EXPRESSED READING PREFERENCES OF INTERMEDIATE-GRADE STUDENTS IN URBAN SETTINGS

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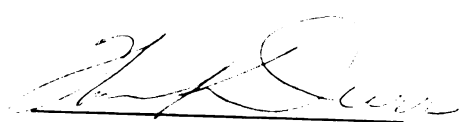

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ABSTRACT

EXPRESSED READING PREFERENCES OF
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By

Jerry L. Johns

The Problem

Several hypotheses have been advanced to suggest why inner-city children have difficulty in reading. Some argue that the problem has been generated, at least in part, from the reading materials used with these children. When instructional materials in the schools are geared to middle class or suburban life experiences, they often contain content that is alien to inner-city children. Although no single type of material will ensure reading success for all these children, some educators argue that reading materials should be based on experiences to which urban children can relate.

It is commonly assumed that multi-ethnic basal readers provide a new incentive for inner-city children to learn to read and improve their reading skills. The rationale for the above statement rests on the notion that illustrations, settings, and characters depicting life in the

inner city enable inner-city children to identify more easily with the story. A crucial assumption, either stated or implied, is that inner-city children prefer to read stories which depict realistic inner-city settings, characters, and/or group interactions. The central focus of this investigation was to explore this crucial assumption as it related to the reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades.

Purpose of Study

The current investigation was undertaken to explore whether or not inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict inner-city settings. Children's preferences for characters having positive and negative self-concepts and characters in positive and negative group interactions were also explored. Since previous research in children's reading preferences has shown that reading preferences often vary with age, sex, and intelligence, the impact of these variables was considered in the analysis of the data. In addition, reading preferences were analyzed by race.

Sample

The sample was composed of 597 intermediate-grade children (grades four, five, and six) from four large inner-city school districts. There were 199 children in each

grade. Within each grade, there were approximately the same number of boys and girls. There were 515 Negro students and 82 white and Mexican American students in the sample.

Methodology and Statistical Analysis

The basis of this investigation involved a series of illustrations and descriptions from modern realistic fiction books for intermediate-grade children. For purposes of clarity, the methodology was discussed in three phases.

In the first phase of the study, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions were selected from modern realistic fiction books for children which: 1) depicted the stark, crowded conditions of inner city or rural living, and 2) suggested more favorable living conditions in the inner city or suburban areas. By random selection, one slide depicting either an inner-city (or rural) environment or a more pleasant and favorable suburban (or inner-city) environment was shown to the class. As each slide was projected on a screen, the standardized taped description of that particular setting was presented to the class. Class members were then asked to respond to three questions which appeared on a questionnaire for each pair of illustrations and descriptions. Thus, each child responded to fifteen questions during the first phase of the study.

In the second phase of the study, a similar procedure was employed. Five descriptions depicted characters with

positive self-concepts and five descriptions depicted characters with negative self-concepts. One positive self-concept character description was paired with a negative self-concept character description resulting in five pairs of character descriptions. As each pair of character descriptions was presented to the class, each child answered three questions for each pair of character descriptions for a total of fifteen questions.

The third phase of the study presented five descriptions of positive group interaction and five descriptions of negative group interaction. After each pair of descriptions was presented to the class using a tape recorder, each child responded to three questions for each pair of group interaction descriptions. In all, every child responded to fifteen questions during each phase of the study for a total of forty-five questions. All of the questions were read to the children so that the child's reading ability would not influence the results.

Twenty-four hypotheses were tested to secure a greater understanding of the reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades based on the variables of age, grade, sex, intelligence, and race. The data were analyzed by three basic statistical tools: multivariate analysis of variance, canonical correlations and one-sample, one-tailed t-tests.

Major Findings

1. Inner-city children in the intermediate grades expressed statistically significant (.01 level) reading preferences for stories or books which depict middle class settings, characters with positive self-concepts, and characters in positive group interactions.
2. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings vary significantly (.025 level) with age and with grade.
3. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for group interactions vary significantly (.025 level) with grade and with sex.
4. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings, characters, and group interactions did not vary significantly with intelligence and with race.
5. Significant positive relationships (.01 level) exist between the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings and 1) their perceptions of their home environments ($r = .28$), and 2) the home environments in which they would prefer to live ($r = .32$).

6. Significant positive relationships (.01) level exist between the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for characters and 1) the type of person they perceive as being most like themselves (r = .34), and 2) the type of person they would rather be (r = .34).

7. Significant positive relationships (.01 level) were found between the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for group interactions and 1) the type of group interaction they perceive as being most like the group with whom they live or play (r = .35), and 2) the type of group interaction they perceive as being most like the group with whom they prefer to live or play (r = .32).

The findings from this investigation also question an assumption that has rarely been challenged. Educators and publishers often assume that inner-city children prefer to read stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings. This study, however, does not support such an assumption. Within the limitations of this investigation, moreover, inner-city children in the intermediate grades preferred to read stories or books containing middle class settings, characters with positive self-concepts, and characters in positive group interactions.

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Education

1970

DEDICATED TO

My wife Annette for her understanding,
patience, and high regard for education.

My son Jeff who can now have the stacks
of computer print-out sheets.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For his counsel, trust, and continued support, I express my appreciation to Dr. William K. Durr, advisor, friend, and chairman of my doctoral committee. I also wish to express appreciation to the other members of the committee for their help and willingness to serve in this capacity: Dr. Jean M. LePere, Dr. Frank H. Blackington III, and Dr. James B. McKee.

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circumstances. By the time these children reach junior high school, 60 per cent are retarded in reading from one to four years."[1] Conant observed that, "In the city slum . . . as many as a half of the children drop out of school in grades 9, 10, and 11."[2] Some educators argue that the severe dropout rate may be attributed to the child's inability to read. Surveys of seriously retarded readers generally reveal that between ten to twenty-five per cent of elementary students are reading at least one year below grade level.[3] Among inner-city children, however, the estimate is as high as fifty or sixty per cent.

Several hypotheses have been advanced to suggest why inner-city children have difficulty in reading. Some argue that the problem is generated, at least in part, by the materials used in teaching inner-city children to read.

> Social scientists and others have severely criticized the white middle-class orientation of reading instruction texts. It is unnecessary to repeat their scathing comments in detail at this time, but certain questions must be asked. How can the reading teacher expect the

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[1]Martin Deutsch, "Nursery Education: The Influence of Special Programming in Early Development," in The Disadvantaged Child, ed. by Martin Deutsch (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967), p. 77.

[2]James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), p. 2.

[3]Guy L. Bond and Miles A. Tinker, Reading Difficulties: Their Diagnosis and Correction (2nd ed.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1967), pp. 9-10.

> lower-class child to enjoy or even succeed in the process of learning to read when he cannot possibly identify with the characters or social life portrayed? How can one expect academic motivation among children constantly exposed to materials which deal with an almost unknown--if not phantasmal-appearing--way of life? How can one expect the lower-class pupil to perceive the ultimate personal and vocational values of reading skill when he finds so little reading material that is cast in terms of life as he understands it?[4]

As a partial solution to the problem, some educators and publishers have focused on the need for developing special reading content in materials for children in urban areas. Such reading materials supposedly provide an opportunity for identification and personal involvement on the part of the student. Although no single type of material will ensure the reading success of all inner-city children, some argue that "the materials must be based on experiences to which the disadvantaged child can relate."[5]

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[4]George D. Spache, "Contributions of Allied Fields to the Teaching of Reading," Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction, Sixty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 245.

[5]Helene M. Lloyd, "Progress in Developmental Reading for Today's Disadvantaged," in Elementary Reading Instruction, ed. by Althea Beery, Thomas C. Barrett, and William R. Powell (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 532.

Background of the Problem

Research studies indicate that over ninety per cent of the nation's schools currently use a basal reading program.[6] Since basal readers currently serve as the dominant mode of reading instruction, some educators are concerned about the content of the basal readers used by inner-city children. In 1964, Wattenburg stated that "so much of the instructional material used in schools is geared to middle class, suburban, or rural life experiences that its very content is alien to core city children."[7]

Sociologists, such as Warner and Hollingshead, have identified five or six social class levels depending upon the geographic location and age of the community.[8] Urban centers, especially inner-city areas, are often labeled as lower class. Children in these areas generally live in an environment which does not stress the so-called "middle class" values. In addition, several ethnic groups are often represented in inner-city areas. Within a half-mile radius of East Houston Street on New York's Lower East Side, for example, there are twenty-two schools in which

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[6]Marie Marcus, "Three Charlie Brown Blankets in Reading Instruction," Elementary English, 42 (March, 1965), 247.

[7]William W. Wattenburg, "Education for the Culturally Deprived," The National Elementary Principal, 14 (November, 1964), 19.

[8]Harold W. Pfautz and Otis Dudley Duncan, "A Critical Evaluation of Warner's Work in Community Stratification," American Sociological Review, 15 (April, 1950), 205-15.

". . . over 50% of the children are socially disadvantaged Puerto Ricans. Approximately 15% are Negro."[9] Although a variety of ethnic groups live in most urban centers, the reading materials for these children ". . . are peopled almost solely . . . by Caucasians."[10]

In recent years, however, some educators and publishers have taken the child's background of experience into consideration when preparing reading materials for inner-city children. "The Bank Street Readers, the revisions of popular basal series, and new supplementary materials are moving in this direction."[11] The focus of these more recent reading materials is heavily weighted on the child's "here and now" world which ". . . provides identification with a story character from his own racial or ethnic group."[12]

In children's literature this "here and now" category is identified as modern realistic fiction. Modern realistic fiction, in turn, can be divided into many

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[9]S. Alan Cohen, "Bitter Lessons, or Mediocrity on East Houston Street," in New Directions in Reading, ed. by Ralph Staiger and David A. Sohn (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1967), p. 189.

[10]Monroe Rowland and Patricia Hill, "Race, Illustrations, and Interest in Materials for Reading and Creative Writing," The Journal of Negro Education, 34 (Winter, 1964), 84.

[11]Lloyd, loc. cit.

[12]Dorothy I. Seaberg, "Is There a Literature for the Disadvantaged Child?," Childhood Education, 45 (May, 1969), 508.

categories.[13] The category usually emphasized in materials prepared especially for inner-city children involves a setting, character, and/or group interaction which provides the child an opportunity to identify with the story setting and characters. Materials often classified as meeting this criteria are multi-ethnic basal readers and some modern realistic fiction books based on twentieth century life in urban areas.[14]

The present study explores the problem of whether or not inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for stories depicting the stark conditions and characters of the inner city rather than stories depicting more pleasant environments and characters that usually exist in suburban, white, well-to-do neighborhoods or in certain sections of urban areas. In short, this study investigates the reading preferences of inner-city children with regard to settings, characters, and group interactions.

Importance of the Study

According to Dechant, "experience is the basis for all educational development. Concepts develop from

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[13]Constantine Georgiou, Children and Their Literature (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 360.

[14]Mildred Letton Wittick, "Innovations in Reading Instruction: For Beginners," Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction, Sixty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 92-94.

experience, and their richness and scope are in direct proportion to the richness and scope of the individual's experience."[15] It is often believed that multi-ethnic basal readers and modern realistic inner-city fiction stories may provide a new incentive for inner-city children to learn to read and improve their reading skills. The rationale for the above statement rests on the notion that illustrations, settings, and characters depicting inner-city life enable inner-city children to identify more easily with the story. A crucial assumption, either stated or implied, is that inner-city children prefer to read stories that depict realistic inner-city settings, characters, and/or group interactions; however, in a recent analysis of methods used in teaching children to read, it was stated that ". . . too many people are making too many recommendations about content without any proof whatsoever."[16]

Purpose of Study

The current study was undertaken to investigate whether or not inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading about

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[15]Emerald V. Dechant, Improving the Teaching of Reading (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 34-35.

[16]Jeanne S. Chall, Learning to Read: The Great Debate (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 310-11.

stories depicting the stark conditions and characters of the inner city rather than stories depicting more pleasant environments and characters which usually exist in suburban, white, well-to-do neighborhoods or in certain sections of urban areas. Since research in children's reading interests and preferences has revealed that preferences often vary according to age, sex, and intelligence, the impact of these variables will be considered in the analyses of the data. In addition, reading preferences will be analyzed by race.

Hypotheses

In this study, twenty-four hypotheses were tested. For convenience, the hypotheses are presented under seven major areas.

General Reading Preferences

1A: Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas than stark inner-city areas.

1B: Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts than characters having negative self-concepts.

1C: Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction than characters in negative group interaction.

Age and Reading Preferences

2A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with age.

2B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with age.

2C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with age.

Grade and Reading Preferences

3A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with grade levels.

3B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with grade levels.

3C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with grade levels.

Sex and Reading Preferences

4A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with sex.

4B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with sex.

4C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with sex.

Intelligence and Reading Preferences

5A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with intelligence.

5B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with intelligence.

5C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with intelligence.

Race and Reading Preferences

6A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with race.

6B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with race.

6C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with race.

The Child's Perceptions on His Reading Preferences

7A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for settings are positively correlated with their perceptions of the pleasantness or starkness of their home environments.

7B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for settings are positively correlated with the pleasantness or starkness of the home environments in which they would prefer to live.

7C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for characters are positively correlated with the type of person they perceive as being most like themselves.

7D: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for characters are positively correlated with the type of person they would like to be.

7E: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for group interaction are positively correlated with the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they live or play.

7F: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for group interaction are positively correlated with the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they prefer to live or play.

Design and Methodology

Although a much fuller treatment of the design for this study will be presented in Chapter III, a brief overview is presented here. For purposes of clarity, the methodology is discussed in three phases.

In the first phase of the study, five pairs of illustrations were selected from modern realistic fiction books for children which: (1) depicted the stark, crowded conditions of inner-city or rural living; and (2) suggested more favorable living conditions in the inner city or in suburban areas. Slides were then prepared from these illustrations. Passages from books were then chosen which described the settings depicted by the slides. These passages were taped to insure a standardized presentation to each group of intermediate-grade children. By random selection, one slide depicting either an inner-city environment or a more pleasant and favorable suburban environment was shown to the class. As each slide was projected on a screen, the taped description of that particular setting was presented to the class. Each class member was then asked to respond

to three questions which appeared on a questionnaire for each pair of slides:

1. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?
2. In which neighborhood would you rather live?
3. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

Thus, each child responded to a total of fifteen questions during the first phase of the study.

In the second phase of the study, a similar procedure was employed. From modern realistic fiction books for children, ten character descriptions were selected. Five descriptions depicted a character with a positive self-concept. The remaining five character descriptions depicted a person with a negative self-concept. One positive self-concept character description was paired with a negative self-concept character description, resulting in five pairs of character descriptions. After each pair of character descriptions was presented to a class with a tape recorder, each student was asked to respond to the following three questions:

1. Which person sounds most like you?
2. Which person would you rather be?
3. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

The third phase of the study presented five descriptions of positive group interaction and five descriptions of negative group interaction. After each pair of descriptions was presented to the class using a tape recorder, each student responded to the following three questions:

1. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?
2. Which group of people would you rather live or play with?
3. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

In all, every child responded to fifteen questions during each phase of the study for a total of forty-five questions. All of the questions were read to the children so that their ability to read would not influence the results. A sample pair of slides and descriptions was also presented to each group of children so that they would have an opportunity to become accustomed to the general nature of the responses they would be asked to make during each phase of the study.

