DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 463 542 CS 510 887

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TITLE	An Investigation into the Awareness among High School Teachers of Boys' Reading Preferences and an Analysis of the Required Reading of Boys in the Lower Track.
PUB DATE	2002-04-00
NOTE	59p.; Master of Arts Theses, Kean University.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Masters Theses (042) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	High School Students; High Schools; Low Achievement; *Reading Attitudes; *Reading Interests; *Reading Materials; *Reading Motivation; Reading Research; *Recreational Reading; Secondary School Teachers; *Sex Differences
IDENTIFIERS	*Literary Canon; New Jersey

ABSTRACT

Research into the reading preferences of boys and girls has shown that there is a difference between the two sexes regarding the type of literature they enjoy reading. These preferences begin at an early age and continue on throughout their school careers. The purpose of this study was to determine if high school teachers are aware of these different preferences, and also to examine the types of books that make up the required reading of male students in the lower track. These books were analyzed for the characteristics that appeal to boys. The study was conducted in a suburban high school in New Jersey. In this high school, it was found that all of the teachers are aware of the differences in reading preferences of boys and girls. An examination of the required texts in one school's curriculum, however, revealed that few of the books had characteristics of reading material that have been found to be motivating to boys. Implications of these findings are presented. (Contains 90 references and a table of data. Appendixes contain the survey instrument, a checklist, and a list of canonical literature.) (Author/RS)

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An investigation into the awareness among high school teachers of boys' reading preferences and an analysis of the required reading of boys in the lower track.

Terry M. Kohn

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Reading Specialization

Kean University

CS 510 887

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my son, Jason, an avid reader, whose protestations and lamentations about some of his required high school reading first aroused my curiosity about the types of books we were asking our young male students to read.

Abstract

Research into the reading preferences of boys and girls has shown that there is a difference between the two sexes regarding the type of literature they enjoy reading. These preferences begin at an early age and continue on throughout their school careers. The purpose of this study was to determine if high school teachers are aware of these different preferences, and also to examine the types books that make up the required reading of male students in the lower track. These books were analyzed for the characteristics that appeal to boys. The study was conducted in a suburban high school in New Jersey. In this high school, it was found that all of the teachers are aware of the differences in reading preferences of boys and girls. An examination of the required texts in one school's curriculum, however, revealed that few of the books had characteristics of reading material that have been found to be motivating to boys. Implications of these findings are presented.

Boys and Reading

Research for nearly a century in the United States, Canada, England, and Australia has indicated gender differences in reading performance. Boys are not only slower to learn to read (Connell, 1996) but are outperformed by girls in all literacy-based tasks (Feeley, 1982; Davies & Brember, 1993; Brozo & Schmelzer, 1997; Alloway & Gilbert, 1997; Gambell & Hunter, 1999). "Females outperform males in all areas of reading and writing at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels and this literacy gap does not narrow or close with age. Males are disadvantaged in literacy by the time they complete high school." (Gambell & Hunter, p. 1).

A related phenomenon is that boys (especially those of color) significantly outnumber girls in corrective or remedial reading classes (Vogel, 1990 as cited in Brozo & Schmelzer, 1997; and Brophy & Good, 1973; Durrell, 1940; Gunderson, 1976; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, Fletcher, & Escobar, 1990 as cited in Pottorff, Phelps-Zientarski, & Skovera, 1996), lower track classrooms (Page, 1991 as cited in Brozo & Schmelzer,), and learning disabilities programs (Naiden, 1976, and Clarizio & Phillips, 1986, as cited in Pottorff et al.; Connell, 1996; Shaywitz, et al., as cited in Brozo & Schmelzer). Boys are 50% more likely to be retained than girls and more likely to drop out of school (Connell). 55% of the students who drop out of school are boys (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998b as cited in Young & Brozo, 2001).

Equally upsetting are statistics concerning adolescent males in our society:

- Adolescent males are four times more likely than adolescent females to commit suicide (Smith, 1995 as mentioned in Young & Brozo, 2001).

- The majority of adolescent alcoholics and drug users are male (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1997 as mentioned in Young & Brozo, 2001).
- Teenage males are the fastest growing group among all absentee fathers (Maynard, 1997 as mentioned in Young & Brozo, 2001).
- Nearly 125,000 teenagers, mostly boys, are serving time in state and federal penitentiaries with over 7,000 minors in adult prisons (Howell, 1997 as mentioned in Young & Brozo, 2001).

"Males not females are fast becoming the culturally and academically dispossessed" (Young & Brozo, 2001, p.318).

Attitudes, Motivation and Reading

Many boys and girls begin school knowing how to read or looking forward to learning how to read. However, as children progress through school, their interest in reading disappears and they report that they do not like to read. Leisure or voluntary reading decreases with age, with boys emerging as significantly less positive than girls towards most reading activities (Allington, 1975 and Shapiro & White, 1991 as cited in Worthy, Turner & Moorman, 1998; Shapiro & Whitney, 1997; Barnett & Irwin, 1994; Davies & Brember, 1993; Kush & Watkins, 1996; McKenna, Ellsworth, & Kear, 1995; Millard, 1997; Baker & Wigfield,1999; Ross & Fletcher, 1989; Worthy, 2000).

Attitudes toward reading both as a pastime and as a school related activity become increasingly negative as students move from first to sixth grade. Among leisure time reading the development of negative attitudes is directly related to ability. For academic reading, the trend is the same regardless of ability, negative (Barnett & Irwin, 1994; Davies & Brember, 1993; McKenna et al., 1995; Kush & Watkins, 1996; Millard, 1997;

Worthy, 1998). As between, males and females, "girls possessed statistically significant more positive attitudes toward recreational reading at all grade levels than did boys, a gap that widened with age" (McKenna et al., p. 948).

Attitude toward reading has been defined by Smith (1990) "as a state of mind, accompanied by feelings and emotions that make reading more or less probable" (Smith, p. 215 as cited in Kush & Watkins, 1996, p. 315). The development of positive attitudes toward reading has been associated with sustained reading into adulthood and throughout the individual's life (Cullinan,1987 as cited in Kush & Watkins; Cothern & Collins, 1992). Attitudes developed towards reading remain stable over time. Positive attitudes in children remain positive in adults but, Smith found, attitudes in later school years are more predictive of adult attitudes than earlier measures.

In the early stages of literacy instruction, the causal relationship between attitude and achievement is unclear. However, many researchers conjecture that positive attitudes toward reading contribute directly to higher reading achievement (Bettelheim & Zelan, 1981 as cited in Kush & Watkins, 1996; Gambell & Hunter, 1999; Ley, Schaer, & Dismukes, 1994; Cothern & Collins, 1992). Attitude may affect the level of reading ability attained by a student through its influence on engagement and practice. Poor attitude may cause the child to decide not to read when alternatives are present. An individual's attitude toward reading is based on his feelings and beliefs about the outcome of reading and his experiences with reading. Beliefs about the outcome of reading, whether reading is boring, fun, or frustrating are weighed against the outcome of other activities. As the child grows older he experiences an array of activities and leisure time options that compete with his reading time. If reading is not associated with positive experiences, if it is in fact, a

frustrating experience, the time spent reading declines when the child is faced with competing demands for his free time (McKenna et al., 1995; Sullivan, 1991). Ley et al. state that young adolescents, 12 to 14 year olds, reevaluate their priorities for reading and often abandon it for more desirable, group type activities. They attribute this to the negative attitude youngsters have toward reading, both assigned and voluntary.

