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SCHEMATA FOR READING OF GRADE ONE GOOD AND POOR READERS AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONCEPTS OF READING HELD BY THEIR PARENTS

University — Université

U. of A.

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M. Ed

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade

1981

Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse

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SCHEMATA FOR READING OF GRADE ONE GOOD AND POOR READERS
AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONCEPTS OF READING
HELD BY THEIR PARENTS

by



HELEN MARY RUTH HAYDEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1981

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the schemata for reading of grade one good and poor readers and the relationships to the concepts of reading held by their parents. The child sample, chosen by the results as indicated as percentile scores on the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, consisted of 10 high comprehenders and 10 low comprehenders from all the grade one classrooms within a suburban school district. The adult sample was comprised of 20 parents. The parent most involved with the child's school work was interviewed at home, the children at their respective schools. The researcher conducted all interviews which were tape-recorded and later transcribed. Two questionnaires, based on the model designed by Canney and Winograd (1979) were employed to provide data for analysis. The analysis proceeded in two stages: a) responses from each group to questions 1-14 were compared and analysed descriptively; b) responses to the main question "What is reading?" were coded by means of the t-unit into three focusses of reading--object, decoding and meaning--and then subjected to two and three-way analyses of variance.

The results did not demonstrate a strong relationship for reading concepts between parents and children. There were however, significant differences within the focusses of the reading concept held by parents and children. Furthermore, good and poor readers did not appear to possess similar schemata for reading. The good readers focussed more frequently on meaning than did their less able peers. Children, in general, were discovered to place more emphasis on the decoding features of the task while their parents considered the process to be one of

mental dialogue between author and reader. Although all subjects thought reading to be important, and good readers approached more accurately the adult conception of what reading is, the children in the study possessed a more restricted view of the process than did their parents.

Suggestions were also given for further studies which could involve additional methods of inquiry for exploring parents' and children's schemata for reading.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due especially to Dr. W. T. Fagan, the supervisor of this thesis, for his continual encouragement, constructive criticism and for the many hours spent considering the research. Appreciation is also expressed to Dr. G. Malicky and Dr. E.A. Blowers who served as committee members. Thanks are extended to Jan for acting as inter-rater.

I also wish to thank my family, particularly Mac, without whose support and understanding this study would not have reached fruition. Lastly, to the children and parents, I offer my thanks for their co-operation and hospitality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

TOPIC

In 1937 Somerset Maugham wrote "The Verger". The short story centers around a church verger of 16 years' tenure who was discovered to be illiterate to the consternation of the fashionable vicar and churchwardens. When asked for an explanation for this deficiency, the verger replied: "I went into service when I was twelve, sir. The cook in the first place tried to teach me once but I didn't seem to 'ave the knack for it, and then what with one thing and another I never seemed to have the time. I've never really found the want for it. I think an awful lot of these young fellows waste a rare lot of time readin' when they might be doin' something useful". Society has changed somewhat since the 1930's, no more evident than in the field of literacy. Today it is essential for children to learn to read, in order that they may function adequately in society. In 1958, Edwards stated that "teaching would be simplified if there were some means of looking inside a child's head and finding out what his idea is in his approach to reading" (p. 239). Research abounds concerning what methods of teaching reading should be used, what reading materials and activities should be employed, the age at which the child should be introduced to reading, the effects

of the home environment on his learning capabilities, etc. Many children, however, complete grade one with less than expected reading achievement to the concern of their teachers and parents, and a cycle of testing their intelligence, their readiness, their motivation, together with a host of other factors, is initiated. Since the sixties, research has given consideration to the child's concept of reading, both as beginner and competent reader. The findings for the former have been somewhat conclusive. Beginning readers are often confused by the reading process and do not appear to have a true understanding that reading implies meaningful interpretation of the text. Current research has demonstrated that the act of reading is both a complex and highly abstract process, especially for the beginner (Clay, 1975; Goodman, 1968; Smith, 1971). However, for many beginners, this complex and abstract process does not seem to be an insurmountable challenge. They learn to read with ease and considerable enjoyment. In fact, by the end of grade one, the majority of children appear to have grasped the concepts central to a schemata for reading and are firmly launched towards a career of literacy.

A reading schema is developed in much the same way as development of schemata for eating or taking a bath (Canney and Winograd, 1979). Does the child develop reading schemata only as he starts to read or is this development nurtured during the preschool years? What effects do the models of reading he sees around him, i.e. his parents, have on this development? One may suggest that his views and understanding of 'what reading is' may be influenced by these models. If the child's schemata for reading contains features for 'meaningfulness' and 'pleasurableness',

what acknowledgement is due to his parents if they also contain similar features in their schemata for reading? This study concerns itself, therefore, with children's and parents' schemata for reading.

THE PROBLEM

A man's home is his castle; it may well be more. There is evidence to show that a child's home environment is an important precondition for his success in school (Ware and Garber, 1976). These authors quote several studies carried out in England and the United States which demonstrated a high correlation between home environment variables and later academic achievement in school.

Canney and Winograd (1979) propose a schema theory of reading, suggesting that such a theory, is an effort to meld theories about the structure of knowledge with the conditions under which that knowledge is operative. They also suggest that children who are poor readers have developed inappropriate schemata for reading. Anderson et al (1976) contend that the meaning of a general term is tied to particular uses. Therefore, a child could have various understandings for reading which are tied to particular conditions and uses of reading. If the child does not see examples of pleasurable and/or meaningful reading in his environment, the development of inappropriate schemata for reading may be a by-product of his home environment. Even though the child may be read to by his parents, discussions about the story characters and questions concerning the plot may be lacking, inadvertently impeding the development of appropriate schemata for reading, i.e. that one brings

information to the text as well as taking information away. If as Waller (1977, p. 1) contends that "thinking is a necessary prerequisite for reading at any level (beginning or mature), for any of its subparts (decoding or comprehension), and for any purpose (pleasure or information)", could the development for appropriate or inappropriate schemata for reading be, in part, a result of the home environment as parents provide examples of schemata for reading? This research, therefore, poses the basic question: what similarities exist between a child's schemata for reading and that of his parents?

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the schemata for reading of grade one good and poor readers and the relationship to the concepts of reading held by their parents.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined to make explicit the study's frame of reference.

Poor Readers: Those grade one readers who performed at or below the 35th percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Primary I, Form F. The labels of poor readers and poor comprehenders are used synonymously.

Good Readers: Those grade one readers who performed at or above the 90th percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Primary I, Form

F. The labels of good readers and good comprehenders are used synonymously.

Schemata For Reading: Things or events which share features or 'slots' common to the event of reading, i.e. mental structures which have incorporated into a coherent dominant knowledge structure the subschema for graphophonic relationships, for syntactic and semantic constructions, for the materials used during reading and for the conditions under which reading can or cannot occur (Canney and Winograd, 1979).

T-unit: "A single independent (main clause) together with any subordinate clause that may be grammatically related to it. It may be a simple or complex sentence, but not a compound sentence" (Fagan, 1978, p. 201).

Object Focus: Responses which are object-related; reading is defined in relationship to the materials one uses to read with, such as 'reading is when you read a book' (Denny and Weintraub, 1965).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do parents and grade one children differ in their concepts of reading?
2. Do the concepts of reading of poor readers in grade one differ from the concepts of good readers?
3. a) Do grade one good readers and their parents differ in their concepts of reading?
b) Do grade one poor readers and their parents differ in their concepts of reading?

In addition to the above research questions for which data will be analysed statistically, the following questions will also be addressed, with descriptive data being presented to provide some answers.

1. Do parents and children like or dislike reading?
2. How often do parents and children read at home?
3. Do parents and children consider reading to be important?
4. At what age do parents and children think fluency in reading is attained?
5. Do parents and children observe others reading at home or in their environment?
6. How do parents and children rate themselves as readers?
7. What factors contribute to the inability to read of some adults and children?
8. What procedures would parents and children follow in order that they themselves might become better readers?
9. Do parents and children view the reading process to be the same for an adult as for a child in grade one?

HYPOTHESES*

1. There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by grade one children and their parents.
2. There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by good readers and poor readers in grade one.
3. There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by grade one good readers and their parents.

* Level of significance for rejection or non rejection of the hypotheses were set at $p < .05$.

- 3a. There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by grade one poor readers and their parents.

LIMITATIONS

1. Data from the children was collected in a school setting thereby inadvertently focusing schemata for reading as a school based activity.
2. The children in the study may possess limited linguistic capabilities to verbalize what they really know and understand internally what reading is.
3. Some of the parents were known to the interviewer. The adults in the study may have provided information which they thought the interviewer, a teacher, may have wanted to hear, rather than what they really believed.
4. All responses to questions were tape recorded which may have heightened the level of anxiety for some of the participants, thereby contributing to a loss in the reliability and validity of the responses.
5. Only one parent from each family was interviewed -- the one most involved with the child's school work. A broader knowledge base could have been attained if both parents had participated. The short space of time for collecting data has therefore limited the amount of data gathered and its degree of reliability.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Little if any empirical evidence exists on parents' concepts of reading. It is hoped that as a result of this study a broader understanding of the correspondence of the reading schemata of parents to the schemata for reading in their children may be added to the present body of reading research. The results of the study may help to answer such questions as: How do parents' schemata for reading relate to the schemata which their grade one children have acquired; if parents see meaning as central to reading, do their children also see meaning as the core of reading, even at this early stage of reading acquisition? Prior research seems to have focused primarily on the child's concepts of reading. This study will provide for a wider view and may be refined for further research.

Strang (1970) contends that several people are responsible for the successful development of reading of the child, and not just the teacher alone. Because parents occupy such a strategic position and because of the present day stress on parental involvement in education in general and reading in particular, this study provides further insight into the importance of parents as co-developers of the successful reader's achievement.

The study is also of theoretical interest as it blends the schema theory of knowledge acquisition with reading as a process event. Since schemata develop over time, a child learning to read is developing a schema for reading and the role his parent plays may not only be important, but vital to successful development.

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

Chapter II presents a review of the literature relevant to the purpose of the present study. Chapter III describes the research design employed in the study. The sample, procedure and data analysis are explained. The statistical findings are presented and discussed in Chapter IV. The descriptive data pertaining to questions 1-14 are presented and analysed in Chapter V. Chapter VI presents a general overview of the study, further discussion on the findings, the implications thereof and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

The survey is presented in four sections. First, a review of schema theory and its relationship to the reading process provides the theoretical framework for the study. Second, research related to children's concepts for reading will be discussed. Third, a review of the limited data available on parents' (adults') reading habits will be presented, together with information on the influence of the home environment on children's reading. Finally, the fourth section will indicate how literature related to the present study provides a rationale for the research.

I. SCHEMA THEORY AND READING

Anderson (1977) refers to schemata as the "mental structures that incorporate general knowledge" (p. 2). Schemata contain certain slots or place holders for each of the particular pieces of information subsumed under the more general idea or structure. When the incoming message matches the slots in the schema, the information is said to be significant whereas when there is no matching, i.e. when the input does not fit a slot, the message is unimportant or irrelevant. When sufficient slots in a schema are filled, comprehension takes place.

Schemata are not isolated units; they may be embedded one within another, with a dominant schema containing many sub-schema. Although there is a relationship between the dominant schema and its subparts, some of the latter may be either more relevant or less central to the superordinate schema than others. An example may help to clarify this perspective.

Every Saturday night, four good friends get together. When Jerry, Mike, and Pat arrived, Karen was sitting in her living room writing some notes. She quickly gathered the cards and stood up to greet her friends at the door. They followed her into the living room but as usual they couldn't agree on exactly what to play. Jerry eventually took a stand and set things up. Finally, they began to play. Karen's recorder filled the room with pleasant music. Early in the evening, Mike noticed Pat's hand and the many diamonds. As the night progressed the tempo of the play increased. Finally, a lull in the activities occurred. Taking advantage of this, Jerry pondered the arrangement in front of him. Mike interrupted Jerry's reverie and said "Let's hear the score." They listened carefully and commented on their performance. When the comments were all heard, exhausted but happy, Karen's friends went home.
(Anderson, R.C. et al., 1977)

Depending on his dominant schema, the reader's interpretation of the above story may proceed in one or more of three ways: 1) he will not understand it at all, i.e. the information will match no slots within the schema; the data will be irrelevant or meaningless to him; 2) he will instantiate slots for a musical recital in his schema or 3) he will identify the information as a foursome for bridge. In the case of the latter, the incoming message - bridge - matches the slots of the purposes and rules of the game and understanding takes place. The reader must have an appropriate schema for bridge sufficiently developed. He understands the purpose of the game to be to contract accurately with a partner in order to win a certain number of tricks. The rules of the

game include bidding according to the number of point-values in the player's hand, following suit during play, initiating play from the dummy hand when it has won the last trick, keeping accurate scores, and so forth. The reader may also be prepared to tolerate the musical interpretation if he has sufficient slots in that sub-schema necessary to accept an alternative view.


Reading itself, also is an activity which has its purposes and rules. The purposes could be for learning and enjoyment, while rules would involve starting to read at the top left-hand side of the page, continuing to the right, employing the decoding mechanisms necessary to decipher the print, etc. Understanding that the reader must bring meaning to the print is the nucleus of the reading act upon which appropriate schema for reading depend.

Schemata exist within a conceptual framework. Larger event structures are organized into scripts and contain all the relationships and functions of the object in the experiences of the individual. The dominant events "describe the interaction of a number of different concepts - people, places and things - organized around a goal... Knowledge of scripts for reoccurring events enables the child (or adult) to predict what, when and who in familiar situations" (Nelson, 1977, p. 222). As the individual becomes more familiar with the event structure, the concept in turn becomes less specific. This is evident when one is placed in a novel situation where actions and the results of those actions are quite idiosyncratic. Such an example may be seen in the beginner automobile driver. As experience with the wheel develops, the driver's schemata for road etiquette becomes more varied and general as

to the what, who and when of the situation. The appropriate schemata for road-knowledge should contain slots for when to pass, the manner in which one passes, how much room to leave between oneself and other travellers, the changes needed to be considered due to road or weather conditions, etc.

Canney and Winograd (1979) suggest that a person learning to read is developing a schemata for reading in much the same way as the beginning driver is developing a schemata for road-etiquette. Subschema, related to the dominant schema for reading, include the graphophonic relationships, the syntactic rules, the semantic constructions, the materials used for reading and the situations under which reading can or cannot occur. As the individual becomes more familiar with reading situations, he constructs more general and salient slots common to the event of reading. Most of us would not dream of reading while attending a symphony performance. Such behavior is outside the reading situations we normally consider. We do know, however that the musicians and conductor are reading their scores while performing, which demonstrates that their schemata for reading includes slots for reading while playing. Reading a recipe while cooking, reading memos at one's desk at work, reading to a child in bed at night, reading to the teacher at school, etc. are situations most of us would consider common to the event 'reading'.

The young child encounters written language long before he personally demonstrates a need to communicate through print. The nursery-room wall-paper may be covered with the letters of the alphabet; he sees his father reading the newspaper, his mother a shopping list. Visits outside



the home provide many examples of symbolic language; the big M for McDonalds, the Esso insignia, traffic signs, etc. Slowly but surely he becomes aware of print. He begins to recognize a favorite cereal on the shelves at the supermarket, the soft drink he prefers on T.V.; his favorite will be picked out from a group of books. For many children, the first steps towards literacy have been taken. They are building experiences with print, developing schemata for reading.

Anderson (1977) suggests that general terms such as nouns do not have fixed meaning for the user. "Such terms have a family of meanings that are shaded by context" (p. 4). If as the author contends, the properties of a word shift from use to use, what is distinguishable in one situation may be unimportant, irrelevant or even absent in another. Canney and Winograd (1979) theorize that the term 'reading' also could have "several definitional and distinguishing properties" (p. 5) and that a student may have various meanings for reading which are tied to the particular conditions and uses under which he experiences reading. In other words, the child may have different scripts for reading which call for different behaviors. Given the varied settings in which reading takes place in his environment, having a book read to him at home, in the warmth and security of his bed may be viewed as a totally different behavior to reading to the teacher at school. In neither case is he expected to be an active participant in the reading process; his own efforts to derive meaning from the print are not central to his schemata for reading. Listening may be the home focus, decoding the emphasis at school. In neither location has he experienced sufficiently often that reading has as its purpose the communication of thoughts and feelings from the author to the reader.

Smith (1977) views reading as a 'top-down' process where the reader is viewed as a problem-solver, one who uses his conceptual and linguistic knowledge to form hypotheses about what he reads, and by analysing the print confirms, adjusts or rejects these hypotheses. In 'bottom-up' processing, the reader is considered an analytic processor of print whereby the information from the page is analysed through a series of low-level to higher-level order stages (Laberge and Samuels, 1974). The reader perceives the print and associates the letters, letter clusters and words with those stored in his lexicon. When automatic processing at the lower-level stage is attained, the reader progresses to the higher-level processes of comprehension. Rummelhart (1977) proposes an interactive model of reading whereby top-down and bottom-up processes are not seen dichotomously but as flowing in either direction depending on the needs and purposes of the reader. Comprehension takes place when information from all levels is synthesized.

Suppose the child has schematized reading as something that is done to him rather than an activity in which he becomes personally involved; suppose his encounters with print have been that of a passive participator, where he responds mechanically to the graphic stimuli without the realization that the print brings a message; suppose he does not know that he is expected to bring meaning to the text and just waits for the story to unfold rather than predicting or anticipating what the author is going to present. The schemata for reading for such a child may well lack slots for meaning-getting.

Complex skills cannot be taught by simply having the learner watch someone else perform. It appears to be taken for granted that if parents

read to their children, appropriate schemata for reading will develop in their offspring. The assumption is, of course, that such reading episodes provide for dialogue on the part of the child. Doake (1977) contends that it is the type of interaction which is important rather than just the reading of the story. Some children from book-centered homes, with parents who read to them and provide themselves as models of reading, may not achieve success in reading at school. The reading episodes in these particular homes may not have demonstrated the concept that meaning is central to reading; they may have failed to generate the idea of the importance of top-down as well as bottom-up processing. The child from such an environment will not have grasped that he must make sense of the text. It is possible, therefore, that he will have developed inappropriate schema for reading and will view listening to the bedtime story or decoding at school as events central to a definition for reading, rather than as a means to promote the development of reading proficiency.

II. CHILDREN'S CONCEPTS OF READING

It would appear important to discover and understand a beginning reader's perception of reading. Understanding one concept is a prerequisite before a child can apply or integrate into his schemata a new concept. Learning is a process of expanding or broadening present concepts and integrating existing conceptualizations with new information (Nelson, 1977). It seems reasonable, therefore, to suppose that if a child does not have an adequate schema of concepts of what reading is,

that getting meaning from the print is the purpose for reading, he will experience difficulty in learning to read. A considerable body of research exists which deals with children's concepts of reading.

Recent studies have investigated children's descriptions of what reading is (Edwards, 1968; Johns, 1972; Johns and Ellis, 1976; Denny and Weintraub, 1965). The linguistic rules of reading as perceived by children have been investigated by Reid (1966), Downing, (1970), Clay (1972) and Glass and Burton (1973). Purposes for reading from the child's point of view have been analysed by Edwards (1962), Muskhoph (1962) and McLaughlin, (1978). Tovey (1976) explained children's understanding of four psycholinguistic concepts. How good and poor readers view the reading process has been investigated by Goodman, (1967), Golinkoff, (1975) and Glass and Burton, (1973). The research pertaining to the present study is discussed below.

Children's Descriptions of Reading

Edward (1958) in his study, focused on the concept of reading as an activity. A special group of 66 retarded readers, in second and fourth grades, normal to superior in intelligence and physique, were members of a group scheduled for two remedial reading classes each week. Three questions, introduced casually as an extension of the current topic of conversation, were presented in group interviews on a weekly basis. The questions all related to the term 'good reading' as perceived by the subjects when they were beginning readers. The resulting definitions were very consistent in spite of the time delay in their presentation. 'Good reading' was conceptualized as "not bumpy", "no stops and not jerky", in the majority of cases. The researcher's explanation for the responses

centered around the child's motivation for social acceptance. He claimed that the subjects viewed reading as an activity which involves speed rather than meaning, in order to sound like an adult. Some criticism of the research is merited. No attempt was made to analyse the responses individually together with the fact that group interviews may have affected the responses of those involved. In the present study the subjects were interviewed individually and the researcher attempted to avoid the leading and specific word 'good' in the question "what is reading"? All questions were presented at one sitting in order to provide a more natural flow to the conversation. The present opinions of the subjects rather than their past experiences were one of the main objectives of the study.

In order to determine the possible relationship between children's concepts of reading and reading achievement, Johns and Ellis (1976) involved 1,600 students attending grades one to eight. Interviewed individually, the investigators asked three questions: 1) What is reading; 2) What do you do when you read; and 3) If someone didn't know how to read, what would you tell him/her that he/she would need to learn. Responses were recorded on audiotape, analysed and classified into one of five ranked categories: category one...I don't know, or vague circular or irrelevant responses; category two...responses involving classroom procedures; category three...responses concerned with word recognition and decoding; category four...responses which defined reading as a process of obtaining meaning from words or understanding a story; category five...responses which referred to both decoding and meaning. The results reported that 69% of the students gave meaningless

or vague answers to the question "what is reading?" Fifteen per cent had responses classified in categories four and five, the majority belonging to students in grades seven and eight. Fifty-five per cent of the responses to question two were also classified as meaningless, while only 21%, including students from grade three up, referred to meaning getting. For the third question, 37% provided meaningless responses; only 8% referred to meaning. However, 56% considered word attack skills as central to reading. The conclusions of the researchers indicated that as many as 69% of the students had little or no understanding of the reading process although older students appeared to have a better understanding than younger students. Most of the meaning responses described reading as a decoding process which they further described as something which involved a text book.

