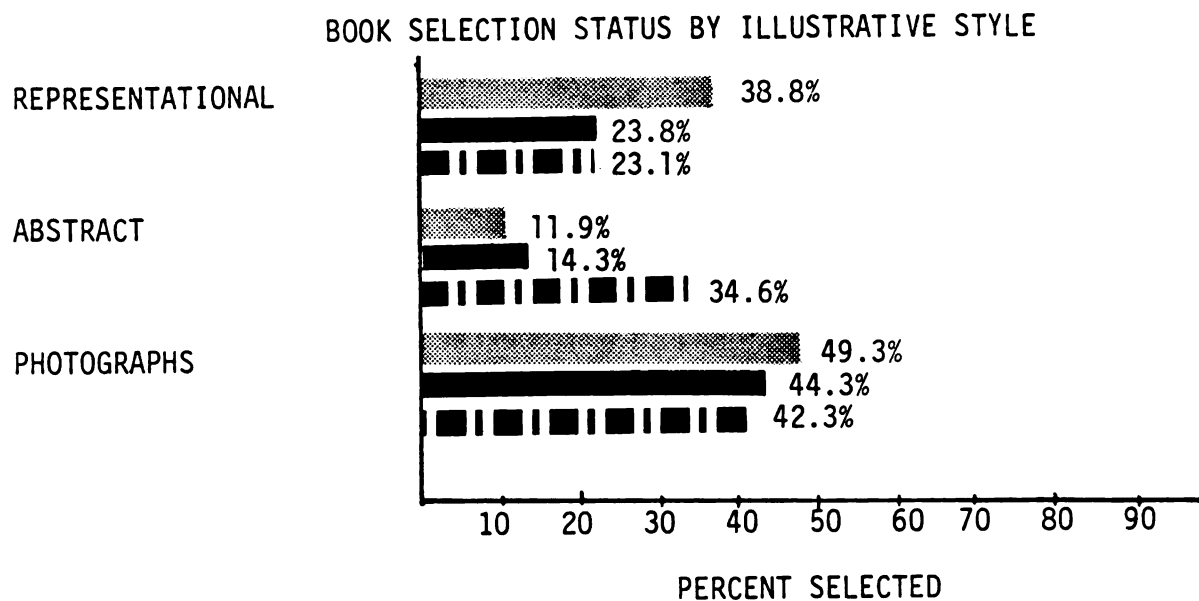


Figure 1

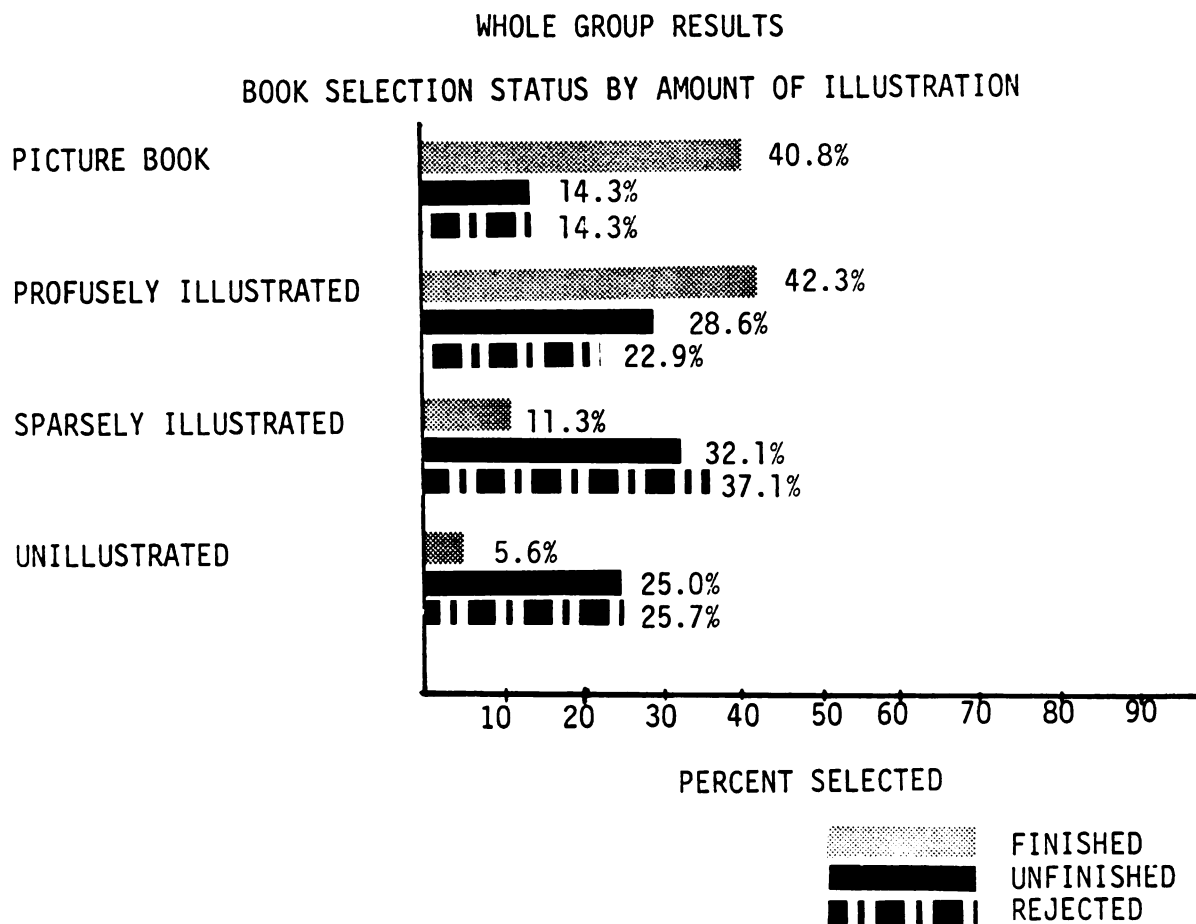


Figure 2

WHOLE GROUP RESULTS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY BOOK LENGTH

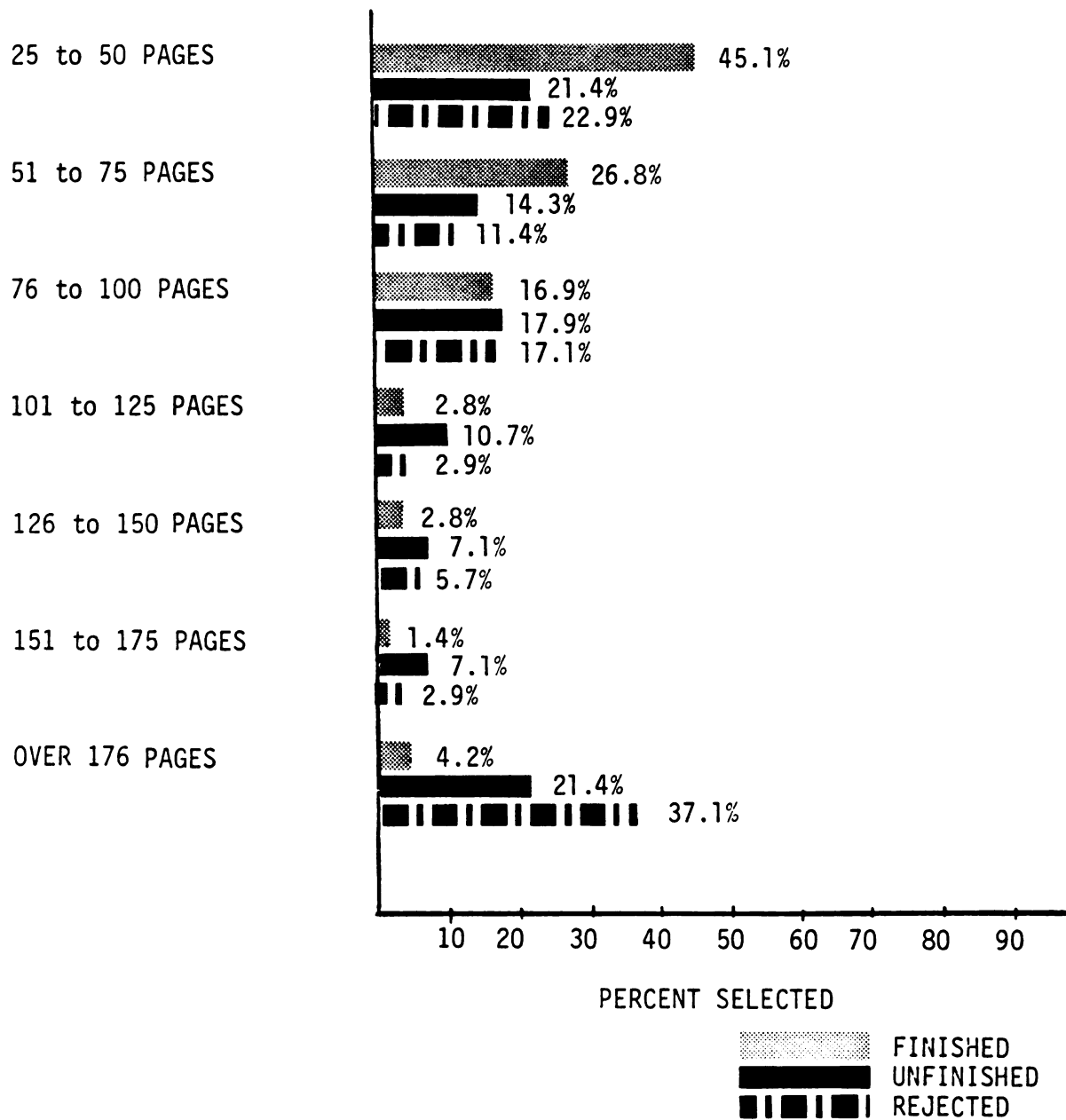


Figure 3

WHOLE GROUP RESULTS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY TYPE SIZE

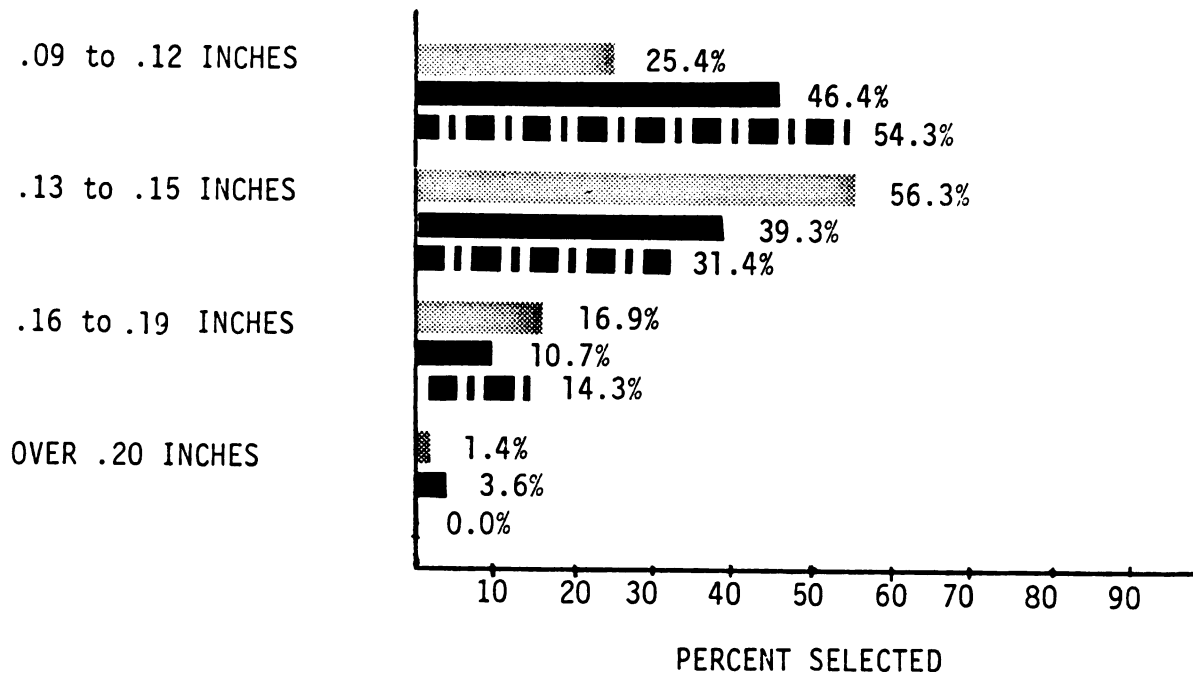


Figure 4

WHOLE GROUP RESULTS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY FICTION/NONFICTION

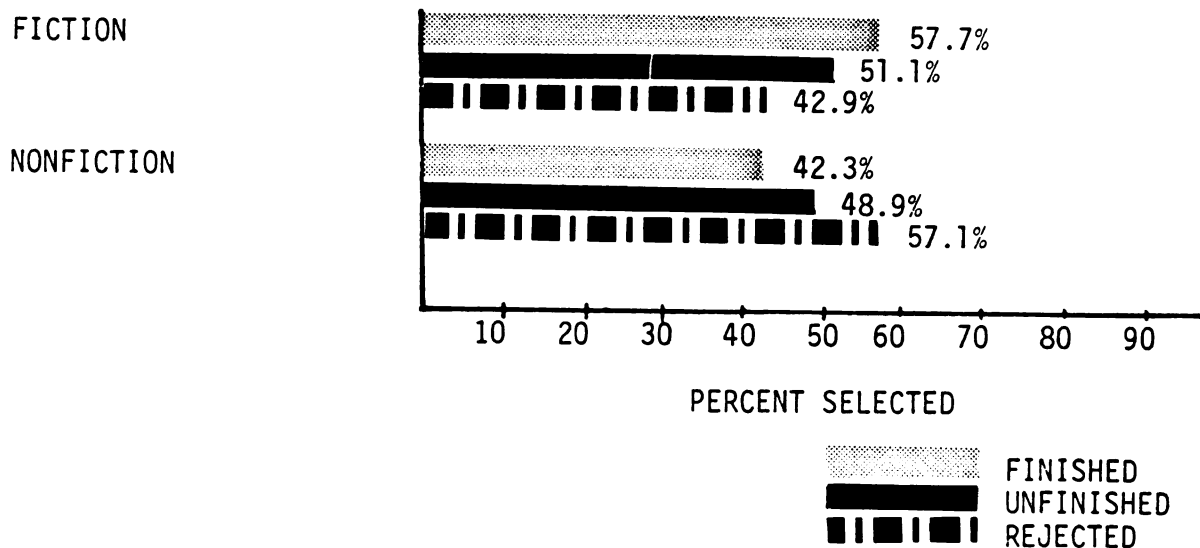


Figure 5

WHOLE GROUP RESULTS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY GENRE/TOPIC

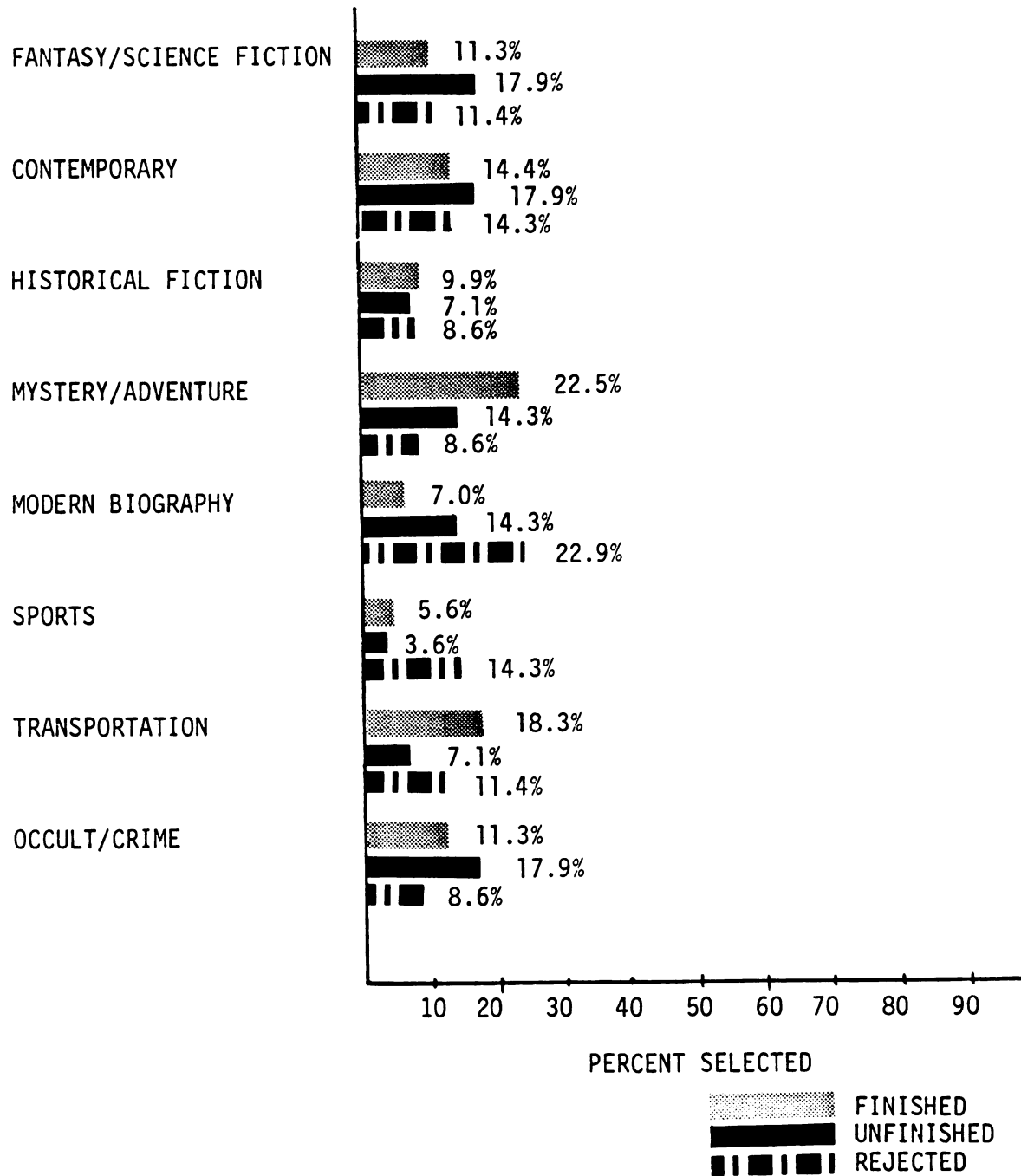


Figure 6

Book Selection of Boys and Girls

This section will examine the differences and similarities of the format and content characteristics between the books boys and girls selected and finished, selected but did not finish, and rejected. Within each book selection category, characteristics will first be presented which distinguished between the book selection decisions of boys and girls, followed by those characteristics which failed to distinguish between boys' and girls' book selection decisions.

Boys made forty-seven decisions to select and finish books; girls made only twenty-four decisions. Although the girls made fewer decisions to select and finish books than the boys did, they left more books unfinished than did the boys. Girls made seventeen decisions to select but not finish books; boys made eleven decisions. Data was gathered for twenty rejected books by boys, fifteen for girls.

Selected and Finished Books

Three characteristics distinguished the books boys and girls selected and finished from each other. These included genre/topic classifications, illustrative style, and fiction/nonfiction classifications.

First, different results were noted in the genre/topic classifications between boys and girls. This characteristic was statistically significant for both groups. Boys made more decisions to select and finish books about transportation and mystery (42.5% total) while girls made more decisions to select and finish mystery

books and contemporary fiction (44.2% total). (See Figure 12, pg. 142.)

Second, the characteristic of illustrative style distinguished between boys' and girls' book decisions of selected and finished books. Illustrative style was statistically significant for boys but not for girls; however, some results should also be noted regarding girls' decisions about illustrative style. Boys selected and finished more books containing photographs (54.6%) while girls selected more books containing representational illustrations (52.2%). (See Figure 7, pg. 139.)

The third characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification was statistically significant only for the girls; however, data regarding fiction/nonfiction classification will also be presented for the boys. Girls overwhelmingly selected and finished fiction (87.5%) while the boys selected and finished more nonfiction (57.4%). (See Figure 11, pg. 141.)

Three format characteristics failed to distinguish between boys' and girls' selected and finished book decisions. These included amount of illustration, book length, and type size. Each of these format characteristics also resembled the data results evident for the whole group's decisions of selected and finished books.

The first characteristic that failed to distinguish between selected and finished books--amount of illustration--was statistically significant for both boys and girls. Both boys and girls made many more decisions (each 83%) to select and finish profusely illustrated

and picture books than sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books. (See Figure 8, pg. 139.)

The second characteristic was book length, which was statistically significant for only girls. Both girls and boys overwhelmingly selected books under one hundred pages (each 87%) than books over one hundred pages. (See Figure 9, pg. 140.)

Third, the characteristic of type size also failed to distinguish between boys and girls, but did yield similar results. Both boys and girls made decisions to select and finish more books of medium sized type (.12-.15 inches) (59% and 50%, respectively). However, this characteristic was statistically insignificant. (See Figure 10, pg. 141.)

In summary, boys selected and finished more books that contained photographs. The genre/topic classifications of transportation and mysteries were more frequently selected and finished. Both of these characteristics were statistically significant. Although statistically insignificant, boys selected and finished more books of nonfiction than fiction.

Girls selected and finished more mysteries and contemporary fiction as well as selecting more fiction than nonfiction. Both of these content characteristics were statistically significant. Although illustrative style was statistically insignificant, girls selected and finished more books containing representational illustrations.

Both boys and girls overwhelmingly made decisions to select and finish profusely illustrated and picture books than books which

were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated. Amount of illustration was statistically significant for both groups. Boys and girls also overwhelmingly selected and finished books containing less than one hundred pages, although the results were statistically insignificant for boys. Boys selected and finished more books between twenty-five and fifty pages. Although type size was statistically insignificant for both groups, medium sized type (.12 to .15 inches) was represented in more of the books selected and finished by both boys and girls. Table 13 summarizes the characteristics which appeared to influence boys' and girls' decisions to select and finish books.

