

1995

An analysis of students' attitudes toward reading as it relates to whole language teaching strategies

Sara L. Bradley
University of Dayton

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/graduate_theses

Recommended Citation

Bradley, Sara L., "An analysis of students' attitudes toward reading as it relates to whole language teaching strategies" (1995). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 1697.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/graduate_theses/1697

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact mschlangen1@udayton.edu, ecommons@udayton.edu.

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD READING AS IT RELATES TO
WHOLE LANGUAGE TEACHING STRATEGIES

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the School of Elementary Education,
University of Dayton, in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
Sara L. Bradley

The School of Education
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON
Dayton, Ohio

July, 1995

APPROVED BY:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the official advisor.

Official Advisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
Chapter:	
I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM.....	1
Purpose for the Study.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Hypothesis.....	3
Assumptions.....	3
Limitations.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	4
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	5
History of Reading Instruction.....	5
Factors of Reading Attitude.....	7
III. PROCEDURE.....	12
Subjects.....	12
Setting.....	12
Data Collection.....	12
Design.....	13
Treatment.....	13
IV. RESULTS.....	16
Presentation of the Results.....	16
Discussion of the Results.....	20
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25
Summary.....	25
Conclusions.....	26
Recommendations.....	26
APPENDICES	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	34

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to address the following individuals whose contributions were essential in the completion of this paper:

- My mother, Carolyn, from whom I was lucky enough to inherit a love for teaching and children's literature.
- My colleagues, for their insights and constructive criticism.
- Dr. Gordon Fuchs, for his patience, guidance, and positive feedback.
- Mr. Mike Ryan, for his analytical sense and perseverance.

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to the person who gives me the strength to keep going when I can't take another step, and who gives me a path to follow whenever I am lost.

Thank you, Mike, for your love, support, and guidance.

Much love,

Sara

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Purpose for the Study

"How children feel about reading is ultimately related to their success at it." (McClendon, 1966).

The desire for children to be intrinsically motivated in their reading habits has been an ongoing struggle for both parents and teachers. How does one achieve that inner motivation? Some students seem to be "born" with it. Others, it seems, cannot see the value of reading despite repeated attempts from adults.

Common sense says that we, adults and children alike, choose specific activities and keep doing these activities if we have a positive attitude toward them (Shapiro, 1988). An excellent reading program, combined with a positive reading attitude, could give students the foundations that are necessary to achieve future goals.

Reading attitude, as it pertains to this study includes several factors. According to Lewis and Teale (1980) a positive reading attitude is not just the feeling towards reading. Both the affective and cognitive domains need to be considered. For example, one student may dislike reading but may view it as important for accomplishing career success. Another student may spend hours involved in pleasurable reading but may rate it a low priority in achieving career goals. Both of these students may be thought of as having negative reading attitudes.

It is up to the educator, then, to be aware of factors that influence reading attitude in order to aid in the

development of a positive reading attitude. Alexander and Filler's research (1976) list these factors as follows:

1. the amount of reading from parents
2. availability of materials
3. value of reading from family and peers
4. teacher behavior (praise and encouragement versus praise
5. reinforcement of student self-concept
6. provision for daily silent sustained reading
7. student choice in selection of materials

Each of these factors is discussed in Chapter 2--Effects of Reading Attitude.

Literature-based reading programs contain quality literature for developing students' reading abilities. A good literature-based reading program not only contains quality literature, but also thought-provoking discussions, necessary skills, and process writing. Learning should be looked at holistically, and not in individual parts. This theory of teaching is most commonly referred to as a whole language theory. The program should also include students in the decision-making processes of the classroom, encourage positive self-concepts, and promote as much student independence as possible.

This kind of program creates an atmosphere in the classroom where students feel free to make mistakes and have the desire to take risks. The quality literature gives meaning on the learning that takes place. Thus, the student is far less likely to complete assignments for just a "grade". The motivation factor will be that he or she wants to read and succeed for his or her own benefit.

It is this basis that brings literature and reading attitudes together and gives a purpose for the study.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this project is to determine if fifth graders' attitudes toward reading have a positive change after they have experienced supplemental whole language teaching strategies.

Hypothesis

There will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest reading attitude scores of fifth graders after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies.

There will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest reading attitude scores of fifth grade boys after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies.

There will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest reading attitude scores of fifth grade girls after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies.

Assumptions

In order to carry out this study, the writer must make the following assumptions. First, that responses to reading surveys in this study were honest. Second, although the children have had exposure to literature-based reading, the scores of the pretest were not significantly affected. Third, that the test results are not affected by the fact that the tests were taken in the spring. Fourth and finally, that the sample size is sufficient to obtain a statistically valid result.

Limitations

One limitation is that the study was administered to the writer's own classroom, with only one group of students. No reading attitude scores prior to the study were available for comparison.

Another limitation is the time of year the study was conducted. The treatment was given in the spring, and the posttest was given at the end of the school year. Some attitude survey scores may not have been accurate as a result.

A third limitation may be the presence of extreme scores. Some students may have exaggerated scores on the pretest, thus giving an inaccurate account of research findings.

A final limitation is the maturation of the students. Due to the time of the school year, some students were less attentive to instruction than in the fall.

Definition of Terms

Intrinsic is a feeling that is inherent, and not necessarily affected by outside factors.

Attitude is a student's way of thinking about a specific topic.

Affective Domain is that part of a child's learning which is subjective, and not easily observable.

Cognitive Domain is that part of a child's learning that is objective, and is easily observable.

Intermediate is a term relating to fourth, fifth and six grade levels..

Silent Sustained Reading is a designated silent reading period.

Supplemental teaching strategies are those that are added to the basic curriculum and course of study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

History of Reading Instruction

In order to determine the relationship between reading attitudes and the whole language teaching theory, it is necessary to discuss a brief history of the whole language movement.

Contrary to popular belief, whole language is not a "fad" that began in the late 1980's. Many of its components are part of trends in education that have occurred over the past one hundred years.