Perhaps one must consider the decline in meaningless responses across the three questions in the above study, 69% to 37%. Could there have been a carry-over effect from one question to another? Each basically deals with the same central thought "What is reading?" In the present research, only the last question specifically asks "What is reading?" Little prior information could be supplied from the other questions, although each deals with reading per se. It is supposed that the carry-over effect from questions 1-14 to the key question 15 (see Appendix A), would be minimal, and then only as a vehicle for focus on the topic of reading. Also as Canney and Winograd (1979) suggest in their analysis of the Johns and Ellis (1976) study, "to respond meaningfully to one or more of the questions may not have been a valid indication of the subject's schemata for reading" (p. 17).

Denny and Weintraub (1963) conducted a longitudinal study with 111 children in five grade one classrooms. Subjects were interviewed individually with responses to the question "What is reading?", being taped. The responses were classified in seven ways: 1) no response; 2) unclear; 3) cognitive, i.e. reading to learn things; 4) object related; 5) valuative, i.e. good or bad; 6) mechanical, i.e. words and sounds; and 7) expectations, i.e. something we have to learn to do. Sixty per cent of the subjects' responses were either unclear or object-related. Another 20% defined reading as a process for learning new information. The final 20% were evenly distributed across the other three categories, valuative, mechanical or expectation.

The sample of students were again interviewed by Denny and Weintraub in 1966, with results from two additional questions being reported. For the second question "What must you do to learn to read in first grade?" slightly more than one-third of all responses given offered no meaningful explanation. Two-fifths indicated a "passive type of obedience" and only 37% were responses for which children saw themselves as taking some action in the reading process. The researchers emphasized that one-quarter of the children could express absolutely no logical reason for learning to read. They conclude their report with the suggestion:

Most research on learning to read supports the proposition that it helps the child to learn if he knows the reason for a learning situation and sees a purpose in the task (p. 446).

In relation to this study, again one wonders if three questions are sufficient to give an accurate description of a child's concept of reading. Questions pertaining to the purposes of reading, the

understanding a child may have of his own success or failure in reading, etc. are absent in the longitudinal study just discussed. In the research central to this thesis, a more detailed and varied questionnaire was employed to ascertain children's concepts of reading (See Appendix A).

Using the interview method, Mason (1967) questioned 178 three to five year olds. Four areas were covered: 1) Do you like to read? Can you do it all by yourself?; 2) Does anyone in the family read?; 3) Would you like to be able to read?; 4) Do you like _____ to read? The findings from questions 1-3 appear to contradict in part some of the studies reported above. Over 90% believed they could read before they went to school, and more important, they liked what they were doing. Since these children could not read, Mason contended that perhaps one of the first steps in learning to read is realizing that one does not know how to read. Markham (1977) concurs as a result of a study with first and third graders in which instructions were made obviously incomprehensible by deleting information needed to understand how to perform the task. Grade one children were not able to notice the inadequacies and had to be urged to perform the tasks before becoming aware of the missing information.

Linguistic Rules of Reading

Reid (1966) investigated the perceptions of reading and writing held by 12 Scottish five year olds in their first year of formal schooling. Each subject was interviewed three times during the year; open-ended questions were designed to elicit responses concerning concepts of books, words, what makes reading hard, methods of word attack, etc. In viewing the results, the author concluded that the subjects perceived reading "as a mysterious activity to which they come with only the vaguest of

expectations" (p. 60). By the end of the first year, most of the children had not formed concepts of written words as being composed of letters and did not appear to have realized that written words had any relationship to speech or meaning.

In 1970, Downing replicated and extended the Reid (1966) study with 13 five year olds in England. The findings supported Reid's conclusions. Children had great difficulty in understanding the technical and abstract terms of word, letter and sound. The present study avoided asking the child sample for definitions of linguistic terms, but phrased the questions in such a manner that the children might use them if they were part of their natural vocabulary; e.g. Is reading hard for you? Why? It was assumed that as the children had had eight months of formal reading instruction, they might use the technical terms and demonstrate their understanding of them in a conversational setting, even if they could not give definitional properties for the same terms in isolation.

Clay (1972) designed a concepts for reading test entitled The Sand Test which sought to assess the linguistic components of reading. Presented with the book Sand, a child could demonstrate where to start reading, where to start reading a page, what direction he must take to follow continuous discourse, whether one reads print or pictures, what function a period, question mark or quotation mark plays in the discourse, the use of capitals and small case letters, etc. Clay contends that these concepts are of prime importance if the child is to be a successful reader. At no point in the test is the subject asked the purpose for his reading. However the global consideration is not omitted

in the present study as several questions are positioned throughout the interview which seek to determine the purposes for reading.

Purpose for Reading

In 1961, Edwards designed a Reading Concept Test to be used with grade five children. The researcher's concern was to assess why reading was important, what the qualities of a good reader were, and whether the subjects were more inclined to read in order to please themselves or the teacher. Responses from the forced choice technique (between two answers) and multiple choice format (among 20 answers) were coded as either functional...getting meaning from the print, or as a tool for enjoyment or relaxation, and form...correct pronunciation, reading orally, being in a particular reading group, etc. One point was given for each functional response, with zero being coded for a form response. No significant relationship was found among any of the variables and the Stanford Achievement Reading Test, California Reading Test and the Large Thorndike Group Intelligence Test respectively. The present study also sought to discover the subjects' perceptions of the purposes of reading. Questions pertaining to the qualities of a good reader were included as well (What do you have to learn to be a good reader? How can you become a better reader than you are now?). The idea of importance was abstracted from answers to the question "Do you think reading is important? Why?" The responses were each given equal weight regardless of classifications, no one response being considered more meritorious than any other. Zero was given for a non-response. In Edward's (1961) study, only responses which were considered "correct" or meaningful were calculated. Such a method of scoring would not appear to be justified as

subjects were penalized when they reported decoding as central to reading, a possible natural outcome from their years of instruction at school, and would not appear to give a complete picture of the child's purpose for reading.

McLaughlin (1978) interviewed 60 grade one children by means of a 67 question survey designed to ascertain their concepts for the purposes of reading in relation to the methods of instruction in the classroom. Results indicated that although most children could verbalize some purpose for reading, few of the responses related to obtaining meaning from the text. Most replies reflected the immediate needs of the child: knowing words, adult approval, or learning to read. Twenty-seven percent of the children understood that one reads in school in order to learn how to read; 20% reported that one reads at home for enjoyment; 28% were of the opinion that other people read for enjoyment or to learn something. McLaughlin reported that a minimum of 25% of the subjects were "unable to demonstrate a sound understanding for the purpose of reading" (p. 114). The present study replicated in part the research just mentioned. Questions pertaining to success or failure in reading (Why do some children not learn to read? Are all adults good readers?) were included in the hopes of gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how young children regard reading.

Concepts of Reading of Good and Poor Readers

Research indicates that there are differences in concepts of what reading is between good and poor readers. In her detailed review of several studies comparing the comprehension processes of good and poor readers, Golinkoff (1975) drew some strong conclusions. Poor readers

appear to read text in a word by word manner with a minimum of text organization (the ability to read text in larger units than the single word). She states "inadequate reading comprehension seems to imply being somewhat of a slave to the actual printed word" (p. 654). Quoting Gromer, Golinkoff contended that there may be several types of poor comprehenders--those that have decoding skills deficits and those who have deficits in text organization skills. Lack of insight into the reading process may account for the latter. Spiro (1977) is of the opinion that poor comprehenders tend to over-rely on processes in one direction, either text based or knowledge based, to the detriment of the other. In reporting the findings of Golinkoff and Resinski, Golinkoff (1975) reported that poor readers appear to have no difficulty in obtaining the meanings of single printed words. She suggested that the difficulty may lie in longer decoding times which interfere with gaining the correct meaning when the word is not in isolation. While word analysis strategies are useful for reading, Smith (1975) contends that they are less necessary and can be short circuited during fluent reading by means of predictive and hypothesis-forming mechanisms.

In analysing a study conducted by Weber in 1970 Golinkoff (1975) reported that in oral reading, grade one good readers corrected twice as many errors that distorted sentence meaning as did poor readers. She suggested that the explanation could be that perhaps poor readers lack efficient strategies for finding errors that distort meaning and that "poor readers may less frequently detect when the meaning of a sentence has become anomalous because they are not comprehending to start with" (p. 636).

The findings reported by Golinkoff are confirmed in the study done by Goodman (1967) concerning the reading behavior of six beginning readers. Good readers were able to make sound/symbol associations and produced a greater percentage of miscues which were syntactically and semantically acceptable.

The present study dealt with the concepts of reading held by good and poor comprehenders. Questions, focusing on their own perceptions of themselves as readers, (How good a reader are you? Why do you think so?) were inserted to ascertain whether poor readers appear to be predominantly contextually constrained or experiential in their approach to reading. Another question (Is reading a hard thing for you to do? Why?) was included to provide information on the cognitive styles or idiosyncratic patterns of either group.

Glass and Burton (1973) investigated what successful decoders actually utilized when they decoded and what they said they did to help them decode correctly. Fifteen students from grades two and five 'read' a list of words they had not seen before, responses from which were taped and observations made during the sessions of what the subjects actually did. The results indicated that none of the students used anything other than a letter-clustering approach; no form of rules or principles were employed, although many students said they used the skills mentioned in word analysis programs. The researchers concluded that students who are successful decoders apparently do not use what is taught in the classroom. For the present study, the questions "What things does a person have to do to be a good reader?" and "What things does a person have to learn to be a good reader?" sought to evaluate what skills,

decoding or otherwise, were necessary in the opinions of the subjects, to become successful readers.

In the study conducted by Canney and Winograd (1979) three good readers and three poor readers in each of grades two, four, six and eight, were identified by teacher judgement and test scores. Students were interviewed individually by means of a questionnaire (Phase I) responses from which was taped. Responses were coded as being object, decoding or meaning focused. Results indicated that higher comprehenders were more aware of the meaning focus features of reading as identified by their responses to the question "What is reading?". This awareness increased over the grade levels, more for good readers than poor readers. Lower comprehenders, in any grade, attended more frequently to the mechanical-decoding aspects of reading. The present research was a replication of the above study, in part; that is, the child sample followed the same procedures as those of Canney and Winograd study.

Summary

In the review of the research presented, several common elements are to be found:

1. Young children do not appear to realize that reading is a communicative process. Even after a minimum of eight months in school, and for many others, several years, a good proportion of students have not acquired the understanding that an effort to make sense of the text is essential in reading.
2. Young children's concepts of reading focus primarily on reading materials, being read to, and fast fluent expression.
3. Many children do not have a well-founded reason for learning to read.

4. Use and understanding of the technical and abstract reading terminology increase with age across the grades.
5. There are significant differences in the concepts of reading held by good and poor readers.

III. PARENTS AND READING

There appears to be limited data available on parents' concepts of reading. However some tangential studies provide information in the area. Sharon (1973) investigated the reading habits of American adults. A longitudinal study was conducted by Durkin (1966) to ascertain what teaching practices, if any, were employed by parents in relation to the reading development of their children. Guinach and Jester (1972), Koppenhauer (1974) and Flood (1977) considered the story-book reading situation as a prediction of reading success. Ryan (1974) investigated family reading patterns. These studies are reviewed below.

Sharon (1973) in a survey of the reading habits of a national sample of 5,067 adults, discovered that a substantial portion of the day was spent in reading. The survey was conducted in order to determine what was being read, by whom, for how long, for what reasons and to discover how reading fit into people's daily lives. The results indicated reading occurred primarily during the day's activities, such as work, shopping, and recreation. Most reading time was spent on newspapers, magazines, books and job related materials. The average adult read for almost two hours a day. However variability in reading time was discovered to be great. Almost 6% spent eight hours a day in reading, which as the author

infers, may have involved a lot of reading at work. On the other hand, slightly more than 6% read for less than five minutes. The 5% of all adults who could not read depended on others to read for them and had an extremely low socio-economic status. Apart from this 5%, only 1% reported difficulty with any type of material they read. The researcher offers two explanations for this finding which he quotes as being in contradiction to the Harris survey of 1970. Either those who found it hard to understand a given material simply had not read it or the subjects were reluctant to admit to difficulty in reading. The Harris review provided evidence that a large number of the American population could not read adequately to fill out application forms for social security, bank loans, or driver's licenses. Of the 33% who read books in the Sharon (1973) survey, only 15 minutes per day were spent on the reading of children's books; that is, the least amount of 'book reading' time was spent in reading to children. Although 54% reported reading as a recreational activity, the median length of time was only seven minutes. The most prevalent reasons for reading were the desire to obtain information or to have something to do. As reporting of pleasure or enjoyment was not recorded, it is assumed that either no such responses were elicited or that such a small percentage was recorded as to be insignificant. That adults consider reading to be important appears evident. What effect this importance has for the development of reading concepts in children is less evident. The present study, though in no way as detailed as the Sharon study, sought to determine what adults read, how much time they spent in reading and their perceptions of themselves as readers.

Perhaps the most significant study of the relationship between home and parent involvement and reading was the research carried out by Durkin (1966). In her longitudinal studies of children who were early readers, interviews were conducted with the parents of both early and non-early readers. A number of the traits and characteristics of the children were recorded. Significant factors were not socio-economic levels, parent occupation or the children's intelligence. Rather, the attitude of the parents, the influence of older children and the interaction between parent and child were the variables recorded. The results indicated that more mothers of early readers said they read more frequently than the average adult; the early readers were continually read to at home prior to school entrance by one or both parents and/or older siblings; materials and books were most available which provided rich and exciting experiences for the child. This confirms Holdaway's (1979) premise that "children with a background of book experiences since infancy develop a complex range of attitudes, concepts and skills predisposing them to literacy. They are likely to continue into literacy on entering school with a minimum of discontinuity" (p. 49).

However the results from Durkin's study provide evidence that the parents were often confused as to what they should or should not do in relationship to their children's reading development. More mothers of non-early readers believed that reading should only be taught by a trained person, that pre-school help would only lead to confusion when the children started school. The conversation with one mother whose son memorized easily was reported by Durkin as follows:

This tendency to memorize was referred to again and again when the mother told how she used to read to Steve, but stopped when

he was about four. At that age, she explained, "He started to memorize all the stories". Asked why she was concerned about the memorization, the mother stated very emphatically that she "didn't want him to memorize words". "I wanted them sounded out" (p. 127).

Parents of early readers also expressed concern that early reading would lessen their child's interest in school. Durkin was of the opinion that the results of her study indicated parents were often confused and concerned about their child's pre-school reading. Although the present study was not designed to ascertain parents' views of their own child's development, the questions were sufficiently open-ended to allow them to speak freely on the notions of reading which came to them.

The interaction between a parent and child is more complicated than just whether they read together or not. The quality of the relationship must be optimal for developing positive attitudes towards books and reading. Guinach and Jester (1972) contend that a distinction be made between the quality and the quantity of the interaction. They suggest that there is little reason to believe that "a barrage of language in an unpleasant situation would be a positive influence on the child" (p. 171). If the child is forced to listen, or if the parent views the process as a bother, the interaction might be a negative rather than a positive influence in developing the child's attitude toward reading. This is often demonstrated in the homework situation of a school age child. In the study of Guinach and Jester (1972) the PARS (The Parent as Reader Scale) was used in order to determine the quality of the mother-child interaction in a book reading situation. The average age of the children was two years, 11 months. Ten categories of parent behaviors, which in turn were broken down into subcategories, were

employed to measure the interaction; e.g. What kind of feedback does the parent give the child, 1) no opportunity for feedback; 2) no feedback to child though it was needed; 3) only negative feedback given; 4) some positive feedback given; 5) feedback with expression and/or repetition.

Results demonstrated that there was a great deal of variability in the way parents shared a book with their children, ranging from very complete and thorough descriptions of the actions and noises found in the illustrations with animated reading of the words to a rather perfunctory series of questions or comments. Flood (1978) in his study which sought to measure parental style of reading in the story-book situation states "the book won't teach the child to read. Children need to be involved in the story from beginning to end; they need to interact with the reader-- their parent, to extend ideas, to question their own understanding and to relate their own ideas to experience" (p. 867). When parents were asked in the present study whether they liked or disliked reading, responses might indicate whether the story-book situation was pleasurable or not.

Koppenhauer (1974) contends that the habits, attitudes, values and ways of thinking appear to be behaviors learned from the family and modified to some degree by outside influences. If this contention is valid, how parents view the reading process should relate to the concepts of reading held by their children. This is the main hypothesis of the present research. The study conducted by Koppenhauer (1974) investigated the nature of the interaction between parents and children and the relationship of that interaction to reading success. Thirty high and 30 low achievers at the fifth grade level comprised the sample. Home environment was defined as the climate for achievement motivation, the

opportunities for verbal development, the nature and the amount of assistance provided in overcoming academic difficulty, the stimulation provided for intellectual growth and the provisions for general types of learning in a variety of situations. Results indicated that there was a positive correlation between home environment and reading success in school.

In a study designed to ascertain family reading patterns, Ryan (1974) administered a 45 item questionnaire to 109 university freshmen with the request that as many members of the extended family as possible participate. There were two groups of students. Group A comprised 54 students in a regular college composition course, Group B with 55 students involved in smaller more intensive composition and reading classes. The mean reading score for Group A was 14.0 while a 9.5 score was the mean for Group B. Results of the study indicated that the parents of Group A read to their children significantly more often when they were young than did the parents of Group B. Perhaps more interesting was the finding that the mothers and fathers of Group A began to read for pleasure themselves at significantly earlier ages than did the parents of Group B.

The above research is fairly conclusive. The reading adult (parent) appears to play an important role in the development of his child's reading achievement.

IV. THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Over the years, suggestions have been made to parents that they should read to their children. Reasons for the request have been primarily to foster an interest in books and a growth towards literacy. Flood (1977) stipulates that parents should not be led to believe that verbal interaction during the reading episode will automatically produce successful readers. In certain cases, the ability of some parents to read dynamically with their children is quite natural; for others it may be a strained performance. The attitude the parent himself/herself has toward reading has been virtually ignored in the literature. It has been taken for granted that all parents like to read to their children. This may well be in the majority of situations. But what of the parent who dislikes reading? His/her style of story-book reading may restrict or prevent the development of appropriate reading schemata in the child; he/she may not invite his/her child to participate or allow enough time during the reading for the child to verbalize about what is happening in the story. As the research has shown, children need time to develop reading concepts. Smith (1971) contends that through the imitation of parents' behaviors, the child becomes aware of behaviors necessary for success in reading: how to hold a book, that one reads the print and not the pictures, the importance of picture cues, the recall and enjoyment of reading and language facility to understand and appreciate the story. Stauffer (1970) has emphasized that reading is "a dynamic active process" (p. 125). Smith (1971) concurs when he stipulates that reading is not a passive activity--the reader must make an active contribution if he is to

acquire the available information. However if the reading situation at home is not dynamic, and the little listener is only a passive recipient of words, how will that same child develop some understanding of reading, how will appropriate concepts of reading be nurtured?

This researcher contends that how parents view reading, the importance they place upon it, what their self-perceptions as readers are, what their concepts of reading entail, etc., may be the key to the success or non-success for their children's reading. If the parent is of the opinion that reading is something he/she engages in when there is nothing else to do, that life is too busy to allow for leisure reading time, that the only reason for reading is for information and never pleasure or relaxation, that for the child, reading is something to be done at school and rarely at home, then that parent may well be fostering similar schemata for reading in his/her child, in spite of having dutifully read bed-time stories. As research in parents' concepts of reading, per se, is limited and research on parents' reading schemata as they relate to the reading schemata of their children (who may be good or poor readers) is practically non-existent, the key purpose of this study was to generate data to throw some light on this issue. The design which guided this study is outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this chapter the design of the study, the sample, the instruments, procedures, analysis of data and the statistical analysis are described.

THE DESIGN

The major purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between parents' concepts of reading and that of their grade one children. To achieve this goal, two questionnaires, one for parents, another for the children, were utilized to collect the data. Responses to the questions were coded and tabulated. Descriptive statistics were used for all questions except the final one--what is reading? Analyses of variance were the statistical tools employed to analyse the data obtained from that particular question. The four sets of factors were parents - children; parents of good readers - good readers; parents of poor readers - poor readers; and good readers - poor readers. The dependent variable was the nature of the reading concept held, which could be object focused, decoding focused or meaning (comprehension) focused.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The sample for this study consisted of 20 grade one children and 20 parents. Each parent subject corresponded to a child subject. The children attended school in a large suburban middle class area of the Edmonton region. The school district was comprised of five elementary schools, K-8, and one high school. Each of the eight grade one classes in the system (N=8) was self-contained. All of the teachers of the children in these grade one classes were considered experienced, that is, each had had at least five years of teaching experience. The grade one population in the system totalled 186 students. An equal number of children from each of the five schools was chosen rather than selecting all the subjects from one school. It was thought that more varied instructional methods might provide for wider definitions of 'what reading is' if all schools were included.

After permission had been granted to conduct research in the schools, the eight grade one teachers in the system were contacted. The project was explained to them with requests being made to supply the names of eight children in each school. The following criteria for the selection were used:

1. English was to be the mother tongue of each child.
2. The children were to be residents of the class for the past six months.
3. None of the children was to be a repeater in grade one.
4. Four of the children were to be the highest achievers and four to be the lowest achievers, in the teachers' judgments, in the school.

Although sex was not considered as a variable in the study it is interesting to note that three of the parents were male. For the group comprised of good readers, there were four boys and six girls. The researcher administered the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Primary I, Form F (1970) to the eight children in each school. The two top achievers and the two lowest achievers in each school were selected to participate on the basis of the results of this test. Four children were thus identified from each of the five schools and constituted the child sample.

Although each child came from a two parent family, the researcher stipulated that only one parent of each child participate. The parent most involved with the child's school work became the determining factor. Based upon the request, twenty parents constituted the adult sample.