Educational Implications

It is currently assumed by some educators that inner-city children are unable to identify with many of the materials used to teach reading in the elementary school. In an attempt to provide inner-city children with a setting

or character where personal involvement is likely to occur, some children's literature and multi-ethnic basal readers have depicted the "here and now" world of urban living. The underlying assumption of those who publish these materials is that inner-city children identify with such settings and characters; moreover, these same children prefer to read such stories. The present study investigates the validity of this assumption. The findings of the investigation may have some direct implications for selecting appropriate content for reading materials that are made available to inner-city intermediate grade children. This study should also offer some relevant data with respect to what inner-city children actually prefer to read.

Definition of Terms

For purpose of clarification, the following terms are defined:

Inner-city Elementary School is defined as a school designated in an area the Board of Education names as an educationally depressed area. In such areas, the schools often participate in Title I programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or in special programs which exhibit similar characteristics of Title I programs even though the schools do not meet the guidelines for participation in this federal program. The schools are all located close to the central area of the city which is usually classified as a poverty area.

Intermediate Grades are defined as grades four, five, and six in the elementary school.

Preferences are defined in such a manner as to clearly separate them from interests. The child faced with a choice of stimuli may admit a preference for one stimuli over another; however, he may have no interest in either. "A preference is a disposition to receive one object as against another; it does not induce one to seek out the particular objects for acquisition or study."[17] A child, for example, may prefer to read Durango Street rather than The Seventeenth-Street Gang and still have no genuine interest in either book. In contrast, the basic nature of an interest is that it does induce us to seek out particular objects and activities.

Modern Realistic Fiction refers to that broad category of children's literature which depicts modern twentieth-century life. Four specific types of modern realistic fiction books for children are included in this study. The first type of book portrays the stark, crowded conditions of the inner city with characters in integrated or inter-ethnic situations. Typical books of this nature include Durango Street and Jazz Man. A second group of modern realistic fiction books portrays the more pleasant aspects

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[17]Jacob W. Getzels, "The Problem of Interests: A Reconsideration," in Reading: Seventy-five Years of Progress, Supplementary Educational Monographs, ed. by Helen M. Robinson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 97.

of urban life with characters often possessing middle class values. An example of such a book is The Seventeenth-Street Gang. The third group of books represents middle class, suburban, or rural life experiences that occur in much more pleasant settings than books of the first type. An example of a book depicting middle class suburban living is The Other Side of the Fence. The final group of books represents unpleasant rural settings. The Pit is an example of the fourth category of modern realistic fiction books.

Assumptions

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. Student responses to the slides and descriptions give some evidence about the reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades.
2. The students involved in this study will encounter little or no difficulty in responding to the questionnaire which forms the crux of this study.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in scope. It does not investigate the reading preferences of inner-city intermediate grade children in a broad general manner, but rather focuses on children's reading preferences for settings and characters taken from modern realistic fiction books for children.

Generalizations drawn from this study are limited to intermediate-grade children from four inner-city school districts in Michigan. It is not within the scope of this study to list or suggest specific books or stories that should be read by inner-city children in the intermediate grades.

Organization of the Study

The general format of the study is organized in the following manner. In Chapter II, the research on the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children is examined. Special attention is given to the psychological and environmental factors which influence the reading preferences of children. Procedures used in the study to secure the sample, to devise the method of investigation, to record the data, and to collect the results are detailed in Chapter III. The results of the study are presented in Chapter IV. The summary and conclusions, as well as recommendations and implications for future research, are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE READING PREFERENCES OF INTERMEDIATE-GRADE CHILDREN

It has been estimated by various authorities that over 300 studies pertaining to children's reading interests and preferences have been reported.[1] Although many studies have been carried out, criticism has often been generated because the studies offer ". . . little direction or guidance for the changes that are essential in children's trade- and textbooks."[2] Even when such studies are used as a guide for selecting books, unwise choices are often made because the studies frequently contain flaws in the theoretical constructs or in the design.[3] Despite methodological errors and other flaws that are often evident upon examination of these studies, it is still possible to formulate several generalizations

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[1]Chester W. Harris, ed., Encyclopedia of Educational Research (3rd ed.; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 1105.

[2]Sara F. Zimet, "Children's Interest and Story Preferences: A Critical Review of the Literature," The Elementary School Journal, 67 (December, 1966), 128.

[3]Samuel Weintraub, "Children's Reading Interests," The Reading Teacher, 22 (April, 1969), 655.

regarding the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children because ". . . the findings are generally in agreement."[4]

Chapter Organization

For purposes of clarity, this chapter is divided into four major sections. In the first section, the distinction between reading interests and reading preferences is clarified to give greater precision to the definition proposed in Chapter I. The proposed definition of a reading preference stated in Chapter I was ". . . a disposition to receive one object as against another."[5] In the second section, factors affecting the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children are considered. Special attention is given to factors within the child (age, intelligence, and sex) as well as relevant environmental factors. The third section contains a review of the current literature reporting the reading preferences of inner-city children. The final section contains a brief summary of the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children and some conclusions in light of the

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[4]Arno Jewett and Doris V. Gunderson, "Developing Reading Interests and Attitudes," in New Perspectives in Reading Instruction, ed. by Albert J. Mazurkiewicz (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1964), p. 399.

[5]Getzels, loc. cit.

literature reviewed. Where necessary, each of the four major sections is broken down into subdivisions to lend further clarity to the review of literature.

The Nature of Interests and Preferences

A perusal of reading interest studies soon makes even the most casual reviewer aware of the lack of concern for precision in definition. Perhaps one of the most diligent attempts to clarify terms used in reading interest studies was Getzels who distinguished among interests and preferences, as well as other terms.[6] Getzels contended that the basic nature of an interest demanded an active, seeking out of specific activities, understandings, objects, skills or goals. He defined an interest as ". . . a characteristic disposition, organized through experience, which impels an individual to seek out particular objects, activities, understandings, skills, or goals for attention or acquisition."[7] Elizabeth Hurlock makes the following statement about interests:

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[6] Ibid., pp. 97-106.

[7] Jacob W. Getzels, "The Nature of Reading Interests: Psychological Aspects," in Developing Permanent Interests in Reading, Supplementary Educational Monographs, ed. by Helen M. Robinson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 7.

> An interest is a learned motive which drives an individual to act in accordance with that interest. It is defined as preoccupation with an activity when the individual is free to choose. When the child finds an activity satisfying, it continues to be an interest.[8]

Psychologists are in general agreement that ". . . there are only a few natural interests connected with children's wants or needs. Most interests, including reading interests, may have some natural basis, but they are largely the result of the content of the child's environment."[9]

Using Getzel's definition of an interest as an active disposition toward some specific goal, it is apparent that many investigations into children's reading interests fall short of representing genuine interests on the part of children. Many studies of the reading interests of children are, in fact, studies of reading preferences which Getzels defines as "a disposition to receive one object as against another. . . ."[10] Reading preferences, in contrast to reading interests, are not active. A preference simply indicates a greater willingness on the part of a child to look at or choose one type of book as opposed to another. A child, for example, may prefer to read a story about an inner-city setting as opposed to a story about a suburban

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[8]Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Child Development (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), p. 440.

[9]David H. Russell, Children Learn to Read (2nd ed.; Waltham, Mass.: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1961), p. 364.

[10]Getzels, "The Problem of Interests," op. cit., p. 97.

setting; however, he may have no interest in reading either story. When given an opportunity to choose his own reading material, he may choose a book about horses because they represent a genuine interest.

Some studies, like that of Jungblut and Coleman,[11] asked pupils in grades six through nine to respond to prose selections concerning different topics. In studies which ask children to respond to multiple choice items or closed items like the Jungblut and Coleman study, it is readily apparent that such studies often explore children's reading preferences rather than reading interests. If the distinction between interests and preferences is kept in mind while reading research, at least some of the discrepancies with regard to what children like to read about can be attributed to the method used for ascertaining children's reading "interests." The distinction between reading interests and preferences is rarely made in research; moreover, the terms are often used interchangeably. For this reason, so-called reading "interest" studies, in addition to reading preference studies, are reviewed in this chapter. It would be useful to remember, nevertheless, that most studies reporting children's reading interests are, according to the definition given by Getzels, reporting the reading preferences of children.

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[11] A. Jungblut and J. H. Coleman, "Reading Content That Interests Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Grade Students," Journal of Educational Research, 58 (May-June, 1965), 393-401.

In the present study, it should be kept in mind that the very nature of the instrument used for this investigation clearly indicates that the reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades are being explored. There should, therefore, be no conclusion that inner-city children will seek out books containing the settings or characters for which they have merely expressed a preference for reading. These children may or may not have a genuine interest in the books for which they express a preference.

Factors Influencing Reading Preferences

Children's reading preferences are influenced by a host of significant factors. Any attempt to choose the primary factors which influence their reading preferences is a difficult task. Furness,[12] in summarizing the results of numerous investigations, has identified three factors inherent in children which influence their reading and preferences: age, intelligence, and sex. According to Furness, these three are identified as general interest factors as opposed to special interest factors which often reside in the type of reading material.

Spache identifies the child's age, intelligence, sex, and cultural background as primary factors since "these

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[12]Edna Lue Furness, "Researches on Reading Interests," Education, 84 (September, 1963), 3-7.

elements cannot be easily manipulated by the teacher who hopes to guide and direct the child's reading. For this reason, the relative importance of these elements is greater and their impact must be more clearly understood."[13]

> Other factors, such as the accessibility of books, attitudes toward and demands upon children, and classroom reading practices can be more readily arranged to stimulate reading. Physical and literary characteristics of books which promote their acceptance are, for the most part, quite obvious and easy to deal with. While they are probably of lesser significance, these factors that can be modified must also be considered in attempting to promote reading by children.[14]

Based upon the observations of Furness and Spache, as well as other educators, primary consideration in this review of the literature will be given to factors within the child (age, intelligence, and sex) and his environment (socio-economic factors) which affect his reading preferences.

Chronological Age and Reading Preferences

The general reading preferences of children at different stages of development have been the concern of numerous investigators. Most of these investigators stress age as an important factor influencing reading preferences. In what has been called the most comprehensive study of children's reading interests since World War II,[15] Norvell

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[13]George D. Spache, Good Books for Poor Readers (Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Publishing Company, 1968), p. 1.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Helen Huus, "Interpreting Research in Children's Literature," in Children, Books and Reading, Perspectives in Reading No. 3, ed. by Mildren Dawson (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1964), p. 125.

obtained approximately 960,000 expressions of opinions by more than 24,000 children in grades three to six regarding 1,576 literary selections.[16] The children were from all types of communities in New York State. The investigation by Norvell is particularly appropriate for intermediate-grade children because the "reports by third grade children were tabulated separately."[17] In the concluding section of his discussion on the influence of age on reading preferences, Norvell notes that:

> . . . the degree of maturity reached exerts a major influence upon children's reading interests and that as children grow older the rate of change in interest gradually diminishes. It is clear also that increasing maturity brings an increase in interest in some kinds of reading materials and a decrease in interest in others.18

In a review of studies spanning two decades, Spache[19] offers further evidence regarding the influence of age on children's reading preferences. Young children are said to prefer stories about animals, fantasy, fairy tales, and other children. By the age of nine, a preference for more realistic materials begins to appear.[20]

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[16]George W. Norvell, What Boys and Girls Like to Read (Morristown, N. J.: Silver Burdett Company, 1958), p. 4.

[17]Ibid., p. 10.

[18]Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[19]Spache, Good Books . . ., op. cit., p. 3.

[20]George D. Spache, Toward Better Reading (Champaign, Ill.: Garrard Publishing Company, 1963), p. 166.

Other studies have also reported similar findings. The classic study by Thorndike[21] indicated less change in reading preferences from ten to fifteen years, especially among boys, when they were asked to select titles rather than read the book. Russell[22] reported that a study of children in grades three to seven found the younger children expressing interest in a great variety of topics. The older children, on the other hand, displayed more discrimination in choosing certain topcs. In a four-year study by Sister Mary Edith and Sister Mary Amatora,[23] it was found that children in grades two and three were interested in stories with child characters or animals. By grades five and six, children showed preferences for adventure stories. Witty[24] and others studied the reading preferences of approximately 8,000 children from kindergarten through grade eight. It was found that children in the intermediate grades selected books of a humorous nature, books of adventure, and books about children in other lands.

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[21]Robert L. Thorndike, Children's Reading Interests (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941).

[22]Russell, op. cit., p. 394.

[23]Sister Mary Edith and Sister Mary Amatora, "The Age Factor in Children's Interest in Free Reading," Education, 71 (May, 1951), 567-71.

[24]Paul A. Witty, Anne Coomer, and Dilla McBean, "Children's Choices of Favorite Books: A Study Conducted in Ten Elementary Schools," Journal of Educational Psychology, 37 (May, 1946), 266-78.

From the representative studies reported, there appears to be substantial agreement that age influences children's reading preferences. By the intermediate grades, children display greater discrimination in their book selection. The particular reading preferences of intermediate-grade children are summarized later in this chapter.

Intelligence and Reading Preferences

Level of intelligence is often considered to be a factor influencing children's reading preferences. Studies have generally grouped children into three levels according to scores on intelligence tests: (1) superior ability (I.Q.'s greater than 110); (2) average ability (I.Q.'s 91 to 110); and below average ability (I.Q.'s below 91). In reviewing studies reporting differences in reading preferences resulting, at least in part, from intelligence, the results should be approached with caution because not all researchers have used the same criteria for grouping children according to the above ranges of intelligence quotients.

Norvell, in his attempt to determine whether children of superior ability vary from average and slow children in reading preferences noted that "few sweeping conclusions can be drawn."[25] Norvell analyzed his data with

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[25]Norvell, op. cit., p. 43.

respect to the three ranges of intelligence mentioned above and its effect on the reading preferences of children in grades four to six. He concluded that there was no reading preference which could be identified as being more outstanding for a pupil having an I.Q. above 110 than with all children.[26] "On the other hand, the evidence justifies the belief that superior children [I.Q. above 110] like poems of nature and didacticism less than do all children."[27] In comparing the reading preferences of gifted and less gifted students, Norvell states two conclusions, supported by his data, which are contrary to popular thinking:

1. Bright children rate a majority of the poems they study in school lower in interest than do children in general.
2. Reading materials of high literary quality are not rated significantly higher in interest on the average by bright children than by children in general.[28]

In addition, he also stated that ". . . there is near identity in the reading interests of bright and slow children."[29]

Generally, the factor of intelligence or mental ability tends to affect children's reading preferences in the same manner as chronological age. In the intermediate

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[26] Ibid., p. 44.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p. 52.

[29] Ibid., p. 53.

grades, and at higher levels, intelligence seems to influence the breadth and depth of reading among children. Thorndike[30] conducted a study involving an analysis of the responses made by approximately 3,000 children to a preference questionnaire composed of annotated fictitious titles. He reported that bright children's preferences are most like those of a group of children with lower I.Q.'s who are two or three years older than they are.[31] In another study, Lazar[32] reported that the actual titles "most enjoyed" did not vary much for bright, average, and below average children except that bright children reported reading a wider range of titles. In addition, average and dull girls read more than average and dull boys; moreover, for boys there was a close association between intelligence and books read. In the area of intelligence and number of books read, Terman and Lima[33] reported that bright children read three or four times as many books as average children and continue reading activities after thirteen years more than the average child does.

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[30]Robert L. Thorndike, "Children's Reading Interests," in Readings on Reading Instruction, ed. by Albert J. Harris (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 338-41.

[31]Ibid., p. 338.

[32]May Lazar, Reading Interests, Activities and Opportunities of Bright, Average, and Dull Children, Contributions to Education No. 707 (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937).

[33]Lewis M. Terman and Margaret Lima, Children's Reading: A Guide for Parents and Teachers (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1931).

