

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE
READING OF COMICS

APPROVED:

Harrell E. Garrison
Major Professor

E. G. Ballard
Minor Professor

D. C. Matthews
Dean of the School of Education

Jack Whison
Dean of the Graduate School

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY ON THE
READING OF COMICS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North
Texas State Teachers College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Marie Pinckley, B. A.

166484

Perryton, Texas

June, 1949

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
Chapter	
I. THE PROBLEM AND PROCEDURE	1
Statement of the Problem	
Source of Data	
Method of Procedure	
Definition of Terms	
Related Studies	
II. HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE COMIC BOOK	4
History of the Comic Book	
Status of the Comic Book	
III. THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD	19
Results of Questionnaires	
Setting up the Reading Program	
The Reading Program Described	
IV. A COMPARISON OF THE COMIC BOOKS AND MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP I AND GROUP II	50
Results of the Questionnaires	
A Comparison of the Two Groups	
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	61
Summary	
Conclusions	
Limitations of Study	
Recommendations	
APPENDIX	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY	75

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Total Number of Comic Books Read by Group I in September and Their Favorites	21
2. Total Number of Comic Books Read by Group II in September and Their Favorites	22
3. Number and Kinds of Comic Books Read by Group I and Group II in September	23
4. Total Number of Magazines Read by Group I in September and Their Favorites	25
5. Total Number of Magazines Read by Group II in September and Their Favorites	26
6. Number and Kinds of Magazines Read by Group I and Group II in September	27
7. Reading Interests of Children in Group I at the Beginning of the Experimental Period	31
8. Total Number of Comic Books Read by Group I in April and Their Favorites	51
9. Total Number of Comic Books Read by Group II in April and Their Favorites	52
10. Number and Kinds of Comic Books Read by Group I and Group II in April	53
11. Total Number of Magazines Read by Group I in April and Their Favorites	55
12. Total Number of Magazines Read by Group II in April and Their Favorites	56
13. Number and Kinds of Magazines Read by Group I and Group II in April	57
14. The Increase or Decrease in the Amount of Comic Book and Magazine Reading by Group I at the End of the Experimental Period	58

15. The Increase or Decrease in the Amount of
Comic Book and Magazine Reading by Group
II at the End of the Experimental Period . . . 59

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND PROCEDURE

In the past few years, some parents and educators have noticed with growing concern the absorption and strange fascination of the comic book for children and some adults.

The large variety of titles seen in any news stand, the huge stacks of these books seen in most homes, the comics hid in the pages of the geography book, and the look of intense interest on a child's face when reading these books have all been factors in motivating this study.

Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this study to (1) determine the history and status of the comic book; (2) to find out how many and what kinds of comic books two groups of fourth graders of the Perryton school are reading; (3) to set up a well-planned reading program in one of these groups; (4) to compare the amount and kinds of comic books read by the two groups at the end of the experimental period.

Source of Data

The material for this study was secured from (1) periodicals and books; (2) questionnaires from children and parents; (3) observation of children; (4) interest and activity inventories.

Method of Procedure

Research was made on the history of the comic book, beginning with the early cartoons and tracing the development of the present day comic book. The status of the comic book was established by quotations and discussions of the opinions of those in favor of the reading of the comics and those opposed to the reading of them. Authorities in the fields of reading, psychology, mental hygiene, and related subjects were cited.

After the results of the reading questionnaires were tabulated and interpreted, the reading program was set up in one of the groups, using the child's basic needs and interests as criteria.

At the end of the experimental period, the reading questionnaires were again given, tabulated and interpreted.

Definition of Terms

The term "comic book" is used for all paper-bound periodicals of a standard size (about seven inches by ten inches) made up totally or almost totally of picture stories, or comics, and sold independently of newspapers. "Comic strips" are those found in the daily or Sunday papers.

"Children's magazines" are paper-bound periodicals, written for children, and usually containing stories, poems, pictures, puzzles, jokes, and other features. Polly Pig-tails and Calling All Girls are classed as magazines in this study.

The experimental period extended over a period of eight months, from September until April, and included the time between the giving of the two sets of reading and questionnaires.

Group I consisted of eighteen fourth-grade children, from the Perryton school, and was the guided group. Group II was also made up of eighteen fourth-grade children, from the Perryton school, but was not given special guidance.

Related Studies

Experiments have been made in motivating interest in reading and broadening children's interests. Magazine reading for pleasure has been innovated in many high schools and some elementary schools. The comic books have been brought into some class rooms. Efforts have been made, on the other hand, to eliminate all comic book reading. Many educators suggest a well-rounded reading program, keeping in mind the child's basic needs and interests.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND STATUS OF THE COMIC BOOK

In making a study of the comic books read by certain fourth-grade children, it will be helpful to trace the history of the comic book. The sudden rise in its popularity and its reception by adults as well as children are discussed later in the chapter.

History of the Comic Book

One should have an understanding of the development of the comic strip before undertaking to give the history of the comic book.

Sarah Laurie explains the beginning of the comic strips by saying:

The popularity of that urge, 'Say it with flowers,' is all part of our tendency to make pictures of our thoughts, our inherent need for dramatizing life. We like to see our ideas in action. Hence the movies, hence the comic strip, which is really as classic as a ballad or a frieze in a Greek temple.¹

From the pens of clever cartoonists have come delightful characters to cheer one's dull moments. "They bring us pictures and conversations of people doing the things we like to do, the things we daren't do ourselves, or can't or

¹ Sarah D. Laurie, "The Comic Strip," The Forum, LXXIX (April, 1928), 527.

don't want to."²

The fact that they have been printed for the main purpose of making money for the author and increasing circulation of the newspaper has not lessened the public's enjoyment of them.

For the real beginning of the picture story, we shall have to go back to the cavemen. W. W. D. Sones explains it in this way:

The picture story is really as old as graphic communication itself and has persisted throughout all history. Early cavemen pictured their hunts and prey on the cave walls; the family, vocational, and political life of Egyptians is communicated to us by pictures and signs on wall panels from temples and tombs; Greek artists not only drew action picture strips but were probably the first to use 'balloons' to indicate speech coming from the mouths of figures in the scenes; the story of the Norman invasion of England is recorded in the Bayeux tapestry; even the instructional purposes of Martin Luther were served in the picture strip entitled "Passional Christi and Anti Christi."³

The first comics printed in the United States were in the form of cartoons or funny pictures and were drawn for the purpose of entertainment rather than instruction. Full page comics, but not in strip form, were started in the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century.⁴ William Laas gives the date or the birth of the comic strip as

² Ernest Brennecke, "The Real Mission of the Funny Paper," Century Magazine, CVII (March, 1924), 666.

³ W.W.D. Sones, "Comic Books Are Going to School," Progressive Education, XXIV (April, 1947), 209.

⁴ Burr Price, "Comics Go Big Business," World's Work, IX (August, 1931), 36.

Sunday morning, February 16, 1896, when there appeared for the first time a grinning, ugly boy clothed in an ankle length yellow nightshirt. "The Yellow Kid," as he soon came to be called, was the child of R. F. Outcault.⁵

Comics usually have:

1. A continuing character who becomes the reader's dear friend.
2. A sequence of pictures, which may be funny or thrilling, complete in themselves or part of a longer story.
3. Speech in the drawing, usually in blocks of lettering surrounded by 'balloon lines.'⁶

In 1907, the first daily comic strip appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle. It was Harry C. (Bud) Fisher's "A Mutt," later changed to "Mutt and Jeff," and has been a fixture ever since.⁷

The comics were not well received by everyone. In 1920, Elizabeth Robbins Pennell denounced them as a primitive form of humor and accused them of playing a leading part in the demoralization of the country.⁸

However, Heywood Broun discussed the improvement of the

⁵ William Laas, "A Half-Century of Comic Art," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXI (March 20, 1948), 30.

⁶ Coulton Waugh, The Comics, p. 14.

⁷ Price, op. cit., p. 35.

⁸ Elizabeth Robbins Pennell, "Our Tragic Comics," North American Review, CCXI (February, 1920), 256.

younger generation over the past generation and gave credit to the newspaper comic strips. In conclusion he said:

I would not commend the comic strip as an agency for inculcating good manners. It seems to me that the frolicsome children of these pictures sometimes go too far in their search for good clean fun. But they do set up in the impressionable a fine and simple faith in the toughness of the human carcass and the imperviousness of the human spirit.⁹

The comic strip writers have their own code of ethics and have always considered the opinions of the public.

"Clarence, the Cop" by C. W. Kohles ran for nine years but was finally stopped by the criticisms of the New York police force. Perhaps Richard Outcault's "Yellow Kid" was allowed to subside for the same reason.¹⁰

In 1931, Burr Price discussed the difficult task of the comic strip writers and made this statement: . . . "There are a variety of taboos and restrictions: race and religious sensibilities must never be offended, motherhood and marital relationships are sacred. An off-color gag is out."¹¹

It has been said that the first comic book was published in 1911. This, however, was not the comic book of today. It was larger, used better paper, and carried reprints from newspaper strips of "Mutt and Jeff."

⁹ Heywood Broun, "It Seems to Heywood Broun," The Nation CXXXI (July 23, 1930), 87.

¹⁰ Sarah D. Laurie, op. cit., p. 530.

¹¹ Price, op. cit., p. 37.