As early as 1887, when Comenius wrote the very first picture book for children in Europe, a bond was being formed between children and literature. Comenius believed that children can discover what is new to them by being shown what is familiar to them in their life experiences (Goodman and Martens, 1989). It is this same premise by which whole language teachers follow today.

During the Progressive Education era (late 1800's to 1930's) Dewey sought to bring attention to the "whole child" learning aspect through direct experience, student-directed activities, and integrated curriculums (Edelsky, Altwenger, and Flores, 1991). Dewey advocated that reading, and written and oral language were related and could be taught in the fashion. Another theorist, Piaget, has also been considered an influence in the whole language movement. He, like Dewey, emphasized the idea that children learn both written and oral language in similar ways (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982). In other words, they learn through direct experience. He also developed a series of developmental stages from birth to adult by which we acquire learning.

Piaget brought public attention to the idea that children are actively involved in problem-solving and develop their own views of the world (Duckworth, 1987). The language-experience approach was yet another predecessor to

whole language. It was from this trend that teachers began giving up the idea notion of basal readers and planned more individualized reading programs for students (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991).

The foundation of the language-experience approach can be interpreted in the following quote:

What I think about, I can say. What I
say I can write or someone can write for
me. I can read what I can write and
what others write for me to read (Allen,
1964).

The language experience programs involved student-dictated/teacher noted stories from children's experiences. It also included a follow-up of those dictated stories with phonics skills and applications.

The idea of open education, brought on in the late 1960's and early 1970's, highlighted another aspect of the whole language movement. Open education focused on the learning process as opposed to the product. The "open education" terminology referred to open classrooms and more informal teaching strategies.

The common element between open education classrooms and whole language classrooms was the development of thematic units (Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores, 1991). Thematic units are a system of integrating subjects from a proposed curriculum. Each thematic unit centers around one major topic. Students learn all subsequent skills and complete specific tasks based on the topic studied.

Both open education and the language experience approach, like whole language, focused on the learner as an individual. However, whole language also views learning in a social aspect. A leader in this arena was Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist who supported the notion that children learn through play and interaction with one another.

In summary, there have several educational trends and theorists that have influenced the whole language theory. In order to understand the relationship between whole language and reading attitude, it is necessary for a criteria for the development of reading attitude to be established. These factors are discussed in the next section.

Factors in the Development of Reading Attitude

How does a positive reading attitude lend itself to the whole language theory? Earlier in the paper, the researcher mentioned seven factors that are critical in the development of reading attitude. They are:

1. the amount of reading from parents
2. availability of materials
3. value of reading from family and peers
4. teacher behavior (praise and encouragement versus criticism)
5. reinforcement of student self-concept
6. provision for daily silent sustained reading
7. student choice in selection of materials (Alexander and Filler, 1976)

The first factor critical in the development of reading attitude is the amount of reading from parents. Children who are read to frequently by their parents are most likely going to have a greater exposure to literature, and consequently, develop an attraction to books. They are going to be used to the idea of a specific reading time which is "their" time, and will look forward to these special times with the parent(s).

Research has shown that children can learn to accommodate being read to even in infancy (Trelease, 1989). However, reading aloud does not have to stop with young

children. Trelease discusses at length of reading aloud to his teenage son and daughter, and the lasting positive effects it had on their family.

Furthermore, when students are read to by their teacher(s), not only do they gain an appreciation for literature, but they also develop excellent listening and comprehension skills. In the researcher's own classroom, students would retell a previously read chapter of the current class read-aloud to a student who had been absent. The retelling was often close to a word-for-word account. Also, having the students guess what would happen either in a particularly exciting scene or in the next chapter was a way to foster a positive reading attitude. Students enjoyed having "contests" to see who had guessed correctly. The researcher also observed that students would check out the class read-aloud from the school library either to follow along as the book was read, or to enjoy afterwards.

A second factor in the development of reading attitude is the availability of materials. In the home environment, children whose parents had a wide variety of reading material to choose from (i.e.; books, magazines, newspapers, etc.), had a better attitude towards reading, and were higher achievers in reading (Koeller, 1982). Students also understand the significance of reading as a function of their development into successful adults.

When teachers provide these same materials in the classroom for students to preview, students may choose reading material out of curiosity or perhaps by watching what their peers read. This is especially true at the intermediate grade levels where the desire to be accepted by others is so apparent.

The value of reading from family and peers is also an important factor in the development of reading attitude. Trelease discusses in his *Read-Aloud Handbook* the importance of reading together as family unit. His children observe him reading a novel and are curious to find out what he is

reading. Children observe and mimic what they see adults do (Brady and Sills, 1993). From this statement, then, one can conclude that if one child's parents read the newspaper daily, and the child observes this ritual, he or she will more than likely begin reading the newspaper as well.

It was noted earlier in the paper that acceptance by one's peers at the intermediate grade levels is a high priority in school and at home. In fact, a child's peers may have an even greater influence on him or her than the child's parent(s). In the researcher's own classroom, one book in particular would be widely circulated within a peer group, if one member of the group approved it. This was especially true in series books.

The behavior of the teacher is also a crucial factor in the development of reading attitude. In the researcher's experiences, students are much more likely to get excited about reading if the teacher displays that same excitement.

Students also respond fervently to positive or negative feedback from the teacher. If a teacher encourages a student to take risks in his or her reading, but criticizes his or her efforts, that student may refuse to take further risks in reading and ultimately withdraw from it entirely. Praise and encouragement to a child for effort, regardless of ability, is vital to the shaping of a positive reading attitude (Flanders, 1960).

The next factor in the development of reading attitude, reinforcement of self-concept, is closely related to teacher behavior. Children need to feel safe in their learning environment. When they feel comfortable, they will be more likely to take risks and believe that "I can do it" (Brady and Sills, 1993). Educators need to see each child as an individual with different needs. This is one of the many foundations on which whole language is built.

