

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

5-1-2006

The reading habits of elementary students and the potential role of the school library media specialist

Elizabeth Reilly-Stern
Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Reilly-Stern, Elizabeth, "The reading habits of elementary students and the potential role of the school library media specialist" (2006). *Theses and Dissertations*. 928.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/928>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

THE READING HABITS OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS
AND THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF THE
SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

by
Elizabeth Reilly-Stern

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
Of
The Graduate School
At
Rowan University
May 1, 2006

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved May 1, 2006
© 2006 Elizabeth Reilly-Stern

ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Reilly-Stern

THE READING HABITS OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND THE POTENTIAL
ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

2005/06

Dr. Marilyn Shontz

Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship

A review of current and related literature showed girls were outscoring boys on reading tests in New Jersey, in the nation and in other countries as well. Students see reading as a feminine activity. Understanding the reading habits of students, particularly male students who read less, is crucial to help students become lifelong learners. By studying reading preferences it may be possible to influence students to read more. This study was designed to determine if girls in fact circulate more books than boys, and if girls specifically circulate more fiction books. Through surveying the school library media specialists and examining the circulation statistics of 240 randomly selected students from six different elementary schools, the researcher determined if the boy to girl fiction circulation statistics were different for those schools in which the school library media specialist specifically targeted boys fiction reading through collection development and programming. The researcher fully expected the results to be that boys read less fiction than their female counterparts, and that did in fact occur. However, the hypothesis that school library media specialist practices alter the reading preferences was not proven with the exploratory study questionnaire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate this thesis to all of the people who had to hear from me over the last five years “I can’t, I have homework to do”. Especially to my husband John, and my children Aaron and Jessica, who had to have heard it too many times.

I would like to thank my family and friends who offered words of encouragement, listened when I felt discouraged and offered a hand when I was overwhelmed. You reminded me of the things that were important and the things that were not, without you I wouldn’t have been successful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
I.	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
II.	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	11
III.	METHODOLOGY.....	24
IV.	ANALYSIS OF DATA.....	29
V.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	44
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	50
	APPENDIX A Principal Cover Letter	53
	APPENDIX B Media Specialist Cover Letter.....	55
	APPENDIX C Library Media Specialist Survey.....	57
	APPENDIX D Subjective Questionnaire Responses.....	60

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Percentage of Fiction Books Circulated by Gender (All Schools Combined).....	30
2. Percentage of Fiction Books Circulated (Individually by School).....	31
3. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School A.....	34
4. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School A.....	34
5. Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School A.....	35
6. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School B.....	35
7. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School B.....	36
8. Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School B.....	36
9. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School C.....	37
10. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School C.....	37
11. Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School C.....	38
12. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School D.....	38
13. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School D.....	39
14. Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School D.....	39
15. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School E.....	40
16. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School E.....	40
17. Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School E.....	41

18. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School F	41
19. Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School F	42
20. Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School F	42
21. Comparison of Average Number of Books Checked Out for both Boys and Girls by grade All Schools	43

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction and Background

Certainly, much attention has been given to the studies of male/female learning. In June 2006 a librarian's conference in Pittsburgh was held with the focus on "enticing reluctant readers to read". Who was the predominant gender among these reluctant readers? Boys! (Price, 2005).

"The issue of boys and literacy is in need of some serious attention" (Woodson, 2004 p.15). Is the issue compounded by the fact that teachers and librarians are predominately women? Jon Scieszka, former educator and popular children's author, thinks so, but he also believes that librarians are in a "unique position" to help boys connect with reading (Scieszka, ¶1). "The world of children's books, particularly popular series fiction, is a highly gendered one" (Dutro, 2002, p. 376). This is another area that Jon Scieszka is trying to change with the help of a Web site he developed just to help "GUYS READ". Is all the attention making a difference? Are male students reading more and in particular are they reading more fiction in schools where school library media specialists are familiar with the research. Where school library media specialists encourage boys with their collection development practice and teaching styles, who introduce Web sites like www.GUYSREAD.com?

Understanding the reading habits of students, particularly male students who read less, is crucial in helping students become lifelong learners. By studying reading preferences it may be possible to influence students to read more and perhaps read better. Enticing students to read is sometimes a struggle, but by knowing preferences and possibly even the reasons behind these preferences, librarians would be better able to persuade students to read more and hopefully read more of a variety.

Collection development is a major responsibility of a librarian's position, and one area that would benefit from understanding the reading habits of students. Teaching practices and strategies, whether in the classroom or in the library would benefit from this knowledge as well. Understanding what interests reluctant readers would augment school programs.

Statement of Problem

Information Power clearly stated in its "Mission and Goals of the School Library Media Program" that school library media specialists' must "... provide resources and activities that contribute to lifelong learning while accommodating a wide range of differences in teaching and learning styles, methods, interests, and capacities" (AASL 1998, p. 7). Yet research has shown again and again boys read less in adolescence and in adulthood, and boys' score lower on language arts tests throughout elementary and middle school. (National Center for Education Statistics

[NCES], 2005 a, b). If we are not instilling in our young boys a love of reading how can we expect them to ever be “lifelong learners”?

Purpose

How do these general statistics stand up in an above average income suburban New Jersey school district? Do the media specialists promote fiction reading among their male students? Are current fiction collection development policies being fair to boys? “Women who work with boys should realize the difference between the reading habits of boys and girls and consider carefully the things they can do to help both” (Sullivan, p. xii).

This study tested the validity of these general statements within the limitations of a Camden County, New Jersey suburban school district. The study questioned if girls in fact circulate more books than boys, and if girls specifically circulate more fiction books. Through surveying the school library media specialists and examining the circulation statistics of randomly selected students from six different elementary schools, the researcher sought to determine if the boy to girl fiction circulation statistics were different for those schools in which the school library media specialist specifically targeted boys fiction reading through collection development and programming.

Research Questions

This research attempted to answer several questions. Were the reading habits of boys different from the reading habits of girls in a Camden County, New Jersey suburban school district? Did boys read less fiction than their female counterparts? Where differences existed, were the differences related to the selected practices of the school library media specialist? In schools where the school library media specialist specifically book talked fiction or intentionally collected more traditional “boys” books, was there a greater number of fiction books being circulated by boys?

Definitions

The following definitions from the *Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science* were applied to this study:

Teaching style

The mix of skills and techniques that, in combination with knowledge, preparation, and experience, enables a librarian to be effective in the classroom. Determined in part by personality, preferences include lecture and demonstration.

Media specialist

A librarian or other individual with specialized training in the creation, selection, organization, maintenance, and provision of access to media of all kinds, who may also be responsible for supervising a media center.

Collection development

The process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics, and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations. Collection development includes the formulation of selection criteria, planning for resource sharing, and replacement of lost and damaged items, as well as routine selection and deselection decisions.

Collection development bias

Partiality in the selection of materials for a library collection, whether against or in favor of materials presenting a particular point of view or with respect to a specific type of resource, category of publisher, etc.

Lifelong learning

One of the goals of bibliographic instruction and information literacy programs is to help library users obtain the skills they need to pursue knowledge at any age, independent of a formal educational institution.

Circulation statistics

A count maintained of the number of items checked out from a library during a given period, or the number of times a specific item is checked out during a given period, usually broken down by type of material and/or classification.

Circulation history

A record that a patron borrowed a specific item, retained (with or without the borrower's consent) for a significant length of time after the item is returned to the library.

Patron record

A confidential record in a library circulation system containing data pertinent to a borrower account.

Online catalog

A library catalog consisting of a collection of bibliographic records in machine-readable format, maintained on a dedicated computer that provides uninterrupted interactive access via terminals or workstations in direct, continuous communication with the central computer. Although the software used in online catalogs is proprietary and not standardized, most online catalogs are searchable by author, title, subject heading, and keywords. Online catalog is synonymous with OPAC.

Borrower account

A patron's ongoing transactions with a library, including items currently checked out, overdues, unpaid fines, holds, etc. Library staff can check the status of an individual's account by examining the patron record.

Borrowing privileges

The rights to which a library borrower is entitled, usually established by registering to receive a library card. Such privileges normally include the

right to check out books and other materials from the circulating collection for a designated period of time.

School library

A library in a public or private elementary or secondary school that serves the information needs of its students and the curriculum needs of its teachers and staff, usually managed by a *school librarian* or media specialist. A school library collection usually contains books, periodicals, and educational media suitable for the grade levels served.

Fiction books

From the Latin *factio*, meaning to "make" or "counterfeit." Literary works in prose, portraying characters and events created in the imagination of the writer, intended to entertain, enlighten, and vicariously expand the reader's experience of life.

Nonfiction

Prose literary works describing events that actually occurred and characters or phenomena that actually exist or existed in the past. In a more general sense, any piece of prose writing in which the content is not imagined by the author.

Elementary school

The lowest school giving formal instruction, teaching the rudiments of learning, and extending usually from six to eight years. Also called primary school.

Circulate

The process of checking books and other materials in and out of a library.