Alternately, other researchers believe that the relationship is just the opposite- achievement leads to better attitudes toward reading (Quinn & Jadav, 1987, as cited in Kush & Watkins, 1996). Children who believe that they are capable of reading well are motivated to read and report that they read more frequently. When students lack a sense of mastery of reading skills, they tend to avoid reading activities, particularly challenging reading activities (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Regardless whichever comes first, it is readily accepted that good readers generally have more positive attitudes toward reading than poorer readers (Wigfield & Asher, 1984, as cited in Kush & Watkins). Able readers spend more time reading than poorer readers, and those who read on a regular basis have higher reading achievement scores. "The amount of reading a child does may be the best predictor of reading achievement" (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988 as mentioned in Shapiro & Whitney, 1997, p. 345.) "Students who enjoy reading are likely to read frequently, thus developing their fluency and improving their comprehension strategies" (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992b, p.21 as cited in Ley et al., 1994, p.14).

Literature Review

Not only are girls performing better than boys in all areas of literacy tasks but they also have more positive attitudes toward reading and feel better about their own reading. More girls than boys report 'doing well' or 'being good' at reading. Boys use words such

as 'not bad' or 'all right' when describing their reading ability (Millard, 1997). These attitudes, as well as reading achievement, have been studied on numerous occasions. In addition, there has been considerable research done on reading preferences by age and by gender.

In the various studies of children's reading preferences researchers have used a variety of methods and consequently only very general comparisons can be made. In addition, often the results or findings vary also. "The instruments and categories used for analysis seem to influence results and this makes studies hard to compare" (Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer, 1997, p. 311). For example, in one study a child might indicate a preference for sport books but in another study the same child might pick a story about a sports figure. Some studies use attitude surveys asking the child what his/her favorite book is, whereas others might have books available or annotated titles of actual and fictitious books and ask the child to select his/her favorite based on the picture on the cover (Boraks et al.; Haynes & Richgels, 1992).

In their article, Boraks et al. (1997) note that reading interests were studied as far back as 1889. Since the 1920s studies done on children's literature preferences have been done periodically. Most were done with students in the upper elementary grades but some were done with children as young as second graders (Haynes & Richgels, 1992) and a few have been done among older students. More recent studies among elementary students include the following: Feeley (1982), using a questionnaire with fictitious annotated titles, showed the following preferences for boys: sports, media, historical/adventure, informational, fun/fantasy, and social empathy. Girl's results showed interest in media, animals, fun/fantasy, social empathy, sports, arts, historical and informational items.

Summers and Lukasevich (1983) used factor analysis to produce three factors or subject groups preferred by boys and four by girls. Boys' groupings were a) adventure/ fantasy/mystery b) science c) history/geography/biography. Factors for girls were: a) adventure/fantasy/mystery b) history/geography/science c) biography d) sports. Both boys and girls enjoyed adventure, fantasy, and mystery. Wolfson, Manning, and Manning (1984) found that fourth grade boys had more interest in items from the categories of adventure, machines and applied science, and animals; whereas, girls expressed interest in multiethnic stories, family life and children, and fine and applied arts. Fisher (1988) surveying third, fourth, and fifth graders, found more similarities than differences in children's literature choices when examined by gender, grade, and race. He did note that girls preferred fairy tales while boys preferred sports and science books. Langerman (1990) reviewed literature regarding boys and girls book preferences and noted that boys often preferred to read nonfiction books. Haynes and Richgels' study (1992) conducted among fourth graders also revealed gender differences in reading preferences. They concluded that content was considered more important than genre classification. For example, children liked books about space and it did not matter if the genre was biography, science fiction or information about space. Allison (1994) interviewed children as they were leaving the library. Many of these children had selected information type books, perhaps for schoolwork. Cherland (1994) studied girls fiction choices and noted that fiction was commonly preferred by girls and suggested that these preferences were the result of gendered forms of literacy learned at home. Fleming (1995) studied writing and found that girls focused more on character and boys on action. Gambrell (1995) using an interview method of survey asked third and fifth graders to name the most interesting

book they had read that week and the name of their favorite book. She noted that children liked series books and selected books based on either a personal interest or strong action. In their study of fourth graders, Harkrader & Moore (1997) found, as did other surveys of this age group that there are gender differences in reading preference. Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer (1997) used a questionnaire asking third, fourth, and fifth graders for their favorite book. Reasons for liking the book were also asked. Gender differences were noted. In addition they noted that boys preferred books with a male main character while girls tended to select books with a female main character. Girls would, however, also read books with a male main character. Daly, Salters, & Burns (1998) used a method of immediate and delayed recall of stories for students between the ages of 8 and 11. They found that boys read less than girls and read less fiction. When they do read, boys are attracted to comics, which contain themes of violence and terror, and to magazines, which focus on hobbies and material of a practical or scientific nature. Hale & Crowe (2001) conducted a reading interest survey among high school students between grades 9 and 12. Reading preferences, which were present in earlier grades, were still present in these older students. Conclusions from the studies were inconsistent but all do say that reading preferences between boys and girls are different.

Reading as a Feminist Concept

The causes for differences in reading performance have been attributed to a variety of factors including biological differences, slower maturation rate of boys, negative responses by female teachers toward boys, content of reading material, and socio-cultural factors. All of these theories have been examined at one time or another. The maturation and development theory, which has been around for years, states that boys mature more

slowly than girls, especially in the early grades, and need additional time to mature if they are to keep up with their female counterparts. While maturational theory is popular, particularly among educators who recognize that young boys frequently require additional help in their early school years, cross-cultural studies have not supported it. Differences in reading abilities by gender have not been found in Germany, Finland, Israel, or Nigeria (Pottorff et al., 1996).

Several researchers have suggested that reading in most English speaking nations is not considered a masculine activity (Pottorff et al., 1996; Barrs, 2000; Shapiro, 1990; Brozo & Schmelzer, 1997; Gambell & Hunter, 1999; Alloway & Gilbert, 1997). Pottorff et al. surveyed 730 students in grades 2, 4, 6, and 8. They found that reading and writing were viewed as predominantly female activities. The perception that girls were better readers and writers remained remarkably consistent across all grade levels. "If reading and writing are seen by boys as gender inappropriate, then boys may will avoid these activities as much as possible or at best simply tolerate them" (Pottorff et al., p. 209.). Furthermore, if boys view reading as gender inappropriate, then it will lose out to sports, television, or other activities, which are considerate more gender appropriate.

