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# A Study of the Selection and Use of Supplementary Reading Materials in Selected Elementary Schools

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Author

A Study of the Selection and Use of Supplementary

Reading Materials in Selected Elementary Schools

(TITLE)

BY

Diana Nickum

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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Aug. 2, 1967  
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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

One of the major functions of our schools, especially in the elementary grades, is to develop in each child the many and varied skills which are needed if a child is to be a good independent reader, and to develop in each child the desire to read. It is known now that one basic reading book does not begin to provide sufficient material to meet the needs of children learning to read. "A balanced program in reading instruction requires a wide variety of materials."<sup>1</sup>

A common problem that has handicapped most elementary schools in the past was the lack of funds to finance the purchasing of books which would aid in the development of skillful and enthusiastic readers. However, during the last few years many federal and state government funds have been made available to public schools, and more emphasis has been placed on the use of varied reading materials. The available funds and the new emphasis on reading have enabled the elementary schools to purchase reading materials that

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<sup>1</sup>Emerald V. Dechant, Improving the Teaching of Reading, (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1964), p. 417.

were never before possible to purchase. Libraries have been established, and large collections of reading materials have been accumulated in many schools; however, it seems that some schools have used the available funds much more than other schools. Varied materials are sometimes still not offered to students in all of our elementary schools. Frequently elementary schools do not have any type of library or a trained librarian. Gertrude Hildreth, a leading authority in reading, states her ideas about services in reading in the following way. "Every school with two hundred or more pupils should have a central library with library service. No classroom collection of books is a substitute for a well-equipped, organized materials center."<sup>2</sup> The Illinois Association of School Librarians stresses the need for libraries in the elementary schools as well as in secondary levels.

Children at the elementary school level have as great a need for materials as students at the secondary level. Modern innovations in education have increased the necessity for a variety of materials to be available to both children and classroom teachers. Reading habits are formed in the elementary years and critical thinking is being learned through the use and evaluation of materials. It is a disservice to deprive children during these formative years of the opportunity to use the wealth of materials available through a good school library program.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Reading, (New York; Henry Holt and Company, 1958), p. 540.

<sup>3</sup>The Illinois Association of School Librarians, Standards for School Library Programs in Illinois, (Springfield, Illinois; Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction), October, 1966, p. 7.

The Illinois Association of School Librarians has established various standards which it feels elementary schools need to follow if school libraries are to provide an adequate collection of materials. The Association suggests that a school book collection should start with 2,000 to 3,000 titles, regardless of the size of the school. Once the basic collection of books is established the number of titles in any library should be based on the number of students enrolled in the school. "Schools having more than 500 students must consider the necessity for ultimately providing their collection a minimum of ten titles for every student enrolled."<sup>4</sup> Librarians are needed in all schools, according to the standards the Association has provided, and an additional full-time librarian should be provided for every additional 300 students.

The Task Force on Education Report, a study of the schools in Illinois, agrees that every school should have a library.

Every elementary school should have a library which serves as a center for all types of instructional materials including, books, pamphlets, periodicals, films, film strips, recordings, and other audio-visual aids. The materials kept in the classrooms should be those that are frequently required for basic daily instruction.<sup>5</sup>

The study also stated the need for central libraries and materials centers in school districts with several elementary

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>The Task Force on Education, Education for the Future of Illinois, State of Illinois, December, 1966, p. 24.



schools. The need for libraries that were easily accessible to pupils and teachers was indicated in the report. The Task Force Report stressed the need for libraries to be adaptable to changes in enrollment, in educational programs and teaching methods.

The role of the teacher in the selection of books and materials is of great importance. The teacher is primarily responsible for acquainting children with reading materials, and it is usually the teacher who stimulates interest in reading materials. It is often the classroom teacher that must make the need of materials known to school administrators and other school personnel. Therefore, it is essential that classroom teachers have the knowledge needed for the selection and use of all types of reading materials. It is of even greater importance that teachers be well-prepared now because so many more materials can be obtained and are available.

Becoming acquainted with school library resources is a basic part of the teacher's education today, both preservice and on the job. Modern teachers need to have wide acquaintance with children's books and with the best sources of information on children's reading so that they can know what is available, what to recommend for purchase, and how to guide children in using books.<sup>6</sup>

It is the opinion of the writer that too frequently teachers are not adequately informed or prepared to aid in the selection of reading material, and it also appears that

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<sup>6</sup>Hildreth, Op. Cit., p. 534.

some schools are not providing a large enough variety of reading materials.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this survey is to determine the types of reading materials that are now being used in our elementary schools, to determine the importance of the classroom teacher in the selection of reading materials, and other aspects with reference to selection, availability, and use of these materials. It is not the intent of the writer to assess the quality of instruction. This study is concerned with the availability of materials which make quality instruction possible.

#### Scope of the Problem

This survey is concerned with the public elementary schools in Illinois, especially in the schools in Central Illinois. Questionnaires were sent to sixty different elementary schools. Of the schools that were selected, thirty were in school systems with an enrollment of less than 1,500 pupils; therefore, these school systems were considered small. The other thirty schools were in larger school systems which had enrollments of over 2,200. It was felt that a more reliable result could be obtained by selecting both large and small schools.

In considering the selection and use of reading materials, the study was concerned with 1) who selects reading materials,

2) how the materials are selected, 3) what materials are being used and are available for elementary pupils, 4) what materials the classroom teacher feels is most effective in her teaching, and 5) the differences between primary grades and intermediate grades in regard to these four areas of concern.

#### Definition of Terms

Basal reader or text is a set of reading textbooks written by an author or group of authors and presented by a single publisher. These textbooks teach the basic reading skills by a well-planned program of instruction.