Also refers to the total number of items checked out by library borrowers over a designated period of time and to the number of times a given item is checked out during a fixed period of time.

Reading habit or reading preference

A reader's taste in reading matter as to format (books, magazines, comic books, etc.), genre (fiction or nonfiction), subject (biography, crime, travel, etc.), and author. Although reading preferences often change with age, studies have shown that in some individuals they remain remarkably constant. Gender and age are important factors in fiction preferences (adventure and westerns for men, mystery and romance for women, science fiction and fantasy for adolescents). Psychological factors such as mood may also influence reader choice.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study it was assumed that the circulation of materials reflected the reading habits of the students and that the circulation records were accurate. It was also assumed that the school library media specialists accurately depicted on the survey their book talking and other programming practices.

Limitations

This research was limited to six elementary schools in a Camden County, New Jersey suburban school district where each school had a full time library media specialist. It was also limited to boys and girls in fourth and fifth grade.

References

- American Association of School Librarians (1998). *Information Power; Building partnerships for learning*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- American Library Association. *Access to library resources and services regardless of sex, gender, identity, or sexual orientation: An interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*. Retrieved October 2, 2005, from www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/acc_gend.html
- Dutro, E. (2002, January). "But that's a girl's book!" Exploring gender boundaries in children's reading practices. [Electronic version]. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, p. 376-384.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005a). *The Nation's report card [New Jersey Grade 4 Public Schools]*. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/stt2005/2006452nj4.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005b). *The Nation's report card state reading 2005 [New Jersey Grade 8 Public Schools]*. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/sh2005/2006452nj8.pdf>
- Price, H. (2005, October 7;). Librarian conference focuses on enticing reluctant readers to read. *Observer-Reporter*, 2005, October, p. 1-3. Retrieved October 7, 2005, <http://www.observer-reporter.com/290719796826239.bsp>
- Reitz, J. M. (2004). *Online dictionary for library and information science*. Retrieved October 12, 2005, from http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm
- Scieszka, J. *Boys will be...the unique reading and development need of boys in libraries: Message to librarians from Jon Scieszka*. Retrieved October 2, 2005, from <http://www.ala.org/alsc/alscresources/forlibrarians/serviceboys/scieszka.htm>
- Sullivan, M. (2003). *Connecting boys with books; What libraries can do*. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Woodson, A. (2004). Boys and reading motivation. [Electronic Version]. *Indiana Libraries*, 23, p. 15-16.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of current and related literature showed that the difference between male and female reading test scores was not a phenomenon only occurring in the United States. Many countries experienced the same disparities. In New Jersey, the state of this research project, girls outperformed boys on state reading proficiency tests in both fourth grade and eighth grade.

Current research also showed that students view reading as a female activity, and that both genders have very specific ideas as to what constitutes a “boy” book or a “girl” book.

There are many professionals with ideas as to how school library media specialists can help boys read more and read better. These suggestions range from collection development ideas to rearranging the library shelves. Several books were written to aid school library media specialists interested in this subject help their programs and male students.

Test Scores

According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, “Fourth-grade girls score higher than fourth-grade boys on the combined reading literacy scale on average in every participating PIRLS 2001 country” (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS], 2001). Specifically, “in the United States, on average, fourth-grade girls scored 18 points higher than boys on the combined reading literacy scale” (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS], 2001).

“In the United States, fourth-grade girls, on average, outscore boys by 16 points on both the literary and informational subscales” (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005a, summary). The National Assessment of Educational Progress was given to a sample of students and was reported in The Nation’s Report Card which stated in regard to fourth grade, “In 2005, female students scored higher on average than male students. Male students’ average score increased by 3 points from 1992 to 2005” In regard to eighth-grade students: “Both male and female students’ average scores showed decreases between 2003 and 2005.” (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005b, summary).

Overall the New Jersey reading scores were higher than those of half the other states’ public schools’ reading scores in both fourth-grade and eighth-grade. “Of the 52 states and other jurisdictions that participated in the 2005 fourth-grade assessment, students’ average scale scores in New Jersey were higher than those in

24 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 3 jurisdictions” (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005c, snapshot report). Eighth grade had a more significant difference: “Of the 52 states and other jurisdictions’ that participated in the 2005 eighth-grade assessment, students’ average scale scores in New Jersey were higher than those in 34 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 16 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 1 jurisdiction” (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005c, snapshot report).

Scores in the State of New Jersey Language Arts tests differed significantly by gender with 34 % fourth-grade males scoring below *Basic* and 26% at *Proficient*. Fourth-grade females scored 29% and 29% respectively. A total of 11% of females scored *Advanced* proficient with 8% of males scoring *Advanced* (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005a). In eighth-grade, the margin was reduced but the female students were still outperforming the male students. “In 2005, male students in New Jersey had an average score that was lower than that of female students by 8 points. In 2003, the average score for male students was lower than that of female students by 9 points” (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2005b).

Children’s Reading Choices

In 1997 Eileen McKenna studied the reading attitudes of 269 students from grades k-8. The study was divided into two parts. In the first part k-3 teachers read a survey list of ten items, including art activities, sport activities and various games.

In the second part, students in grades 4 –8 read written descriptions of similar activities, only with 38 selections. In both instances respondents were asked to reflect on whether the activity was a masculine or a feminine. The results showed “the overall majority of students throughout grades k –8 see reading as an activity more suitable for girls. This perception in general continues to escalate as the children advance toward grade 8. The most dramatic increase in this perception seems to take place around the fifth grade” (McKenna, 1997, p. 14).

In 1994/95 the W.H. Smith Children’s Reading Choices Project in the United Kingdom sent a national questionnaire postal survey to 7,976 children who were 10, 12, and 14 years old. They compared their findings with a similar United Kingdom study conducted in 1974. Over the two decades book reading did increase for 10 year olds of both sexes. However, 10-year-old girls still read substantially more books in the four weeks prior to the survey (3.71) than boys who read an average of 2.98. At 12 years of age girls had increased the number of books they read, while the boys number had remained the same. In the 14-year-old group a decrease was found in the number of books for boys. In all age groups compared (10, 12 and 14) girls read more books than their male counterparts (Hall & Coles, 1997, p. 9).

Elizabeth Dutro, as a “participant observer”, monitored literature circle lessons with a fifth grade class of twenty-six students for one school year. Through observation, conversation, note taking and taping book club discussions, she compiled her research in *“But that’s a girls’ book!” Exploring Gender Boundaries in Children’s Reading Practices* (Dutro, 2002). She specifically described one

episode where the students had to choose books from a table, “The children went into the book-choosing episode with certain implicit assumptions about what books were “girl” books or “boy” books. Noted, was the fact that, boys’ anxieties around crossing gender boundaries were certainly on display” (Dutro, 2002, p. 379). In regard to the girls however she found:

It was true that most girls in the class chose the books that were marked as “girl” books. However, Jade, Sese, and Neena eagerly and deliberately chose a book that the children appeared to concur was a “boys’ book”.

These girls seemed very conscious of the fact that they were trespassing on boys’ territory and seemed to enjoy the reactions this move elicited. (Dutro, 2002, p. 379)

Through later interviews Dutro found, “As the boys had opportunities to read books about girls and talk about those books, their anxieties lessened and their policing of gender boundaries eased” (Dutro, 2002, p. 384).

In *To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader*, William G. Brozo stated “boys need help finding books that are both pleasing and identity affirming.” Brozo talked specifically about the “five-year void,” the term first coined by Ray Nicolle, the years between 7 and 12 (Brozo, 2004, p. 93). “One possible explanation as to why boys are not the readers they can and should be is that reading often conflicts with boys’ sense of masculinity” (Brozo, 2004, p. 13).

Wendy Schwartz in *Helping Underachieving Boys Read Well and Often* commented on the difference between boys and girls perception towards reading,

when she wrote "...boys tend to read at an older age than girls, take longer to learn, and comprehend narrative texts less easily. Boys also value reading less, and see reading as a way to get information rather than as a recreational activity" (Schwartz, 2002, p.2) In speaking of what boys prefer, as reported by Simpson, 1996, and also Smith & Wilhelm, 2002, she stated,

They are usually most interested in books and periodicals about hobbies, sports, and activities they might engage in, and in informational resources. They like escapism (science fiction, adventure, and fantasy) and humor more than fiction and poetry, and they like to collect series of books. (Schwartz, 2002, p. 2-3)

Library Programming

Michael Sullivan asserted, "one of the most effective tools that libraries use to promote reading is programming." With this in mind, "it is imperative that librarians design programming with an eye toward serving the needs of boys." "Women who work with boys should realize the difference between the reading habits of boys and girls and consider carefully the things they can do to help both."... "Boys will respond to programs that feed their competitive spirit. Should we relegate competition to the athletic fields?" (Sullivan, 2003, p. xiii). In Chapter 3 Sullivan spoke directly about book choices,

Boys choose nonfiction more often than girls do, especially books that focus on the natural world, science, and animals. When they read fiction, boys are

likely to gravitate toward books about sports or action situations, and they are much more likely than girls to go for the edgy kinds of comedy. For genre reading, boys will opt more often for fantasy and science fiction. In all cases, they prefer books written by male authors. (Sullivan, 2003, p. 22)

Later in the chapter he clarified issues. “With boys in their tween years, the best books is not the issue. What is at issue is what books they will actually read” (Sullivan, 2003, p. 28). Sullivan recommended promoting reading, “If you want to encourage boys to read, then you must allow them to choose their own reading” (Sullivan, 2003, p. 29). In relation to book groups, he stated,

... this may be an instance where it is worth carving out a special place for boys. Consider offering a separate book group for them. The different ways that boys express themselves... will make it difficult for elementary-aged boys and girls to mix well in this format. (Sullivan, 2003, p. 35)

When using book-talking Sullivan suggested a different approach.