Editors of features syndicated now check closely all drawings and lines of the text before they are printed.¹²

The first comic book was offered to the readers for a few cents and six coupons clipped from succeeding issues of the Chicago American, and in this manner the comic book became a circulation builder.¹³

George Delacorte of Dell Publishing Company published The Funnies in 1929, and sold it independently of any newspaper. It was printed in four colors and was the size of a newspaper tabloid. This was an important step since the comics were written and drawn expressly for it. It was printed by Eastern Color Printing Company and even though it was short lived, the idea was not forgotten.¹⁴

In 1933 this same company experimented with a little book by making it the size of a newspaper tabloid folded twice, thus giving it the same format as the present day book but using reprints and the premium idea. M. C. Gaines is given credit for later pasting a ten cent sticker on each book and selling them on the news stands. Issue No. 1 of these Famous Funnies appeared in May, 1934.¹⁵

¹²Ward Greene, "The Comics Have Rules of Their Own," Good Housekeeping, CXXI (September, 1945), 24.

¹³Hayden Weller, "The First Comic Book," Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 195.

¹⁴Waugh, op. cit., p. 339.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 340.

Detective Dan, a one-color book with original art work, appeared in 1933; however, the first four-color books of present size with original art and writing did not appear until 1935. These books, at first called New Fun and later changed to More Fun, with another book called New Adventure Comics started a very important trend in comic book history. The first book to be devoted to one particular subject, Detective Comics, came out in January, 1937. It marked the beginning of the time when the comic books were to leave the newspaper strips and start something bold and sensational of their own.¹⁶

It took Superman, created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster, "to lift the whole comic book industry in his immense arms and blow it into an extravaganza new to publishing, new to America, and new to the world."¹⁷ In January, 1939, the McClure Syndicate published Superman in the daily newspapers and in May of the same year the Superman Quarterly Magazine appeared. These books and many imitations flooded the news stands. The actual figures are: in 1939-1940, sixty; in 1941, one hundred and sixty-eight. Twelve to fifteen million copies were sold each month.¹⁸

In 1941, Lowell Thompson wrote in the Atlantic Monthly:

¹⁶ Waugh, op. cit., p. 342.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 343

¹⁸ Ibid.

There's a new straw in the wind. It is America's million-dollar-a-month craze for comic strip magazines. This enormous business has grown up in less than two years -- in the two years since Munich. The magazines are not just reprints of the comic pages; in fact, for the most part they feature different characters and a different formula.¹⁹

By 1944, more than twenty million copies were sold monthly.²⁰ In 1947, the number had risen to the almost unbelievable amount of sixty million copies a month.²¹

The Status of the Comic Book

It must be kept in mind that this discussion deals entirely with the comic book and does not refer to the comic strips in the daily or Sunday newspapers.

It was on May 8, 1940, that Sterling North's editorial, "A National Disgrace and a Challenge to American Parents," in the Chicago Daily News, voiced the opinions of some educators, parents, and clergymen. His scathing attack on the comic books was republished by forty newspapers and magazines, and almost a year later requests for reprints averaged about a thousand a day. He called the comic book business "a poisonous mushroom growth of the last two years. . . . full of the sex horror serials. . . . badly drawn, badly written,

¹⁹ Lovell Thompson, "Not so Comic," Atlantic Monthly, CLXVII (January, 1941), 105.

²⁰ Harvey Zorbaugh, Editorial in the Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 194.

²¹ "Comics' Publishers Organize to Improve Standards," Publishers' Weekly, CLI (June 14, 1947), 2941.

and badly printed. . . . a strain on young eyes and young nervous systems parents and teachers must band together to break the comic magazine." ²²

At a luncheon with writers for Parents' Magazine held at Hotel Roosevelt during Children's Book Week in 1941, George Hecht reported that seventy-five per cent of the leisure time of children nine to fourteen years of age was absorbed by comic magazines. He stated that there were one hundred and twentyfive different titles and that fifteen millions were sold each month. The next week Fred Allen devoted a lot of time on his radio show to amusing interviews with people who had been influenced for better or worse by comics. ²³

Other writers and educators took up the fight, surveys were made to see how many were being read, and explanations were offered to account for the strange fascination of children for this ugly little book which was printed in glaring colors on cheap paper.

In 1941, Robert L. Thorndyke noticed the strong appeal of comics to children and deemed it worth while to make an analytical study on the range and difficulty of the vocabulary of some of the most widely circulated ones. He used

²² Sterling North, "The Antidote for Comics," National Parent-Teacher, XXXV (March, 1941), 16-17.

²³ "Book Week Audience Hears about Comics," Publishers' Weekly, CXL (November 22, 1941), 1953.

Superman, Batman, Action Comics, and Detective Comics in his study. He found that each book contained about ten thousand words of reading matter -- more than he expected to find. The number of slang words and words with slang meanings was not alarming and many hundreds were words a child needs to encounter to expand his reading vocabulary. By using the Lorge formula, he classified them as fifth and sixth grade reading level.²⁴

The same year Paul Witty made several studies to determine the extent and nature of reading the comics. By way of explanation he says:

Teachers and parents are becoming aware of the extent to which children read the comics. Reactions to this activity are varied. Some persons look upon the situation with apprehension and marked disfavor!

On the other hand, there are many adults who are undisturbed by the recent preoccupation of children with the comics. They look upon this activity as a product of many conditions and factors in our culture and assert that this reading habit simply parallels other contemporary developments such as an intense interest in highly exciting radio programs and movies. Through these media adventure, excitement, and 'humor' are offered the child with a minimum of effort and concern on his part.²⁵

Witty's three studies concerning grades four, five, and six will be reviewed here. Since this study is concerned with the reading of comic books, the parts referring to comic strip

²⁴ Robert L. Thorndyke, "Analyzing the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), 110-113.

²⁵ Paul A. Witty, "Children's Interest in Reading the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), 100.

reading and making will not be cited.

In his study of three hundred and thirty-four white boys and girls in grades four, five, and six of the Dewey and Lincolnwood schools of Evanston, Illinois, he found that reading the comics was one of the pupils' favorite leisure activities and the most popular of all reading pursuits. They read an average of about thirteen books (three regularly, three often, and six sometimes) and their favorites were Superman, Batman, and Famous Funnies.²⁶

At the same time, a study was made of two hundred and seven Negro children in grades four, five, and six of Chicago. They read on the average of about eighteen books (eight regularly, four often, and five sometimes) and their favorites were Batman, Superman, and Jungle Comics. The reading of a greater amount than was read by the white children was attributed to inadequate library facilities and funds for buying books at home.²⁷

The data for his next study were secured from a random sample taken from questionnaires given to twenty-five hundred children in grades four, five, and six. The interest in comic books was general and consistent from grade to grade

²⁶ Ibid., p. 102.

²⁷ Paul Witty and Dorothy Moore, "Interest in Reading the Comics among Negro Children," Journal of Educational Psychology, XXXVI (May, 1945), 303-308.

and sex differences were not pronounced. The average number read was about fifteen and the same comics were popular from grade to grade.²⁸

The entire magazine of the Journal of Educational Sociology for December, 1944, was devoted to analyses and criticism of comic books. Harvey Zorbaugh quoted Sterling North's editorial which was mentioned earlier in this chapter. He called it extreme and took the view that the comics are a new medium of communication and social influence. He stated that, in a recent poll of opinion, seventy-five per cent of the adults questioned expressed the opinion that comic books are good, clean fun.²⁹

The Market Research Company of America reported, in 1944, that ninety-five per cent of the boys and ninety-one per cent of the girls from six to eleven were regular readers of comic books; eighty-seven per cent of the boys and eighty-nine per cent of the girls from twelve to seventeen; forty-one per cent of the men and twenty-eight per cent of the women from eighteen to thirty were regular readers; and sixteen per cent of the men and twelve per cent of the women over thirty were

²⁸ Paul Witty, "Reading the Comics - A Comparative Study," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), 109.

²⁹ Harvey Zorbaugh, Editorial in Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 194.

regular readers. To be a regular reader, boys and girls must read twelve to thirteen books a month, young men and women, seven to eight, and older adults, six.³⁰

The comics have influenced our health, language, songs, art, drama, and schools. Sadie Hawkins' day is celebrated in five hundred schools and colleges. In more than twenty-five hundred classrooms, children are learning to read with Superman workbooks. They have played an active part in war and have been a voice for minority groups.³¹

Some constructive efforts have been made in an attempt to link the interest in the reading of comics with worthwhile educational endeavor. My Weekly Reader has provided a series of comic strips, and Parents' Magazine has published True Comics and Real Heroes.³²

M. C. Gaines, one of the men most responsible for the development of the comic book, edited and produced a number of sensational magazines. Since he had once been a school teacher, he sold his interest in the older type of books and began producing comic books which could be used in schools. His best known is Picture Stories from the Bible, a two

³⁰ Harvey Zorbaugh, "The Comices There They Stand," Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 198.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 202, 203.

³² Paul Witty, "Children's Interest in Reading the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), p. 100.

hundred and thirty-two page book. Eight hundred thousand copies of this book were sold at fifty cents each in the first two years.³³

Also of significant interest is the fact that Classic Comics, a series devoted to tales of literature, has sold right along with the most popular ten cent cartoon book. Gilberton Company, publishers, has sold about one hundred million copies of its twenty-eight titles, in three and one half years. Albert L. Kanter reports that twenty thousand schools have used them.³⁴

Another idea that has been tried recently is the presentation of the subject matter of several school subjects in the style of the comics. The narratives are focused and unified and the effect of action is produced by the sequence of the pictures.³⁵

Some writers and illustrators of children's books have written and drawn books in the comic-strip way. The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins by Theodore Seus Geisel,³⁶ and a brand

³³ Waugh, op. cit., p. 347.

³⁴ "Classic Comics Sell a Hundred Million," Publishers' Weekly, CXLIX (March 23, 1946), 1736.