Building library refers to a library that serves only one school building.

Central library refers to a library in which library materials for an entire school system are located.

Cobasal reading program refers to the use of two or more basal reading texts to teach the skills of reading.

Combination reading program is a reading program which uses more than one method of teaching reading to children, e.g. the use of a basal reader and another phonics program.

Disadvantaged child is a child who has been deprived of experiences which would prepare him for learning in school.

Experience charts are simple, written, charts prepared by the teacher while one or more children tell her about some experience they have had. The teacher writes what the child or children say.

Gifted reader refers to a child that is able to read well beyond the expected reading level for his age or grade.

Individualized reading program is a method of teaching the skills of reading by allowing each child to select materials which interest him and by allowing each child to work at his own rate with the materials he has chosen. Use is made of frequent individual teacher-pupil conferences.

Intermediate grades are grades four, five, and six.

Phonics program refers to a type of reading program which stresses the application of speech sounds in the teaching of reading.

Pre-primers are books which are used at the beginning of reading instruction. The story is told with pictures, while the reading is usually what the characters in the book say.

Primary grades are first, second, and third grades.

Problem reader is a term used to describe a child who does not read as well as his mental ability would indicate that he should be reading.

Programmed reading is a method of teaching reading in which the child uses prepared materials and advances at his own rate of progress while learning the reading skills. This type of reading material is sometimes referred to as "programs".

Reading kits are compactly boxed collections of reading pamphlets which are written on different levels of difficulty.

They are designed for use by individual children so that the child can improve his basic reading skills.

Reading readiness program is a program used by teachers to prepare a child for an aspect of reading instruction.

Reading supervisor is responsible for assisting classroom teachers in the teaching of reading. They usually assist by advising and providing necessary materials, not by actually teaching.

Reading workbooks are books which are consumable by the child, and attempt to assist the child in the use of reading skills. The skills have usually been introduced in non-consumable reading textbooks.

Slow reader refers to a child who comes within the group between the average and the mentally deficient levels of intelligence and who is sufficiently inferior to warrant special instruction.

Supplementary readers are books that reinforce rather than introduce the basic reading skills.

Supplementary reading materials are reading materials which are used beyond the one basic reading material. These materials reinforce rather than introduce the basic reading skills.

#### Related research

After an examination of the Education Index from 1950 to

1967, of Dissertation Abstracts, and of Abstracts' of Dissertations for the years 1960 to 1966 no related articles were located.

However, the writer did find that some research had been made in regard to the selection of reading materials in the Harvard report on reading in elementary schools. In this report, The First R., Mary C. Austin and Coleman Morrison found that, in the opinion of school administrators, very often the classroom teacher was responsible for the selection of reading materials. The study found that between 17% and 29% of the classroom teachers in our country select reading materials that are used in the classroom. The study evaluated library programs and concluded that "too often services of this nature were lacking because there was no trained librarian, only a meager supply of books, and/or a shortage of appropriate facilities."<sup>7</sup>

The Task Force on Education Report also gave some conclusions in regard to instructional materials that are available in our elementary schools. "The quantity and quality of instructional materials vary widely among elementary schools and school districts within the state. The state should move

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<sup>7</sup>Mary C. Austin, and Coleman Morrison, The First R., (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1964), p. 267.

toward greater equalization of instructional materials among schools and school districts."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Task Force on Education, Op. Cit., p. 24.

## CHAPTER II

### PROCEDURE AND TREATMENT OF DATA

#### Method of procedure

To gather data for this study of reading materials available in the elementary schools and of the function of the teacher in selecting reading materials, a questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire was developed in such a way as to require very little time to complete. It was felt that a better return would be acquired if the questionnaire was designed for an easy response.

At the top of the questionnaire was a statement concerning the purpose of the survey and instructions on how to respond to the questionnaire in order to guarantee standardization of responses. A letter explaining the purpose of the survey accompanied the questionnaire. A stamped reply envelope bearing the name and school address of the writer was enclosed with the questionnaire.

A letter and two questionnaires were sent to the principals of sixty elementary schools in Illinois. The letter suggested that one questionnaire be forwarded to a first-grade teacher and the other to a fourth-grade teacher. It was also suggested that he give the questionnaires to teachers whom he felt were best qualified to make the response. A copy of the



questionnaire and letter appears in the Appendix.

The recipient of each questionnaire was to answer the questions as they applied to the reading materials that were available in his school during the present time.

A follow-up notice was not sent to the schools because the return of the questionnaires was sufficient for this study.

#### Treatment of the Data

In tabulating the questionnaires, it was found that forty-five of the sixty first-grade teachers completed and returned the questionnaire for a 75% return, and thirty-seven fourth-grade teachers replied for a 64% return; this was an overall of 70% return on the questionnaires. The purpose and nature of this study would indicate this was an adequate return.

Each questionnaire was given a code number so that the writer would know which schools made a reply. The thirty schools in the larger systems returned forty-two of their sixty questionnaires, and the thirty smaller school systems returned forty. Therefore, a balance was maintained in the replies from large and small school systems.

In analyzing the data, either a table was constructed and tabulations were made and summarized or the results of a question were summarized; distinctions were made, in most instances, between the replies from the first-grade teachers

and the replies from the fourth-grade teachers. In some instances a comparison was made between the large and small schools. In some questions the teachers were asked to describe materials and methods in addition to those listed on the questionnaire, those responses were not included in the tables but were expressed after the analysis of each question was made in the body of the paper.

In some of the questions in the instrument, it was possible for the respondent to check more than one item concerning reading materials. It is for this reason that some of the tallies reported in this study do not correspond to the number of schools replying.