The above studies indicate that, in general, the reading preferences of bright, average, and dull children in the intermediate grades are similar. In summary, disparity was noted in the following areas:

1. Generally, the areas of interest of more intelligent children are on a slightly higher level than are those of less intelligent children.[34]
2. Children with high I.Q.'s generally read books that are more difficult and more adult.[35]
3. Dull children like books only a little more mature in theme than younger children of the same mental age.[36]
4. Brighter children select a wider range of titles.[37]
5. Brighter children read more extensively than less intelligent age mates.[38]

Sex and Reading Preferences

Over a decade ago Norvell contended that "most writers on children's reading interests state or imply that below the junior high school level the differences in the reading preferences of boys and girls are so minor that they may be largely disregarded."[39] Apparently Norvell was unaware of

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[34]Dechant, op. cit., p. 71.

[35]Huus, op. cit., p. 127.

[36]Russell, loc. cit.

[37]Spache, Good Books . . ., op. cit., p. 4.

[38]J. C. Seegers, "A Study of Children's Reading," Elementary English, 13 (November, 1936), 253.

[39]Norvell, op. cit., p. 35.

the research by Robinson.[40] In summarizing investigations of reading preferences from the primary grades through high school, Robinson found that reading preferences begin to diverge along sexual lines in the intermediate grades. Boys were found to prefer adventure stories, descriptions of "how-to-do-it," hero-worship, hobbies, and science. Girls, on the other hand, preferred fantasy adventure and stories about home and family life. Even some fifteen years before Norvell reported his study, Thorndike stated that "sex is conspicuously more important than age or intelligence as a determiner of reported interest pattern. . . ."[41] In the above statement, Thorndike was referring to ten-year-old children. According to Thorndike's statement, the influence of sex on reading preferences is not as "minor" as Norvell seems to imply.

Most of the literature investigating the influence of sex on reading preferences report that while sex differences are not prominent during the early primary grades, they become clear-cut by about age nine or ten. Norvell's study[42] confirmed the influence of sex on the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children. As indicated by

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[40]Helen M. Robinson, "What Research Says to the Teacher of Reading: Reading Interests," The Reading Teacher, 8 (February, 1955), 173-77.

[41]Thorndike, op. cit., p. 36.

[42]Norvell, op. cit., pp. 35-42.

their responses on questionnaires, boys in grades four to six favored books which dealt with animals, adventure, physical struggle, humor, courage, and patriotism. On the other hand, boys did not care for excessive description, moralizing, or didacticism, romantic love, sentiment, heroines or main characters, and physically frail male characters. Girls in Norvell's survey preferred reading about adventure, home and school life, animals and pets, romantic love, mystery, the supernatural, and patriotic deeds. They did not like violent action, fierce animals, excessive description, didacticism, or characters younger than themselves (except babies).

Additional studies confirm the results reported by Norvell regarding sex differences in reading preferences in the intermediate grades. Terman and Lima,[43] for example, found that at about eleven years of age boys were more interested than girls in realistic stories and were becoming interested in science and mechanics. Girls, in contrast, were beginning to read romantic "adult-type" fiction. It was also reported that girls liked fairy tales, poetry, and sentimental fiction while boys preferred adventure and vigorous action. Thorndike's study,[44] which was mentioned earlier, also revealed clear sex differences. In analyzing the data he also found that boys

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[43]Terman and Lima, loc. cit.

[44]Thorndike, loc. cit.

seldom show preference for a "girl's" book, but girls will read a "boy's" book to a greater degree. Also, girls read more than boys at every age. Lazar[45] reported an investigation which involved over two thousand ten- to twelve-year-old children in New York City. She found both sexes enjoying mystery, adventure, and history, but disagreeing on such items as novels, poetry, stories of home and school, fairy tales, and detective stories.

In an extensive survey by Shores and Rudman[46] which involved over 6,000 pupils in grades four to eight, a number of interesting conclusions are presented. One conclusion apparently conflicts with the sex differences found by Norvell and others in their research. Shores and Rudman state that "contrary to the findings of other studies, few sharp sex differences are found."[47] It should be noted that some sex differences were found; however, they were not statistically significant. With the single exception of the Shores and Rudman study, support is given to the notion that the reading preferences of boys and girls begin to diverge as they reach the age of nine or ten despite a common core of interests.

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[45]Lazar, loc. cit.

[46]Herbert C. Rudman, "The Informational Needs and Reading Interests of Children in Grades Four Through Eight," The Elementary School Journal, 55 (April, 1955), 502-12. J. Harlan Shores, "Reading Interests and Informational Needs of Children in Grades Four to Eight," Elementary English, 31 (December, 1954), 493-500.

[47]Shores, op. cit., p. 494.

A study by Byers[48] demonstrated clear-cut differences in the general interests of boys and girls in classroom behavior as early as the first grade. Recorded tapes were used to exemplify this differentiation during sharing periods. In another study with first-grade children, contrasts in interests were again noted.[49] From these studies, one reading authority has concluded that, ". . . as early as the first year in school both sexes are moving in the direction of the sex role defined for them by our society."[50]

Much of the research reviewed thus far has concerned the so-called average child. Some research has also been conducted to uncover the personalities of retarded readers. In a research study reported by Spache, he concluded that:

> In general, retarded readers are inclined to be more aggressive and defensive, less insightful, and inept in knowing how to handle situations of conflict with adults. They tend to display a passive but defensive, or negativistic attitude toward authority figures. Their relationships with other children are also impaired by aggression, intolerance and defensiveness which make them inadequate in finding constructive or peace-making solutions to conflict with their peers.[51]

Spache's research gives strong indications of the extent to which these readers differ from average children of

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[48]Loretta Byers, "Pupils' Interests and the Content of Primary Reading Texts," The Reading Teacher, 17 (January, 1964), 227-33.

[49]Helen Rogers and H. Alan Robinson, "Reading Interests of First Graders," Elementary English, 40 (November, 1963), 707-11.

[50]Spache, Good Books . . ., op. cit, p. 3.

[51]Ibid., p. 4.

similar ages. It would appear that a fundamentally masculine pattern is present among retarded readers of both sexes.[52] Since it has previously been shown that inner-city children are often retarded readers, one might hypothesize that the reading preferences of some inner-city, intermediate-grade children would not vary according to sex as much as one might expect. Evidence on this hypothesis is lacking at the present time since those studies conducted with inner-city children have only involved children in the primary grades. With primary children in the inner-city, results have shown few sharp differences in the reading preferences.

In spite of the influence that sex may have upon children's reading preferences, some evidence also suggests that boys and girls in the intermediate grades have a common core of interests. In a summary of Norvell's study it was stated that "both boys and girls like animal stories--boys placed them first, and girls second only to 'girls' books.' Biography ranked surprisingly high with children--boys rated it second among the categories, and girls third."[53] Lazar[54] found that mystery stories were ranked first by both boys and girls. Despite this common core of interests, it is generally accepted that sex

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Jewett and Gunderson, op. cit., p. 396.

[54] Lazar, loc. cit.

influences the reading preferences of boys and girls in the intermediate grades.

Socio-Economic Factors and Reading Preferences

In addition to psychological factors or variables within the child that influence reading preferences, there are also several environmental factors which may have a particular influence on the reading preferences of inner-city children. Consider, for example, the attitude and interest toward reading that one might expect from Steve. His mother has had about two years of schooling and is barely able to write her own name. She has been reasonably successful as a housewife. His father, when home, exhibits few intellectual or literary interests. There is little or no reading material in the home except for an occasional newspaper which is purchased at the corner newsstand. It is readily apparent that Steve lacks many of the so-called "middle class" opportunities for exploring reading materials in his home. Cleary[55] and others have made it quite clear that reading is a middle and upper class value or ideal. The typical teacher who reflects such class values normally has extreme difficulty in understanding the differences in a child's behavior who comes from a home in which the so-called middle class values are not promoted.

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[55]Florence Damon Cleary, Blueprints for Better Reading (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1957), quoted by Spache, Good Books. . ., op. cit., p. 7.

The role that socio-economic status plays in influencing the child's reading preferences is not absolutely clear. Almost twenty years ago, Havighurst[56] studied children in grades five through seven who attended an urban school system. He classified the children according to socio-economic status. Upon investigating the leisure-time activites of four socio-economic groups, Havighurst found that reading books was ranked sixth or seventh in each group out of a total of twelve different leisure-time activities. "This seems to indicate that the proportion of time spent in book reading is not highly related to socio-economic status but that the specific type of reading done may be highly related."[57] In two further investigations which studied the relationship between socio-economic status and the number of books and magazines found in the home, interesting results were reported. Although Lazar noted a relationship between socio-economic status and the number of books and magazines found in the home, Vandament and Thalman found no significant differences between the reading preferences of children from varying socio-economic

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[56]Robert J. Havighurst, "Relations Between Leisure Activities and the Socio-Economic Status of Children," Growing Points in Educational Research (Official Report, American Educational Research Association, 1949, 201-8), quoted by Henry P. Smith and Emerald V. Dechant, Psychology in Teaching Reading (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 277.

[57]Ibid.

backgrounds.[58] In spite of the conclusion by Vandament and Thalman, others contend that "probably the most significant single factor in the development of wholesome reading habits and tastes is the informal exposure of children to an abundance of good books and magazines in the home, schools and public library."[59]

Several investigators have compared the reading interests of children from rural, urban, and metropolitan centers. In the study reported by both Shores and Rudman, "care was taken to select equally from the nine census regions of the United States, from rural, urban, and metropolitan communities, and from grades four through eight."[60] One of the findings of this study was ". . . little difference in the reading interests of the children from rural, urban, and metropolitan centers."[61] This same finding was also reported by Russell.[62]

Reading Preferences of Inner-city Children

With the large number of studies conducted to uncover children's reading preferences, it may seem strange

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[58]William E. Vandament and E. W. Thalman, "An Investigation into the Reading Interests of Children," Journal of Educational Research, 49 (February- 1956), 467-70.

[59]Russell, op. cit., pp. 396-97.

[60]Shores, op. cit., p. 494.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Russell, op. cit., p. 397.

that so few studies have focused on the reading preferences of inner-city children. These children, often referred to as disadvantaged, probably constitute thirty per cent of the children in large metropolitan areas such as Detroit.[63] The term "disadvantaged" conjures up many notions. For the purpose of this discussion, the term refers to ". . . any children who have not shared in the kinds of preschool and out-of-school opportunities which most teachers have come to expect for most children."[64] Using this definition, it is readily apparent that many inner-city children are disadvantaged.

A partial explanation for the apparent neglect of research to uncover the reading preferences of inner-city children can be attributed to the relatively recent interest in urban education. Only within the present decade has special attention been focused on the education of inner-city children. This attention may have been stimulated by the civil rights movement of the 1960's which some political leaders view as nothing short of a revolution

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[63]The Yearbook Committee, "Introduction," The Educationally Retarded and Disadvantaged, Sixty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 3.

[64]William K. Durr, ed., Reading Instruction: Dimensions and Issues (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 170.

among the underprivleged.[65] In addition to the civil rights movement, massive federal programs like Headstart, as well as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, have stimulated compensatory programs for many children in urban areas.

One prime need of the inner-city child is the ability to read. Emphasis has generally focused on how to teach these children to read. Authorities are in general agreement that efforts to improve the reading ability of the disadvantaged should take several factors into consideration. One such factor is "the significance of the use of materials of instruction which are closely related to the experiences, interests, and needs of the disadvantaged."[66] Although the child's interests are identified as important factors in the learning process, "far too little attention is being given to the role of interest in planning programs for the educationally retarded and disadvantaged

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[65]Abraham J. Tannenbaum, "Social and Psychological Considerations in the Study of the Socially Disadvantaged," The Educationally Retarded and Disadvantaged, Sixty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 40.

[66]Paul A. Witty, (ed.), "Principles and Practices in Compensatory Education" The Educationally Retarded and Disadvantaged, Sixty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 68.

pupils."[67] Witty also urges the use of questionnaires involving children's preferences which may yield clues to understanding their interests and needs.[68]

Only recently have attempts been made to discover the reactions of inner-city children to basal readers and trade books more attuned to their experiences and problems. In a testimonial type of research, Seaberg[69] reported the classroom experiences of a number of teachers enrolled in an NDEA children's literature institute. The teachers taught in public elementary schools located in disadvantaged neighborhoods of Brooklyn. The investigation involved literature for the disadvantaged child living in urban areas. Specifically, it was assumed that if an inner-city child ". . . is put in contact with stories and pictures of children of his own skin color and environment, identification and personal involvement are likely to occur and therefore he will enjoy the story."[70] A report by one teacher using Benjie which apparently met the above criteria of identification ". . . left the children with no sense of wonder or excitement--only bleak apathy."[71]

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[67] Ibid., p. 78.

[68] Ibid., p. 79.

[69] Seaberg, op. cit., pp. 508-512.

[70] Ibid., p. 508.

[71] Ibid., p. 509.

By contrast, a modern folk tale, exemplified by The Five Chinese Brothers, was received enthusiastically by the same group of youngsters. The teacher decided the enthusiastic acceptance of the folk tale meant that young children prefer a story which stirs a child's imagination and fancy to harsh realism. Seaberg stated that the culture of poverty from which these children come and the needs these children have for immediate gratifications, make escape valves necessary for coping with the realities of life.[72] If escape valves are necessary, one might then argue that inner-city children should be given fiction fantasy for use in the process of learning to read or when the teacher chooses books for reading to the children. From the NDEA participants' discussions and papers, Seaberg observed that folk literature and fanciful fiction seem to have the greatest appeal of all types of literary genre for the inner-city child. It is unfortunate, however, that Seaberg fails to define the age group for which fiction fantasy is most needed. One might assume that her conclusions are directed toward children in the primary grades.

In searching for modern realistic fiction to be used with the urban young, Seaberg says that care should be taken to choose books which are related to the real life experiences of the child. It is only when books meet

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[72] Ibid.

this criteria that identification can take place. Seaberg argues that in selecting literature for disadvantaged children, one must first remember that ". . . they are children possessing a kinship or common bond with all children."[73] It follows then, that one must guard against setting up artificial barriers in the selection of literature; moreover, the child should share in the heritage of classics prized by all children.

A more controlled investigation was reported by Emans.[74] The study used two series of multi-ethnic basic readers that were assumed to represent a cross section of life in urban centers to which the young child would be able to relate his city experiences. A random sample of eleven boys and girls from an inner-city school who had not started a formal reading program were selected to provide empirical evidence to the question: Will inner-city children express a greater interest in stories that focus on a city theme or in stories that focus on a family-friends-pets theme? A total of twelve stories for the study was selected from the basal series. One story from the family-friends-pets theme and one story from the city theme comprised a pair of stories to be read individually to each child. Thus, there were six pairs of stories read

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[73] Ibid., p. 512.

[74] Robert Emans, "What do Children in the Inner-City Like to Read?" The Elementary School Journal, 68 (December, 1968), 119-122.

to each child. The order in which the stories were read, the individuals who read the stories, and the sequence in which the pairs of stories were read were systematically altered to insure control of a possible variation due to order, reader, or story sequence. After each pair of stories was read to a child, he was asked to indicate which story he would like to have read to him again. His choice was recorded and reinforced by rereading the selection he chose.

Of the 132 times the children were asked to choose between the two story themes, these children chose the stories on the family-pets-friends theme eighty times and the stories on the city theme fifty-two times. Both boys and girls in the study preferred the stories on the family-pets-friends theme. The results of the children's choices of stories revealed statistically significant results at the .005 level using the binominal test.