³⁵ Sones, op. cit., p. 212.

³⁶

May Hill Arbuthnot, Children and Books, p. 546.

new book, Three Tall Tales written and illustrated by Helen Sewell,³⁷ are examples.

Thirty-five publishers of about sixty million comics a month have formed an Association of Comic Magazine Publishers. Their first meeting was held June 18, 1947. George F. Delacorte, Jr., president of Dell Publishing Company, is at the head of the group and M. C. Gaines, of Educational Comics, is vice-president. The comic publishers feel that they owe an obligation to the public, and wish to maintain standards which will meet public approval.³⁸

The publishers of the comic books which were receiving the most criticism secured boards of prominent educators and experts to study the materials and pass on them before they were printed.³⁹

The criticism continued, however. The common denominator of violent crimes committed by young boys and girls and other minor offenses is comic books, according to Fredric Wertham, noted psychiatrist.⁴⁰ This is the most bitter accusation

³⁷Helen Sewell, "Illustrator Meets the Comics," The Hornbook Magazine, XXIV (March-April, 1948), 137-140.

³⁸"Comics' Publishers Organize to Improve Standards," Publisher's Weekly, CLI (June 14, 1947), 2941.

³⁹Waugh, op. cit., p. 348.

⁴⁰Frederic Wertham, "The Comics - Very Funny," The Saturday Review of Literature, XXXI (May 29, 1948), 6.

against comic books since Sterling North's editorial in 1940.

The Reader's Digest printed his article in condensed form and printed the following statement:

✓ Three United States cities have acted against the sale of comic books deemed harmful to youth, reports the American Municipal Association. Working together, Indianapolis magazine distributors, city officials, and civic groups have banned 35 comics. Detroit police have forbidden news stands sale of 36 comic books. Hillsdale, Michigan has banned the same books prohibited in Detroit. ⁴¹

The comics, like the movies and radio, are a part of today's world. They can no longer be ignored. Teachers and parents can join the fight to break the comics; they can welcome them into the homes and schools; they can encourage publishers to pattern books and instructional material after them; or they can take a middle course -- use the best they have to offer -- but guide the children in more and better reading. In the next chapter there are some suggestions for this guidance.

⁴¹

Frederic Wertham, "The Comics-Very Funny," Reader's Digest, LIII (August, 1948), 15-18.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

In this chapter, the results of the questionnaires¹ concerning the reading of comic books and magazines by Group I and Group II will be tabulated and discussed. The number and kinds of comic books and magazines read by both groups were determined at the beginning and the end of the experimental period, in order to answer this question: As the children in Group I become acquainted with more magazines and are guided in the reading of them, will they read less comic books?

Authorities in the field of reading will be quoted in an introduction to a guided free reading program. The program will be described in detail as it was carried on in Group I.

Results of Questionnaires

At the beginning of the experimental period, questionnaires were given to Groups I and II. Each group was made up of eighteen pupils, ten girls and eight boys, from fourth

¹
See Appendix A.

grade rooms. The pupils were placed in rooms by alphabetical order and consequently there was no distinction made concerning grades or abilities.

The purpose of the questionnaires was to find out the number and kinds of comic books and magazines that were read by the pupils, their favorites, and the frequency of reading them.

A list of twenty-four popular comic books and ten children's magazines was arranged in alphabetical order and ample space was provided at the bottom of the sheet for additional ones read. The children were asked to draw one line under those they read often and two lines under those they subscribed to or bought each issue of. They were also asked to write the names of their favorite comic book and magazine. It was made clear to the pupils that they were not to be graded on this sheet since most pupils in this school were "grade conscious." One should keep in mind that there was a rule forbidding the reading of comic books in the school rooms, which had been in effect for several years. The pupils in Group I received help in filling out their questionnaires from their teacher, and those in Group II received help from their teacher or from parents.

Fictitious names are used in tabulating the results since the information received was kept confidential. As mentioned earlier in the study, Polly Pigtales and Calling

All Girls are classed as magazines rather than comic books in this study.

Table 1 shows the number of comic books read by Group I at the beginning of the experimental period and lists their favorites. They read an average of 17.7 comic books often and subscribed to an average of 2.2. This made their total reading average about twenty comic books each month.

TABLE 1
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMIC BOOKS READ BY GROUP I IN
SEPTEMBER AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribed to	Favorite
Opal	13	0	Superman
Twila	11	2	None
Thelma	21	4	Blondie
Fay	13	0	Bugs Bunny
Flora	10	0	Detective Comics
Sally	27	0	Loony Tunes
Sarah	38	0	Plastic Man
Edith	10	0	None
Nell	17	6	Blondie
Texia	23	0	Doll Man
Elmo	11	0	Bugs Bunny
Tom	7	5	Batman
Theo	12	17	Jungle Comics
Floyd	17	0	Bugs Bunny
Fred	23	2	Punch and Judy
Scott	25	0	Superman
Steve	19	1	Andy Pandy
Ellis	25	6	Superman

Bugs Bunny and Superman received the most votes as favorites. Sarah read the most with a total of thirty-eight and Theo followed with a total of twenty-nine. Ten was the least number read by any child.

Table 2 shows the number of comic books read by Group II at the beginning of the experimental period and lists their favorites. The children read an average of 8.8 often and 1.4 were subscribed to. Their total reading averaged about ten comic books a month.

TABLE 2

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMIC BOOKS READ BY GROUP II
IN SEPTEMBER AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribed to	Favorite
Ann	12	0	None
Bonnie	10	2	Bugs Bunny
Clarice	7	1	Bugs Bunny
Dora	2	0	Bugs Bunny
Eunice	4	11	None
Flo	5	2	Comic Cavalcade
Gaynell	9	0	Donald Duck
Helen	18	2	Donald Duck
Ida	10	0	None
Julia	6	0	Crime Comics
Kenneth	13	1	Jungle Comics
Larry	11	1	None
Marvin	11	0	None
Oscar	17	0	Captain Marvel
Paul	5	1	True Comics
Quinton	2	0	Donald Duck
Roy	11	4	None
Sam	6	0	None

Bugs Bunny and Donald Duck received the most votes as favorites in this second group. Helen read the most with a total of twenty comic books, and Oscar came second with a total of seventeen. Dora and Quinton each read only two.

Table 3 makes a comparison of the total number and kinds of comic books read by Group I and Group II.

TABLE 3
NUMBER AND KINDS OF COMIC BOOKS READ BY GROUP I
AND GROUP II IN SEPTEMBER

Comic Books	Group I	Group II
Adventure Comics	6	8
Animal Fables	6	2
Action Comics	5	4
Batman	14	13
Boy Commando Comics	6	5
Bugs Bunny	16	17
Calling All Boys	4	4
Calling All Kids	5	5
Comic Cavalcade	1	4
Crime Comics	10	6
Detective Comics	12	4
Donald Duck	17	17
Famous Funnies	7	6
Frankenstein	3	6
Jungle Comics	14	11
Magic Comics	8	6
Mystery Comics	8	6
Picture Stories from History	4	0
Plastic Man Comics	10	5
Real Heroes	6	4
Superman	18	14
True Comics	16	9
World's Finest Comics	8	7
A Date With Judy *	4	..
All Funny Comics *	3	..
All Star Comics *	4	..
Andy Pandy *	6	..
Archie *	6	..
Blondie Comics *	8	..
Blue Bolt *	3	..
Captain Marvel *	10	1
Coo Coo Comics *	4	..
Dick Tracy *	7	..
Doll Man	6	..
Funny Stuff *	4	..

TABLE 3--Continued

Comic Books	Group I	Group II
Ha Ha Comics *	4	..
Little Bad Wolf *	5	..
Little Black Sambo *	3	..
Loony Tunes *	9	..
Mary Marvel *	7	..
Mickey Mouse *	8	..
Mutt and Jeff *	8	1
Punch and Judy *	6	1
Rangers *	3	..
Super Rabbit *	4	..
Wonder Woman *	5	1

* Added by children

The children in Group I read all of the twenty-four titles listed on the questionnaire and twenty-three additional titles were added by more than two children. Twenty-three additional titles (not listed in the Table) were added by only one or two of the children. This made a total of sixty-nine comic books read by the children of Group I.

The children in Group II also read all of the twenty-four titles listed on the questionnaire. Fantastic Comics is not included on the table since it was read by only one child in each group. Nineteen additional titles were added by only one or two children. This made a total of forty-three comic books read by the children in Group II.

Superman was read by all of the children in Group I and Donald Duck was read by all except one. Bugs Bunny and Donald Duck were each read by all except one of the children in Group II.

Table 4 lists the total number of magazines read by Group I at the beginning of the experimental period and gives their favorites. Only one child read more than four

TABLE 4

TOTAL NUMBER OF MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP I IN
SEPTEMBER AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribed to	Favorite
Opal	1	0	Polly Pigtaills
Twila	2	1	Polly Pigtaills
Thelma	2	0	Life
Fay	3	0	None
Flora	2	1	Polly Pigtaills
Sally	3	0	True Stories
Sarah	2	0	Play Mate
Edith	2	2	None
Nell	2	0	Post
Texia	2	0	Life
Elmo	1	0	Life
Tom	1	0	Wee Wisdom
Theo	8	2	Life
Floyd	1	0	None
Fred	1	3	Jack and Jill
Scott	0	0	None
Steve	1	2	Wee Wisdom
Ellis	2	0	None

magazines, and the average was about three each. Life, an adult magazine, was given as the favorite of four children. Polly Pigtaills was given as the favorite of three children. Five gave no favorites.