INSTRUMENTS

The Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) Primary I, Form F (1970 Edition).

The Metropolitan Achievement Test (Reading) Primary I, Form F, was employed to obtain a standardized reading achievement rating for each child in the study. Sabers, in Buros (1978) in his review of the test maintains that it is as good as any and better than most standardized reading tests. He further contends that it serves as a rough measure of reading achievement for comparative purposes (p. 734). As the intent of

this study was to identify two groups of children of widely dispersed reading levels in order to compare their concepts of reading in relationship to that of their parents, this particular test appeared most suitable.

The test was administered by the researcher during the morning school session at each individual school. The subjects wrote Subtest I, Word Knowledge and Subtest III, Reading, in groups of eight in a room apart from their regular classroom. Directions as set out in the manual were adhered to. The subtests were added to give a total reading score, also as per directions in the manual. Percentile ranks and stanine scores were recorded. When two children in one school obtained the same percentile rank, the raw score became the measure by which a child would be selected, the higher raw score being chosen for the good readers, the lower score for the poor readers.

Questionnaires

Two separate questionnaires, one for children and one for parents, (See Appendix A) were used in the study. Except for the deletion of question #5 both are very similar to that developed by Canney and Winograd (1979) which was designed to ascertain students' knowledge of the purposes and nature of reading. Resembling one another in content, some of the questions, e.g. 4, 6, 12, 13 and 15 are phrased differently in each specimen. The phrasing in the parent example is that suggested by Canney and Winograd (1979) for older children, i.e. grade eight students. In lieu of the word 'person' in the children's survey, the more colloquial 'kid' was inserted.

Designed to be administered by personal interview, the questionnaires followed an open-ended format. This allowed the interviewer the freedom

to probe or rephrase questions if further information was necessary or if misunderstanding was perceived on the part of the subject. Reid's research (1966) suggests this form of questioning to be most suitable. Acceptable probes such as "Is there anything else?" or "Can you tell me more about it?" were offered to expand the subject's responses. Three probes were considered maximum for any one question. The key question, #15, "What is reading?" is positioned last to allow the participants to warm up to the subject of reading and thus minimize the likelihood of an "I don't know" response which other researchers recorded for 69% of their subjects (Johns and Ellis, 1979).

PROCEDURE

The procedure in this study followed four steps:

1. The pilot study of the parent questionnaire was conducted.
2. The Metropolitan Achievement Test was administered.
3. Interview conditions with children and parents were planned and interviews conducted.
4. Data for the study were analysed.

Pilot Study of Parent Questionnaire

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to determine if the questions would elicit appropriate responses from adults. The questionnaire had previously only been used with children, the oldest of whom attended grade eight. Four parents of grade one children were selected by the researcher. None of them had children attending the chosen school division. Each parent was interviewed at the researcher's

home with conversations being tape recorded. They were later transcribed verbatim at which point the data were coded and analysed. Results of the pilot study indicated that the subjects responded to the questions with little difficulty. They provided a wide variety of answers once they had been assured initially that the researcher was more interested in their opinions rather than "correct answers". However question 5--"To read, do you have to have a book?" allowed for some confusion. A decision to delete it was taken as the information provided therein was not vital to the study. Question 6 was reworded to include 'others' in place of 'parents' and 'in your environment' was appended. 'Adult' was inserted in #12 in lieu of 'grown up'. 'Adult' also replaced a particular grade level in question 13.

The revisions to the last three questions were initiated prior to the pilot study in order that parents might feel that the questionnaire approached their conversational level more accurately. No other changes to the original example developed by Canney and Winograd were made.

Metropolitan Achievement Test, Primary I, Form F (1970)

As already mentioned, the test was administered and marked by the researcher during the morning school session at each individual school. Testing took place during the last week of April and the first week of May. Group administered in a room apart from the classroom, care was taken to ensure that the subjects were not deprived of one of the 'fun' activities for the day in order to write the test. The subjects questioned and talked with the researcher prior to testing which allowed them to feel at ease. The children did not appear anxious. Even when they came to a difficult passage, they continued their work when so

encouraged. The guidelines for testing as set out in the manual were followed. Upon completion, scores were tabulated and the teachers of the subjects were alerted as to which children had been chosen to participate.

Interviews

A letter was sent to the parents of the twenty chosen children (See Appendix B) requesting their participation in the study. All the parents of the child sample agreed to be interviewed when telephoned by the interviewer, after they had been assured that anonymity would be maintained. The parents of each child chose between themselves as to which one would be involved in the conference. A request had been made that the parent who was most involved in the child's school work participate. The researcher had no way of knowing if, in reality, the "correct" parent was interviewed or whether it was a matter of convenience that one parent rather than the other contributed to the study. It is assumed that the parents honoured the request. Times convenient to both parents and researcher were scheduled, mostly in the evening after the bedtime hour of the child subject. In only one case was the child present; she had been interviewed previously at school.

All but four of the parents were interviewed at their homes; three subjects came to the researcher's home at their request; one chose her place of employment. Parents made a special effort to have other siblings either in bed or occupied elsewhere while the interviews were conducted. In all cases, only the parent who had chosen to participate in the study was present. Few interruptions took place in the majority of interviews. Parents were put at ease when told that it was their opinions rather than "correct answers" that were being sought, by

informal chatting prior to the interview and by the guarantee of anonymity. Only one appeared nervous during the session. Interviews lasted from 25 to 45 minutes. Due to scheduling difficulties, it was not always possible to speak with the child prior to his parent, but every effort was made to do so. In the cases where the adult contributed first, she was asked not to discuss the questions with her child. The researcher is of the opinion that the request was honoured as the children who were interviewed after their parents answered "No" to the question "Did your mother tell you what she and I had been talking about the other day?" Preceding each session, questions consisting of general information gathering, e.g. hobbies, other members of the family, early reading experiences, were introduced to allow for a relaxed atmosphere and to alleviate any pressure the subjects may have felt.

The child subjects were all interviewed at their respective schools in the morning and early afternoon; the location was a private room. The children were escorted, one at a time by the researcher from their classrooms to the taping room. They were allowed to play with the tape recorder prior to the session and listen to a play back of the general conversation which preceded the interview. In short, the test atmosphere was relaxed and the subjects did not appear to be pressured. Each subject was told "I am going to ask you some questions, now, and I'm sure you'll have fun answering them. If you don't understand what I say, just tell me and I'll explain". Sessions lasted approximately 15 - 20 minutes. Some children asked that the whole interview be played back; this was done at their request. As the researcher presented the questions, an effort was made to probe more deeply, or to rephrase them

if the child seemed unsure or reluctant to respond. There were few "I don't know" responses. If a child nodded or shook his head in reply, the interviewer said "Pardon?" whereupon the child verbalized an answer.

All subjects in the study received the questions in the same order. Occasionally a response to a later question provided further information for a previous question. In such instances, the interviewer later rephrased the earlier question to elicit further information and in transcription, coded the data in what appeared to be the appropriate place.

As discussed earlier, both parents and children were given no more than three probes per question. If after the first probe no further information was forthcoming, the interviewer moved to the next point. When a response was vague, a probe such as "Could you explain that?" was employed to help pursue the subject's thinking and/or clarify the response. Most subjects appeared to enjoy the sessions and tried to clarify their answers upon request.

The researcher carried out all interviews which were tape recorded and later transcribed verbatim for analysis (See Appendix C for two sample interview protocols).

DATA ANALYSIS

Two separate steps were involved in analysing the data:

1. The categorization of responses for questions 1-14.
2. The classification of responses to question 15, utilizing the t-unit, to determine whether responses were object, decoding or meaning focused.

1. Questions 1-14

After all responses to the questions and probes had been taped, a verbatim transcription was carried out by the researcher which in turn was rechecked with the tapes for accuracy. Most questions were of the yes/no format; however the probes provided reasons for particular responses. Through the examination of individual replies to the probes, it was discovered that various patterns or categories of responses had emerged. To allow the information received to be more meaningfully coded, the questions were regrouped into semantically similar categories when it became evident that the patterns of responses provided information to more than one question. Nine categories replaced the original 14 questions. The categories and the patterns which emerged as responses are as follows. Question numbers are in parentheses.

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>REASONS</u>
1. <u>Like - Dislike</u> (1, 2, 3)	
* yes	* enjoyment
no	* communication
yes/no	* teacher says
don't know	* know words
	difficulty
	time constraints
	outside pressures
	wait turn
2. <u>Reading Competence</u> (4)	
excellent	
above average	
average	
below average	
poor (low)	

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>REASONS</u>
3. <u>Reading Outside School (5)</u> yes no don't know	enjoyment communication nothing else to do
4. <u>Reading Frequency at Home (6)</u> daily twice a week less than twice a week	
5. <u>Importance of Reading (7)</u> yes no maybe	communication enjoyment for children adult says to give help good for you important books
6. <u>How to Improve as a Reader (8, 9, 14)</u> decoding skills comprehension skills better teaching more personal involvement listen better practice speed more time allotted pay attention	
7. <u>Age of Competency (10)</u> 4 years old or less 5 - 9 years 10 years +	sibling model general maturity more knowledge can already read
8. <u>Some not learn to Read (11, 13)</u> yes no don't know	decoding communication teacher school home practice

CATEGORYREASONS8. Some not learn to Read (11, 13) (continued)

age
 lack of interest
 other: I.Q.,
 personality, etc.

9. Adult-child Reading Processes (12)

yes
 no
 yes/no
 maybe

decoding
 comprehension
 maturity
 intelligence
 more knowledge
 can already read
 different materials
 enjoyment
 both reading

The responses from each member of the four groups--good readers, poor readers, parents of good readers and parents of poor readers were classified according to the above mentioned categories. Each response was nominally classified. No response was hierarchically or otherwise assigned any value. The semantic content of the responses provided the basis on which they were judged. Frequencies of responses to each question and the reasons thereof were calculated for each group, for the combined group of parents and for the combined group of children. Percentages for the above groups were then calculated. Frequencies and percentages were hand calculated. An independent judge, a university professor with many years' experience in reading research, analysed the responses of two parents and two children, in order to assure the reliability of the response categories by the researcher. There was 100% agreement between the rater and researcher.

2. Question 15

The responses to this question were first divided into t-units. Directions for the divisions, suggested by Fagan (1978) were followed. Four responses, two parents and two children, were analysed by another rater, a graduate student in reading, to establish the reliability of the number of t-units per response. There was perfect agreement between this rater and the researcher. Next the responses (t-units) were grouped into one of three categories, a) object focus, b) decoding focus and c) meaning focus. The twenty-two features of reading identified by Canney and Winograd (1979) were discovered in the responses of the subjects in the present study. The focus categories and their exemplars are as follows:

Object Focus

- * reading a book
- * listening to instructions by a teacher

Decoding Focus

- * learning the alphabet/learning vowels and consonants
- * sounding out words
- * saying words
- * looking at words
- * recognizing words
- * learning words
- * memorizing words
- * blending words to form compound words
- * spelling words
- * writing words
- * punctuating sentences

Meaning Focus

- * learning word meanings
- * understanding word meanings
- * putting words together to make sentences/stories/poems
- * understanding sentences/stories
- * remembering what is read
- * interpreting signs and symbols

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data for each subject were key punched onto IBM cards upon scoring completion. Each subject was given an identification number, a designation as to whether he was a good or poor reader or the parent of a good or poor reader; three scores, one each for object focus, decoding focus or meaning focus where applicable were recoded on the data sheet. Reading percentile scores were also noted for the child sample. Statistical treatment of the data involved two two-way analyses of variance with repeated measures and one three-way analysis of variance with repeated measures. The first two hypotheses were tested by utilizing a two-way analysis of variance for calculating significant differences between the means. The three-way analysis of variance with repeated measures across different categories of concepts of reading was employed to test the significance of the third hypothesis.

SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the design of the study, the sample selection, the instruments used, the procedures followed, the analysis of the data and the statistical analyses employed.

Chapter IV presents the statistical findings and results of the study together with a discussion of these results.

CHAPTER IV

STATISTICAL DATA

This chapter presents each of the three hypotheses which were subjected to statistical analyses. They are concerned only with the responses to question 15 "What is reading?" Responses were divided into t-units. Raw scores and percentages of raw scores for the object, decoding and meaning foci were tabulated and subjected to analysis of variance procedures. As no significant differences emerged for either method, the data presented below are based on raw score figures. Each hypothesis is restated from Chapter I. A statement of rejection or non-rejection is given followed by a table containing the data concerning the significance of the relationships explored. Immediately following result presentation, each hypothesis is discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

HYPOTHESIS 1

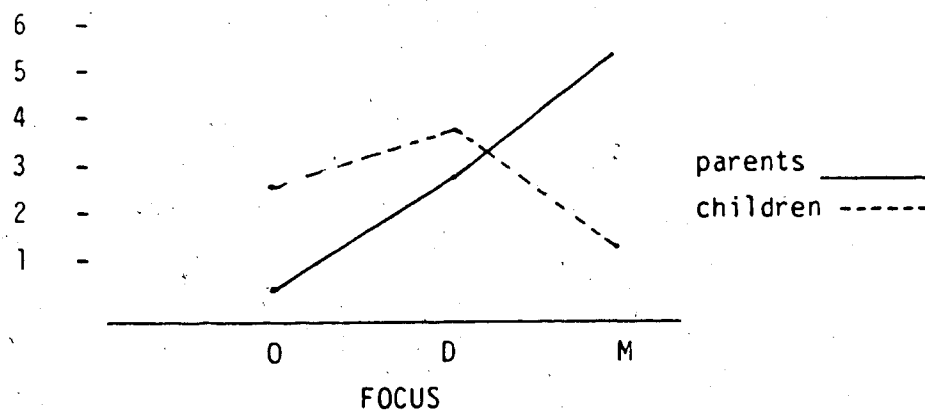
There will be no interactions effects for the concepts of reading held by grade one children and their parents.

This hypothesis was rejected (Table 1). Whereas there were no differences in the overall concept of reading, there were differences within the focuses of the concept (Figure 1).

Table 1
 Analysis of Variance for Differences Between Parents
 and Children for Concepts of Reading

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
<u>Between Subjects</u>	126.80	39		
A (parents-children)	3.33	1	3.33	1.02
Subjects within groups	123.47	38	3.25	
<u>Within Subjects</u>	620.66	80		
B (concepts)	80.61	2	40.31	9.22*
AB	207.72	2	103.86	23.75*
B x subjects within groups	332.33	76	4.37	

*Probability of F = 0.002



Cell means

	<u>Object</u>	<u>Decoding</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
parents	0.55	2.80	5.35
children	2.60	3.75	1.35

Figure 1
 Parents' and Children's Concepts of Reading

Discussion

The differences between parents and children for concepts of reading were analysed by a two way analysis of variance with repeated measures. The results indicated that while parents focused primarily on a meaning concept (mean 5.35), the dominant feature for the child subjects was that of decoding (mean 3.75). It is this researcher's opinion that a decoding focus may be the result of the children's reading experiences in school where traditionally more emphasis has been placed upon the mechanics of reading than interpretation of the text. Such an explanation appears to agree with Chall's (1967) view when she contends that the majority of primary grade teachers consider decoding as the major focus of early reading instruction.

In order to determine more exactly where significant differences existed among the three concept for children and parents, a Newman-Keuls Comparison of Ordered Means was conducted. The differences between subjects is demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Significant Differences Between Parents and Children for Concepts of Reading

OBJECT			DECODING			MEANING		
NK	r crit	p	NK	r crit	p	NK	r crit	p
2.05	1.53	.01	.90	1.53	NS	4.00	1.53	.01

Significant differences between both groups were found for the object and meaning focuses of reading. The children concentrated more frequently than parents on a definition of reading as being something over which they did not have control, as being the responsibility of someone else other than themselves. These interpretations agree with the literature (Denny and Weintraub, 1965; John, 1972). For parents, on the other hand, reading was not considered as something done to them; they perceived it primarily within a comprehension or an understanding-of-the-text context. This finding is to be expected. Overwhelmingly, studies (Clay, 1972; Downing, 1979; Edwards, 1965) have found that as children mature in age, a deeper understanding of the reading process is obtained; that is, as they grow older, they become more aware that reading entails top-down processing behaviours. As one of the groups under discussion was comprised of adults, it is not surprising that they placed considerable emphasis on meaning-focused definitions of the task.

Perhaps it should be noted that although all parents and just over 50% of the children provided responses which were recorded in the meaning category, the children's responses were primarily on understanding word meanings and putting words together to make sentences and stories. Parents referred more frequently to the interpretative features of meaning--how thinking is required for reading and that reading is the medium through which one can learn about the world. Although both types of definitions were classified as belonging to the meaning category, this researcher contends that the adults provided responses at a higher level of understanding of what reading is than did their children. In other words, it appeared that parents viewed reading as a process which

involves reading between and beyond the lines. The children, on the other hand, who referred to meaning, were more orientated to the literal context of the text.

A point of note was that the analysis indicated that the differences between parents and children were non-significant for a decoding focus. None of the children failed to refer to this feature of reading; all but three of the parents also thought it sufficiently important to mention. One interpretation could be that the parents were particularly aware of decoding because their young children, in bringing home their school work, focused on that feature of the reading process, thereby possibly influencing the concepts held by their parents. It is also possible that parents, like many primary teachers, viewed the decoding process to be a significant component in learning to read. One may assume that it might be easier for parents to assist their offspring with decoding since the skills have been precisely defined than to encourage them in the expansion of their ideas and interpretation of the text.

In summary, parents and children differ significantly in their concepts of reading for the object-related features and the meaning-related components. Parents tend to define reading as extracting information from the text because of the ability to identify letters, words and meanings. Children, on the other hand, tend to perceive reading as something under the control of others and which emphasizes the pronunciation of words. The concept that reading involves understanding appears to be absent in the schemata for reading for the majority of children.

V

HYPOTHESIS 2

There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by good readers and poor readers in grade one.

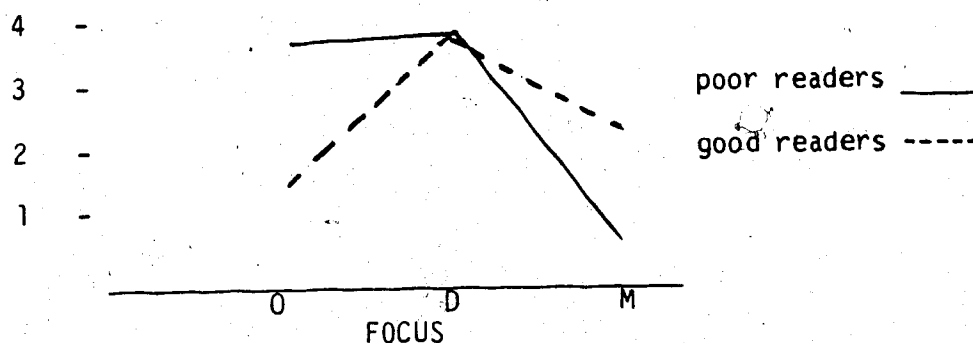
This hypothesis was rejected (Table 3). Whereas there were no differences in the overall concept of reading, there were differences within the focuses of the concept (Figure 2).

Table 3

Analysis of Variance for Differences Between Good
and Poor Readers for Concepts of Reading

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
<u>Between Subjects</u>	44.07	19		
A (good-poor readers)	0.07	1	0.07	0.027
Subjects within groups	44.00	18	2.44	
<u>Within Subjects</u>	210.67	40		
B (concepts)	57.63	2	28.82	9.71*
AB	46.23	2	23.12	7.79*
B x subjects within groups	106.80	36	2.79	

*Probability of F = 0.001



Cell means

	<u>Object</u>	<u>Decoding</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
poor readers	3.70	3.80	0.30
good readers	1.50	3.70	2.40

Figure 2

Good and Poor Readers' Concepts of Reading

Discussion

A two way analysis of variance with repeated measures was conducted in order to ascertain the differences in concepts of reading for good and poor readers. The results confirm the findings of many researchers (Johns, 1974; Golinkoff, 1974; Glass and Burton, 1973) that significant differences exist between high and low comprehenders in terms of the nature of their concepts of reading. In order to discover more exactly where the differences were to be found, a Newman-Keuls Comparison of Ordered Means was employed. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4

Significant Differences Between Good and Poor Readers for Concepts of Reading

OBJECT			DECODING			MEANING		
NK	r crit	p	NK	r crit		NK	r crit	p
2.70	1.89	.01	.95	1.89	NS	2.1	1.89	.01

For the object-related focus, a $p < .01$ level of significance emerged between the two groups where the mean score of good readers was considerably lower than the mean score obtained by poor readers. The latter group appeared to be orientated to this feature of reading more frequently than their successful peers. In fact, all but one referred several times within their responses to reading as "reading a book", "listening to the teacher", etc. For the more able comprehenders, seven of the subjects perceived reading as being object-related; however, these responses occurred less frequently for each of the good readers than for each member of the poor reader group. Three of the high readers did not refer at all to this category. One may assume, therefore, that as a group, good readers had progressed beyond such a definition of reading, while poor readers were still object-bound in their interpretations of what reading is.

For the meaning focus, the mean scores were 2.40 and 0.30 respectively for good and poor readers. The differences between the two

groups were significant at the $p < .01$ level for this particular focus. As previously stated, all good readers made reference and were orientated to meaning foci in their definitions. Such results do not agree with studies in the area (Downing, 1972; Johns, 1972) where good readers in this grade level did not possess a meaning concept of reading. These researchers reported that many able comprehenders failed to refer to extracting information from the text in their explanations of what reading is. It is the present writer's opinion that the warm-up questions and the selection of able readers at or above the 90th percentile on a standardized reading test influenced the above-reported results. It is possible that these children, because of their success with the reading task, were more conscious of the meaning aspects of the reading process. Their fluency helped them to the realization that comprehension is a necessary component in reading. In other words, their schemata for reading contained slots for meaning. Similar schemata did not appear for a meaning feature for poor readers, as only one child within this group, referred to meaning-getting in his/her responses to the question.