CHAPTER III  
FINDINGS OF THE DATA

Out of the sixty schools which were sent questionnaires, forty-eight returned one or both replies. It was found that all of these schools provided some form of supplementary reading materials, and most schools indicated that the classroom teacher assisted in some way in the selection of reading materials. Three teachers who returned the questionnaire indicated in their comments that some of the terminology had confused them, but they completed the questions. Three additional questionnaires were received after the results had been tabulated; therefore, they did not contribute to the findings of this study.

Question One: Which services are provided in your school system?

It should be remembered that the responses for this question are much the same between first and fourth grades because usually a reply was received from both grade levels when a school did return the questionnaire. Table I shows the services provided in the school systems according to frequency of occurrence.

TABLE I

## TYPES OF SERVICES AVAILABLE

Services	First Grade N = 41	Fourth Grade N = 34	Total N = 75
central library	14	14	28
building library	19	18	37
full-time principal	31	30	61
school librarian	14	16	30
unit librarian	10	9	19
reading supervisor	7	6	13

In viewing Table I it is readily seen that over 70% of the schools provided a full-time principal, but less than half provided a library and only slightly more than half had a librarian. It should be mentioned that eight of the schools which replied had a school librarian and a unit librarian; therefore, because of duplication, the total number of schools that had either a school or unit librarian was less than 50%.

In a comparison between the large and small school systems it was found that more unit librarians were used in the larger school systems, but more school librarians were provided in the smaller systems. Central libraries were provided in only three more large school systems than small ones. There was less than a 4% difference between the two sizes in the provision of a full-time principal and a building library. The most significant difference in the services provided was the fact that only two of the smaller schools provided a reading supervisor, or consultant, compared to eleven of the larger schools. No

services were indicated by three of the larger schools and by four of the smaller schools.

Question Two: Which one basic reading program does your school use?

The differences in replies between first and fourth grades were great, and this would be expected because the first grade and primary grades are usually more responsible for the teaching of basic reading skills than are the intermediate grades; therefore, the basic approach to reading often differs.

Table II shows a frequency distribution of replies to this question.

TABLE II  
TYPE OF BASIC READING PROGRAM

Reading Programs	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 82
individualized	1	1	2
basal text	32	15	47
programmed	1	1	2
combination	5	20	25
cobasal	6	0	6

The basal text was used by 71% of the first grades, but only 40% of the fourth grades. Over half of the fourth grade teachers indicated that they used a combination of reading programs for their basic programs. The use of a programmed reading program was used by only one school, and both teachers replied. Only one school used an individualized program as their basic approach to reading. There was no significant difference in the type of basic reading approach used in large and small schools; however, the programmed approach and individualized approach were used in two of the larger schools.

Question Three: Which of the following persons selects your supplementary materials?

TABLE III

## PERSONS THAT SELECT READING MATERIALS

Person	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 82
teacher	41	29	70
reading supervisor	1	4	5
librarian	5	13	18
teacher committee	13	11	24
principal	13	13	26
other supervisor	6	3	9

It is easily seen that the teacher is most often used in the selection of reading materials. In 91% of the first grade replies the teacher assisted in the selection of materials while the other listings rated only as high as 29%. Fourth-grade teachers indicated that teachers assisted in 78% of the returns. It is quite evident that reading supervisors and librarians are not assisting in many of the schools; of course, as Table I indicated, many schools do not have librarians and reading supervisors available. Librarians did assist in 35% of the fourth grades, compared to only 11% in the first grades.

Question Four: What one person assumes major responsibility for the selection of supplementary reading materials?

As the question indicates, the teacher was to make only one response to this question. However, three fourth-grade replies had two responses, and these responses were tabulated. All of the first grade teachers made only one response.

TABLE IV

PERSON PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION  
OF MATERIALS

Person	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 40	Total N = 85
teacher	35	23	58
reading supervisor	0	2	2
librarian	2	4	6
teacher committee	4	6	10
principal	1	3	4
other supervisor	3	2	5

The classroom teacher is primarily responsible for the selection of reading materials in 78% of the first grade responses and in 62% of the fourth grade replies. The category that is used second in frequency also consists of a teacher by means of a teacher committee. Therefore, in sixty-eight of the eighty-five replies, or 80%, one or more teachers were primarily responsible for the selection of reading materials.

The teacher was primarily responsible for the selection of reading materials in twenty-five of the large school systems and in thirty of the small schools. A teacher committee was used in only two of the large schools and in eight of the smaller schools. The larger schools indicated that seven used reading supervisors or other supervisors, and four used librarians as the one individual primarily responsible for the selection of materials. However, none of the smaller schools indicated that a librarian or a supervisor was the one most responsible in the selection of reading materials. The three replies that gave two responses included two combinations of a teacher and librarian, in large schools, and one small school gave a combination of a teacher and principal.

Question Five: In what ways are reading workbooks provided?

TABLE V

## HOW WORKBOOKS ARE PROVIDED

Provision	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 19	Total N = 82
only for basic materials	32	19	51
only if teacher requests	4	9	13
same workbooks for all teachers	17	10	27
for all materials in which teachers feel need	10	12	22

Workbooks were provided only for the basic materials in first grade in 71% of the responses; but, as the table illustrates, the fourth-grade teachers seem to have more opportunities to select the workbook materials they wish to use. It also appears that workbooks are used more in the primary grades than in the intermediate grades because a total of sixty-three responses were made by first-grade teachers, but only fifty responses were made by fourth-grade teachers. There was no significant differences in the responses given by teachers in large schools and small schools.

Question Six: What materials are used in your readiness program?

This question referred to the reading readiness program that is used in primary grades, especially kindergarten and first grade; therefore, only the responses that were received from first-grade teachers were tabulated for this study. To make the results more meaningful the percentages are also given.