Table 5 gives the total number of magazines read by Group II at the beginning of the experimental period and lists their favorites. Eunice read a total of seven and Oscar read

five, but the average was only about two. Only seven children gave a favorite magazine. Wee Wisdom was the only favorite named by more than one child.

TABLE 5

TOTAL NUMBER OF MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP II IN
SEPTEMBER AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribed to	Favorite
Ann	1	2	None
Bonnie	0	1	Polly Pigtaills
Clarice	1	2	None
Dora	1	0	None
Eunice	4	3	None
Flo	0	0	None
Gaynell	3	1	Jack and Jill
Helen	0	0	None
Ida	2	1	Wee Wisdom
Julia	2	0	Children 's Activities
Kenneth	1	0	None
Larry	0	1	None
Marvin	0	0	None
Oscar	5	0	Look
Quinton	0	3	Wee Wisdom
Roy	1	0	None
Sam	4	0	None

Table 6 compares the total number of magazines read by Group I and Group II. In each of the tables, it is clearly shown that the children in Group I were reading more comic books and magazines than the children in Group II. No explanation can be given for this since no records of their home and school background previous to this study are available.

TABLE 6

NUMBER AND KINDS OF MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP I
AND GROUP II IN SEPTEMBER

Magazine	Group I	Group II
Calling All Girls	5	4
Child Life	2	0
Children's Activities	3	6
Jack and Jill	9	7
Jr.	1	1
Open Road for Boys	2	2
Play Mate	4	2
Polly Pigtales	8	4
Story Parade	1	1
Wee Wisdom	5	6
American Girl *	..	1
Life *	4	3
Look *	..	1
Sweet Sixteen *	..	1

* Added by children

Setting up the Reading Program

It is a well established fact that comic books have an almost universal appeal to children of all ages, regardless of sex, I. O., or cultural background. In 1944, the children's Book Committee of the Child Study Association undertook to examine and evaluate about a hundred comic books. They analyzed their contents and the nature of their appeal to children and offered suggestions by which adults may help children to discriminate among them as among other forms of reading. No list of recommended titles could be printed because of the changing nature of each book from month to month, and

the wide range of material that appears in one issue.

The contents fall into the following categories: adventures, fantasy, crime and detective, real stories and biography, war, retold classics, love interest, jungle adventure, animal cartoons, and fun and humor. The highest in favor are the stories of adventure, with danger and suspense playing a prominent part.²

A new and healthier trend was on the way in 1947. A new type of comic book was becoming popular, namely, the various titles devoted to teen-age interests. The gay, animal book of the Walt Disney type was growing in popularity also.

"These are funny books. . . And to laugh is one of our greatest national habits, one of our finest talents."³

"It goes without saying that the reading of comics, to the exclusion of everything else, would be undesirable literary diet for children."⁴ Even if they seem to forsake all else, they should be introduced to other books and pictures with respect to their own choices. They can be offered adventure, mystery, suspense, and fantasy in books.

² Jossette Frank, "Looking at the Comics," Child Study, XX (Summer, 1943), 112-118.

³ Waugh, op. cit., p. 351.

⁴ Frank, op. cit., p. 118.

Not more and better reading only, but more and better living and doing and creating will give them some of the satisfactions for which they turn to the comics. Those children for whom home and school are busy, active places, whose work and play are alive and rich with real and meaningful activity, will take comics in their stride. They will read the comics -- yes -- for these are today a part of the common reading mores. But this reading will take its proportionate place in their full lives, among absorbing and enjoyable activities. ⁵

Almost everyone reads a certain amount of worthless material during his lifetime and is not wrecked thereby. The significant thing to be concerned about.... is not that his chief interest now centers in comics, but that this interest shall not become a permanent, absorbing thing which sets his reading tastes for life. ⁶

It is the responsibility of every teacher to guide children in their reading habits. Reading, our most important avenue for continuous growth and understanding, falls low in the list of preferred recreation for adults. Active and creative pursuits have been replaced by passive types of amusement; namely, listening to the radio, going to the movies, riding in an automobile, and watching athletic sports. This is true of many high school students and remains true in adult life. ⁷

⁵Ibid.

⁶Jennie Milton, "Children and the Comics," Childhood Education, XVI (October, 1939), 64.

⁷Paul Witty and David Kopel, Reading and the Educative Process, pp. 9-10.

A child's tastes and fondness for reading can be carried over into adult life. To do this children must learn to enjoy reading by being given much easy reading, seasoned with encouragement and praise.⁸ Not only should a teacher find reading material that children can read, but material that is appropriate and worthy of being read.⁹

The program set up by the teacher of the children in Group I was designed to guide their free reading in school and out of school. The teacher studied a number of reports and surveys that have been made on the reading interests and preferences of children. It has been found that boys and girls have similar reading tastes before the age of nine. Animal stories which involve the element of personification are most favored. At nine, most children prefer stories of real life and do not live so much in the world of fancy.

A real interest in reading develops at nine years of age and becomes well established by ten. Boys begin to look for stories of adventure and by eleven seek series books. Girls often prefer stories of home and school life. The dramatic element has not the appeal for girls that it has for boys. Girls usually read more, but boys are apt to have a

8

Bessie Porter, "A Project in Motivating Interest in Reading," Elementary School Journal, XLVIII (September, 1947), 44.

9

Witty and Kopel, op. cit., p. 59.

wider range of interests. Boys do not as a rule read books written especially for girls but girls sometimes read boys' books.¹⁰

Interest and activity inventories were given to the pupils in Group I at the beginning of the reading program.¹¹

Table 7 shows the reading interests of the boys and girls.

TABLE 7

READING INTERESTS OF CHILDREN IN GROUP I AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

Interests	Girls	Boys
Horses	7	8
Dogs	8	5
Deer	6	5
Other animals	6	2
Airplanes	3	4
Children of foreign lands	7	2
Fairies	8	3
Kings	8	2
Cowboys	9	8
Crime	6	4
Jungles	8	6
War	5	5
Boys and girls like you	8	6
Pioneers*	6	4
Indians*	3	0
Giants*	1	0

* Added by children

¹⁰

Witty and Kopp, op. cit., p. 26.

¹¹

See Appendix B.

The entry, "cowboys," was checked by all the boys and by all but one of the girls. The entries, "horses," "jungles," and "boys and girls like you" were next in popularity. The word "pioneers" was added by ten children, probably because a social studies unit was being studied at the time the inventory was given. Most of the children checked as many as ten interests; however, one girl checked only four.

Seventeen of the children answered, "yes," to the question: "Do you like to read?" Seventeen also answered "yes" to the question: "Do you like to have someone read to you?" Eight of the children named Bambi as one of their favorite books, but no other book was named by more than two children. Five named no favorite books.

A study of reading interests and preferences alone is adequate for effective guidance. Data concerning children's play and other preferred activities are frequently of great value in determining the selection of appropriate books for poor readers. . . . Frequently the Interest Inventory reveals the fact that the teacher's major problem is to stimulate and develop new and more enduring interests.¹²

This can be applied to good readers as well as poor readers. A child may read profusely and yet need guidance in reading. The interests and activity inventories, therefore contained information concerning their emotional stability and out of school activities.

¹²

Ibid., p. 57.

The information gathered from the questionnaires given to the children and their parents was carefully sorted, recorded, and filed in individual folders, along with other pertinent information concerning each child. The teacher consulted these files throughout the experimental period. A part of this information will be briefly reviewed here.

All of the children except one girl had pets. Dogs were more popular than cats and horses ranked third. Ten enjoyed being in programs on the stage, while eight did not. All except two said that they were happy most of the time. These two replied, "no" to the question, "Do you cry often?" Two others said they cried often and gave as the reasons: "I get hurt," and "I get mad."

In naming their best friends, most of the children named from two to six children of their own age and sex. Three girls included one boy and three boys included one girl in their lists. Only one half of the group expressed a desire to be the leader of a game. In regard to favorite games, cards, checkers, and jacks were mentioned often; but baseball for the girls and football for the boys headed the list. Church attendance was regular except for one girl and one boy.

When asked, "Of all the persons that you have known, heard about, or read about, whom would you most wish to be?" three named "a Red Cross nurse;" eight named different movie stars; two named "Mary"; two named "Jesus;" one named "Samson;"

and two named "Superboy."

Among the things they disliked at home or at school were: "work," "to dry dishes," "to get hurt," "arithmetic," and "spelling." Twelve named "recess" or "ball" as the part of school they liked best, while five named a special subject ("reading" was named only once.) One girl said she did not like any part of school. All of this information is of value to the teacher since the source of the trouble can usually be determined.

The most popular out-of-school activities were attending movies and football games, riding horses and bicycles, reading, and listening to the radio.

From the parents it was found that the children spent from thirty minutes to an hour on homework each evening.¹³ All of the children performed easy tasks around the home but only one boy worked any down town. The children averaged attending movies twice a week (usually Saturday and Sunday). However, two or three never attended, or only once or twice a year.

To the question: "Does your child seem content to play and work alone a part of the time?" fifteen of the parents answered "yes"; one answered, "not very long at a time;" one answered, "all the time;" and one answered, "yes, very much so." Reading, arithmetic, and language were each

¹³ See Appendix C.

mentioned once as a part of school their children disliked. The others answered, "none." Seven said that their children told them about the happenings at school when specific questions were not asked. Several named physical defects which the teacher should know about.

Six of the parents answered, "no," to the question, "Do you forbid your child to read certain books, see certain movies, and listen to certain programs over the radio?" Five answered, "Yes;" two said, "only certain movies;" and the others believed in guiding rather than forbidding.