In the early development of literacy the family has the most influential role. Parents act as the earliest and most powerful role models for the child. They not only provide the child with his/her first books and materials for writing, but also act as their first teachers. In the preschool years it is the mother who spends time reading to the child and the mother who encourages the child's efforts at drawing and writing. Mothers were consistently regarded as the major influence in the early stages of literacy. Fathers played a

role but it was generally as one part of the parent team. (Gambell & Hunter, 1999; Millard, 1997).

When the child is asked who reads the most in the family, boys frequently named their mothers. Girls also named their mothers but second to themselves. Sisters were mentioned more than fathers or brothers, and grandmothers were mentioned but not grandfathers. Reading is an activity that is closely associated with the female members of the family. Boys named other activities that they shared with their fathers, such as reading to find out about computer games or reading to find out the results of some sports activity. When a father was said to be the main reader in the family it was for some specific purpose, to get information or as part of his job, rather than as a leisure time pursuit (Millard, 1997).

The idea that reading is a female activity begins even before the child enters first grade (Shapiro, 1990). Girls are more likely to be portrayed as readers in illustrations in children's books and given books as gifts (Willinsky & Hunniford, 1993 as mentioned in Millard, 1997). Boys, on the other hand, are more often given toys, often boisterous toys that encourage active play (Millard).

When the young boy enters school his teacher will most likely be female. 85% to 95% of all elementary school teachers in the United States are female (Spring, 1997 as mentioned in Brozo & Schmelzer, 1997). Shapiro (1990) notes that two studies done earlier, McFarland (1969) and Dwyer (1976), reported that young boys who had a male teacher in the elementary school years experienced improvements in reading achievement. By the spring of the first grade year, boys increasingly regard reading and writing as inappropriate sex role activities (Shapiro). Common practices in the literacy classroom:

sitting still, reading quietly, spelling and handwriting skills, vocabulary tests, oral and dramatic performance and aesthetic response to text, are incompatible with the young boy's understanding of appropriate masculine behavior and identity (Gilbert & Gilbert, 1996 as mentioned in Alloway & Gilbert, 1997). "Successful reading involves .....entering the world of the text and identifying with the characters" (Barrs, 2000, p.288). Boys who do not role-play as much and who do not like to "dress up" as much as girls have difficulty doing this. Additionally, "Reading that involves feeling, that invites the reader to live through an emotional experience, may be difficult to relate to in the context of the classroom and their peer group. Social pressures often operate against boys communicating their feelings" (Barrs, p. 288).

As the young boy progresses through school he becomes aware of many negative expectations about his reading achievement. Teachers see him as less capable than girls, he sees himself as less capable than girls, girls see him as a less capable reader, and at home he sees his mother as the person who does most of the reading. All of these factors help to make him decide that reading may not be an appropriate gender activity for him. Reading loses out to other activities, particularly sports, a more gender appropriate activity. (Gambell & Hunter, 1999; Millard, 1997; Pottorff, et al., 1996). In addition, fathers tend to push their boys to excel in sports rather than concentrate on reading (Connell, 1996).

Reading Preferences - Boys vs. Girls

As noted before in order to understand differences in reading achievement between males and females, much research has also been done on literature preferences between the two sexes. As indicated the findings have been somewhat inconsistent and difficult to compare because of the different methodologies used in the various studies. Although the

findings do vary somewhat, it is clear that differences do indeed exist. The categories determined by the individual researchers also vary from study to study; however, certain differences in preferences stand out.

"Sex was found to be the single most important determinant of reading interests" (Fisher, 1988, p. 62). Young girls chose fairy stories and story books while boys chose superhero books, comics, science fiction, pop-up books, cartoon books, or in other words "exciting, colorful books" (Osmont, 1987 as mentioned in Langerman, 1990). Elementary school girls show a preference for poetry, fairy tales and other kinds of make-believe, books about people, family life and romance (Haynes & Richgels, 1992). As the girls grow older their taste for fairy tales and fantasy are abandoned and replaced by interest in historical fiction, realistic fiction, and romance/love stories (Boraks et al., 1997; Hale & Crowe, 2001; Harkrader & Moore, 1997). Girls continue to enjoy romance stories into adulthood (Crowe, 2000).

Elementary boys show a preference for sports, science, hobbies, historical fiction (Haynes & Richgels, 1992) and information type books. Boys, in particular boys who are weaker readers, often choose non-fiction for their reading. Non-fiction books are not as clearly identifiable as belonging to a specific grade level (Barrs, 2000). As they get older boys interest in sports continues. They do not read a lot of fiction but when they do they like stories, which contain themes of violence and terror (Simpson, 1996). This is often found in comic books (Daly, Salters, & Burns, 1998) and fantasy. Their taste in fantasy continues into adolescence (Boraks et al., 1997). They enjoy science fiction, adventure, cartoon books, how to sports and space books (Boraks et al., 1997; Hale & Crowe, 2001;

Harkrader & Moore, 1997). They also like magazines especially those which deal with hobbies (Daly et al., 1998).

Both boys and girls enjoy mysteries, books about adventure and humor. (Haynes & Richgels, 1992; Hale & Crowe, 2001; Simpson, 1996). Subject matter is more important than genre classification. For example, if children like books about space it doesn't seem to matter if the book is a biography, science fiction or information about space (Haynes & Richgels, 1992). The most popular reading material among middle school aged children is the Goosebumps series followed closely by other scary books and story collections (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998).

Both boys and girls prefer reading books with the same sex main character. Boys prefer reading books with a male main character and girls tend to select books with a female main character but girls are often willing to read books with male main characters; whereas, boys are not willing to read about girls (Abilock, 1997; Boraks et al., 1997; Brozo & Schmelzer, 1997; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Daly et al., 1998; Isaacs, 1996). Beyard, Taylor, & Sullivan (1980) state that among girls the preference for same sex characters diminish in strength as age increases, whereas boys preferences for characters of the same sex actually grow stronger as they grow older.

As noted, differences in the types of literature each sex likes to read does exist and it exists as early as the pre-school years.

Reading Preferences - Preschool Years

Children arrive at school, even at a young age, with certain fixed preferences for literature. In a study done with children between the ages of two and four, it was noted that gender differences in book selection were already present. Specifically, girls showed a

growing preference for romantic tales, whereas boys showed a growing preference for violent tales. The interest in scary tales was stronger for boys than for girls and was stable over time (Collins -Standley & Gan, 1996). Langerman (1990) notes that pre-school girls preferred stories with a female character and a "feminine" activity and least preferred the story with a male character and a masculine activity. For boys the reverse was true (Kropp & Halverson, 1983, as mentioned in Langerman, 1990).

Preferences develop at very young ages in both boys and girls and parallel their choice of toys and the games that they play. Boys engage in more rough and tumble play or aggression type play than girls. Observers noted that boys of this age more often behave in an aggressive or destructive manner than girls do. Boys engage in activities such as cops and robbers or war, they chase each other, participate in mock fights, use toy guns and swords. Girls on the other hand prefer to play house and care for babies. They prefer housekeeping and family type activities. Boys and girls tend to play with peers of the same sex and use toys popular with their own gender (Collins-Stanley & Gan, 1996).