TABLE VI

## MATERIALS USED IN READINESS PROGRAM

Materials	First Grade N = 45	First grade percentage
readiness books	41	91%
experience charts	36	80%
pre-primers	39	87%
easy-to-read books	30	67%
picture books	27	60%
other	1	2%

The responses to this question indicate that a high percentage of first grades provide a variety of materials in their reading readiness program. The fact that 91% of all first-grade teachers select supplementary materials, as shown in Table IV, and 91% provide a reading readiness book would seem to indicate that teachers select readiness books when they have the opportunity to select materials. One teacher who taught in a large school system indicated that no readiness materials were used in first grade because the kindergarten program provided all of the readiness program.

Many varied responses were given in answer to additional materials used in the reading readiness program. The replies were as follows:

- 1) Pictures and picture charts (7)
- 2) Mimeographed materials which are made by the teacher to fit specific needs (3)
- 3) Educational television phonics program (2)
- 4) Filmstrips (2)
- 5) Games which make use of matching pictures and sounds (2)

- 6) Purchases mimeographed material (2)
- 7) Achievement and Readiness tests (1)
- 8) Films (1)
- 9) Fingerplays (1)
- 10) Flannel board (1)
- 11) Flash cards (1)
- 12) Games which teach classification (1)
- 13) Listening games (1)
- 14) Overhead transparencies (1)
- 15) Records (1)
- 16) Tape Recorder

Many of those who returned the questionnaire in all probability failed to list many of the additional materials which they use because of the time element involved in completing the question.

Question Seven: Which references are used for the selection of books?

The references which were listed for this study consisted of those that are most frequently suggested by reading authorities. The results are found in Table VII.

TABLE VII

## REFERENCES USED FOR SELECTION OF BOOKS

References	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 82
book exhibits	30	32	62
catalogs	42	35	77
library lists	34	29	63
teacher's manual	30	22	52
other teacher recommendations	23	20	43

Catalogs were used by 94% of the teachers who replied, and Table VII indicates that most of the teachers use many references in addition to the catalogs. Book exhibits are evidently available to most of those who replied because 86% of the fourth-grade teachers and 67% of the first-grade teachers used exhibits. It is interesting to find that 71% of the first-grade teachers use a basal text which would provide a teacher's manual, and 67% of the replies indicated that a manual is used as a reference for the selection of books. Evidently, most of the teachers that have a teacher's manual use it as a reference for the selection of reading materials.

Question Eight: Which book list references are used for the selection of books?

An unlimited number of book lists are available to teachers; therefore, it was difficult to choose only a few to include in the questionnaire. The writer included four book lists which were most frequently suggested by authorities in reading and the Illinois Reading Service lists which should be available to all teachers in Illinois. Four of the first-grade teachers gave no response.

TABLE VIII

## BOOK LIST REFERENCES USED

Book lists	First Grade N = 41	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 78
<u>Children and Books,</u> by May Hill Arbouthnot (Chicago: Scott Foresman Co., 1964)	20	15	35
<u>Children's Literature in the Elementary Schools</u> by Lillian Hallowell (New York: Rinehart Co., 1954)	8	11	19

TABLE VIII (Cont.)

Book lists	First Grade N = 41	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 78
Illinois Reading Service book lists, Bloomington, Illinois	36	31	67
<u>Children's Catalog</u> , by Estelle A. Fidell (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1966)	28	24	52
<u>A Magic Book Collection</u> , by Charlotte Wilson (New York: Henry Holt Co., 1965)	12	9	21

The Illinois Reading Service book lists were used by 80% of the first-grade teachers and by 84% of the fourth-grade teachers. It would appear that the Illinois Reading Service book lists are, as expected, available to most teachers. Children and Books, is referred to and suggested by most authorities in reading, but only 44% of the first grade and 40% of the fourth-grade teachers made use of it. It is rather expensive; therefore, it may not be available in many schools. One teacher, in her reply, indicated that only the Illinois Reading Service book lists and other free publisher lists were available in her small school. The Children's Catalog is a list that is used by most librarians, and the replies would indicate that over 60% of those replying use it. A Magic Book Collection for Elementary Grades is a relatively new book list, and this may be the reason that only 25% of those replying use it.

In a comparison between large and small schools it was found that nine of the large schools and three of the small

schools used only the Illinois Reading Service book lists. The other references were used with almost the same frequency of occurrence in both large and small schools.

Question Nine: In what way does your school provide supplementary readers?

TABLE IX  
PROVISION FOR SUPPLEMENTARY READERS

Provision	First Grade N = 46	Fourth Grade N = 40	Total N = 86
single copies	0	0	0
few sets each grade	22	17	39
some sets, primary grades only	8	6	14
several sets, all grades	16	17	33

This question referred to supplementary readers or copies of other basal readers used as supplementary readers which are published by a textbook company, and it did not refer to library books. The replies would indicate that none of the schools provided only single copies, and this would usually be expected because the books should be available to children that need reinforcement in any skill of reading. A set of books that stresses the use of a certain skill should be available to all children that need more practice in that particular skill, and often a teacher has more than one child weak in any one skill. More schools provided only a few sets of supplementary readers instead of several sets. The percentage of schools which had only a few sets was forty-five, and the schools which had several sets was thirty-eight. However,

an equal number of schools provided either a few or several sets at the fourth grade level. In fourteen schools, or 18%, only primary grades were provided with sets of supplementary readers. In four of the returns the teacher indicated two responses instead of one. These responses were included in Table IX, and they concerned the provision of a few sets of supplementary readers which were only provided in the primary grades. Written comments indicated that sixteen schools provided single copies for each classroom in addition to sets which were shared.