When we booktalk, librarians often zero in on the characters in the book and their interpersonal relations. Most children’s librarians are women, and this is what we, as a group, feel is most important and interesting about books. We also tend to make booktalks very long and intricate, as if we can reveal all that is great about an entire book in a single discussion. We need to explore different styles of booktalks so we can reach a broad audience. In addition, if we want to reach boys, it is a good idea to keep the booktalks

short. Girls are more likely to be drawn in by an emotional setup; boys are looking for the impact. (Sullivan, 2003, p. 99)

Dr. Ray Doiron in *Boy Books, Girl Books: Should We Re-organize Our School Library Collections?* discussed his research. In a three-year study he had teacher-librarians in one school district gather information on all books signed out by students in first through sixth grade. Over 10,000 transactions were analyzed per grade level and only books identified as independent reading by the students' were included in the data. Doiron reported:

- First of all, the students signed out more fiction than information books. The split was about 60 percent fiction to 40 percent nonfiction.
- Broken down by gender, the data indicates girls are taking more books out than boys, but not in significantly different numbers.
- Broken down by book type (fiction and information), boys signed out 1.029 fiction books and 0.753 information books per transaction. Girls signed out 1.405 fiction books and 0.449 information books per transaction.

- Boys took out over two-thirds of all information books signed out, with less than one-third taken out by girls.

(Doiron, 2003, p.15)

Dr. Doiron believed educators needed to change their beliefs about reading. “We need to re-examine what it means to read so that browsing through a book, stopping at things that catch our attention, reading captions, looking at pictures and visual materials are all ways of reading” (Doiron, 2003, p.16).

Barbara Braxton in *Bait the Boys and Hook Them into Reading* had several suggestions as to how to promote boys’ reading in the school media center; she recommended “Let them read what they want to read! Let them hone their skills on whatever they choose. Voluntary practice leads to success, competence and confidence -compulsory prescription leads to fear, frustration and despair”

(Braxton, 2003, p.43). She also suggested educators “read aloud often so they can hear the expression of an experienced reader, but also the stops and stumbles that you make.” Braxton thinks librarians should “Promote books with boys. Have a Boys Only zone in your library to display the sorts of books they are interested in; produce bibliographies of the ‘if you liked..., then you will enjoy.....’ kind”

(Braxton, 2003, p.1).

Brian W. Sturm authored a study to help clarify the students’ preferences in reading. The study, conducted by the State Library of North Carolina, included two thousand responses to an open-ended survey. The children surveyed were North Carolina Public Library patrons, 1057 female and 943 male, ranging in age from

two to eighteen. Results were divided into several categories and subcategories, all by gender. The thirteen most popular reading categories among boys were found to be animals, science, sports, literature, biographies, transportation, history, library collection, computers, careers, entertainment, education and arts and crafts. These varied in order for the thirteen most popular categories among girls. The category that was listed first for both male and female most popular was animals but further classification found that boys prefer mammals, reptiles, dinosaurs and fish over the pets, insects, and birds that were preferred by girls. The category of sports was in the top five for both groups (boys third and girls fourth) but what they were choosing within the category was different. Boys and girls both listed basketball as the favorite, but after that there was a great different between preferences. Boys preferred football, baseball, ice hockey skateboarding, biking, martial arts, wrestling, racing, fishing, boxing, rugby, snowboarding, hunting, karting, lacrosse, rollerblading, skiing and tennis. Girls chose books on soccer, dance, cheerleading, gymnastics, surfing, equestrian, ice-skating, scuba diving and track and field. In the literature categories girls preferred series, poetry, mystery, comics, realistic fiction, and historical fiction, while boys preferred folklore/mythology, fantasy, specific title, adventure, and horror (Sturm, 2003).

Summary

A review of current and related literature showed girls were outscoring boys on reading tests in New Jersey, in the nation and in other countries as well. Students

see reading as a feminine activity and see many titles as particularly feminine. Several books were written for the professional, specifically the public librarian and the school library media specialist, to help with programming and encouraging reading with their male patrons and students.

References

- Bilz, R. L. (2004). *Life is tough; Guys, growing up and young adult literature*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Braxton, B. (2003, February). Bait the boys and hook them into reading. [Electronic version] *Teacher Librarian*, 30, p. 43-44.
- Brozo, W. G. (2004). *To be a boy, to be a reader; Engaging teen and preteen boys in active literacy* (3rd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association
- Doiron, R. (2003, February). Boy books, girl books; Should we re-organize our school library collections? [Electronic version]. *Teacher Librarian*, 30, p. 14-16.
- Doiron, R. (2003, January). Motivating the lifelong reading habit through a balanced use of children's information books. [Electronic version] *School Libraries Worldwide*, 9, p. 39-49.
- Dutro, E. (2002, January). "But that's a girl's book!" Exploring gender boundaries in children's reading practices. [Electronic version] *The Reading Teacher*, 55, p. 376-384.
- Hall, C., & Coles, M. (1997, June 6). *The children's reading choices project*. Retrieved January 27, 2003, from <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/english/whscrcp.html>
- McKenna, E. (1997, May). *Gender differences in reading attitudes*. Retrieved April 6, 2004, from www.eric.gov
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005a). *The Nation's report card [New Jersey Grade 4 Public Schools]*. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/stt2005/2006452nj4.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005b). *The Nation's report card state reading 2005 [New Jersey Grade 8 Public Schools]*. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/sh2005/2006452nj8.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005c). *The nation's report card*. Retrieved November 12, 2005, from [http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc.reading_math_2005/s0002.asp?prin](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc.reading_math_2005/s0002.asp?printer=)
tver=

- Nilsen, A. P. (2001, March). It's deja vu all over again! [Electronic version]. *School Library Journal*, 47.
- Price, H. (2005, October 7). Librarian conference focuses on enticing reluctant readers to read. *Observer-Reporter*, 2005, October, p. 1-3. Retrieved October 7, 2005, from <http://www.observer-reporter.com/290719796826239.bsp>
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (2001). *International comparisons in fourth-grade reading literacy*. Retrieved October 12, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/pirlspub/6.asp?nav=2>
- Schwartz, W. (2002, August). *Helping underachieving boys read well and often*. Retrieved April 6, 2004, from www.eric.ed.gov
- Sturm, B. W. (2003). *The information and reading preferences of North Carolina children*. Retrieved October 2, 2005, from <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume62003/reading>
- Sullivan, M. (2003). *Connecting boys with books; What libraries can do*. Chicago: American Library Association.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overall Research Design and Justification

The research design included both direct and indirect data collection techniques. One part of the study was conducted through the distribution of an exploratory survey to the school media specialists of the six schools involved. An exploratory survey was chosen because “exploratory studies merely suggest insights or hypotheses; they cannot test them” (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 85).

An exploratory survey, often conducted as qualitative research, can increase the researcher’s familiarity with the phenomenon in question, it can help to clarify concepts, it can be used to establish priorities for future research, it can identify new problems, and last, but not least, exploratory survey research can be used to gather information with practical applications, although such results cannot always be anticipated. (Powell & Connaway, 2004, p. 85)

Student circulation statistics were collected by the researcher through the automated library system Athena and represented an indirect measure.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of the research study was twofold. One aspect was to determine if girls in fact circulate more books than boys, and if girls specifically circulate more fiction books. The second aspect was to determine, through surveying the school library media specialists and examining various programs they offered, if there was a difference in circulation habits at those school media centers where programming encouraged more male fiction reading with collections.

Through surveying the school library media specialists, the researcher questioned if the boy to girl circulation patterns were different for those schools in which the school library media specialist specifically targeted boys reading with programming. This was determined through questions regarding collection development and programming. The questionnaire solicited fixed responses, as well as five unstructured questions. The questions were a mixture of types, including factual, informational and opinion or attitude questions.

Population and Sample

Circulation statistics were gathered from six elementary school libraries in a Camden County New Jersey suburban school district. The sample for the circulation statistics part of the study was randomly selected. All boys from the 4th grade level were numbered and each number was placed in a box. A number was selected until there were 10 randomly chosen male students. The process was

repeated with the female students and then the 5th grade was selected. There were 10 boys and 10 girls from each fourth and fifth grade or a total of 40 students from each school. For the six schools there were 240 students, 120 male and 120 female. Each elementary school that participated employed a full time school library media specialist who was required to hold classes each week. Each school was assigned an identification letter allowing the comparison between the school library media specialist questionnaire answers and the students' circulation statistics. All six-school library media specialists' surveys were returned and deemed valid.