As far as toys, boys selected toy tanks, trucks, cars, planes, balls, bats and construction tools. Girls picked crayons, paints, kitchen supplies and dolls. Girls, however, were not as bound by gender lines as were boys in their choice of toys and activities. "These gender specific play preferences may be expected as early as age one, but are bound to have materialized by age three" (Collins-Stanley & Gan, 1996, p. 281). Gender specific genre preferences for books appear between the ages of 3 and 4 with preferences following the same pattern as that of toys (Collins-Stanley & Gan, 1996).

Reading Preferences - Adolescence

Negative attitudes toward reading become especially prevalent beginning in the middle and high school years (Anderson, Tollefson, & Gilbert, 1985 and Cline & Kretke, 1980 as mentioned in Worthy, Turner et al., 1998; McKenna et al., 1995; Shapiro & White, 1991; Worthy, 1998). As children reach their adolescent years their interest in reading drops. They do less voluntary reading than they have done in the past, and reading is ranked low among their preferred leisure activity preferences. Young adolescents (12 - 14 year olds) reevaluate their priority for reading and abandon it for more desirable group type of activities. Many of these changes are a reflection of the attitudes that children have regarding reading (Ley et al., 1994). Students in high school claim they are so busy that they have little or no time for pleasure reading outside of school (Bushman, 1997).

However, Moffit & Wartella (1992) indicate that a large number of high school students still read for pleasure and that the number increases as students move through their high school careers. As expected, academically better students were more likely to read than students with lower averages. Also adolescent females read more than males. This view is also supported by other researchers who state that adolescents still read but their interest and what they read have changed (Alloway & Gilbert, 1997; Gambell & Hunter, 1999; Langerman, 1990; Worthy, 1998,).

Teenage readers indicated a clear preference for only a few kinds of books. For females, the romance novel was the overwhelming favorite type of book. For second and third choices, females indicated preferences for adventure, fantasy, and mystery novels. No such clear choice exists for male teenage readers. Males vary and their tastes include sports, books about cars, fantasy, science fiction, and books containing violence and adventure, and mystery (Hale & Crowe, 2001; Mellon, 1990; Moffitt & Wartella, 1992;

Simpson, 1992). Mechanics books were popular with boys, to help them "fix and fiddle" with things and to show them how things work (Mellon, 1990).

Teenagers also claim to read both magazines and newspapers. Of her survey of rural teens, Mellon (1990) states that almost every respondent claimed to read more than one magazine and was able to verify this by naming the magazine. However, "Reading books is reading; reading magazines and newspapers is not really reading."(Mellon, 1990, p. 224). Teens are willing to spend their own money on magazines and they keep the magazine as a source of reference. They also share their magazines with friends. They read magazines for the same reasons they read books: for pleasure, information and escape. They like the short format of the stories so that they can pick up a magazine when they have half an hour or so to kill. Adolescents read teen magazines, sports, and entertainment magazines (Davies & Brember, 1993; Langerman, 1990; Mellon, 1990; Millard, 1997; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1998; Worthy, 1998).

Boys and Reading

To reiterate, as boys and girls grow their attitudes toward reading become increasingly negative. Although this is true for both sexes, it is particularly true for boys. Girls read for enjoyment outside of school. Boys do not. They see little or no intrinsic value in reading. They read for information or to learn how to do something. They have poorer attitudes toward reading and tend to be extrinsically driven to read. They read for a specific purpose rather than for pleasure (Gambell & Hunter, 1999).

Langerman reports that although boys stop reading fiction around their middle school years, they are still reading. However they are reading different types of material. They are not reading books. Some are starting to read the newspaper, many read baseball

cards and collector's books telling them what the cards are worth, many read magazines, as noted previously, and many read the Boy Scout manuals. However, these are not counted as 'real' reading (Langerman, 1990). This view is supported by Gambell & Hunter (1999), who note that middle grade and secondary school males prefer to read periodicals that feature mountain biking, adventure, computer games and outdoor activities. They devote much time to computer and video games where the on-screen reading demands are different from those of hard copy textual reading. These sources of literacy are not considered worthwhile or legitimate sources of reading. Alloway & Gilbert (1997) remark that boys are quite capable at literacy skills but the skills they possess are not valued in the classroom. Surfing the net, reading video screens and engaging with computers, all demand levels of literacy competence that do not figure high in school measures of literacy competence. On the other hand, these skills are important in terms of acquiring future jobs (Simpson, 1992). Besides these skills do not undermine the boys' feelings of masculinity.

Teenage boys do enjoy fantasy books. Fantasy literature is based on fairy tales, myths and legends. For young children, fantasy stories often consist of modern fairy tales, stories of magical or talking animas or toys, travels to imaginary lands and speculations on the future. Fantasy stories contain adventure, battles and violence. These themes have been of interest to boys since they were preschoolers. "Fantasy replaces the boredom of everyday life with the strange and unusual and provides an escape from the problems of modern society (Sanders). With its appeal to the senses, fantasy may provide adolescents with a feeling of overcoming the odds and being triumphant at a time when their own lives

are often a series of battles that they lose or never even get to fight." (Crowe, 2000, p. 136).

While most adults do not read fantasy literature, adolescents, particularly boys, are devouring it. Girls are reading romance and historical romance but boys are reading fantasy. A visit to a Barnes and Noble or Borders bookstore confirms this phenomenon. Women will be found in those sections that contain the romance books, men in the fantasy book section and both genders will be seen in the mystery section. In the young adult section, there are not a large number of fantasy books. Adolescents who want to read this genre are reading books from the adult fantasy section (Crowe, 2000).

Adolescents are also reading other adult books. Michael Cricthon, Steven King, Tom Clancy and John Grisham are popular authors (Worthy, Turner, et al., 1998; Chandler, 1999; Isaacs, 1992). Adolescents select books that have been made from movies (Chandler; Hale & Crowe, 2001; Worthy, Turner, et al.). Comics (X-men, Superman) and series books are also favorites among all boys including adolescents (Davies & Brember, 1993; Daly et al., 1998; Simpson, 1996; Worthy, Turner, et al.; Ujue & Krashen,1996).

Comics

Comic books are a particular favorite of boys. Many boys prefer reading comics to stories or fiction. (Davies & Brember, 1993; Simpson, 1996; Sullivan, 1991; Ujue & Krashen, 1996; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1999). Comics appeal to boys because they frequently contain themes of violence and terror (Daly et al, 1998). Many girls report that they have never read a comic book (Ujue & Krashen).

