Review of recent literature on the problems confronting boys in reading experiences

Ronald B. Janaky

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.stritch.edu/etd

Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.stritch.edu/etd/823

This Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by Stritch Shares. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses, Capstones, and Projects by an authorized administrator of Stritch Shares. For more information, please contact smbagley@stritch.edu.
A REVIEW OF RECENT LITERATURE ON THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING BOYS IN READING EXPERIENCES

CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE LIBRARY
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

by
Ronald B. Janaky

A RESEARCH PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION (READING SPECIALIST) AT CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1973
This Research Paper has been approved for the Graduate Committee of Cardinal Stritch College by

Sister Marie Colette
(Adviser)

Date February 17, 1973
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This writer wishes to express his sincere gratitude to Sister Marie Colette, the adviser of this paper, for her help and guidance, and to all members of the Graduate Division Faculty of Cardinal Stritch College.

My greatest debt is to my wife, Kathleen, and our children Rick and Nicole for their love, faith, inspiration and understanding in the writer's undertaking of this paper.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................ iii

CHAPTER

I. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM .................................. 1

   Introduction
   Statement of the Problem
   Significance of the Study
   Scope and Limitations
   Summary

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .......................... 4

   Problems Confronting Boys in Reading Experiences
     Maturation and Growth Problems
       Physical and Psychological Problems
       Emotional Problems
       Social Problems
     Educational Problems
       Teacher Problems
       Materials
       School Environment Problems
     Parental Problems
   Reasons for the Problems Confronting Boys
     Physical Reasons
     School Reasons
   Solution to the Problems Confronting Boys
     Maturational Solutions
     Teacher Solutions
     School Environment Solutions
       Sex Grouping
       Materials
     Parental Solutions
   Summary
III. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction
Conclusions

Problems Confronting Boys
in Reading Experiences
  Maturation Problems
  Emotional Problems
  Social Problems
  Teacher Problems
  Material Problems
  School Problems
  Parental Problems

Reasons for the Problems Confronting Boys
  Physical Reasons
  School Reasons
  Social Reasons

Solutions to the Problems Confronting Boys
  Maturation Solutions
  Teacher Solutions
  School Environment Solutions
  Material Solutions
  Parental Solutions

Implications

BIBLIOGRAPHY.
CHAPTER I

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

One does not have to venture far, into either literature or the depths of the classroom, to find support for the contention that boys very often do less well in reading than girls. Heilman gives the following reasons why boys tend to achieve at a slower rate.

A number of factors have been advanced as possible explanations of this difference in reading achievement. These include general maturational factors, the school environment, reading materials, societal expectations, emotional incapacities, a preponderance of women teachers in the primary grades, and difference of motivational level between the sexes.¹

The above quotation is offered as an invitation to all teachers involved in the teaching of reading to become aware of the factors which may impede the progress of boys in reading achievement and to help in obliterating the discriminating factors.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this review was to determine the problems confronting boys in reading experiences, and to suggest possible solutions to those problems.

The questions this review intended to explore through a review of the research were:

1. what were the problems facing boys in their pre-school experiences?
2. what were the problems facing boys in their reading experiences?
3. what adjustments could be made to overcome some of the existing problems?

Significance of the Study

This research paper was written in order to provide the reader with an overview of the problems confronting boys during the development of their reading skills. Although the review of research presented will probably be read and used mainly by teachers, it is hoped that the attention of parents and school officials will also be directed towards the research findings. Finally, it is hoped that the summary and conclusions of the study will provide for a better understanding and relationships between student and teacher, and that the entire reading program will benefit because of it.
Scope and Limitations

This study was initiated to compile the available and relevant research on the overall difficulties facing males in reading instruction so as to gain a better understanding of the difficulties and their solutions. Only those investigations were reviewed that dealt with the physical, emotional, social, motivational material, environmental, parental, and teacher effects on boys and their reading experiences. Although the majority of the studies were based on material published within the last five years, a few readings prior to that time were used because of their direct and solid contributions to the matter concerned.

Summary

This chapter began with a quotation suggesting problems which may impede the reading progress of boys and it called for the cooperation of all interested in education to help remedy those situations.

The problem was clearly presented, and the scope and limitations of the review were given.