No significant difference was found between the two groups for the decoding focus. In essence, both groups attained mean scores which were highly similar, 3.70 as opposed to 3.80. The scores, for both, were higher than the means for each of the two other concepts of reading. As mentioned previously, such results may be an indication of the kind of instruction the children received in school where emphasis is placed on the mechanics of reading by their teachers. In this environment, learning how to read is seen in a different light to reading for meaning. As both groups appeared similar for their focus on decoding,

one may assume that good readers use the decoding skills they have learned to gain information from the text in a meaningful way and may be organizing text both in a bottom-up and top-down manner. Poor readers, however, may be decoding text for decoding's sake without the realization that they are supposed to interpret units larger than the single word and therefore do not read for meaning. The poor comprehender, with a strong focus on the object and decoding features of the task and little or no orientation towards meaning-getting, may be processing text in a bottom-up fashion only, to the detriment of his/her understanding and enjoyment.

In summary, the results from this hypothesis indicate that significant differences do exist between the concepts of reading held by poor and good readers in their focus towards object and meaning features of what reading is. While both groups were highly concerned with decoding, the reasons for such emphasis may vary between the groups. Johns (1979) has queried whether good readers' concept about print caused them to be competent readers or whether their concepts about print were a result of their reading ability. This researcher is of the opinion that perhaps it is the interaction of the concepts about print and the reading ability which lead to comprehension. Such an explanation appears reasonable when the reading scores and the verbalized concepts of reading produced by the children, in this study, are examined together.

HYPOTHESIS 3

- a) There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by grade one good readers and their parents.

b) There will be no interaction effects for the concepts of reading held by grade one poor readers and their parents.

These hypotheses were rejected (Table 5). Whereas there were no differences in the overall concept of reading, there were differences within the focuses of the concept (Figure 3).

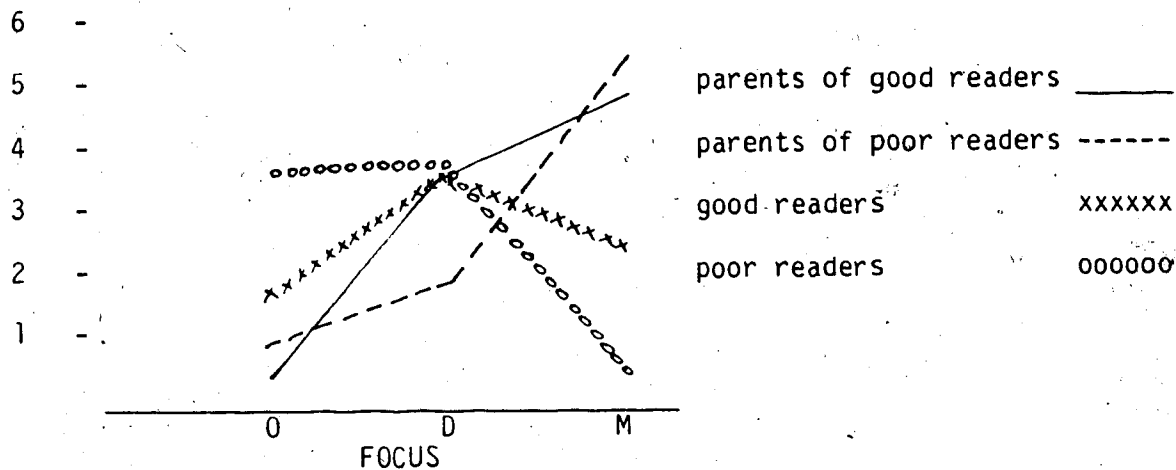
Table 5

Analysis of Variance for Differences in Concepts of Reading Held by Grade One Good and Poor Readers and Their Parents

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
<u>Between Subjects</u>	126.80	39		
A (parents, good-poor)	3.33	1	3.33	0.98
B (children, good-poor)	0.13	1	0.13	0.04
AB	0.53	1	0.53	0.16
Subjects within groups	122.80	36	3.41	
<u>Within Subjects</u>	620.66	80		
C (concepts)	80.62	2	40.31	10.88***
AC	207.71	2	103.86	28.03***
BC	30.22	2	15.11	4.08*
ABC	35.32	2	17.66	4.77**
C x subjects within groups	266.80	72	3.71	
*Probability of F = .05 ** = .01 *** = .001				

Discussion

A three way analysis of variance with repeated measures was conducted in order to determine whether each group of parents and their children differed significantly in their concepts of reading. Figure 3 displays each group's concept of reading and their relationship to one another.



Cell means

	<u>Object</u>	<u>Decoding</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
parents of good readers	0.30	3.70	5.00
parents of poor readers	0.80	1.90	5.70
good readers	1.50	3.70	2.40
poor readers	3.70	3.80	0.30

Figure 3

Parents' and Their Children's Concepts of Reading

A Newman-Keuls Comparison of Ordered Means was conducted in order to ascertain where the significant differences among the four groups were to be found. Table 6 presents the results of the comparisons.

Poor readers differed significantly from their parents within the object-related focus. Such significance was not found for good readers and their parents within the same focus. For the object focus, therefore, it appears that poor readers differ significantly from all other groups by focusing more on reading in relation to outside factors than do the other groups.

Significant differences also occurred between the low comprehenders and their parents on the meaning emphasis of reading with a probability

Table 6

Significant Differences for Good and Poor Readers
and Their Parents for Concepts of Reading

Group	Focus	NK	r crit	p
poor-good readers	Object	2.20	2.20	.01
poor readers-parents of poor readers	Object	3.40	2.70	.01
parents of good-readers parents of poor readers	Decoding	1.80	1.65	.05
poor-good readers	Meaning	2.10	1.65	.05
poor readers-parents of poor readers	Meaning	5.40	2.35	.01
poor readers-parents of poor readers	Meaning	4.70	2.72	.01
good readers-parents of good readers	Meaning	3.30	2.21	.01

of .01. Whereas the parents placed less emphasis on decoding than did their children, they placed greater emphasis on meaning. Only one child within this group referred to meaning, while all the parents of poor readers more frequently mentioned meaning than any other group. One interpretation of the results may be that as these parents focused primarily on comprehension while their children's concerns were with the mechanics of the task, assisting their offspring in reading might possibly prove to be frustrating for both groups as neither is aware of the other's emphasis. In other words, children may be bound by the very

detailed word by word decoding while their parents are focusing on the meaning concept of the task.

Unlike the poor readers and their parents, differences within the schemata for reading for the object focus were not found between good readers and their parents. Significant differences did emerge between the two groups for the meaning focus. Although the types of responses as to their understanding of what meaning is in reading varied between the children and parents, all of the former produced some evidence of meaning-getting in their replies.

Although not a stated part of this hypothesis, one unexpected finding is that differences between means occurred between both parent groups for their degree of focus on reading as decoding, with the parents of poor readers focusing less on this feature. This finding is difficult to explain. It is not surprising that these parents* like the parents of good readers placed more emphasis on reading as extracting meaning from the print. However, since they placed less emphasis on decoding is it not possible that as they worked with their children, they stressed the meaning aspect of reading and minimized any focus on decoding which would have been in conflict with the children's notion of what reading is?

To summarize, parents of good readers and good readers were more similar in their concept of what reading is than were poor readers and their parents. In fact, poor comprehenders differed significantly in their concepts to those held by the three other groups, in all instances

* It must be remembered that these parents were similar to the parents of the good readers in educational standards and class status.

save for the decoding emphasis. The main focuses in their definitions stressed object-related and decoding features with only minimal reference to the extraction of meaning from print. It is possible that they have not yet formed appropriate schemata for reading because of their erroneous understanding that reading is a process under the control of others, and that sounding out words constitutes reading.

Smith (1978) contends that children naturally seek meaning when they approach the reading task. If such is the case, and this researcher would not care to disagree, one questions why nearly 50% of the children in the present study did not produce evidence in their verbalizations that meaning was central to, or at least tangential to the reading task. Smith (1978) further stipulates that if children are not taught or do not discover that print is meaningful, they will find reading instruction non-sensical and therefore may not succeed in their efforts in learning to read. For the poor readers, in this study, it would appear that such is the case.

SUMMARY

Although significant differences were not found for the overall concept of reading between parents and children, significant differences within the focuses of the concept were discovered among the four groups.

Chapter V presents the descriptive findings and results thereof together with a discussion of those results.

CHAPTER V

THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter contains the descriptive results of the study and is presented in the following manner. Each question is restated from Chapter I. Frequencies of responses to each question and the ensuing probes were hand calculated for each of the four groups of subjects. Bar graphs indicate the percentage of semantically similar responses to each question and the reasons for the choices thereof. Discussion follows as to the similarities and differences between the groups. The chapter concludes with a summary.

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Question 1

Do Parents and Children Like or Dislike Reading?

The first three items on the questionnaires provided data for this question -- 1) Are there some things you like about reading? 2) Are there some things you dislike about reading? and 3) Is reading a hard thing for you to do? Why? Figures 4 and 5 present the results derived from the responses.

Ninety percent of the poor readers claimed they liked reading. However when one analyses the graph displaying their responses, these

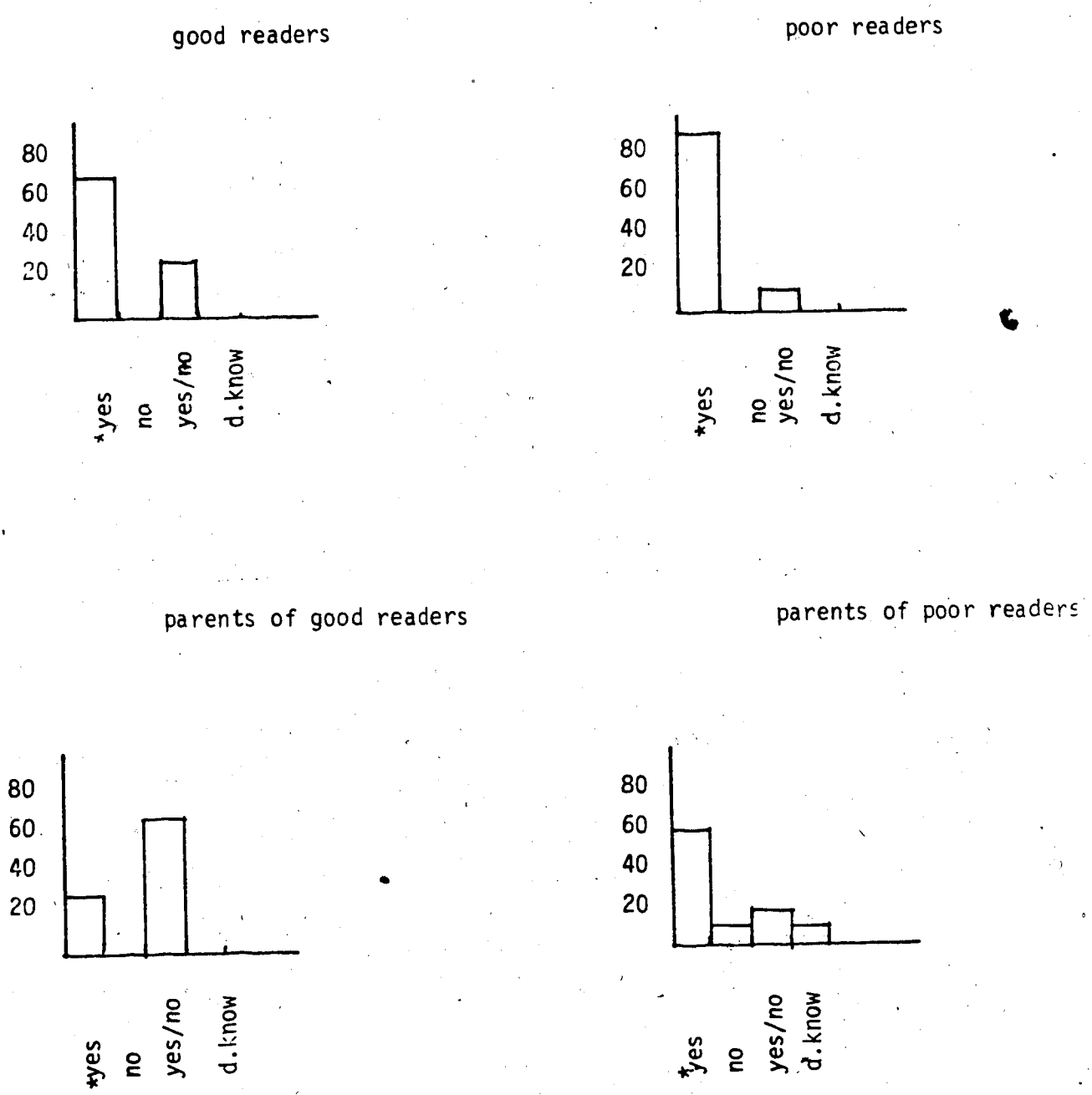


Figure 4

Do Parents and Children Like or Dislike Reading ?

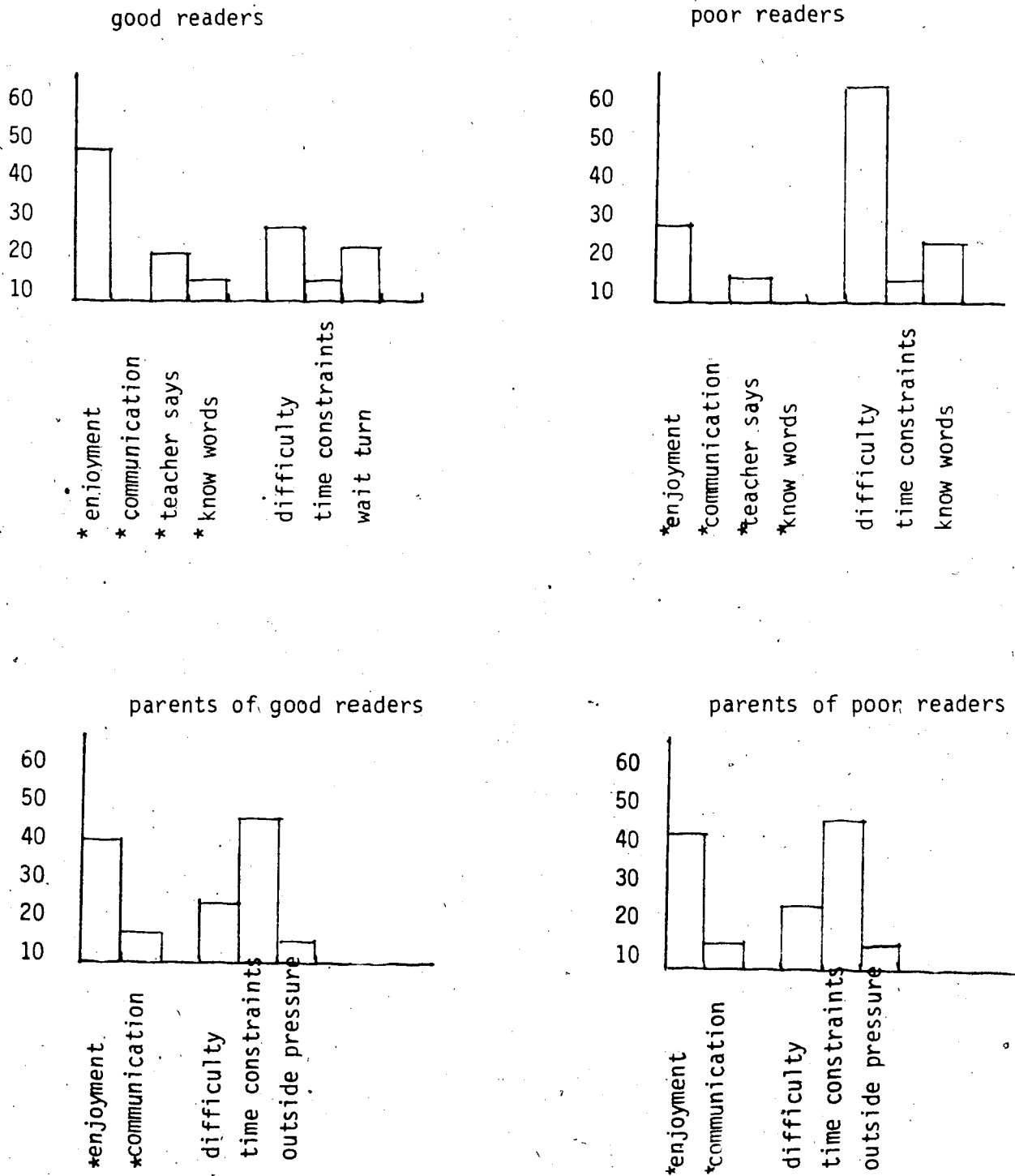


Figure 5

Reasons for Reading Preferences

readers indicated that reading was difficult for them. "I don't know hard words and stuff". "It's kind of hard to like one of those hard words like 'indebility' and I don't get it and I get it marked wrong". Perhaps these subjects felt that they were supposed to like reading even if they experienced difficulty with the task. Alternately, perhaps they really did like reading which would confirm, in part, the results of Mason's (1967) study where the children stated they liked reading although they could not read.

The responses of the good readers appear to be more consistent than those of their peers. Seventy percent of the above average comprehenders said they liked reading, giving enjoyment as their main reason. "I like it 'cause there's fun things, like stories and things in it". "I like to read to other people and I like reading letters from my grandma". Only 20% of this group professed to finding any difficulty with reading as opposed to 54% of the poor readers. "I already know how to do it and just zip right through the book". A point of note is that neither good nor poor readers referred to liking reading as a means to discovering new information. Although one comprehender spoke of his facility in reading encyclopedias and dictionaries, the size of the books was more important than the data they contained. "I read encyclopedias and dictionaries and big books like that". It is the opinion of this researcher that these young children may have not yet conceptualized the finding out of new and interesting information as pertinent to the schemata for reading for themselves, although they appear to realize that this is one of the main reasons adults read (See Figures 7 and 10).

While 60% of the parents of poor readers claimed they liked reading, 70% of the parents of good readers professed to having mixed emotions on

the subject. However, the reasons presented by both groups were very similar, regardless of their initial choices. Although enjoyment was cited as being important to 33%, time constraints preventing them from engaging in reading accounted for nearly 40% of the replies. Many found that reading interfered with their daily schedules, that they felt guilty if they read when they should have been doing "more constructive work". "Finding the time is hard; I don't have much time anymore with the kids and work and stuff; they come first to me". It is interesting to note that 20% of the adults considered themselves as having difficulty with reading, nearly the same percentage as that of the good readers. The parents contended that the inadequacy stemmed from their own early experiences in reading which influenced their present ability to read. "When I started school there was none of this pronouncing words; that was by memory only". "The easier words, no problem, but when I get to the harder ones, I've trouble. It's too bad I can't do it (decode)".

In analysing the percentage of responses, it appears that there may be a relationship between the adults and the good readers in the area of reading for enjoyment. However only 25% of the poor readers seem to have realized that pleasure can be derived from reading. As they have not yet attained fluency in the reading task, reading by their own admission, is a difficult task and may therefore be less enjoyable in spite of their professing to liking it. Fluent readers move into the enjoyment of the act as they process the information in the text while poor comprehenders may be so textually constrained as to disallow enjoyment.

Question 2

How Often Do Parents and Children Read at Home?

The distribution of responses per category are located in Figure 6.

The parents of the poor readers professed to reading on a daily basis more frequently than any of the other three groups. The newspaper was the reading material most often cited, with books taking a low priority. "I'll sit down and read the newspaper right through after supper". "I just never get into a book, you know, 'cause it takes too long to get through". A point to report is that none of the adults referred to reading to their children. An explanation could be that the parents did not see this participating situation as reading per se, and inferred that the researcher was only seeking to discover their own personal reading habits. However, as their offspring were experiencing considerable difficulty with reading, one wonders if these children were still being read to and if their parents just failed to mention that fact as an example of their reading habits.

Rather surprisingly, only 30% of the good readers read on a daily basis. Their responses indicated that they had many interests other than reading and as the interviews were conducted during a particularly warm spring week, it is possible their memories failed them. "Sometimes I read; sometimes I go out on my roller skates". "I read every day when I can't take out my bike".