Research shows that comic book reading does not replace or inhibit other kinds of reading. Comic book readers, in general, read as much as non-comic book readers. (Witty,

1941; Heisler, 1947; Bailyn, 1959; Swain, 1978 as mentioned in Ujue & Krashen, 1996). Those who reported more comic book reading also reported more pleasure reading in general, greater reading enjoyment and tended to do more book reading. Comic books, therefore, serve as a bridge to other forms of reading. Comic books provide practice in reading and eventually the linguistic basis for reading more difficult texts. Comic book reading facilitates heavier book reading. (Krashen, 1993 as cited in Krashen & Ujue).

Series Books

Series novels hold a strong attraction for both boys and girls (Isaacs, 1992; Worthy, 1998). For boys it is the Hardy Boys series and for girls, Nancy Drew. Later girls move on to Sweet Valley High Romances. Children love reading series books and getting to know the characters better and better in each book (Isaacs, 1992). Although set in various times and places, these books all stress family values, collaboration and integrity. The hero/heroine confronts obstacles of different sorts and triumphs over adversity. The plot varies from book to book, but readers appreciate the familiarity of learning more about characters they already know (Reid & Cline, 1997; Sullivan, 1991) "For many students, series books provide the incentive to devour text." (Reid & Cline, p. 69). "R. L. Stine, author of the Goosebumps series, a favorite of the middle school child, states that he receives 2000 letters a week, including notes from parents, that say before the Goosebumps series, their children were non readers" (Reid & Cline, p. 69).

Students do not read these books forever but reading them helps them become increasingly fluent in reading. "One reading experience leads to another" (Sullivan, 1991, p. 45). They eventually move beyond these books. But just as with comics, these books that hold special interest for the reader help that reader develop fluency by building

vocabulary and confidence in reading increasingly challenging text. They teach children that reading can be pleasurable. Pleasure reading is an essential element in the development of lifelong readers (Reid & Cline, 1997).

By validating pleasure reading, we send messages to children that reading is fun and should be enjoyable. By encouraging children to read even the light materials such as comics and the series books, we tend to make them engaged readers. The child's attention has been captured and he learns that reading is a enjoyable (Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1999, Sullivan, 1991, Reid & Cline, 1997). "Time spent reading is tied to reading and writing competence; and many students who do not read in their free time eventually lose academic ground, even if they are not initially remedial readers. Beyond mere time, however, involvement in reading remains the most potent factor in the development of the reading process." (Worthy, 1998, p. 516)

Book Selection

Elementary and middle school students value teacher's recommendations and help in choosing books if the teacher shows a genuine interest in the materials. In addition peer recommendation is important. (Boraks et al., 1997; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1999)

Peer recommendations were most influential in helping adolescents choose books (Isaacs, 1996; Mellon, 1990; Moffott & Wartella, 1992; Worthy, Turner, et al., 1999). Surprisingly, students stated that parents played a role in their book selection (Mellon, 1990; Moffott & Wartella). Millard (1997) claims that the boys he studied named their mothers as the person they share books with or the person they relied on to recommend or to buy books for them. Chandler (1999) states that as adolescents develop an interest in adult books, e.g., King, Crichton, Steel, they frequently share books with their parents,

especially their mothers. When students were asked how they became acquainted with Stephen King's work, they often responded that they were introduced to him by their parents (Chandler, 1999; Isaacs, 1996).

In Millard's study (1997), boys reported being far less likely to share reading with either friends or family unless it were for a specific purpose. Over 70% of the boys said they never shared books but over half the girls did share them with a friend or with family members. Boys did exchange magazines, particularly football and computer related publications. Many teens claimed to read books and periodicals available in their home (Mellon, 1990).

When asked, students gave plot and emotional impact as the major determining factors in selecting a book (Boraks, et al., 1997). Junior high school students state that what the book is about is the most important consideration for picking something to read. The subject, they state, is much more important than the difficulty of the text. They state that they use the story subject, editor's introduction, pictures, back cover, opening paragraphs and story type to determine if they are interested in reading a book. Several recommended choosing literature by its author and commented that they had sometimes read everything a favorite author has written. (Ollman, 1993). These students will give a book a few pages to get good before abandoning it (Ollman). Other students admit to giving a book only a couple of paragraphs to determine whether or not they will read it. If they are not hooked by then the book will be dropped (Wilde, 1998).

School and Reading

"I loved reading when I was young, school made me hate it" (Sullivan, 1991, p. 40). Students claim that school tells them what to read, when to read, and how to read

(Sullivan, 1991). "Most students indicate that they like to read when they are not forced to read and when they do not have to make reports on what they read." (Mellon, 1990, p 224). The reading done in school is teacher selected, teacher directed, and skills focused (Worthy, 1998). Schools have in essence turned students off to reading (Bushman, 1997).

In school, the need to work on serious stuff is felt by teachers. Teachers "select reading material that will challenge students and then work to help them' get it'." (Reid & Cline, 1997, p. 68). Thus reading in school is work, not pleasure. Even good readers tend to regard assigned reading as finishing an assignment but without the expectation of getting pleasure from it. Pleasure reading is left to develop on your own, outside of school (Millard, 1997; Reid & Cline, 1997). Millard (1997) states further that students know that reading is important for life but the reading required in school has no relationship to this.

Worthy (1996) reports that school reading was regarded negatively by the 11 students interviewed. Most of them spoke of reading as a school activity and not something they would choose to do voluntarily in their own time. Yet, fortunately, they all mentioned some positive experiences with reading in school, including books that they had enjoyed hearing read aloud, books they had read for class assignments, and topics that had been interesting to read about. Enthusiastic readers often remain enthusiastic about their own outside of school reading and hated or were indifferent only to what they had to do for school (Sullivan, 1991).

Motivation and Reading

"Promoting lifelong learning is an important educational goal and literacy is the key to life long learning" (Rowe, 1991 as mentioned in Barnett & Irwin, 1994, p. 113). To become lifelong learners therefore, children must be motivated to engage in literacy

activities (Baker & Wigfield, 1999). Developing the desire to read needs to be done as well as developing the ability (Barnett & Irwin).

Researchers have shown that when students are both interested in what is being taught and have access to materials that interest them, learning, motivation, effort and attitudes improve (Hidi, 1991; Schiefele, 1991 as mentioned in Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1999). One way of achieving increased interest, and thus leading to increased learning and voluntary reading, may be to provide access to materials that personally engage the student. Often books that teachers consider 'quality' books are not ones students would choose for themselves (Worthy, Turner, et al.).

Allowing students to choose what they want to read and giving them ownership over their reading will enable them to become absorbed in books and they will engage in reading for longer periods of time. If we want our students to grow as readers and develop that life long love of reading, then they must be allowed to choose literature with which they can connect, literature that they enjoy, and literature which will, hopefully, inspire them to read more (Cope, 1997; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Ley et al., 1994; Worthy, Turner, et al., 1999). Matching preferences and interests increases motivation and learning (Brozo & Schmelzer, 1997). "Once children are hooked on reading, then we can and should introduce them to books that take them beyond their own experiences" (Saccardi, 1994).