In a replication of the study in another inner-city school, the children selected the stories on the family-friends-pets theme ninety-three times, and the stories on the city theme fifty-one times. These results were statistically significant at the .0001 level using the binominal test. In discussing the results, Emans states that, "contrary to what might be expected after reading much of the current literature on the subject, the children preferred the family-friends-pets stories to the city

stories."[75] Even though the family-friends-pets stories were chosen more than the city stories, Emans emphasizes that his study should not be used to argue that any one set of materials is most appropriate for all children or for any one child at all times.[76]

In the conclusion to his study, Emans states that "objective, empirical evidence is necessary for the preparation of materials for reading instruction."[77] It is not enough for educators and publishers to act on their hypotheses as to what children prefer to read. Although Emans suggests that materials and procedures must be tried out under controlled conditions with children, his study has several drawbacks. Of primary importance is the fact that many stories about the family-friends-pets theme could take place in a city setting. Apparently Emans was unaware of this possibility or he chose to ignore it. His conclusions, which are based on a relatively small sample, are open to question. Regardless of these possible shortcomings, the work of Emans has stimulated interest in the reading preferences of children in urban areas. Additional studies in the intermediate grades may reveal further data about the reading preferences of inner-city children. It

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[75] Ibid., p. 121.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 122.

is toward this end that the reading preferences of intermediate, inner-city children are systematically examined.

Summary and Conclusions

To help teachers deal effectively with the reading preferences of children in the intermediate grades, numerous studies have been conducted to determine the types of books these children prefer to read. By summarizing the studies dealing with the reading preferences and/or interests of intermediate-grade children, one means is provided for the teacher to help supply books that satisfy the reading preferences of these children most effectively. When children reach the intermediate grades, they become somewhat independent in their reading habits. "Their intellectual and social horizons have been so enlarged that their literary likes and tastes have great diversity and individuality."[78] Although children at any grade level differ with respect to the things which interest them, ". . . there are some general trends in the reading interests of children at certain ages which are important to keep in mind when books are selected."[79]

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[78]Leland B. Jacobs, "Children's Experiences in Literature," Children and the Language Arts, eds. Virgil E. Herrick and Leland B. Jacobs (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 200.

[79]Glenn Myers Blair, Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), pp. 174-175.

Numerous books on reading instruction attempt to give an overall picture of the types of books preferred by children in the intermediate grades. A book on basic reading instruction summarizes children's reading preferences in the following manner:

> The upper-grade child begins to establish the interests of his lifetime. The diversity of the intermediate-grade child's reading tends to narrow down to individually preferred types: adventure, travel, biography, mystery, detective stories, or the classics--whatever has been proving most satisfying in earlier years. There is increasing interest, too, in political and civic problems, patriotic themes, vocations, and hobbies. Fiction that features adventure and mystery continues to be a favorite.
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> . . . While both sexes like adventure stories, girls reject the violence and bloody struggles that may appeal to boys. All children enjoy animal stories; but girls prefer books about domestic animals and pets and do not care for stories that feature the fierce wild beasts about which boys like to read. Children of both sexes seek out books about human characters but girls do not want the children in the stories to be younger than themselves, and boys prefer not to read stories about girls.
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> In some ways, girls and boys differ greatly in their likes and dislikes. Girls prefer stories of home and school life, love and romance, sentiment, and the supernatural. They avoid accounts that feature bitter conflict, violence, and goriness; at the same time, boys do not care for love and romance, sentiment, fairy stories, or physical weakness. The latter do like accounts of physical struggle, hero tales, sports and games, humor, and the factual accounts of history and science--in particular modern tales about space ships, motors, and atomic devices.[80]

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[80] Mildred A. Dawson and Henry A. Bamman, Fundamentals of Basic Reading Instruction (2nd ed.; New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 32-33.

From the above description, it would appear that many types of books could satisfy the reading preferences of intermediate grade children. In a more succinct summary, Smith and Dechant state that:

> In the intermediate grades the interests of boys and girls become differentiated. Boys become more interested in "true to life" adventure stories; girls prefer stories of school and home. Prose is liked better than poetry by both boys and girls, and fiction is the dominant choice of prose. However, informational materials are chosen if they are written to suit the child's age and mental level. Comics become especially popular. The theme of the fictional story or book is the most important factor in influencing the child's selection.[81]

Between the ages of nine through twelve Hildreth states that ". . . there are no marked changes in interests shown in types of books preferred, although more maturity is demanded in the stories."[82] Leland Jacobs, an authority in children's literature, recommends the following categories of books to meet the reading preferences of children in the intermediate grades: contemporary experiences (life situations, comrades, home, school, community living); historical fiction; modern magic (machines and gadgets, actual and imaginary); animals; folk literature; and American folk heros.[83]

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[81]Smith and Dechant, op. cit., p. 280.

[82]Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), p. 507.

[83]Jacobs, op. cit.

It is a formidable task to summarize the results of some three hundred research studies, many of which concern the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children. The following conclusions, however, are substantiated by numerous investigators who have sought information about the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children:

1. Reading preferences vary significantly in both kind and amount with age, intelligence, and sex.
2. Students in the elementary school read more fiction than any other type of material.
3. During the primary grades, sex differences in reading preferences are not very marked. By the age of nine or ten, however, definite sex differences are apparent. In addition:
   a. Boys read more non-fiction than girls.
   b. Girls read more poetry than boys.
   c. Girls as a group read more than boys.
   d. Boys have a wider range of interests than girls.
   e. Both boys and girls rank adventure, mystery, animal stories, patriotism, and humor high in their preferences.
4. Voluntary reading usually increases in amount until the age of twelve or thirteen.

5. Generally, bright children read much more than the average child, have a wider range of reading preferences, and are usually a year or two ahead of the average child in interest maturity. The mentally slow child reads less and generally has preferences which are slightly immature for his age, but more mature than those of younger children of his mental level.

Those who are interested in bringing children and books together will undoubtedly find the above generalizations useful. In spite of these generalizations, however, it must be remembered that the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children are highly personal and individual. Book selection, therefore, should be a matter of individual choice even if the child does not conform to the general trends uncovered by reading preference studies. Since book selection should be a matter of individual choice, a wide variety of materials should be provided from which boys and girls may choose.

Implications of Reading Preference Studies

The bulk of studies concerning the reading preferences of children in the intermediate grades have produced both useful and interesting conclusions. It cannot be overlooked, however, that few studies have concerned themselves with the reading preferences of inner-city children. Those few studies which have been reported, moreover, have focused

on children in the primary grades. There has been a void in the attention given to the reading preferences of intermediate-grade children in the inner city.

With the current emphasis on effective education for inner-city children, additional research needs to be done. Riessman writes that:

> There is a great need for readers and materials more attuned to the experiences and problems of lower socio-economic groups. The textbooks used in the schools present predominately middle-class illustrations, rarely concerning themselves with problems or heroes of the disadvantaged.[84]

Research needs to be conducted to determine whether or not inner-city children in the intermediate grades actually prefer to read stories or books which contain illustrations, settings, and characters attuned to the experiences and problems of these children. The study described in the next chapter represents an attempt to investigate the influence of these factors on the reading preferences of inner-city children in intermediate grades.

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[84]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 30.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Numerous methods for ascertaining children's reading interests and preferences have been discussed by various authors. Whitehead describes the techniques of observation, interviews, and questionnaires.[1] In addition to these methods, Strang discusses reviews written by students, charts of reading interests, students' actual choice of books, and rating actual or fictitious annotated titles.[2] According to Barbe, the best means of determining a child's interests is from observation.[3] When attempting to obtain responses from a large group of children, however, questionnaires are often the most practical to use; moreover, they may also prove quite helpful in determining children's reading preferences. For determining reading interests and

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[1]Robert Whitehead, Children's Literature: Strategies of Teaching (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 14.

[2]Ruth Strang, Diagnostic Teaching of Reading (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), pp. 105-122.

[3]Walter B. Barbe, Educator's Guide to Personalized Reading Instruction (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 97.

preferences, a number of comprehensive instruments are available to teachers and researchers. For elementary pupils, Harris has used a Recreational Activities Check List.[4] Other inventories of a similar nature have also been constructed by Witty and Kopel[5] and Hildreth and Beard.[6]

Various types of questionnaires have been used in reading preference studies. For the present study, a relatively simple questionnaire was developed since none of the previously published questionnaires or inventories provided the necessary information for testing the hypotheses generated by this study. Although the questions that comprise the questionnaire used in the present study are relatively simple, the procedure for securing the illustrations and descriptions which were shown to the children was much more time consuming and complicated. A detailed explanation of the instrumentation used in the present study follows.

Questionnaire Development and Instrumentation

Of crucial importance to the development of the questionnaire used in this study was a thorough investigation

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[4]Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (4th ed.; New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 478.

[5]Paul A. Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1949), pp. 302-305.

[6]Spache, Good Books . . ., op. cit., p. 9.

of modern realistic fiction trade books written for children in the intermediate grades. Modern realistic fiction books were chosen because they offered the most relevant sources for the purposes of this investigation. Certain books were chosen because the illustrations and descriptions realistically depicted the settings and characters of inner-city and suburban living. According to Georgiou, one of the criteria for realistic books is a realistic presentation of descriptions and pictures of places, people, and things.[7] Of the books reviewed for this study, all those selected met the above criteria.[8]

The questionnaire for this study was developed in three phases.[9] For purposes of clarity, each phase of the questionnaire is discussed separately.

Phase One: Preferences for Settings

The three basic questions comprising the first page of the questionnaire were designed to explore children's preferences for story settings. A dual approach was used. First, five illustrations were selected from modern realistic fiction books for children which depicted the stark, crowded conditions of inner-city or rural living. Another

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[7]Georgiou, op. cit.

[8]A list of the children's books reviewed for the present study is found in the bibliography.

[9]A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix A.

five illustrations were also selected which depicted more favorable living conditions in inner-city or suburban areas. From these ten illustrations, five pairs of contrasting illustrations were made. Each pair of slides: 1) depicted the stark, crowded conditions of inner-city or suburban living; and 2) more favorable living conditions in inner-city or suburban areas. Ektachrome slides were then prepared from these illustrations.[10] Second, actual passages from modern realistic fiction books were then chosen to further describe the setting depicted by each of the ten slides.

For purposes of illustration, the first slide depicts a stark, inner-city setting showing a boy standing on the roof of a tenament building by air ducts and smoke stacks. To compliment the slide, the following description was chosen:

> He waited on the stoop until twilight, pretending to watch the sun melt into the dirty gray Harlem sky. Cars cruised through the garbage and broken glass . . . Packs of little kids, raggedy and skinny, . . . raced along the gutter's edge, kicking beer cans ahead of them . . . Street sounds floated up through the open windows, children yelling, the thud of a rubber ball against the pavement . . . Alfred unfolded his bed, and sat on the edge staring at the green-painted plaster beginning to crack over the kitchen sink. A roach scurried over the cabinet, paused, then scurried back into the wall.[11]

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[10]Sources of these illustrations, as well as a brief description of the settings depicted, are found in Appendix B.

[11]Robert Lipsyte, The Contender (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 1, 2, 16, 37.

In contrast to the above slide and setting description, a second slide and description was selected. The slide shows a residential area of brick homes with two boys in the foreground who have just emptied a basket of grass. To compliment this slide, the following description was selected:

> Almost everybody on Pearl Street went to church on Sunday. There was an empty house on the street. The lawn had been neatly cut. It's a nice neighborhood.[12]

Four other pairs of slides and descriptions were also prepared for the first phase of the study.[13] The order in which the pairs of slides and descriptions were presented to the children was determined by consulting a table of random numbers.[14] The descriptions which accompanied the slides were then taped to insure a standardized presentation to each class of intermediate-grade children.

As each slide was projected on a screen, the taped description of that particular setting was presented to the class. Each class member was then asked to respond to three questions which appeared on the first page of the

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[12]Emily Cheney Neville, The Seventeenth-Street Gang (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 4.

[13]Sources for the illustrations and descriptions for this phase of the study can be found in Appendices B and C respectively.

[14]Helen M. Walker and Joseph Lev, Elementary Statistical Methods (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), p. 280.

questionnaire for that particular pair of slides. The order in which these questions were asked on succeeding pairs of slides and descriptions was systematically altered to control possible variation due to the order in which the questions were asked. To eliminate the possible effects of the range of reading levels found in the classrooms, each question on the questionnaire was read to the class. All of the questions were dichotomous. During the first phase of the study, each of five pairs of slides and descriptions were followed by three questions. Each child, therefore, responded to a total of fifteen questions during this phase of the study.

Phase Two: Preferences for Character Descriptions

In the second phase of the study, a procedure similar to that of phase one was employed. The three basic questions used in phase two of the study were designed to explore children's preferences for story characters with positive or negative self-concepts. From modern realistic fiction books for children, ten character descriptions were selected. Five descriptions depicted a character with a positive self-concept. The remaining five character descriptions depicted a character with a negative self-concept. Each positive self-concept character description was paired with one of the five negative self-concept character descriptions thereby resulting in five pairs of character descriptions.

For purposes of illustration, the first character description described a child with a positive self-concept.

> I had always felt that the Devon School came into existence the day I entered it, was vibrantly real while I was a student there, and then blinked out like a candle the day I left . . . I became quite a student after that. I had always been a good one . . . . I was more and more becoming the best student in school.[15]

In contrast to the above character description, a second description was selected which depicted a child with a negative self-concept.

> I walked in anyway and got heck [heck inserted in place of hell]. Mr. Finley, the teacher was in a wild mood . . . and then some guy in the . . . room accused me of stealing . . . Then my math [math inserted in place of Algebra] teacher called me in to say that if I didn't get down to work I would be in school for the rest of my life . . . then on top of everything this girl called me a slob.[16]

The five pairs of character descriptions[17] in this phase of the study were randomized by a procedure similar to that described in phase one. After each pair of character descriptions was presented to the class with a tape recorder, each student responded to three questions.[18] As in phase one, the questions were read to the students;

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[15]John Knowles, A Separate Peace (New York: Bantam Books, 1966), pp. 1, 46, 47.

[16]Barbara Wersba, The Dream Watcher (New York: Atheneum Books, 1969), pp. 16-17.

[17]Sources of these descriptions, as well as the actual passages used, are found in Appendix D.

[18]See page two of the questionnaire found in Appendix A.

moreover, the order in which the questions were asked was systematically altered. The method of student response was the same as that used in phase one. During the second phase of the study, each child responded to a total of fifteen questions.

Phase Three: Preferences for Group Interactions

The three basic questions used in the third phase of the study were designed to explore children's preferences for story characters involved in positive or negative group interactions.[19] Five descriptions of positive group interaction were paired with five descriptions of negative group interaction.[20]

For purposes of illustration, the first group interaction description was positive.

> Niagara Falls! Niagara Falls! Niagara, Niagara, Ni- Ni- agara- agara! The children sang and shouted . . . That Miss Burr-Marie has a guitar that she was playing. Her head was thrown back and she was smiling, looking happy and beautiful. . . . There was singing and then a talk from Mr. Schering about how happy they all were and how much happier they would be as time went on, and what they were going to do during their stay.[21]

In contrast to the above group interaction description, a second description was selected which depicted negative group interaction.

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[19]See page three of the questionnaire found in Appendix A.

[20]Sources of these descriptions, as well as the actual passages used, are found in Appendix E.

[21]Mary Stolz, A Wonderful Terrible Time (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 6, 91, 92, 112.