Six of the mothers visited the school room during regular class work; and most of the others visited during open house, programs, and on holidays. The teacher felt free to discuss problems with the parents at any time.

The Reading Program Described

While carrying on the reading program, the teacher not only kept in mind the information gathered from the questionnaires and interest and activity inventories; but she followed closely a guide for the selection of reading material for children. This guide was based on the child's basic needs, namely:

1. The need for material, emotional, and spiritual security
2. The need to belong -- to be part of a group

3. The need to love and be loved
4. The need to achieve
5. The need to know
6. Play: the need for change
7. The need for aesthetic satisfaction.¹⁴

Since children's magazines have about the same format as comic books, are primarily amusement material, contain pictures and features, and are toned down for children, they were used as a stimulant for pleasure reading.

The teacher subscribed to Jack and Jill and Children's Activities. The children subscribed to Boys' Life, Wee Wisdom, and Story Parade with one half of their money brought for My Weekly Reader. This gave them one copy of My Weekly Reader for each two children. The teacher and children bought issues of Play Mate, Child Life, and Polly Pigtales at the local news stands. The American Junior Red Cross News was subscribed to by each room in the school.

As each magazine arrived, the teacher showed it to the children and discussed some of the interesting features. The teacher's enthusiasm and sincere appreciation of the magazines proved to be contagious.

It is necessary to begin where children are and lead them to more and better reading. Most of them were

familiar with Polly Pigtales and begged the teacher to read aloud from it. She read a continued mystery story, "The Copper Tea Kettle." The story proved to be entertaining, but a little melodramatic and sensational. The teacher was gaining the children's confidence, and becoming a companion to them.

Later she read "The Ice Clad Twins" from Jack and Jill, "Think of That " from Wee Wisdom, and "Michael Goes to Sea" from Story Parade. All of these stories contained enough suspense, excitement, and action to help satisfy the children's craving for mystery stories. These comments were heard frequently: "It always stops at the most interesting place," "I like that story," and "Do you know how it ends?"

The last period of the day was set aside for free reading --reading just for fun. The magazines were kept on the reading table, and the children were permitted to read them during any study period when assignments had been completed. This not only encouraged more reading, but proved to be an incentive for getting work done promptly.

The children began reading the short stories in the magazines and later some of them read the serials. Since there were not enough magazines for every child to read at one time, it was decided in November to bind the stories in the September and October issues. Construction paper was stapled to the front and back. The title of the story and the magazine that it was taken from were printed on the front

of each booklet. After reading a story, each child wrote his name on a sheet of typing paper that was pasted on the cover. This proved helpful to the teacher in finding out how much each child was reading and also to the other children in finding out who had read the story. They often asked each other such questions as: "Did you like that story?" and "What is it about?" Stories from other issues were bound later in the year.

The children begged to take the magazines home and were allowed to take them for only one night at a time. A mimeographed sheet giving the addresses and prices of the magazines was sent home to the parents.¹⁵

After the health check each morning, the children took turns arranging a short program. The programs usually consisted of a story read or told, a few jokes or riddles read, a poem read or recited, and a song or two. Most of the material was taken from current issues of the magazines and was appropriate to the season of the year.

On all holidays, special programs were arranged by one of the children and presented to another room, visitors in the class room, or at a party. Two of them will be described.

On Hallowe'en, Edith, who was program chairman, found a play in the Play Mate magazine for October, copied the parts,

and gave them to boys and girls of her own choosing. She directed the practice and announced the play on the day of the Hallowe'en party. Several visitors were present and were pleased with the performance. Edith was a timid, nervous child and a very poor oral reader. This helped to satisfy her need to achieve and to be recognized by the group.

On Friday of Children's Book Week a program was presented to the other fourth-grade classes. Invitations were written in the language class and posters illustrating each child's favorite book were made in the art class. At the conclusion of the program, which was taken from the November issues of the magazines, book markers were presented as favors to all present.

Scrapbooks were made with the remaining materials from the magazines, after the stories had been bound. The class was divided into groups and each group of three or four children made a scrapbook. The titles were: "Recipes," "Games and Puzzles," "Jokes and Riddles," "Poems," and "Picture Stories." These were kept on open shelves and used for reference and programs the remainder of the year. The girls cut out the paper dolls from the magazines and played with them on rainy days.

It has been a custom in this school for several years, to give reading certificates to all children who read as many as thirty library books during the school year. Each room has its own library and each teacher is responsible

for guiding the children's reading.

Since the books were too difficult for the slow readers at the beginning of the year, a dozen small, inexpensive, but attractive books from The Little Golden Library were ordered. The delightful illustrations and easy vocabulary encouraged the children to make their first book reports on them. The Saggy Baggy Elephant and The Poky Little Puppy, for instance, could have been read by some second graders, but this fact did not keep the fourth graders from reading them eagerly.

Oral book reports were given once a week and those desiring to give additional ones wrote them on cards. In giving the oral reports, the title and author of the book, the important characters, the type of story, and an interesting, humorous, or exciting part of the story were related. If possible, they showed the book to the class when giving the report. After an interesting report, five or six children would often say, "Let me read it next." Children are more apt to read a book recommended by a friend than by a teacher. This is especially true until a harmonious relation has been built between the teacher and the children.

On Friday afternoon, during the free reading period, most of the children read a library book, and these books were taken home for pleasure reading over the week end. The teacher helped some of the children choose a book to read. One day Thelma said, "I want a book, but I don't like anything

except mystery stories." The teacher showed her The Little Spanish Dancer by Madeline Brandeis and said, "This story is full of action, excitement, and suspense." Thelma read it, and later admitted that it was one of the best books that she had ever read.

Following the afternoon play period, the teacher read aloud to the children from a magazine or book. This was probably the most enjoyable period of the day. Through this happy sharing of vicarious experiences, the teacher became a companion to the children.

The books read aloud were carefully chosen. At the first of school, the teacher read Children of the Covered Wagon by Mary Jane Carr, an exciting story of the perils of pioneer life. This book was thoroughly enjoyed by all the children and was another step in satisfying their craving for excitement and mystery. This book was followed by The Other Side of the Mountain by May Justus, another story of pioneer life.

During this time the children read the supplementary readers, Singing Wheels and First Families of America in their social studies class. While reading Singing Wheels, Fred said, "This is the best book I have ever read; I wish it was ten times as long as it is." Although he had not been fond of reading, that book seemed to be the key that unlocked the door to the enjoyment of reading. His mother commented several times, "Fred really likes to read now."

The teacher next read Little Navajo Bluebird by Ann Nolan Clark, a story of Indian life on a reservation. Since the children's intense love of pioneer life did not include an appreciation of Indians, this was developed to some extent by this book and First Families of America.

Other books read aloud during the year were: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Samuel L. Clemens, for adventure and humor; The Birds' Christmas Carol by Kate Douglas Wiggin, for spiritual comfort; Bambi by Felix Salten, a favorite of the children reread; Mickey Sees the U. S. A. by Caroline D. Emerson, combining well-liked comic characters with facts about our country; The Patchwork Quilt by Adele De Leeuw, to stress the security of home life; Nadita by Grace Moon, with plenty of suspense and an understanding of our neighbors to the south; and last of all Just David by Eleanor H. Porter, a touching story of the struggle of a misunderstood child to find security -- with a little romantic love successfully woven in.

Carefully chosen poems were often read aloud by the teacher and the children for the purpose of entertainment and aesthetic satisfaction. One day the whole class memorized a four-stanza poem. It was really just four sentences, but the children could hardly believe that they had learned it so easily. On other occasions choral reading, conversational reading of a story, and dramatizing were enjoyed.

Stories of their own choice were sometimes read silently and told to the class. One day the boy and the girl telling the most interesting ones, selected by the vote of the class, went to another room and told their stories. Most of the girls chose fairy tales, and among them such old favorites as "Beauty and the Beast," "Cinderella," and "Hansel and Gretel." The boys got their stories from the magazines and booklets. Fay and Tom were the winners. This recognition by the group was of value to both of them.

When the teacher selected new library books, the children's interests and needs were kept in mind. Besides the books read aloud and the Little Golden Library books, the ten best-liked books listed in the order of their popularity were: The Cat That Walked a Week by Meindert DeJong, a true to life story of a cat's struggle for existence; Little Lucia by Mabel L. Robinson, a story of a small girl's trials with a broken leg; What Happened at Midnight by Franklin W. Dixon, one of the Hardy Boys mystery stories; Star by Forrestine C. Hooker, the story of an Indian pony; Honey Bunch, Her First Trip on the Ocean, one of a series for small girls; The Little Swiss Wood-Carver by Madeline Brandeis, the hardships and final success of a poor Swiss boy; Whitey's First Round-Up by Glen Rounds, a Story Parade picture-book of a very young cowboy's experiences; No School Friday by Fran Martin, the exciting adventures of three boys on a holiday; A Boy and a

Dog by Marguerite Henry, a small boy's efforts and deserved reward in training a dog; and Debby by Siddie Joe Johnson, a young girl's wish comes true.

Whether the books were about boys, girls, horses, dogs, or cats, they all had one thing in common: that is, overcoming obstacles in a true-to-life manner. Some other popular books with the best readers were Heidi by Johanna Spyri, Huckleberry Finn by Samuel L. Clemens, Eight Cousins by Louisa Mae Alcott, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, and Toby Tyler by James Otis.

In April, the class and their teacher visited the public library in a group. The librarian, the teacher, and the children who were frequent visitors of the library, explained to the other children how to find desired books and how to conduct themselves in the library. Library cards were given to those who requested them. The two main objectives in visiting the library were to give the better readers a larger number of books to make their selections from and to plan for summer reading. The children were also encouraged to subscribe to the Playtime Weekly Reader and to at least one children's magazine for added summer reading.