Unfortunately, books that students enjoy are often in short supply in school or in libraries. In some instances, these are even non-existent in the school (Saccardi, 1994). Student preferred reading materials often include materials that are seen as inappropriate for school by teachers and librarians. These include such things as light fiction, series

books, magazines, comics, horror and scary books, drawing books and many popular magazines. There seems to be a gap between what the student wants to read and what may be available for him to read. Consequently, allowing choice may not translate into reading development if preferred materials are not available. The student is then left with three alternatives: to pick something he is not really interested in, to pick something outside of school and bring it in, or not to read at all (Worthy, 1998; Worthy, Turner, & Moorman, 1999).

Brozo (2001) claims that we need to do more than allow boys to choose their own literature. He claims that we are turning boys off to reading by not providing them with the specific type of literature we know they like. Boys need literature that will capture their attention and draw them into books. Boys need to read things that they enjoy in order to develop a love of reading. He suggests using archetypal literature to hook boys on reading. "I know this is text with strong, traditional masculine language themes but I need to use it in order to engage you" (Young & Brozo, 2001, p. 321). Boys who are turned off to reading need be wooed with books and literature until they build their skills and read for the enjoyment.

Research has shown us that a positive correlation exists between the amount of time spent reading and reading achievement (Gambell & Hunter, 1999). Time spent reading and involvement in reading remain the most potent factors in the development of the reading process (Worthy, 1998).

Purpose of Study

Research has shown clearly that boys and girls have different reading preferences. These preferences begin at an early age and extend throughout their school careers. The

present study had two purposes. The first was to determine whether or not high school teachers are aware of boys reading preferences. The second was to examine the required reading texts of high school students in the lower reading group for characteristics known to appeal to boys.

Method

Participants

A questionnaire was given out to all certified staff attending a monthly faculty meeting of a suburban New Jersey high school. A total of 74 questionnaires were returned from the survey. Of these, there were 71 completed surveys; 3 individuals answered only the first 3 questions, so their questionnaires were deleted from the results. Of these 71, 21 were men and 50 were women. 10 of the respondents were teachers of English. Of the 71, 11 people have less than 2 years teaching experience, 8 have between 3 and 5 years experience, 9 have between 6 and 10 years experience, 14 have between 11 and 15 years experience and 29 or 41% have 16 or more years teaching experience.

Materials

In order to determine teachers' awareness of boys reading preferences a questionnaire was developed (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was field tested on a group of 11 teachers. There was no ambiguity among the questions. However, additional interest categories were added to questions 5 and 6.

From the review of current literature, a check list was developed regarding the types of books that boys say they like to read and those qualities in reading that make the material especially appealing to boys (see Appendix B for check list).

Procedure

Permission to administer the questionnaire to the staff was obtained from the superintendent of schools. The questionnaire was then given out to all certified staff attending a monthly faculty meeting of the high school, and all staff members attending were asked to complete the questionnaire at that time. Questionnaires were collected before the meeting was adjourned.

Teachers were asked about their awareness of reading material that appeals to girls as well as boys. In addition, English teachers were asked how they assign books for independent reading and specifically what, if any,. books they assign to their classes beyond those required by their department. Besides the required reading, all of the teachers assigned additional reading to their students. The responses to this question provided the names of the additional books used in the review of literature.

For the second part of the study, a list of required reading or "Canon" as it is called for each grade level, 9 through 12 was acquired from the Head of the English Department. English classes in this high school are broken down into three levels: Honors, College Prep, and General. The amount of required reading is greater in the Honors classes than in the College Prep and lowest in the General classes. The General classes are composed of the poorest readers, who are often the students with the least motivation to read. It is for this reason that I selected to study the reading material of this group of students, both required or "Canon" as well as the supplementary books used for whole class reading. As boys have the poorest attitudes toward reading I was specifically looking

to see what appeal the books required of high school students, at the General level, have to boys.

I read each book and using the checklist determined how many characteristics each book possessed that boys find appealing. I also categorized each book according to its genre; a romance received a negative rating. Similarly, a book with a female protagonist received a negative rating.

In order to verify the accuracy of my ratings, I asked a colleague to read several of the books and, using my checklist, to rate them. At the same time, I had my son, a high school sophomore, who had just read several of these same books in his English class, to rate them also, using my checklist. I explained to each reader that the characteristic, "grabs attention quickly", meant that the book needed to entice the reader to continue reading within the first 2 or 3 pages. Each rater (an adult colleague and my high school son) read 5 books. My son is a high school sophomore in an Honors English class at a different high school in a different county in New Jersey and had just completed reading 5 of the same books. I asked him to rate these 5 books and was particularly interested in how his ratings would compare to mine. They compared favorably. Out of a possible 90 points we disagreed on 9. Two of the points were on Romeo and Juliet. I scored it favorably in the categories, plot filled with action/excitement and quick moving. When I questioned my son regarding his scoring, which consisted of only 0s, he said, in typical adolescent male fashion, "It was a love story". The other reader's ratings also compared favorably with mine; we differed in 6 out of 90 points. There was some minor variation in the characteristics ratings among all three readers, but none that were consistent. There was no disagreement among readers as to what category or type to assign each book.

The characteristic, "plot filled with action/excitement" needs some clarification. Not one of the books read was filled with action or excitement. In fact, if I had adhered to a strict interpretation of "filled with", all of the books would have been given a 0. Instead, if a book had some action or excitement, I accorded it a 1. Therefore this trait should probably be renamed "contains some action or excitement" but "filled with" is the characteristic that was suggested by the research regarding boys reading preferences. The two co-readers rated this trait in a manner similar to mine without any clarification of the category. Another attribute, "who selected or recommended the book to the reader", often a factor in determining whether or not a boy will read a book, was deleted from the list as all books were teacher assigned.

Data Analysis

All questionnaires were tallied by hand. Similarly the checklist was hand scored immediately upon completion of each book. The presence of each motivating characteristic of a text earned it a score of one point in that category. The absence of a specific motivating characteristic earned it zero points in that category.

Results

The first few questions on the questionnaire asked teachers about their sex, subject taught, and number of years teaching. Questions 5 and 6 asked teachers about their awareness of reading material that appeals to girls as well as boys. Respondents were told to check all categories that applied.

Question 5: In general, boys are interested in reading about:

Category	# of times checked
Adventure	53
Cars	50

Fantasy	27
Mystery	29
Science	25
Animals	17
Crafts	1
Historical fiction	13
Poetry	4
Sports	59
Biography	11
Fairy tales	1
Jokes	32
Romance	0
Other	3

Question 6: In general, girls are more interested in reading about:

Category	# of times checked
Adventure	16
Cars	1
Fantasy	41
Mystery	36
Science	7
Animals	20
Crafts	20
Historical fiction	15
Poetry	24
Sports	9
Biography	27
Fairy tales	19
Jokes	10
Romance	63
Other	4

Teachers' survey responses reported that boys like to read books about sports or books that are filled with adventure. They also like books about cars, joke books, mysteries, fantasy, and books about science. One science teacher did note, that she based her answers on the type of magazines she sees students in her class reading when they have free time. Girls, on the other hand, like romance. 63 out of 71 respondents indicated that girls liked

books containing romance. Whereas, not one person picked this category as appropriate for boys. Girls also like fantasy and mysteries. These findings parallel those found in current research on the reading preferences of boys and girls.