Variables

The dependent variable was the participation of each school library media specialist in both the completion of the survey and the authorization to gather the circulation statistics. The researcher independently divided the selected students into males and females. For each student the researcher tallied all circulated books within the five-month period of September 2005 through February 2006. The researcher also labeled the circulated books of each student as fiction or non-fiction.

Data Collection

The process began by obtaining the permission of each school principal to survey their school library media specialist and to obtain the circulation records of forty randomly selected students, six out of eleven school principals agreed. This was done through a letter from the researcher telling them of the intent of the

research project (see Appendix A). A letter of intent was then sent to each school library media outlining the research project specialist and requesting his or her personal participation (see Appendix B).

Athena was the automated computer library system used by the participating school district. The Athena program allowed for the circulation statistics of selected students to be acquired; however each school's circulation statistics could only be obtained from that school's computer. The researcher therefore visited each school during the week of March 5, 2006 and printed the circulation records for the forty students. At this time the researcher gave each school media specialist a copy of the survey and requested that they return it the following week through interschool mail.

Reliability and Validity

The circulation records from the automated computer system, Athena, were assumed to be reliable for purposes of this study. The assumption was made that the students were in fact reading the books selected and circulated. These records were not, however, be assumed to be indicative of students reading choices outside of the library.

References

Powell, R. R., & Connaway, L. S. (2004). *Basic research methods for librarians* (4th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Procedure/Methods

Circulation history statistics were gathered from six different elementary schools in a Camden County New Jersey district. From each school, statistics were taken for 10 boys and 10 girls from both 4th and 5th grade. Two hundred and forty student library circulation records were examined. Circulation records specifically represented the period from September 2005 through February 2006. In addition, all six-school elementary library media specialists completed a survey (quantitative data) regarding specific programming practices in the library and library collection development. Microsoft Excel was used to create a spreadsheet and generate all charts and tables.

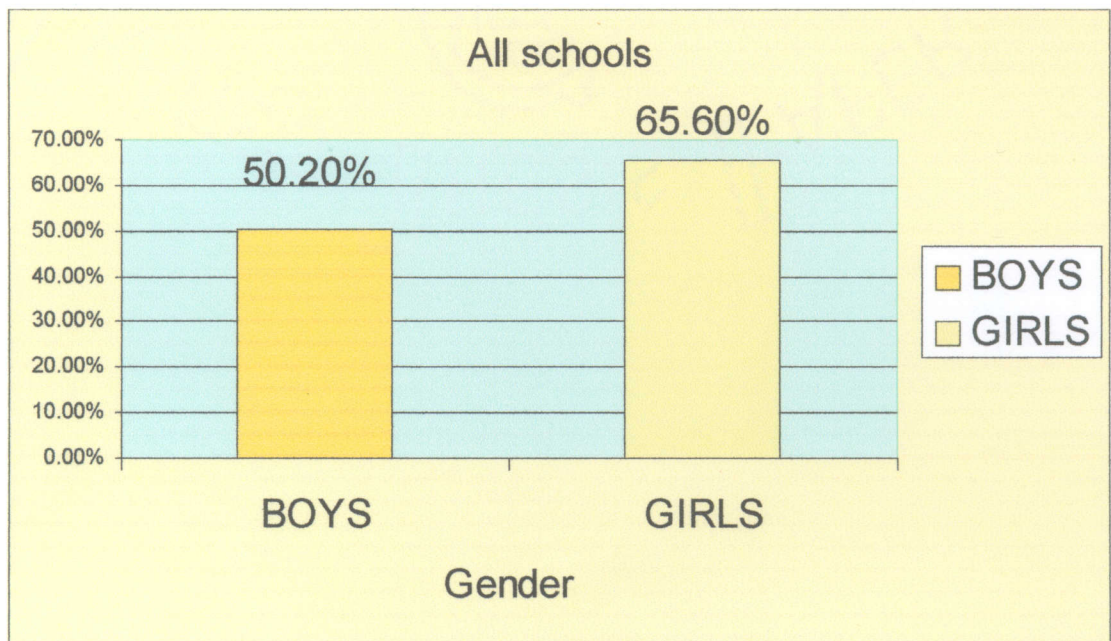
Presentation of Results

There was a significant amount more fiction circulated by female students than by male students in data from all schools combined. Of the books checked from the six libraries, girls circulated 65.60% fiction; boys circulated 50.20% fiction. The

percentages for the total amount of fiction boys and girls circulated can be found in Figure 1.

Figure 1

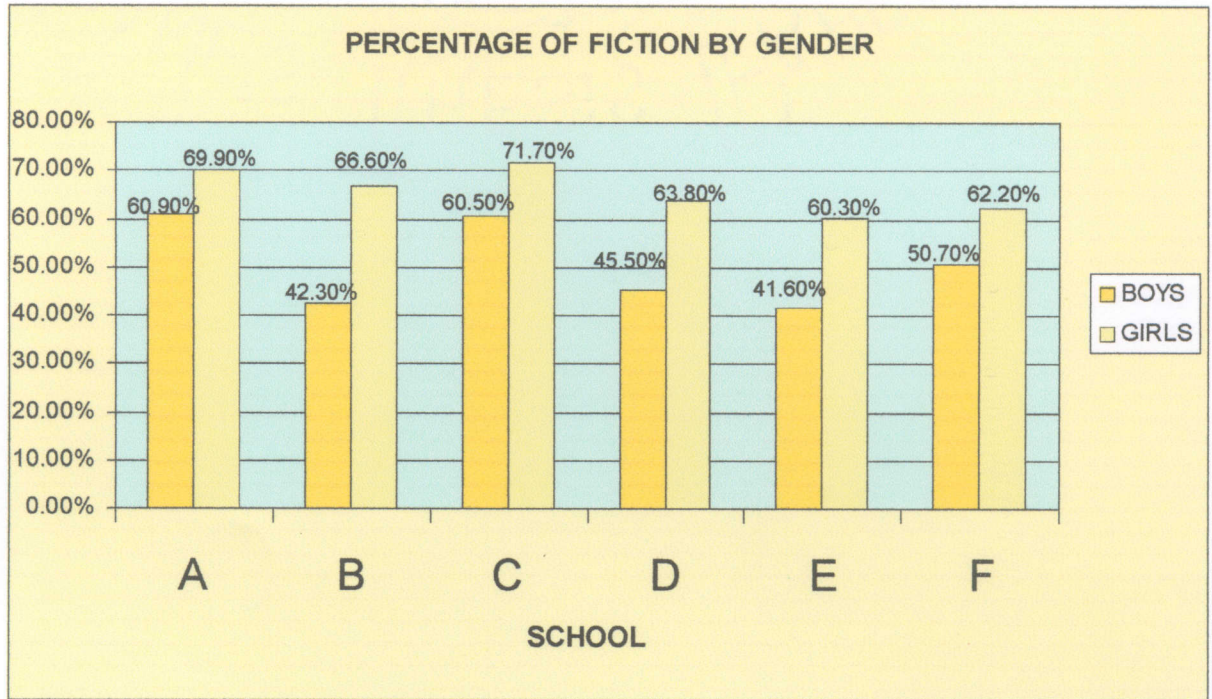
Percentage of Fiction Books Circulated by Gender (All Schools Combined)



Taken individually, the schools' fiction ratios varied, but in all schools collectively and individually, girls circulated more fiction books than boys. Figure 2 demonstrates the schools percentages individually.

Figure 2

Percentage of Fiction Books Circulated (Individually by School)



The first three questions in the school library media specialist survey compared how many books were in each collection, and available times when students could visit the library independently of their classes. All the school library media specialists reported between 1800-2000 fiction books in their collections with an average of 35-40% of their budgets per year purchasing new fiction titles. All the school library media specialists had open library times available outside of individual classes and all posted such hours for teachers and students.

The six school library media specialists answered the following questions:

Question #4 Do you believe boys read less fiction than girls in general?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes

Question #5 Do you believe boys read less fiction than girls in your library?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	no	no	no	yes

Question #6 a-f Regarding literature promotion activities, the following were reported:

6a. Do you read aloud?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

6b. Do you do book talks?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes

6c. Boy specific book talks?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
n/a	yes	no	yes	n/a	no

6d. Do you hold book contests?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
no	no	yes	yes	no	yes

6e. Boy specific book contests?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
n/a	n/a	no	no	n/a	no

6f. Does your school host author/illustrator visits?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Question #8 When you display fiction books do you consciously pick 'boy' books to display as well?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes

Question #9 Are you aware of Jon Scieska's Web site "*GUY'S READ*"?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no

9a. If so, do you direct reluctant readers to this site?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
no	yes	no	no	n/a	n/a

Question #10 Do you have a library eBoard or Web site?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

10a. If yes, is the site "*GUY'S READ*" linked from your eBoard or Web site?