> Major's arms were folded across his chest, and Hollis' lips were pulled back in a buck-toothed grin. "Where's James?" "Where's James?" mimicked Major. "They caught him you . . .," snarled Hollis, pushing Sonny toward Alfred, and then the four of them were in a tight pile of swinging arms and legs, kicking, cuffing, punching, and Alfred smashed into the pavement, under Sonny, and the elbows and fists began crashing into his sides, his head, his stomach.[22]

After each pair of descriptions was presented to a class with the tape recorder, students responded to three questions for the pairs of descriptions. During the final phase of the study, each student responded to a total of fifteen questions. The randomized procedure for presenting the descriptions and the method for obtaining student responses was similar to that of the first two phases of the study.

Summary of Questionnaire Development

Illustrations and descriptions selected from modern realistic books for children provided the basis for formulating the questions used in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was devised so that it could be administered to entire classes of students in grades four, five, and six. The administration of the questionnaire in each classroom was standardized by taping all the descriptions and questions to which the students responded. A sample pair of slides and questions was also presented to each class

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[22]Robert Lipsyte, The Contender, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

involved in the study so that students would have an opportunity to become accustomed to the general nature of the responses they would be asked to make during each phase of the study. The order in which the slides were presented was determined by consulting a table of random numbers. The order in which the questions on the questionnaire were asked was systematically altered to control any possible effects this factor might have in the study. In each phase of the study, students responded to fifteen questions for a total of forty-five questions. The questionnaire used in this study was pre-tested and revised before it was administered to the intermediate-grade students involved in the study.

Setting of the Study

For the purposes of this study, intermediate-grade children who attended inner-city schools comprised the sample. School districts in four large Michigan cities took part in the study. The largest city had a population of over 1,500,000 while the smallest city had a population of approximately 100,000. The number of elementary schools in the participating school districts ranged from 28 to over 250. All of the elementary schools chosen for the study were classified by school administrators as inner-city schools; moreover, each school met the criteria of an inner-city school as stipulated in Chapter I.

The criteria for selecting the elementary schools varied from school district to school district. In some cases, primary consideration had to be given to schools in which no other research was currently being conducted. In other cases, schools were merely asked whether or not they wished to participate in the study.

Sample

The sample was composed of 597 students from grades four, five, and six. The distribution of the sample by sex and grade is shown in Table 3-1. From Table 3-1, it can be seen that the sample is evenly distributed within and between grades and sexes.

TABLE 3-1.--Distribution of Sample by Grade and Sex.

	Sex		
Grade	Boys	Girls	Totals
4	99	100	199
5	100	99	199
6	100	99	199
Totals	299	298	597

The racial composition of the sample for each grade is shown in Table 3-2. The sample is largely composed of Negro students. The remaining 82 students are Mexican Americans or Caucasians. The distribution of the Negro students is evenly distributed between grades. In a

similar vein, the remaining part of the sample, though much smaller, is also evenly distributed between grades.

TABLE 3-2.--Distribution of Sample by Grade and Race.

Grade	Race		Totals
	Negro	Other	
4	173	26	199
5	171	28	199
6	171	28	199
Totals	515	82	597

Collection of Data

After a time period of approximately forty minutes was scheduled for each intermediate-grade classroom within a given school, the investigator carried out all research procedures. The investigator gave brief directions to each class and then presented the slides and taped descriptions taken from modern realistic fiction books for children. Each student marked his questionnaire independently. If it was apparent to the investigator and/or classroom teacher that several students were unable to follow the directions during the presentation, their questionnaires were merely invalidated and not used in the study. After each presentation to a class, the investigator checked all questionnaires and discarded any which were incomplete.

In order to secure intelligence test scores which were necessary to test several hypotheses, each child's cumulative record was consulted. Those students for whom intelligence test data were not available were omitted from the study unless it was the policy of the school system not to give group intelligence tests. In the vast majority of cases, these data were available. The distribution of the sample by intelligence classifications and grade is shown in Table 3-3. The number of students within each intelligence classification is approximately the same although the number of students varies considerably between the three intelligence groups.

TABLE 3-3.--Distribution of Sample by Grade and Intelligence Levels.

Grade	Intelligence Levels			Totals
	Below Average (I. Q.'s below 91)	Average (I. Q.'s 91-110)	Superior (I. Q.'s above 110)	
4	41	70	26	137
5	53	69	18	140
6	57	96	21	174
Totals	151	235	65	451

The distribution of intelligence scores by sex is shown in Table 3-4. The number of boys and girls within each of the three intelligence groups is approximately the

same although the number of students varies considerably between the three intelligence groups.

TABLE 3-4.--Distribution of Sample by Sex and Intelligence Levels.

Sex	Intelligence Levels			Totals
	Below Average (I. Q.'s below 91)	Average (I. Q.'s 91-110)	Superior (I. Q.'s above 110)	
Boys	76	122	26	224
Girls	75	113	39	227
Totals	151	235	65	451

Method of Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaires were programmed on a Control Data Corporation 3600 computer. The transfer of information from the coding sheets to the data cards was verified and cross-checked by a professional not connected with the study. None of the sixty data cards randomly chosen for verification contained an error.

Results of the statistical analysis of the data are reported separately for each of the hypotheses. Since the hypotheses themselves differ, statistical tools required for the analyses also differed. Three basic statistical tools were used in the analysis of the data. Levels of confidence used to test the hypotheses were chosen in order to reduce the overall probability of making a Type I error.

The Bonferoni Inequality states that when statistical tests are not all independent, the overall probability of a Type I error is less than or equal to the sum of making a Type I error for each of the tests.

The one-sample, one-tailed t-test is described in Hays.[23] Hypotheses IA, IB, and IC were analyzed with this technique. The .01 level of confidence was chosen for each hypothesis because the investigator wanted to decrease the risk of a Type I error: rejecting the implicit null hypothesis when it is true.

Three multivariate analyses of variance[24] were used to analyze Hypotheses 2ABC through 6ABC. Multivariate analysis of variance tests for differences among a number of means to different treatments. Application of the model may be made to any number of groups, any number of test variables, and any number of covariant variables. The models in this investigation examined the data for the variable of age, grade, sex, intelligence, and race. The .025 level of confidence was used to test each hypothesis.

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[23]William L. Hays, Statistics for Psychologists (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 311.

[24]Ibid., pp. 439-47.

The third statistical technique was canonical correlations.[25] The best linear function of the variables in each set is obtained by factorial methods, and then the correlation between these composites gives what is known as a canonical correlation. Such a correlation is the maximum possible between two sets of variables. Hypotheses 7A through 7F were analyzed with this statistical technique. The .01 level of confidence was used to test each hypothesis.

In this study, twenty-four hypotheses were tested. As an aid to the reader, the hypotheses are grouped into general categories followed by the method of analysis for that particular group of hypotheses.

General Reading Preferences

1A: Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books with depict pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas than stark inner-city areas.

1B: Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts than characters with negative self-concepts.

1C: Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction than characters in negative group interaction.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .01 level using one-tailed, one-sample t-tests.

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[25]Donald F. Morrison, Multivariate Statistical Methods (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 213-218.

Age and Reading Preferences

2A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with age.

2B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with age.

2C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with age.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .025 level using a three-way analysis of variance for the variables age, sex, and race.

Grade and Reading Preferences

3A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with grade levels.

3B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with grade levels.

3C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with grade levels.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .025 level using a three-way analysis of variance for the variables grade, sex, and race.

Sex and Reading Preferences

4A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with sex.

4B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with sex.

4C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with sex.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .025 level using a three-way analysis of variance for the variables sex, race, and age.

Intelligence and Reading Preferences

5A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with intelligence.

5B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with intelligence.

5C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with intelligence.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .025 level using a four-way analysis of variance for the variables intelligence, grade, sex, and race.

Race and Reading Preferences

6A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with race.

6B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories of books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with race.

6C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with race.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .025 level using a three-way analysis of variance for the variables race, sex, and grade.

The Child's Perceptions on His Reading Preferences

7A: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for settings are positively correlated with their perceptions of the pleasantness or starkness of their home environments.

7B: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for settings are positively correlated with the pleasantness or starkness of the home environments in which they would prefer to live.

7C: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for characters are positively correlated with the type of persons they perceive as being most like themselves.

7D: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for characters are positively correlated with the type of person they would like to be.

7E: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for group interaction are positively correlated with the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they live or play.

7F: The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for group interaction are positively correlated with the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they prefer to live or play.

Each of the above hypotheses will be tested at the .01 level using canonical correlations.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings, characters, and group interactions were the main focuses of the sets of hypotheses tested. The hypotheses were designed to explore whether or not reading preferences vary with age, grade, sex, intelligence, and race. The data collected and analyzed by the procedures described in Chapter III are presented in this chapter. Each of the twenty-four hypotheses is presented along with observations of data relevant to these hypotheses. For purposes of clarity, the hypotheses are categorized into seven major areas.

General Reading Preferences

Hypothesis 1A

> Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas than stark inner-city areas.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the

children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 1A: If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read? The responses the children made to each pair of illustrations and descriptions were given an arbitrary value of one for each pleasant setting and zero for each stark setting. A child could, therefore, achieve a score ranging from zero to five for the total of the five pairs of setting descriptions. The theoretical expected score was 2.5.

A one-tailed, one-sample t-test was used to determine whether or not the observed responses of the 597 children were significantly higher than 2.5. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 1A and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the t-value at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 2.33. The t-value obtained was 8.63 for which $p < .0001$. Since the t-value was greater than 2.33, Hypothesis 1A was accepted:

> Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas than stark inner-city areas.

Data relevant to Hypothesis 1A is included in Table 4-1.

TABLE 4-1.--One-tailed, one-sample T Test for Hypothesis 1A.

Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
3.04	1.54	1 596	8.63	<.0001	Accepted

Hypothesis 1B

> Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts than characters having negative self-concepts.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 1B: If a story of book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read? The responses the children made to each pair of character descriptions were given an arbitrary value of one for each positive self-concept and zero for each negative self-concept. A child could, therefore, achieve a score ranging from zero to five for the total of the five pairs of character descriptions. The theoretical expected score was 2.5.

A one-tailed, one-sample t-test was used to determine whether or not the observed responses of the 597 children

were significantly higher than 2.5. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 1B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the t-value at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 2.33. The t-value obtained was 3.98 for which $p < .0001$. Since the t-value was greater than 2.53, Hypothesis 1B was accepted:

> Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts than characters having negative self-concepts.

Data relevant to Hypothesis 1B is included in Table 4-2.

TABLE 4-2.--One-tailed, one-sample T Test for Hypothesis 1B.

Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
2.72	1.40	1 596	3.98	<.0001	Accepted

Hypothesis 1C

> Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction than characters in negative group interaction.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction

descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 1C: If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read? The responses the children made to each pair of character descriptions were given an arbitrary value of one for each positive group interaction and zero for each negative group interaction. A child could, therefore, achieve a score ranging from zero to five for the total of the five pairs of group interaction descriptions. The theoretical expected score was 2.5.

A one-tailed, one-sample t-test was used to determine whether or not the observed responses of the 597 children were significantly higher than 2.5. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 1C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the t-value at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 2.33. The t-value obtained was 4.98 for which $p < .0001$. Since the t-value was greater than 2.33, Hypothesis 1C was accepted:

> Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express a greater preference for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction than characters in negative group interaction.

Data relevant to Hypothesis 1C is included in Table 4-3.

TABLE 4-3.--One-tailed, one-sample T Test for Hypothesis 1C.

Mean	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	t	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
2.80	1.5	1 596	4.98	<.0001	Accepted

Age and Reading Preferences

Hypothesis 2A

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with age.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 2A: If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of age, sex, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 2A and reject the implicit

statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 1.83. The F value obtained was 1.92 for which $p < .0176$. Since the F value was greater than 1.83, Hypothesis 2A was accepted:

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with age.

Data relevant to Hypothesis 2A is included in Table 4-4.

TABLE 4-4.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for age.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Age	1 593	1.92	<.0176	Accepted

An inspection of Table 4-5 reveals how preferences for settings vary with the four age levels.[1] Setting number 5 is the best discriminator for the four age levels. In general, eight- and nine-year-old children prefer more pleasant settings than the other age groups. Although preferences for pleasant settings generally

[1]The discriminate function coefficients are solved to maximize the differences in the levels of the independent variables. The discriminate scores are obtained by multiplying the discriminate function coefficient by the obtained score for each child in each setting and then summing over settings.

TABLE 4-5.--Means, standard deviations, and discriminate function coefficients and scores for Hypothesis 2A.

Setting Number	Discriminate Function Coefficients	Ages							
		8-9		10		11		12-14	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	-0.46	.60	.49	.58	.50	.58	.49	.56	.50
2	0.40	.66	.47	.57	.50	.52	.50	.57	.50
3	0.74	.75	.43	.71	.45	.68	.47	.57	.50
4	0.17	.62	.49	.53	.50	.56	.50	.52	.50
5	1.70	.74	.44	.56	.50	.66	.47	.55	.50
Discriminate Scores		1.92	.94	1.67	1.02	1.54	1.05	1.42	1.02

diminished with age, the twelve- to fourteen-year old children also prefer the pleasant settings.

Hypothesis 2B

> The reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with age.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 2B: If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of character descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of age, sex, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 2B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 1.83. The F value obtained was .65 for which $p < .8365$. Since the F value was less than 1.83, Hypothesis 2B was not accepted. There is no evidence that the reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading

stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with age. Data relevant to Hypothesis 2B is included in Table 4-6.

TABLE 4-6.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for age.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Age	15 1,593	.65	<.8365	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 2C

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with age.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 2C: If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded

to each of the five pairs of group interaction descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of age, sex, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 2C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 1.83. The F value obtained was 1.35 for which $p < .1656$. Since the F value was less than 1.83, Hypothesis 2C was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with age. Data relevant to Hypothesis 2C is included in Table 4-7.

TABLE 4-7.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for age.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Age	15	1,593	1.35	<.1656	Not Accepted

Grade and Reading Preferences

Hypothesis 3A

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with grade levels.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 3A: If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of grade, sex, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 3A and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.05. The F value obtained was 2.97 for which $p < .0011$. Since the F value was greater than 2.05, Hypothesis 3A was accepted:

The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with grade levels.

Data relevant to Hypothesis 3A is included in Table 4-8.

TABLE 4-8.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for grade.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Grade	10	1,162	2.97	<.0011	Accepted

An inspection of Table 4-9 reveals how preferences for settings vary with grades four, five, and six. Setting number 5 is the best discriminator for the three grades. The fourth-grade children generally chose the pleasant settings more than the fifth-grade children who, in turn, chose the pleasant settings more than the sixth-grade children. For the remainder of the settings, there is not as much difference between grades. All the children in the three grades, however, preferred the pleasant settings to a greater extent than the stark settings.

TABLE 4-9.--Means, standard deviations, and discriminate function coefficients and scores for Hypothesis 3A.

Setting Number	Discriminate Function Coefficients	Grades					
		4		5		6	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	-0.87	.56	.50	.61	.49	.58	.50
2	0.56	.64	.48	.51	.50	.58	.50
3	0.16	.72	.45	.68	.47	.68	.47
4	-0.12	.59	.49	.54	.50	.54	.50
5	1.96	.74	.44	.63	.48	.54	.50
Discriminate Scores		1.44	.99	1.09	1.04	.97	1.00

Hypothesis 3B

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with grade levels.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 3B: If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of character descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

The responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of grade, sex, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 3B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.05. The F value obtained was .97 for which $p < .4711$. Since the F value was less than 2.05, Hypothesis 3B was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having

positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with grade levels. Data relevant to Hypothesis 3B is included in Table 4-10.