TABLE 13.--Summary Format and Content Characteristics of Boys' and Girls' Selected and Finished Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED BOOK COMPLETION (BOYS)	
Book Length	Books less than one hundred pages; many books within the twenty-five to fifty page category
Amount of Illustration	Profusely illustrated and picture books
Illustrative Style	Photographs
Type Size	Medium (.13-.15 inches)
Genre/Topic Classifications	Transportation, mystery/adventure
Fiction/Nonfiction Classification	Nonfiction
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED BOOK COMPLETION (GIRLS)	
Book Length	Books less than one hundred pages
Amount of Illustration	Profusely illustrated and picture books
Type Size	Medium (.13-.15 inches)
Illustrative Style	Representational
Genre/Topic Classifications	Mystery, contemporary fiction
Fiction/Nonfiction Classification	Fiction

SELECTED AND FINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

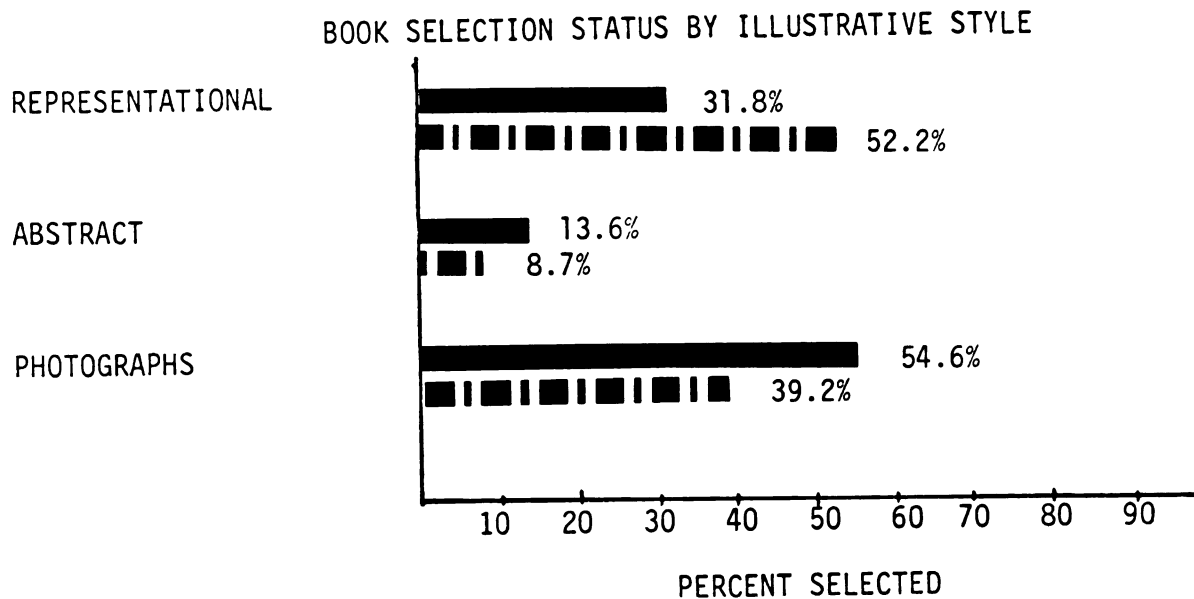


Figure 7

SELECTED AND FINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

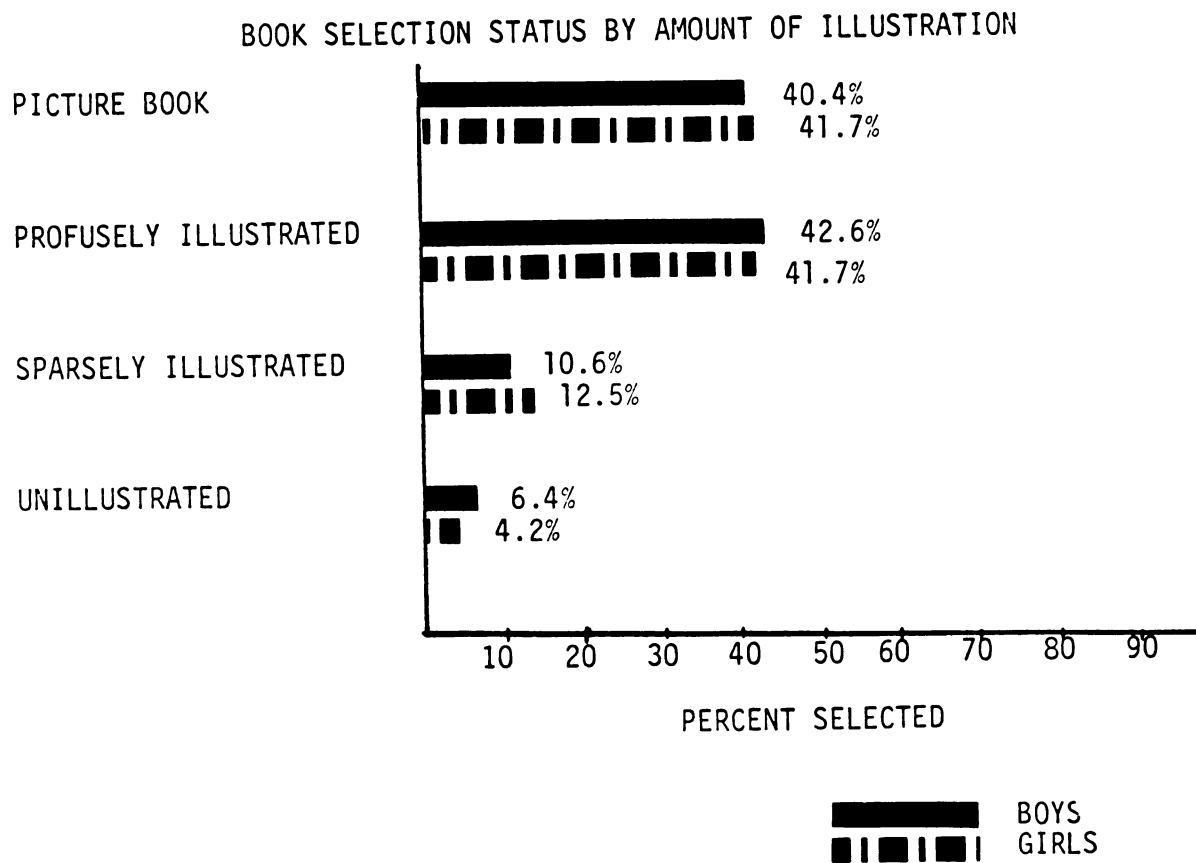


Figure 8

SELECTED AND FINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY BOOK LENGTH

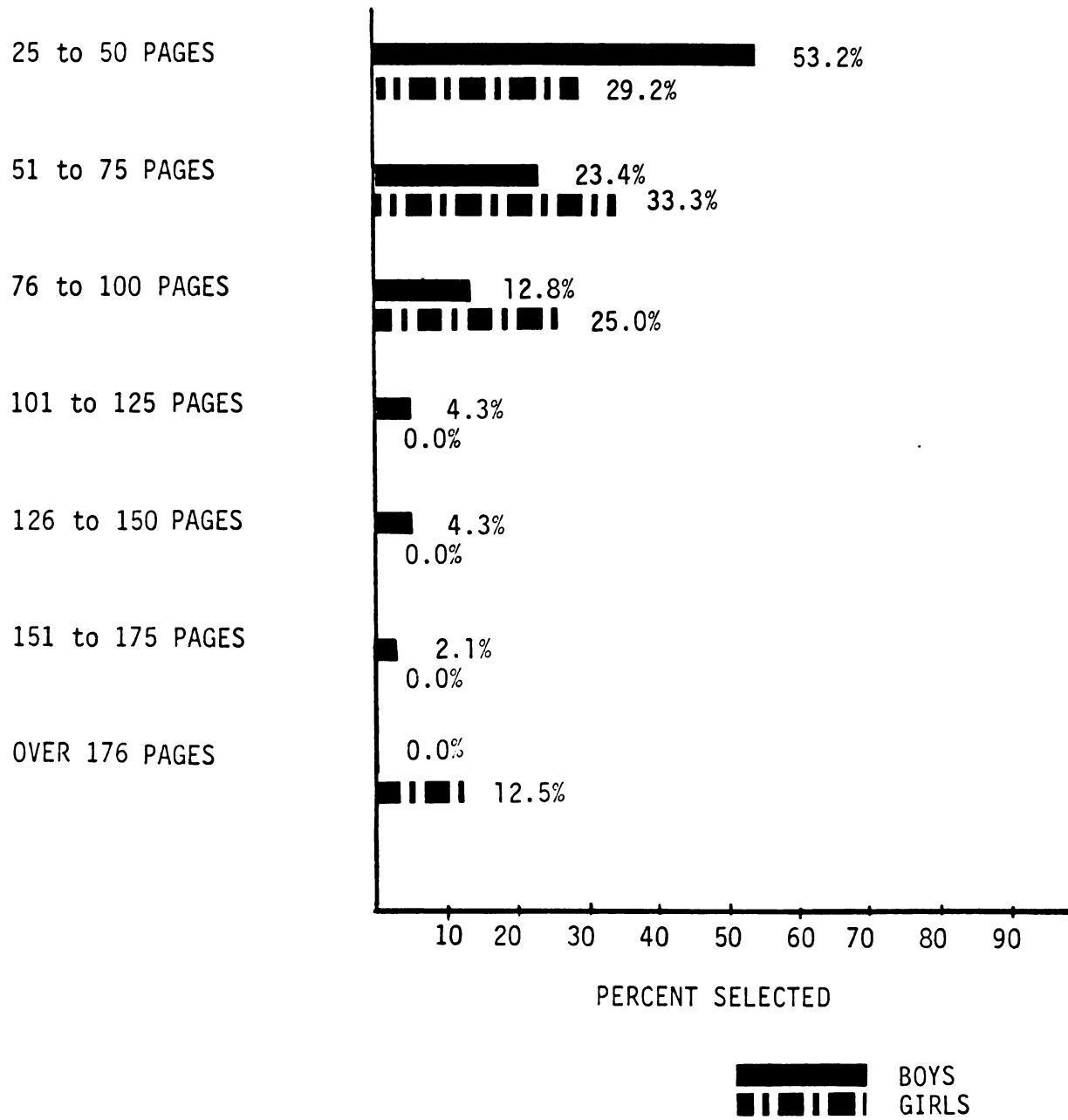


Figure 9

SELECTED AND FINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY TYPE SIZE

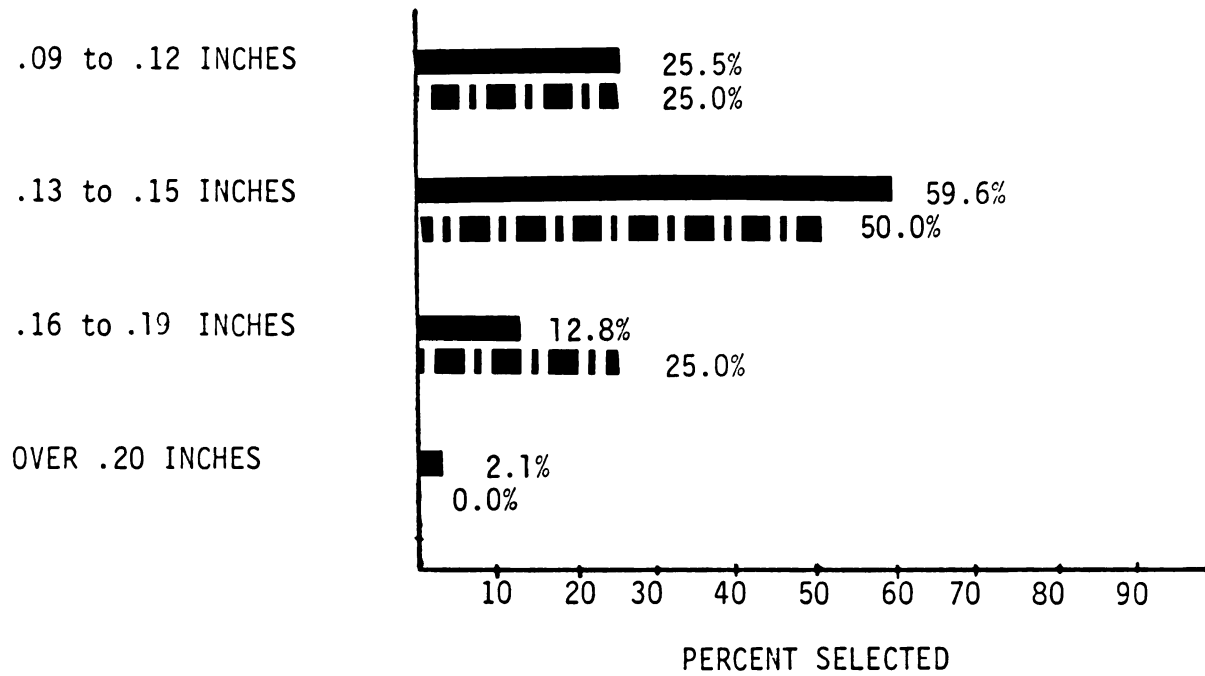
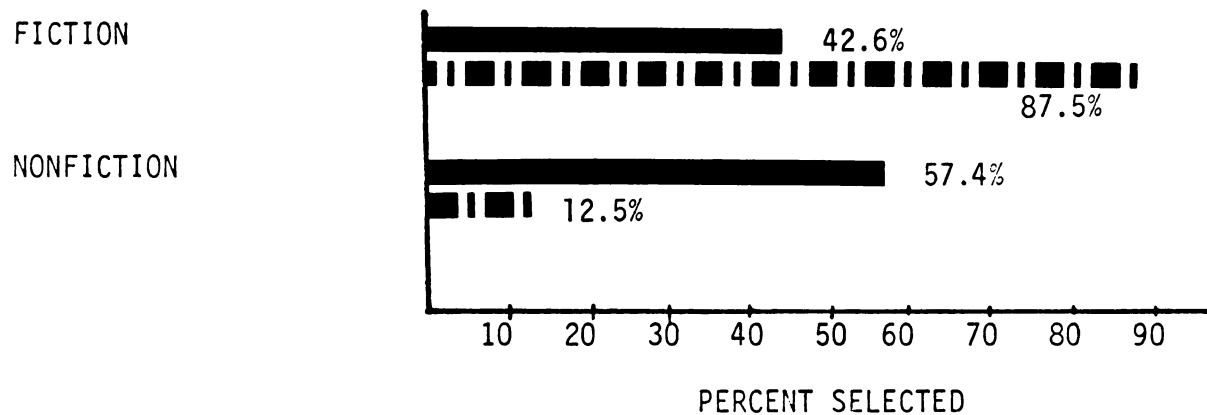


Figure 10

SELECTED AND FINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY FICTION/NONFICTION



 BOYS
 GIRLS

Figure 11

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SELECTED AND FINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY GENRE/TOPIC

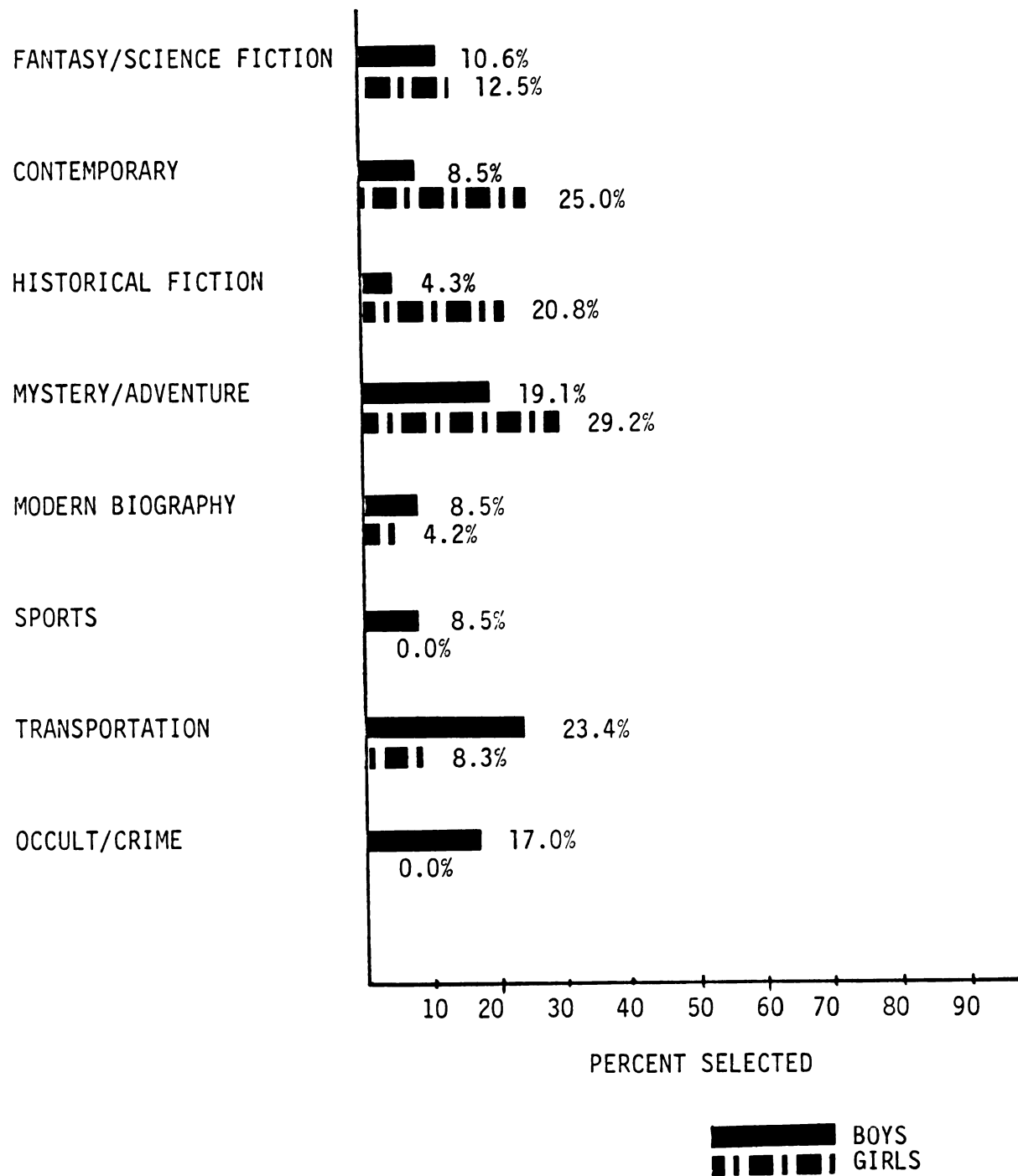


Figure 12

Selected But Unfinished Books

Five characteristics distinguished between the books boys and girls selected but did not finish. These included amount of illustration, genre/topic classifications, book length, fiction/nonfiction classifications, and type size.

Several of format and content characteristics for the selected but unfinished books resembled the characteristics of the selected and finished books. For boys, these included book length, amount of illustration, illustrative style; for girls, these included fiction/nonfiction classifications and genre/topic classifications. For each of these format and content characteristics, selected and finished books contained specific pattern(s) of the characteristic which resembled patterns of the characteristics in the selected but unfinished books.

First, the characteristic of amount of illustration, which was statistically significant for both boys and girls, distinguished between boys' and girls' decisions of selected but unfinished books. Boys made decisions to select but not finish more picture books and profusely illustrated books (63.7%) while girls made more decisions to select but not finish more sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books (70.6%). (See Figure 14, pg. 148.) One interesting point should be noted. Boys made only one decision to initially select one book which was unillustrated while girls made six decisions to initially choose unillustrated books. Consequently, the boys appeared to have been influenced more by the amount of illustrations for initial book selection than were the girls.

Second, the characteristic of genre/topic classifications distinguished between boys' and girls' selected but unfinished books. Occult/crime related books were selected but not finished (36.4%) by boys while mystery/adventure and contemporary books were selected but not finished (52.9%) most often by the girls. (See Figure 18, pg. 151.) It should be noted that the classifications of mystery and contemporary fiction were also selected and finished most frequently by girls. Consequently, although girls initially selected more from these genre/topic classifications, selection alone did not ensure that the books would be read to completion.

Third, the format characteristic of book length, which was statistically significant for only boys, also distinguished between the boys' and girls' selected but unfinished books. Boys left books of less than one hundred pages unfinished (63.7%). In contrast, the girls' unfinished books were divided approximately between books less than one hundred pages (47%) and those over one hundred pages (53%). (See Figure 15, pg. 149.) It should be noted that girls were much more willing to initially select books over 176 pages (35.3%) than boys were (0%). However, it should be remembered that six of the nine books were never finished by the girls.

Fourth, the content characteristic of fiction/nonfiction, although statistically significant only for girls, also distinguished between boys' and girls' book decision choices of selected but unfinished books. Boys made more decisions to leave nonfiction unfinished (72.8%) while girls left more fiction unfinished (76.4%). (See Figure 17, pg. 150.)

Although type size was statistically insignificant for both boys and girls, the format characteristics did distinguish between the two groups. Boys made twice as many decisions to select but not finish books containing small sized type (.09 to .12 inches) than medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches). In contrast, girls made approximately the same number of decisions to select but not finish both the smallest sized type (.09 to .12 inches) and medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches). (See Figure 16, pg. 150.)

The format characteristic of illustrative style was similar for the books both boys and girls selected but did not finish; however, this characteristic was statistically significant for only boys. Both boys and girls made more decisions to select but not finish books containing photographs (80% and 45.5% respectively). (See Figure 13, pg. 148.)

In summary, boys made more decisions to select but not finish profusely illustrated and picture books. Books with the genre/topic classification of occult/crime as well as books of one hundred pages or less were selected but not finished more frequently. Amount of illustration, genre/topic classifications and book length were statistically significant. Although statistically insignificant, boys selected but did not finish more books of nonfiction and containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches). Table 14 summarizes characteristics which appeared to influence boys' and girls' decisions to stop reading books.

Girls made more decisions to select but not finish books sparsely illustrated or unillustrated. Contemporary fiction and

mystery were the genre/topic classifications most frequently selected but unfinished as was fiction within the fiction/nonfiction classification. Amount of illustration, genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications were each statistically significant for girls.

Although book length was statistically insignificant, girls left approximately the same number of books of less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages unfinished as well as equal numbers of books containing the smallest sized type and medium sized type.

Although statistically insignificant for girls, both boys and girls selected but did not finish books containing photographs.

Six of twelve of the content and format characteristics of the selected and unfinished books resembled the patterns present in the selected and finished books. These included four for the boys and two for the girls.