The large schools provided supplementary readers only in primary grades in 25% of the responses, compared to 9% of the responses received from small schools. Several sets of readers were provided for all grades in 45% of the smaller schools; however, only 29% of the larger schools provided several sets. Both large and small schools provided only a few sets of supplementary readers for all grades in 46% of the responses. It appears that the smaller schools provide more supplementary readers for their students than do the larger schools.

Question Ten: In what one way are supplementary reading books distributed?

Question ten seems similar to question nine, but the method of distribution referred to the method used to provide the available supplementary readers to any one particular classroom.

TABLE X

## METHOD USED FOR DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY READERS

Method used	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 32	Total N = 77
several sets, all grades	27	20	47
sets, each room, no sharing	2	2	4
from central library	9	4	13
other	7	6	13

The sharing of books was used by 55% of the schools, and it is interesting to find that only two of the school systems provided each room with sets of books which did not require sharing. Only 15% of the teachers obtained their books from a central library. Five of the fourth-grade teachers made no reply to this question.

It is interesting to find that in a comparison of the methods used for distribution of supplementary materials in large and small schools the responses were almost identical.

The written comments which concerned other methods of distributing supplementary readers follow:

- 1) Books are checked out of a materials room which is provided in each school. (9)
- 2) Sets of books which are ordered by a specific teacher remain in her room only. (1)
- 3) Sets of supplementary readers which are kept on a movable cart in a hallway are provided for sharing by any one grade level. (1)
- 4) Small sets of six to eight copies are provided in each primary classroom for use in that particular classroom only. (1)

The sharing of books is implied by comments 1 and 3, and comments 2 and 4 indicate that sets of supplementary books are provided in classrooms with no sharing necessary. Therefore, a total of fifty-seven, or 74%, returns indicated sharing of supplementary readers, but only a total of six, or 7%, indicated no sharing was necessary.

Question Eleven: Supplementary readers are supplied at which levels?

TABLE XI

LEVELS FOR WHICH SUPPLEMENTARY READERS ARE PROVIDED

Levels (of reading achievement)	First Grade N = 39	Fourth Grade N = 27	Total N = 66
slow readers	39	27	66
gifted readers	39	26	65
problem readers	20	18	38
others	4	3	7

The results of Table XI strongly indicate that the slow reader and gifted reader are provided with more supplementary readers than the problem reader at both grade levels. The fact that seven schools made no reply to this question would seem to indicate that no supplementary readers were provided at the various levels which were mentioned in 9% of the classrooms that returned questionnaires.

The large schools provided supplementary reading materials for the gifted reader and problem reader in 10% more of the responses than the small schools. The slow reader was provided materials in thirty-five of the large schools, compared to thirty-four of the small schools. Three large schools gave



no response, and four small schools did not reply. It is easily seen that the large schools provide only slightly more materials for different levels of reading ability than do the small schools.

The answers that were listed for other levels, included:

- 1) The remedial reader (3)
- 2) The disadvantaged child (2)
- 3) Non-readers (1)
- 4) Partially sighted, mentally handicapped, and hard of hearing (1)

The term "remedial reader" actually refers to the problem reader; therefore, forty-one, or 50%, of the questionnaires received indicated that supplementary readers were provided for problem readers. Materials are apparently not consciously or systematically provided for the handicapped or disadvantaged child.

Question Twelve: Which criteria do you use in selecting?

The last word, "books", was omitted from question twelve when the questionnaire was duplicated; however, this did not seem to create any problem to the recipients of the questionnaire. The results of the answers are found in Table XII.

TABLE XII

## CRITERIA USED IN SELECTION OF BOOKS

Criteria	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 82
literary merit	24	22	46
illustrations	19	17	36
appeal to children	40	30	70
format	15	9	24
difficulty	28	25	53
vocabulary	35	21	56
child's needs	33	33	66
other	2	1	3

As is readily seen the particular needs of children and the appeal of a book is of primary importance to both grade levels when teachers select books. The vocabulary and difficulty of a book were considered by approximately 70% of the teachers. The vocabulary received more attention by first-grade teachers than fourth-grade, and one would expect this because first-grade children lack many of the necessary skills for word recognition. Format was considered by 33% of the first-grade teachers and by only 24% of the fourth-grade teachers. Only 42% of the first-grade responses indicated illustrations as being considered when selecting books; however, this is rather surprising because most easy-to-read books use many illustrations which are usually very colorful and attract the reader's attention to the content of the story. Literary merit was considered in 59% of the fourth grade replies and 53% of the first grade replies.

Only three additional criteria were given under "others".

- 1) Cost (1)
- 2) Durability (1)
- 3) Interests of children (1)

Question Thirteen: Does your school provide dictionaries for each child?

Each questionnaire that was returned included an answer for this question. The percentages and frequency of occurrence are given in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII  
PROVISION OF DICTIONARIES

Provided for each child	First Grade N = 45 %	Fourth Grade N = 37 %	Total N = 82 %
Yes	15 36%	31 84%	47 58%
No	29 64%	6 16%	35 42%

Slightly more than half of the children in the schools who responded are provided with dictionaries. Intermediate grades appear to provide a much higher percentage of their pupils with dictionaries than do the primary grades.

In a comparison between the larger and smaller school systems it was found that at the fourth-grade level sixteen large schools and fifteen small schools provided dictionaries, while three schools of both sizes did not. At the first-grade level eleven large schools and five small schools provided dictionaries, but twelve large schools and seventeen small schools did not. More of the larger schools provide dictionaries for children than do the smaller schools; however, it is evident that the size of the school system was not significant at the intermediate grade level.

Question Fourteen: Which of the following supplementary materials are selected in your school?