It appears evident that all subjects read at home and the relationship between how often parents and children read is somewhat consistent. Eighty percent of the parents read at least twice a week, or

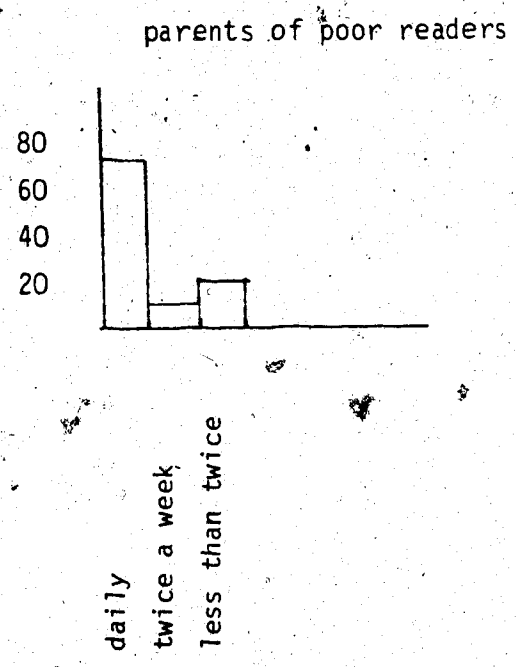
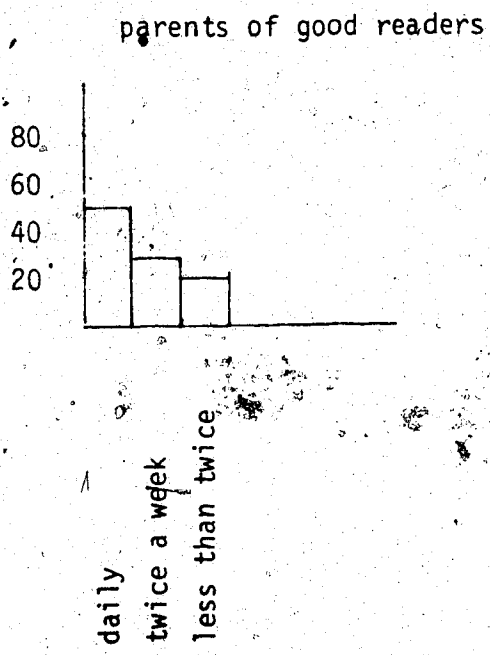
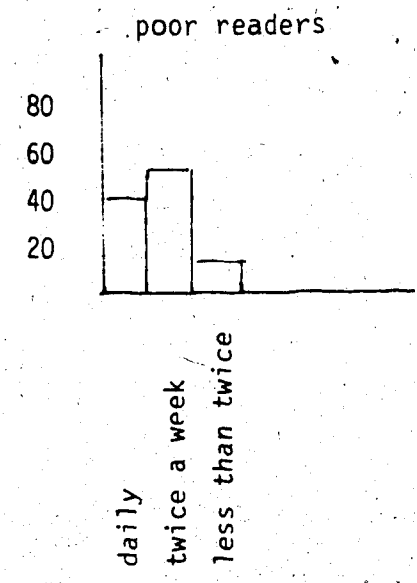
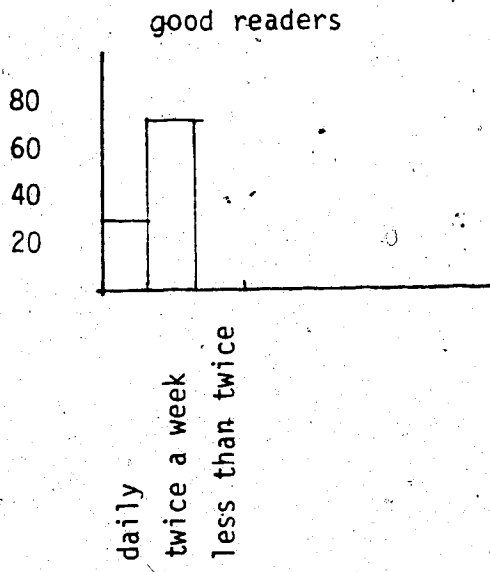


Figure 6
Home Reading Frequency

more frequently. Approximately the same figure holds true for their children.

Question 5

Do parents and Children Observe Others Reading at Home or in Their Environment?

Figures 7 and 8 give the results to this question. It must be noted that the subjects were not asked what their own reasons were for reading at home or in their environment; the intent of the question was to discover what purposes others had for reading outside of a school setting. Overwhelmingly, the responses of all subjects indicated that reading was being done at home and in the work environment.

The parents of the good readers claimed that those whom they observed reading at home, e.g. spouse, relative or offspring, were involved in the process for enjoyment purposes. "My own mother, for example, reads for fun. She likes to fill her time at that rather than T.V. or things". The 23% who offered communication as a reason referred to the work situation. They mentioned that pleasure reading was frowned upon by employers even if the employee did not have sufficient work to fill the hours. "We used to be able to take a book to work and read, when we weren't busy, but now they've done away with that".

While 58% of the parents of poor readers viewed communication as the main purpose for home or work reading, 42% contended that enjoyment was the prime reason. These results are very consistent with their replies to question 3 (See Figure 10). The adults in the group referred to their spouses or relatives as those they saw reading. None mentioned their own child or other siblings. This leads one to assume that perhaps the poor

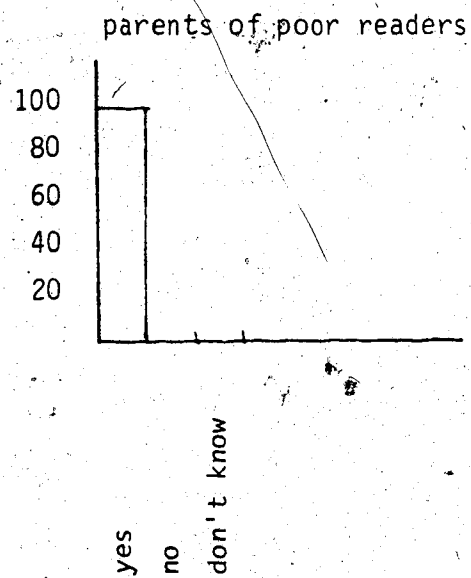
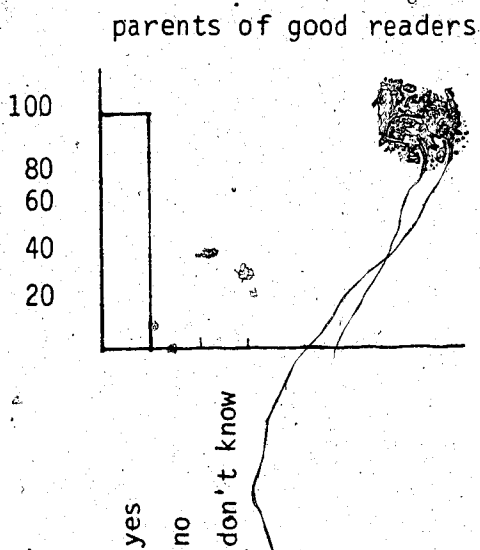
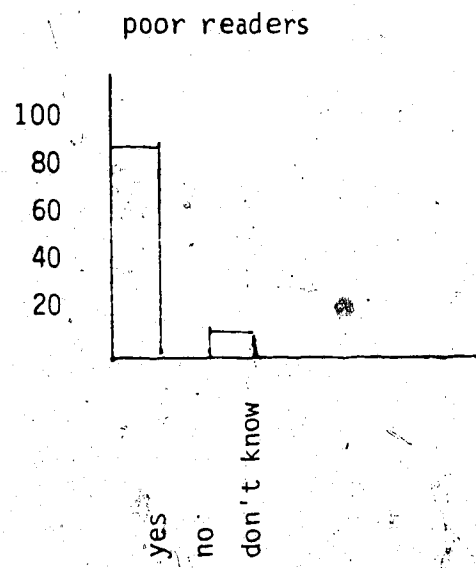
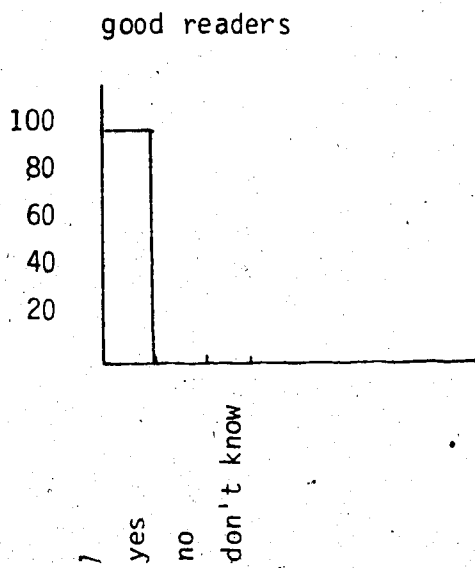


Figure 7
Observations of Home Reading

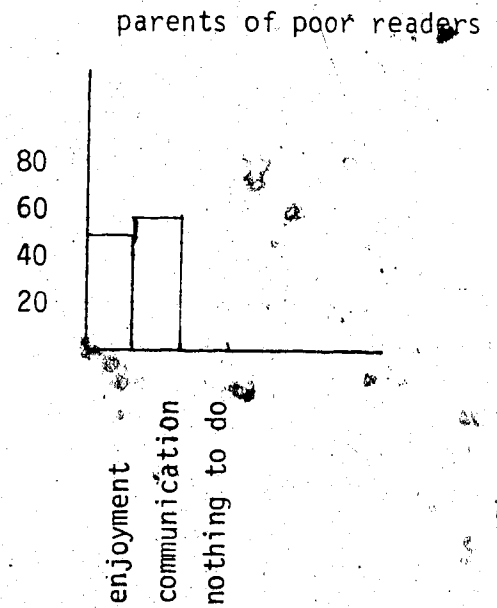
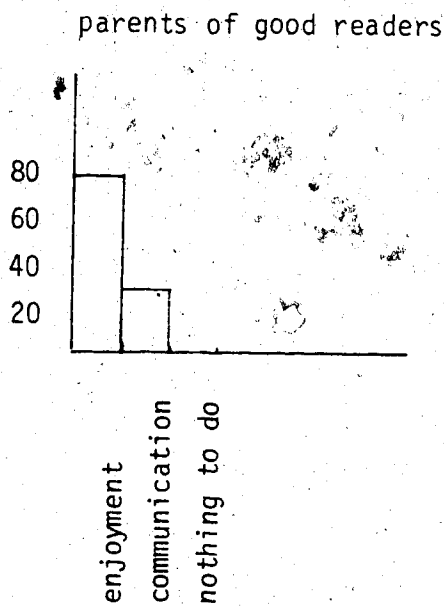
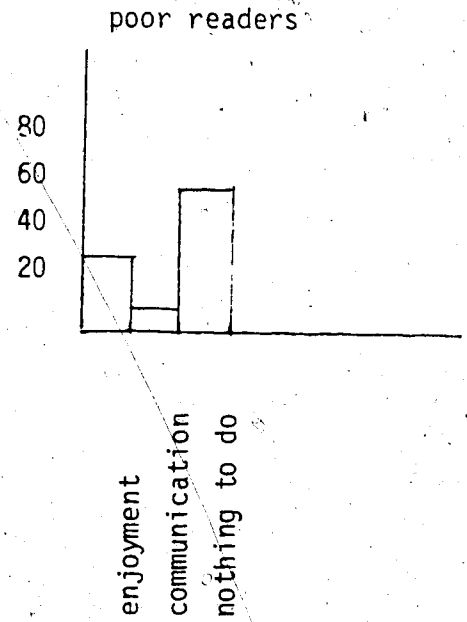
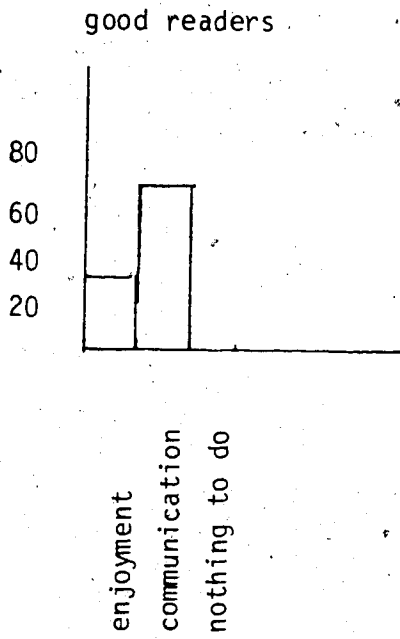


Figure 8
Reasons for Home Reading Practices

readers did not read much, if at all, at home, which appears to be inconsistent with the children's replies to question 2 (See Figure 3). An alternative explanation may be that while these same children do read at home, their parents viewed such reading activity as school prescribed and therefore failed to mention it. The parents of good readers, however, referred constantly to their own children as examples of those they saw reading at home. "_____ has started reading the sport's section". "_____ reads her library books and the ones she brings home from school just about every day".

The good comprehenders saw communication as the main purpose for their parents reading. "Well he looks at the newspaper to find out what happened". "My mom reads her nurse book so she can take care of the baby". It must be noted that perhaps much of the reading activity in the home is accomplished by the parents after their young children go to bed, when the adult can read for pleasure without fear of interruption. "I have to have complete silence to read and no distractions" was the way one parent phrased it. If such were the case, the child would have less opportunity to see a parent reading for pleasure.

Fifty eight percent of the poor readers considered that their parents read because they had nothing else to do. S: "When my mum has finished the dishes, she reads". I: "Why do you think she reads?" S: "Cause everything's done and she's nothing to do". Sixty percent of the poor readers did not indicate that they had formed concepts of reading for enjoyment or communication purposes. These results confirm the findings of Edwards (1962) and McLaughlin (1978), but appear inconsistent with their own responses to the question concerning the importance of reading,

(See Figure 9) where reading to learn was of prime importance. Perhaps an explanation could be that these children did not realize that adults also learn through reading. Good readers, on the other hand, appeared to have developed a schema for reading that contained features for learning and enjoyment as main components of the reading task.

Figures 7 and 8 appear to demonstrate that while all the subjects are exposed to others reading in the home environment, the purposes for this activity are not viewed as being similar among all the groups. Again, poor comprehenders were more unlike those of any of the other three groups.

Question 3

Do parents and children consider reading to be important?

Overwhelmingly, all subjects considered reading to be important (See Figure 9). The reasons for this emphasis varied among the groups (See Figure 10). While all parents and good readers were of the opinion that communication and enjoyment were the prime reasons for the importance, the poor comprehenders appeared not to have developed a schema for enjoyment as it applies to the importance of reading. This is in keeping with the majority of their responses to Question 1. For the present question none of them alluded to the pleasure one derives from reading which was evident in 33% of the responses of the good readers. "Because it's (got) so much exciting things and scary things". If a focus of pleasure is missing in the reading schemata for these children, one may assume that they will not be inclined to read for relaxation or enjoyment. Rather they will approach the task only when so directed by outside pressures-- e.g. the teacher in school or the parent who

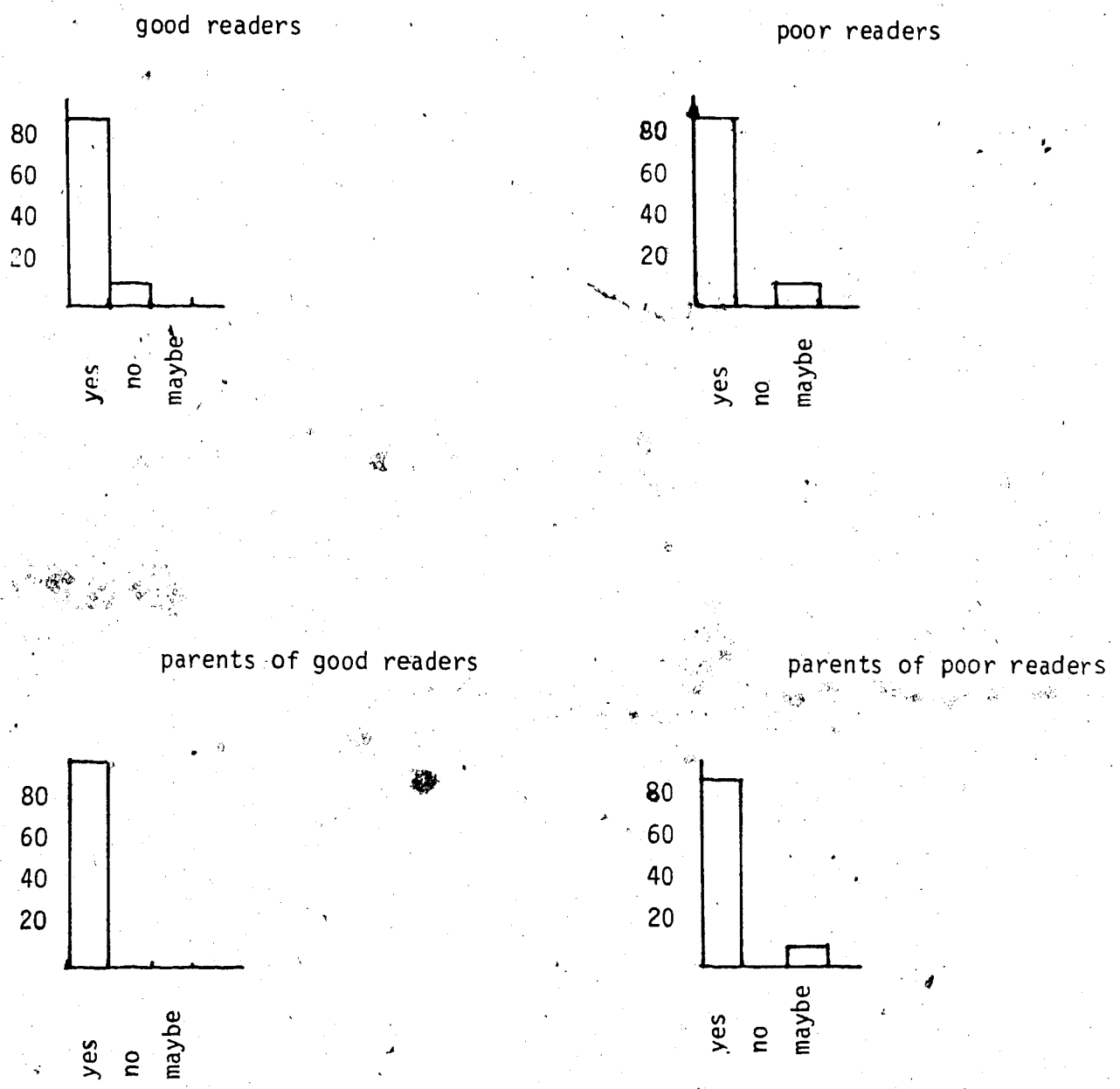


Figure 9
Is Reading Important ?

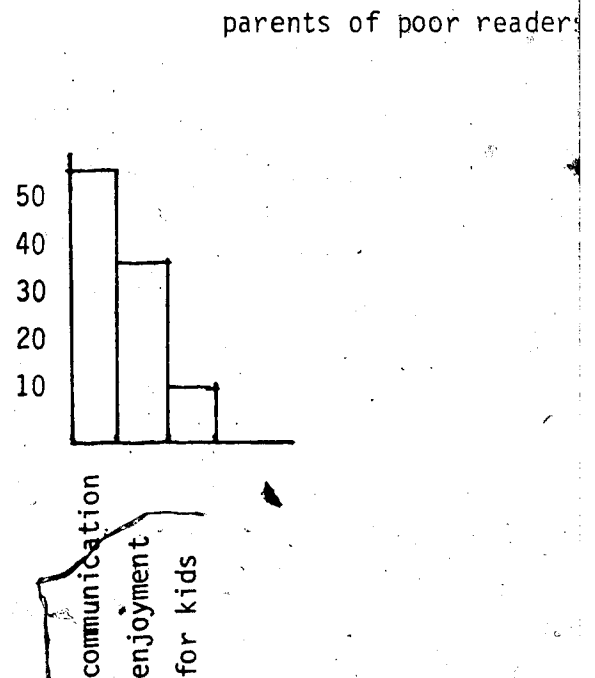
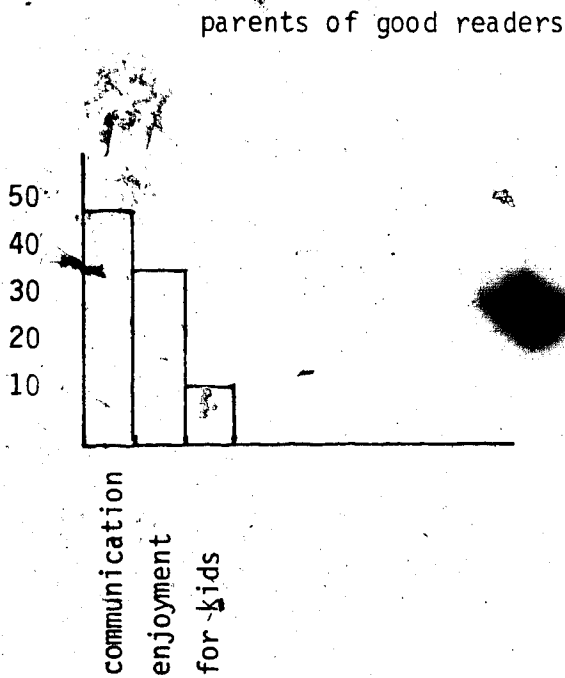
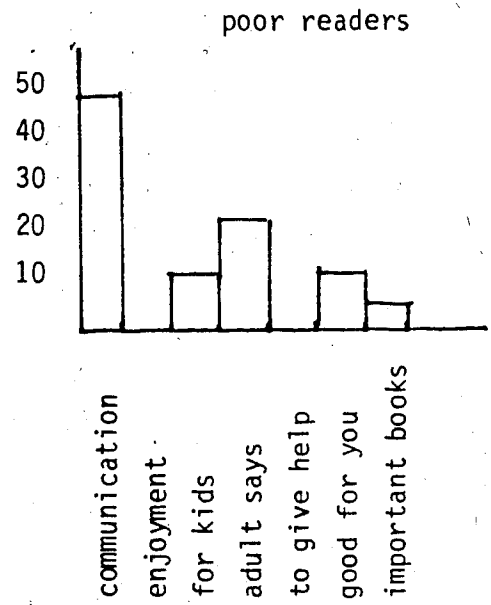
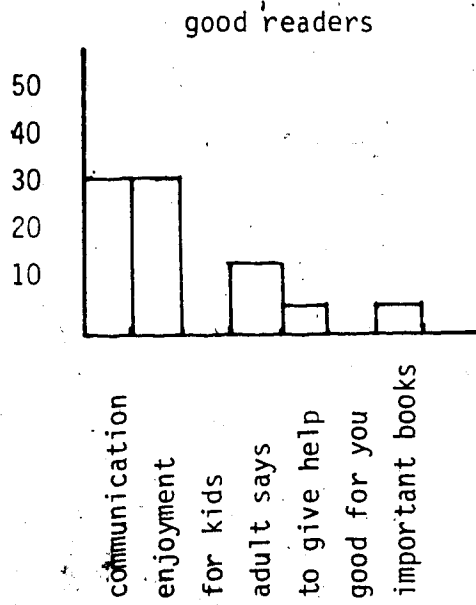


Figure 10
Reasons for Importance of Reading

supervises the homework. Furthermore, 23% of the poor readers indicated that reading was important because some adult had told them so. "Well my mum says it is so I can drive and things when I grow up". If this group has internalized the importance of reading as the outcome of an adult directive, rather than being self-motivated, it may be that they do not realize what they themselves bring to the text is important to its interpretation. Reading for future success may detract from reading in the present for pleasure or enjoyment.