Daily periods of uninterrupted sustained silent reading (SSR) yield better achievement and attitude scores (Anderson, 1985; Beckman, 1984). This is yet another factor

in the development of reading attitude. Children need that silent reading time to explore, reflect, and just enjoy reading. Common acronyms for this reading time include: D.E.A.R. (drop everything and read); R.O.O.T.B.E.E.R. (reading our own thing because everybody enjoys reading); and D.I.R.T. (dig into reading today). Each of these headlines can be used to further instill a positive reading attitude.

However, more research has been done to show that SSR is only effective in the classroom when the teacher is a serious reader (Hill, 1985; Perez, 1986). This would mean the teacher would read along with the class during SSR instead of doing other tasks, such as paperwork. This also supports the value of reading that a child sees in others.

The final factor that was listed earlier by the writer is student choice in the selection of materials. One goal that most teachers have for their students, regardless of age, is for the students to become more independent. In order for this independence to occur, students must be able to select their own material to read (and read again, if they choose). This choice factor helps the reading meaningful to them.

Some students need guidance in their quest for finding reading material which is appealing to them. The researcher found that many students wander aimlessly in the school library simply because they did not know where to begin to look. It is the teacher's (and school librarian) responsibility to give them that guidance if needed, and then to encourage them to expand their interests later. One student in the researcher's classroom did not seem to have any interest in reading, except for occasional comic books and sports magazines. Concentrating on the sports theme, the researcher showed the student many fictional stories with a sports background. Consequently, the student began visiting the fiction section more frequently, and, eventually, made his own transition into other fiction

books. Beckman's (1984) research showed that exposing children to high frequency literature yields positive effects in their attitude toward reading.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher focused on two topics that supported the study: the history of reading instruction and factors of reading attitude. Both topics were discussed at length with an emphasis on the area of whole language.

First, there were several trends that influenced the whole language theory. Progressive education, largely due to the work of John Dewey, brought attention to the child as a learner through direct experiences. The language experience approach focused on individualized reading programs for students. Open education brought forth the concept of thematic units.

Of the three trends mentioned, the language experience approach is the most closely related to whole language, and is still taught in many schools and college educational programs today. Open education, with its lack of structure and purpose, ranks lowest in similarities to whole language.

Other contributors to the whole language theory include: John Comenius, who showed a link between children, language, and learning; Jean Piaget, who emphasized the key role children take in their learning; and Vygotsky, who explored the realm of learning through play and interaction.

Secondly, seven factors that influence the development of reading attitude were discussed. Each factor is specific in its impact on reading attitude, but yet dependent on all other factors for maximum success.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Subjects

The study consisted of twenty-one fifth grade students in the researcher's own classroom. Of this group, seventeen are Caucasian, two are Hispanic, and two are African-American. The group of students contained nine girls and twelve boys. The ages of the students ranged from ten to twelve years. The achievement levels range from low to above average. At the time of the study, the students were following a literature-based basal reading program. Each student had a workbook and a skill booklet that had been completed up to the time of the treatment.

Setting

School. This elementary school is located in the southwestern part of Ohio in the city. It is one of five elementary schools in the school district. Classes are grouped heterogeneously, and each classroom is self-contained. The school includes grade levels kindergarten through sixth grade. There are approximately 673 students in the building, but this number is always subject to change due to the number of transient students in the district.

Community. The school district is placed within an urban setting. The school building used in the study is located within a lower economic area of the city. Much of the school's community live in low-income housing and apartments. Wright Patterson Air Force Base and Wright State University have provided growth and employment for much of the community residents.

Data Collection

Construction of the Semantic Differential. The researcher constructed a semantic differential as shown by Osgood (1981). The pretest instrument consisted of eleven

bipolar adjective pairs which were relevant to reading attitudes. The pairs were arranged from positive to negative in order to reduce confusion for the fifth graders participating in the study. Each subject conveyed his or her feelings about reading by placing an "X" on one of the five spaces on a line between each pair of bipolar adjectives. The posttest was constructed in the same format.

Before using the semantic differential devices, the researcher gave the test to a pilot group of fifth graders from other classrooms. None of the pilot group of students presented any difficulties to the researcher, and, therefore, the test was considered valid for the study (see Appendix A for a copy of the semantic differential).

Administration of the Semantic Differential. A pretest was given at the beginning of the study. A posttest was given three months after the supplemental whole teaching strategies were implemented. The directions for the tests were read aloud to the students in a whole-group setting at approximately 9:15 a.m. All tests were returned after students had ample time to complete them. The tests were not timed in any way.

Design

The design used was the one experimental group, non-randomizing, pretest-posttest design (Isaac, 1990).

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
T1	X	T2

Treatment

Prior to the study, students were given a pretest to convey their attitudes toward reading. Prior to the study,

they had using a basal reader, with a workbook and skill booklet. From the seventh of March to the second of June, students no longer used these reading materials. Instead, they followed a more detailed, yet relaxed reading program where students often worked at their own pace. In the first two months of the treatment, the literature genres of mysteries and humorous fiction were studied. In the last month of the treatment, total integration subjects was implemented into the social studies curriculum. They will be referred to a Part One and Part Two, respectfully.

In part one of the study, students read in pairs, groups, or individually from approved mystery and humorous fiction anthologies. Each anthology consisted of three to four stories from acclaimed authors. These authors were studied along with the genres themselves and supplemental reading material was brought into the classroom from these authors for to students to use.

Resource guides were available for each literature genre. Students became adept with the plot, characters, climax, and setting, of each story discussed. Students were also encouraged to select some of their own spelling words through their reading. Three to five supplemental words were chosen for the spelling list each week, based on student interest and knowledge (or lack of about the words.

Students responded to the stories through reading response journals. Students were asked to express their feelings about the literature, as well as give summarization's of the selections. However, not all literature selections were responded to in this manner. Other times, students were asked to act out a favorite part of the selection, or give a choral reading of it.

Students were often be split into two groups at the beginning of the reading session. One group worked on author studies or previewing/predicting the selections, while another group read from the books silently or orally.

This grouping was necessary because not enough books were available for each student to have his or her own.

Part two was an integrated study of World War II. Students read books, completed mathematics activities, did science experiments, and learned about nutrition through this topic of discussion.