TABLE 14.--Summary of Format and Content Characteristics of Boys' and Girls' Selected but Unfinished Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED DECISIONS TO STOP READING BOOKS (BOYS)	
Amount of Illustration	Sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books
Type Size	Small (.09-.12 inches)
Genre/Topic Classifications	Occult/crime
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE DECISIONS TO STOP READING BOOKS (BOYS)	
Book Length	Books less than one hundred pages
Illustrative Style	Photographs
Fiction/Nonfiction	Nonfiction
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED DECISIONS TO STOP READING BOOKS (GIRLS)	
Book Length	Books more than 176 pages
Amount of Illustration	Sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books
Type Size	Small (.09-.12 inches)
Illustrative Style	Photographs
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE DECISIONS TO STOP READING BOOKS (GIRLS)	
Genre/Topic Classifications	Contemporary fiction, mystery/adventure
Fiction/Nonfiction Classifications	Fiction

SELECTED BUT UNFINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

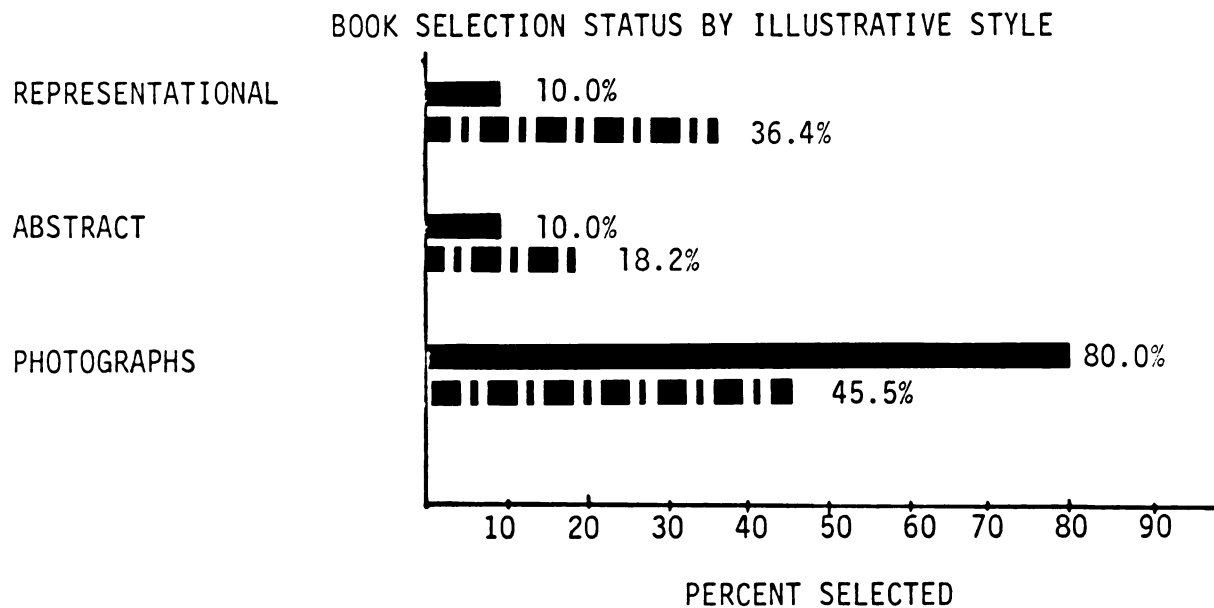


Figure 13

SELECTED BUT UNFINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

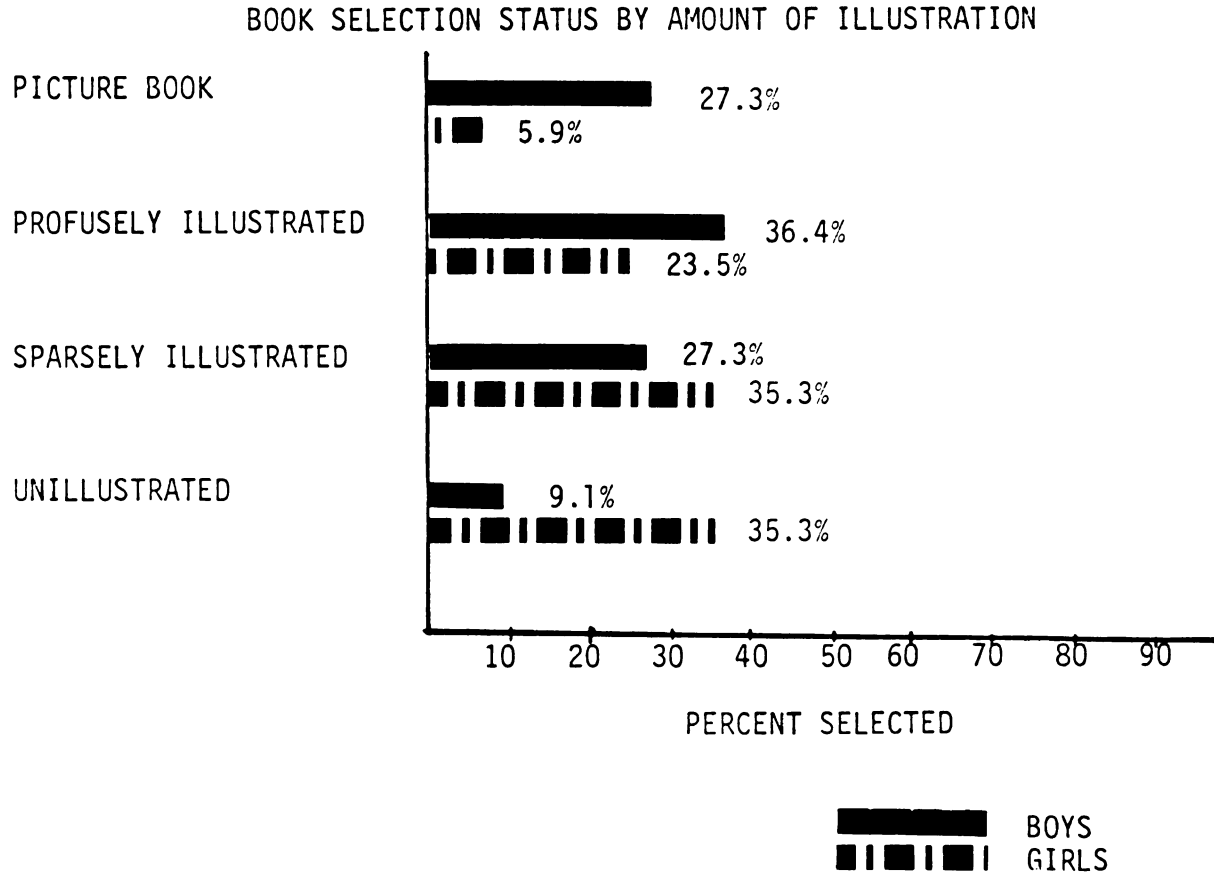


Figure 14

SELECTED BUT UNFINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY BOOK LENGTH

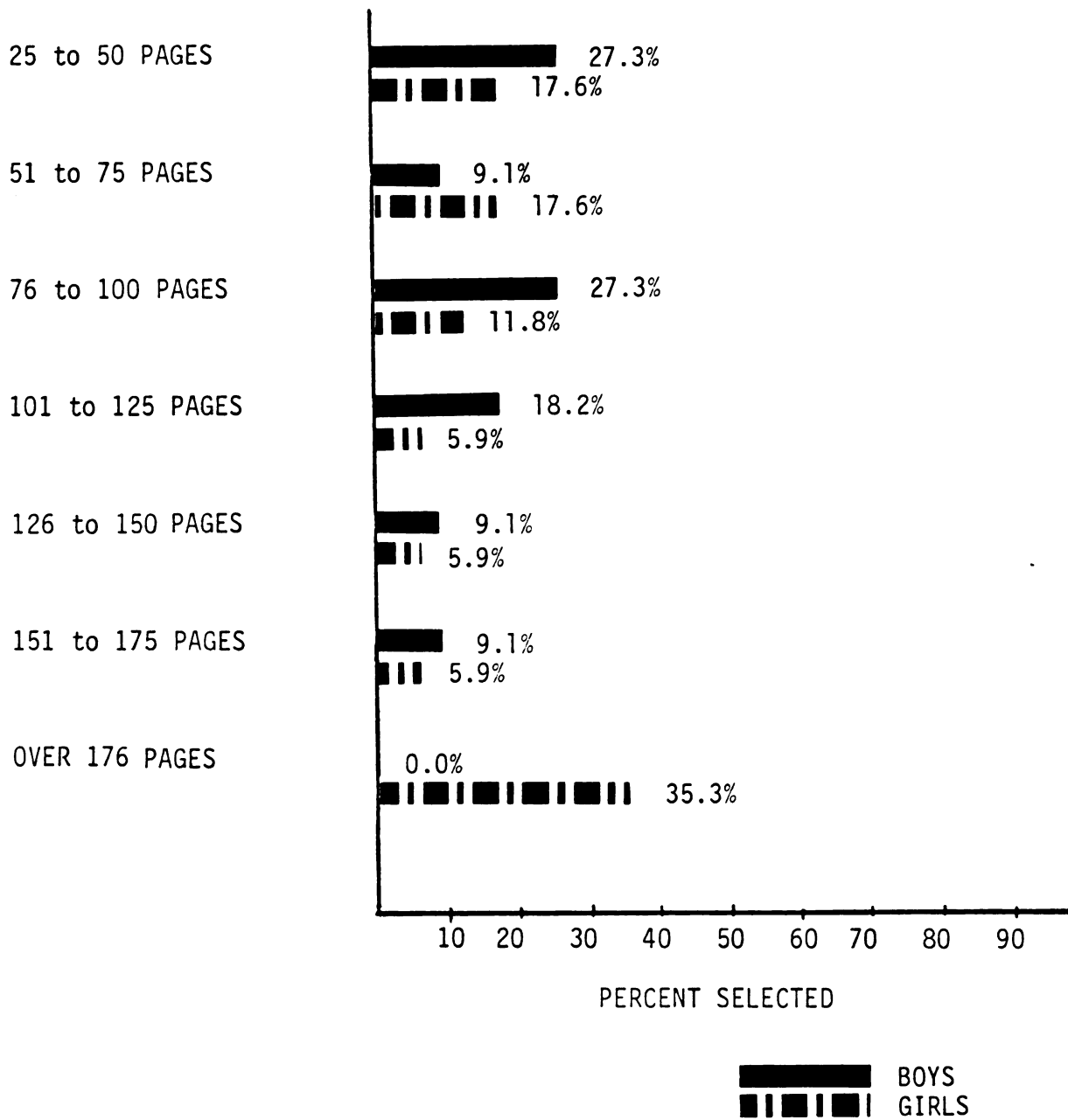


Figure 15

SELECTED BUT UNFINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY TYPE SIZE

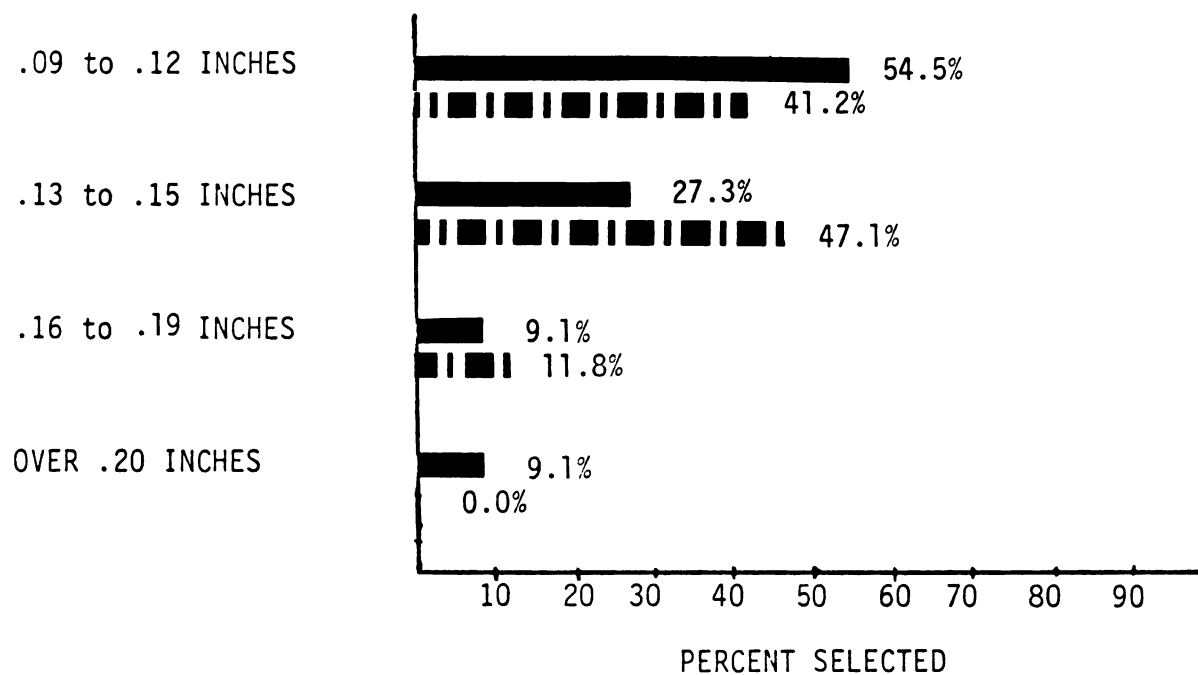
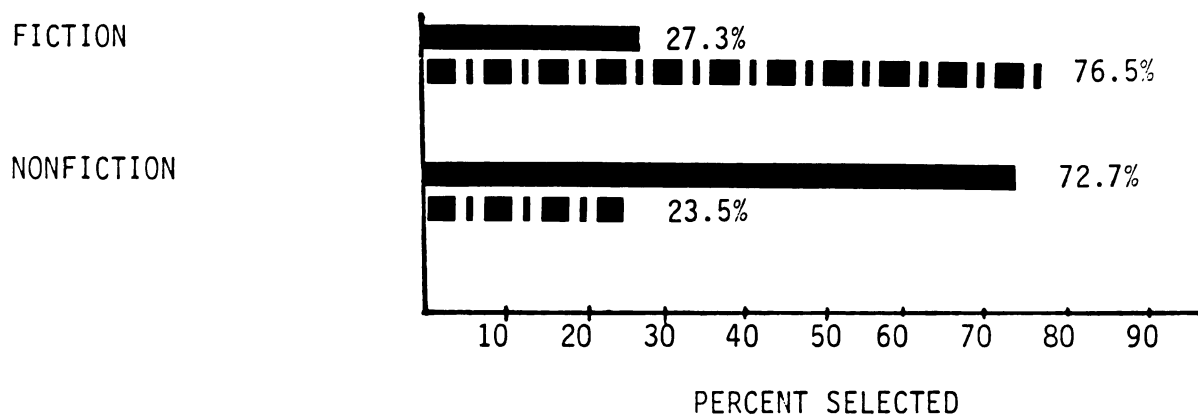


Figure 16

SELECTED BUT UNFINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY FICTION/NONFICTION



 BOYS
 GIRLS

Figure 17

SELECTED BUT UNFINISHED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY GENRE/TOPIC

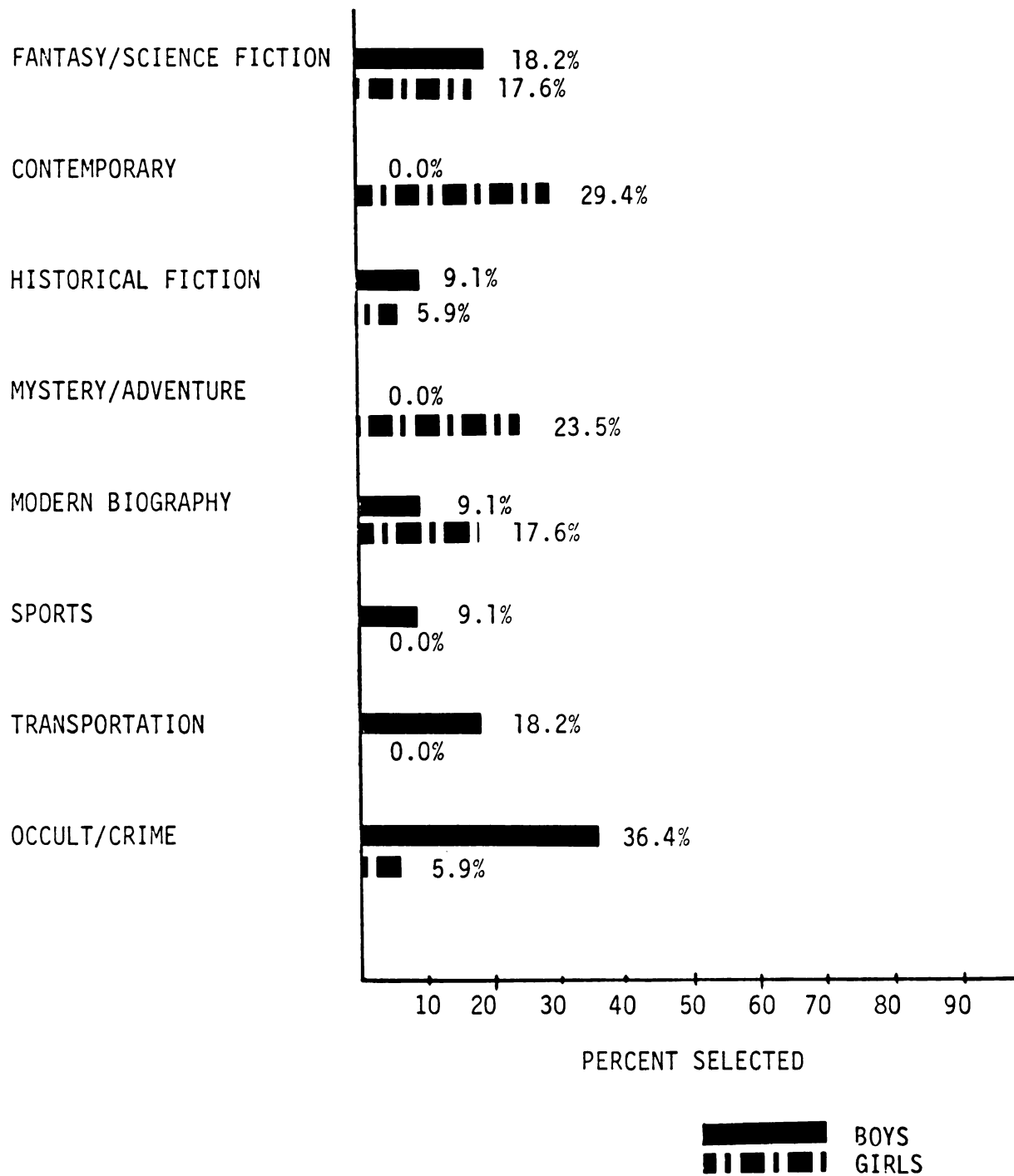


Figure 18

Rejected Books

Five format and content characteristics distinguished between boys' and girls' book decision choices. These included amount of illustration, genre/topic classifications, book length, illustrative style, and fiction/nonfiction classification.

First, the characteristic of the amount of illustration which was statistically significant for both groups, distinguished between boys and girls. Boys made decisions to reject more books that were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated (70.1%) than profusely illustrated or picture books (29.9%). In contrast, girls made an approximately equal number of decisions to reject books that were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated (53.3%) and that were profusely illustrated or picture books (46.7%). (See Figure 20, pg. 156.)

The second characteristic of genre/topic classifications was also statistically significant for both boys and girls and also distinguished between the boys' and girls' decisions to reject books. Boys made decisions to reject more modern biographies than any other genre/topic classification (30%) while girls made decisions to reject transportation and sports books (46.7%). (See Figure 24, pg. 159.)

The third characteristic which distinguished between boys' and girls' decisions to reject books was illustrative style, which was statistically significant for only boys. Boys made slightly more decisions to reject books that contained abstract illustrations (42.9%)

than photographs (35.7%). On the other hand, girls made more decisions to reject books which contained photographs (50%). (See Figure 19, pg. 156.)

The fourth characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification also distinguished between boys' and girls' decisions to reject books. Fiction/nonfiction classification was significant only for girls. Girls rejected more nonfiction (73.3%) than fiction while boys rejected slightly more fiction (55%) than nonfiction. (See Figure 23, pg. 158.)

Two format characteristics failed to distinguish between boys' and girls' rejection decisions. These included book length and type size.

The characteristic of book length was statistically significant for only boys. The number of decisions to reject books were approximately the same for books less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages for both boys and girls. However, both groups rejected the most books within the category of books over 176 pages; that is, girls rejected 33.3% of the books within this category while boys rejected 40% of the books within it. (See Figure 21, pg. 157.)

The format characteristic of type size also failed to distinguish between boys' and girls' decisions to reject books. Type size was statistically insignificant for both boys and girls. Books containing the smallest sized type (.09 to .12 inches) were rejected more frequently by boys (45%) and girls (66.7%). (See Figure 23, pg. 158.)

In summary, boys made more decisions to reject books which were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated and modern biographies. Books containing abstract illustrations were rejected slightly more frequently than books containing photographs. Each of these format characteristics was statistically significant for boys. Although fiction/nonfiction was statistically insignificant, boys had a tendency to reject more books of fiction than nonfiction.

Girls made approximately an equal number of decisions to reject books that were profusely illustrated and picture books as they did for sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books. Transportation and sports books were the most frequently rejected books within the genre/topic classifications as were nonfiction books within the fiction/nonfiction classification. Amount of illustration, genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications were each statistically significant for girls. Although statistically insignificant for girls, more books containing photographs were rejected.

The format characteristics of book length and size of type yielded similar results for both boys' and girls' rejected books. Approximately equal numbers of books of less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages were rejected by both boys and girls; however, this was statistically insignificant for girls. Although size of type was statistically insignificant for both boys and girls, both groups rejected books containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches). Table 15 summarizes characteristics which appeared to influence boys' and girls' decisions to reject books.

TABLE 15.--Summary Format and Content Characteristics of Boys' and Girls' Rejected Books.

CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS (BOYS)	
Book Length	Books over 176 pages
Amount of Illustration	Sparsely illustrated and un-illustrated books
Type Size	Small (.09-.12 inches)
Illustrative Style	Abstract
Genre/Topic Classifications	Modern Biography
Fiction/Nonfiction Classifications	Fiction
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH INFLUENCED DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS (GIRLS)	
Book Length	Books over 176 pages
Type Size	Small (.09-.12 inches)
Illustrative Style	Photographs
Genre/Topic Classifications	Transportation, sports
Fiction/Nonfiction Classifications	Nonfiction
CHARACTERISTICS WHICH DID NOT INFLUENCE DECISIONS TO REJECT BOOKS	
Amount of Illustration	Approximately equal number of books profusely illustrated and picture books, and sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books

REJECTED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY ILLUSTRATIVE STYLE

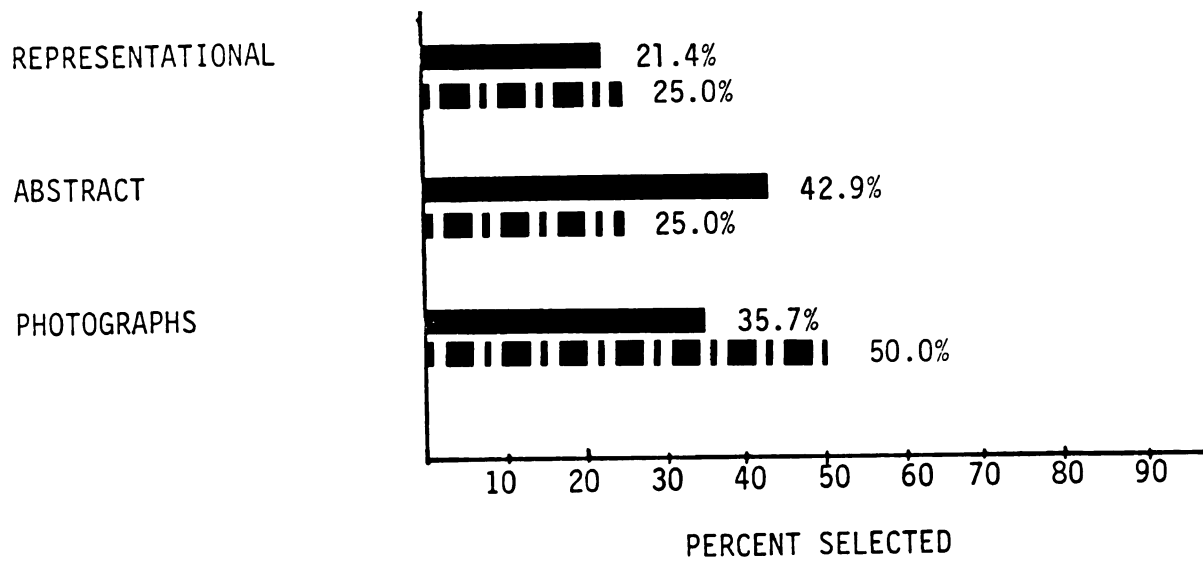
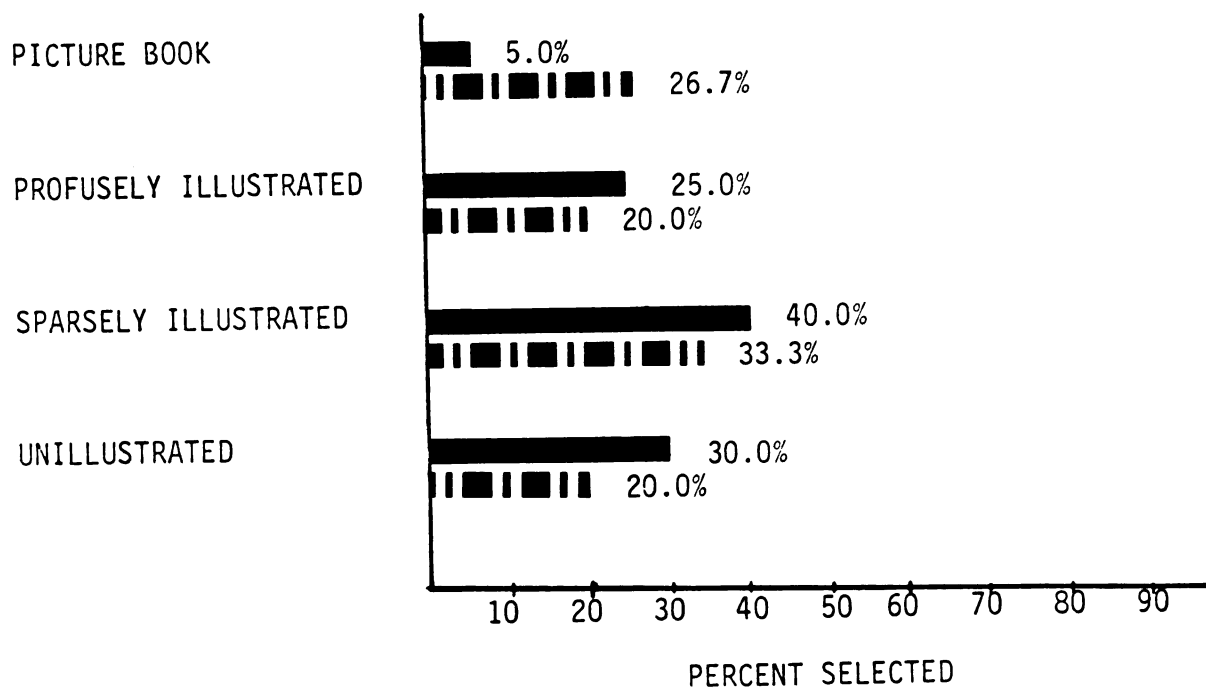


Figure 19

REJECTED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY AMOUNT OF ILLUSTRATION



 BOYS
 GIRLS

Figure 20

REJECTED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY BOOK LENGTH

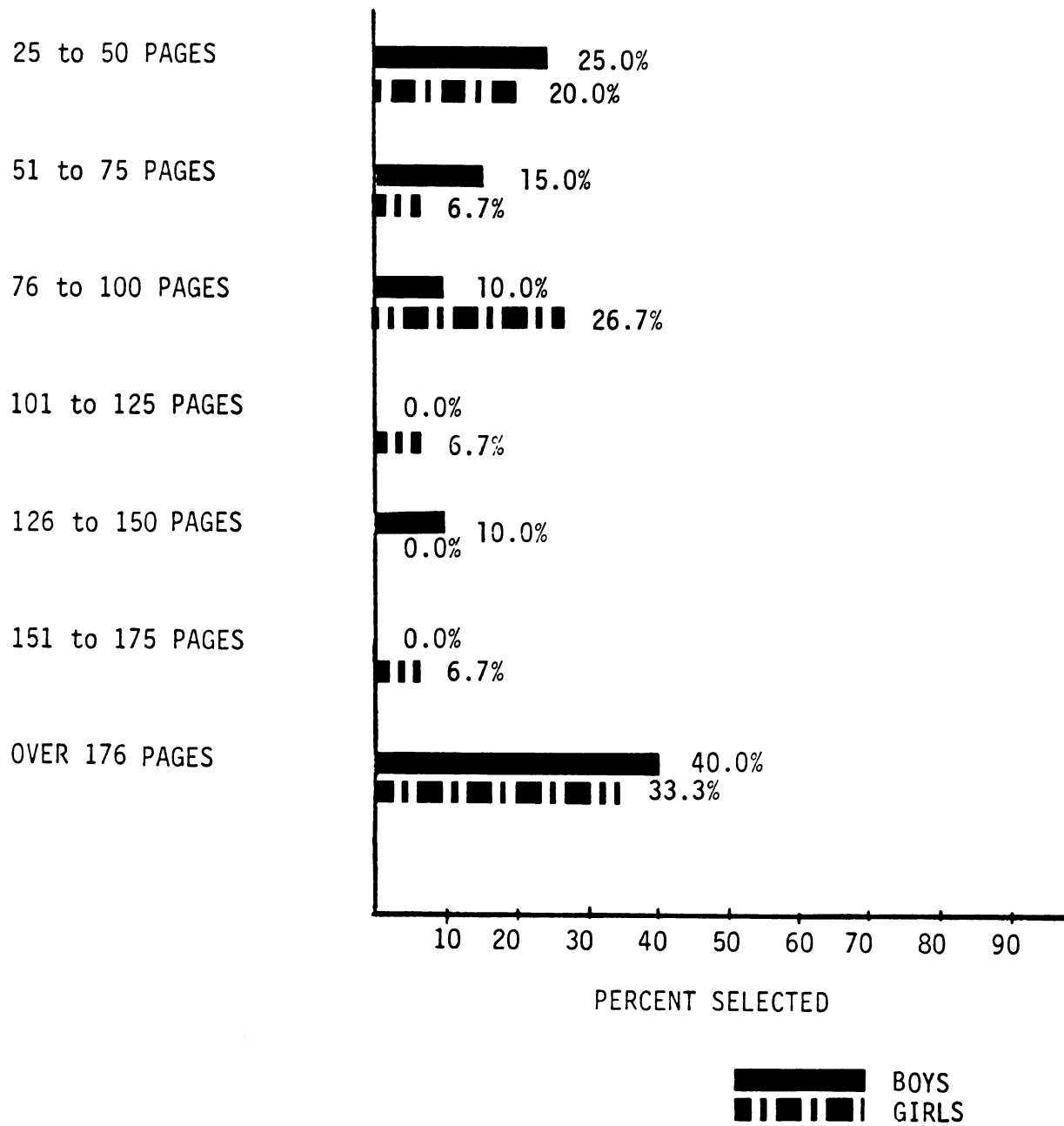


Figure 21

REJECTED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY TYPE SIZE

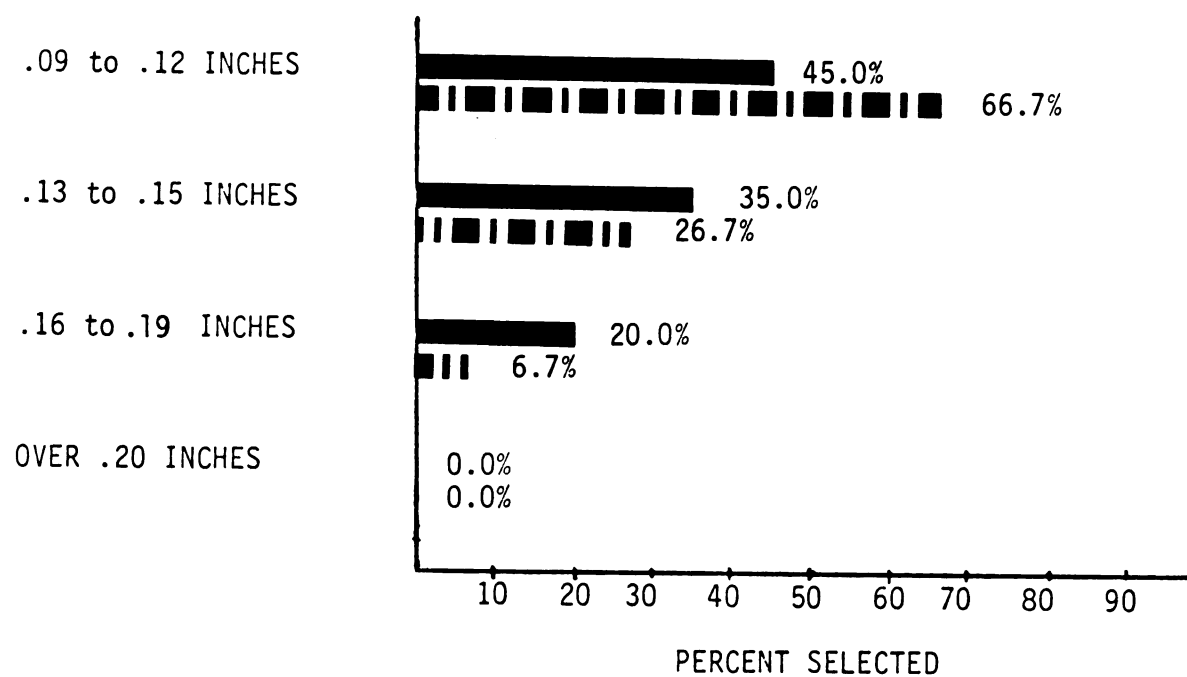


Figure 22

REJECTED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY FICTION/NONFICTION

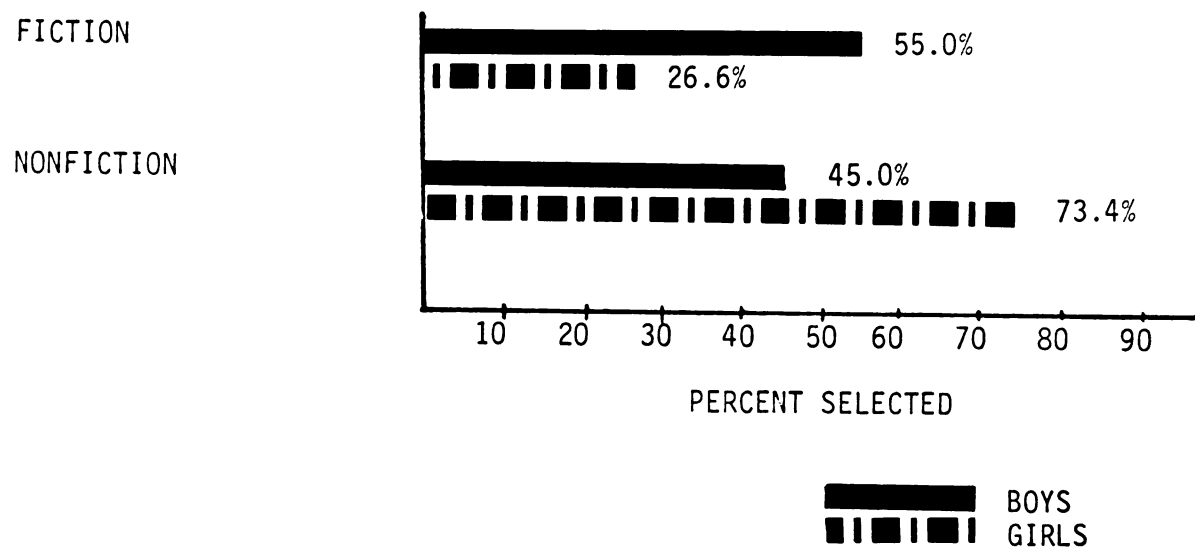


Figure 23

159

REJECTED BOOKS: BOYS VERSUS GIRLS
BOOK SELECTION STATUS BY GENRE/TOPIC

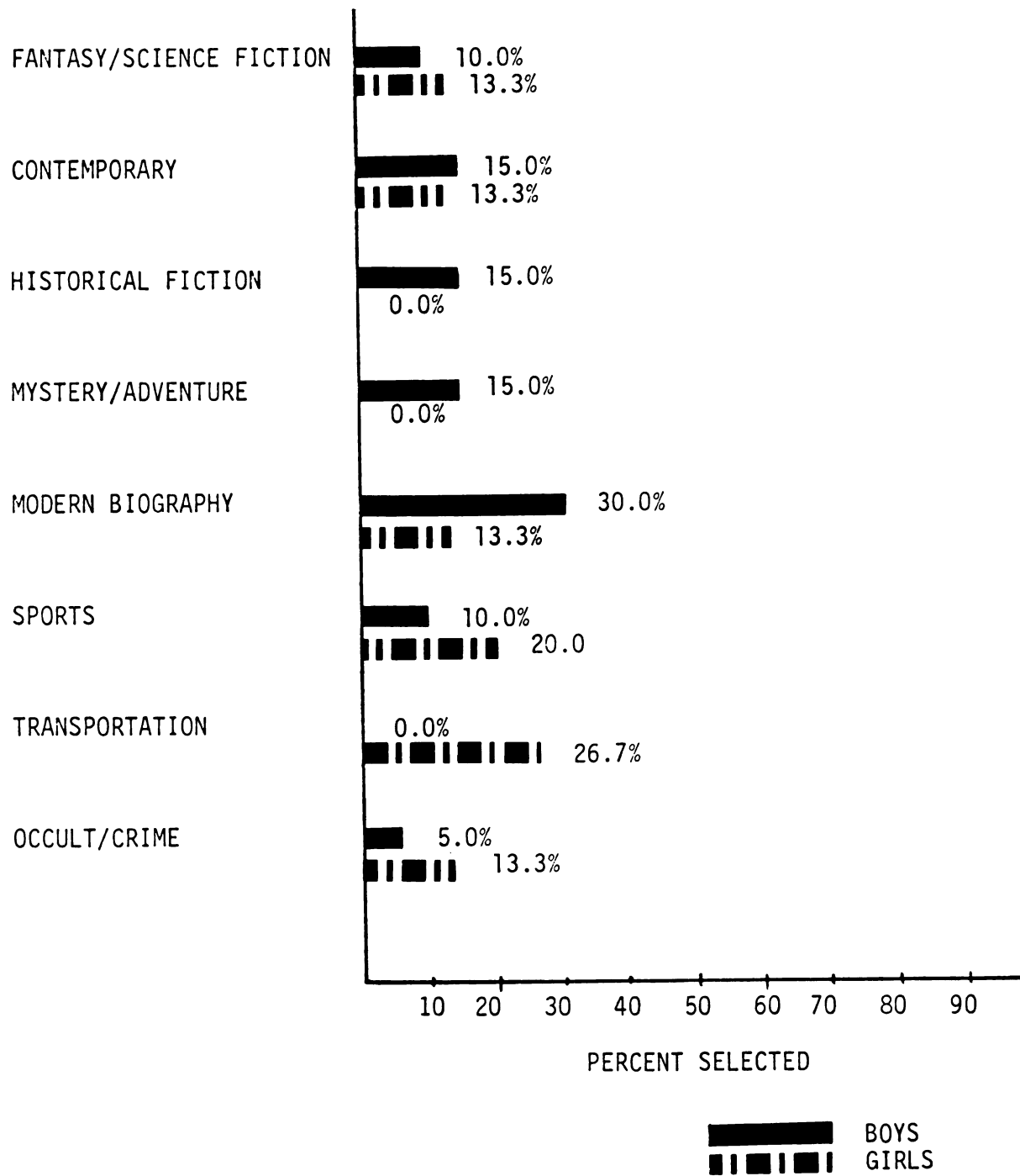


Figure 24

General Comments

Data will be presented in this section which will further discuss the possible explanations of the book selection decisions of reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers to determine what characteristics influenced initial book selection, book completion and rejection of high interest, low vocabulary trade books. The data regarding the relationship between interest scores and amounts of books completed has not been previously reported in Chapter IV. However, the remainder of the data to be presented will be an elaboration and clarification of data results previously discussed in this chapter. These data were determined from items #1, #2, #3, and #4 from the interest inventory and from the ninety-six interviews regarding books from the three book selection categories.

Previously discussed data results indicated that interest scores increased as both the books' appearances and subjects/contents were perceived as becoming appropriate for sixth graders and slightly older students. Interest scores were also highest when the books' difficulty levels were perceived as matching the students' reading levels or were perceived as being slightly harder.

The degree of student interest also affected the amount of book completed for books within the selected but unfinished category. As greater proportions of books were finished, the mean interest scores also increased. The mean interest score ranged from 8.3 for books which were 1-19% completed to a mean interest score of 12 for books which were 80-99% completed. (See Table 16, pg. 161.)

Consequently, the degree of interest toward a book appeared to have influenced the amount of the book finished.

TABLE 16.--Relationship Between Proportions of Books Completed and Mean Interest Scores.

	<u>Proportion of Book Completed</u>				
	0-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-99%
Mean Interest Score	8.3	8.6	8.8	10.6	12

The influence of interest in the form of likes/dislikes of subjects and contents was previously discussed in the appropriate book selection categories. Books which were selected and finished were most frequently selected because the students expressed preferences for the subjects/contents. The reasons most frequently stated for decisions to stop reading books were because the books (subjects/contents) became boring or uninteresting. Comments included statements such as "It got a little bit boring" (Winners in Gymnastics by Frank Litsky), and "I just got tired of it" (Don't Shoot by Roxane Chadwick). The reason for students' rejection of books was also influenced by the subjects/contents; that is, dislike of the books' subjects/contents. In all, thirty-nine interviewees mentioned that their initial selection or rejection of books was influenced by the books' subjects/contents. Fourteen of these interviewees attributed the main reason for initial selection or rejection because of the books' subjects/contents.

The inability of the remedial readers to accurately perceive the books' difficulty levels in relation to their reading levels was discussed previously in this chapter. The students overestimated the books' difficulty levels for the selected and finished books and underestimated them for the selected but unfinished books, while book difficulty levels were equally overestimated, underestimated and accurately perceived for the rejected books. It was ascertained, regardless of book selection category, that these students often attempted to determine the book difficulty levels using various format factors such as size of print, length or thickness of a book, or the amount of illustrations as criteria. Nine interviewees stated that large type size indicated easy book difficulty levels, while four said small type size indicated hard difficulty levels. The length of the books also determined book difficulty levels for three interviewees--two stated that short books meant easy difficulty levels; one stated that long books meant hard difficulty levels. The amounts of illustration also confused some of the students--four interviewees stated that many illustrations indicated easy books; one stated that no illustrations meant hard difficulty levels. One girl, however, summarized the philosophy of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books with the following statement regarding her reaction to The Plant People by Dale Carlson: "Those words were easier than the cover made them look."

As previously discussed in Chapter IV, students mentioned the amount of illustrations within each of the three book selection categories; however, responses about the illustrative styles or

components within the illustrations occurred less frequently. Responses about the amount of illustration occurred seventeen times, responses about the components of the illustrations only six times. The comments regarding illustrative style included, "The pictures look young" (The Homework Caper by Jean Lexau), "The illustrations are weird colors" (Walter Cronkite by Paula Taylor and Lorita Larson). The students in this group seemed much more concerned with the amount of illustrations rather than the actual styles or components of the illustrations.

Item #8 on the interest inventory attempted to determine the similarities or differences of the influence of the books' covers, titles, jackets among the three book selection categories. Data results indicated by a mean score for each book selection category, that the influence of the covers, titles or jackets had similar influence on selection and rejection. However, the interview results indicated that the covers exerted more influence on selected and finished books and selected but unfinished books than on rejected books. For selected and unfinished books, six interviewees stated that the pictures of the subjects/contents on the covers had a major role on their initial selection decisions while five interviewees stated that the covers' illustrations of the subjects/contents were also the major reason for the book selection decisions for selected and finished books; no interviewees discussed the illustrative style or components of the covers of selected and finished books and selected but unfinished books. However, components of the rejected covers' illustrative style exerted an influence for rejection of books. Within this

category, five interviewees mentioned illustrative components on the covers which exerted negative responses from them. Statements describing components within the illustrations included, "Only using the colors black and yellow are uninteresting" (Black and Blue Magic by Zilphia Synder), "The colors are strange" (Henry Kissinger by Paula Taylor), and "The cover is only green" (Broken Wheel Ranch by Leonard Eisner). However, no major reasons for rejection were attributed solely to the rejected covers. This is in direct contrast to the other two categories, in which the covers' pictorial subjects/ contents directly influenced the decision to select books. It appeared that covers directly motivated students to select books; however, covers in combination with other factors encouraged students to reject books.

A contradiction between the way students perceived the books and what they selected and finished was very evident. During the interviews, the students frequently mentioned that they associated short books and frequently illustrated books with younger children. However, the data results indicated that books containing these characteristics were much more frequently selected and finished than those that possessed other format characteristics.

In summary, greater proportions of the books were completed when the students perceived the books as being more interesting. These high interest, low vocabulary trade books disguised their low difficulty levels with older looking format characteristics which frequently misled the students in thinking that the books were too difficult for them when many of the books were actually below their

reading levels. Similarly, books which contained format characteristics which the students associated with younger students were often perceived as being too easy when many of the books' difficulty levels were above the students' reading levels. Students mentioned the amount of illustration more than the illustrative styles or components within the illustrations. Book covers appeared to influence major book selection decisions within the selected and finished and selected but unfinished categories. However, the influence was exerted by the pictorial presentation of the books' subjects/contents rather than the covers' illustrative styles. Students appeared to be more aware of illustrative style of covers of the rejected books, especially of aspects which did not appeal to them. Although the students associated the format characteristics of short books and frequent illustrations with younger students, these sixth graders overwhelmingly selected and finished books containing these characteristics.

Summary

The book selection and responses of a group of eighteen reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers to high interest, low vocabulary books were examined. Various readability factors of book difficulty, interest, content, and format characteristics were investigated to determine the similarities and differences among three book selection categories--selected and finished, selected but unfinished, and rejected.

The books which were initially selected, including both the categories of selected and finished books as well as selected but

unfinished books, contained characteristics which ranged from having low to high difficulty levels as well as having low to high interest levels. These initially selected books had format characteristics which ranged from the shortest to the longest book lengths and from picture books to unillustrated books, often contained the smallest (.09 to .12 inches) and medium (.13 to .15 inches) sized type, and photographs. The books were most frequently within the genre/topic classifications of mystery/adventure, transportation, contemporary fiction, fantasy/science fiction, or occult/crime. Fiction was most frequently represented in the initially selected books.

Several of the characteristics of the initially selected books appeared to have influenced the students' decisions to finish the books. Finished books had the lowest mean difficulty levels and were overwhelmingly below the students' reading levels. In addition, the finished books were frequently less than one hundred pages long and profusely illustrated or picture books. The characteristic book length and amount of illustration were statistically significant. Books containing photographs were the most often selected and finished; the characteristic of illustrative style was also statistically significant. Although statistically insignificant, the finished books contained medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches), were fiction and frequently mystery/adventure or transportation. The interest levels for selected and finished books were higher than for the selected but unfinished books.

In contrast, rejected books had the highest mean difficulty levels and/or subjects/contents disliked by their readers. These

books frequently contained over 176 pages, were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated or, if they had illustrations, contained photographs. The format characteristics of book length, amount of illustration, and illustrative style were statistically significant. The rejected books had the smallest sized type and, within the genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications, were more frequently modern biographies and fiction, respectively; however, these last three format and content characteristics were statistically insignificant.