Quiz programs were an incentive for more and careful reading. About twice a month questions were collected from suggestions of the children, science and geography stories, holidays, and current events. The program was then carried

on similar to those on the radio. Elmo was fifteen and had missed whole years of school. He had a good general knowledge and memory and was able to excel in the quiz programs. This was of value to him since it gave him the attention he craved.

In an effort to widen and direct the children's interests, discussion periods were encouraged. Radio programs, movies, sports, school happenings, and current events were favorite topics.

At the beginning of the experimental period fourteen of the eighteen children gave a mystery radio program for at least one of their preferences. The horror portrayed on some of these programs is equal to that pictured in the most sensational comic books. In November, when radio programs were discussed, each child was permitted to tell about one or two that he liked. Those mentioned most often were: "Red Skelton," "Fibber McGee," "Jack Benny," "Blondie," "The Hit Parade," and "Chesterfield Supper Club." Only two mystery programs were included in this discussion.

The teacher asked them if they ever listened to any children's programs, and a few named "The Quiz Kids" and "Funny Paper Hour." Several others asked when these programs came on. It was decided to make a radio log. All those who listened to good programs for children were asked to write down the name of the program, the time, and the

station. A few days later this information was collected and put on the bulletin board for all to consult or copy.

Good movies, showing at the local theaters, were called to the children's attention by the teacher or one of the other children. The parents and teacher encouraged the attendance of movies only on the week ends.

Stories were written about their favorite characters in fiction, radio, or movies. Over one half of the class wrote about Dagwood, and gave as reasons for liking him, "He is so silly;" "He is so funny;" "He gets in trouble." Others wrote about Superboy, Superman, Captain Marvel, Jack Armstrong, Dick Tracy, Tom Mix, Little Black Sambo, and Tom Hastings, a character in the reader Singing Wheels. They gave as some reasons for liking them: "He is strong;" "He is brave;" "He helps others;" "He goes to the jungle;" "He goes hunting."

The social studies unit often furnished an incentive for reading in supplementary readers and library books. When studying about Italy, several of the children read Little Tony of Italy by Madeline Brandeis. After reading the short chapter in the geography book on Switzerland, Fred said, "I wish it told more." He was shown a reader with an excerpt from the book Moni, the Goat Boy by Johanna Spyri and a library book, The Little Swiss Wood-Carver by Madeline Brandeis. He read the story that period and took the library book home to read.

For six weeks after Christmas it was necessary for the

children to spend most of their play periods in the room or the gymnasium because of the heavy snow and rain. In the room, checkers, bingo, and other games were provided; drawing facilities were available; and handwork classes were started. Several of the girls learned to knit and crochet, and were soon able to read and follow directions for making berets, bags, and noilies.

As soon as the weather improved, softball became the center of interest for both boys and girls. Each child, in turn, was appointed captain of one of the teams, chose his players, and assigned them to their positions. Steve showed the best sportsmanship by playing fielder when he was the captain. For the others it meant the opportunity to be either pitcher or catcher. Several of the children learned to keep score and all read and learned the rules of the game. The children were thus guided in more and better living, and doing and creating as well as more and better reading.

Comic book day was observed in the spring. Each child was permitted to bring one comic book to school and read it during the free reading period. At the end of the period, each one told an interesting incident that he had read. Texia told about a party Dixie Dugan gave for her school mates; Thelma told about a funny school for animals in Supermouse; Tom and Theo each told humorous incidents from Felix, the Cat; Flora and Opal told about the solving of murders in

Mary Marvel. The others told incidents from Cookie, Little Audrey, Roy Rogers, Donald Duck, Nellie, the Nurse, and A Date with Judy. Fred, Steve, and Twila said that they liked to read comic books, but preferred other books and magazines. Fred and Twila read library books and Steve read a story, in Boys' Life.

When asked why they liked comic books the children all answered, "Because they are funny." After further questioning, fourteen said that they liked the pictures, but all except Scott said that they read all of the words. He was twelve years old and a slow reader and really got satisfaction out of the pictures. Fifteen of the children preferred comic books that were true to life, and only three preferred fantastic episodes. They were evenly divided on the question: "Had you rather read about boys and girls of about your own age or about older people?"

When asked if they thought there was any harm in reading comic books, several said, "Those about crime aren't good for children." They considered True Comics the most beneficial. None of them thought the reading of comics harmful to the eyes.

The children were observed closely all during the year and incidents and conversations were recorded and filed for reference. They were a healthy group of children and were seldom absent except in cases of extreme weather or impassable roads. There were no major problems in discipline during

the experimental period. Most of them were leading rich, full lives in school and out of school. Their pleasant home life and previous school experiences had provided a good foundation.

The guided free reading program was beneficial to the extent that permanent reading interests and tastes had been built up and lifetime reading habits formed.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARISON OF THE COMIC BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

READ BY GROUP I AND GROUP II

At the end of the experimental period, questionnaires were again given to the children in Group I and Group II. The purpose was to find out how many and what kinds of comic books and magazines they were reading, how often they read them, and which ones were their favorites.

Group I had been guided systematically, day by day, in a planned free reading program. The main purpose had been to broaden their interests, satisfy their basic needs, and acquaint them with an abundance of appropriate reading materials. The teacher of the children in Group I kept this question constantly in mind: "As the children become acquainted with more magazines and are guided in the reading of them, will they read less comic books?"

Results of the Questionnaires

Table 8 shows the total number of comic books read by the children in Group I at the end of the experimental period and lists their favorites. They read an average of 13.2 often and only three children subscribed to even one comic book. Ellis read the most with a total of twenty-four,

and Edith read the least with a total of only four. Donald Duck was given as the favorite of seven children. The decrease in the number of comic books read by Group I can be seen by comparing this table with Table 1.

TABLE 8

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMIC BOOKS READ BY GROUP I IN
APRIL AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribe to	Favorite
Opal	7	0	Bugs Bunny
Twila	9	0	Annie Oakley
Thelma	8	0	Magic Comics
Fay	16	0	True Comics
Flora	9	1	Donald Duck
Sally	22	0	Bugs Bunny
Sarah	16	0	Donald Duck
Edith	4	0	Donald Duck
Nell	21	0	Donald Duck
Texia	11	0	Jungle Comics
Elmo	9	0	Bugs Bunny
Tom	19	0	Donald Duck
Theo	23	0	Superman
Floyd	8	0	None
Fred	11	1	Donald Duck
Scott	8	0	Donald Duck
Steve	13	1	True Comics
Ellis	24	0	Superman

Table 9 gives the total number of comic books read by the children in Group II, at the end of the experimental period. They read an average of 20.8 often and subscribed to 2.1. Roy read the most with a total of thirty-three and eight other children read twenty-five or more comic books. In other words, one half of the group were reading twenty-five

or more comic books each month. No child read less than ten which was their average in September. Donald Duck was given as the favorite of five children. The increase in the number of comic books read by Group II can be seen by comparing this table with Table 2.

TABLE 9

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMIC BOOKS READ BY GROUP II IN
APRIL AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribed to	Favorite
Ann	14	0	Jungle Comics
Bonnie	22	0	Jungle Comics
Clarice	23	3	Bugs Bunny
Dora	29	0	Donald Duck
Eunice	9	6	Donald Duck
Flo	28	4	Jungle Comics
Gaynell	15	0	Donald Duck
Helen	29	0	None
Ida	9	1	Donald Duck
Julia	28	0	Crime Comics
Kenneth	18	0	The Jungle Girl
Larry	20	10	Batman
Marvin	25	0	Donald Duck
Oscar	32	0	Walt Disney Comics
Paul	17	8	Frankenstein
Quinton	17	0	Roy Rogers
Roy	31	2	Crime Comics
Sam	9	4	Superman

A comparison of the total number and kinds of comic books read by the two groups in April can be seen by examining Table 10. Group I read all of the twenty-four titles listed; however, four were read by only one or two children. This brought

their total down from sixty-nine titles in September to forty-three in April.

TABLE 10

NUMBER AND KINDS OF COMIC BOOKS READ BY GROUP I
AND GROUP II IN APRIL

Comic Books	Group I	Group II
Adventure Comics	6	9
Animal Fables	4	7
Action Comics	5	9
Batman	11	16
Boy Commando Comics	6	10
Bugs Bunny	17	17
Calling All Boys	8	9
Calling All Kids	10	8
Comic Cavalcade	2	4
Crime Comics	9	10
Detective Comics	9	12
Donald Duck	18	18
Fantastic Comics	1	2
Famous Funnies	8	11
Frankenstein	1	9
Jungle Comics	15	16
Magic Comics	7	10
Mystery Comics	7	9
Picture Stories from History	1	6
Plastic Man	4	9
Real Heroes	3	4
Superman	14	18
True Comics	8	13
World's Finest Comics	9	8
A Date With Judy*	1	4
Archie *	1	5
Black Hawk*	..	4
Blondie Comics *	3	12
Captain Marvel *	7	15
Captain Midnight *	..	4
Dick Tracy *	..	5
Gene Autry *	1	14
Hop-A-Long-Cassidy*	1	3
Katzenjammer Kids*	..	4
Marvel Family *	1	4
Mickey Mouse *	7	10
Mighty Mouse *	7	..

TABLE 10 --Continued

Comic Books	Group I	Group II
Our Gang *	..	6
Roy Rogers *	1	15
Steve Canyon *	..	4
Superboy*	6	7
Tarzan*	..	10
The Jungle Girl *	..	7
Tom Mix *	..	4

* Added by children.