All subjects considered reading to be important for communication purposes. There would seem to be a relationship between the parents' and children's concepts in this particular area. However this is not in keeping with their responses to the question as to why they liked or disliked reading (See Figure 5). In the present instance, the subjects' replies focused strongly on learning "cause you get to learn lots of things, like about mice and things". "You can't learn much without reading and as an adult you learn everything through reading and can apply that knowledge". One may assume that if learning is what the subjects view as being important, it may not be considered enjoyable. Rather reading to learn is thought of as something one has to do, as opposed to something one likes to do. Over 10% of the parents' responses indicated that reading was important for their children, if not necessarily for themselves. "Its important for kids 'cause they're just learning; for myself, it's not so important, I think". These responses did not clarify whether these adults were emphasizing the mechanics of reading as opposed to the overall concept of reading as an interpretative process. The researcher is of the opinion that while these parents may

be encouraging a reading for learning concepts in their children, they may not be models themselves as readers for learning in the home environment.

In summary, for this question related to the importance of reading, a relationship appears to exist among the four groups. Also communication as the main reason for professing such a belief is indicated with some consistency among the groups. Poor comprehenders, however, appear to be lacking the concept of enjoyment as a reason for reading importance.

Question 4

At What Age Do Parents and Children Think Fluency in Reading is Attained?

The results for this question are presented in Figure 11. With the exception of the group comprised of poor readers, all subjects were of the opinion that fluency is attained by the age of nine, or in other words, by the end of grade three. Their reasons (See Figure 12) were based primarily on the examples provided by sibling models or the general maturity of readers at that age. "My brother's eight and he's a good reader." "Our older daughter _____ read well by grade three". "They're old enough by then (grade three) to stand what they read". Some of the good readers considered themselves fluent readers. "Well I'm seven and I'm a pretty good reader". They appeared to have realized that proficiency was possible even at their own present age and that one did not have to wait until the distant future to achieve mastery of the reading task.

However, 70% of the poor readers thought that fluency would come at a later age, 10 years or older. "When I'm bigger, I'll read better". The implication of such responses indicates that if poor readers do not expect to attain fluency until they are much older, they may not be

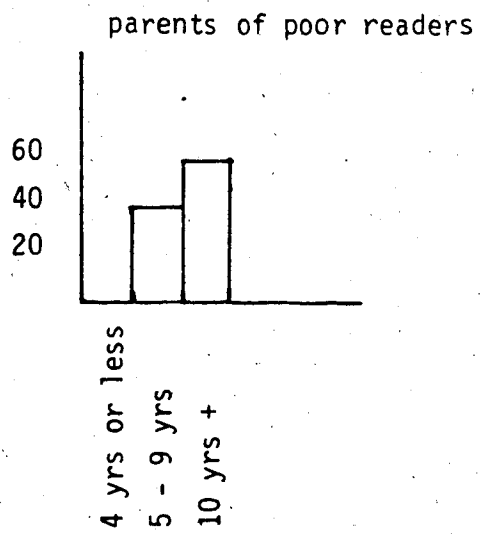
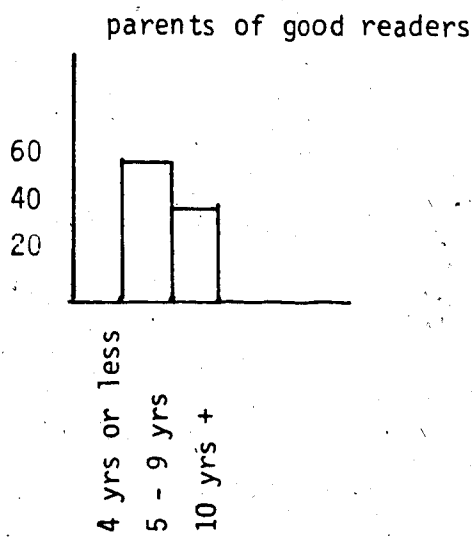
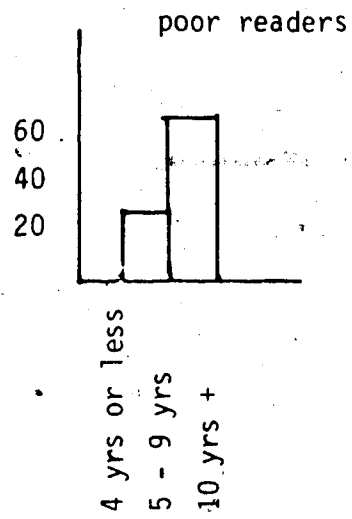
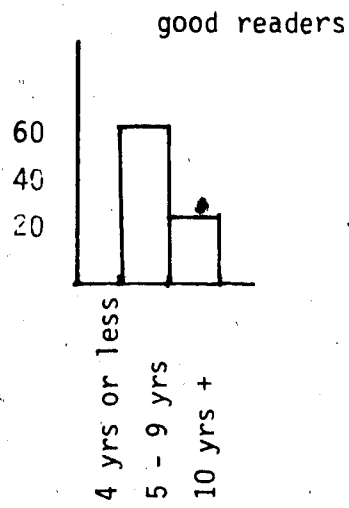


Figure 11

Age of Reading Fluency

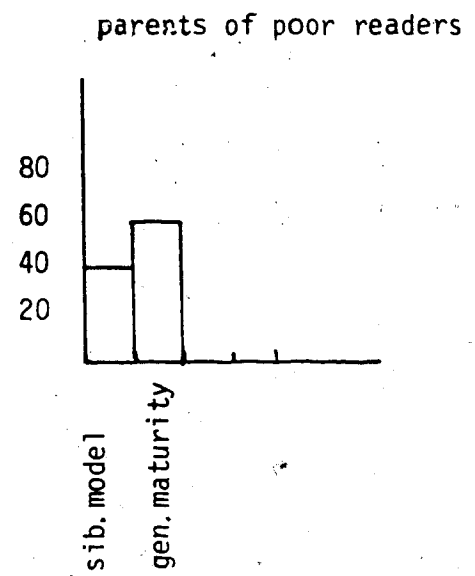
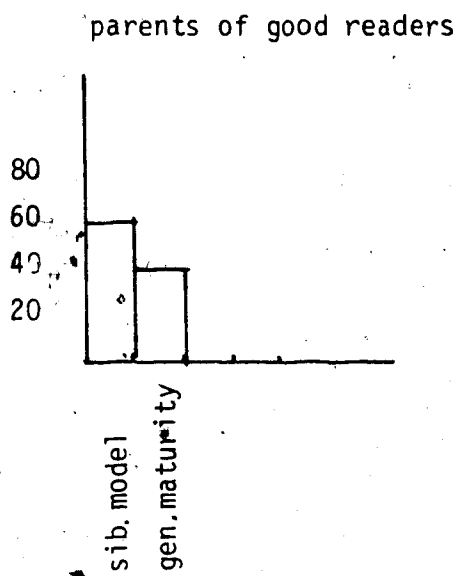
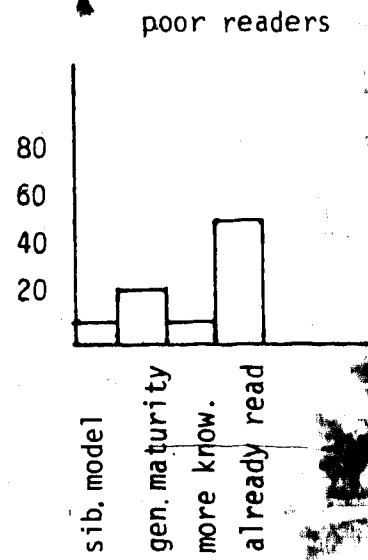
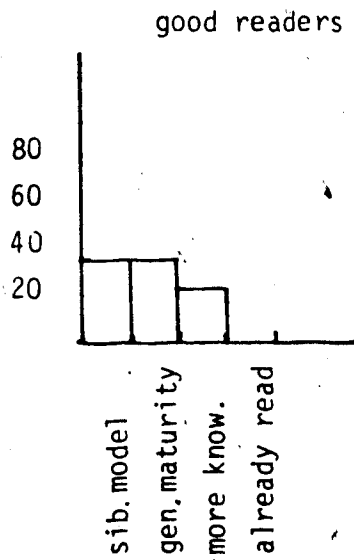


Figure 12
Reasons for Age of Fluency Choices

approaching the reading task with the same expectations of success as good readers. In other words, they may think that mastery of the art will come about as a by-product of age rather than as a result of their own personal involvement and efforts. In analysing the responses created by the poor comprehenders, one discovers that they were of the opinion that they would already be reading by that age; that is, they provided circular responses. "Well, you're old when you're 12 and you'll know more reading when you're old, like 12". "'Cause you'll already know reading and you won't fool around and stuff". Another explanation could be that poor readers rationalized their present reading performance as a result of not being old enough to be fluent readers. In other words, they could not read with fluency until they were older.

Interestingly, only 40% of the parents of poor readers mentioned sibling models as examples of successful readers and considered maturity to be of more importance in the attainment of fluency. "When they're older, they'll understand better what's happening". It is the opinion of this researcher that these parents may not be expecting their children to be successful readers in their present grade and may be waiting for their offspring to grow up before attaining fluency.

In analysing the responses, there does not appear to be a relationship between the concepts of fluency attainment held by poor readers and those of the other three groups. The similarity of replies between good readers and parents indicates that the former may be approaching an adult-like understanding of when reading fluency is attained.

Question 6

How Do Parents and Children Rate Themselves As Readers?

The results from this question are displayed in Figure 13. The good readers saw themselves as proficient, able to handle any of the reading tasks in school. "I'm extra good! I always get my words right like my sheets and lists." Others perceived themselves as fluent readers because of the quality of the materials they read and the position of their reading group in the class. "I can read hard books and other things like that". "I'm in a group that read a book called Cherry Street; that's about in the highest group." The good comprehenders projected self-confidence and a strong awareness of their own capabilities. Poor readers however, did not demonstrate the same confidence. They realized that they were not strong readers, that they had trouble with decoding and that extrinsic rewards for reading correctly were highly valued. One little girl put it most aptly when she stated "(I'm) a little bit good. Not too good. 'Cause this week I'm getting a little bit too many words wrong. And then I get some right. I like it when I get them right 'cause I get a sticker with this smell thing on it and it smells and smells if you scratch it." Understanding the text, or top-down processing, was not mentioned by the child groups. The ability to read well orally and decode accurately seemed to be the basis by which the children judged themselves. These responses are consistent with the research in the literature (Downing, 1970; Johns, 1972). While the poor readers admitted to difficulty, they placed themselves as average on the ability scale; however, their reading percentile scores indicated that they were very weak indeed as readers. None of them appeared to realize

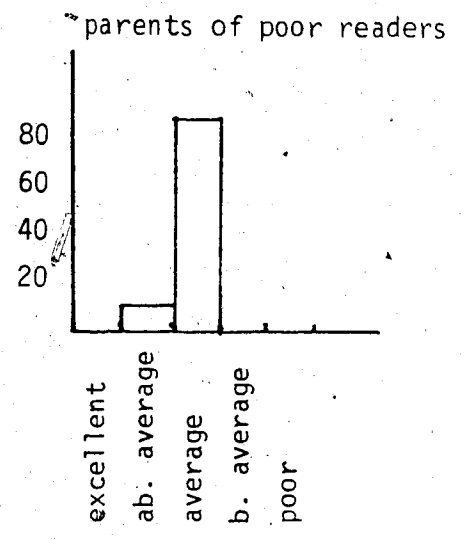
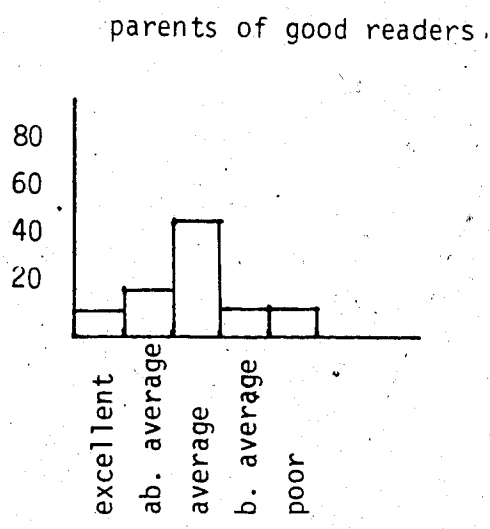
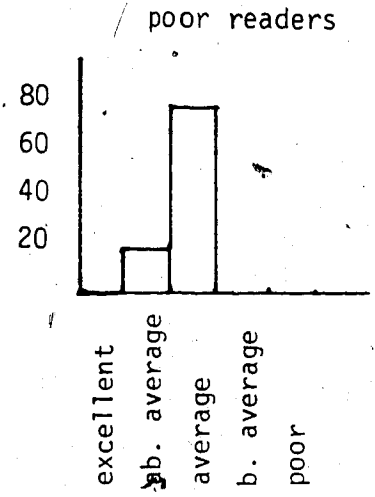
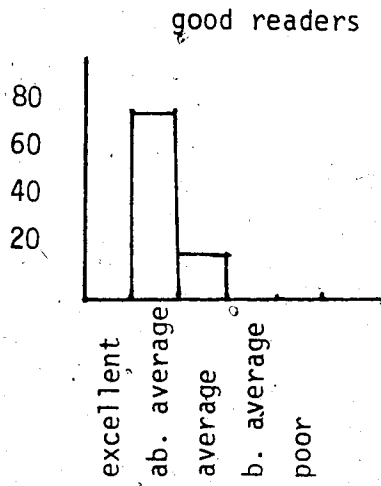


Figure 13
Subjects' Self-Perceptions of Reading Ability

this fact. An explanation could be that their parents and teachers had been continually rewarding their successes so that their self-confidence had not been damaged during the course of the year. Alternately, their ability to judge themselves more accurately may not have been possible because their concepts of reading, as they applied to their own facility, were not appropriate.

The parents of the poor readers also perceived themselves primarily as average readers, attributing this opinion to their lack of speed, to the amount they read and by comparing themselves to other models of excellent readers. "I'm very slow when I read in order to grasp what I'm reading". "I'll listen to others who read on T.V. and stuff, like church; I could never read like that, they're way up as readers."

The parents of good readers were the only ones who felt that their ability ranged from excellent to poor. Speed, accuracy and the ability to understand the text were the main criteria for excellence; lack of comprehension and difficulty with words appeared to be the focuses for poor ability. "I read very quickly and I understand what I'm reading". "I'd say about below average...like some of the words I can't make out and I don't understand so I have to ask my husband".

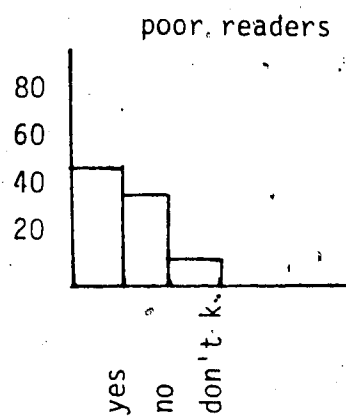
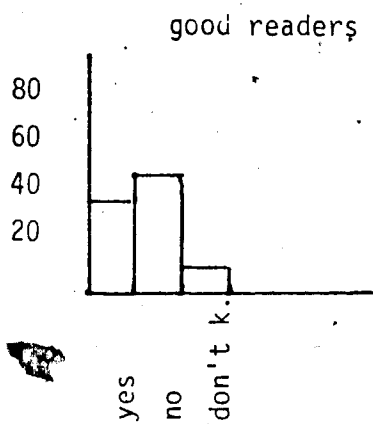
While there appears to be a marked similarity between the attained scores of the parents of poor readers and poor readers, it may be unjust to contend that a relationship exists because of the discrepancy between the children's judgements of themselves and their reading performance as measured by standardized reading tests. They may not have had a true concept of what an average reader is; even if they had developed such a schema they were unable to verbalize what such a concept entails.

Question 7

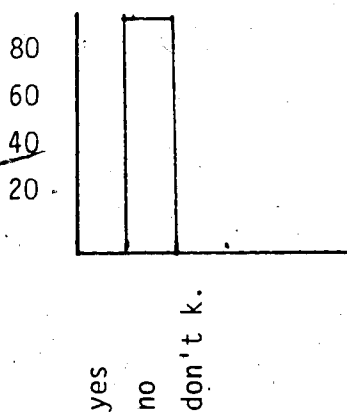
What Factors Contribute to the Inability to Read of Some Adults and Children?

Items 11 and 13 on the questionnaire provided the data for this question. Figures 14 and 15 demonstrate the results. The replies to Question 11 indicate that although the parent groups overwhelmingly thought some adults were not good readers, there appeared to be little difference between the child groups as to whether all adults were/were not good readers. Fifty percent of the poor readers indicated that all adults could read well which is in keeping with their responses as to when fluency is attained. "They're grown up so they know how; they know all the words". Forty percent of the good readers also considered that all adults were proficient readers, providing answers rather similar to those of their peers. "My dad is grown up and he's a good reader". More interesting, perhaps, is the discovery that a good proportion of both child samples understood that some adults had difficulty with the reading task. The reasons for the deficit centered around the non-reading model in their environment, lack of interest and practice as children. "Some are retarded and can't talk"; "'Cause they don't like it"; "Maybe they haven't practiced enough when they're little".

Combined with the data on adults' reading ability, item 13 provided further information as to what variables the subjects thought might interfere with the reading process. The good and poor readers placed emphasis on decoding deficits because their peers who were experiencing difficulty in the classroom appeared to have obvious trouble with that particular aspect of the task. "The words are too hard for them". "They



parents of good readers



parents of poor readers

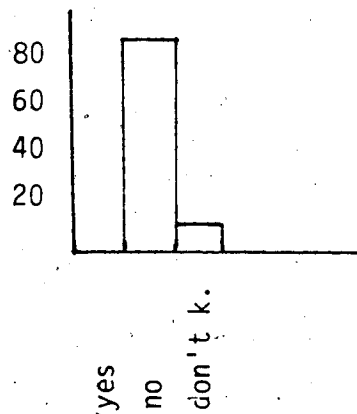


Figure 14

Are All Adults Successful Readers?

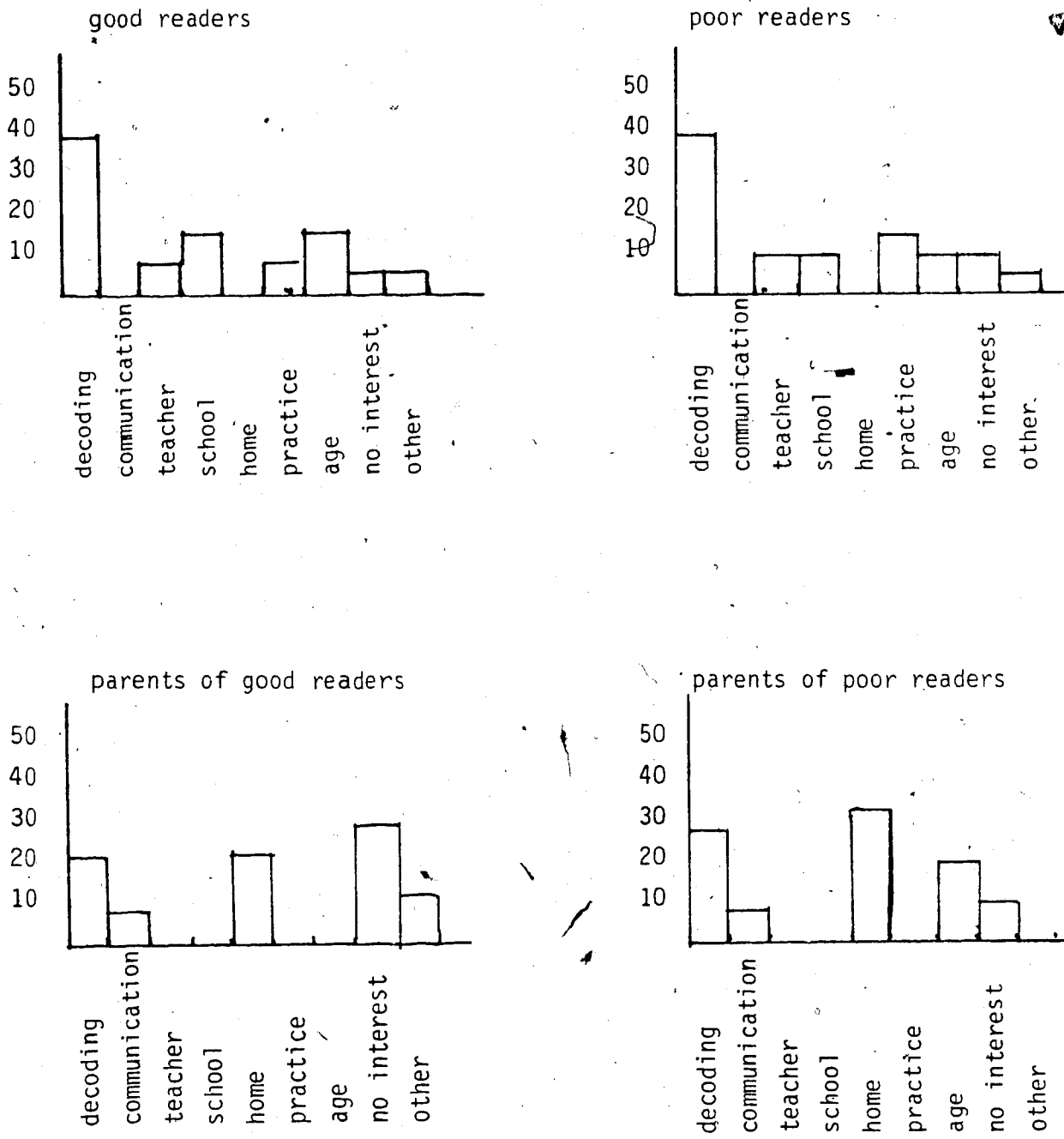


Figure 15

Factors Contributing To The Inability To Read Of Some Children And Adults

can't find the place where they're at and they sound out wrong". These young subjects appeared to have empathy for those experiencing difficulty and thought their problems could be solved if they tried harder and listened better to the teacher. "They have to pay attention and learn and not fool around". The poor readers did not refer to their own plight; rather they spoke of others in the class who were having trouble. As 80% considered themselves average readers, their lack of identity as problem readers was not surprising. A point of note, however, was that poor comprehenders provided very similar reasons to those produced by the good readers as to why a peer might find reading difficult.