Interest in books increased as the students perceived the books becoming more appropriate in appearances and subjects/contents for sixth graders and slightly older students as well as when book difficulty levels were perceived as being within the students' reading levels. Greater proportions of books were completed as the books were perceived as being more interesting. Students initially selected and rejected books because of likes/dislikes of the books' subjects/contents.

The students inaccurately perceived the books' difficulty levels; that is, they frequently overestimated the difficulty levels for selected and finished books and underestimated them for the selected but unfinished books. Students often based their perception of books' difficulty levels on format characteristics such as book length, amount of illustration, or size of type.

Format and content characteristics which appealed to boys and girls differed slightly. Boys appeared to prefer books that were profusely illustrated or picture books and books that had less than one hundred pages. Both of these characteristics were statistically significant for boys. Photographs were the most frequently selected

illustrative style. This format characteristic was also statistically significant. Books about transportation or mysteries were the most frequently selected and finished within the genre/topic classifications while nonfiction was selected most often, although both of these characteristics were statistically insignificant. Type size was also insignificant; however, boys appeared to prefer medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches). In contrast, boys most frequently rejected books over 176 pages, sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books, books with abstract illustrations, modern biographies, fiction, and the smallest type size (.09 to .12 inches).

Girls also appeared to prefer profusely illustrated or picture books and books containing less than one hundred pages. Girls selected and finished more mysteries and contemporary fiction, and preferred fiction to nonfiction. Both of these content characteristics were statistically significant. Although statistically insignificant, girls seemed to prefer books with representational illustrations and medium sized type (.13 to .15 inches). Results for girls within the selected and unfinished book selection categories indicated that the girls were more willing to initially select books over 176 pages as well as sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books than boys were, although many of these books were never finished. Data results of rejected books also supported these tendencies. Girls rejected transportation and sports books within the genre/topic classifications as well as nonfiction within the fiction/nonfiction classification. Both of these characteristics were statistically significant. Although statistically insignificant, girls rejected more books containing photographs and the smallest sized type (.09 to .12 inches).

A contradiction was observed when the interview statements were compared to the book selection data. The students associated short books and those containing frequent illustrations with younger students; however, these sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers frequently selected and were most successful finishing high interest, low vocabulary books which contained these format characteristics, especially when low book difficulty levels simultaneously occurred.

Findings, conclusions, and the implications of this research for teachers, librarians, and publishers will be discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter will contain a summary of the research design, the findings, conclusions and implications of the data in relation to the selection decisions of reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers. Suggestions for changes of this study as well as recommendations for further research will also be discussed.

Summary

This researcher examined reluctant, remedial sixth grade students' book selections and rejections of 164 high interest, low vocabulary trade books to determine what aspects of difficulty level, interest, content and format characteristics influenced their decisions to read or not to read specific books or types of books. Three selection categories--selected and finished, selected but unfinished and rejected books--were considered.

The 164 high interest, low vocabulary trade books chosen for inclusion within this study were selected according to specific criteria. These criteria included difficulty levels ranging from first through seventh grades, approximately sixth grade interest levels, specific content characteristics of fiction/nonfiction, genre/topic classifications as well as specific format features

of illustrative style, amount of illustration, size of type, and book length. An attempt was made by this researcher to attain an equal representation of each variable.

At the beginning of the study, the Estes Attitude Scale was administered to the remedial sixth graders and to another group of sixth grade readers functioning at and above grade level. The results showed that the remedial readers scored significantly lower than the other group, thereby indicating that the remedial readers appeared to possess more negative attitudes toward reading than did the average and above average readers.

The high interest, low vocabulary trade books were made available over a period of six weeks to eight girls and ten boys. After each book selection, the student completed an interest inventory on which he/she indicated degree of interest, amount of book read, and perceptions about difficulty level, appropriateness of book's appearance and subjects/contents for sixth graders. Interviews were taped by this researcher to gather information about rejected books and to record additional information about students' responses to selected books.

The data were tabulated and classified by the type of decisions the students made regarding the books. The students were asked to make one of four types of decisions for each book: to select and read a book to completion, to select but not finish a book, to indicate a book to the researcher that the student did not want to read (rejected book), and to totally ignore a book. For

each student, this latter category consisted of decisions regarding all the remaining books which were not in one of the first three selection categories. Consequently, each student made 164 various decisions (one decision for each book); a total of 2,952 book selection decisions were made by the eighteen students during the six weeks. The group made seventy-one decisions to select and finish books, twenty-eight decisions to select but not finish books, thirty-five decisions to reject books and 2,817 decisions to ignore books.

The data were analyzed by several procedures. Means were used to determine difficulty levels and influence of interest inventory items to enable comparisons among the three book selection categories. Means were also utilized to enable comparisons between the selected and finished category and the selected but unfinished category for interest scores, and to determine possible relationships between students' perceptions of difficulty levels and interest scores, appropriateness of books' appearances and interest scores, and appropriateness of subjects/contents and interest scores. For selected but unfinished books, means were also utilized to determine the relationship between proportions of books finished and the interest scores. Frequency tables were constructed to determine the relationships between books' difficulty levels and students' reading levels (readability match index) and between the readability match index and the students' perceptions of difficulty levels. The statistic chi-square was utilized to determine the similarities

and differences of the content and format characteristics among the three book selection categories for the entire group and between boys and girls. The confidence level was set at .05.

The Findings

The research findings will be presented by discussing each of the major research questions investigated, its subquestions, and explanations of why the results may have occurred.

1. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books selected and finished by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty level, interest, content, and format?

- a. What is the difficulty level?

The mean difficulty level of the selected and finished books was 3.6, ranging from the first through the seventh grade difficulty levels. This was the lowest mean difficulty score for the three book selection categories. Actual book difficulty levels were determined by the four sources used to select the high interest, low vocabulary trade books, including Booklist, Top of the News, Good Reading for Poor Readers, and Gateways to Readable Books.^{124,125,126,127}

Students chose books with which they believed they could have successful and satisfying reading experiences. Therefore,

¹²⁴Goldberger, Duree, op. cit., September 15, 1975 ff.

¹²⁵YASD High Interest/Low-Literary Level Materials Evaluation Committee, op. cit., p. 197-201.

¹²⁶Spache, op. cit., p. 41 ff.

¹²⁷Withrow, op. cit., p. 27 ff.

ease of difficulty level, appears to have been an influential factor for reluctant, remedial readers' selection and successful completion of high interest, low vocabulary trade books.

- b. Does a relationship exist between the students' reading levels and the books' difficulty levels?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The reluctant, remedial readers overwhelmingly selected and finished 76% of books below their reading levels, while selecting and finishing only 12.7% of books within their reading levels, and 11% of books above their reading levels. Ease of difficulty levels again appears to have been an influential factor to motivate reluctant, remedial readers to select and finish high interest, low vocabulary books.

- c. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and the books' difficulty levels?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The reluctant, remedial readers tended to overestimate the difficulty levels of the selected and finished books (58%). In other words, they inferred that the books' difficulty levels were more difficult in relation to their own reading levels than the books actually were. The difficulty levels of selected and finished books were accurately perceived for 27% of the books, while the difficulty levels were underestimated for 15% of the selected and finished books.

Overestimation of difficulty levels of selected and finished books may have occurred because of two reasons. First, students'

attempts to protect their self-concepts may have resulted in over-estimations. The students may not have wanted to admit that the books they had selected were too easy for them. Second, adult-looking elements of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books may have disguised the low difficulty levels of some of the books; thereby influencing the students' decisions to overestimate the difficulty levels.

d. What is the level of interest?

The mean interest score for the selected and finished books was 13.13, ranging from seven to fifteen points. This score was higher than the interest score determined for the category of selected but unfinished books.

Consequently, high degrees of interest toward books appears to have motivated students to select and finish books. This supports Williams' study, discussed within the Review of Literature, which concluded that high interest was an important motivator for book completion.

e. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and the interest scores?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. Books perceived as being slightly too difficult received the highest interest score for the selected and finished books (14.4), while books perceived as being within or slightly below the students' reading levels received slightly lower but equal scores (13.2). Books perceived as being much too easy received the lowest interest scores (10.9).

Two reasons may explain why books perceived as being slightly too hard received the highest mean interest score. First, results previously discussed indicated finished books had difficulty levels below the students' reading levels; consequently, the fact that the students believed that these books were difficult might suggest that high interest toward these books motivated the students to finish them. Second, the students may have felt positive about reading books which they believed to be too difficult for them and may have indicated this by rating the books as being more interesting.

Books which were perceived as being slightly easy and those perceived as being just right received equal but also relatively high interest scores. Two reasons may also explain this. First, high interest toward the books may have influenced the students' perceptions of difficulty levels; that is, books of higher interests were thought to be easier to read. Second, it appears that the students' beliefs that the difficulty levels were slightly below or at their reading levels may have encouraged successful experiences with the books and influenced students to assign high interest scores to the books. Conversely, books which were perceived as being way too easy were rated as having the lowest amount of interest. Students may have equated the "easy" reading levels with younger students and believed that the books were appropriate for students younger than the sixth grade. The sixth graders may have also thought that elements of these books, such as plot or

characterization, were treated in a manner more appropriate for younger students.

- f. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' appearances and their interest scores?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. Books perceived as having appearances appropriate for students slightly older received the highest interest scores (14.2), followed by books whose appearances were perceived appropriate for sixth graders (13.5), and next, for students slightly younger (12.5). The lowest interest score (11) occurred for books whose appearances were perceived as being appropriate for much younger students.

Books having appearances which were perceived as being appropriate for slightly older students may have caused the remedial readers to feel positive about themselves and their reading abilities; therefore, the books were assigned higher interest scores. A similar situation may also have occurred for books which were perceived as having appearances appropriate for sixth graders; these books also received relatively high interest scores.

However, reluctant, remedial readers appeared to be less interested in books which were perceived as having appearances appropriate for slightly younger students and least interested in books whose appearances looked appropriate for much younger students. This latter category of books may have been subconsciously associated with the reading materials remedial students have used during reading classes.

- f1. Are the books' appearances considered appropriate for sixth graders?

The selected and finished books received a mean appearance score of 2.7. This indicated that the books were perceived as having appearances appropriate for students of about the sixth grade.

Because this item did not discriminate among the three book selection categories, the books' appearances were perceived as being similar, regardless of category. Therefore, the book selection categories may not have exerted any measurable influence on students' perceptions of books' appearances.

- g. Does a relationship exist between the perceived appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents and their interest scores?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. Books perceived as having subjects/contents appropriate for slightly older students received the highest interest scores (14.5), followed by books whose subjects/contents were perceived as being appropriate for sixth graders (13.2) and those appropriate for slightly younger students (13.1). The lowest score (10.9) occurred for books whose subjects/contents were perceived as being appropriate for students much younger.

Students may have believed that the subjects/contents which were perceived to be appropriate for slightly older students were more interesting than what they usually selected to read; consequently, they assigned the highest interest scores to books within this category.

Books which had subjects/contents perceived as appropriate for sixth graders and slightly younger students also received similarly high interest scores. Because some of these students may have been within a transitional developmental stage, some of the sixth graders may have accepted subjects/contents considered appropriate for younger students. These students may have been attracted to subjects/contents appropriate for elementary aged students as well as those of middle school age. The two year age difference within these classes may also explain why these books also received the high interest scores.

However, books containing subjects/contents appropriate for younger students were evaluated as being least interesting to the students. These subjects/contents appeared to have been more appropriate for developmental stages much below those of sixth graders; consequently, the sixth graders did not appear to be as interested in these books. Books such as these may have subconsciously suggested or reminded the students of other books which they may have had to use during their reading classes.

g1. Do the books possess subjects/contents considered appropriate for sixth graders?

The selected and finished books received a mean score of 2.7. This indicated that the books were perceived as having subjects/contents appropriate to students of about the sixth grade.

Because this item did not discriminate among book selection categories, the subjects/contents of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books were perceived in similar manner, regardless of

book selection category. Therefore, the book selection categories may not have exerted any measurable influence on students' perceptions of books' subjects/contents.

- h. Do the titles, covers, or book jackets influence selection?

The selected and finished books received a mean score of 3.6. This indicated that the titles, covers, or book jackets had some influence on book selection but they were not among the main reasons.

Because this item did not discriminate among the book selection categories, the title, cover, book jacket may have had similar influence, regardless of the book selection category.

- i. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, and length)?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated that books with photographs were the most frequently selected and finished (49.3%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The characteristic of the amount of illustration indicated that profusely illustrated and picture books were more frequently selected and finished (83.1%) while sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books were infrequently selected and finished (16.9%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The characteristic of size of type indicated that books containing medium sized type (.13-.15 inches) were most frequently

selected and finished (56.3%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant.

The characteristic of book length indicated that books which were less than one hundred pages were more frequently selected and finished (88.8%) while books over one hundred pages were infrequently selected and finished (11.2%). However, more books within the book length category of between twenty-five and fifty pages were selected and finished (45.1%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The reluctant, remedial readers within this sample chose books containing format characteristics which may have suggested to the students that they would be successful in book completion and have satisfying reading experiences. The students also may have been concerned with the potential time commitment involved to read the books. Consequently, some of the students may have selected books which contained format characteristics which they believed might represent shorter commitments.

Photographs may have appealed to the students because they perceived them as being adultlike or associated them with popular trade magazines; that is, they did not resemble materials usually associated with textbooks used for reading.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated that boys selected and finished more books containing photographs (54.6%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristic of amount of illustration indicated boys more frequently selected and finished profusely illustrated and picture books (83%) than sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books (17%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristic of type size indicated boys selected and finished more books containing medium sized type (.13-.15 inches) (59.6%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for boys.

The characteristic of book length indicated boys more frequently selected and finished books of less than one hundred pages (89.4%) than those over one hundred pages (10.7%). However, more books within the book length category of between twenty-five and fifty pages were selected and finished (53.2%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

Boys within this sample chose books containing format characteristics which suggested to them that they would be successful in book completion and have satisfying reading experiences. Boys may have been concerned with the amount of time it would take to read their choices; consequently, they may have chosen books containing many illustrations, short lengths, and medium sized type (.13-.15 inches).

Boys' preference for photographs may have been the result of a preference for the illustrative style or the result of interacting variables. Boys selected and finished more nonfiction books

which often were illustrated with photographs. Consequently, it may be difficult to determine the amount of influence of each factor on boys' book selection and subsequent influence on the decision to finish the books.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated girls selected and finished more books which contained representational illustrations (52.2%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for girls.

The characteristic of the amount of illustration indicated girls more frequently selected and finished profusely illustrated and picture books (83.4%) than sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books (16.7%). This characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

The characteristic of size of type indicated that girls selected and finished the most books containing medium sized type (.13-.15 inches) (50%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for girls.

The characteristic of book length indicated girls more frequently selected and finished books less than one hundred pages (87.5%) than those over one hundred pages (12.5%). However, girls did select and finish three books over 176 pages while boys did not attempt any books over 176 pages. However, this characteristic of book length was statistically insignificant for girls.

Girls within this sample chose books containing format characteristics which suggested to them that they would be successful in book completion and have a satisfying reading experience.

Girls' preference for books containing representational illustrations may be the results of a general liking of this illustrative style or the result of interacting factors. Many of the books selected and finished by the girls were fiction which contained more representational and abstract illustrations than photographs. The nonfiction books which were selected less frequently by the girls often contained photographs. Consequently, it may be difficult to determine the amount of influence of each of these factors on girls' books selection and subsequent completion of the books.

j. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classifications indicated that selected and finished books were more frequently mystery/adventure (22.5%) or transportation (18.3%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

This group of students selected and finished more mystery/adventure than any other genre/topic classifications. The elements of this classification including suspense, action, danger, and surprise may have influenced selection and completion. Data results for the entire group, however, did indicate that this group possessed a wide range of reading interests.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classifications indicated boys selected and finished more books about transportation (23.4%), followed by books of mystery/adventure (19.1%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

Sixth grade reluctant, remedial boys appeared to be most interested in books about transportation. This may be due to the anticipation of driving and/or liking of mechanical objects. Overall, boys appeared to have a wider range of reading interests than the girls did. These results supported the findings of Ramsey's study which was discussed in the Review of Literature.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classifications indicated girls selected and finished more mystery/adventure (29.2%), followed closely by contemporary fiction (25%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

Sixth grade reluctant, remedial girls appeared to be most interested with books which contained elements of suspense, surprise, and action. However, girls also appeared to be attracted to books about the joys, struggles, and problems of children of their own age. Overall, girls appeared to have a narrower range of reading interests than boys did. The girls may have avoided genre/topic classifications such as sports and occult/crime which they may have associated with male interests.

k. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction indicated selected and finished books were more frequently fiction (57.7%) than non-fiction (42.3%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

These students appeared to prefer fiction as a group. They may have been most familiar with this classification or enjoyed the "story" element within fiction as opposed to the "information" element within nonfiction. These results are supported by Ferguson's study which was discussed in the Review of Literature.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification indicated boys selected and finished more nonfiction (57.4%) than fiction (42.6%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant for boys.

Boys appeared to be more attracted to nonfiction than fiction. However, boys selected and finished books from both fiction and nonfiction, indicating that they are interested in reading books from either classification.

Boys' preference for nonfiction was also noted in studies by Whitehead and Packer. These studies were discussed in the Review of Literature.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification indicated girls selected and finished more fiction (87.5%) than

nonfiction (12.5%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

Girls appeared to prefer fiction to nonfiction. This may have resulted because the girls associated the topics/genres of some of the nonfiction books with boys and, consequently, did not choose to read them. Girls may have also preferred the "story" element present within the fiction classification rather than the "informational" elements present within nonfiction.

Similar findings were reported in studies by Packer and Whitehead which were discussed in the Review of Literature.

2. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books selected but unfinished by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty levels, interest, content, and format?

- a. What is the difficulty level?

The mean difficulty level for selected but unfinished books was 4.7, which was the mid mean difficulty score for the three book selection categories. The difficulty levels of selected but unfinished books ranged from first through seventh grade. Actual book difficulty levels were determined by the four sources used to select the high interest, low vocabulary trade books, including Booklist, Top of the News, Good Reading for Poor Readers, and Gateways to Readable Books.^{128,129,130,131}

¹²⁸Goldberger, Duree, op. cit., September 15, 1975 ff.

¹²⁹YASD High Interest/Low-Literary Level Materials Evaluation Committee, op. cit., p. 197-201.

¹³⁰Spache, op. cit., p. 41 ff.

¹³¹Withrow, op. cit., p. 27 ff.

Consequently, it appears that higher difficulty levels of the selected but unfinished books may have influenced decisions to stop reading books.

- b. Does a relationship exist between the students' reading levels and the books' difficulty levels?

The data appeared to support that a relationship did exist. Books which were selected but unfinished were most frequently above the students' reading levels (42.9%), followed by those below the students' reading levels (32.1%) and those within the students' reading levels (25%).

Two reasons may explain why books having difficulty levels above the students' reading levels may not have been finished. First, students may have been discouraged by the harder difficulty levels, and decided to stop reading the books. Second, these books, which were perceived as being lower in interest, may not have been able to motivate the students to exert the extra reading effort necessary to finish them. Results for selected and finished books indicated ease of reading level may have been influential for book completion; therefore, the books below the students' reading levels may have been unfinished due to factors other than the books' difficulty levels. These factors may have included aspects of interest, various content or format characteristics. Similarly, these other factors may also have influenced decisions to stop reading books which possessed difficulty levels within the students' reading levels.

- c. Does a relationship exist between the students' perceptions of the books' difficulty levels and the books' difficulty levels?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The reluctant, remedial readers tended to underestimate the difficulty levels of the selected but unfinished books (43%). In other words, the students inferred that the difficulty levels of the books were too easy for them, when the difficulty levels were actually above their reading levels. The students overestimated 21% of the books and accurately perceived the difficulty levels of 36% of the books.

Two reasons may account for this underestimation of the difficulty levels of selected but unfinished books. First, the students may not have wanted to admit that they had selected books which were too difficult for them; this may have occurred to protect the students' self-concepts. Second, format characteristics which were usually associated with younger children, may have influenced the sixth graders into thinking that these books had lower difficulty levels than they actually had.

- d. Does a relationship exist between the proportions of the books read and their interest scores?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The mean interest scores increased as greater amounts of books were completed. The following interest scores were attained for proportions of books completed: an interest score of 8.3 for 1-19%, a score of 8.6 for 20-39%, a score of 8.8 for 40-59%, a score of 10.6 for 60-79% and a score of 12 for 80-99%.

The amount of interest toward a book appeared to influence the amount of a book completed. Therefore, higher interest toward reading selections appears to motivate students to read greater proportions of the materials. This supports the results of Williams' study which was discussed in the Review of Literature.

d1. What is the level of interest?

The mean interest score of the selected but unfinished books was 11.33. This mean interest score was lower than the mean score for the selected and finished books. The interest scores for the selected but unfinished books ranged from three to fourteen points.

It appears that lower interest in the selected but unfinished books may have influenced decisions to stop reading the books. Students may have thought that the books became boring or uninteresting and, consequently, not worth the effort to continue reading them. Similar results were reported in Williams' study which was discussed in the Review of the Literature.

e. Does a relationship exist between students' perceptions of books' difficulty levels and the interest scores?

The data appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The mean interest scores increased as the books were perceived from being way too easy (3) to being a little easy (8.5) to being within the students' reading levels (9.9), decreasing slightly when the books' difficulty levels were perceived as being slightly too difficult.

It appears that students who believed that the books' difficulty levels were within their reading levels may have felt

comfortable when reading the books and thereby assigned the books relatively high interest scores. However, other factors such as format or content characteristics may have influenced the students' decisions to leave the books unfinished.

Two reasons may explain why the mean interest score for selected but unfinished books perceived as being slightly too difficult declined. One possible explanation might have been that the difficulty levels perceived as being above the students' reading levels might have negatively influenced the students' interest ratings; that is, these books which were perceived as being too difficult to read may have, in turn, made the books less interesting to the readers. The other reason might have been that the amounts of student interest in the books were not high enough for the students to read the books to completion.

The books which were perceived as being way too easy were rated as having the lowest interest. Students may have equated these "easy" books with younger students and believed that the books were more appropriate for students much younger than sixth grade. The sixth graders may also have believed that literary elements of these books such as plot or characterization were treated in a manner more appropriate for younger students.

- f. Does a relationship exist between the perceived appropriateness of the books' appearances and their interest score?

The data appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The mean interest scores increased as the books' appearances were perceived from being appropriate for much younger students (3) to

being appropriate for students a little younger (9.4) to being appropriate to sixth grade students (9.8), then decreasing slightly for books whose appearances were perceived as being appropriate for slightly older students (7).

Students who believed their books had appearances appropriate to sixth graders may have had relatively satisfying reading experiences and consequently, assigned somewhat high scores. Other factors such as difficulty level may have influenced decisions to stop reading the books. The fact that books had sixth grade appearances probably was not a reason why students left the books unfinished.

However, the appearances of the books which were perceived as being appropriate for students of other ages may have influenced the students' interest scores and decisions to stop reading. Books which had appearances appropriate for slightly older students may have had various format characteristics which discouraged students from completing the books. Books which had appearances perceived as looking appropriate for slightly younger students and much younger students may have been subconsciously associated with the reading materials that were used during reading instruction with these remedial readers.

f1. Are the books' appearances considered appropriate for sixth graders?