The researcher brought in several picture books to share with the students. They were given the freedom to check these books out to preview for three days at a time. The book checkout was handled similarly to that of a school library. Teacher read-aloud time increased from once (approximately fifteen minutes), to two and three times a day (approximately thirty to forty-five minutes).

As in part one, oral language activities and spelling words were also taken from the literature. Students also responded in their reading response journals.

As a culmination activity, ethnic foods were brought in for students to taste and enjoy. The subject of rationing was also discussed.

After three months, the posttest was given. Scores of the pretest and posttest were compared.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Presentation of the Results

Students were given a reading attitude pretest which consisted of eleven pairs of bipolar adjectives that reflected students' attitudes toward reading. The semantic differential that was given to the class is located in Appendix A. There are five spaces between each pair of adjectives with each line space having a point value between one and five. The line space closest to the negative adjective has a value of one and the one closest to the positive adjective has a value of five. The other values were assigned according to their position. Each student marked the line that best represented his or her feelings toward reading. Semantic differential responses could not be anonymous because a comparison had to be made between the pretest and the same students' posttest. However, the students did not write their names on the test. A numbering system was used and each student was given the pretest and posttest with the same number on it so that a comparison could be made later. After a three month time period, a posttest was administered. This test had the same format, except that adjective pairs were rearranged. Twenty-one students (nine girls and twelve boys) with achievement levels from low to above average participated in the study.

The results of the pretest for the class are found in Appendix B. The boys and girls were sorted from lowest to highest scores and then numbered to track the posttest comparison. Listed at the top of the table are the numbers associated with the eleven bipolar adjective pairs as they appeared on the pretest. The total score for each test and the mean and standard deviations for the sampled populations were computed and shown in the table. The standard deviations listed were computed based on a sampled population using the "nonbiased" or "n-1" method (Isaac and Michael, 1990). The mean of the scores for each bipolar adjective ranged between 3.05 and 3.86 with the highest corresponding to **good/bad** and **important/unimportant** (questions Q3 and Q4) adjective pairs on the test. The lowest mean corresponded to the **clear/confusing** (questions Q5) adjective pair.

The results of the posttest for the class are shown in Appendix C. The boy and girl numbers in the figure correspond to those found in Appendix B. The means of the scores for each bipolar adjective ranged between 3.57 and 4.38 with the highest corresponding to the **important/unimportant** (question Q4) adjective pair on the test. The lowest mean corresponded to the **relaxing/tense** (questions Q7) adjective pair. The posttest scores improved slightly from a mean of 38.95 on the pretest to a mean of 42.52 on posttest.

The means, standard deviations and t scores for the three groups are found below in Table 1. S is the estimated standard deviation for a dependent variable test. S^2 is the estimated variance for a dependent variable test.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviation, and t Scores for Groups

	N	df	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	S^2	S	t
BOYS	12	11	38.25	38.25	20.82	1.32	1.898
GIRLS	9	8	39.9	39.89	32.00	1.89	2.652
CLASS	21	20	38.9	38.95	25.86	1.32	2.712

The figure in Appendix D shows the pre- and posttest mean scores for the class for each bipolar adjective pair in bar chart format. The class attitude mean values ranged from 3.1 to 4.4 on both the pre- and posttests. The posttest score average increased on every adjective pair for the class. The total scores from each student were grouped together and a difference was determined. This difference was used in computing the t-test value for significance. With a sample size of 21 the degree of freedom is 20. The sum of the differences was 67 and the sum of the squares of the differences was 785. The mean of the pretest was 38.95 and the mean of the posttest was 42.14.

These values were used to compute an estimated variance and standard deviation which were then used to compute the value of t (see Table 1 above). The value of t is computed based on the assumption that the mean scores will be the

same for both tests. The value of t computed for the class was 2.712 which exceeds the .05 level of significance for a two-tailed test where t is 2.086 with 20 degrees of freedom. It also exceeds the .02 level of significance where t is 2.528, but fails at the .01 level where t is 2.845.

The figure in Appendix E shows a comparison between the bipolar adjective pair mean scores from the pretest to the posttest for the boys. These values ranged from 2.7 to 4.2 on both the pre- and posttests. The lowest scores were on the **always/never** (question Q10) adjective pair and the highest scores were on the **happy/sad** (question Q8) adjective pair on the pretest. The posttest score average increased on every adjective pair for the boys. With a sample size of 12 the degree of freedom is 11. The sum of the differences was 30 and the sum of the squares of the differences was 304. The mean of the pretest was 38.3 and the mean of the posttest was 40.75.

The values shown in Table 1 for the boys were used to compute an estimated variance and standard deviation which were then used to compute the value of t (see Table 1 in text). The value of t is computed based on the assumption that the mean scores will be the same for both tests. The value of t computed for the boys was 1.898 which does not exceed the .05 level of significance for a two-tailed test where t is 2.201 for 11 degrees of freedom.

Appendix F shows a comparison between the bipolar adjective pair mean scores from the pretest to the posttest for the girls. These values ranged from 2.7 to 4.5 on both the pre- and posttests. The lowest scores were on the **clear/confusing** (question Q5) adjective pair and the highest scores were on the **important/unimportant** (question Q4) adjective pair on the pretest. The posttest score average increased on every adjective pair for the girls except for **relaxing/tense** (question Q7) adjective pair where the mean value went from 3.9 to 3.5. With a sample size of 9 the degree of freedom is 8. The sum of the differences was 45 and the sum of the squares of the differences was 481. The mean of the pretest was 39.9 and the mean of the posttest was 44.89.

The values found in Table 1 for the girls were used to compute an estimated variance and standard deviation which were then used to compute the value of t (see Table 1 in text). The value of t is computed based on the assumption that the mean scores will be the same for both tests. The value of t computed for the girls was 2.652 which exceeds the .05 level of significance for a two-tailed test where t is 2.2306 for 8 degrees of freedom.