Although both groups of parents stated that poor decoding skills might be one of the variables interfering with the reading process, 33% of the parents of poor readers and 24% of the parents of good readers identified the home as not being a satisfactory learning environment and therefore a cause of reading difficulties. "Maybe they don't have books at home". "Perhaps the parents don't read to them enough". "I think I'd have to say a lack of encouragement at the home level". None of the parents thought the school or the teacher was at fault. This leads one to speculate that although parents expect their children to be taught to read at school, the role the teacher plays in reading achievement may be less important to adults than what has been traditionally thought. It must be mentioned, however, that all the parents in the study were aware that the researcher was a teacher which may have influenced their responses.

The two groups of children compare favourably to each other as do the two groups of parents. However there appears to be little relationship between parents and children. Although many of the responses offered were similar, particularly in relation to the decoding feature, the percentages of responses varied considerably between adults and children.

Question 8

What Procedures Would Parents and Children Follow In Order That They Themselves Might Become Better Readers?

Items 8, 9 and 14 were employed to provide information for this question. Figure 16 demonstrates the results.

Good readers were of the opinion that the reading of more difficult materials and continual practice in the art of reading ~~was to~~ lead to improvement. The focus on mechanical skills rather than ~~absorbing~~ the ideas contained within the material concurs with research in the area (Downing, 1970; Johns, 1972). Practice was of prime importance, a procedure which was to be carried out at home rather than in the school. "First you have to learn small words and then you have to get better and get longer and longer, bigger, hard words". "You can take out a library book and practice lots at home so you can be good when you grow up". Library books were frequently mentioned as a means to improvement, giving some indication, perhaps, that this group may have viewed their school readers as being less challenging.

The poor readers also felt that practice was the main avenue to improvement. "You have to practice and practice, just about every day, I think". What they were to practice was less evident. "Just practice, that's all". Considering that 80% of these children professed to reading

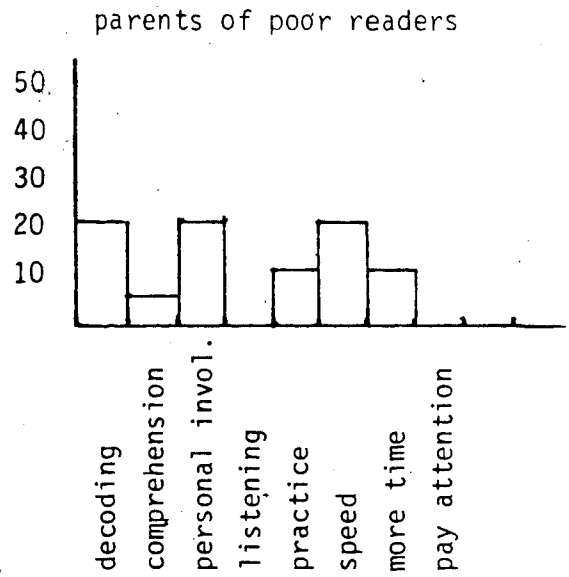
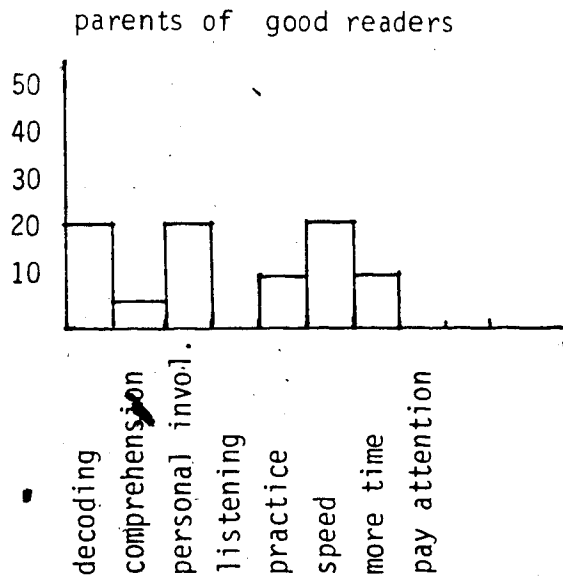
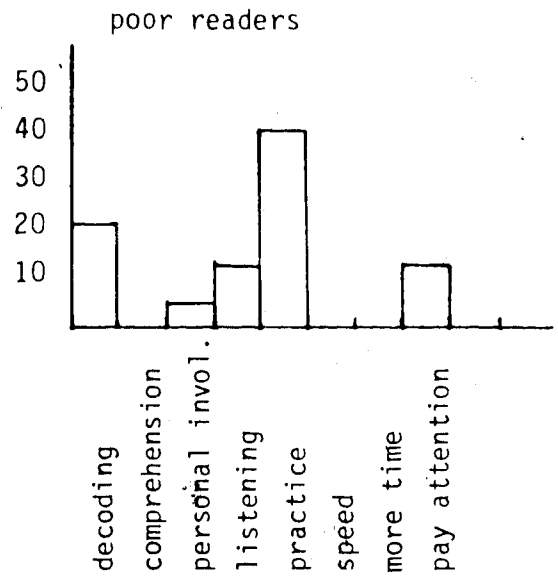
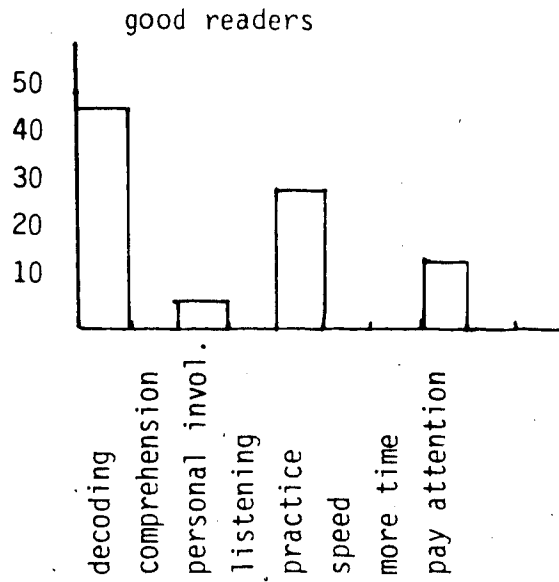


Figure 16

Self-Perceptions Concerning Reading Improvement

rather often at home, one wonders what they were "practicing lots". Were they reading their text books and worksheets to their parents without knowing why they were reading them? Were they practicing to become good oral readers without understanding the purpose of their reading? The latter explanation conforms to the studies in the literature (Johns, 1972; Denny and Weintraub, 1965). However becoming proficient in decoding was of less importance to them, as only 20% mentioned the mechanics of reading as a means to improvement. It is possible that this group were unaware of their own deficiencies with the decoding process and therefore could not place emphasis on it. However, in their definitions of what reading is, as shown in Chapter IV, decoding was one of the features on which they placed importance. The continual reference to hard words and mistakes in reading throughout the interview leads one to assume that while they may have formed some concept of what decoding is, they had not developed appropriate schemata for that feature of the process as being one which assists the reader to interpret the text.

Paying attention and listening to the teacher were also considered as means to improvement. Nearly 20% were of the opinion that if they did not "fool around in class" and "tried to listen to the teacher when she tells you what to do", they would become better readers. While concentration and time on task would appear to be necessary for successful achievement, these children saw the lack of these abilities as the causes of the reading difficulties of their peers rather than the symptoms.

Both parent groups were very similar in the views concerning improvement. Over 20% of each group considered the reading of more

difficult materials, more personal involvement and speed to be of prime importance. One parent summed it up succinctly when she stated:

I would like to take speed reading courses; that's what frustrates me when I read; I find I go too slow; I'd like to read faster and practice more and read things that require thought on my part like 'yes, that's a good idea, a good point, or that's interesting'; more difficult books, too, I think.

None of the parents referred to the fact that one reads different materials at different rates depending on the purpose for reading.

Although some similarity appears to exist between the responses of children and parents in the area of decoding as a means to improvement, the remaining replies appear to be less consistent among the groups. The children scarcely mentioned personal involvement and more important did not refer to speed at all as a requirement for improvement. This appears to be in contrast to the Edwards' (1958) study where fast reading was viewed as a skill to be desired.

Question 9

Do Parents and Children View the Reading Process to be the Same for an Adult as For a Child in Grade One?

Figures 17 and 18 display the responses which were obtained from item 12 on the questionnaires. Both parents and children did not consider the reading process to be the same for an adult as for a child and from the responses, it is evident that the subjects viewed the differences to be primarily text-based in contrast to knowledge-based. Their choices were founded upon the premises that the reading materials were quite different, that adult print would be too difficult thus preventing a child from being able to decode them satisfactorily. "Children are

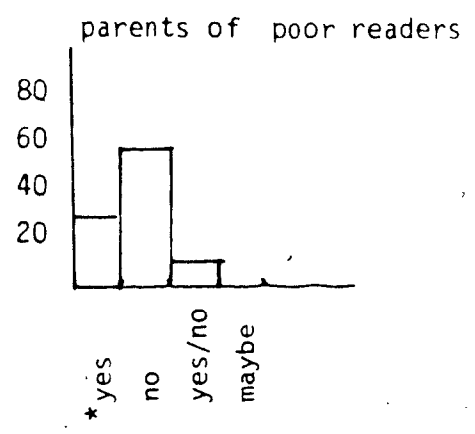
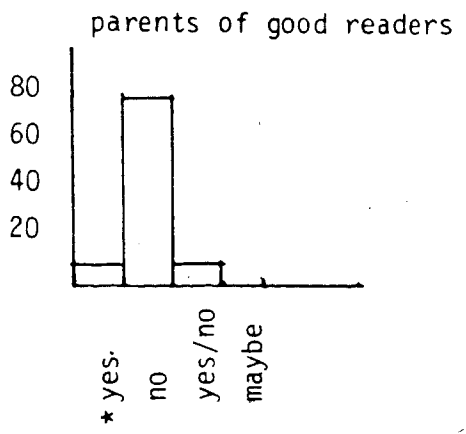
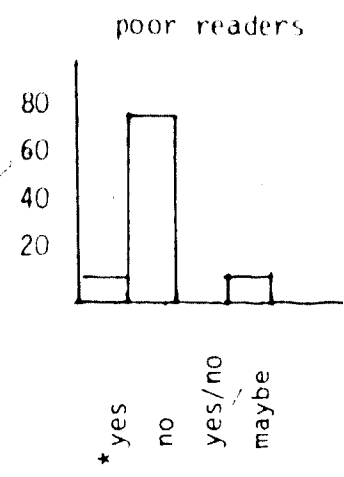
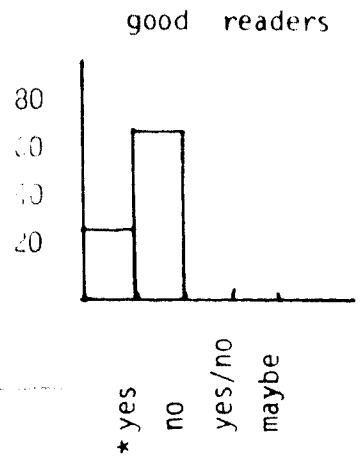


Figure 17

Is Reading Process Similar for Children and Adults?

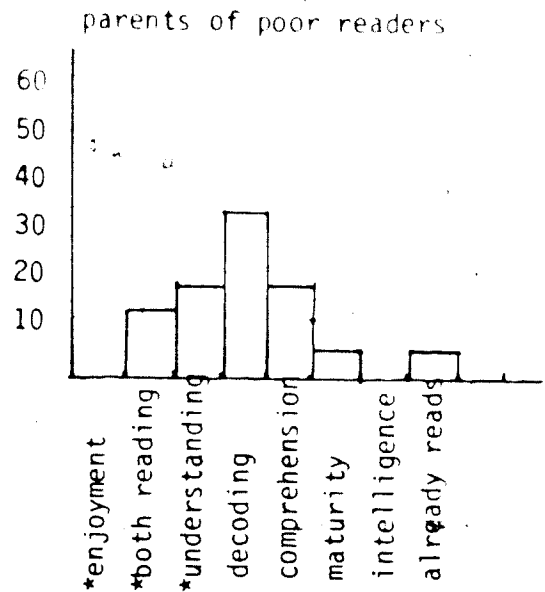
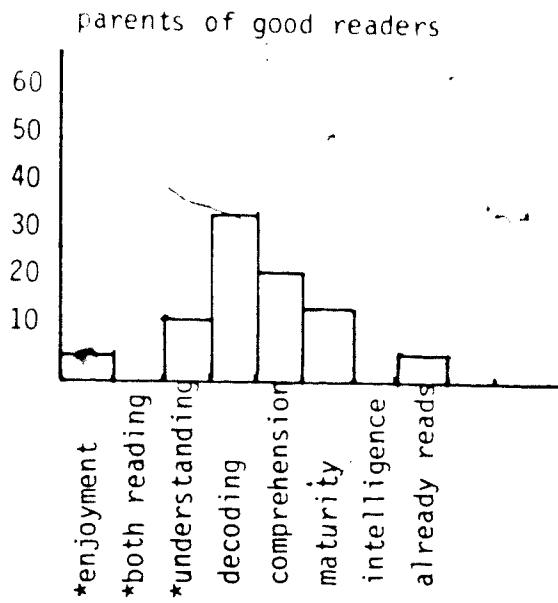
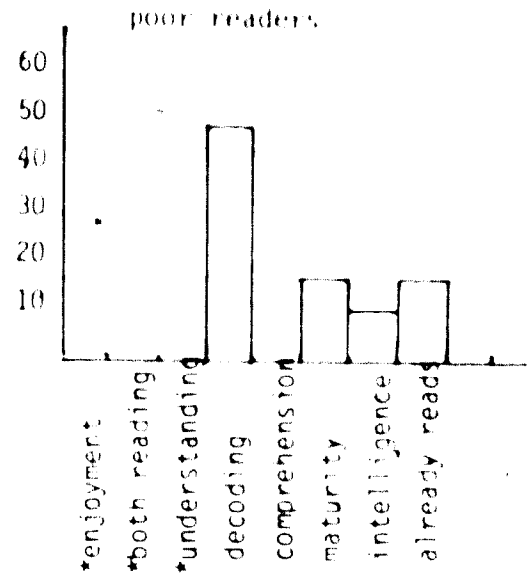
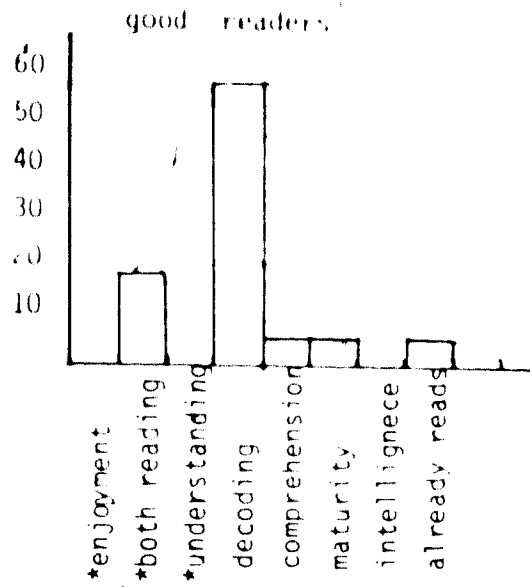


Figure 18

Differences and Similarities in Adult-Child Reading Processes

learning to sound out every word, while an adult doesn't do that; he knows them". "Grade sixer books are harder and thicker and grade ones don't know all the words". "The challenge for the child is getting all the words, not so much the story". Only 20% of the parents referred to meaning or comprehension. This researcher is of the opinion that if parents view the process as one of exactitude in decoding for their children, rather than extracting information from the page, which is what adults themselves do, they may be overstressing decoding procedures in the home reading situation, thus nurturing a bottom-up rather than a combination of schema-based and text-based concepts of reading in their children. Research has demonstrated (Canney and Winograd, 1979) that the same emphasis is being placed by the teacher in the school environment, in the primary grades, thereby further fostering a text-based strategy in learning to read. The understanding of the reading materials did not appear at all in the responses of the poor readers and was only barely alluded to by the good readers. Since poor readers did not provide evidence of a meaning focus in their definition of reading, such verbalizations for this question are not surprising. What is interesting is that good readers failed to mention meaning in the present instance as they did possess schemata for meaning in their definitions.

The enjoyment one derives from reading, regardless of the ability or level of reading, was scarcely mentioned by any of the subjects. This is somewhat surprising as a good proportion of parents and children felt that they themselves read for pleasure and enjoyment (See Figure 5), and one may presume that they might have discovered this pleasure in others regardless of age. Twenty percent of the good readers and 12% of the poor

readers contended that the same processes were at play in comparing children and adults. However, when asked to explain, the responses were somewhat non-explanatory. "Well, they're reading. Aren't they?" None verbalized that comprehension, enjoyment or pleasure could be one of the similarities. However 20% of the parents of poor readers and 16% of the parents of good readers referred to the interpretation of the text. "They are getting an understanding of a lot of things, the meaning of what's going on in the story and they're finding out things like an adult does, but on a different level".

Most parents and children did not see adults and children as approaching the reading task in the same manner. However, there appeared to be little connection between the parents' reasons and those provided by their children except in the area of decoding which was the main focus for the stated differences.

SUMMARY

All subjects considered reading to be important, primarily for communication purposes. Overall, however, few relationships emerged between the responses of children and their parents. Good readers, in general, displayed more similarity to the adults' conceptions of reading than did their less able peers.

Chapter VI presents the summary and conclusions of the study. Recommendations for further research and instructional implications are also presented.

CHAPTER VI

This chapter contains a brief summary of the study, the main findings and conclusions. Recommendations for further research and implications for teaching are also presented.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the schemata for reading of grade one good and poor readers and the relationship to the schemata of reading held by their parents. The sample consisted of 20 parents, 10 good and 10 poor readers chosen from all the grade one classrooms in a middle-class suburban school district. Each child was tested by means of the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test in order to determine their reading ability. Good readers achieved a score at or above the 90th percentile, poor readers at or below the 35th percentile. Each child was individually interviewed at his/her respective school. A parent from each family, the one most involved with the child's school work, also was interviewed, primarily in the home. The researcher conducted all interviews which were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Two questionnaires, based on the model designed by Canney and Winograd (1979) provided the data for the study. Questions 1-14 were employed as a warm-up effect to the subject of reading and to provide descriptive data while the final question "What is reading?" was subjected to statistical analysis. Based upon the findings related to each question in Chapters IV

and V, and the synthesis of that data, the following conclusions appear to be justified.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Parents and children consider reading to be important.

A strong relationship existed in this study between the views of parents and their children as to the importance of reading. The reasons provided by each group focused on communication. The children were of the opinion that reading to learn was thought of as something they had to do rather than something they liked to do, as a means to future success rather than present achievement and enjoyment. Parents, however, focused on the value of reading in their daily lives, in order that they might function successfully in their homes and work.

2. Grade one readers possess a restricted view of the reading process.

Responses of both good and poor readers indicated that the majority perceive reading as a decoding process. Knowing how to pronounce words and sound them out received strong emphasis in their replies to what reading is. Further evidence for this focus surfaced when they described how they might overcome their own difficulties with the task, and the reasons why some of their peers might be experiencing difficulty. Approximately 50% did not verbalize the notion that one is supposed to reconstruct meaning from print or that the personal knowledge one brings to the page is of significance. It was suggested that the

conceptualization of identifying and remembering words may have been the result of the methods of instruction at school rather than home environment.

3. Students' schemata for reading may be used to differentiate between good and poor readers.

There appears to be a relationship between students' awareness that reading entails meaning-focused activities and their comprehension abilities. Poor readers relied on decoding systems as a vehicle to becoming better readers. They did not verbalize any evidence that the meaning component had been considered in their search for proficiency. One may assume, therefore, that if they do not conceptualize meaning as a prerequisite for fluency, they do not and will not use semantic clues in their analysis of the text. If they treat each word as a separate unit, do not avail themselves of context clues and are unaware of the relationships among words, they will experience difficulty in processing text in a top-down manner. Good readers, however, referred to the words as making up sentences and stories which indicate that they are cognizant of the relationships among the units, and therefore, are developing a schema for understanding text. Such children, also, would appear to be developing appropriate schemata for reading by employing graphophonic, syntactic and semantic strategies in their search for meaning. Whether this awareness of meaning is a result of their reading ability or whether reading ability is a consequence of the knowledge that text is to be comprehended, is a question that needs further research. Less able students, in the study, centered their attention only on the graphophonic relationships when they referred to sounding out and pronouncing words. Such reliance on decoding proficiency without the development of a schema

for meaning, may in fact retard rather than expand comprehension skills significantly. In essence, therefore, it may be possible, by identifying a child's schemata for reading, to assess his/her ability as he/she approaches the reading task. If the child has not grasped the concept that meaning-getting is at least related if not central to reading, he/she may be processing minute pieces of information in a vacuum.