The mean appearance score for the selected but unfinished books was 2.5. This score indicated that the students perceived the appearances of the selected but unfinished books as being appropriate for students of about the sixth grade.

Because this item did not discriminate among the three book selection categories, the books' appearances were perceived as being similar, regardless of category. Therefore, the book selection categories may not have exerted any measurable influence on students' perceptions of books' appearances.

- g. Does a relationship exist between the perceived appropriateness of the books' subjects/contents and their interest scores?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. The mean interest scores increased as the books' subjects/contents were perceived from being appropriate for much younger students (3) to being appropriate for students slightly younger (9.4) to being appropriate to sixth graders (9.8), then decreasing as the subjects/contents were perceived as being appropriate for slightly older students (7).

It appears that students who believed that their selected but unfinished books had subjects/contents appropriate for sixth graders may have had more satisfying reading experiences and, consequently, assigned relatively higher interest scores to these books. The fact that books had subjects/contents appropriate for sixth graders was probably not the reason why students decided to stop reading the books.

However, the belief that the books' appearances were more appropriate for other age groups may have influenced the amount of interest the sixth graders had for the books. The books which had subjects/contents perceived appropriate for older students may have not been of much interest; consequently, the books received

lower interest scores and discouraged the students from finishing them.

Books which had subjects/contents perceived as being appropriate for slightly younger and much younger students may have appeared to have been aimed at developmental stages below the sixth graders; consequently, the sixth graders were not interested in these books. These books may have subconsciously suggested or reminded the students of books which they may have used during remedial reading classes.

- g1. Do the books possess subjects/contents considered appropriate for sixth graders?

The mean score for the appropriateness of the subjects/contents of selected but unfinished books was 2.7. This indicated that the students perceived the books' subjects/contents as being appropriate for students of about the sixth grade.

Because this item did not discriminate among book selection categories, the subjects/contents may have been perceived in a similar way, regardless of book selection category. Therefore, the book selection categories may not have exerted any measurable influence on students' perceptions of books' subjects/contents.

- h. Do the titles, covers, or book jackets influence selection?

The mean score of the influence of books' titles, covers, or jackets on the selected but unfinished books was 3.4. This indicated that the books' titles, covers, or jackets had some influence, but were not the main reason for initial book selection.

Because this item did not discriminate among the book selection categories, the influence of the title, cover, and book jacket may have had similar influence regardless of book selection category.

- i. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, length)?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated that books containing photographs were most frequently selected but not finished (61.9%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The characteristic of amount of illustration indicated that sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books were more frequently selected but unfinished (57.1%) than picture books and profusely illustrated books (42.9%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The characteristic of type size indicated that slightly more books containing the smallest size type (.09-.12 inches) were selected but unfinished (46.4%), followed by books containing the average sized type (.13-.15 inches) (39.3%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant.

The characteristic of book length indicated that approximately equal numbers of books less than one hundred pages (53.6%) and equal numbers of books over one hundred pages were selected but

not finished (46.3%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

It appears that books which were unillustrated or sparsely illustrated may have discouraged students from finishing the books. Too many words on a page with few or no breaks for illustrations may have overwhelmed these students; that is, instead of feeling confident that they could be successful with the books, the students may have become discouraged. Reading may have become the work that they often expected it to be.

The small type also may have discouraged some of the reluctant, remedial readers. This small type may have made books containing it look like more work and, therefore, take longer periods of time to read. Also, previous reading instruction may have used larger type materials; consequently, the students may not have had opportunities to read many materials with small type.

The most frequent illustrative style for both selected but unfinished books and selected and finished books was photographs. The students within this sample (especially the boys) were attracted to books containing photographs. However, the fact that photographs illustrated the books did not ensure that the books would be automatically finished.

Book length did not appear to be an influential factor when students made decisions to leave books unfinished. The other factors appeared to exert more influence on decisions to stop reading books.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated boys more frequently selected but did not finish profusely illustrated books and picture books (63.7%) than sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books (36.4%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristic of size of type indicated boys most frequently selected but did not finish books containing the smallest size type (.09-.12 inches) (54.5%). However, type size was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristic of book length indicated boys more frequently selected but did not finish books less than one hundred pages (63.7%) than those over one hundred pages (36.4%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristics of amount of illustration, book length, and illustrative style for selected but unfinished books was similar to the characteristics of boys' selected and finished books. This similarity may have occurred because boys automatically excluded books containing some format characteristics from selection consideration; therefore, the selected but unfinished books contained characteristics similar to the selected and finished books.

Interview results indicated that the students tended to infer difficulty levels from the size of type; consequently, students may have inferred that the books with small type size were too difficult for them. The boys may also have believed that books

containing small type would have more words and take longer to read. Consequently, boys may have decided to stop reading the books believing that they would not have successful or satisfying experiences with books containing small type.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated girls selected but did not finish books containing photographs (45.5%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for girls.

The characteristic of amount of illustration indicated girls more frequently selected but did not finish books which were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated (70.6%) than those which were more profusely illustrated or picture books (29.4%). However, girls were more willing to initially select unillustrated books (six books) than boys were (one book). This format characteristic of amount of illustration was statistically significant for girls.

The characteristic of size of type indicated girls selected but did not finish approximately the same number of books containing the smallest size type (.09-.12 inches) and medium size type (.13-.15 inches) (41.2%, 47.1% respectively). However, type size was statistically insignificant for girls.

The characteristic of book length indicated girls selected but did not finish approximately equal numbers of books less than one hundred pages (47%) and those over one hundred pages (53%). However, girls initially selected more books over 176 pages (six

selection decisions) than boys (zero selection decisions). However, this format characteristic of book length was statistically insignificant for girls.

Books which contained photographs did not appear to appeal to the girls. It is difficult to determine if the lack of appeal was result of the illustrative style or result of an interaction with other format and content characteristics. For example, girls also selected but did not finish more books of nonfiction which often were illustrated with photographs.

Because girls left approximately equal numbers of books with small (.09-.12 inches) and medium (.13-.15 inches) sized type unfinished, the characteristic of type size did not appear to be an important factor influencing girls' decisions to leave books unfinished.

The two remaining format characteristics of book length and amount of illustration also appear to indicate that girls may have been less influenced by format characteristics during initial book selection than boys were. That is, girls were willing to attempt to read unillustrated books as well as books over 176 pages. Boys more frequently excluded books containing these characteristics from selection consideration. It appeared that girls may have been less influenced by format characteristics than boys were; girls' interest in the books may have overridden the format characteristics. Boys, on the other hand, appeared to initially select books which first fulfilled their specific format criteria; then, secondly, fulfilled their personal (reading) interests. Although the girls

were willing to initially select books over 176 pages and unillustrated books, it should be noted that they did not finish them. These format characteristics may have influenced the girls' decisions to stop reading the books. Another possible reason for the girls' willingness to select longer books and unillustrated books may have been that they were trying to impress the female researcher with their book choices.

j. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classifications indicated equal numbers of books from the genre/topic classifications of fantasy/science fiction, contemporary fiction and occult/crime were selected but not finished. However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

Because books were selected but unfinished from each of the eight genre/topic classifications, including the greatest numbers from the three classifications mentioned above, it appears that personal likes/dislikes and reading interests may have influenced decisions to stop reading books. Further, these decisions may have been further influenced by various format characteristics interacting with the genre and topic classifications.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classifications indicated boys selected but did not finish more books within the classifica-

tion of occult/crime (36.4%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

Possible content characteristics present within this classification of books may have interacted with the likes/dislikes and reading interests of the boys to influence their decisions to stop reading the books. Various format characteristics of the book may also have influenced decisions. These books were often divided into chapters, with each chapter relating one separate occult story. Some boys may have read only the stories which interested them, thereby omitting the others.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classifications indicated girls selected but did not finish books within the classifications of contemporary fiction (29.4%) and mystery/adventure (23.5%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

Contemporary fiction and mystery/adventure were the classifications most frequently selected but unfinished as well as selected and finished by girls. Because the girls tended to have a narrower range of reading interests than did the boys, their initial book selection choices were most frequently within these two classifications. Consequently, the books left unfinished most frequently also occurred within these classifications.

Personal likes/dislikes of literary elements within the specific books may have been responsible for decisions or may have

interacted with various format characteristics which influenced decisions to stop reading the books.

k. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?

Whole Group Results

This characteristic indicated more fiction was selected but unfinished (57%) than nonfiction (43%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

This content characteristic resembled the selected and finished category. These students as a group appeared to be more attracted to fiction; however, the fact that the books were fiction did not automatically ensure that the books would be finished.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification indicated boys selected but did not finish more nonfiction (72.8%) than fiction (27.3%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

Boys also selected and finished more nonfiction than fiction. However, the fact that the books were nonfiction did not automatically ensure that the books would be completed. Other combinations of interacting variables may have influenced decisions to stop reading these nonfiction books.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classifications indicated girls selected but did not finish more fiction (76.4%)

than nonfiction (23.5%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

Girls also selected and finished more fiction than nonfiction. However, the fact that the books were fiction did not ensure that the books would be automatically finished. Other factors, including format characteristics, personal likes/dislikes of literary elements and personal reading interests may have influenced the girls' decisions to stop reading the books.

3. Do the high interest, low vocabulary trade books rejected by reluctant, remedial readers have similar characteristics regarding difficulty level, content, and format?

- a. What is the difficulty level?

The mean difficulty level of the rejected books was 4.9. The difficulty levels ranged from second through seventh grade. This was the highest mean difficulty level of the three book selection categories. Actual book difficulty levels were determined by the four sources used to select the high interest, low vocabulary trade books, including Booklist, Top of the News, Good Reading for Poor Readers, and Gateways to Readable Books.^{132,133,134,135}

It appears that high difficulty levels is an influential factor for students' rejection of books. Reluctant, remedial students appeared to actively avoid books which had higher difficulty levels.

¹³²Goldberger, Duree, op. cit., September 15, 1975 ff.

¹³³YASD High Interest/Low-Literary Level Materials Evaluation Committee, op. cit., p. 197-201.

¹³⁴Spache, op. cit., p. 41 ff.

¹³⁵Withrow, op. cit., p. 27 ff.

- b. Does a relationship exist between the students' reading levels and the books' difficulty levels?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. Equal numbers of rejected books were above and below students' reading levels (42.9%) while fewer books had difficulty levels within the students' reading levels (14.3%).

It appears there were several major reasons for students' book rejection. First, the books' difficulty levels were too high. Second, students were not interested in the subjects/contents of the books and, third, students were not attracted to various format characteristics present within the books. Books may have been rejected because they possessed one or a combination of the factors which may have represented a threat to the students' beliefs of potential success with the books.

- c. Does a relationship exist between students' perceptions of the difficulty levels of the books and the books' difficulty levels?

The data results appeared to support that a relationship did exist. Unlike the other two book selection categories, the students' perceptions of difficulty levels were about equally divided. Students overestimated 31% of the books, underestimated 34% of the books, and accurately perceived the difficulty levels of 34% of the books in relation to their own reading levels.

These books were only skimmed or quickly glanced at; students did not read them. Therefore, it appears that students must have relied largely on format characteristics as guides to infer difficulty levels.

For the rejected books, the students did not have a tendency to overestimate difficulty levels as they did for selected and finished books or underestimate difficulty levels as they did for the selected but unfinished books. Two reasons may have accounted for this. First, the interaction of the reader with the books may have created a bias or a mind set toward the finished and unfinished books. In other words, the readers became less objective after interacting with the books for periods of time. Consequently, students may have automatically believed or assumed that all books they finished had reading levels "just right" for them. Similarly, they may have also automatically believed that all books they did not finish were too difficult for them.

Second, by the very nature of the rejected books, the books allowed the students' self-concepts to be less involved. The rejected books did not require the students to make commitments to attempt to read the books. Similarly, the books did not require the students to actually bring their reading abilities (or deficiencies) to the situations. Consequently, students may have been able to be somewhat more objective when attempting to infer the difficulty levels since they knew their reading abilities would not be involved.

d. Are the books' appearances considered appropriate for sixth graders?

The mean score for the rejected books' appearances was 2.6. This indicated that the students perceived that these books' appearances were appropriate to students of about the sixth grade.

Because this item did not discriminate among the three book selection categories, the books' appearances were perceived as being similar, regardless of the category. Therefore, the book selection categories did not exert any measurable influence on students' perceptions of books' appearances.

- e. Do the books possess subjects/contents considered appropriate for sixth graders?

The mean score for the appropriateness of the subjects/contents of the rejected books was 2.6. This indicated that the students perceived these books' subjects/contents as being appropriate for students of about the sixth grade level.

Because this item did not discriminate among book selection categories, the subjects/contents may have been perceived in a similar way, regardless of book selection category. Therefore, the book selection categories did not exert any measurable influence on students' perceptions of the appropriateness of subjects/contents.

- f. Do the titles, covers or book jackets influence book selection?

The mean score of the influence of the books' titles, covers, or jackets on rejection was 3.4. This indicated that the titles, covers, or jackets had some influence but were not one of the main reasons.

Because this item did not discriminate among the book selection categories, the influence of the title, cover, book jacket may have had similar influence, regardless of category.

- g. Do the books possess similar format characteristics (style of illustration, amount of illustration, size of type, length)?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated that more books containing photographs were rejected (42.3%), followed closely by expressionistic illustrations (34.6%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The characteristic of amount of illustration indicated that sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books were more frequently rejected (62.8%) than were profusely illustrated or picture books (37.2%). This format characteristic was statistically significant.

The characteristic of size of type indicated rejected books most frequently contained the smallest size type (.09-.12 inches). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant.

The characteristic of book length indicated that approximately equal numbers of books less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages were rejected (51.4%, 48.6%, respectively). However, the category of books over 176 pages contained the most rejected books of all the book length categories (37.1%). This format characteristic of book length was statistically significant.

Rejection of books containing photographs may be the result of reasons other than dislike of photographs. First, many of the books were rejected because of dislike of the books' subjects/contents; these books also happened to have photographs. Second, over half of the books rejected were nonfiction, many of which contained photographs.

Because photographs were represented most frequently within each of the three book selection categories, it is difficult to

determine the appeal or lack of appeal of photographs to these students. Two reasons may explain why photos were most frequently chosen within each book selection category. First, it may have been that the style of illustration was of minor importance; instead the amount of illustration was more of an influential factor for reluctant, remedial sixth graders' book selection or rejection. Second, books with photographs may have had other characteristics associated with them--difficulty levels, differing amounts of interest, other format and content characteristics--which were more influential factors for selection or rejection than the illustrative style of photographs.

The characteristics of amount of illustration, small type size (.09-.12 inches), and books over 176 pages appear to indicate that students rejected books on the basis of these format characteristics which may have threatened the students' beliefs of potential success with the books. These students, as a group, used these characteristics as criterion to exclude books from selection consideration.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated that boys rejected more books containing expressionistic illustrations (42.9%), followed closely by books containing photographs (37.7%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristic of amount of illustration indicated boys more frequently rejected sparsely illustrated and unillustrated

books (70%) than profusely illustrated and picture books (30%).

This format characteristic was statistically significant for boys.

The characteristic of size of type indicated boys rejected more books containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches) (45%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for boys.

The characteristic of book length indicated boys rejected equal numbers of books less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages. However, boys rejected the most books within the book length category of over 176 pages (40%). This format characteristic of book length was statistically significant for boys.

Boys rejected books which contained format characteristics which may have influenced the boys' beliefs that they would have unsuccessful reading experiences with these books.

Books containing expressionistic illustrations may have been rejected because of the unrealistic components of the illustrations. During the interviews, students mentioned dislike of unrealistic use of colors. Components such as this of the expressionistic style, as well as others not verbalized, may have been noticed and of more concern to boys than girls.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of style of illustration indicated girls most frequently rejected books containing photographs (50%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for girls.

The characteristic of amount of illustration indicated girls rejected approximately equal numbers of profusely illustrated and picture books (46.7%) and sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books (53.3%). This format characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

The characteristic of size of type indicated girls most frequently rejected books containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches) (66.7%). However, this format characteristic was statistically insignificant for girls.

The characteristic of book length indicated girls rejected approximately equal numbers of books that were less than one hundred pages (53.4%) and over one hundred pages (46.7%). The book length category of over 176 pages had the most books rejected within it (53.3%). However, this format characteristic of book length was statistically insignificant for girls.

More books containing photographs were rejected by girls; perhaps, because the girls tended to reject nonfiction books. Photographs were frequently used to illustrate nonfiction; consequently, the two variables may have interacted.

Girls may have believed that they would not have had a successful reading experience with books containing the smallest sized type.

Both format characteristics appeared to indicate that girls seemed to be less concerned with book length and amount of illustrations than boys were. A dislike of the books' subjects/contents

(lack of interest for) may have been more of an influential factor for the girls' book rejection than these format characteristics.

h. Do the books represent similar genres and topics?

Whole Group Results

This characteristic indicated that rejected books were most frequently modern biography (22.9%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

The students appeared to be least interested in modern biographies which included sports stars, entertainment and political personalities. Rejection appeared to be caused by dislike of the personality, what the personality did (tennis, racing) or unfamiliarity with the personality. Perhaps, the results would have been different if the biographies had been about famous historical persons and heroes.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classification indicated boys rejected the most books within the classification of modern biography (30%). This content characteristic was statistically significant.

Boys appeared to least prefer modern biographies. The biographical personalities of the high interest, low vocabulary books used for this study may not have matched the boys' interests. The results may have been different if the boys had been able to indicate a "favorite person" and books were brought in to match their stated preferences.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of genre/topic classification indicated girls rejected more books about transportation (26.7%), closely followed by books about sports (20%). This content characteristic was statistically significant.

Girls appeared to be uninterested in books' genre/topic classifications which appeared to be male associated.

- i. Do the books represent fiction or nonfiction?

Whole Group Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification indicated that more nonfiction was rejected (57.1%) than fiction (42.9%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

Nonfiction may have represented genre/topic classifications which appeared to be less interesting to the readers. Students were able to identify the subjects/contents from the nonfiction titles or covers immediately and often knew if they were interested in selecting or rejecting the books. On the other hand, fictional books may have had titles or covers which did not always indicate the specificity of the subjects/contents, plots, characterizations, or settings. Consequently, students may not have automatically rejected these books as often as they did the nonfiction books.

Boys' Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification indicated boys rejected slightly more fiction (55%) than nonfiction

(45%). However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant for boys.

Boys may have rejected fiction because of various format characteristics such as book length, amount of illustration or type size, rather than characteristics associated with fiction.

Girls' Results

The characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification indicated girls rejected more nonfiction (73.3%) than fiction (26.6%). This content characteristic was statistically significant for girls.

Girls may have rejected nonfiction because many of the genre/topic classifications appeared to be male associated, and were believed not to be of much interest to the girls.

Conclusions

Selected and Finished Books

It appears that specific factors of difficulty levels, interest, format and content characteristics of high interest, low vocabulary trade books motivate reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers to initially select and encourage readers to sustain enough interest to eventually finish the books.

Ease of difficulty levels appears to be one of the most influential factors which motivate book selection and completion. The selected and finished books had the lowest mean difficulty level of the three book categories and were overwhelmingly below the students' reading levels.

High amounts of interest appear to motivate the students to also select and finish books. The selected and finished books had higher interest scores than the selected but unfinished books. The highest interest scores of the selected and finished books were assigned to the books which the sixth graders perceived as having appearances appropriate for slightly older students and to those books whose subjects/contents were perceived as also being appropriate to slightly older students. Books having appearances and subjects/contents perceived as being appropriate for sixth grade students also received relatively high mean interest scores.

Difficulty levels which were perceived to be slightly harder than the students' reading levels, within the students' reading levels or those slightly below the reading levels also appeared to influence students' decisions to finish books. Although students could not accurately infer the books' difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels, the students tended to overestimate the difficulty levels for selected and finished books. Students may have felt a need to protect their self-concepts by refusing to admit that the books were too easy for them.

Format characteristics appeared to be important predictors of book selection and subsequent completion. The entire group most frequently selected and finished books which were profusely illustrated or picture books and were less than one hundred pages. The characteristics of amount of illustration and book length were statistically significant. Other format characteristics, although

statistically insignificant, indicated selected and finished books most frequently contained medium sized type (.13-.15 inches) and photographs. For this sample of reluctant, remedial readers, the format characteristic of illustrative style did not appear to be as influential a factor as the amount of illustration within the books.

Content characteristics of genre/topic classifications and fiction/nonfiction classifications for the whole group did not appear to be as important a characteristic as were the other three characteristics of difficulty level, interest and format characteristics. This group of reluctant, remedial readers selected and finished books which reflected a diversity of reading interests of the different genres and topics as well as fiction and nonfiction. However, both of these content characteristics were statistically insignificant.

Comparison of format characteristics between boys and girls indicated that similar characteristics motivated both boys and girls to initially select books and read them to completion. Statistically significant format characteristics of selected and finished books for boys indicated books were profusely illustrated or picture books, less than one hundred pages, and contained photographs. Although statistically insignificant, books contained medium sized type (.13-.15 inches). Similarly, amount of illustration which was statistically significant for girls, indicated their selected and finished books were profusely illustrated or picture books. Although statistically insignificant, girls selected and finished books which were less than one hundred pages, contained representational

illustrations and medium sized type (.13-.15 inches). Both boys and girls appeared to select books which contained format characteristics which suggested to them that they would have successful reading experiences with the books.

The content characteristics of topic/genre and fiction/nonfiction classifications indicated greater differences between boys and girls. The two groups' reading interests also became narrower and more specific, especially the girls. Girls selected and finished the most books within the mystery/adventure and contemporary fiction classifications, and within the fiction classification. Girls did not select and finish any books within the sports and occult/crime classifications, which they may have associated with male interests. On the other hand, boys selected and finished the most books within the transportation and mystery/adventure classifications, and the nonfiction classification. Boys appeared to have wider reading interests than the girls did.

Selected But Unfinished Books

Many of the characteristics of the selected but unfinished books tended to support the motivational characteristics of the selected and finished books. Consequently, these selected but unfinished books appeared to possess some characteristics which may have hindered students from having successful and satisfying reading experiences.

The mean difficulty level of selected but unfinished books was higher than for selected and finished books. More of the selected but unfinished books had difficulty levels above the

students' reading levels. Consequently, higher difficulty levels appears to have influenced decisions to stop reading some of the books. These books were also less interesting to their readers as indicated by a lower mean interest score; this may also have influenced decisions to leave some books unfinished. However, it was noted that the amount of selected but unfinished books completed increased as the amount of interest for the books also increased.

The format characteristics of amount of illustration and type size appear to have influenced the entire groups' decisions to stop reading the books while illustrative style and book length appeared to exert little influence. The characteristic of amount of illustration, which was statistically significant, indicated books which were sparsely illustrated or unillustrated were more frequently selected but unfinished. Although type size was statistically insignificant, students did not finish books containing the smallest type size (.09-.12 inches).

Several of the format and content characteristics as well as student perceptions did not appear to influence decisions to leave books unfinished.

Books with photographs were most frequently selected but unfinished; photographs appeared to exert little influence on students' decisions to leave books unfinished. Amount of illustration appears to have been a more influential characteristic than style of illustration. Similarly, book length appears to have exerted little influence on decisions; approximately equal numbers

of books less than one hundred pages and over one hundred pages were selected but unfinished.