All of the schools that returned questionnaires made a response. Three teachers, all teaching in smaller schools,

gave a response, but they also included the following comments:

- 1) Very few materials are selected and purchased.
- 2) Most of the supplementary materials we have are out-dated.
- 3) We purchase only library books, and this is not sufficient.

Table XIV shows a frequency distribution to this question.

TABLE XIV

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS THAT ARE SELECTED

Materials	First Grade N = 45	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 82
library books	42	37	79
reading kits	16	22	38
PROGRAMS	4	8	12
periodicals	25	25	50
A-V materials	29	25	54
workbooks	21	4	25
phonics programs	21	18	39
readers	36	27	62

The above table indicates that three, or 7%, of the first grades do not select library books, but 100% of the fourth grades do obtain library books. Programmed materials are selected by only 14% of all the teachers that returned questionnaires; however, these materials are relatively new and are still in an experimental stage. Many of the fifty teachers who selected periodicals stated that they select only one periodical which was received each week. Reading kits were selected by 59% of the fourth-grade teachers and 36% of the first-grade teachers. Audio-visual materials were listed as being selected by 65% of the first grades and 67% of the fourth grades.

The average number of responses made by fourth-grade teachers was five, and first-grade teachers gave an average number of four replies. This would seem to indicate that a wider variety of supplementary materials are being selected and used at the intermediate grade level. The fourth grades had a higher percentage of selecting materials in each category except "readers". Supplementary readers were selected by 80% of the first grades and 73% of the fourth grades.

The responses made by large and small schools were very similar.

Question Fifteen: Please list three from the last question on the reverse side of this page in order of importance.

Question fifteen referred to question fourteen. There were four first-grade teachers that gave no reply. Three tables have been included in this study to show the frequency distribution of replies which ranked as first, second, and third in importance. There was no significant difference in the replies given by large and small schools.

Table XV, on the following page, is concerned with the supplementary materials which teachers selected as being of greatest importance in the teaching of reading.

TABLE XV

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS LISTED AS FIRST CHOICE

Material	First Grade N = 41	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 78
library books	12	8	20
supplementary books	23	14	37
workbooks	2	4	6
phonics programs	4	3	7
reading kits	0	8	8
periodicals	0	0	0
programs	0	0	0
A-V materials	0	0	0

Supplementary readers were chosen by 48% of those responding, with 39% of the fourth grade and 56% of the first-grade teachers selecting them as their first choice. Library books were listed as first choice by 26% of the teachers. It is interesting to find that reading kits were selected as first choice as often as library books by fourth-grade teachers. Phonetic Keys to Reading was used as a supplement to their basal text by five of the seven schools which selected a phonics program as their first choice.

TABLE XVI

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS LISTED AS SECOND CHOICE

Materials	First Grade N = 41	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 78
library books	9	9	18
supplementary readers	5	8	13
workbooks	10	4	14
phonics program	8	4	12
reading kits	2	4	6
periodicals	0	2	2
programs	0	2	2
A-V materials	7	4	11

Library books and supplementary readers, again, were frequently selected. Workbooks were selected by 25% of the

first-grade teachers, and they selected audio-visual materials in 19% of their responses. Table XVI indicates that fourth-grade teachers use a wide variety of materials, but they put less emphasis upon workbooks than first-grade teachers.

TABLE XVII

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS LISTED AS THIRD CHOICE

Materials	First Grade N = 41	Fourth Grade N = 37	Total N = 78
library books	13	9	22
supplementary books	4	5	9
workbooks	3	11	14
phonics program	2	3	5
reading kits	6	0	6
periodicals	3	4	7
programs	1	0	1
A-V materials	9	4	13

Library books were chosen by 28% of those responding, and supplementary books were selected as third choice by 12%. It is interesting to see that even though workbooks were chosen by very few fourth-grade teachers as first or second choice, 30% selected workbooks as their third choice. One fourth-grade teacher replied that she would select research material as her third choice.

The two materials that were always given as either first, second, or third choice were, of course, supplementary readers and library books. Supplementary readers and library books were each selected in 77% of the total responses. The other materials were selected much less frequently.

Question Sixteen: Please indicate the company name of your basic reading material.

Question sixteen was placed on the reverse side of the second page of the questionnaire. The question referred to the one text that was primarily responsible for teaching children to read.

TABLE XVIII

## PUBLISHER OF BASIC READING MATERIAL

Publisher	First Grade N = 38	Fourth Grade N = 17	Total N = 55
Scott Foresman Company, <u>The New Basic Readers</u> , by Robinson, Monroe, & Artley	18	7	25
Ginn and Company, <u>The Ginn Basic Readers</u> , by David Russell	7	6	13
Economy Company, <u>Phonetic Keys to</u> <u>Reading</u> , by Harris, Creekmore, & Greenman	3	0	3
Houghton Mifflin Company, <u>Reading for Meaning</u> <u>Series</u> , by Paul McKee	4	2	6
American Book Company, <u>Betts Basic Readers</u> , by Betts & Welch	2	2	4
The MacMillan Company, <u>The MacMillan Reading</u> <u>Program</u> , by Harris & Clark	2	0	2
Row-Peterson & Company, <u>The Alice and Jerry Basic</u> <u>Reading Program</u> , by Coughlan & O'Donnell	2	0	2

Only fifty-five teachers gave a response, and 70% of the responses were given by first-grade teachers. Scott Foresman was listed as the basic reading material by 48% of the first-grade teachers and by 28% of the fourth-grade teachers. Ginn was listed by 24% of those responding. Economy Company was



the basic material for three first grades which would indicate that their major approach to reading was by the use of phonics. All of the responses that were given specified basal reading texts except those that used Economy Company.

There were no significant differences in the responses given by large and small schools.