Question 7 provided teachers with the same categories but asked them about the type of material they selected for their classroom libraries. Among high school teachers, 35 of the 71 stated that they do not have classroom libraries and 5 chose not to answer the question. Of the remaining 31, who stated that they have added to their classroom library in the past year, almost all noted that they had bought reference or subject specific books or magazines appropriate to the subject they teach. The magazines ordered were often trade magazines.

English teachers were also asked if they required students to read independently outside of class. All 10 English teachers queried, stated that they required some independent reading from their students. When asked what sort of guidelines, if any, they imposed, only one teacher said that she provided no guidelines for outside reading and would accept magazines as well as books. Four teachers give their students specific guidelines e.g.: fiction, nonfiction, biography, etc., to be used when selecting outside reading material. Four teachers stated that they give no guidelines but do require that the selection be a novel or a book, and one teacher stated that she alternates between giving students specific guidelines and allowing them to choose whatever they want to read. Furthermore, three teachers said that it was necessary for the student to obtain teacher approval of the selected reading material.

The last question on the survey asked the English teachers to list any other books that they would read, as an entire class, this current 2001 -2002 school year. It was from

this list that I obtained the books I reviewed other than those listed on the Canon. The books on the Canon or the required reading list for all General level students include the following:

9th Grade	The Pigman
	A Steinbeck novel, either Of Mice and Men or The Pearl or both
10th Grade	Death of a Salesman
	Old Man and the Sea
	Raisin in the Sun
	Romeo and Juliet
11th Grade	Beowulf
	Canterbury Tales - Prologue and Selections
	Macbeth
	1984 and/or Brave New World and/or This Perfect Day
12th Grade	Chocolate War
	A Doll's House
	Night
	Oedipus the King
	Winning

Additional class reading at the General level varies with the makeup of the each particular class but books read are selected from among the following:

9th Grade	Go Ask Alice
	Z for Zacariah

10th Grade	Love Story
	Our Town
11th Grade	A Separate Peace
	Rime of the Ancient Mariner
12th Grade	The Late Great Me
	The Stranger
	Things Fall Apart

The following table shows the checklist used and the results:

Insert Table 1 here

As the data illustrates, regarding the type of books assigned, not one is a book that deals with sports, a mystery or a detective story, an adventure, or a humorous or cartoon book. Only one book was considered a fantasy, two contained some historical information but were not pure informational books, and three were considered science fiction. Two of the books were romances; a negative classification and 4 of them had a female as the main protagonist, also a negative characteristic. Of the 26 books reviewed, only 4 dealt with topics of interest to boys and an additional 2 contained some historical information, an appealing attribute for boys.

Of the 26 books reviewed, 7 (27%) grabbed the reader's attention quickly, that is within the first 2 or 3 pages and 7 (27%) had a plot or story line that was quick moving. 9 (35%) of the books contained some action or excitement and 8 (31%) had some violence, terror, or horror. Only 3 (12%) were either scary or suspenseful and only 3 (12%) were filled with surprises. None of them were mysterious or funny. 9 (35%) of the books contained visually graphic imagery.

Discussion

Research has shown that boys like specific types of books and these include books in the categories of sports, mystery and detective stories, adventure, science fiction, fantasy, humor or cartoons, and informational books dealing with history or science. On the other hand, romance is a turnoff for boys. The results of the survey indicate that high school teachers have a good understanding of the types of books that appeal to boys; and this awareness is found among all teachers, not only those who teach English. They also have a good understanding of the types of books that girls enjoy.

When examining the types of books that boys are required to read we see a discrepancy in what research has indicated that boys like to read, what teachers know boys like to read, and what boys are actually assigned to read. Of the 26 books I read, only 4 of them were about topics that are of interest to boys. An additional 2 contained some historical information but of these two, Macbeth and Night, neither one is written as a purely informational book, a category boys enjoy. Two of the books were romances, Love Story and Romeo and Juliet, a turnoff for boys.

A closer look at the "Canon" or required reading list for the different levels of classes, Honors, College Prep, and General, reveals that they are very similar (see

Appendix C for a complete list of the Canon). The Honors classes may be required to read more books than the College Prep classes and these students to read more than the General students but the books they are required to read are the same. A further examination indicates that the required reading list is composed primarily of classical literature. These are the same titles that most schools require their students to read. In fact, these are the same books that I read when I was in high school many years ago.

When examining the list of supplemental books that teachers use to assign additional class reading, more diversity can be seen. Go Ask Alice, The Late Great Me, and Z for Zacariah are clearly attempts to include books that might be of more wide spread interest, particularly to those students in the lower level classes. Two of these deal with teenage addiction: Go Ask Alice is the diary of a teenager addicted to drugs and The Late Great Me, told in the first person; is the story of a teenage alcoholic. Z for Zacariah is a science fiction story and this book rated high on attributes that appeal to boys. The main drawback of these three books is that in all of them, the main protagonist is a female. Boys are less likely to read a book with a female protagonist than are girls to read stories with a male hero.

Even in this list of supplemental reading material, many of the books listed are classics: Romeo and Juliet, A Separate Peace, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, and The Stranger. Clearly, we know what boys like to read but we are not asking them to read those things that they enjoy and are willing to read. Is it any wonder then that boys are turned off to reading, particularly school reading?

That is not to say that these classics are not worthwhile books to read, they are, indeed, wonderful books. I reread A Doll's House, A Raisin in the Sun, A Separate Peace,

Of Mice and Men, and Death of a Salesman, books, which I had read years ago, in high school, and thought they were worthwhile reading again. I was glad, in fact, that I was rereading them. Many of them have messages, messages that are just as appropriate today as they were when I was in high school. However, on the checklist of attributes that appeal to boys they did not score well. A Raisin in the Sun and A Separate Peace did not receive a single positive point. Consequently, if we are trying to encourage young male students to read, particularly boys in a General English class, who don't like to read and are turned off to reading and perhaps even struggling with reading, we need to provide them with the types of books that we know they enjoy. We need to give them the type of book that will grab their attention quickly and make them want to continue reading. Perhaps we need to move away from the classics and provide them with not only the types of books boys say they like but also books that have the attributes that will hold their attention. Boys have stated that they like books containing action, horror, mystery, suspense, and humor, books that are visually graphic and filled with surprises. These are the types of books we should be providing them.

If we want our male students to grow as readers and develop a life long love of reading we need to provide them with the type of literature that we know they like, literature with which they can connect, literature that will capture their attention and draw them into the book. We want to turn these students into readers. Hopefully, once they realize that reading is fun, they can always come back to the classics if and when they are ready to do so.