Within the characteristic of genre/topic classifications, equal numbers of books of fantasy/science fiction, contemporary fiction, occult/crime were left unfinished. However, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant. Because more books within each topic/genre classification were also finished, other factors such as personal likes/dislikes and reading interests may have influenced the decisions to stop reading the books. Further, these decisions may have been also influenced by various format characteristics interacting with the genre and topic classifications.

The highest mean interest scores were assigned to the selected but unfinished books having appearances appropriate to sixth graders and whose subjects/contents were also appropriate to sixth graders. The selected but unfinished books which were perceived to have difficulty levels within the students' reading levels received the highest mean interest score. Although the students could not accurately infer the books' difficulty levels in relation to their own reading levels, the students tended to underestimate the difficulty levels for the selected but unfinished books. The students may have felt a need to protect their self-concepts by refusing to admit that the books were too hard for them. These factors, in themselves, did not appear to influence reluctant, remedial readers' decisions to stop reading the books.

When the format characteristics which appeared to influence girls' and boys' decisions to stop reading books were examined, differences were noted. The patterns of books selected but unfinished by girls closely resembled the characteristics of the entire group, with the exception of type size. The amount of illustration, which was the only format characteristic statistically significant for girls, indicated girls more frequently selected but did not finish sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books. Girls also selected but did not finish books containing photographs (if illustrated) and approximately equal numbers of books less than and over one hundred pages; however, both illustrative style and book length were statistically insignificant for girls. The results of the characteristic of type size differed slightly from the results of the entire group which did not finish books containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches); girls selected but did not finish approximately the same number of books containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches) and medium sized type (.13-.15 inches). The patterns of the girls' selected but unfinished books appeared to indicate girls were more willing to attempt books containing longer lengths and no illustrations than boys were. Consequently, girls may have been less influenced by format characteristics for initial selection of books; however, after attempting to read them, eventually became discouraged and decided to leave them unfinished.

For boys, in contrast, the three statistically significant characteristics of amount of illustration, book length and style of illustration were similar for both boys' selected but unfinished books as well as their selected and finished books. Boys appeared to select books according to a somewhat narrow set of format criteria--books which were profusely illustrated or picture books, less than one hundred pages and had photographs. Books containing other format characteristics were often automatically excluded from selection consideration. The only format characteristic that differed was type size, which indicated that small type size (.09-.12 inches) appeared to influence boys' decisions to stop reading the books; however, type size was statistically insignificant.

When the content characteristic of genre/topic classifications was analyzed by sex, boys more frequently selected but did not finish books of the occult/crime classification while girls more frequently selected but did not finish contemporary fiction and mystery/adventure classifications. Genre/topic classifications were statistically significant for both boys and girls. Because books from each of the classifications were also selected and finished, decisions to leave the books unfinished may have been influenced by personal likes/dislikes of literary elements present within the specific books or by various format characteristics rather than solely the result of the genres or topics.

The content characteristic of fiction/nonfiction classification did not appear to influence decisions of either boys and girls to stop reading books. Boys selected but did not finish

more nonfiction while girls selected but did not finish more fiction. Both of these patterns were similar to those noted in the selected and finished books. Fiction/nonfiction classifications were statistically significant for both boys and girls.

Rejected Books

Rejected books appeared to possess specific features of difficulty, content and format characteristics which definitely did not appeal to reluctant, remedial readers and appeared to motivate the students to actively avoid books containing these features.

Rejected books had the highest mean difficulty levels of the three book selection categories. Equal numbers of rejected books were above and below the students' reading levels. It appeared that the students' main reasons for rejecting books was because of high difficulty levels and/or like/dislike of the books' subjects/contents. Students equally overestimated, underestimated, and accurately perceived books' difficulty levels in relation to their reading levels.

Format characteristics also appeared to be important predictors of books being rejected. The characteristics of rejected books by the whole group indicated that the reluctant, remedial readers most frequently rejected sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books, books containing photographs (if illustrated) and books longer than 176 pages. These characteristics were each statistically significant. The students also rejected books most

frequently containing the smallest sized type (.09-.12 inches), although this format characteristic was statistically insignificant. It appeared that the amount of illustration was again more influential a factor than the style of illustration.

Within the genre/topic classifications, the whole group rejected more modern biographies, although this content characteristic was statistically insignificant.

While within the fiction/nonfiction classification, the group rejected more fiction than nonfiction; however, this content characteristic was statistically insignificant. This latter content characteristic did not appear to be a major reason for rejection. Other factors such as difficulty level, genre/topic classifications, and/or various format characteristics appeared to exert more influence on rejection.

The format and content characteristics of boys' and girls' rejected books indicated similar characteristics are disliked by both groups and both groups actively avoid books containing these characteristics.

Boys most frequently rejected sparsely illustrated and unillustrated books, slightly more books containing abstract illustrations (if illustrated), and books longer than 176 pages. Each of these format characteristics was statistically significant for boys. Boys also rejected more books containing the smallest type size (.09-.12 inches); however, this characteristic was statistically insignificant.

Girls also rejected more sparsely illustrated or unillustrated books; this characteristic was statistically significant for girls. Other characteristics present in girls' rejected books included photographs (if the books were illustrated), the smallest type size (.09-.12 inches) and books of over 176 pages; however, each of these format characteristics was statistically insignificant for girls.

The content characteristics of genre/topic and fiction/nonfiction classifications also indicated differences between boys and girls. Boys rejected more modern biographies while girls rejected more transportation and sports books. Girls may have associated these topics with males. This content characteristic was statistically significant for both boys and girls. Boys rejected slightly more fiction while girls overwhelmingly rejected more nonfiction. These content characteristics were statistically significant for both boys and girls.

In summary, specific characteristics regarding difficulty levels, interest, content and format characteristics appear to motivate reluctant, remedial sixth grade readers to initially select books and sustain enough interest to complete them. In contrast, other characteristics appear to influence students' decisions to stop reading books or to actively avoid selecting certain books.

Implications for Teachers,
Librarians, and Publishers

As a result of this study, teachers should be aware of the following about high interest, low vocabulary trade books in relation to sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers:

1. Teachers should know students' personal interests and reading interests. This information can be gathered by questionnaires, interviews, and/or observations.
2. Teachers should know the reading levels of students within their classrooms. These reading levels can be determined by informal or formal devices.
3. A wide range of difficulty levels should be present within the high interest, low vocabulary trade books utilized within the classroom to ensure that some books will be below and within each student's reading level.
4. Teachers should be familiar with the format characteristics which appear to encourage successful reading experiences for sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers. These include profusely illustrated or picture books, books less than one hundred pages, and books containing medium sized type (.13-.15 inches). Photographs are acceptable as an illustrative style, especially for boys.
5. High interest, low vocabulary trade books' "total" appearances should look appropriate for sixth graders and slightly older students.

6. High interest, low vocabulary trade books' subjects/contents should be appropriate for sixth graders or slightly older students' developmental needs.
7. High interest, low vocabulary trade books should include a wide variety of genre/topic classifications as well as fiction/nonfiction classifications to match the wide variety of students' personal interests and reading interests.
8. Teachers should not accept the status quo book selection of reluctant, remedial readers indefinitely. That is, the students' present preferences for various format characteristics should be viewed as starting points. Reluctant, remedial readers need to learn that they can also have successful reading experiences with books which have characteristics that they do not usually select on their own, such as books with no illustrations, small type size, or longer than one hundred pages.
9. Reluctant, remedial students need to become aware of artistic styles and their various components. This is especially important since art is frequently being cut from school curriculums. Units about illustrative styles and artists should become part of reading classes' curriculum to encourage aesthetic experiences and art awareness.
10. High interest, low vocabulary trade books may be used for application of word recognition skills or comprehension skills. Use of materials which are of greater interest may produce more effective skill application than use of materials which are of little interest to the students.

11. Teachers should give the reluctant, remedial readers regularly scheduled reading periods to enable the readers to become involved in reading books. Reading should be encouraged by actual reading. Reading should be as satisfying and successful an experience as possible for reluctant, remedial readers.
12. Teachers should be constantly searching for high quality, high interest, low vocabulary trade books. Because students are poor readers is no excuse to only offer books of poor quality. The high interest, low vocabulary trade books should contain characteristics of high quality literature such as well delineated characterizations and settings, structured plots, uplifting, flowing writing styles and esthetic and well done illustrations.
13. Teachers should be aware of students' needs and interests at various developmental stages, and attempt to make books available to students at the appropriate stages.

As the result of this study, librarians should be aware of the following about high interest, low vocabulary trade books in relation to sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers:

1. Librarians should order high interest, low vocabulary trade books with a range of difficulty levels, interest levels, and a variety of genres and topics, fiction and nonfiction, and format characteristics to meet the current needs and future needs of reluctant, remedial readers.
2. Librarians should have knowledge of students' reading levels, reading interests and personal interests.

3. Librarians should be familiar with the format characteristics which appear to encourage successful reading experiences for sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers. These include profusely illustrated or picture books, books less than one hundred pages, and books containing medium sized type (.13-.15 inches). Photographs are acceptable as an illustrative style, especially for boys.
4. Librarians should order trade books whose "total" appearances look appropriate for sixth graders and slightly older students.
5. High interest, low vocabulary trade books ordered should have subjects/contents appropriate for the developmental stages of sixth graders and slightly older students.
6. Librarians should offer extended uninterrupted periods of reading time to encourage reluctant, remedial readers to select and become involved in reading books. Reading should be encouraged by actual reading.
7. To prevent the lowering of reluctant, remedial readers' self-concepts and to prevent stigmas being associated with high interest, low vocabulary trade books, these books should be shelved among the other books. Other students would have equal opportunities to select the books which, consequently, might increase circulation and status of some of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books.
8. Librarians should have a list of high interest, low vocabulary trade books for reluctant, remedial readers' reference if the readers desire assistance. Some inconspicuous code may also

identify these books to enable reluctant, remedial students to locate the books. Implementation of suggestions such as these may make the library a less overpowering and fearful place for reluctant, remedial readers.

9. Library displays should routinely present high interest, low vocabulary trade books with non-high interest, low vocabulary trade books denoting specific topics, reading interests, and/or concerns.
10. Librarians should be aware and constantly searching for high quality, high interest, low vocabulary trade books to include in library collections. Books of high quality should contain well delineated characterizations and settings, structured plots, uplifting and flowing writing styles in addition to esthetic and well done illustrations. Publications such as Booklist and Top of the News can inform librarians of the latest high interest, low vocabulary trade books.
11. Librarians should not accept the status quo book selection of reluctant, remedial readers indefinitely; that is, the students' present preferences for various format characteristics should be viewed as starting points. Reluctant, remedial readers need to learn that they can also have successful reading experiences with books which have characteristics which they do not usually select on their own such as books with no illustrations, small type size, or longer than one hundred pages.

12. Librarians should be aware of students' needs and interests at various developmental stages, and attempt to make books available to students at the appropriate stages.

As the result of this study, publishers should be aware of the following about high interest, low vocabulary trade books in relation to sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers:

1. Reluctant, remedial readers need high interest, low vocabulary trade books which contain a range of difficulty levels, interest levels, genres and topics, and various format characteristics to meet their current and future needs.
2. The status quo of the publication of many of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books is currently unacceptable. Because students are poor readers is no excuse to give them poor quality books. Consequently, editors should encourage manuscripts of higher literary quality. The illustrations within high interest, low vocabulary trade books also should have standards applied to them. These students need to experience esthetic illustrations rather than only those possessing low standards. The same standards for quality which are applied to other children's books should be applied for high interest, low vocabulary trade books.
3. Publishers should be familiar with the format characteristics which appear to encourage successful reading experiences for sixth grade reluctant, remedial readers. These include profusely illustrated or picture books, books less than one hundred pages, and books containing medium size type (.13-.15

inches). Photographs are acceptable as an illustrative style, especially for boys.

4. The high interest, low vocabulary books' "total" appearances should look appropriate for sixth graders and slightly older students. This includes such format items as book size, type size, implied sophistication of illustrations, amount of print on a page, and chapter lengths.
5. The high interest, low vocabulary trade books' subjects/contents should be appropriate for sixth graders and slightly older students' developmental stages.

Suggestions for Changes Within This Research Study

If this study was to be repeated, the following changes should be considered to improve the design.

A readability formula such as the Fry or Spache readability formula should have been used by the researcher to validate the book difficulty levels presented by the four sources of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books. If this had been done, the books would have possessed a common determination of the book difficulty levels.

The researcher should have given a standardized reading test to the students to confirm the test results of the California Achievement, Form 16C. Some students may have tested below or above their actual reading levels on the testing day for any number of reasons. If the reading scores for any student had greatly differed between the two standardized tests, a mean score could have been computed or the student could have been retested.

The categorization of books into the illustrative styles of photographs, representational and expressionistic styles should have been verified by another person.

The study should have used a larger sample size, randomly selected, to determine if similar factors of high interest, low vocabulary trade books appeal or do not appeal to greater numbers of reluctant, remedial readers.

The study should have occurred earlier in the school year rather than near the end of the year. The students may have been tired of school and school-associated subjects by the end of the school year.

More high interest, low vocabulary trade books should have been available from which to select as well as the research project being extended for a longer period of time. If these changes had occurred, the students might have selected books containing different characteristics than those which resulted in this study.

It is recommended if the study was repeated that the high interest, low vocabulary trade books be selected from only one source (for example, Booklist) for inclusion in the study. Therefore, the various criteria used for inclusion, such as difficulty levels and ranges of interest levels, would be more consistent from book to book.

Recommendations for Further Research

Various Replications of the Study

It is recommended that this research be replicated to support or refute this study's findings.

Research is needed to study the high interest, low vocabulary trade book selection of reluctant, remedial high school students to determine which characteristics appeal or do not appeal to these students.

Similarly, research is needed to study the book selection of elementary aged reluctant, remedial readers to beginning-to-read or easy-to-read trade books to determine which characteristics appeal or do not appeal to these students.

The data of a similar study should be analyzed by a log-linear analysis of nominal or ordinal qualitative data by the method of maximum likelihood (Multiqual) to determine which characteristic or combination of characteristics of various format, content, interest and difficulty level factors most greatly influence the selection, completion, and rejection of high interest, low vocabulary trade books.

A study is needed to determine the similarities and differences of the influence of interest and difficulty levels on the high interest, low vocabulary on boys' and girls' trade book selection.

A study is needed to investigate high interest, low vocabulary trade book selection of reluctant, remedial readers from various geographic areas, such as inner cities and suburban areas, to determine the similarities and differences of the factors which appeal or do not appeal to readers from different locations.

Teacher Effectiveness
(Improvement of Reading and/or Skills)

A study is needed to determine if the use of high interest, low vocabulary trade books in individualized reading situations can improve reluctant, remedial readers' comprehension skills.

A study is needed to compare the effect of using student-selected, high interest, low vocabulary trade books to the effect of using basal textbooks, either teacher assigned or student-selected, for transference and retention of newly acquired word recognition skills.

A study is needed to determine how high interest, low vocabulary trade books can be used to improve the critical reading skills of reluctant, remedial readers.

A study is needed to determine if the availability of high interest, low vocabulary trade books for reluctant, remedial readers can improve their reading levels and/or increase amount of leisure time reading.

Increasing Readers' Motivation

A study is needed to develop teaching techniques to be used with reluctant, remedial readers to encourage them to select and successfully complete high interest, low vocabulary trade books which contain format characteristics which the readers usually do not select on their own.

A study should be conducted to determine if audiovisual materials can motivate reluctant, remedial readers to read greater numbers of high interest, low vocabulary trade books as well as

other books. An experimental group of reluctant, remedial readers would be exposed to films, filmstrips, and television programs of various books; the control group would not be. Book reading lists of students within both groups would be compared to determine the effect of visual media on the motivation of students' book selection and completion.

Determination of Readers' Interests and Book Selection Procedures

A study is needed to determine the themes of high interest, low vocabulary trade books as they relate to the developmental stages and needs of the reluctant, remedial readers of middle school and/or high school age.

A study is needed to determine if reluctant, remedial readers' stated reading and/or personal interests match the topics and subjects of the high interest, low vocabulary trade books they select to encourage more prudent ordering of classroom and library high interest, low vocabulary trade books.

A study is needed to determine the similarities and differences of library book selection behavior of reluctant, remedial readers and average and above average readers through observation and interviews. Specific factors of the selected books such as difficulty levels, various format and content characteristics could be compared to determine further similarities and differences between the two groups.

Readers' Determination of Book Difficulty Levels

A study is needed to further investigate the techniques reluctant, remedial readers use to determine trade book difficulty levels. The resulting data could be compared to the techniques used by average and above average readers within the same grade.

A similar study should investigate techniques used by reluctant, remedial readers to determine difficulty levels of materials controlled for specific format characteristics such as type size or amount of illustration. Results of these studies might assist publishers in producing high interest, low vocabulary trade books which would possess features which would induce the students into believing they would have successful reading experiences with the books.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CELL FREQUENCIES

APPENDIX A

CELL FREQUENCIES OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Fiction

Difficulty Level	Science Fiction/ Fantasy	Contemporary	Historical	Mystery/ Adventure
1-2	3	4	4	5
3	4	4	2	5
4	5	3	4	5
5	4	4	4	4
6	4	4	4	4
7	2	3	3	2

Nonfiction

Difficulty Level	(Modern) Biography	Sports	Transportation	Occult/Crime
1-2	4	4	2	1
3	4	4	1	2
4	4	1	4	3
5	3	4	4	2
6	5	4	1	4
7	4	2	2	3

APPENDIX B

INTEREST INVENTORY

Date _____ Name _____

Title of the book _____

Author _____

CIRCLE THE STATEMENT THAT BEST TELLS HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS BOOK.

1. What did you think about this book?

- (1.) I hated it. (2.) I didn't like it. (3.) It was O.K. (4.) I liked it. (5.) It was great.

2. How interesting did you find this book?

- (1.) Very boring (2.) Kind of boring (3.) It was O.K. (4.) Kind of interesting (5.) Very interesting

3. Would you like to read more books like this one?

- (5.) Yes (3.) Maybe (1.) No

4. Did you finish reading this book? Yes _____ No _____

If your answer was "No," what page did you get to?

_____ pages out of a total _____

5. What did you think about the reading level of this book?

- (1.) Way too easy for me (2.) A little easy for me (3.) Just right for me (4.) A little hard for me (5.) Way too hard for me

6. How does this book look to you?

- (1.) Looks way too young for a 6th grader (2.) Looks a little young for a 6th grader (3.) Looks just right for a 6th grader (4.) Looks a little old for a 6th grader (5.) Looks way too old for a 6th grader

7. How do you think the subject of this book is for 6th graders?

- (1.) Best for kids much younger than I am (2.) Best for kids a little younger than I am (3.) Just right for 6th graders (4.) Best for kids a little older than I am (5.) Best for kids a lot older than I am

8. How much did the title, cover or jacket help you choose this book?

- (1.) Absolutely no influence on my choice (2.) Not much influence on my choice (3.) Some influence on my choice (4.) One of the main reasons for my choice (5.) The main reason for my choice

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INTERVIEWS

Selected and Finished

I: This is student #10. Today we are talking about a book called The Ape Inside Me, written by Kin Platt, and this is a finished book. Why do you think you chose this book in the first place?

S#10: Because the cover is covered with people on it and they have clenched up fists. Looks like they're going to get ready to fight.

I: You thought this book was great. Why was this book great?

S#10: Cause this ape inside this kid kept getting him really mad, and if anybody came around pushing him, ape inside of him would really kick around and would get him really mad and go over and start shoving him and getting in big fights.

I: And you thought this book was very interesting. Why?

S#10: Uh-huh. He kept getting into fights and ape kept getting mad and everything.

I: Was it a real ape inside of him?

S#10: I don't know, it never said, but he always said that the ape kept kicking in him.

I: What do you think he meant?

S#10: That he kept getting mad inside of him and I think cause he read all these King Kong books and thinks he has King Kong in him now.

I: You said that you thought that the book was a little hard for you. What made you feel that the book was a little hard for you?

S#10: There were some big words in there and I couldn't understand. My Dad and my Ma helped me.

I: And the book looked a little old for a sixth grader. Why did you say that?

S#10: Just looks a little older, like a seventh grader could read it better.

I: Okay. And you said that because?

S#10: Cause the small print in it.

I: Anything else?

S#10: No.

I: Now the subject of this book is about what?

S#10: A kid that keeps getting in fights.

I: A kid who keeps getting into fights is the subject. You said the subject was best for kids a little older than you are. Why did you say that?

S#10: I just thought there was big words in it and I couldn't barely read them. Some of the words I couldn't get and had to look up in the dictionary.

I: And you said that the title, cover or book jacket was the main reason for your choice of that book?

S#10: Uh-huh.

I: Tell me anything else you want to about why you finished this book.

S#10: I wanted to see if he got in any more fights?

I: Did he?

S#10: He got into five of them, I think.

I: Do you think that this kid is going to be always getting into fights?

S#10: Probably.

I: Thank you.

Selected but Unfinished

I: This is Student #9. Today we're talking about an unfinished book called Clipper Ship written by Thomas Lewis. Why do you think you chose this book in the first place?

S#9: It was written about a ship and I liked the way it looked on the cover.

I: The cover influenced your decision. Now, you said that you hated this book. Why did you hate this book?

S#9: Cause I figured it was too easy and it wasn't interesting. There really wasn't much stuff in it.

I: Why did you decide to stop reading it?

S#9: I thought . . . I thought it got boring.

I: Now you said that the reading level of this book was way too easy for you. What made you feel that way?

- S#9: The words were easy and it had just short words on it. And the words were spread all over the page.
- I: And you said this book looks way too young for a sixth grader. Why did you say that?
- S#9: Because the way the words were.
- I: Anything else?
- S#9: No.
- I: Now the subject of this book is what?
- S#9: It's about a ship that goes out and gets into the middle of a storm and that's about where I ended.
- I: You said the subject of this book is best for kids younger than you are.
- S#9: Yah.
- I: Why do you think that?
- S#9: Cause it's, well I figured it was made for younger kids.
- I: You said that the title, cover or jacket helped you choose this book. It was one of the main reasons. Is there anything you want to add?
- S#9: Yah. The lettering in the title.
- I: Okay. Tell me anything else you want to about why you didn't finish this book.
- S#9: It wasn't good reading. It was easy and it was too boring.
- I: Thank you.

Rejected

- I: This is Student #1. We're going to be talking about a rejected book called Black and Blue Magic and it's written by Zilpha K. Snyder. Why don't you want to read this book?
- S#1: Too thick and I think the words in it are a little out of my range, I think. There are full pages of writing and I don't like full pages. And plus it's thick and I don't like thick books.
- I: Is there anything else that you don't like about this book?
- S#1: The cover. I don't like it cause there was nothing on it. It's just black and yellow. I just don't like it.
- I: If you read this book, how do you think you would find the reading level?
- S#1: Maybe a seventh grader could read it, or a high sixth grader.
- I: What age level do you think this book looks like it was written for? Kids way younger, a little younger, sixth graders, kids a little older, or way older?
- S#1: High sixth or seventh. Cause of all the words and few pictures.
- I: All right. What do you think this book is about?
- S#1: What do I think this book is about? A witch or something.
- I: What age level do you think this would be good for? Kids a lot younger than you, a little younger, sixth graders, a little older, or a lot older?
- S#1: Sixth graders. Sixth graders like witches.
- I: Tell me anything else why you wouldn't want to read this book.