CHAPTER IV  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Contrary to the opinion of some who feel that our elementary schools no longer have any problem in regard to providing children with reading materials, many elementary schools still need to improve in the variety of reading materials and in the services provided to children and teachers in the area of reading. Some of the conclusions drawn from this study are stated in the following paragraphs.

The teacher is primarily responsible in nearly all of the sampled schools for the selection of reading materials, and she is provided library service in less than half of the schools. Only a few, less than one-eighth of the schools sampled, have a reading supervisor available to assist them. Teachers seem to be making use of all available sources which inform them about reading materials. However, apparently some teachers do not have essential book lists references available to them.

The criteria that teachers use in the selection of books indicates that they attempt to choose books which will meet the needs of a child and appeal to him; therefore, teachers

are attempting to select books that will aid children in acquiring reading skills and will arouse their interests.

Most schools use a basal text or a combination approach as their basic reading program, and workbooks are usually provided for only the basic text. The teacher seems to have little opportunity, especially in the primary grades, to supplement consumable items by purchasing additional materials. Scott Foresman is used in nearly half of the classrooms that have a basal text.

Most schools do provide at least a few supplementary readers, but nearly all of the teachers in the selected schools must share sets of books which could often hinder a teacher in obtaining supplementary readers when they are needed. Most teachers put much emphasis on supplementary readers when asked to select materials which they feel aided them in the teaching of reading.

Library books and supplementary readers seem to be the major supplementary materials used, but a variety of other materials are selected and used. Newer materials appear not to be available in some of the sampled schools.

Many of the supplementary materials that are selected and used for the gifted and slower student are not available to the problem reader or the handicapped child.

Dictionaries are provided for slightly more than half of the children, but more intermediate grades have dictionaries

available for individual use. Only about one-third of the first grade children had dictionaries provided for them. Simple dictionary skills are taught in first grade, and many dictionaries are published and are available for beginning readers.

The readiness program in most schools provides a variety of materials. Many materials in the readiness program are obtained from the basal text company, but many are obtained elsewhere.

Very few differences were found in comparing the responses given by large and small school systems. The larger school systems do provide more reading supervisors and central libraries; however, more building librarians are available in small schools. The small school systems which were selected provide a larger abundance of supplementary readers, but dictionaries were provided for each child more often in the large school systems. The writer was rather surprised to find that a comparison between large and small school systems could result in such similar responses given by both types of school systems.

In comparing this study and the Harvard study, -- referred to previously -- it is apparent that this study found teachers more frequently responsible for the selection of materials than the Harvard study found. The Harvard study found ten million children in school districts of more than 150 children who are without libraries, and this study found that less

than half of the selected schools provided libraries. The gifted child was provided special materials and experiences in 71% of the schools in the Harvard study, and 80% of the schools in this study provided special supplementary materials for the gifted. Basal readers were used as the chief tool of instruction by 64% of the primary grades in the Harvard study, and in this study basal texts were used by 68% of the selected schools. It appears that the results of the Harvard study on reading in elementary schools and the results of this study are very similar, except in the instance of the person responsible for the selection of reading materials.

#### Recommendations

Although many supplementary materials are available in our elementary schools, the writer recommends that more need to be provided. Sets of supplementary readers need to be provided in more abundance so that the problem of sharing will not interfere with the teaching of reading.

The services which are available to teachers and pupils certainly need to be expanded. More libraries need to be organized, and more assistance should be given to the classroom teachers in the selection and use of supplementary materials by providing reading supervisors and qualified librarians. In some of our schools administrators need to provide larger selections of book lists and other references which aid in the selection of reading materials.

The writer recommends that teachers be given more opportunities to purchase workbooks and other consumable materials when the need is felt. Provision for the needs of individual children can only be met if teachers are allowed to obtain materials that are designed to teach the skills which each child lacks. Dictionaries should also be purchased for each child at every grade level in the schools which do not provide them at the present time.

Problem readers, disadvantaged children, and handicapped children should have more reading materials available to them. A variety of materials are being published for these children, and school personnel should become acquainted with these new materials so that they can purchase what is needed.

The classroom teacher is very important in the selecting of supplementary reading materials; therefore, the writer strongly recommends that teachers be offered every opportunity possible to learn more about new books, methods, and materials. Many schools would probably profit by offering workshops or some type of in-service training in the evaluation and selecting of supplementary reading materials.

#### Speculations

Recommendations for the improvement of reading services and materials have been voiced by many individuals through the past. However, as this study shows, situations in our

schools often do not improve or the improvement is very slow.

The voices for improvement seem to be growing louder, and it appears that perhaps reading is, at last, attracting the attention that it deserves. Illinois is now providing special funds for reading materials which are used by the mentally handicapped and the gifted child. The federal government has various programs which provide funds for the purchasing of reading materials. Some of the more familiar federal funds are given various title numbers. Title I provides funds for the culturally deprived child, Title II provides \$1.70 for each pupil for the purchasing of library books, and Title III gives funds for reading materials to schools that will also contribute funds. The federal government has also provided matching funds for materials used in the major areas of learning, including reading, through the National Defense Education Act. All of the funds that are now available to elementary schools, in all probability, will aid schools in increasing the amount of services and materials that aid in the teaching of reading.

Teachers appear to be concerned about their position in the selection of materials, and teacher-training institutions and school administrators seem to be providing more opportunities for teachers to become acquainted with reading materials. It seems evident that in the future teachers increasingly are going

to make known the need for services and materials.

The future appears to be more promising than the past.