My research was aimed at the high school population. It included an inquiry into teachers' awareness of reading preferences among boys and girls and an analysis of the

type of material that is required reading of general level high school students. Further studies might be done among the middle school population and even elementary students. This study has shown that male reading preferences are not considered when selecting required reading of the high schoolers. It might be interesting to analyze what type of reading is obligatory among younger students. Many of our male students are turned off to reading long before they reach high school age.

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Characteristics that Appeal to Boys

Canon	Pigman	Mice & Men	The Pearl	Death of Salesman	Old Man & the Sea	Raisin in the Sun	Romeo & Juliet	Beowulf	Canterbury Tales	Macbeth	1984	Brave New World	This Perfect Day	Chocolate War	A Doll's House	Night	Oedipus the King	Winning
Type of Book																		
Sports	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mystery/detective	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adventure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science fiction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Fantasy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Humor/cartoon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information -science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
-history	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Romance (negative trait)	0	0	0	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Characteristics																		
Grabs attention quickly	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Plot filled with action/excitement	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Quick moving	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Violence/terror/horror	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
Scary/suspenseful	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Mysterious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funny	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visually graphic	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Filled with surprises (never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
know what's going to happen																		
Other																		
Male/female main character	M/F	M	M/F	M	M	M/F	M/F	M	M/F	M	M	M/F	M	M	F	M	M	M
															-1			

Characteristics that Appeal to Boys

Supplemental List	Go Ask Alice	Z for Zacariah	Love Story	Our Town	A Spearate Peace	Rime Anc. Mariner	Late Great Me	The Stranger	Things Fall Apart
Type of Book									
Sports	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mystery/detective	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adventure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science fiction	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fantasy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humor/cartoon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information -science	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
-history	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Romance (negative trait)	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Characteristics									
Grabs attention quickly	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plot filled with action/excitement	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quick moving	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Violence/terror/horror	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Scary/suspenseful	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mysterious	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funny	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Visually graphic	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Filled with surprises (never	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
know what's going to happen									
Other									
Male/female main character	F	F	M/F	M/F	M	M	F	M	M
	-1	-1					-1		

Appendix A Reading Preference Survey

I am a graduate student at Kean University in the reading department currently working on my master's thesis. The purpose of my study is to gather information on student reading preferences and teachers' perceptions of these preferences. As a high school teacher, your participation in this study would be most helpful. I can assure you that your participation, however, is entirely voluntary, and that all of your responses will remain confidential. You may also withdraw from this study at any time, and your refusal to participate will not result in any negative consequences.

Please check the appropriate box:

1. I am: _____ male _____ female

2. I teach at: _____ High School
   _____ Middle School

3. I am:
   a teacher of _____ English/Language Arts
   _____ Science
   _____ Foreign Language
   _____ Physical Ed/Health Ed
   _____ Basic Skills
   _____ Special Ed
   _____ Math
   _____ Social Studies
   _____ Computers
   _____ Music/Art
   _____ ESL
   _____ Other (Please specify) ____
   _____ Librarian
   _____ Guidance Counselor
   _____ Supervisor

4. Number of years teaching _____

5. In general, boys are interested in reading about (check all that apply):

   _____ adventure
   _____ cars
   _____ fantasy
   _____ mysteries
   _____ science
   _____ animals
   _____ crafts
   _____ historical fiction
   _____ poetry
   _____ sports
   _____ biographies
   _____ fairy tales
   _____ jokes
   _____ romance
   _____ other (please specify) _____

6. In general, girls are interested in reading about (check all that apply):

_____ adventure	_____ animals	_____ biographies
_____ cars	_____ crafts	_____ fairy tales
_____ fantasy	_____ historical fiction	_____ jokes
_____ mysteries	_____ poetry	_____ romance
_____ science	_____ sports	_____ other (please specify) _____

7. When selecting reading material for your classroom library, what types of material do you pick? (check all that apply)

_____ adventure	_____ animals	_____ biographies
_____ cars	_____ crafts	_____ fairy tales
_____ fantasy	_____ historical fiction	_____ jokes
_____ mysteries	_____ poetry	_____ romance
_____ science	_____ sports	_____ other (please specify) _____

_____ do not have a classroom library

7b. If you have added to your classroom library in the past year, please give the names of 2 things that you have added.

For English teachers only

8a. Are students required to read independently, outside of the class?

a. _____ yes
b. _____ no

<u>If yes</u>

8b. What guidelines do you use in allowing them to select a reading material?

a. _____ no guide lines, they may select whatever they want including magazines
b. _____ no guidelines but it must be a novel or book
c. _____ specific guide lines (genre, author, poem, etc.) given
d. _____ other (please describe) _____

9. In addition to the canon, please list any other books an entire class will read this current, 2001 - 2002, school year. (Use the other side of the paper if you need to and please specify whether the class is General, CP or Honors.)

Appendix B

Check List

Type of book

Sports

Mystery/detective

Adventure

Science Fiction

Fantasy

Humor/cartoon

Information - science
- history

Romance (negative trait)

Characteristics that appeal to boys

Grabs attention quickly

Plot filled with action/excitement

Quick moving

Violence/terror/ horror

Scary/suspenseful

Mysterious

Funny

Visually graphic

Filled with surprises (never know what's going to happen)

Other

Male/female main character
(female - negative score)

Who selected book - friend,
family, significant other

Appendix C

Canon – General

Grade 9	The Pigman
	A Steinbeck novel – Of Mice and Men and/or The Pearl
Grade 10	Death of a Salesman
	Old Man and the Sea
	Raisin in the Sun
	Romeo and Juliet
Grade 11	Beowulf
	Canterbury Tales – Prologue and Selections
	Macbeth
	1984 and/or Brave New World and /or This Perfect Day
Grade 12	The Chocolate War
	A Doll's House
	Night
	Oedipus the King
	Winning

Canon – College Prep

Grade 9	Julius Caesar and/or A Midsummer Night's Dream
	The Learning Tree and/or A Patch of Blue
	The Pearl and/or Of Mice and Men
Grade 10	Death of a Salesman
	The Great Gatsby

	The Old Man and the Sea
	Romeo and Juliet
	The Scarlet Letter
Grade 11	1984
	Beowulf
	Brave New World
	Canterbury Tales
	Macbeth
	A Separate Peace
Grade 12	All Quiet on the Western Front
	Hamlet
	A Doll's House
	Night
	Oedipus the King
	The Stranger

Canon – Honors

Grade 9	The Chosen
	Hiroshima
	Julius Caesar
	The Odyssey
	A Steinbeck novel
Grade 10	Death of a Salesman
	The Great Gatsby

	Huckleberry Finn
	Old Man and the Sea
	Our Town
	Romeo and Juliet
	The Scarlet Letter
Grade 11	1984
	Beowulf
	Canterbury Tales
	Heart of Darkness
	Macbeth
	One novel of a major 18th/19th century author, e.g. Hardy, Dickens, Eliot
Grade 12	All Quiet on the Western Front
	Don Quixote
	Hamlet
	Ibsen play
	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
	Madame Bovary
	Oedipus (Roche)/Antigone
	The Stranger

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