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
no	yes	no	no	no	no

Figures 3, 4 and 5 break down data from School A, the numbers of fiction and nonfiction circulated, per gender.

Figure 3

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School A

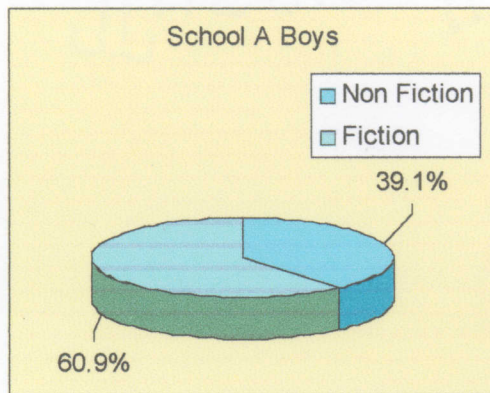


Figure 4

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School A

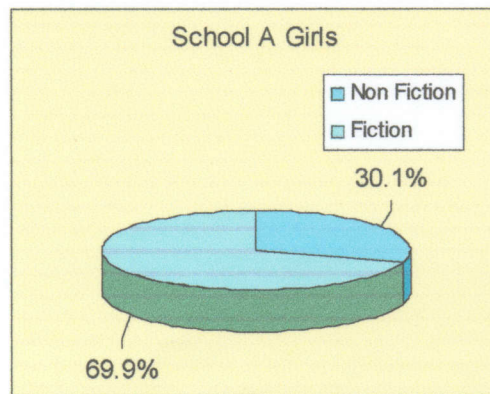
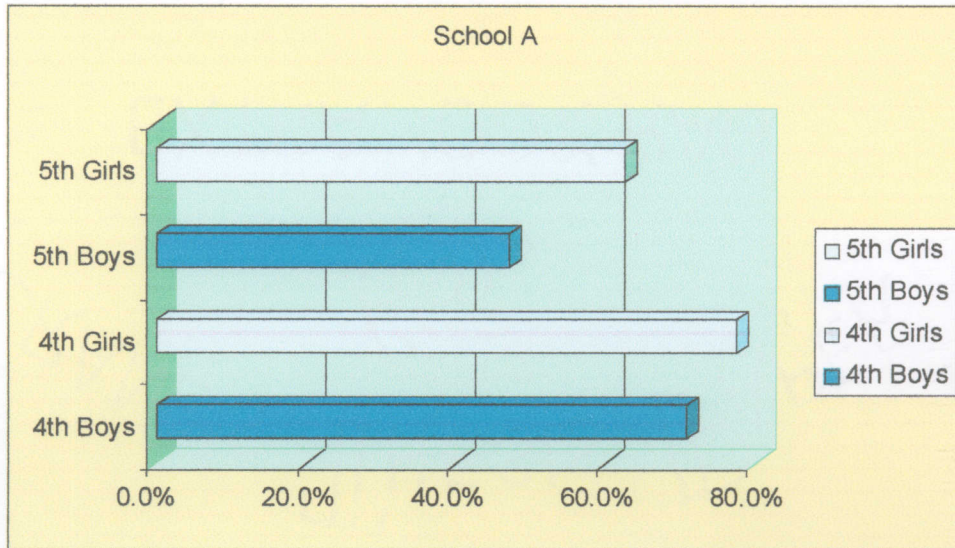


Figure 5

Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by Grade School A



Figures 6, 7 and 8 break down data from School B, the numbers of fiction and nonfiction circulated, per gender.

Figure 6

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School B

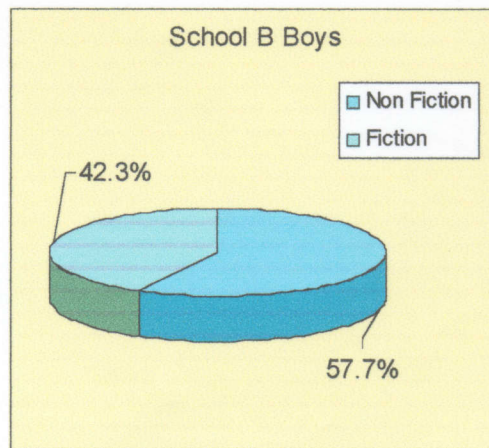


Figure 7

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School B

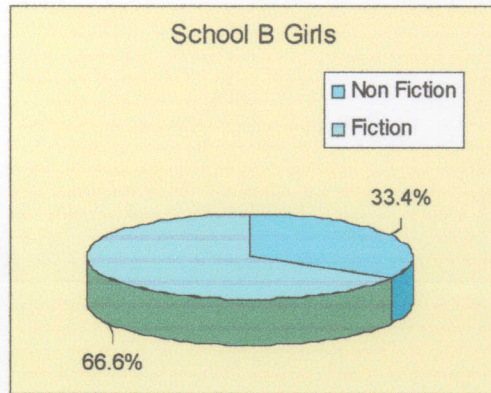
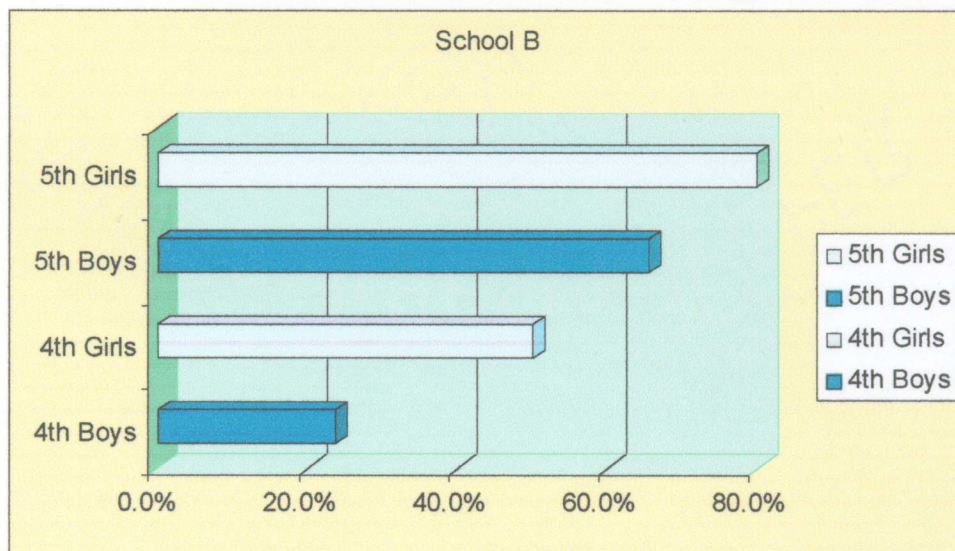


Figure 8

Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School B



Figures 9, 10 and 11 break down data from School C, the numbers of fiction and nonfiction circulated, per gender.

Figure 9

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School C

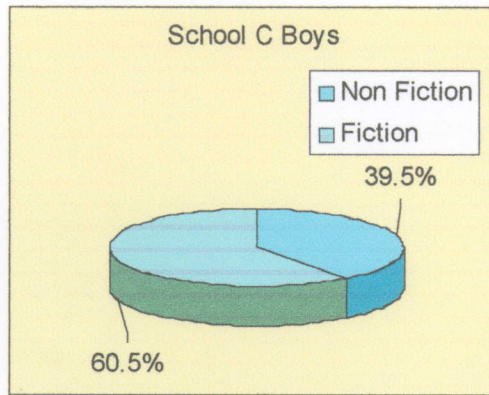


Figure 10

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School C

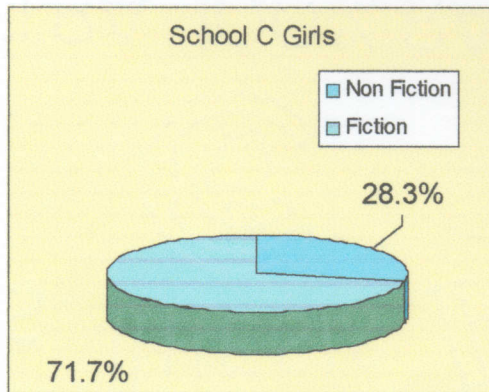
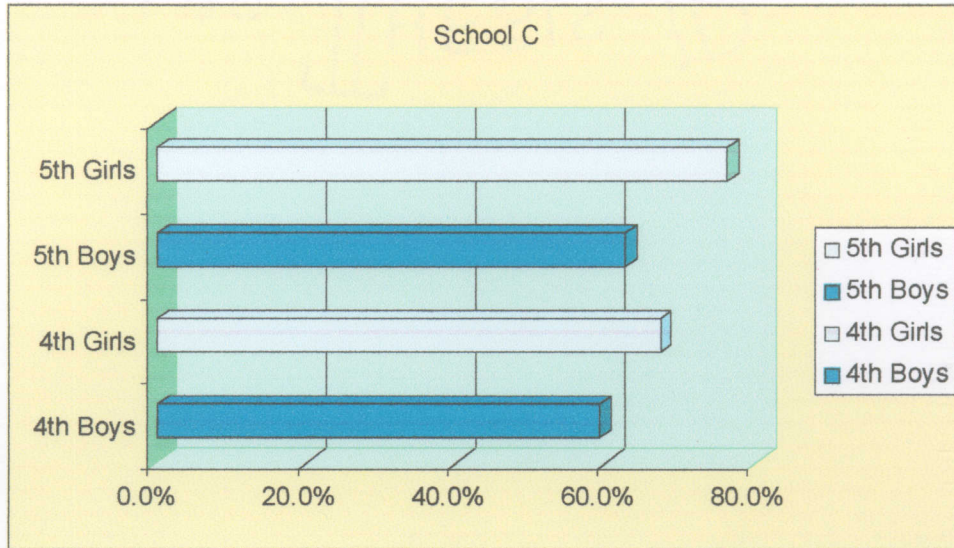


Figure 11

Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School C



Figures 12, 13 and 14 break down data from School D, the numbers of fiction and nonfiction circulated, per gender.