4. Parents and children do not hold similar concepts of what reading is.

When comparing all the children to their parents; the difference in concepts held by both groups were in the expected direction. Parents focused strongly on the extraction of information from the text with the ability to understand what the author intends and to relate it to one's own experience. Knowledge-based schemata, containing features which allow the reader to go beyond the literal content of the text, to read between and beyond the lines, were central to the parents' concepts of reading. Children, on the other hand, possessed concepts dominated by object and decoding foci with minimal reference to meaning-getting. The few ideas they had concerning the extraction of information from the page, focused on the literal content of the passage. Few children alluded to personal involvement as a prerequisite for efficient and pleasurable reading.

5. Parents and children consider good decoding skills as necessary for successful reading.

No significant difference was discovered between parents and their children in schemata for decoding. The mechanics of reading were viewed as a vital part of the reading process. Both groups considered that self-improvement and the means by which others might improve were

dependent upon satisfactory decoding skills. Although parents appeared to have more insight into the various types of strategies needed for successful decoding, they, like the children, considered reading to be an exact process, one of identifying every word within a sentence, in order to read fluently. Neither group verbalized that reading is a process of approximation rather than one of exactitude. It was suggested in the analysis, however, that perhaps decoding was worthy of particular mention for these parents, as their children were in a learning to read situation.

6. Good readers seemed to be approaching the adult conception of what reading is.

Overall, good readers indicated a greater similarity in their responses to those provided by the parents than their less able peers. The good comprehenders read for enjoyment more frequently, considered fluency to be attained earlier, understood more accurately the reasons others have for reading, were more conscious of meaning-getting as a part of the process, and appeared to be developing an awareness that the ability to decode successfully had as its end, an understanding of what was happening in the text, albeit at a direct content level. Like the adults in the study, good readers' responses indicated, although not as frequently, that their schemata for reading included meaning-getting features.

7. Poor readers differed significantly in their concepts of reading to those held by parents and good readers.

Parents and good readers demonstrate disparate views of reading to those of poor readers. The low comprehenders, with one exception, did not focus on the concept of meaning as being part of the reading process. In other words, they did not or were unable to verbalize that reading

involves top-down processing behaviours. Although they placed emphasis on decoding skills, they were still bound by the knowledge that the materials one uses in reading, the person who instructs, and the concentration needed to pay attention and listen were central features of the task; they were object focused in their approach to reading and because of their vague and erroneous concepts of what reading is, it may be assumed that they were making unreal approaches to the task. Their verbalization indicated that they were basically unsure of what the reading process entailed. Although they possessed a schema for decoding, their reasons for seeking deciphering proficiency appeared either irrelevant or circular, as they did not produce evidence that decoding has as its purpose the processing of text in order to understand it. Their responses to many questions appeared acceptable and appropriate on the surface; their reasons, however, were contrary in logic to their original responses. For example, when asked if they liked reading, their replies were in the affirmative, but their reasons for the preferences showed overwhelmingly, that reading was difficult for them. One may question why one likes what one finds difficult. Good readers and parents, on the other hand, understood reading to have an interpretation component; they viewed decoding as a means to assist in comprehension and not as a skill to be learned for its own benefit. Few of these readers were object-bound, because the conditions and uses of reading which they had experienced seemed to be pleasurable rather than stressful, easy rather than difficult, meaningful rather than senseless.

8. Parents of good readers and parents of poor readers did not differ significantly in their concepts of reading as they relate to meaning.

Both parent groups were strongly orientated towards the meaning focus of reading. Each considered reading for meaning, i.e. to gain information and for enjoyment and relaxation, central to the process. Although discrepancies existed between them as to the frequency of their reading, and the mixed emotions they possessed regarding the task, both groups considered the interpretation of ideas, the mental dialogue between author and reader, to be the main component of what reading is.

9. Parents of good readers and parents of poor readers differed significantly in their concepts of reading for the decoding feature.

Parents of good readers were of the opinion that adequate decoding skills formed a major part of the reading process. The ability to successfully decipher unknown words as opposed to a reliance on memory, was considered a necessary skill for fluent reading. Parents of poor readers, on the other hand, did not distinguish decoding as a necessary component in their definitions of reading.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study has focused attention upon children's concepts of reading and the relationship to the reading concept held by their parents. The results of the study indicate that for both groups considerable differences were found both in the descriptive and statistical data in most cases. The study relies exclusively on an abbreviated interview technique to assess the subjects' concept of what reading entails. In order to generate further interest in the area of

parents' and children's schemata for reading, and to refine the present study, the following suggestions are made.

1. The present study addressed only one group of children and their parents at one particular developmental stage of the former. Additional insights regarding the development of appropriate schemata for reading could be gained through a longitudinal study. Such a project, carried on over a period of years, would produce information on the actual development of children's concepts. A study, initiated when the child is three years of age and continuing on to the second grade, where both parent and child would be interviewed in depth every year, might provide for a deeper knowledge and understanding of how those children's concepts of reading are developed and expanded. It must be noted that perhaps such a study will demonstrate that there are as many distinctive features as there are children and parents. However, an overall developmental pattern might emerge in spite of the individualism of the subjects involved. In addition, such longitudinal studies could yield valuable information about the stages at which appropriate schemata for reading become more precise.

2. This study did not differentiate between male and female responses for either parents or children. Other studies might examine differing responses for the sexes which could be explored further to see if differences in relationships exist for the concepts of reading for the sexes at different ages.

3. The interview technique was the only method used for the collection of data in the present study. To compliment the face to face encounter between researcher and subjects, a series of actual reading

situations, both oral and silent, could be devised so that the former might observe exactly what children and parents do when they read in relation to what they say reading is. Such observations may tell more about the subjects' understanding of reading if they were conducted in a naturalistic setting such as the home, where the reader is given more opportunity to relate reading to his personal life.

4. As this study did not provide for observations of parents and children reading together, case studies could be conducted in order to clarify the attitudes, reactions and language employed by the adults to their children in their natural environment as they engage in the task. Such studies might provide valuable data concerning the relationships between parents' and children's thinking as they interact in the reading process. If conducted longitudinally, research might indicate the growth of the child's awareness of reading concepts and the parental influence thereof.

5. Only children from grade one were chosen for this research. Studies which were comprised of students from all elementary grades might shed some light on the relationship, if any, between reading schemata and reading ability. As research has indicated that children's concepts of reading are more prone to include a meaning focus as they grow older, a study, based on a schema-for-reading theory, and including more mature students, might indicate a relationship between older students and inadequate reading.

6. This study did not control for the myriad of variables related to the home environment, and it would appear reasonable to expect that not all home settings are alike. In this day and age, when often both parents

are working outside the home, a study which took into account the socio-economic status of the family, parental work patterns and absenteeism, the availability of reading materials, television viewing practices, the ability in reading of older siblings, etc., might be valuable in providing information that indicates what kind of home setting most effectively prepares children for reading success. The present study was conducted in a middle-class suburban area where no indication of want or need of material items was apparent. However, all the poor comprehenders were virtually non-readers as ascertained by their reading percentile scores. It is possible that the factors which contributed to the inability to read may have been the result of particular home environmental practices.

7. The child initially learns everything he knows in his home. He learns it easily and well. There is no practical reason to believe that such incidental learning ceases to exist in his natural environment upon his entry into school. Studies which investigate the parents as continual co-developers of the child's awareness of the world in general and his/her understanding of what reading entails in particular in relation to the role of the teacher in the area may lead to a deeper knowledge of how the parent, in the course of his role as teacher and guide, may assist the child in his search for successful achievement in school.

IMPLICATION FOR INSTRUCTION

From the conclusions of the study, the following teaching implications are suggested.

1. Teachers should not assume that because they are teaching children to read, they are also providing a basis for the understanding of the reading process. Nearly 50% of the children did not indicate that they were aware that extracting ideas from and interpreting the text were central to reading. Poor readers in particular must be brought to the realization that reading necessitates efforts to comprehend the print. Teachers must center their attention on the meaning focus of reading if they are to develop well-defined concepts of reading which focus on reading as a meaningful activity. Instruction geared to comprehension as central to rather than the outcome of reading, could include a variety of concrete examples of reading concepts. Stauffer (1975) has shown that primary grade children can be guided to think critically and creatively about very simple stories. They can be taught to locate information for specific purposes, to predict and evaluate their predictions before, during and after their reading, thereby demonstrating that what they bring to the text, what they already know, may assist them in deriving meaning from what they read.

2. In order to accomplish their objectives, teachers should be aware that different methods of reading instruction may produce different concepts of reading. Methods and materials which place a high emphasis on searching for meaning will not be similar to those which stress the fractioning of the reading process into minute details. In this study, the children clearly indicated their strong reliance on decoding skills. It must be the responsibility of the teacher to avoid over emphasis on any one cue system, be it graphophonic, syntactic or semantic to the exclusion of the others.

3. Since the findings of this study did not demonstrate a strong relationship between parents' and children's concepts of reading, schools might profitably develop programs to make parents more aware of the importance of their own attitudes and beliefs concerning reading as they relate to their children's reading achievement. Telling parents to read to their children and to have a variety of books available in the home is not enough. Teachers and administrators might indicate the reasons for these practices and assist parents in discovering how they can make the home reading episodes as pleasurable and as meaningful as possible. Almy (1967) put it aptly when she stated:

An environment that provides the children with many opportunities for varied sensory and motor experiences is essential. So, too, is the presence of people who talk with (not merely at or to) the child, people who read and write and who share these activities with the children. (p. 67)

Kindergarten teachers have shown how valuable parents can be as co-developers of the child's learning. It may be the duty of primary school teachers to do likewise.

4. The questionnaire in the study could be a useful tool for the teacher who wishes to analyse the concepts of reading possessed by his/her students. By this semi-informal technique, he/she may begin to understand that the children in her class are as varied in their development of appropriate concepts of reading as the number of desks in her room. Because of the detailed knowledge gleaned from the child's responses to the questions, of what the child knows of the reading process, the program may be fitted to the child rather than vice versa. The teacher will be better equipped to assist the child who takes a long

time to understand the truth about reading. This same teacher must, however, be cautioned by the results of Vygotsky (1962) where he states:

Direct teaching of concepts is fruitless and impossible. A teacher who tries to do this usually accomplishes nothing but empty verbalism, a parrot-like repetition of words by the child, simulating a knowledge of the corresponding concepts but actually covering up a vacuum. (p. 96)

5. Since children profess to liking reading and consider it to be important, it behooves the teacher to capitalize upon these features. By the provision of materials which are exciting, about interesting things in their lives outside school, and at their ability level, children will learn that they do not have to read to please adults; rather it will be an enjoyable experience engaged in for their own interest and pleasure.

CONCLUSION

Grade one good and poor readers possess schemata for reading that did not appear to bear much relationship to one another. Good readers placed more emphasis on reading for meaning. Children, in general, were found to focus on the mechanics of the task while their parents conceptualized the process as the conveyance of interesting information from the author to the reader. If young children could be guided to realize that by reading they can extract ideas from print and that these same ideas provide for personal satisfaction, they may internalize reading as a meaningful learning situation and therein develop appropriate schemata for reading during their first years at school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Parent Questionnaire

1. Are there some things that you like about reading? Y N Y/N?
What are they?
2. Are there some things that you don't like about reading? Y N Y/N?
3. Is reading a hard thing for you to do? Y N Y/N Why?
4. How good a reader would you say you are? excellent above average
average below average very low. Why do you think so?
5. Do you see others reading at home or in your environment? Y N
Y/N? Who are they? How often do you think they read? What reasons
do you think he/she/they have for reading?
6. Do you read at home? Y N Y/N? How often?
7. Do you think reading is important? Y N Y/N? Why?
8. What things does a person have to learn to be a good reader?
9. What things does a person have to do to be a good reader?
10. How old do you have to be before you can be a really good reader?
11. Are all the people who are adults really good readers? Y N Y/N?
Why do you think so?
12. When a child in grade one is reading is he doing the same things as
when an adult is reading? Y N Y/N? Why?
13. Why do you think that some children have trouble in reading?
14. What things do you need to learn to be a better reader than you are
right now?
15. Many people think that reading is one of the most important things
that you do in school. What would you say reading is?

(Canney and Winograd, 1979)

Children Questionnaire

1. Are there some things that you like about reading? Y N Y/N?
What are they?
2. Are there some things that you don't like about reading? Y N Y/N?
3. Is reading a hard thing for you to do? Y N Y/N Why?
4. How good a reader would you say you are? Why do you think so?
5. Do you see your mom and dad reading at home? Y N Y/N? How often do you think they read? Why do they read?
6. Do you read at home? Y N Y/N? How often?
7. Do you think reading is important? Y N Y/N? Why?
8. What things does a kid have to learn to be a good reader?
9. What things does a kid have to do to be a good reader?
10. How old do you have to be before you can be a really good reader?
11. Are all the people who are grown-up really good readers? Y N Y/N? Why do you think so?
12. When a kid in grade one is reading is he doing the same things as when a kid in grade six is reading? Y N Y/N? Why?
13. Why do you think that some children have trouble in reading?
14. What things do you need to learn to be a better reader than you are right now?
15. Suppose you have a friend who had a little brother/sister who was going to start school soon. And that little boy/girl said to you, "My mommy said that when I go to school I will read." What's reading? What would you tell him/her that reading is?

(Canney and Winograd, 1979)

APPENDIX B

April 21, 1981

For the past year, I have been released from my teaching duties with the ----- in order that I might pursue further studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my Master's program, I am conducting a research study in the area of reading.

Mr. ----- has granted me permission to carry out this research in the schools of our System. Your grade one child has been selected to participate in the study. As the research also deals with parents' views of reading, I would appreciate your participation in the study. Only one parent from each family is required, preferably the one who is most involved with the child's school tasks.

I will telephone you in the near future in order that I may answer any questions you may have, and at that time, arrange for an appointment for an interview with you. Each interview should last no more than 30 minutes.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Yours truly,

Ruth Hayden

APPENDIX C

Transcription Subject #14 (Parent)

1. Interviewer (I): Are there some things that you like about reading?

Subject (S): Well...I can't really say I enjoy reading that much. If I'm bored, I'll pick up a magazine. If I find a good book, I'll read and read and read.

I: Can you tell me more?

S: Well...I really can't say. I guess I like reading, sort of, when I'm not too busy or anything.

2. I: Are there some things you don't like about reading?

S: That's hard to answer. Well, I guess a book really has to interest me or it bores me and sometimes I never get past the first few pages, 'cause I'm bored with it.

I: Is there anything else?

S: Well...not that I can think of right now.

3. I: Is reading a hard thing for you to do?

S: It's not hard to read but I guess it's time consuming. I feel other things have to be done before reading. I feel kind of lazy and...guilty if I read when I've other things I should be doing.

I: Could you tell me more?

S: Well...like my sister-in-law. She reads a lot and her house is a mess, never tidy you know, and I wouldn't be like that just for reading.

4. I: How good a reader would you say you are? Excellent, above average, average, below average, very low.

S: Oh, just average.

I: Why do you think so?

S: Well...'cause I don't read that much. And...I'm sort of a slow reader. You're an excellent reader if you read fast, aren't you?

5. I: Do you see others reading at home or in your environment?

S: No, not at work.

I: How about at home?

S: At home? Well...my husband reads some.

I: Why do you think he reads?

S: Oh, for enjoyment and to learn I guess. But my father-in-law always has a book, even in his back pocket. It drives my mother-in-law wild.

I: How often do you think your husband reads?

S: Well...once in a while in the evenings when there is nothing on T.V.

I: How about your father-in-law?

S: All the time. He's a read-a-holic if there is such a thing. When the kids were small, he read all the time and wouldn't talk to them. He's still that way.

6. I: Do you read at home?

S: Yes.

I: How often?

S: Oh, I read the paper every day. A magazine a few times a month. I haven't read a book in months.

I: Why not books?

S: Well...I used to get some from the library but then I'm slow so there'd be fines to pay, so I don't bother with them any more.

7. I: Do you think reading is important?

S: Yes, I do.

I: ~~Why?~~

S: For knowledge and it probably relaxes people. You have to read for shopping and...signs and things; reading the news every day.

8. I: What things does a person have to learn to be a good reader?

S: ...first of all, I think they need phonics so they can sound out the words; sounding out the words, I guess. They're not going to memorize every word that comes along.

I: Is there anything else?

- S: ...no, I can't think of anything else.
9. I: What things does a person have to do to be a good reader?
- S: Be able to comprehend. Probably it helps to read quickly too.
- I: Anything else?
- S: That's all, I guess. Well...know what you're reading about.
10. I: How old do you have to be before you can be a really good reader?
- S: I don't know; probably by the time you're in grade three or four.
- I: Why would you say grade three or four?
- S: Well...you should be able to read a good percentage of books by then. You should have your phonics down pat by then.
11. I: Are all the people who are adults really good readers?
- S: Probably half of them aren't.
- I: Why do you think so?
- S: ...they're probably poor in English to begin with; maybe it's their personality. Don't you need a certain personality to read? I mean there are seven boys in my husband's family and only one is an avid reader like his dad; and he's sort of the same personality like his dad. I mean, the others, they read 'cause they had to.
12. I: When a child in grade one is reading, is he doing the same things as when an adult is reading?
- S: I don't know if they're comprehending the story. I think they are so engrossed in pronouncing the words.
- I: Can you tell me more?
- S: Well...not at the beginning, they're not. But...well...I think _____ (her grade one child) is comprehending now the story; he knows what he's reading; so maybe they are the same. I couldn't say for sure.
13. I: Why do you think some children have trouble in reading?
- S: Maybe they're not picking up the phonics at the beginning; I think phonics are so important. Like _____ (her grade one child), I don't know if he's really grasped it yet. I think he's starting to...

I: Is there anything else?

S: Maybe it's their background. You know if they don't see us reading, they're not going to read. But then in my husband's family...I keep comparing it. They say if you read lots, your children will. I still say it depends on the personalities.

14. I: What things do you need to learn to be a better reader than you are right now?

S: Well...that's hard, you know. Have some free time, I guess, just to be able to leave everything and read, I guess.

I: Is there anything else?

S: Well...not feel guilty, like read and leave my housework and not feel bad about it.

15. I: Many people think that reading is one of the most important things that you do in school. What would you say reading is?

S: Well, let's see. Gosh! I never thought of that. Well...it increases the vocabulary provided you're able to understand the English language.

I: Can you tell me more?

S: It's probably a jungle of words that...a structure that you can probably comprehend. That's hard.

I: Anything else?

S: It tells you a story and gives information to you. I've never thought of it before.

Transcription Two: Subject #29 (Child)

1. Interviewer (I): Are there some things that you like about reading?

Subject (S): Well...it's fun and it's also fun to learn to read 'cause if you don't read when you're little, you won't be able to read when you're grown up and it'd be awful like read signs when you drive and stuff.

I: Anything else?

S: It's fun 'cause there's lots of fairy tales in it and real cute some of them.

2. I: Are there some things you don't like about reading?

S: Sometimes it takes a long time to read books that fat. (demonstrates with her hands).

I: Can you tell me more?

S: I don't think so.

3. I: Is reading a hard thing for you to do?

S: No.

I: Why not?

S: Well...I like it. I know lots of words 'cause I've been reading a whole bunch of books in the library.

I: Anything else?

S: It's not hard if there's not long words.

4. I: How good a reader would you say you are?

S: Pretty good.

I: Why would you say pretty good?

S: Well, I'm in a group that read a book called Cherry Street...that's about the highest group.

5. I: Do you see your mom and dad reading at home?

S: Sometimes. My mom reads these books about a long long time ago.

I: How often does she read?

S: No much 'cept when she's not busy, she reads.

I: How about your dad?

S: He only reads the newspaper.

I: Why do you think they read?

S: 'Cause it's fun to find out about things in long ago and my dad wants to find out about the news and stuff and see what's happening.

6. I: Do you read at home?

S: I have to read the library books.

I: How often do you read at home?

S: Almost every day, I guess.

7. I: Do you think reading is important?

S: Yes.

I: Why do you think so?

S: 'Cause you won't be able to read letters people send to you and then you won't be able to read books and stuff to your little kid or something.

8. I: What things does a kid have to learn to be a good reader?

S: Words and...sounds of the letters. I...

I: Anything else?

S: Nothing else, I think..

9. I: What things does a kid have to do to be a good reader?

S: Have to practice lots at home, if you can. You can take out a library book and practice.

I: Can you tell me more?

S: Read lots and lots so you can be good when you're grown up and stuff.

10. I: How old do you have to be before you can be a really good reader?

S: About 7.

S: You have to look in books at school and there's a whole bunch of words in it and you have to try and figure out what these words are and you read a whole bunch of stories in the book when you read the words.

I: Can you tell me more about it?

S: Well, it's fun and if you don't (read) you'll grow up and you won't be able to read signs when you drive and when people send you notes and stuff for business, you won't be able to read them.

I: Anything else?

S: Different little stories you have to look at and try and figure out the words and stuff and you'll like it.

I: Why 7?

S: Well I'm 7 and I'm pretty good now.

11. I: Are all the people who are grown-up really good readers?

S: People that learned to read when they're little and read lots, they're good.

I: Can you tell me more?

S: The bad ones haven't practiced when they're little.

I: But are all grown-ups good readers?

S: Not all, but most of them if they practiced lots.

12. I: When a kid in first grade is reading, is he doing the same things as when a kid in grade six is reading?

S: Well, when you're in grade six, you'll get a little hard words and stuff.

I: Anything else?

S: I don't think so.

13. I: Why do you think some children have trouble in reading?

S: They haven't been taking home books and practicing reading and stuff.

I: Can you tell me more?

S: Because they haven't took hard books home and read hard words and things.

14. I: What things do you need to learn to be a better reader than you are right now?

S: Take home hard books that are really thick.

I: Anything else?

S: Try to read hard words and stuff.

15. I: Suppose you have a friend who had a little sister who was going to start school soon. And that little girl said to you, "My mommy said that when I go to school I will read." What's reading? What would you tell her that reading is?