Discussion of the Results

Pretest and posttest score results have been categorized into three sections. These sections correspond to the hypotheses stated in Chapter 1. According to the

research in this project, it appears that there was a significant difference in the attitudes of the fifth grade students as a class and in fifth grade girls toward reading, but no significant difference was found in the attitudes of fifth grade boys.

The first null hypothesis was that there will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest scores of fifth graders after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies. From the computations discussed in the presentation of results, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is rejected. One reason for this may be that students were excited over the fact that they had more freedom in their reading. They were no longer doing workbooks and skill booklets, with everyone being on the same page on the same day. Another reason may that reading aloud time and SSR periods were increased. This reason supports the factor in the development of reading attitude of provision for silent sustained reading (Alexander and Filler, 1976). During the study, the researcher observed many more students taking books out to read during free time. More materials were available to the students to preview which is also a supporting factor in the development of reading attitude.

The second null hypothesis stated that there will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest scores of fifth grade boys after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies. From the

discussion of the results in the presentation, it can be concluded that this hypothesis is accepted. This may have occurred because of several reasons. First, it has been determined from previous studies that students' attitudes are sensitive to such factors as newness, novelty, and the "upbeat" nature of a beginning enterprise or fresh start and a shift in a less positive direction is probable as the experience becomes routine and familiar (Isaac and Michael, 1990). This test was new to the entire class, and some exaggerated scores could have been entered on the pretest. The posttest scores could have been affected by the fact that it was the end of the school year and the students' attitudes toward school may have shifted in a negative direction. Boys who scored over 38 on the pretest had lower posttest scores. The categories where attitude dropped the most for those boys were **fun/work** and **positive/negative**. The same trend occurred for the girls somewhat, but not to the same degree. One girl tested at the maximum of 55 on the pretest and scored a 49 on the posttest. The sample size of both the boys and the girls was relatively small, so further samples could have changed the results. The researcher did observe that many of the boys did not work as well together in pair and small groups. It was necessary for the researcher to provide more structure for these students.

The third null hypothesis was that there will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest scores of fifth

grade girls after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies. From the results discussed earlier in Chapter Four, it can be concluded that this hypothesis is rejected. One of the reasons that the study was so successful with the girls may have been that reading achievement was individualized. Two girls, who had previously achieved well below average in reading prior to the study, began taking a much better interest in reading. Their study habits also improved. They may have felt that reading taught in this manner was much less competitive. Consequently, their self-concept may have improved. This supports the literature in Chapter Two, which states that student self-concept is a factor critical in the development of reading attitude (Alexander and Filler, 1976). Another reason may have been the increase in pair and small group reading. The girls worked very well in mixed ability groups. The value of reading with their peers seemed to have a very positive effect on their attitude towards reading. This supports the third reading attitude factor mentioned previously in Chapter Two. The researcher did not observe any negative effects in high, average, or low reading ability in girls.

The students' attitudes toward reading in the adjective pairs of interesting/boring, good/bad, important/unimportant happy/sad, confident/unsure and positive/negative were around four or more on the posttest. The treatment seemed to improve the students' interest in reading, and gave them

confidence and a healthy respect for the importance of it. It was able to peak the students' curiosity, but since reading is an individual process the students progressed at their own rate. Students were given choices in reading selections, which supports the last factor mentioned in Chapter Two in the development of reading attitude (Alexander and Filler, 1976). The treatment did not seem to affect the frequency with which the students practice reading or help those who had difficulties with reading. The most interesting results of all of the attitude pairs were the **relaxing/tense** and **clear/confusing** results. These were the only results that did not fit the trends. Some students who were happy, interested, confident and positive were also confused and tense. It may have been that the students were not familiar with the terminology or that they were subjected to so much literature that they were not following all of it. Overall, the scores showed that a positive attitude was already present for the class.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In order for children to become intrinsically motivated in their learning, it is necessary for both parents and teachers to aid in the development of a positive reading attitude in children. The researcher sought to facilitate this development by implementing whole language teaching strategies into classroom reading instruction where a basal reader had been used prior to the study.

The purpose of this project was to determine if fifth graders' attitudes toward reading had a positive change after they had experienced supplemental whole language teaching strategies. Three hypotheses were proposed from this statement. First, that there will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest reading attitude scores after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies. Secondly, that there will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest scores of fifth grade boys after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies. Finally, that there will be no significant difference in pre- and posttest reading attitude scores of fifth grade girls after they have been exposed to a series of supplemental whole language teaching strategies.

Before beginning the study, the researcher administered a pretest to her class of fifth graders. The test was designed in a semantic differential format (Isaac and Michael, 1990). From the seventh of March to the second of June, students did not use the basal reader, workbook, or skill booklet. Whole language teaching strategies were implemented including more literature exposure, individualized learning, theme teaching, and mixed ability grouping. After a three month period, a posttest was given. Scores of both tests were then compared.

The t test for dependent samples was used to compute the value of t . The null hypotheses for the class and for girls were rejected at the .05 level of significance. However, the null hypothesis for the boys was accepted.

Conclusions

As a result of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, that students' attitudes toward reading did improve after receiving whole language teaching instruction. Secondly, that students have better attitudes toward reading when they realize that the learning is meaningful to them. Finally, that the time of year the study is implemented and the sample size of the subjects may affect the results of the study.

Recommendations

One recommendation of this study is that if educators are going to use a whole language approach in their classrooms, they should only use what is comfortable to them. There is no rigid set of rules in whole language teaching. Just as a student's learning is individualized, so is a teacher's plan of instruction (Cambourne, 1988).

Another recommendation is to increase the sample size of the subjects and/or increase the time span of the study. Achievement levels could then possibly be measured.

A final recommendation is that in studies of this nature, the likelihood of more positive results following the study may be greater if the study is initiated at an earlier time of year. This recommendation depends on an educator's own situation.

APPENDICES

READING

DATE: _____

Check one: BOY ---
GIRL ---

Directions: Listed below are words to describe your feelings toward reading. Place an X on the line that is closest to your feeling of reading. For example: If you feel that reading is sometimes easy and other times difficult, then place an X on the line in the middle. If you believe reading is very easy, place an X on the line next to the word "Easy" (and so on). Do the same for each pair of describing words. **REMEMBER**, each word pair should only have one X between them.