TABLE 4-10.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for grade.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Grade	10 1,162	.97	<.4711	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 3C

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with grade levels.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 3C: If a story was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read? The children responded to each of the five group interaction descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three way analysis of variance using the variables of grade, sex, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 3C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.05. The F value obtained was 2.21 for which $p < .0155$. Since the F value was greater than 2.05, Hypothesis 3C was accepted:

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with grade levels.

A partial explanation for why preferences for group interactions varied with grade but not age may be attributed to using four age groups instead of three age groups. Data relevant to Hypothesis 3C is included in Table 4-11.

TABLE 4-11.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for grade.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result Hypothesis Testing
Grade	10	1,162	2.21	<.0155	Accepted

An inspection of Table 4-12 reveals how preferences for group interactions vary with grades four, five, and six. Group interaction number 5 is the best discrimination for the three grades. The fourth-grade children generally chose the positive group interactions more

TABLE 4-12.--Means, standard deviations, and discriminate function coefficients and scores for Hypothesis 3C.

Group Interaction Number	Discriminate Function Coefficients	Grades					
		4		5		6	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	0.58	.61	.49	.54	.50	.50	.50
2	-0.98	.60	.49	.58	.50	.64	.48
3	0.30	.64	.48	.66	.47	.60	.49
4	0.77	.56	.50	.47	.50	.42	.50
5	1.26	.60	.49	.56	.50	.45	.50
Discriminate Scores		1.47	.97	1.00	.98	.73	1.06

than the fifth-grade children who, in turn, chose the positive group interactions more than the sixth-grade children. This general trend is also evident in group interaction numbers 1 and 4. All three grades, however, preferred the positive group interactions.

Sex and Reading Preferences

Hypothesis 4A

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with sex.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 4A: If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three way analysis of variance using the variables of sex, grade, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 4A and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025

level was equal to or greater than 2.57. The F value obtained was 2.01 for which $p < .0750$. Since the F value was less than 2.57, Hypothesis 4A was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with sex. Data relevant to Hypothesis 4A is included in Table 4-13.

TABLE 4-13.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for sex.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Sex	5 581	2.01	<.0750	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 4B

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with sex.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was

presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 4B: If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of character descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

The responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three way analysis of variance using the variables of sex, grade, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 4B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.57. The F value obtained was 1.88 for which $p < .0956$. Since the F value was less than 2.57, Hypothesis 4B was not accepted. There was no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with sex. Data relevant to Hypothesis 4B is included in Table 4-14.

TABLE 4-14.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for sex.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Sex	5	581	1.88	<.0956	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 4C

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with sex.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 4C: If a story was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five group interaction descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three way analysis of variance using the variables of sex, grade, and race. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 4C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.57. The F value obtained was 4.21 for which $p < .0010$. Since the F value was greater than 2.57, Hypothesis 4C was accepted:

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with sex.

Data relevant to Hypothesis 4C is included in Table 4-15.

TABLE 4-15.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for sex.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Sex	5	581	4.21	<.0010	Accepted

An inspection of Table 4-16 reveals how group interactions vary with sex. Group interaction number 5 is the best discriminator between the boys and the girls. Girls chose the positive group interactions more than the boys. This is also evident in group interaction numbers 1, 2, and 3 but the difference was not as great. Girls generally chose positive group interactions while the boys appeared to be neutral.

TABLE 4-16.--Means, standard deviations, and discriminate function coefficients and scores for Hypothesis 4C.

Group Interaction Number	Discriminate Function Coefficients	Boys		Girls	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	-0.04	.53	.50	.57	.50
2	0.66	.57	.50	.64	.48
3	0.08	.62	.49	.65	.48
4	-0.88	.49	.50	.48	.50
5	1.94	.46	.50	.62	.49
Discriminate Scores		.86	1.03	1.24	.97

Intelligence and Reading Preferences

Hypothesis 5A

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with intelligence.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 5A: If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read? The 451 children for whom intelligence test data were available responded to each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions for a total of 2,255 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, four-way analysis of variance using the variables of intelligence, sex, race, and grade. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 5A and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.05. The F value obtained was 1.48 for which $p < .1417$. Since the F value was less than 2.05, Hypothesis 5A was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences

of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with intelligence. Data relevant to Hypothesis 5A is included in Table 4-17.

TABLE 4-17.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for intelligence.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Sex	10	822	1.48	<.1417	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 5B

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with intelligence.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 5B: If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 451 children for whom intelligence test data were

available responded to each of the five pairs of character descriptions for a total of 2,255 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, four-way analysis of variance using the variables of intelligence, sex, race, and grade. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 5B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.05. The F value obtained was .37 for which $p < .9604$. Since the F value was less than .96, Hypothesis 5B was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with intelligence. Data relevant to Hypothesis 5B is included in Table 4-18.

TABLE 4-18.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for intelligence.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Sex	10	822	.37	<.9604	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 5C

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with intelligence.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 5C: If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 451 children for whom intelligence test data was available responded to each of the five pairs of character descriptions for a total of 2,255 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, four-way analysis of variance using the variables of intelligence, sex, race, and grade. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 5C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.05. The F value obtained was .75 for which $p < .6757$. Since the F value was less than 2.05, Hypothesis 5C was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict

characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with intelligence. Data relevant to Hypothesis 5C is included in Table 4-19.

TABLE 4-19.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for sex.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Sex	10	822	.75	<.6757	Not Accepted

Race and Reading Preferences

Hypothesis 6A

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with race.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 6A: If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children

responded to each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of race, grade, and sex. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 6A and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.57. The F value obtained was 2.46 for which $p < .0319$. Since the F value was less than 2.57, Hypothesis 6A was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict stark inner-city settings contrasted with more pleasant settings in middle class suburban areas vary with race. Data relevant to Hypothesis 6A is included in Table 4-20.

TABLE 4-20.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for race.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Race	5	581	2.46	<.0319	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 6B

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having negative self-concepts vary with race.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 6B: If a story of book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five pairs of character descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of race, grade, and sex. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 6B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.57. The F value obtained was 1.01 for which $p < .4123$. Since the F value was less than 2.57, Hypothesis 6B was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters having positive self-concepts contrasted with characters having

negative self-concepts vary with race. Data relevant to Hypothesis 6B is included in Table 4-21.

TABLE 4-21.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for race.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Race	5	581	1.01	<.4123	Not Accepted

Hypothesis 6C

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with race.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children responded to one question relevant to Hypothesis 6C: If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read? The 597 children responded to each of the five group interaction descriptions for a total of 2,985 responses.

These responses were then analyzed by a mixed model, three-way analysis of variance using the variables of race, grade, and sex. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 6C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the F value at the .025 level was equal to or greater than 2.57. The F value obtained was 2.26 for which $p < .0474$. Since the F value was less than 2.57, Hypothesis 6C was not accepted. There is no evidence that the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for reading stories or books which depict characters in positive group interaction contrasted with characters in negative group interaction vary with race. Data relevant to Hypothesis 6C is included in Table 4-22.

TABLE 4-22.--Multivariate test of equality of mean vectors for race.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Race	5	581	2.26	<.0474	Not Accepted

The Child's Perceptions and His Reading Preferences

The remaining six hypotheses were all tested using canonical correlations. The best linear function of the variables in each hypothesis was obtained by factorial methods, and then the correlation between these composites gives what is known as the canonical correlation. Such a correlation is the maximum possible between two sets of variables. If the canonical correlation is zero, the sampling distribution of the canonical correlation is approximately χ^2. The χ^2 distribution, therefore, can be used to test the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis 7A

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for settings are positively correlated with their perceptions of the pleasantness or starkness of their home environments.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children answered two questions relevant to Hypothesis 7A:

1. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?

2. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

The 597 children responded by answering these questions for each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions. This resulted in 2,985 responses for each question or a total of 5,970 responses.

A canonical correlation coefficient was computed for the two variables investigated by the above questions. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 7A and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the χ^2 value with 25 degrees of freedom at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 44.31. The obtained χ^2 value was 101.65 for which $p < .0001$. Since the χ^2 value was greater than 44.31, Hypothesis 7A was accepted. A positive relationship exists between children's perceptions of their home environments and their reading preferences for settings. The canonical correlation coefficient and other data relevant to Hypothesis 7A is included in Table 4-23.

Hypothesis 7B

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for settings are positively correlated with the pleasantness or starkness of the home environments in which they would prefer to live.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of illustrations and descriptions depicting inner-city and suburban settings were presented to the children. After each pair of illustrations and descriptions was presented, the children answered two questions relevant to Hypothesis 7B:

1. In which neighborhood would you rather live?
2. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

The 597 children responded by answering these questions for each of the five pairs of illustrations and descriptions. This resulted in 2,985 responses for each question or a total of 5,970 responses.

A canonical correlation coefficient was computed for the two variables investigated by the above questions. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 7B and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the χ^2 value with 25 degrees of freedom at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 44.31. The obtained χ^2 value was 137.41 for which $p < .0001$. Since the χ^2 value was greater than 44.31, Hypothesis 7B was accepted. A positive relationship exists between children's reading preferences for settings and the home environments in which they would prefer to live. The canonical correlation coefficient and other data relevant to Hypothesis 7B is included in Table 4-24.

TABLE 4-23.--Chi-square test for the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis Tested	Correlation Coefficient	Chi Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
7A	.28	101.65	25	<.0001	Accepted

TABLE 4-24.--Chi-square test for the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis Tested	Correlation Coefficient	Chi Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
7B	.32	117.63	25	<.0001	Accepted

Hypothesis 7C

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for characters are positively correlated with the type of person they perceive as being most like themselves.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children answered two questions relevant to Hypothesis 7C:

1. Which person sounds most like you?
2. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

The 597 children responded by answering these questions for each of the five pairs of character descriptions. This resulted in 2,985 responses for each question or a total of 5,970 responses.

A canonical correlation coefficient was computed for the two variables investigated by the above questions. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 7C and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the χ^2 value with 25 degrees of freedom at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 44.31. The obtained χ^2 value was 117.63 for which $p < .0001$. Since the χ^2 value was greater than 44.31, Hypothesis 7C was accepted. A

positive relationship exists between children's reading preferences for characters and the type of person they perceive as being most like themselves. The canonical correlation coefficient and other data relevant to Hypothesis 7C is included in Table 4-25.

Hypothesis 7D

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for characters are positively correlated with the type of person they would like to be.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters with positive and negative self-concepts were presented to the children. After each pair of character descriptions was presented, the children answered two questions relevant to Hypothesis 7D:

1. Which person would you rather be?
2. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

The 597 children responded by answering these questions for each of the five pairs of character descriptions. This resulted in 2,985 responses for each question or a total of 5,970 responses.

A canonical correlation coefficient was computed for the two variables investigated by the above questions. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 7D

and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the χ^2 value with 25 degrees of freedom at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 44.31. The obtained χ^2 value was 103.08 for which $p < .0001$. Since the χ^2 value was greater than 44.31, Hypothesis 7D was accepted. A positive relationship exists between children's reading preferences for characters and the type of person they would like to be. The canonical correlation coefficient and other data relevant to Hypothesis 7D is included in Table 4-26.

Hypothesis 7E

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for group interaction are positively correlated with the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they live or play.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children answered two questions relevant to Hypothesis 7E:

1. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?
2. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

TABLE 4-25.--Chi-square test for the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis Tested	Correlation Coefficient	Chi Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
7C	.34	117.63	25	<.0001	Accepted

TABLE 4-26.--Chi-square test for the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis Tested	Correlation Coefficient	Chi Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
7D	.34	103.08	25	<.0001	Accepted

The 597 children responded by answering these questions for each of the five pairs of group interaction descriptions. This resulted in 2,985 responses for each question or a total of 5,970 responses.

A canonical correlation coefficient was computed for the two variables investigated by the above questions. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 7E and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the χ^2 value with 25 degrees of freedom at the .01 was equal to or greater than 44.31. The obtained χ^2 value was 110.06 for which $p < .0001$. Since the χ^2 value was greater than 44.31, Hypothesis 7E was accepted. A positive relationship exists between children's reading preferences for group interaction and the type of group interaction they perceive as being most like the group with whom they live or play. The canonical correlation coefficient and other data relevant to Hypothesis 7E is included in Table 4-27.

Hypothesis 7F

> The expressed reading preferences of inner-city intermediate-grade children for group interaction are positively correlated with the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they prefer to live or play.

In order to secure data to test this hypothesis, five pairs of descriptions depicting characters in positive and negative group interaction were presented

to the children. After each pair of group interaction descriptions was presented, the children answered two questions relevant to Hypothesis 7F:

1. Which group of people would you rather live or play with?
2. If a story of book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

The 597 children responded by answering these questions for each of the five pairs of group interaction descriptions. This resulted in 2,985 responses for each question or a total of 5,970 responses.

A canonical correlation coefficient was computed for the two variables investigated by the above questions. The decision rule was to accept experimental Hypothesis 7F and reject the implicit statistical null hypothesis if the χ^2 value with 25 degrees of freedom at the .01 level was equal to or greater than 44.31. The obtained χ^2 value was 97.41 for which $p < .0001$. Since the χ^2 value was greater than 44.31, Hypothesis 7F was accepted. A positive relationship exists between children's reading preferences for group interaction and the type of group interaction that they perceive as being most like the group with whom they prefer to live or play. The canonical correlation coefficient and other data relevant to Hypothesis 7F is included in Table 4-28.

TABLE 4-27.--Chi-square test for the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis Tested	Correlation Coefficient	Chi Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
7E	.35	110.06	25	<.0001	Accepted

TABLE 4-28.--Chi-square test for the significance of a canonical correlation.

Hypothesis Tested	Correlation Coefficient	Chi Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
7F	.32	97.41	25	<.0001	Accepted

Interaction Effects

As hypotheses were tested using the multivariate analysis of variance technique, it was possible to explore fourteen possible interaction effects. The interaction effects explored by the present investigation are summarized in Table 4-29. These fourteen interactions were tested for significance at the .01 level. The interaction of grade and race for group interactions was significant at the .01 level since the F value was greater than 2.01 (see Table 4-30). The means, standard deviations, and discriminate function coefficients and scores for the interaction of grade and race are presented in Table 4-31.

By plotting the discriminate scores for each grade and race (see Figure 4-1), the meaning of the interaction becomes clearer. From this figure, three trends can be noted:

1. As a group, fourth-grade Mexican American and white students selected positive group interactions to a greater degree than did the fourth-grade Negro students.
2. As a group, fifth-grade Negro students selected positive group interactions to a greater degree than did the fifth-grade Mexican American and white students.

TABLE 4-29.--Summary of interactions tested for significance.

Sources of Variation	Phase of Study		
	Setting	Characters	Group Interaction
Race x Sex	NS	NS	NS
Race x Age	NS	NS	NS
Race x Grade	NS	NS	S
Race x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Sex x Age	NS	NS	NS
Sex x Grade	NS	NS	NS
Sex x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Age x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Grade x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Race x Sex x Grade	NS	NS	NS
Race x Sex x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Race x Grade x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Sex x Grade x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS
Race x Sex x Grade x Intelligence	NS	NS	NS

TABLE 4-30.--Multivariate test for interaction of grade and race.

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom		F	Significance Level	Result of Hypothesis Testing
Grade x Race	10	1162	2.44	<.0070	Significant

TABLE 4-31.--Means, standard deviations, and discriminate function coefficients and scores for the interaction of grade and race.