Group II read all of the twenty-four titles listed and only one title was read by as few as two children. Nineteen other titles were added by more than two children and twenty-five additional titles were read by one or two children. This brought their total of fifty-three in September up to sixty-eight in April.

Donald Duck was read by every child in both groups and Bugs Bunny was read by all except one in each group. Every child in Group II read Superman, while fourteen children in Group I read it. Jungle Comics was also popular with both groups. By comparing this table with Table 3 it can be seen that Group I was reading less comics in April than in September, and that Group II was reading about twice as many.

Table 11 shows the total number of magazines read by Group I in April, and lists their favorites. They read an average of about six each month. No adult magazine was

named as a favorite. Polly Pigtales and Wee Wisdom were each given as the favorites of three children.

TABLE 11

TOTAL NUMBER OF MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP I IN
APRIL AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribe to	Favorite
Opal	6	0	Jack and Jill
Twila	6	1	Story Parade
Thelma	5	2	None
Fay	5	0	Play Mate
Flora	6	1	Wee Wisdom
Sally	6	0	Wee Wisdom
Sarah	7	0	Play Mate
Edith	5	3	None
Neil	6	0	Polly Pigtales
Texia	7	0	Polly Pigtales
Elme	1	0	None
Tom	6	0	None
Theo	6	0	Polly Pigtales
Floyd	6	0	None
Fred	8	3	Open Road for Boys
Scott	0	0	None
Steve	5	4	Wee Wisdom
Ellis	6	1	Boys' Life

The total number of magazines read by Group II in April is shown in Table 12. They read an average of about three each month -- only one half as many as Group I. Two adult magazines were listed as favorites. Polly Pigtales, Wee Wisdom, and Jr. were each given as the favorite of two children. Six children in each group gave no favorites. Edith read eight magazines, but gave no favorite. When questioned, she said, "I like them all."

TABLE 12

TOTAL NUMBER OF MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP II IN
APRIL AND THEIR FAVORITES

Student	Often	Subscribe to	Favorite
Ann	1	2	None
Bonnie	1	0	Polly Pigtaills
Clarice	7	2	Polly Pigtaills
Dora	9	0	Miss America
Eunice	1	1	Look
Flo	3	0	Life
Gaynell	2	1	Jack and Jill
Helen	2	0	None
Ida	0	1	Wee Wisdom
Julia	9	1	Wee Wisdom
Kenneth	0	1	Jr.
Larry	1	0	Story Parade
Marvin	2	0	None
Oscar	3	1	Jr.
Paul	0	0	None
Quinton	3	3	Boys' Life
Roy	0	0	None
Sam	2	1	None

Table 13 compares the magazine reading of the two groups in April. Polly Pigtaills was read by more children in each group than was any other magazine. Children's Activities, Play Mate, Story Parade, and Wee Wisdom were each read by every child except two in Group I. Jack and Jill was read by fourteen children in this group. No magazine was read by more than one half of the children in Group II.

TABLE 13

NUMBER AND KINDS OF MAGAZINES READ BY GROUP I
AND GROUP II IN APRIL

Magazines	Group I	Group II
Calling All Girls	2	6
Child Life	2	4
Children's Activities	16	3
Jack and Jill	14	6
Jr.	2	5
Open Road for Boys	2	2
Play Mate	16	2
Polly Pigtales	17	9
Story Parade	16	3
Wee Wisdom	16	5
Boys' Life *	8	..
Life *	1	6
Look *	..	4
Miss America *	..	1
Movie Camera*	..	1
McCalls*	..	1
See *	..	1

* Added by children

For further comparison, notice Table 14 and Table 15 which give the increase and decrease in comic books and magazine reading of each child in both groups. Table 14 also gives pertinent information concerning each child in Group I in order to get a better picture of the child as a whole. For instance, Sarah, who read the most comics in September, was nine years of age in April; made excellent grades all year; received a reading certificate; read twenty-two less comics in April than in September; and read five more magazines. Only two children in Group I read more comic books

in April than in September, and only one child read less magazines.

TABLE 14

THE INCREASE OR DECREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF COMIC
BOOK AND MAGAZINE READING BY GROUP I AT
THE END OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

Pupil	Age	Average Grades	Reading Certificate*	Comics		Magazines	
				More	Less	More	Less
Opal	9	C	No	-	6	5	-
Twila	10	B	Yes	-	4	4	-
Thelma	10	B	Yes	-	16	5	-
Fay	10	C	No	3	-	2	-
Flora	10	C	No	-	-	4	-
Sally	9	A	Yes	-	5	3	-
Sarah	9	A	Yes	-	22	5	-
Edith	9	C	No	-	6	4	-
Nell	9	B	Yes	-	2	4	-
Texia	10	B	Yes	-	12	5	-
Elmo	15	C	No	-	2	-	-
Tom	11	B	No	7	-	5	-
Theo	9	B	No	-	6	-	4
Floyd	10	C	No	-	9	5	-
Fred	10	A	Yes	-	13	7	-
Scott	11	C	No	-	17	-	-
Steve	10	A	Yes	-	6	6	-
Ellis	10	A	Yes	-	7	5	-

* Given for reading thirty library books during the year.

Table 15 gives similar information concerning Group II. Helen, who read the most comic books in September, was ten years old in April; made good grades all the year; received a reading certificate; read nine more comic books in April than in September; and read two more magazines. All of the children except two, who read the same number, read more comic

books in April than in September, while only eight read more magazines.

TABLE 15

THE INCREASE OR DECREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF COMIC
BOOK AND MAGAZINE READING BY GROUP II AT
THE END OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

Pupil	Age	Average Grades	Reading Certifi- cate*	Comics		Magazines	
				More	Less	More	Less
Ann	10	A	Yes	2	-	-	-
Bonnie	10	A	Yes	10	-	1	-
Clarice	9	C	No	18	-	6	-
Dora	10	A	Yes	27	-	8	-
Eunice	10	B	No	-	-	-	5
Flo	9	A	Yes	25	-	3	-
Gaynell	10	A	Yes	6	-	-	1
Helen	10	B	Yes	9	-	2	-
Ida	9	A	Yes	-	-	-	3
Julia	10	A	No	22	-	8	-
Kenneth	10	B	Yes	4	-	-	-
Larry	11	B	No	18	-	-	-
Marvin	10	B	No	14	-	2	-
Oscar	10	A	No	15	-	-	1
Paul	10	C	Yes	19	-	-	-
Quinton	10	C	Yes	15	-	3	-
Roy	11	C	Yes	18	-	-	1
Sam	10	C	No	7	-	-	1

* Given for reading thirty library books during the year

The foregoing discussion may be summarized as follows:

1. Group I's average reading of about twenty comic books at the beginning of the experimental period, decreased to about thirteen comic books at the end of the period.

2. Group II's average reading of about thirteen comic books, at the beginning of the experimental period, increased

to about twenty-three comic books at the end of the period.

3. The magazine reading was about equal at the beginning of the experimental period, but at the end of the period Group I was reading twice as many magazines as Group II.

4. The animated animal comic book remained popular with both groups.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

It has been the purpose of this study to determine the effect a systematically planned free reading program will have on the reading habits of fourth-graders, with special emphasis on comic book reading. The ratio of the comic book and magazine reading has been noted. The history and status of the comic book serve as a background for this study.

Conclusions

The following conclusions have been reached as a result of this study:

1. The real beginning of the present day comic book was in May, 1939, when the Superman Quarterly Magazine appeared.
2. The number of different comic books has risen to over two hundred and a total of about sixty million copies are sold each month in the United States.
3. The comic book is a part of today's world and can no longer be ignored.

4. Teachers and parents should use the best these books have to offer, but guide the children in more and better reading.

5. At the beginning of the experimental period Group I averaged reading about twenty comic books a month, while Group II read only about ten.

6. At the end of the experimental period Group I averaged reading about thirteen comic books a month, while Group II averaged about twenty-three.

7. The decline in the number of comic books read by Group I was due, to some extent, to the fact that they were systematically exposed to children's magazines and other appropriate reading materials.

8. Other reasons for the decline in the reading of comic books were: (a) their interests and needs were studied closely, (b) their desire for thrills was partly met by the reading of continued stories and books, with suspense and action involved; (c) special guidance was given in the selection of library books; (d) free discussions of radio programs, movies, and stories were encouraged and directed.

Limitations of the Study

The scope and reliability of this study have been limited by several factors, namely:

1. The small number of children that were questioned

2. No questionnaires were given during the eight month period

3. The responses of children of about nine years of age vary from day to day

Recommendations

All parents and teachers should know what their children are reading. They should study closely the child as a whole and find out his needs for certain types of reading material.

Magazines written at his reading level should be provided and an effort made to familiarize him with them. Magazines should not be bought in the place of comic books, but with them. A child should not be put on the defensive in regard to his comic book reading.

Rapport should be built up between the parent and the child as well as between the teacher and the child. A child's life should be rich, full, and exciting -- with a sense of security firmly grounded. He needs, besides good health, friends of his age, a sense of belonging, hobbies, easy tasks to perform at home and at school, directed recreation, and plenty of easy, interesting reading material.

Parent Teacher Associations, churches, clubs, and civic organizations should find out what the children in their town are reading and help provide more and better material when it is needed.

Publishers of children's magazines and books have made great strides in fulfilling some of the reading needs of children in the last decade, but much more needs to be done. There should be a magazine for boys under ten years of age. Writers of textbooks might present some of their subject matter in the style of the comic book. The illustrators of stories and books have a wonderful opportunity. The pictures must do more than merely illustrate the story; they can produce the effect of action.