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 1. Easy | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Difficult |
| 2. Interesting | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Boring |
| 3. Good | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Bad |
| 4. Important | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Unimportant |
| 5. Clear | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Confusing |
| 6. Fun | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Work |
| 7. Relaxing | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Tense |
| 8. Happy | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Sad |
| 9. Confident | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Unsure |
| 10. Always | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Never |
| 11. Positive | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Negative |

Appendix B

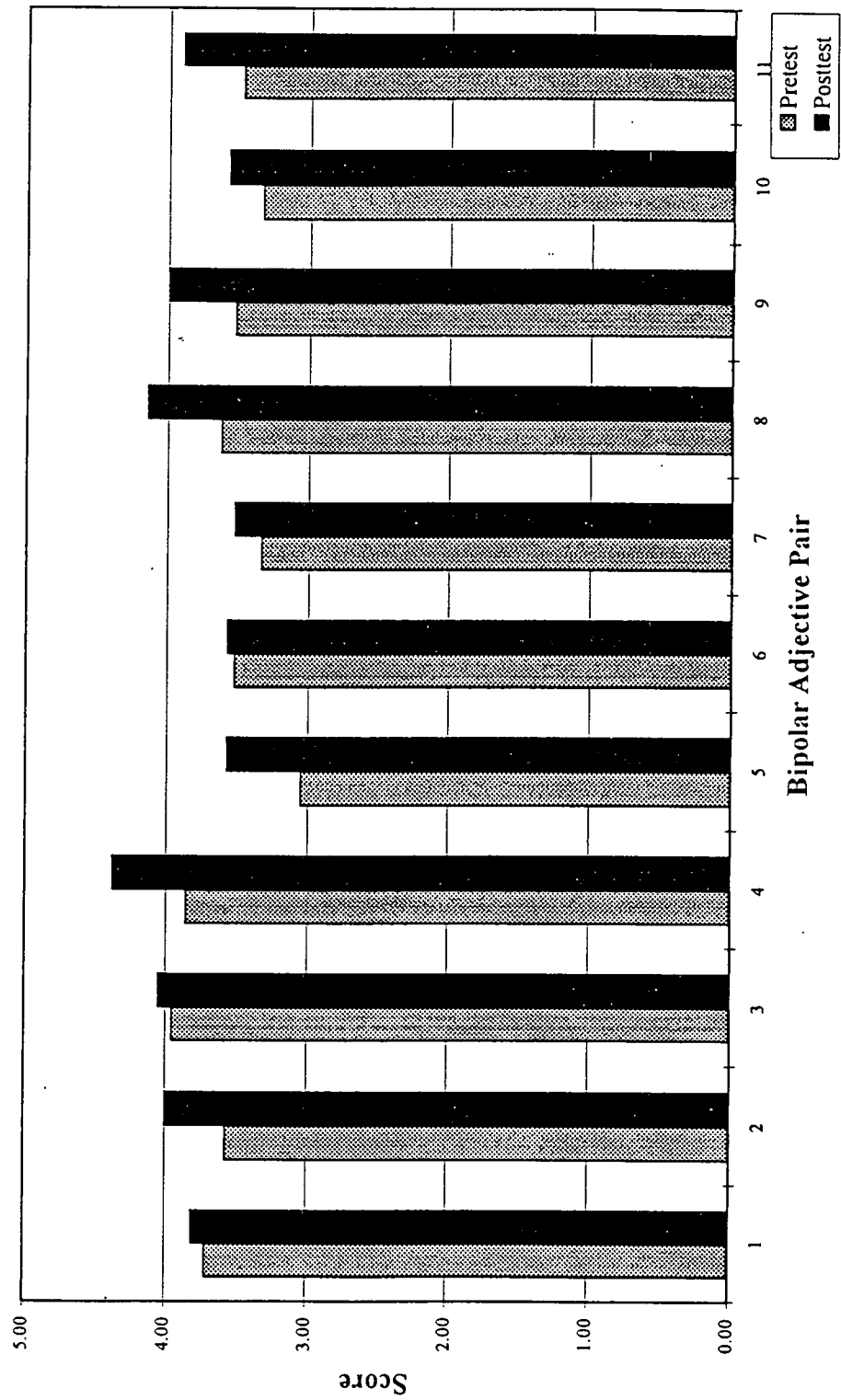
Pretest of Boys and Girls on March 7, 1995												
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Total
Boy #1	3	1	3	4	1	2	2	3	4	3	1	27.00
Boy #2	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	3	3	2	28.00
Boy #3	4	3	3	3	2	3	1	2	3	3	2	29.00
Boy #4	3	1	4	3	3	2	2	4	4	2	3	31.00
Boy #5	4	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	1	3	32.00
Boy #6	5	2	3	4	1	4	1	3	5	3	2	33.00
Boy #7	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	39.00
Boy #8	3	4	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	3	4	43.00
Boy #9	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	5	47.00
Boy #10	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	49.00
Boy #11	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	5	4	50.00
Boy #12	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	51.00
Girl #1	3	3	4	3	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	28.00
Girl #2	3	3	3	4	1	3	3	3	1	2	4	30.00
Girl #3	1	4	5	4	1	3	3	3	1	3	3	31.00
Girl #4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	2	3	4	35.00
Girl #5	3	4	3	3	1	3	3	5	5	3	4	37.00
Girl #6	3	4	4	5	3	5	5	3	3	5	4	44.00
Girl #7	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	49.00
Girl #8	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	50.00
Girl #9	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	55.00
Average	3.71	3.57	3.95	3.86	3.05	3.52	3.33	3.62	3.52	3.33	3.48	38.95
St Dev	1.04	1.05	0.84	0.79	1.49	1.02	1.39	0.96	1.36	1.06	1.11	8.94