Group Interaction Number	Discriminate Function Coefficients	Grade 4				Grade 5				Grade 6			
		Black		White		Black		White		Black		White	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	-0.77	.63	.49	.48	.51	.59	.49	.35	.49	.47	.50	.73	.46
2	1.60	.56	.50	.76	.44	.59	.49	.48	.51	.65	.48	.91	.29
3	-0.81	.67	.47	.71	.46	.65	.48	.74	.45	.58	.50	.82	.39
4	1.20	.55	.50	.62	.50	.48	.50	.35	.49	.42	.50	.64	.49
5	-0.57	.61	.49	.43	.51	.59	.49	.48	.51	.44	.50	.59	.50
Discriminate Scores		.19	1.02	.77	.85	.21	.98	.04	1.16	.46	.94	.66	.46

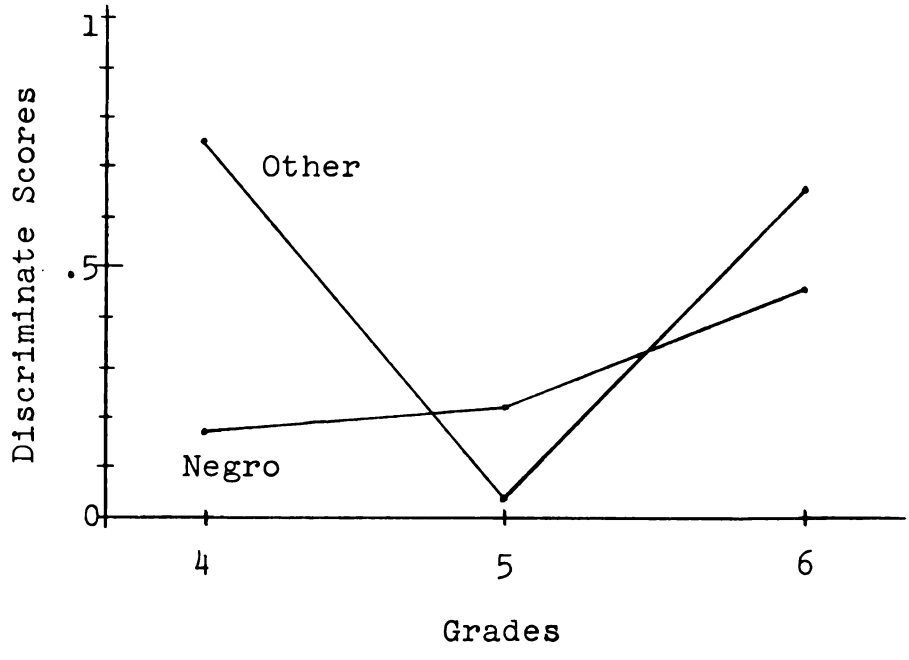

Figure 4-1.--Plot of Discriminate Scores for the Interaction of Grade and Race for Group Interactions.

3. As a group, sixth-grade Mexican American and white students selected positive group interactions to a greater degree than did the sixth-grade Negro students.

These trends are also evident for several of the group interactions. Figure 4-2 contains the plots of the means for the interaction of grade and race for the five group interactions. Group interaction numbers 2 and 4 reveal the same trends mentioned above. In group interactions numbers 1 and 5, however, the Negro students in grade four chose positive group interactions to a greater degree than did Mexican American and white students in grade four. In group interaction 3, the fourth- and sixth-grade students conform to the above statements; however the fifth-grade Mexican American and white students chose positive group interactions to a greater degree than did the fifth-grade Negro students. The mean preferences of Negro students for group interactions appear to be more stable over time than the Mexican American and white students.

The next, and final, chapter summarizes the results of the study and presents implications for the content of reading materials used by inner-city children as well as recommendations for future research.

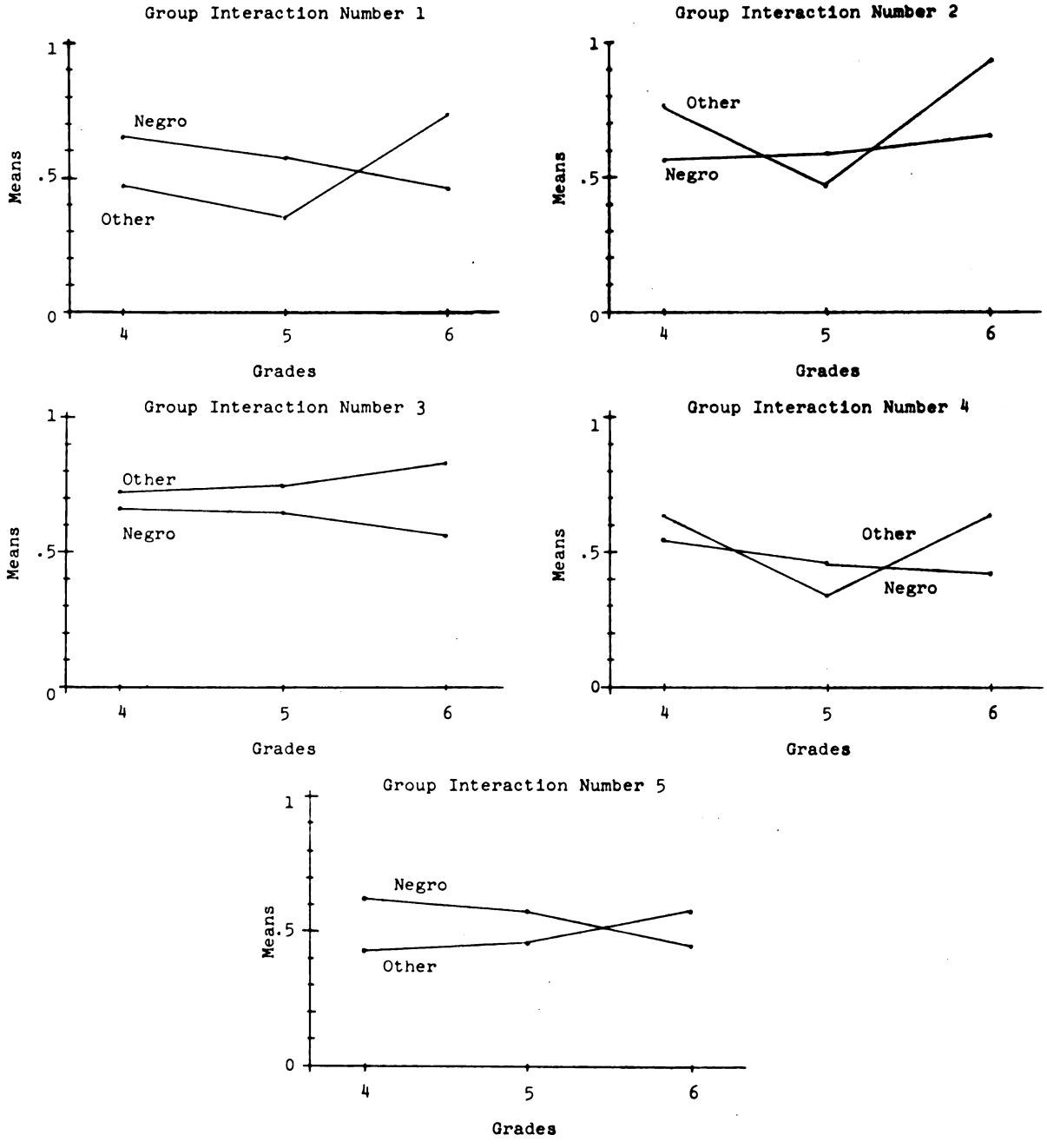

Figure 4-2.--Plots of Means for the Interaction of Grade and Race for the Five Group Interactions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings, characters, and group interactions were the main focuses of the twenty-four hypotheses investigated. The results of the study are summarized in this final chapter. The implications of the findings for the content of reading materials used by inner-city children in the intermediate grades are included in the latter part of the chapter.

Conclusions

Conclusions in this investigation are drawn from findings to which tests of statistical significance have been applied. Applications of these conclusions to a larger population than included in this study may or may not be justified. The following conclusions have been drawn from the findings:

1. Inner-city children in the intermediate grades express statistically significant reading preferences for stories or books which depict

middle class settings, characters with positive self-concepts, and characters in positive group interactions.

2. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings vary significantly with age.
3. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for characters and group interactions were not found to vary significantly with age.
4. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings and group interactions vary significantly with grade.
5. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for characters were not found to vary significantly with grade.
6. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for group interactions vary significantly with sex.
7. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings and characters were not found to vary significantly with sex.

8. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings, characters, and group interactions were not found to vary significantly with intelligence.
9. The expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings, characters, and group interactions were not found to vary significantly with race.
10. Significant positive relationships exist between the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for settings and (1) their perceptions of their home environments, and (2) the home environments in which they would prefer to live.
11. Significant positive relationships exist between the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for characters and (1) the type of person they perceive as being most like themselves, and (2) the type of person they would rather be.
12. Significant positive relationships exist between the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades for group interactions and (1) the type of group interaction they perceive as being most like

the group with whom they live or play, and (2) the type of group interaction they perceive as being most like the group with whom they prefer to live or play.

Implications for Reading Materials

Several hypotheses have been advanced to suggest why inner-city children have difficulty in reading. Some argue that the problem has been generated, at least in part, from the reading materials used with inner-city children. Wattenburg, for example, states that "so much of the instructional material used in schools is geared to middle class, suburban, or rural life experiences that its very content is alien to core city children."[1] The implication of such a statement is quite clear: "the materials must be based on experiences to which the disadvantaged child can relate."[2]

Many educators believe that books which are related to the real life experiences of the child provide an opportunity for identification to take place. It is commonly assumed, for example, that multi-ethnic basal readers provide a new incentive for inner-city children to learn to read and improve their reading skills. The rationale for the above statement rests on the notion that illustrations, settings, and characters depicting

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[1]Wattenburg, op. cit., p. 19.

[2]Lloyd, op. cit., p. 532.

life in the inner city enable inner-city children to identify more easily with the story. A crucial assumption, either stated or implied, is that inner-city children prefer to read stories that depict realistic inner-city settings, characters, and/or group interactions.

In a recent analysis of methods used in teaching reading, Chall stated that ". . . too many people are making too many recommendations about content without any proof whatsoever."[3] Emans, in a recent study, suggested that "materials and procedures must be tried out, under controlled conditions, with children."[4] It is not enough for educators and publishers to act only on their hypotheses as to what inner-city children prefer to read.

Perhaps, then, an appropriate question to ask is: What evidence is available from the present investigation to either support or question the assumption that inner-city children prefer to read stories or books which depict settings and characters in urban settings? To this investigator, it is apparent that, as a group, inner-city children in the intermediate grades prefer

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[3]Chall, op. cit., pp. 310-11.

[4]Emans, op. cit., p. 122.

to read stories or books which contain middle class settings as opposed to stark inner-city settings. These children may or may not identify with a particular setting. There is no direct evidence in this investigation to support or refute such an assertion. Regardless of the answer to this assertion, however, the findings of this investigation make it quite clear that iner-city children in the intermediate grades prefer the middle class settings over the stark inner-city settings.

There are, of course, several explanations which amy account for the children's preferences for middle class settings. Perhaps the illustrations and descriptions of the inner-city settings were too stark when compared to the middle class illustrations and descriptions. It is also possible that the inner-city settings were not appropriate to the areas in which the children lived. Although all children comprising the sample attended inner-city schools, many of the children lived in houses. Several of the inner-city settings, however, depicted apartment living. This seemingly small difference may have influenced their choice of settings. Many of the books depicting urban living, however, concentrate on life in apartments, housing projects, and the like. Another possible explanation

for the results may be attributed to the children not revealing their genuine preferences. The kind of data collected in a study of this nature is clearly open to the influence of the response set of providing the investigator with information the child believes he wishes to hear.[5] This possibility, however, seems unlikely in light of the large number of children involved in the investigation and the manner in which the data were collected. Perhaps one of the most important implications which emerges from this investigation is that inner-city settings may not be as useful in teaching materials for inner-city children as commonly believed by some educators and publishers. The present study, however, is too limited in scope to do more than raise a caution signal about an assumption that has rarely been challenged.

The inner-city children in the intermediate grades also indicated significant preferences for reading stories or books which depict characters with positive self-concepts and characters in positive group interactions. It must be kept in mind, however, that characters with positive self-concepts and characters in positive group interactions cannot be characterized exclusively as inner city or suburban middle class. The

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[5]Robin C. Ford and Janos Koplyay, "Children's Story Preferences," The Reading Teacher, 22 (December, 1968), 233.

main point to be kept in mind is that the inner-city children in the intermediate grades in this investigation preferred to read stories or books which contained characters with positive self-concepts and characters in positive group interactions.

Only cautious implications for the reading materials of inner-city children can be given because of the limited scope of the study and the large number of uncontrolled variables. Within the limitations of this investigation, however, it is evident that inner-city children in the intermediate grades prefer to read stories and books which contain middle class settings, characters with positive self-concepts, and characters in positive group interactions. In short, this investigation offers no general support for Reissman's statement that "there is a great need for readers and materials more attuned to the experiences and problems of lower socio-economic groups."[6]

Implications for Future Research

The following recommendations are made on the bases of the total study including the review of literature, the questionnaire study, and the author's experience. An emphasis is placed on basic ideas for future investigations into the reading preferences of inner-city children.

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[6]Reissman, op. cit., p. 30.

1. Replicate the present study in an effort to check the validity of the results and conclusions. A smaller number of children could be randomly chosen from a greater number of settings. The results and conclusions could then have greater generality than was possible in the present investigation.
2. Some investigators may attempt to explore the same basic questions of this investigation by presenting illustrations, as well as descriptions, for all the stimuli presented to the children.
3. New investigations could be undertaken to explore the same basic questions in this investigation. By choosing new illustrations and descriptions from other children's books, comparisons could be made to the results and conclusions of the present investigation.
4. Some investigators may wish to secure an inner-city sample and a suburban sample of intermediate-grade children. The responses of these children to the basic questions used in the present investigation could then be compared with appropriate statistical techniques.

5. Similar techniques to those employed in the present study could be utilized in an attempt to explore the reading preferences of children in the primary grades. Because of the ages of the children involved, the research would have to be much shorter in duration. Perhaps reading preferences for settings, characters, and group interactions could be investigated on three different days.
6. Still other researchers may wish to utilize other techniques for exploring the reading preferences of inner-city children. While the present study offers many worthwhile possibilities, other techniques could also be developed and tried. The findings from these techniques might then be compared to the results and conclusions of the present investigation.

The present investigation was exploratory in that it attempted to examine, in a systematic way, the expressed reading preferences of a large group of intermediate-grade children in four inner-city school districts. Although this investigation offers no final word on the expressed reading preferences of inner-city children in the intermediate grades, it does offer some tentative conclusions that can only be substantiated or

discounted through continued research efforts. It is hoped that this investigation offers a point of departure for other interested investigators.

A final word to all those educators who are concerned with finding out what inner-city children prefer to read. The time may come when a generally accepted list of generalizations is available for the reading preferences of inner-city children. Hopefully, such generalizations will be helpful to educators. It must still be remembered, however, that individual children are being dealt with in the learning process. It is important, therefore, that individual reading preferences, in addition to group reading preferences, be identified. To accomplish this end, the educator must begin with the individual child.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE STUDY

0 Boy Grade_____ Name _____

0 Girl Age_____ School _____

L M H X Y City _____

1 2 1. Which slide or picture shows only one boy?

1 2 2. Which slide or picture shows a group of boys playing?

1 2 3. If a story or book was written about one of these pictures, which would you prefer to read?

A 1 2 1. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?

1 2 2. In which neighborhood would you rather live?

1 2 3. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

B 1 2 1. In which neighborhood would you rather live?