Figure 12

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School D

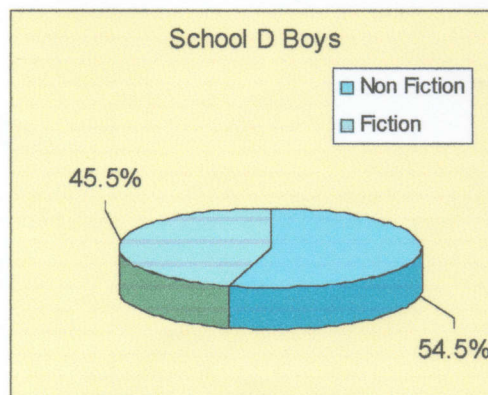


Figure 13

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School D

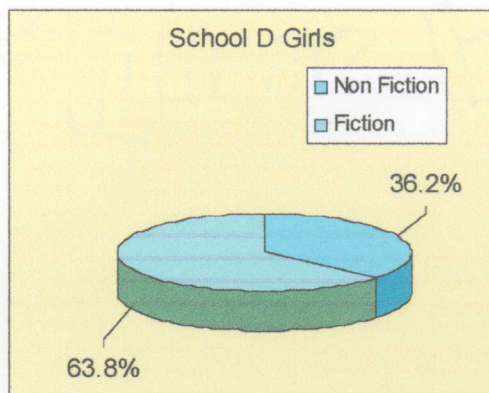
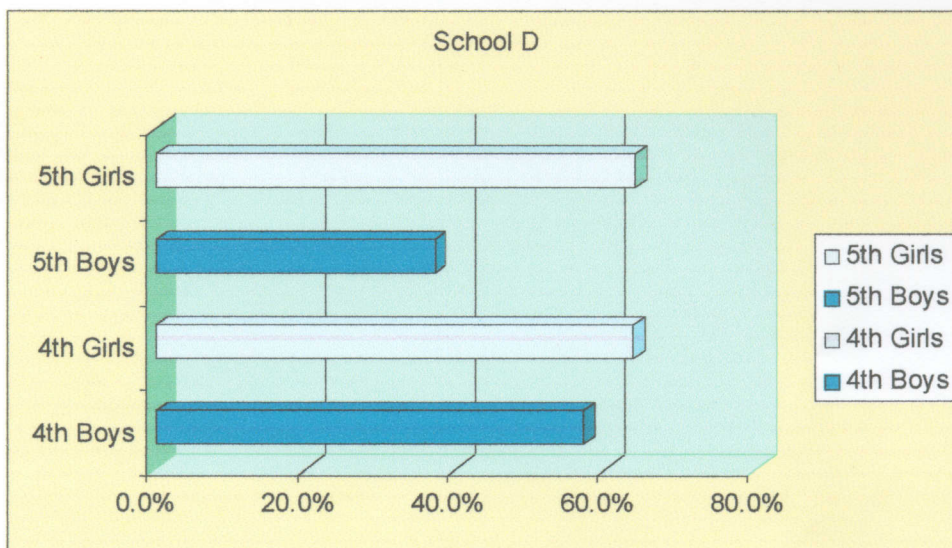


Figure 14

Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School D



Figures 15, 16 and 17 break down data from School E, the numbers of fiction and nonfiction circulated, per gender.

Figure 15

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School E

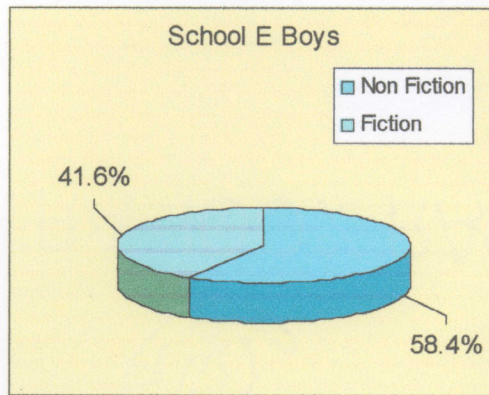


Figure 16

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School E

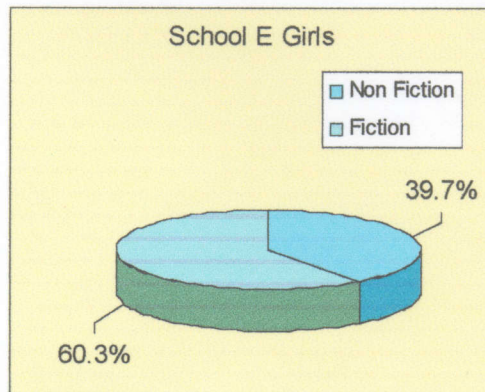
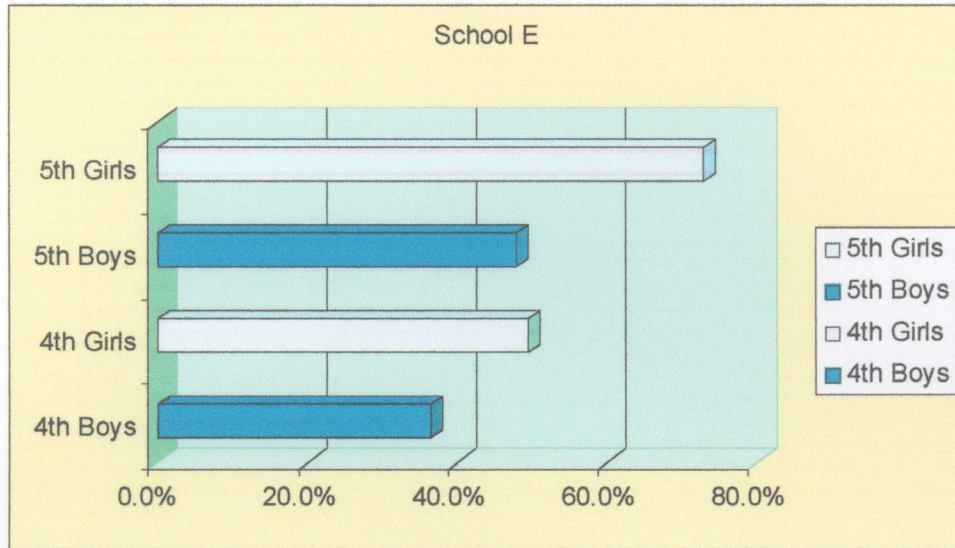


Figure 17

Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School E



Figures 18, 19 and 20 break down data from School F, the numbers of fiction and nonfiction circulated, per gender.