Appendix C

Posttest Scores of Boys and Girls on June 2, 1995												
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Total
Boy #1	3	4	3	5	1	2	1	4	2	2	2	29.00
Boy #2	4	3	3	5	2	3	2	4	3	3	3	35.00
Boy #3	3	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	4	4	5	37.00
Boy #4	3	2	3	4	2	3	4	4	4	2	4	35.00
Boy #5	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	5	4	3	38.00
Boy #6	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	3	3	41.00
Boy #7	4	3	5	5	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	42.00
Boy #8	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	5	4	3	4	45.00
Boy #9	4	5	5	4	3	4	4	5	4	4	3	45.00
Boy #10	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	5	46.00
Boy #11	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	5	47.00
Boy #12	5	4	5	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	49.00
Girl #1	2	5	4	5	3	3	2	3	4	4	3	38.00
Girl #2	4	3	4	5	4	3	1	4	4	3	4	39.00
Girl #3	4	4	5	4	5	4	2	3	3	4	4	42.00
Girl #4	5	4	3	5	5	3	3	5	4	3	3	43.00
Girl #5	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	5	44.00
Girl #6	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	47.00
Girl #7	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	50.00
Girl #8	5	5	4	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	50.00
Girl #9	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	51.00
Average	3.81	4.00	4.05	4.38	3.57	3.57	3.52	4.14	4.00	3.57	3.90	42.52
St Dev	0.79	0.84	0.77	0.57	0.84	0.96	1.20	0.73	0.54	0.65	0.84	4.92