1 2 2. If a book or story was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 3. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?

C 1 2 1. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 2. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?

1 2 3. In which neighborhood would you rather live?

D 1 2 1. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?

1 2 2. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 3. In which neighborhood would you rather live?

E 1 2 1. If a story or book was written about one of these areas or neighborhoods, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 2. In which neighborhood would you rather live?

1 2 3. Which picture and description is most like the place where you live?

Name _____

A 1 2 1. Which person sounds most like you?

1 2 2. Which person would you rather be?

1 2 3. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

B 1 2 1. Which person would you rather be?

1 2 2. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 3. Which person sounds most like you?

C 1 2 1. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 2. Which person sounds most like you?

1 2 3. Which person would you rather be?

D 1 2 1. Which person sounds most like you?

1 2 2. If a story or book was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 3. Which person would you rather be?

E 1 2 1. If a story or bock was written about one of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 2. Which person would you rather be?

1 2 3. Which persnn sounds most like you?

Name _____

A 1 2 1. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?

1 2 2. Which group of people would you rather live or play with?

1 2 3. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

B 1 2 1. Which group of people would you rather live or play with?

1 2 2. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 3. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?

C 1 2 1. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 2. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?

1 2 3. Which group of people would you rather live or play with?

D 1 2 1. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?

1 2 2. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 3. Which group of people would you rather live or play wiht?

E 1 2 1. If a story or book was written about one group of these people, which would you prefer to read?

1 2 2. Which group of people would you rather live or play with?

1 2 3. Which group is most like the people you live or play with?

APPENDIX B

SOURCES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PHASE ONE

SOURCES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR PHASE ONE

1A: Mary Stolz, A Wonderful, Terrible Time (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 40.

This illustration shows a boy standing on the roof of a tenement building by air ducts and smoke stacks.

1B: Molly Cone, The Other Side of the Fence (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 18.

This illustration shows a residential area of brick homes with two boys in the foreground who have just emptied a basket of grass.

2A: Molly Cone, The Other Side of the Fence (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 35.

This illustration shows two boys fishing in a pond near a wooded area.

2B: Mary Hays Weik, Jazz Man (New York: Atheneum House Inc., 1967), p. 8.

This illustration shows the interior of an apartment with a loaf of bread on the window sill. Through the window is another apartment building with a person sitting near the window.

3A: Mary Hays Weik, Jazz Man (New York: Atheneum House Inc., 1967), p. 2.

This illustration shows a man standing in front of a door. In the background are clothes hanging on a line between two buildings.

3B: Molly Cone, The Other Side of the Fence (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), p. 2.

This illustration shows a woman and boy walking in front of a large brick home with a tricycle in the yard.

4A: Molly Cone, The Other Side of the Fence (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), cover.

This illustration shows two boys and a man painting a fence.

4B: Ann Grifalconi, City Rhythms (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), unnumbered.

This illustration shows a view of crowded buildings in a city setting.

5A: Mary Stolz, A Wonderful, Terrible Time (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 101.

This illustration shows a group of girls in the woods walking toward a house situated near a lake.

5B: Nan Hayden Agle, Joe Bean (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967), p. 25.

This illustraton shows a man and boy repairing and cleaning a room.

APPENDIX C

SOURCES AND PASSAGES FOR PHASE ONE

SOURCES AND PASSAGES FOR PHASE ONE

1A: Robert Lipsyte, The Contender (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 1, 2, 16, 37.

He waited on the stoop until twilight, pretending to watch the sun melt into the dirty gray Harlem sky. Cars cruised through the garbage and broken glass . . . Packs of little kids, raggedy and skinny . . . raced along the gutter's edge, kicking beer cans ahead of them. . . . Street sounds floated up through the open windows, children yelling, the thud of a rubber ball against the pavement. . . . Alfred unfolded his bed, and sat on the edge staring at the green-painted plaster beginning to crack over the kitchen sink. A roach scurried over the cabinet, paused, then scurried back into the wall.

1B: Emily Cheney Neville, The Seventeenth-Street Gang (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 4.

Almost everybody on Pearl Street went to the church on Sunday. There was an empty house on the street. The lawn had been neatly cut. It's a nice neighborhood.

2A: Emily Cheney Neville, Berries Goodman (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 11.

Olcott Corners is a suburb about 50 miles out of New York. There were plenty of nifty houses that I liked with clean paint and neat little fenced in yards for a dog. The houses were brand new and I bet they had push button everything. We bought an older house with a pond. It was pretty nice out in the country.

2B: Lorenz Graham, North Town (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1965), pp. 13-14.

The Williamses were living temporarily in a four room flat in a dingy two story building. It was the last row of identical frame houses, all of which badly needed a coat of paint. . . . They never had a bathroom before and they liked the kitchen with its running water and white enameled sink. He had to sleep on a couch in the living room . . .

3A: Frank Bonham, Durango Street (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1965), front flap, pp. 20, 22.

The Durango Housing Project . . . was one of the worst sections in the city. The street . . . speared through a small doomed area of grimy stores, restaurants, and bars . . . On both sides of the street were shabby houses with warped steps and porches. Drifts of trash were heaped between the houses, and old automobiles were being overhauled in front yards.

People were sitting in chairs in front yards, watching the traffic and fanning themselves with newspapers . . . The fenced in backyard was bare of anything but weeds and trash.

3B: Martha Tolles, Too Many Boys (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), pp. 13, 32.

All the lawns up and down Apple Street looked elegant and sparkly under the morning dew except for her yard and the Madison's next door . . . "Such a charming neighborhood for raising boys," Mrs. Walters said, taking in the wide front lawn and the quiet street.

4A: Ester Weir, The Space Hut (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1967), pp. 7, 8.

Mike's family moved out of the big city into the suburbs . . . with a skytouching oak in their new backyard . . . A wonderful new school was only three blocks away. From the top of the tree Mike could see the houses and yards in a mathematical arrangement of neat squares. He could see the countryside and a frozen river, glinting like a silver trail as it twisted from the distant hills.

4B: Mary Elizabeth Vroman, Harlem Summer (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1967), pp. 16, 17.

It was too hot in the little crowded apartments to stay inside . . . The Matthews lived on the fourth floor of an old building. The lights in the halls and stairways were dim. People were always slipping there. The halls weren't kept very clean . . .

The street was full of people, walking, standing around, talking, sitting on steps, looking out windows . . . The tall project buildings stood up straight like the buildings children make with blocks.

5A: Elizabeth L. Konigsburg, Jennifer, Hecate, MacBeth, William McKinley, and me, Elizabeth (New York: Atheneum House Inc., 1967), p. 3.

Our apartment house had grown on a farm about 10 years before. There was still a small farm across the street; it included a big white house, a greenhouse, a caretaker's house, and a pump painted green without a handle. The greenhouse had clean windows. I could see only the roof windows from our second floor apartment. The rest were hidden by trees and shrubs. My mother never called the place a farm--it was called THE ESTATE. The estate gave us a beautiful view from our apartment.

5B: Robert Coles, Dead End School (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), pp. 6, 8.

The apartment was a dirty mess. It has four rooms. As you walk through, each room is smaller than the last until you get to the kitchen and can barely breathe. There were some holes in the wall, and my mother got boards and made me nail them up . . . The big trouble was that almost all of us had to sleep in one room . . .

APPENDIX D

SOURCES AND PASSAGES FOR PHASE TWO

SOURCES AND PASSAGES FOR PHASE TWO

1A: John Knowles, A Separate Peace (New York: Bantam Books, 1966), pp. 1, 46, 47.

I had always felt that the Devon School came into existence the day I entered it, was vibrantly real while I was a student there, and then blinked out like a candle the day I left . . . I became quite a student after that. I had always been a good one . . . I was more and more becoming the best student in school . . .

1B: Barbara Wersba, The Dream Watcher (New York: Atheneum Books, 1969), pp. 16, 17.

I walked in anyway and got heck [heck inserted in place of hell]. Mr. Finley, the teacher, was in a wild mood . . . and then some guy in the . . . room accused me of stealing . . . Then my math [math inserted in place of Algebra] teacher called me in to say that if I didn't get down to work I would be in school for the rest of my life . . . then on top of everything this girl called me a slob.

2A: Barbara Wersba, The Dream Watcher (New York: Atheneum Books, 1969), pp. 6, 24.

You see, it wasn't just that I was lousy in school. Or that I didn't have friends or belong to any

clubs . . . It wasn't even that I was funny-looking. No the problem with me was my soul; . . . sometimes I felt like my soul was a trapped animal banging wildly around a cage trying to get out. This thought was so depressing that I was seriously contemplating suicide.

2B: Julia Cunningham, Dorp Dead (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), pp. 4, 39, 40.

I am ferociously intelligent for my age and at ten I hide this . . . And I'm lucky. I'm not just bright, I'm brilliant, the way the sun is at noon . . . I earn the top of the alphabet in every subject except spelling . . . I'm commencing to worry that I'll soon be labeled the brightest student in the one-room schoolhouse . . .

3A: Louisa R. Shotwell, Roosevelt Grady (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Inc., 1964), pp. 16, 21, 40, 91.

Roosevelt felt good. As if he belonged . . . Roosevelt liked to have things come out even. He liked to have a place to put every piece of whatever he had . . . It was a lot later than six when Roosevelt woke up and found his folks gone, but he didn't worry. He knew why they weren't there and he knew what to do. He was used to being left in charge . . . But he couldn't go to sleep. He was too excited about school.

3B: Emily Cheney Neville, The Seventeenth-Street Gang (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), pp. 55, 91.

Mr. Rourke looked at him now, the way he entered the room with his head down and his shoulders hunched. He frowned. No boy could feel confident when he went around looking like that . . . Hollis, as usual was walking with his head down and didn't see them till Ivan bumped into Khan . . . Hollis allowed himself to be led along, but he still looked sulky. He was feeling miserable and alone . . .

4A: Ester Wier, Easy Does It (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1965), pp. 14, 28, 29.

He knew he was good, just as he knew he could also be better . . . Chip found that life was good now . . . It seemed to him that life had never been happier or fuller.

4B: David Wilkerson, John and Elizabeth Sherrill, The Cross and the Switchblade (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell and Company, 1963), p. 30.

Maria walked over beneath the light bulb and held out her arm. I could see little wounds on it like festered mosquito bites. "I'm a mainliner, Davie. There's no hope for me, not even from God.

5A: Anne Huston and Jane Yolen, Trust a City Kid (New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shephard Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 10, 22.

"Did you bring your lucky horseshoe?" she asked. "Yeah a lot of good it'll do me . . . He was sorry he never told her about it . . . What did it matter at all? . . . What's wrong with me? She didn't want to sit by me. Do I smell or something?

5B: Dorothy Sterling, Mary Jane (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 10, 22.

She was going to Emerson [Emerson inserted in place of Wilson] because it was a better school and she wanted to go . . . Aunt Ruth made her feel special and important, as if she were an explorer or inventor or something. She was so pleased with herself and everybody else that she didn't grumble after dinner when Mamma asked her to take Jimmy to the playground . . . He was real proud of her, and so was grandpa. Pretty soon she got to feeling real proud of herself--and not a bit upset.

APPENDIX E

SOURCES AND PASSAGES FOR PHASE THREE

SOURCES AND PASSAGES FOR PHASE THREE

1A: Mary Stolz, A Wonderful, Terrible Time (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 6, 91, 92, 112.

Niagara Falls! Niagara Falls! Niagara, Niagara, Ni-Ni- agara-agara! The children sang and shouted . . . That Miss Burr-Marie has a guitar that she was playing. Her head was thrown back and she was smiling, looking happy and beautiful . . . There was singing and then a talk from Mr. Schering about how happy they all were and how much happier they would be as time went on, and what they were going to do during their stay.

1B: Robert Lipsyte, The Contender (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), pp. 12, 13.

Major's arms were folded across his chest, and Hollis' lips were pulled back in a buck-tooth grin. "Where's James?" "Where's James?" mimicked Major. "They caught him you . . . " snarled Hollis, pushing Sonny toward Alfred, and then the four of them were in a tight pile of swinging arms and legs, kicking, cuffing, punching, and Alfred smashed into the pavement, under Sonny, and the elbows and fists began crashing into his sides, his head, his stomach.

2A: Zilpha Snyder, Black and Blue Magic (New York: Atheneum, 1966), p. 16.

Dinner time that night was pretty grim, too . . . Every time Miss Thurgood disappeared behind her handkerchief for another coughing spell, Mr. Konkel would gaze at Harry accusingly. It was up to Harry to set them all straight . . . Miss Thurgood drowned him out with another coughing fit. Finally he gave up . . . he was feeling pretty miserable.

2B: Lois Lenski, Coal Camp Girl (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1959), pp. 63, 101.

Daddy and Celia and baby Larry were sitting up close . . . The little coal camp house was alive with bright lights in every room. And its walls were fairly bursting with happiness and merriment, as the dancers whirled around . . . The children frolicked, ate and drank, and had the time of their lives.

3A: Emily Cheney Neville, It's like this, Cat (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), pp. 2, 3.

"Don't get fresh!" Pop jerks the plug out of the record player so hard the needle skips, which probably wrecks my record. So I get mad and start yelling too. Between rounds we both hear Mom in the kitchen starting to wheeze. Pop hisses, "Now, see--you've gone and upset your mother!" I slam the record player shut . . . This isn't the first time Pop and I have played this scene, and there gets to be a pattern.

3B: James Robert Richard, Joker, the Polo Pony (New York: Lothrop, 1959), pp. 12, 166.

"Forget it, Dave. I was just as excited as you were. That was a pretty good shot Barry made, wasn't it." . . . Frank Banks expressed his pleasure and congratulations again, and Aunt Hattie came over with tears of happiness in her eyes to give Dave a great big hug and a resounding smack on the cheek.

4A: Bella Rodman, Lions in the Way (New York: Follett Publishing Company, 1966), p. 186.

In the Boys Club, it made no difference what a boy had been. Only what he was now, or was trying to be . . . In four sentences the Boys Club inserted code built a fence a kid could not crawl under or over. It hemmed him in with such good intentions and good feelings that he was proud to be trapped there. Whoever wrote it, Buddy though, knew boys--that any kid would rather be good than bad.

4B: Frank Bonham, Mystery of the Fat Cat (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 34, 36, 37.

Logan was so preoccupied with his thoughts that when a figure darted out from behind the broad trunk of a tree and stood before him, he could only look up vacantly. Simultaneously his arms were clutched from behind . . . There was a sharp jab at his stomach. Fists struck him from all sides . . . Logan's head struck the jagged circle of stones bordering the earth under a huge elm. One of his attackers directed a

final kick at his unconscious figure, and there was a crunching sound as a heavy shoe struck his eye socket.

5A: Maurine H. Gee, Firestorm (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1968), pp. 39, 44, 93.

Ken stood to one side as his friends filed out of the shed. "See you tomorrow for the Saturday special," he told each one of them . . . There were shouts of laughter as the four of them came down the trail . . . "Let's go to my house," Merve said . . . He looked at Ken with a solemn smile. "You're welcome to anything in my house," he added. "Anything at all."

5B: David Wilkerson, John and Elizabeth Sherrill, The Cross and the Switchblade (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1963), p. 137.

Linda and Kay heard language they'd never heard before. The boys pushed and taunted them. From nowhere something glistened in the dark. Linda looked. One of the boys held a crescent-shaped knife in his hand that shown in the night like the moon. Without warning he lunged at Linda. Linda slipped her body sideways. The knife slashed through her clothing. It ripped out a chunk of her dress but it did not touch her body.