S#1: I just don't like it. It's too thick.

I: Thank you.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The numbered questions corresponded directly to the items on the interest inventory. The blanks in the questions were completed with the student's responses indicated on the student's interest inventory for the book being used for the interview. Questions preceded by letters were asked to determine general background information.

Selected and Finished

Student's Number
Title
Author of the book
Date

A. Why do you think you chose this book in the first place?

1. You said that you _____. Why?
2. Why did you think this book was _____?
- 3.
- 4.
5. You said that the reading level was _____. What made you think that?
6. Why did this book look _____ to you?
7. What was the subject of this book?
Why do you think this subject is _____?

8. Tell me why you marked that the cover, title, or book jacket
_____?
- B. Tell me anything else you want to about why you finished this book?

Selected but Unfinished

Student's Number
Title
Author of the book
Date

- A. Why do you think you chose this book in the first place?
1. You said that you _____. Why?
 2. Why did you think that this book was _____?
 - 3.
 4. Why did you decide to stop reading it?
 5. You said that the reading level was _____. What made you think that?
 6. Why did this book look _____ to you?
 7. What was the subject of this book?
Why do you think this subject is _____?
 8. Tell me why you marked that the cover, title, or book jacket
_____?
- B. Was there anything you liked about this book?
- C. Tell me anything else you want to about why you didn't finish this book.

Rejected

Student's Number
Title of the Book
Author of the Book
Date

- A. Why don't you want to read this book?
- B. What else don't you like about this book? Why?
 - 5. If you read this book, how do you think you would find its reading level? Why?
 - 6. For what age group does this book look like it was written? Why?
 - 7. What do you think this book is about?
For what age level would this be a good subject?
 - 8. Did anything about the cover, title or book jacket help you decide not to read this book?
- C. Tell anything else you want to about why you wouldn't want to read this book.

APPENDIX E

STUDENTS' READING LEVELS

APPENDIX E

STUDENTS' READING LEVELS

Student Number	Reading Level as reported by the California Achievement Test, Form 16C	Sex
1	5.8	M
2	5.6	M
3	3.8	M
4	4.6	M
5	4.1	M
6	2.0	F
7	5.8	F
8	5.5	F
9	4.5	M
10	5.8	M
11	2.8	M
12	2.0	M
13	7.0	M
14	4.8	F
15	5.4	F
16	4.7	F
17	5.3	F
18	3.5	F
19	7.0	M
20	6.0	M

APPENDIX F

TABLES OF RAW DATA

TABLE A1.--Book Selection Status by Amount of Illustration (Group).

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.
Picture Book 1.		5 1.0 14.3 .2	447 32.2 15.9 15.1	4 .8 14.3 .1	29 6.0 40.8 1.0
					485 16.4
Profuse 2.		8 .7 22.9 .3	1070 95.8 38.0 36.2	8 .7 28.6 .3	30 2.7 42.3 1.0
					1117 37.8
Sparse 3.		13 1.9 37.1 .4	672 95.7 23.9 22.8	9 1.3 32.1 .3	8 1.1 11.3 .3
					702 23.8
Unillustrated 4.		9 1.4 25.7 .3	628 96.9 22.3 21.3	7 1.1 25.0 .2	4 .6 5.6 .1
					648 22.0
Column Total		35 1.2	2817 95.4	28 .9	71 2.4
					2952 100.0

Raw Chi Square = 48.45293 with 12 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0000

TABLE A2.--Book Selection Status by Illustrative Style (Group).

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.
Representational	Tot Pct				
		6	915	5	26
		.6	96.1	.5	2.7
		23.1	41.8	23.8	38.8
		.3	39.7	.2	1.1
Abstract		9	304	3	8
		2.8	93.8	.9	2.5
		34.6	13.9	14.3	11.2
		.4	13.2	.1	.4
Photos		11	970	13	33
		1.1	94.4	1.3	3.2
		42.3	44.3	61.9	49.3
		.5	42.1	.6	1.4
Column Total		26	2189	21	67
		1.7	95.0	.9	2.9
					2303
					100.0

Raw Chi Square = 13.746 with 6 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0358

TABLE A3.--Book Selection Status by Book Length (Group).

		Count				Row Total
	Row Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	
	Col Pct					
Tot Pct		1.	2.	3.	4.	
25-50	1.	8	728	6	32	774
		1.0	94.1	.8	4.1	26.2
		22.9	25.8	21.4	45.1	
		.3	24.7	.2	1.1	
51-75	2.	4	477	4	19	504
		.8	94.6	.8	3.8	17.1
		11.4	16.9	14.3	26.8	
		.1	16.2	.1	.6	
76-100	3.	6	408	5	12	432
		1.4	94.4	1.2	2.8	14.6
		17.1	14.5	17.9	16.9	
		.2	13.8	.2	.4	
101-125	4.	1	173	3	2	179
		.6	96.6	1.7	1.1	6.1
		2.9	6.1	10.7	2.8	
		.0	5.9	.1	.1	
126-150	5.	2	337	2	2	343
		.6	98.3	.6	.6	11.6
		5.7	12.0	7.1	2.8	
		.1	11.4	.1	.1	

TABLE A3.--Book Selection Status by Book Length (Group).

		Count		Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	Row Total
		Row Pct Col Pct	Tot Pct					
		1.	2.	3.	4.			
25-50	1.	8	728	6	32	774		
		1.0	94.1	.8	4.1	26.2		
		22.9	25.8	21.4	45.1			
		.3	24.7	.2	1.1			
51-75	2.	4	477	4	19	504		
		.8	94.6	.8	3.8	17.1		
		11.4	16.9	14.3	26.8			
		.1	16.2	.1	.6			
76-100	3.	6	408	5	12	432		
		1.4	94.4	1.2	2.8	14.6		
		17.1	14.5	17.9	16.9			
		.2	13.8	.2	.4			
101-125	4.	1	173	3	2	179		
		.6	96.6	1.7	1.1	6.1		
		2.9	6.1	10.7	2.8			
		.0	5.9	.1	.1			
126-150	5.	2	337	2	2	343		
		.6	98.3	.6	.6	11.6		
		5.7	12.0	7.1	2.8			
		.1	11.4	.1	.1			

TABLE A3.--Continued.

		Count				Row Total	
		Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected		
					but Unf 3.		and Fin 4.
151-176	6.		1 .5 2.9 .0	212 98.1 7.5 7.2	2 .9 7.1 .1	1 .5 1.4 .0	
						216 7.3	
Over 176	7.		13 2.6 37.1 .4	482 95.6 17.1 16.3	6 1.2 21.4 .2	3 .6 4.2 .1	
						504 17.1	
Column Total			35 1.2	2817 95.4	28 .9	71 2.4	
						2952 100.0	

Raw Chi Square = 50.71411 with 24 degrees of freedom. Significance = .001

TABLE A4.--Book Selection Status by Type Size (Group).

Count						
Row Pct		Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	Row Total
Col Pct	Tot Pct					
		1.	2.	3.	4.	
.09 to 0.12	1.	19	1299	13	18	1350
		1.4	96.2	1.0	1.3	45.7
		54.3	46.1	46.4	25.4	
		.6	44.0	.4	.6	
.13 to 0.15	2.	11	1108	11	40	1170
		.9	94.7	.9	3.4	39.6
		31.4	39.3	39.3	56.3	
		.4	37.5	.4	1.4	
.16 to 0.1	3.	5	304	3	12	324
		1.5	93.8	.9	3.7	11.0
		14.3	10.8	10.7	16.9	
		.2	10.3	.1	.4	
Over 0.20	4.	0	106	1	1	108
		0	98.1	.9	.9	3.7
		0	3.8	3.6	1.4	
		0	3.6	.0	.0	
Column Total		35	2817	28	71	
		1.2	95.4	.9	2.4	100.0

Chi Square = 19.08263 with 12 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0885

TABLE A5.--Book Selection Status by Genre/Topic (Group).

	Count					Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.	
Fantasy/Science Fiction 1.		4 1.0 11.4 .1	378 95.7 13.4 12.8	5 1.3 17.9 .2	8 2.0 11.3 .3	395 13.4
Contemporary 2.		5 1.3 14.3 .2	375 94.9 13.3 12.7	5 1.3 17.9 .2	10 2.5 14.1 .3	395 13.4
Historical Fiction 3.		3 .8 8.6 .1	385 97.0 13.7 13.0	2 .5 7.1 .1	7 1.8 9.9 .2	397 13.4
Mystery/Adventure 4.		3 .7 8.6 .1	425 94.9 15.1 14.4	4 .9 14.3 .1	16 3.6 22.5 .5	448 15.2
Modern Biography 5.		8 1.9 22.9 .3	398 95.9 14.1 13.5	4 1.0 14.3 .1	5 1.2 7.0 .2	415 14.1

TABLE A5.--Continued.

	Count Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.	Row Total
Sports 6.		5 1.5 14.3 .2	314 96.9 11.1 10.6	1 .3 3.6 .0	4 1.2 5.6 .1	324 11.0
Transportation 7.		4 1.3 11.4 .1	290 93.9 10.3 9.8	2 .6 7.1 .1	13 4.2 18.3 .4	309 10.5
Occult/Crime 8.		3 1.1 8.6 .1	252 93.7 8.9 8.5	5 1.9 17.9 .2	8 3.0 11.3 .3	269 9.1
Column Total		35 1.2	2817 95.4	28 .9	71 2.4	2952 100.0

Raw Chi Square = 32.48675 with 28 degrees of freedom. Significance = .2552

TABLE A6.--Book Selection Status by Fiction/Nonfiction (Group).

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected	
	Col Pct	1.	2.	but Unf	
	Tot Pct	3.	4.		
Fiction					
		15	1563	16	41
		.9	95.6	1.0	2.5
		42.9	55.5	51.1	57.7
Nonfiction					
		.5	53.0	.5	1.4
		20	1254	12	30
		1.5	95.3	.9	2.3
Column Total					
		57.1	44.5	42.9	42.3
		.7	42.5	.4	1.0
		35	2817	28	71
		1.2	95.5	.9	2.4
					100.0

Raw Chi Square = 2.4235 with 3 degrees of freedom. Significance = .660

TABLE A7.--Book Selection Status by Amount of Illustration (Boys).

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.
Picture Book 1.					
		1	246	3	19
	.4		91.4	1.1	7.1
	5.0		15.7	27.3	40.4
	1		15.0	.2	1.2
Profuse 2.					
	5	592	4	20	621
	8	95.3	.6	3.2	37.9
	25.0	37.9	36.4	42.6	
	3	36.1	.2	1.2	
Sparse 3.					
	8	374	3	5	390
	2.1	95.9	.8	1.3	23.8
	40.0	23.9	27.3	10.6	
	.5	22.8	.2	.3	
Unillustrated 4.					
	6	350	1	3	360
	1.7	97.2	.3	.8	22.0
	30.0	22.4	9.1	6.4	
	.4	21.3	.1	.2	
Column Total					
	20	1562	11	47	1640
	1.2	95.2	.7	2.9	100.0

Raw Chi Square = 32.93139 with 9 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0001

Count		Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin
Row Pct	Col Pct	1.	2.	3.	4.
Tot Pct					
25-50	1.	5 1.2 25.0 3	397 92.3 25.4 24.2	3 .7 27.3 .2	25 5.8 53.2 1.5
51-75	2.	3 1.1 15.0 .2	265 94.6 17.0 16.2	1 .4 9.1 .1	11 3.9 23.4 .7
76-100	3.	2 .8 10.0 .1	229 95.4 14.7 14.0	3 1.2 27.3 .2	6 2.5 12.8 .4
101-125	4.	0 0 0 0	96 96.0 6.1 5.9	2 2.0 18.2 .1	2 2.0 4.3 .1
126-150	5.	2 1.1 10.0 .1	185 97.4 11.8 11.3	1 .5 9.1 .1	2 1.1 4.3 .1
151-175	6.	0 0 0 0	118 98.3 7.6 7.2	1 .8 9.1 .1	1 .8 2.1 .1

TABLE A9.--Continued.

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.
Over 176 7.					
		8	272	0	0
		2.9	97.1	0	0
		40.0	17.4	0	0
		.5	16.6	0	0
Column Total		20	1562	11	47
		1.2	95.2	.7	2.9
					1640
					100.0

Raw Chi Square = 42.64347 with 18 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0009

TABLE A10.--Book Selection Status by Type Size (Boys).

		Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.	
0.09 to 0.12	1.	9 1.2 45.0 .5	723 96.4 46.3 44.1	6 .8 54.5 .4	12 1.6 25.5 .7	750 45.7
0.13 to 0.15	2.	7 1.1 35.0 4	612 94.2 39.2 37.3	3 .5 27.3 .2	28 4.3 59.6 1.7	650 39.6
0.16 to 0.19	3.	4 2.2 20.0 2	169 93.9 10.8 10.3	1 .6 9.1 .1	6 3.3 12.8 .4	180 11.0
Over 0.20	4.	0 0 0 0	58 96.7 3.7 3.5	1 1.7 9.1 .1	1 1.7 2.1 .1	60 3.7
Column Total		20 1.2	1562 95.2	11 .7	47 2.9	1640 100.0

Raw Chi Square = 13.44098 with 9 degrees of freedom. Significance = .1436

TABLE A11.--Book Selection Status by Genre/Topic (Boys).

	Count					Row Total
	Row Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	
	Col Pct Tot Pct	1. 2.	2. 3.	3. 4.	4. 5.	
Fantasy/Science Fiction	1.	2 .9 10.0 .1	211 95.9 13.5 12.9	2 .9 18.2 .1	5 2.3 10.6 .3	220 13.4
Contemporary	2.	3 1.4 15.0 .2	212 96.8 13.8 13.1	0 0 9.1 .1	4 1.8 4.3 .1	219 13.4
Historical Fiction	3.	3 1.4 15.0 .2	215 97.3 13.8 13.1	1 .5 9.1 .1	2 .9 4.3 .1	221 13.5
Mystery/Adventure	4.	3 1.2 15.0 .2	238 95.2 15.2 14.5	0 0 0 0	9 3.6 19.1 .5	250 15.2
Modern Biography	5.	6 2.6 30.0 .4	219 95.2 14.0 13.4	1 .4 9.1 .1	4 1.7 8.5 .2	230 14.0

TABLE A11.--Continued.

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.
Sports 6.					
		2	173	1	4
		1.1	96.1	.6	2.2
		10.0	11.1	9.1	8.5
		.1	10.5	.1	.2
Transportation 7.					
		0	157	2	11
		0	92.4	1.2	6.5
		0	10.1	18.2	23.4
		0	9.6	.1	.7
Occult/Crime 8.					
		1	137	4	8
		.7	91.3	2.7	5.3
		5.0	8.8	36.4	17.0
		.1	8.4	.2	.5
Column Total		20	1562	11	47
		1.2	95.2	.7	2.9
					1640
					100.0

Raw Chi Square = 36.90047 with 21 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0173

TABLE A12.--Book Selection Status by Fiction/Nonfiction (Boys).

	Count		Rejected	Untouched	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	Row Total
	Row Pct	Col Pct					
Fiction			11	876	3	20	910
			1.2	96.3	.3	2.2	55.5
			55.0	56.0	27.3	42.6	
			.7	53.4	.2	1.2	
Nonfiction			9	686	8	27	730
			1.2	94.0	1.1	3.7	44.5
			45.0	44.0	72.8	57.4	
			.5	41.8	.5	1.6	
Column Total			20	1562	11	47	1640
			1.2	95.2	.7	2.9	100

Raw Chi Square = 6.9463 with 3 degrees of freedom. Significance = .078.

TABLE A13.--Book Selection Status by Amount of Illustration (Girls).

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected 1.	Ignored 2.	Selected but Unf 3.	Selected and Fin 4.
Picture Book 1.					
		4	201	1	10
		1.9	93.1	.5	4.6
		26.7	16.0	5.9	41.7
		.3	15.3	.1	.8
Profuse 2.		3	478	4	10
		.6	96.4	.8	2.0
		20.0	38.1	23.5	41.7
		.2	36.4	.3	.8
Sparse 3.		5	298	6	3
		1.6	95.5	1.9	1.0
		33.3	23.7	35.3	12.5
		.4	22.7	.5	.2
Unillustrated 4.		3	278	6	1
		1.0	96.5	2.1	.3
		20.0	22.2	35.3	4.2
		.2	21.2	.5	.1
Column Total		15	1255	17	24
		1.1	95.7	1.3	1.8
					1312
					100.0

Raw Chi Square = 23.15169 with 12 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0265

TABLE A14.--Book Selection Status by Illustrative Style (Girls).

	Count Row Pct Col Pct Tot Pct	Rejected	Untouched	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	Row Total
Representational		3 .7 25.0 .3	403 95.5 41.2 39.4	4 .9 36.4 .4	12 2.8 52.2 1.2	422 41.3
Abstract		3 2.1 25.0 .3	137 95.1 14.0 13.4	2 1.4 18.2 .2	2 1.4 8.7 .2	144 14.1
Photos		6 1.3 50.0 .6	437 95.6 44.7 42.7	5 1.1 45.5 .5	9 2.0 39.2 .9	457 44.6
Column Total		12 1.2	977 95.5	11 1.1	23 2.2	1023 44.6

Raw Chi Square = 3.3547 with 6 degrees of freedom. Significance = .760.

TABLE A15.--Continued

		Count											
		Row Pct	Col Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin			Row Total			
				1.	2.	3.	4.						
151-175	6.												
				1	94	1	0			96			
				1.0	97.9	1.0	0			7.3			
				6.7	7.5	5.9	0						
				.1	7.2	.1	0						
Over 176				5	210	6	3			224			
				2.2	93.8	2.7	1.3			17.1			
				33.3	16.7	35.3	12.5						
				.4	16.0	.5	.2						
Column Total				15	1255	17	24			1312			
				1.1	95.7	1.3	1.8			100.0			

Raw Chi Square = 29.38507 with 24 degrees of freedom. Significance = 2.060

TABLE A16.--Book Selection Status by Type Size (Girls).

		Count				Row Total
		Row Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	
		Col Pct	1.	2.	3.	
0.09 to 0.12	1.					
			10	576	7	600
			1.7	96.0	1.2	45.7
			66.7	45.9	41.2	
			.8	43.9	.5	
0.13 to 0.15	2.					
			4	496	8	520
			8	95.4	1.5	39.6
			26.7	39.5	47.1	
			.3	37.8	.6	
0.16 to 0.19	3.					
			1	135	2	144
			.7	93.8	1.4	11.0
			6.7	10.8	11.8	
			.1	10.3	.2	
Over 0.20	4.					
			0	48	0	48
			0	100.0	0	3.7
			0	3.8	0	
			0	3.7	0	
Column Total			15	1255	17	1312
			1.1	95.7	1.3	100.0

Raw Chi Square = 13.25425 with 12 degrees of freedom. Significance = .3508

TABLE A17.--Book Selection Status by Genre/Topic (Girls).

Count								
	Row Pct	Col Pct	Tot Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected but Unf	Selected and Fin	Row Total
				1.	2.	3.	4.	
Fantasy/Science Fiction	1.							
				2	167	3	3	175
				1.1	95.4	1.7	1.7	13.3
				13.3	13.3	17.6	12.5	
				.2	12.7	.2	.2	
Contemporary	2.							
				2	163	5	6	176
				1.1	92.6	2.8	3.4	13.4
				13.3	13.0	29.4	25.0	
				.2	12.4	.4	.5	
Historical Fiction	3.							
				0	170	1	5	176
				0	96.6	.6	2.8	13.4
				0	13.5	5.9	20.8	
				0	13.0	.1	.4	
Mystery/Adventure	4.							
				0	187	4	7	198
				0	94.4	2.0	3.5	15.1
				0	14.9	23.5	29.2	
				0	14.3	.3	.5	
Modern Biography	5.							
				2	179	3	1	185
				1.1	96.8	1.6	.5	14.1
				13.3	14.3	17.6	4.2	
				.2	13.6	.2	.1	
Sports	6.							
				3	141	0	0	144
				2.1	97.9	0	0	11.0
				20.0	11.2	0	0	
				.2	10.7	0	0	

TABLE A17.--Continued.

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct	Rejected	Ignored	Selected	
	Col Pct Tot Pct	1. Tot Pct	2. Tot Pct	Selected but Unf 3. Tot Pct	Selected and Fin 4. Tot Pct
Transportation 7.					
		4	133	0	2
		2.9	95.7	0	1.4
		26.7	10.6	0	8.3
		.3	10.1	0	.2
Occult/Crime 8.		2	115	1	0
		1.7	96.6	.8	0
		13.3	9.2	5.9	0
		.2	8.8	.1	0
Column Total		15	1255	17	24
		1.1	95.7	1.3	1.8
					1312
					100.0

Raw Chi Square = 41.87379 with 28 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0446

TABLE A18.--Book Selection Status by Fiction/Nonfiction Status (Girls).

	Count				Row Total
	Row Pct	Rejected	Untouched	Selected	
	Col Pct			but Unf	
	Tot Pct				and Fin
Fiction		4	687	13	21
		.6	94.8	1.8	2.9
		26.6	54.7	76.4	87.5
		.3	52.4	1.0	1.6
Nonfiction		11	568	4	3
		1.9	97.0	.7	.5
		73.3	45.3	23.5	12.5
		.8	43.3	.3	.2
Column Total		15	1255	17	24
		1.1	95.7	1.3	1.8
					1311
					100

Raw Chi Square = 18.3023 with 3 degrees of freedom. Significance = .0000

APPENDIX G

SOURCES OF THE HIGH INTEREST,
LOW VOCABULARY TRADE BOOKS
USED IN THIS STUDY

APPENDIX G

SOURCES OF THE HIGH INTEREST, LOW VOCABULARY TRADE BOOKS USED IN THIS STUDY

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Mystery/Adventure

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Science Fiction/Fantasy

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Science Fiction/Fantasy

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Sports

Mohn, Peter M. The Golden Knights. Photographs by the Army. Chicago: Childrens Press, 1977.*

Occult/Crime

Cohen, Daniel. Real Ghosts. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1977.

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Fourth Grade Difficulty Level

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Liss, Howard. Football Talk for Beginners. Illustrated by Frank
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Transportation

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Cohen, Daniel. World's Most Famous Ghosts. New York: Dodd, Mead &
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Fifth Grade Difficulty Level

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Sixth Grade Difficulty Level

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Edmonds, I. G. Drag Racing for Beginners. New York: Bobbs Merrill Co., 1972.

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Transportation

Radlauer, Edward and Radlauer, Dan. Race Car Drivers' School. Photographs by the authors. New York: Franklin Watts, 1975.

Occult/Crime

Cohen, Daniel. The Greatest Monsters in the World. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975.

Knight, David. The Spy Who Never Was and Other True Spy Stories. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1978.

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Seventh Grade Difficulty Level

Modern Biography

Drucker, Malka with Seaver, Tom. Tom Seaver, Portrait of a Pitcher. New York: Holiday House, 1978.*

Eldred, Patricia Mulrooney. Rose Kennedy, An Energizing Spirit. Illustrated by Harold Henriksen. Mankato, Minn.: Creative Education Press, 1975.*

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Sports

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Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1978.

*Books which were totally ignored; that is, books which were never included in the categories of selected and finished, selected but unfinished or rejected.

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