More summer reading programs should be set up. This can be done with the cooperation of teachers, parents, and librarians.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN IN GROUP I AND GROUP II

Name _____ Date _____

Age _____ Sex _____

Draw a line under the name of each magazine or comic book that you read often. If you subscribe to it or buy each issue, draw two lines under it:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Adventure Comics | 18. Frankenstein |
| 2. Animal Fables | 19. Jack and Jill |
| 3. Action Comics | 20. Jr. |
| 4. Batman | 21. Jungle Comics |
| 5. Boy Commando | 22. Magic Comics |
| 6. Bugs Bunny | 23. Mystery Comics |
| 7. Calling All Boys | 24. Open Road for Boys |
| 8. Calling All Girls | 25. Picture Stories from History |
| 9. Calling All Kids | 26. Plastic Man |
| 10. Child Life | 27. Play Mate Magazine |
| 11. Children's Activities | 28. Polly Pigtales |
| 12. Comic Cavalcade | 29. Real Heroes |
| 13. Crime Comics | 30. Story Parade |
| 14. Detective Comics | 31. Superman |
| 15. Donald Duck | 32. True Comics |
| 16. Fantastic Comics | 33. Wee Wisdom |
| 17. Famous Funnies | 34. World's Finest Comics |

Which is your favorite magazine and comic book? _____

Write the names of all other magazines and comic books that
you read that are not on the list: _____

APPENDIX B

INTEREST AND ACTIVITY INVENTORIES FOR GROUP I

Name _____ Date _____

Age _____ Sex _____

1. Write the names of the magazines that you subscribe to:

2. Do you like to read? _____

3. Do you like for someone to read to you? _____

4. Name two or three of your favorite books: _____

5. Draw a line under the words about which you like to read stories: horses, dogs, deer, other animals, airplanes, children of foreign lands, fairies, kings, cowboys, crime, jungles, war, boys and girls like you.

6. Do you have a library card at the public library? _____

7. About how many books did you read this summer? _____

8. Do you have a radio at home? _____

9. Name some of your favorite programs: _____

10. Do you sometimes dream at night about the things that you hear over the radio? _____

11. Which programs do you think might scare children younger than you? _____

12. Do you take any private lessons such as music or dancing?

13. How many times a week do you go to the movies?_____

14. How much money do you spend each week for pleasure?_____

15. Name some of the shows that you have seen lately that
you enjoyed very much:_____

16. Write the names of your best friends:_____

17. Name several games that you like to play:_____

18. Do you like to be the leader of a game?_____

19. Do you like to draw pictures?_____

20. Do you like to work puzzles and answer riddles?_____

21. Can you sing very well?_____

22. Draw a line under the things that you can do: cook,
sew, embroider, knit, crochet, build model planes, model
clay, build things with wood.

23. Do you have pets?_____Describe them:_____

24. Who takes care of them?_____

25. Have you ever raised a vegetable or flower garden?_____

26. Do you have a calf, pig or chickens?_____
27. What kind of ball games do you like to play?&_____
28. Of all the persons that you have known, heard about,
or read about, whom would you most wish to be?_____
- _____
29. Why do you like or admire this person so much?_____
- _____
30. Do you like to be in programs on the stage?_____
31. Are you happy most of the time?_____
32. Do you cry often?_____ Why?_____
33. What things do you do at school and at home that you
dislike very much?_____
34. What part of school do you like best?_____
35. Draw a line under the thing you had rather do:
- a. Ride a bicycle or listen to the radio
 - b. Listen to the radio or read a book
 - c. Go to the movies or read a story
 - d. Listen to the radio or go to the movies
 - e. Play a musical instrument or listen to the radio
 - f. Draw pictures or read a story
 - g. (for girls) Play dolls or read a comic book
 - h. (for boys) Play football or read a comic book
 - i. Dry the dishes or go on an errand
 - j. Work arithmetic problems or read a story

k. Read a comic book or go to the movies

l. Go to a football game or read a comic book

m. Read a comic book or ride a horse

36. What church do you attend? _____

37. Are you a member? _____

38. How often do you go to church? _____

39. Do you belong to any clubs or organizations? _____

Name them and tell how often and where they meet: _____

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF GROUP I

Name of child _____ Age _____ Sex _____

1. How much time does your child spend each day on his home work? _____
2. What does your child do around the house to help you?

3. Does your child work any away from home? _____
4. What radio programs does your child listen to closely and regularly? _____
5. What magazines and comic books does your child buy to read? _____
6. Are others borrowed or exchanged often? _____
7. How many times a week does your child go to the movies?

8. Does your child seem content to play and work alone part of the time? _____
9. What lesson or activity in school does your child dislike? _____
10. Does your child tell you very much about the things that happen at school unless you ask specific questions?

11. Do you know of any physical defects your child has; such as weak eyes, ear trouble, infected tonsils, nervousness, kidney trouble? _____

12. Do you forbid your child to read certain books, see certain movies, listen to certain programs on the radio? _____

APPENDIX D

LIST OF MAGAZINES SENT TO PARENTS

1. Jack and Jill, \$2.50 a year, order from Curtis Publishing Co., Philadelphia 5, Penn.
2. Wee Wisdom, \$1.00 a year, order from Unity School of Christianity, 917 Tracy Street, Kansas City, 6, Mo.
3. Child Life, \$3.00 a year, order from Child Life, McCall Street, Dayton, 1, Ohio.
4. Children's Activities, \$3.00 a year, order from Child Training Association, Inc., 1018 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill.
5. Story Parade, \$3.00 a year, order from Story Parade, 1 Madison Ave., New York, 10, New York.
6. Play Mate, \$1.50 a year, order from A. R. Mueller Co., 3025 East 75th St., Cleveland, 4, Ohio.
7. Boys' Life, \$2.50 a year, order from Boy Scouts of America, 2 Park Avenue, New York, 17, New York.
8. Open Road for Boys, \$3.00 a year, order from Open Road Publishing Co., 729 Boylston St., Boston, 16, Mass.
9. Jr., \$5.00 a year, order from Progressive Educators Inc., 812 North Dearborn St., Chicago, 10, Ill.
10. The Parents Magazine Press, 260 Fourth Avenue, New York, 10, New York;

a. Polly Pigtales, \$1.50 a year

b. Calling All Girls, \$1.75 a year

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Arbuthnot, May Hill, Children and Books, Chicago, Scott, Foreman and Company, 1947.
- Waugh, Coulton, The Comics, New York, the MacMillan Company, 1947.
- Witty, Paul and Kopel, David, Reading and the Educative Process, Boston, Ginn and Company, 1939.

Articles

- Brennecke, Ernest, "The Real Mission of the Funny Paper," Century Magazine, CVII (March, 1924), 665-675.
- Broun, Heywood, "It Seems to Heywood Broun," The Nation, CXXXI (July 23, 1930), 87.
- Frank, Josette, "Looking at the Comics," Child Study, XX (Summer, 1943), 112-118.
- Greene, Ward, "The Comics Have Rules of Their Own," Good Housekeeping, CXXI (September, 1945), 24; 121-123.
- Laas, William, "A Half-Century of Comic Art," Saturday Review of Literature, XXXI (March 20, 1948), 30; 39-41.
- Laurie, Sarah D., "The Comic Strip," The Forum, LXXXIX (April, 1928), 527-536.
- Milton, Jennie, "Children and the Comics," Childhood Education, XVI (October, 1939), 60-64.
- North, Sterling, "The Antidote for Comics," National Parent-Teacher, XXXV (March, 1941), 16-17.
- Pennell, Elizabeth Robbins, "Our Tragic Comics," North American Review, CCXI (February, 1920), 256.
- Porter, Bessie, "A Project in Motivating Interest in Reading," Elementary School Journal, XLVIII (September, 1947), 41-44.

- Price, Burr, "Comics Go Big Business," World's Work, LX (August, 1931), 35-37.
- Publisher's Weekly, CXL (November 22, 1941), 1953, Article, "Book Week Audience Hears About Comics."
- Publisher's Weekly, CLI (June 14, 1947), 2941, Article, "Comics' Publishers Organize to Improve Standards."
- Publisher's Weekly, CXLIX (March 23, 1948), 1736, Article, "Classic Comics Sell a Hundred Million."
- Sewell, Helen, "Illustrator Meets the Comics," The Hornbook Magazine, XXIV (March-April, 1948), 137-140.
- Sones, W. W. D., "Comic Books Are Going to School," Progressive Education, XXIV (April, 1947), 208-209, 212.
- Thompson, Lovell, "Not So Comic," Atlantic Monthly, CLXVII (January, 1941), 105-107.
- Thorndyke, Robert L., "Analyzing the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), 110-113.
- Weller, Hayden, "The First Comic Book," Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 195.
- Wertham, Fredric, "The Comics -- Very Funny," Reader's Digest, LIII (August, 1948), 15-18.
- Wertham, Fredric, "The Comics -- Very Funny," The Saturday Review of Literature, XXXI (May 29, 1948), 6-7, 27-29.
- Witty, Paul, "Children's Interest in Reading the Comics," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), 100-104.
- Witty, Paul, "Reading the Comics -- A Comparative Study," Journal of Experimental Education, X (December, 1941), 105-109.
- Witty, Paul and Moore, Dorothy, "Interest in Reading the Comics Among Negro Children," Journal of Educational Psychology, XXXVI (May, 1945), 303-308.

Zorbaugh, Harvey, Editorial in Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 194.

Zorbaugh, Harvey, "The Comics -- There They Stand," Journal of Educational Sociology, XVIII (December, 1944), 196-203.