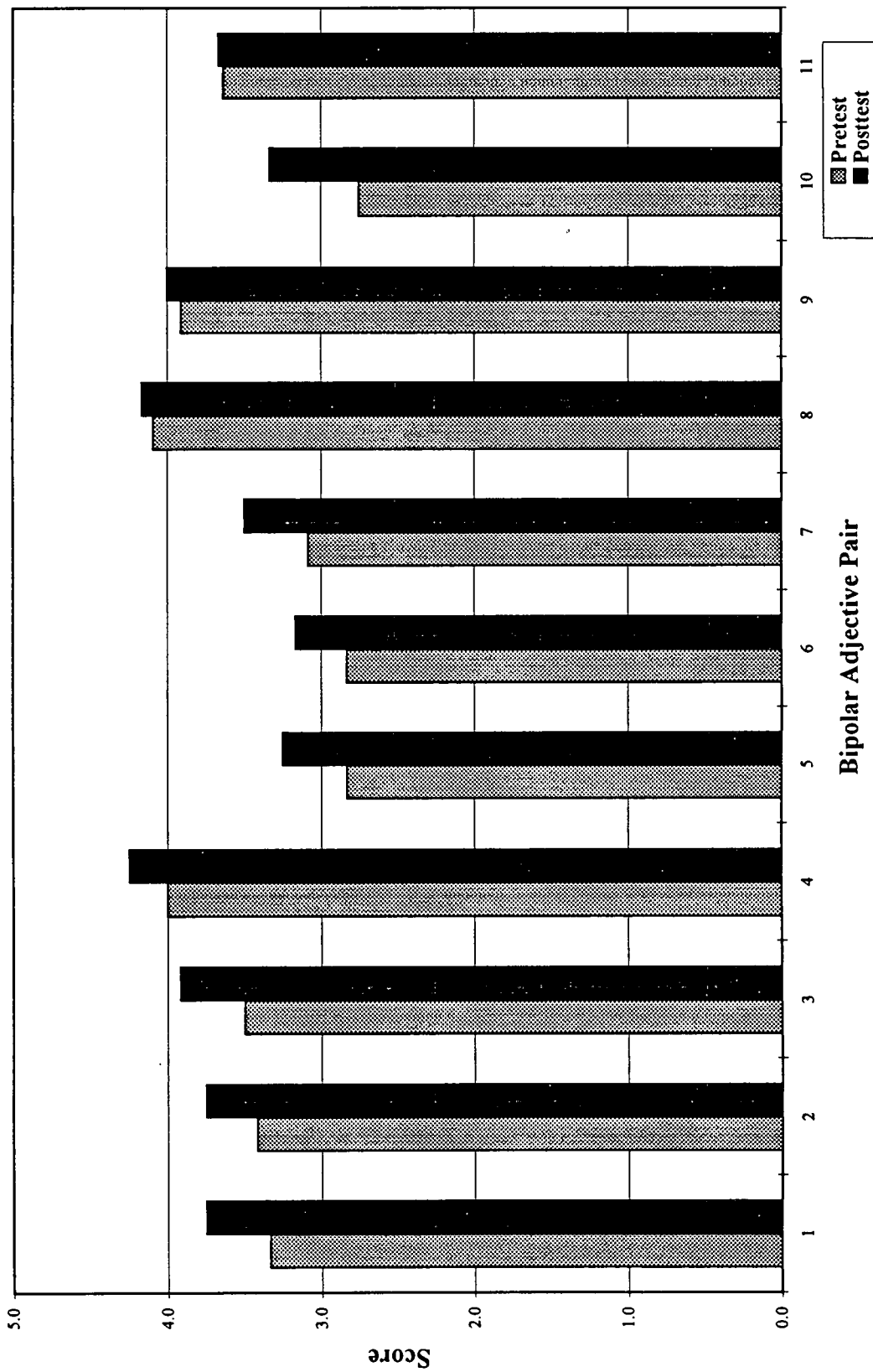
Appendix D

Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores for Class



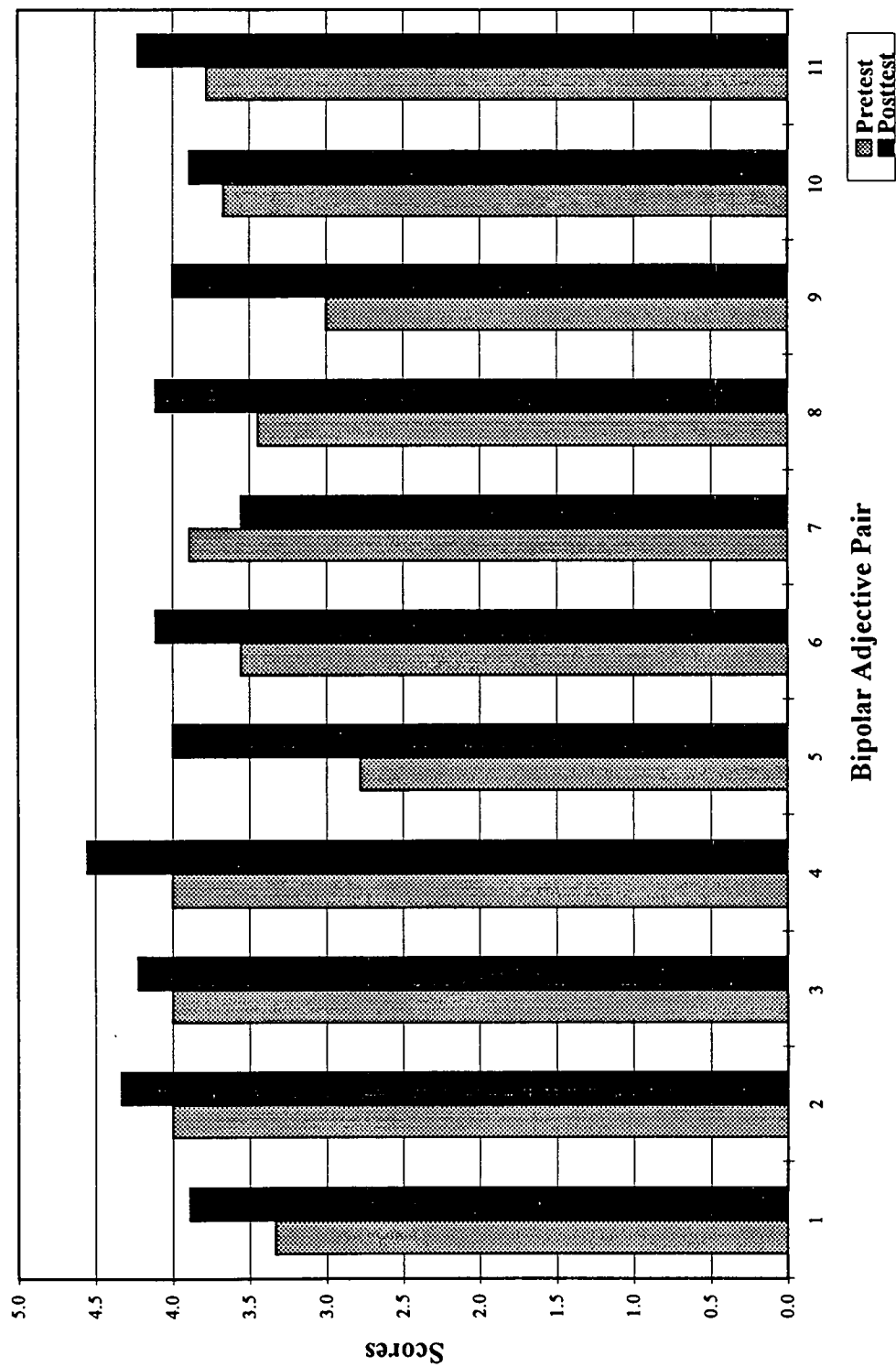
Appendix E

Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores for Boys



Appendix F

Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores for Girls



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, J. Estill, and Ronald Claude Filler. *Attitudes and Reading*. Reading Aid Series, 1976.
- Allen, Linda. Multiple Indicators of Children's Reading Habits and Attitudes: Construct Validity and Cognitive Correlates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 1992, 84, 489-503.
- Anderson, Gary. Differences in the Free-Reading Books Selected by High, Average, and Low Achievers. *The Reading Teacher*, 1985, 39, 326-330.
- Brady, Sandra K., and Sills, Toni. *Whole Language: History, Philosophy, and Practice*. 1993.
- Cambourne, Brian. *The Whole Story: Natural Learning and the Acquisition of Literacy in the Classroom*. 1988.
- Duckworth, E. *The Having of Wonderful Ideas*, 1987.
- Edelsky, Carole, Altwerger, Bess, and Flores, Barbara. *Whole Language: What's the Difference?* 1991.
- Ferreiro, E., and Teberosky, A. *Literacy Before Schooling*, 1982.
- Flanders, Ned A. *Teacher Influence, Pupil Attitudes, and Achievement*, 1960.
- Goodman, Ken. *What's Whole in Whole Language*, 1991.
- Goodman, Yetta, and Prisca Martens. Roots of the Whole-Language Movement. *Elementary School Journal*, 1989, 113-127.

- Haynes, Carol, and Richgels, Donald J. Fourth Grader's Literature Preferences. *Journal of Educational Research*, 1992, 85, 208-219.
- Hill, S.E. Children's Individual Responses and Literature Conferences in the Elementary School. *The Reading Teacher*, 1985, 382-386.
- Hinkle, Dennis, and Stephen Jurs. *Basic Behavioral Statistics*, 1982.
- Isaac, Stephen, and William Michael. *Handbook in Research and Evaluation*, 1990.
- Koeller, K. 25 Years Advocating Children's Literature in the Reading Program. *The Reading Teacher*, 1981, 552-556.
- Lehr, Fran. Identifying and Assessing Reading Attitudes. *Journal of Reading*, 1982, 82-83.
- Lewis, Ramon, and William H. Teale. Another Look at Secondary School Students' Attitudes Toward Reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 1980, 187-210.
- Perez, S.A. Children See, Children Do: Teachers as Reading Models. *The Reading Teacher*, 1986, 8-11.
- Shapiro, Thomas. *Cognitive Learning and Reading Attitude*, 1985.
- Teale, William H. Assessing Attitudes Toward Reading: Why and How? *Australian Journal of Reading*, 1980, 86-94.
- Trelease, Jim. *The New Read-Aloud Handbook*, 1989

Williams, Paula Shuter. *Improving Students' Attitudes
Toward Reading Through Newspapers as a Supplement to the
Basal Reader*, 1990.

R002636751