APPENDIX

ILLINOIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WHICH

RECEIVED QUESTIONNAIRES

Small Schools

Arlington School, 1601 Lexington St., Lawrenceville.  
Atwood Grade School, 316 N. Illinois St., Atwood.  
Blue Mound Grade School, Blue Mound.  
Bridgeport Grade School, N. Main St., Bridgeport.  
Center Street School, 200 W. Center St., Fairfield.  
Chrisman Grade School, 111 N. Pennsylvania, Chrisman.  
Clara Peterson School, East Franklin St., Paxton.  
Dwight Grade School, S. Columbia St., Dwight.  
Franklin School, East Market St., Farmer City.  
Gibson City Grade School, 200 N. Melvin St., Gibson City.  
Jefferson School, 707 N. 4th St., Carmi.  
Kansas Grade School, Kansas.  
Lincoln School, 500 E. Grant St., Monticello.  
Newman Grade School, S. Coffin St., Newman.  
Lowe and Powers Schools, 205 S. Pierce St., Sullivan.  
McEndree School, 200 N. Olive St., Flora.  
Monroe School, E. Monroe St., Casey.  
Nette Davis School, N. Fourth St., Watseka.  
Newman Grade School, S. Coffin St., Newman.  
Newton Grade School, 1 Maxwell St., Newton.  
North School, Nokomis.  
Oblong Grade School, N. Main St., Oblong.  
Palestine Grade School, N. Main St., Palestine.  
South Side School, S. 6th St., Marshall.  
South Ward School, 210 S. Niles, Tuscola.  
Toledo Grade School, Toledo.  
Villa Grove School, Villa Grove.  
West Side, 401 E. Randolph St., McLeansboro.  
Westview, S. First St., Fairbury.  
Windsor Grade School, Windsor.

Large Schools

Abraham Lincoln School, 820 Royal Heights Rd., Belleville.  
Blaine Sumner Schools, 919 S. Matthew St., Peoria.  
Central School, Pine and Calumet Sts., Centralia.  
Central School, 200 Elm St., Olney.  
Columbian School, 2709 Marion Ave., Mattoon.  
Dubois School, 120 S. Lincoln St., Springfield.  
Edison School, Fair and Huntington Sts., Downers Grove.  
Edison School, 521 Perkins Ave., Mt. Vernon.  
Edwards School, 801 W. Market St., Bloomington.  
Fairchild School, 828 N. Bowman Ave., Danville.  
Garfield School, 115 State St., Pekin.  
Hewitt School, 1000 S. Cheney St., Taylorville.

Highland School, Highland and Main Sts., Downers Grove.  
Hills School, 1801 W. Ottawa St., Ottawa.  
Jefferson School, Eighth and Jefferson Sts. Charleston.  
Jefferson School, W. Jefferson St., Vandalia  
Kenwood School, 1001 S. Stratford St., Champaign.  
LeClaire School, 801 E. Franklin St., Edwardsville.  
Lincoln School, S. Vicksburg St., Marion.  
Lincoln School, 614 E. Second St., Pana.  
Maplewood School, Eater Dr., Rantoul.  
Memorial School, E. Newton St., Paris.  
North School, N. Walnut St., Mt. Carmel.  
Oak Park School, 426 E. Oglesby St., Salem.  
South Shores School, 2500 S. Franklin St. Rd., Decatur.  
South Side School, 211 W. Douglas St., Effingham.  
Thomas Edison School, 1991 E. Maple St., Kankakee.  
Washington School, W. Condit St., Robinson.  
Wiley School, 1602 S. Anderson St., Urbana.

Washington School  
Robinson, Illinois

Dear Principal:

Having taken many graduate courses in the area of reading and being a first grade teacher, I have become very interested in the use of supplementary reading materials in the elementary grades. It is for this reason that I am conducting a survey regarding supplementary reading materials to fulfill my thesis requirement at Eastern Illinois University. This survey should provide information that can be used by all persons interested in the teaching of reading.

Your help is necessary to make this survey a success. Please forward this letter and questionnaire to a first and fourth grade teacher whom you feel are best qualified to make the response.

Enclosed, for each teacher, is a stamped, self-addressed envelope for prompt return of the questionnaire. Results of the survey will be available if you are interested.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

Diana Nickum  
Teacher and Graduate  
Student

bkh

Enclosures

n, please enter the grade level at which each book is read in the box immediately below the row.

	IDENTIFICATION NUMBER									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Which book list references are used for the selection of books?

- Children and Books (Arbuthnot)
- Children's Literature in the Elementary Schools
- Illinois Reading Services
- Children's Catalog
- A Magic Book Collection for Elementary Grades

What way does your school provide supplementary readers?  single copies  
 few sets each grade  
 some sets, primary grades only  
 several sets, all grades

What one way are supplementary reading books distributed?

- several sets, all grades, some sharing
- sets, each room, no sharing
- from central library
- other (describe on back of page)

At which levels are supplementary readers supplied at which levels?

- slow readers  gifted readers
- problem readers  Other (describe on back)

Which criteria do you use in selecting?

- literary merit  illustrations
- appeal to children  format
- difficulty  vocabulary
- particular needs of children
- other, (describe on back of page)

Does your school provide dictionaries for each child?  yes  no

Which of the following are selected?

- (supplementary) library books  reading kits
- programs  periodicals
- A-V materials  workbooks
- phonics programs  readers

1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
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25	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
26	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
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35	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
36	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
37	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
38	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
39	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
40	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Please list three from the last question on the reverse side of this page, in order of importance:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the company name of your basic reading material:

\_\_\_\_\_

Other reading readiness materials which you use but which were not listed in this questionnaire:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other methods of distributing supplementary books which were not listed:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other special reading levels for which supplementary materials are provided:

\_\_\_\_\_

Other criteria which you use when selecting supplementary books which were not listed in this questionnaire:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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