Figure 18

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Boys in School F

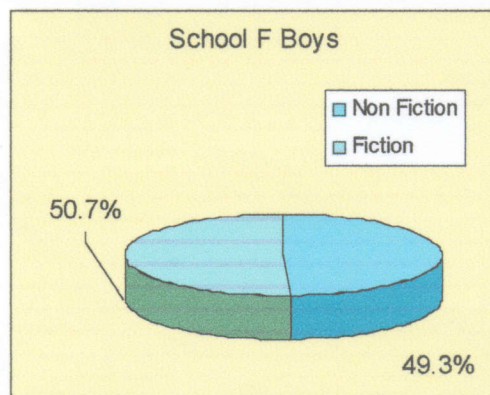


Figure 19

Comparison of Fiction/Nonfiction Books for Girls in School F

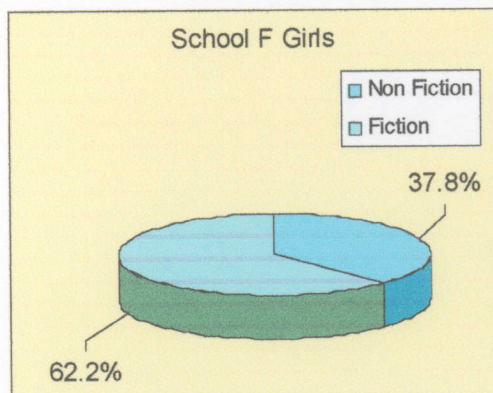
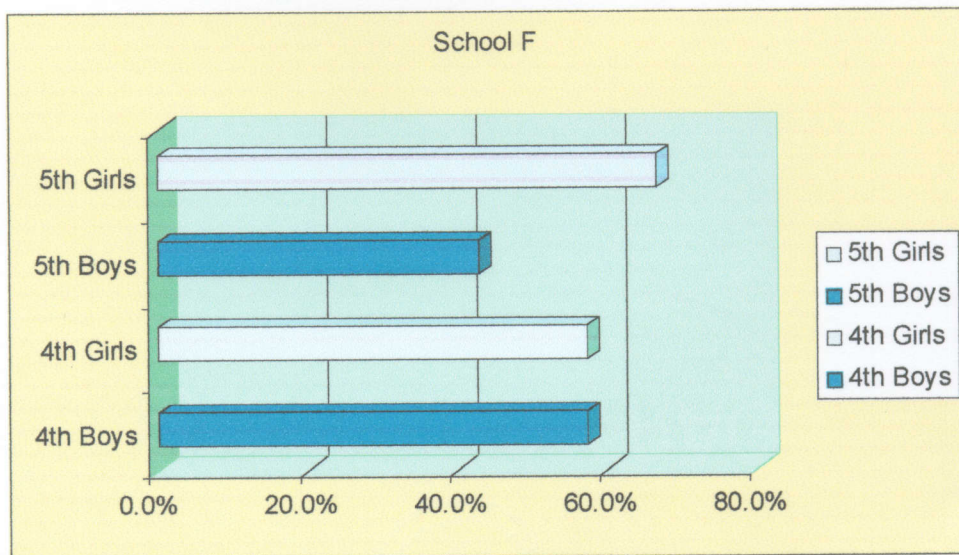


Figure 20

Comparison of Fiction Books for Boys and Girls by grade School F



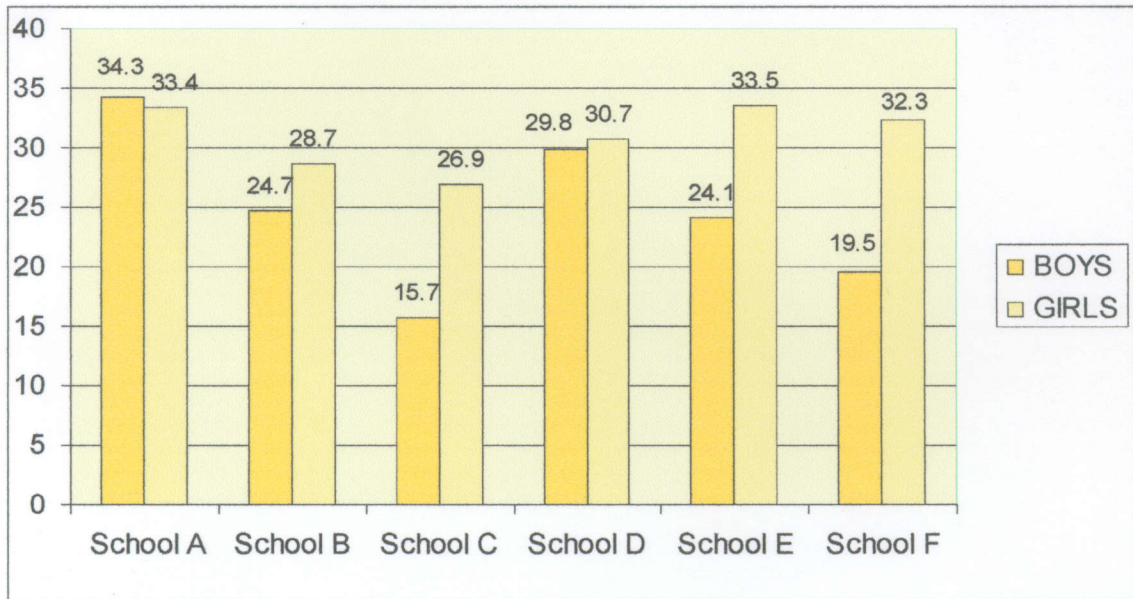
In comparing the average number of books circulated, both fiction and nonfiction, in all schools except one it was found that girls circulated more books than boys (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

Comparison of Average Number of Books Checked Out

for both Boys and Girls by grade

All Schools



CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Understanding the reading habits of students, particularly male students who read less, is crucial in helping students become lifelong learners. By studying reading preferences it may be possible to influence students to read more and perhaps read better. Enticing students to read is sometimes a struggle, by knowing preferences and possibly even reasons behind these preferences, librarians would be better able to persuade students to read more and hopefully read more of a variety. Collections in the library is one area that would benefit from understanding reading habits of students. Collections is a major responsibility of a librarian's position, understanding the interests of reluctant readers would augment school programs. Teaching practices and strategies, be it in the classroom or in the library, would benefit from this knowledge as well.

Boys reading less and boys reading in particularly less fiction is an area that Jon Scieszka is trying to change with the help of a Web site he developed named "*GUYS READ*". Is all the attention making a difference? For school library media specialists who were familiar with the research, who encouraged boys with their

collection development practice, and teaching styles, who introduced Web sites like www.guysread.com; were their male students reading more and in particular were they reading more fiction?

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn by the researcher were a result of data collected and presented in Chapter IV. The researcher fully expected the results to be that boys read less fiction than their female counterparts, and that did in fact occur. What was unexpected was that in certain schools, by grade, these differences were not as great as anticipated, which led the researcher to question how much influence specific grade level curriculum requirements alter the selection process. If grade level teachers required a variety of genres for classroom reading, did that in fact alter the results, and if teachers required a variety of reading was that leading to better reading skills for the student. School F's male and female students in fourth grade have almost exactly the same ratio for fiction and nonfiction reading, can that be explained more by grade level teacher practices than by school library media specialist practices?

The hypothesis that school library media specialist practices alter the reading preferences was not proven with the exploratory study questionnaire. School B's male students, School D's male students and School E's male students all had an average of fiction books read in the 40th percentile. School A's male students had the highest average for male fiction reading, yet School A's school library media

specialist reported almost all of the same answers as School B's school library media specialist except School B's school library media specialist did direct reluctant readers to the "GUYS READ" Web site and did link this site from the eBoard. In looking at specific grade level reading, School B's fourth grade male students had a very low average fiction book percentage of just over 20%. The fifth grade male students were much higher with over 60%. School A's fourth grade male students had the highest percentage of fiction selections at over 70%. None of the survey questions or answers can account for the difference. This will be discussed more in the final section, Recommendations for Further Study.

While comparing the data on the students collectively, one surprising anomaly the researcher found was the fact that there were boys that read 100% fiction and there were girls that read 100% non-fiction. In fact out of 240 male and female students' 28 students read either 100% of fiction or nonfiction. A total of 8.5% of the students studied read not one book of the opposite type of genre, 138 students read only up to 20% of fiction or nonfiction and in fact only 53 students read between 40% and 60% of fiction or nonfiction. Only 22.1% of the students, male or female, studied read a comparatively balanced number of fiction and nonfiction books.

Recommendations for Uses of the Results

Results of this study were shared with the school library media specialists in the participating school district. The information was used to discuss ways to devise

stratagem for more varied reading choices. Certainly, book publishers have long studied what sells books, and the reading practices of the masses. It is up to school media specialists to study what interests their patrons and how to entice the male reader with the most varied selections.

Recommendations for Further Study

The fact that males score lower on language arts tests will continue to be studied, factored into these studies should be the reading habits of male students, and if, in fact, these preferences contribute to these lower scores. If such a correlation exists, does that mean librarians should attempt to alter these reading habits? Or does the problem lie in the current testing? In relation to lifelong learning, does it really matter if a reading choice is fiction or nonfiction? Or should it be more like Krashen's theory of "free voluntary reading" (Krashen, 2004) and that whatever a student prefers will lead to more reading and more reading will mean improved reading and we will have our lifelong readers. Does lifelong reading equate to lifelong learning?

More research needs to be done on both male and female habits of reading and ways in which teachers and school library media specialists can influence a more balanced approach to genres. This study took the reading habits of students in six elementary schools and the practices of the school library media specialists, but a much broader and wider survey and study must be done to really see if there is a

relationship between practices of the school library media specialist (or teachers for that matter) and the reading practices of students.

References

Krashen, S. D., (2004). *The power of reading; Insights from the research* (2nd ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- American Association of School Librarians (1998). *Information Power; Building partnerships for learning*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.
- American Library Association. *Access to library resources and services regardless of sex, gender, identity, or sexual orientation: An interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*. Retrieved October 2, 2005, www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/acc_gend.html
- Bilz, R. L. (2004). *Life is tough; Guys, growing up and young adult literature*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Braxton, B. (2003, February). Bait the boys and hook them into reading. [Electronic version]. *Teacher Librarian*, 30, p. 43-44.
- Brozo, W. G. (2004). *To be a boy, to be a reader; Engaging teen and preteen boys in active literacy* (3rd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association
- Doiron, R. (2003, February). Boy books, girl books; Should we re-organize our school library collections?. [Electronic version]. *Teacher Librarian*, 30, p. 14-16.
- Doiron, R. (2003, January). Motivating the lifelong reading habit through a balanced use of children's information books. [Electronic version]. *School Libraries Worldwide*, 9, p. 39-49.
- Dutro, E. (2002, January). "But that's a girl's book!" Exploring gender boundaries in children's reading practices. [Electronic version]. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, p. 376-384.
- Hall, C., & Coles, M. (1997, June 6). *The children's reading choices project*. Retrieved January 27, 2003, from <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/english/whscrcp.html>
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading; Insights from the research* (2nd ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- McKenna, E. (1997, May). *Gender differences in reading attitudes*. Retrieved April 6, 2004, www.eric.gov

- National Center for Education Statistics (2005a). *The nation's report card*. Retrieved November 12, 2005, http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc.reading_math_2005/s0002.asp?printer=
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005b). *The Nation's report card state reading 2005 [New Jersey Grade 8 Public Schools]*. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/sh2005/2006452nj8.pdf>
- National Center for Education Statistics (2005c). *The nation's report card*. Retrieved November 12, 2005, from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nrc.reading_math_2005/s0002.asp?printer=
- Nilsen, A. P. (2001, March). It's deja vu all over again! *School Library Journal*, 47, . Retrieved October 3, 2005, http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/results_single_fulltext.jhtml;jsessionid=MJIJ
- Powell, R. R., & Connaway, L. S. (2004). *Basic research methods for librarians* (4th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Price, H. (2005, October 7). Librarian conference focuses on enticing reluctant readers to read. *Observer-Reporter*, 2005, October, p. 1-3. Retrieved October 7, 2005, <http://www.observer-reporter.com/290719796826239.bsp>
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2001). *International comparisons in fourth-grade reading literacy*. Retrieved October 12, 2005, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/pirlspub/6.asp?nav=2>
- Reitz, J. M. (2004). *Online dictionary for library and information science*. Retrieved October 12, 2005, from http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm
- Schwartz, W. (2002, August). *Helping underachieving boys read well and often*. Retrieved April 6, 2004, from www.eric.ed.gov
- Scieszka, J. (2005) *Boys will be...the unique reading and development need of boys in libraries: Message to librarians from Jon Scieszka*. Retrieved October 2, 2005, <http://www.ala.org/alsc/alscresources/forlibrarians/serviceboys/scieszka.htm>

- Sturm, B. W. (2003). *The information and reading preferences of North Carolina children*. Retrieved October 2, 2005, <http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume62003/reading>
- Sullivan, M. (2003). *Connecting boys with books; What libraries can do*. USA: American Library Association.
- Welldon, C. (2005, April). Addressing the gender gap in boys' reading. [Electronic version]. *Teacher Librarian*, 32, p. 44-45.
- Woodson, A. (2004). Boys and reading motivation. [Electronic version]. *Indiana Libraries*, 23, p. 15-16.

APPENDIX A

Principal Cover Letter



Dear Principals:

I am currently a school library media specialist. To fulfill requirements of the School Librarianship Master's Program at Rowan University, I am in the process of writing a thesis under the direction of Dr. Marilyn L. Shontz. My research involves the reading habits of boys and, and the potential role that the school library media specialists play in these habits.

It is well documented that girls fair better on language art and reading tests. Many have attributed this to the fact that girls read more and specifically read more fiction titles. I will be analyzing the circulation statistics at the elementary schools to see if in fact: boys read less fiction then their female counterparts and if the school library media specialists' programming or collection development habits alter the circulation statistics.

In order to conduct my research I am seeking your approval to survey your library media specialist regarding their individual programs and practices and gather circulation statistics from Athena, the automated library system. The statistics I would be collecting are from randomly selected fourth and fifth grade students. I will specifically be looking at the number of nonfiction and fiction titles each has selected over the course of five months. I will only note if the student is a male or a female for the intent of this study. All names or other information will be deleted from any and all print materials.

If you have any questions regarding this research or my methods, please do not hesitate to email me at estern@chclc.org or Dr. Shontz at shontz@rowan.edu. If you do not wish your school to participate, just let me know.

I would welcome the opportunity to share my findings with you upon completion if you desired.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Stern

APPENDIX B

Media Specialist Cover Letter



Dear Instructional Library Media Specialist:

To fulfill requirements of the School Librarianship Master's Program at Rowan University, I am in the process of writing a thesis under the direction of Dr. Marilyn L. Shontz. My research involves the reading habits of boys and girls in The Cherry Hill School District, and the potential role that the School Library Media Specialists play in these habits.

It is well documented that girls fair better on language arts and reading tests. Many have attributed this to the fact that girls read more and specifically read more fiction titles. The researcher will be analyzing the circulation statistics at the Cherry Hill elementary schools to see if in fact: boys read less fiction then their female counterparts and if the school library media specialists' programming or collection development habits alter the circulation statistics.

Please respond to the enclosed short survey, it should take you less then 15 minutes, and return it to me via interschool mail by March 1, 2006.

In addition I will also need to, at your convenience, visit with you and print the circulation statistics of randomly selected students. I will choose 10 boys and 10 girls from fourth grade and fifth grade. To do this I will need the class lists only to gather the information. I will also need access to Athena (from your schools server) and a printer. Naturally, any names or other information will be omitted, for my purposes I will only note if they are male or female. Your names and answers as well will be kept completely out of any product.

I have under separate cover addressed a letter to your principals requesting the schools participation. If you are not able to participate, I understand.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at estern@chclc.org or Dr. Shontz at shontz@rowan.edu. I would welcome the opportunity to share my findings with you upon completion if you desired.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Stern

APPENDIX C

Library Media Specialist Survey

Survey of School Library Media Specialists

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! As mentioned in the cover letter this survey is strictly for the use of my personal research project through Rowan University. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

1. Approximately how many fiction books are there in the library collection?

2. What percentage of your budget do you spend on fiction titles? _____
3. Are students allowed to visit the library/media center at other times independent of classes? Yes _____ No _____ Do you have a schedule posted of the times the library is open/available for independent use? Yes _____ No _____
4. Do you believe boys read less fiction then girls in general? Yes _____ No _____
5. Do you believe boys read less fiction then girls in your library? Yes _____ No _____
6. Do you provide any of the following literature promotion activities through the library/media program?
 - a. Read aloud Yes _____ No _____
If yes,
to kindergarten _____,
to first grade _____,
to second grade _____,
to third grade _____,
to fourth grade _____,
to fifth grade _____
 - b. Book-talks Yes _____ No _____
 - c. If yes, do you consciously choose books for boys? Yes _____ No _____
 - d. Book contests Yes _____ No _____
 - e. If yes, do you consciously choose books for boys? Yes _____ No _____
 - f. Author/illustrator visits Yes _____ No _____

7. Are your fiction books marked by genre, do they have spine labels for things like 'sports' 'fantasy' or 'realistic fiction'? Yes _____ No _____

8. When you display fiction books do you consciously pick 'boy' books to display as well? Yes _____ No _____

9. Are you aware of Jon Scieska's Web site "GUYS READ"? Yes _____
No _____

a. If so, do you direct reluctant readers to this site? Yes _____ No _____

10. Do you have a library eBoard or Web site? Yes _____ No _____

a. Is the site "guys read" linked from your eBoard or Web site? Yes _____ No _____

11. Which specific Web site(s) is/are linked from your eBoard or Web site to aid reluctant readers to fiction books?

12. In his book, *Connecting Boys with Books, What Libraries Can Do*, Michael Sullivan includes a list of recent publications that specifically appeal to boys. Do you consult such lists when you purchase fiction for your library? Besides professional journal reviews which lists do you consult?

APPENDIX D

Subjective Questionnaire Responses

School Library Media Specialists'
responses to open ended questions
not included Chapter IV

Question #1 - all S.L.M.S. claimed between 1,800-2,000 fiction books.

Question #2 - all S.L.M.S. reported they spent 35-45% of their budget on fiction titles.

Question # 7 – 2 out of 6 S.L.M.S. have genre marked spine labels.

Question #10 – Web sites linked to eBoards or Web pages to aid reluctant readers.

- NoveList
- Mystery.net
- Public Library Web Page
- NEA Kids' Top 100 Books
- Kids Who Read
- Book Hive
- Book Adventure
- Author sites
- Holiday interest
- Classroom support sites
- KidsReads

Question #11 – None of the S.L.M.S. reported consulted Michael Sullivan's "boys Books" list. The lists they did report using for collection development included:

- Award winners
- "Best of" Judy Freeman and other seminars
- Kids Reads
- Colleagues
- Student recommendations

Question #12 – Other activities reported:

- Challenges
- Accelerated Reader
- "On demand" book-talks
- Individualized recommendations
- Local commercial incentives