The following chapters will review the literature pertaining to difficulties confronting the male population in reading instruction and describe possible solutions to these problems.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The teaching of reading is a major concern of education today. The statistics from many schools indicate that boys have more difficulty than girls in learning to read. In fact, large school systems report that, at the upper elementary level, the boys comprise seventy-five per cent to eighty per cent of all reading disabilities. Enrollment figures from reading clinics show that boys compose over eighty-five per cent of the students in classes for reading improvement.

With these facts in mind, this review of related literature will attempt to reveal some patterns of causes. If some adjustments are made within the home and school environment, a percentage of retardation can be reduced.

Problems Confronting Boys in Reading Experiences

In the investigation of the problems confronting boys in reading experiences, a pattern of reasons appeared. The available literature pointed out that most causes were maturational, educational, or parental in nature.

Maturation and Growth Problems

Physical and Psychological Problems. -- The subject of sex differences in reading acquisition and school achievement
has been a popular area of study for many years. Peltier, in his study, stated that in many ways, young males start life's struggle with gross handicaps. Boys mature less rapidly than girls: physically they are at least a year behind at the age of six, eighteen months behind at age nine, and a full two years less mature upon entrance to high school. Psychologically, differences between the sexes are also apparent. Boys usually learn to be more aggressive, independent, and outspoken and to avoid displays of emotion, befitting their traditional sex roles. Boys generally are superior in analytical thinking, problem solving and scientific pursuits.¹

Through the preschool years and in the early school years, girls exceed boys in most aspects of verbal performance. Girls say their first words sooner; articulate more clearly at an earlier age, use longer sentences, and are more fluent. By the beginning of school, however, Good and Brophy suggest that there are no longer any consistent differences in vocabulary. They suggest that girls learn to read sooner and there are more boys than girls who require special training in remedial reading programs. A number of their studies show that boys, by

approximately the age of ten, have refined their reading skills. What does need to be affirmed in this case, is that the male population would not have improved without the assistance of additional reading instruction.

It is common knowledge that boys and girls mature at different rates. However, the implications for educational theory of differing physiology need to be stressed. Since boys are less physiologically mature, eye muscles and visual acuity may not be equal to the task of beginning reading, and their attention span may be shorter than teacher-guided instructional periods. Heilman emphasizes that maturation cannot be hastened through stress or training. As a result of a large number of different experiences in language development he has found that girls tend to be significantly superior to boys in language usage and facility throughout the preschool and primary grades.

Stanchfield has been an activist for the Right to Read effort and has been especially concerned with reading achievement of boys. In one study her data agrees in theory with those of Heilman. In verbal facility she found boys to be poor verbalizers, speaking in incomplete

---

1 Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, "Questioned Equality for Grade One Boys and Girls," Reading Teacher, XXV (December, 1971), 252.

and fragmented sentences, and less fluent than girls. As for skill of discriminating sounds, the boys' inadequacies in articulation, enunciation, and pronunciation led to greater difficulties in phonetic analysis skills. Many times it would take boys eight or ten lessons to learn and recognize sounds that the girls could identify in three lessons. Her studies have also shown that boys have special interests and do not like the so-called girlish books, but that girls not only like their own special books, but also all of the so-called boys' books.¹

One interesting position on sex differences in today's education is held by the maturationists. They contend that the superiority of girls could realistically be explained on the basis of heredity. Cardon, an active maturationist, points to the substantial differences in language ability. She views this greater language sense is looked upon as genetic in origin one of the endowments of womanhood. Data from many studies support this and ample evidence exists for a genetic basis for sex differences in achievement.²

Olsen and Bentzen, as reported by Smith, contend that reading growth throughout the elementary grades follows


approximately the same growth curve as general physical development. Their theory, called the organismic age concept, resulted from attempts to measure a child's total development. The measure consists of averaging a child's mental age, reading age, and age status of development in several aspects of physical growth, such as dental age, weight age, grip age, and the development of wrist bones.\(^1\) Olsen further contends that progress in reading is more closely related to organismic age than it is to mental ability.\(^2\) Out of this theory has grown the self-seeking, self-selection, and self-pacing activities which are being implemented through individualized reading programs, now used widely in some parts of the country.

Minuchin says boys appear to be more confident about their actions, have negative feelings about school, and are less concerned about achievement and adult approval. They are more enthused around power, active competition, and mastery so as to prove their manhood.\(^3\) It has also been suggested by Cohn, that the greater restlessness of the six year old boy and his apparently greater need to assert

---


physical prowess and to get satisfaction from vigorous outdoor play may militate against his giving optimum attention to the paper and pencil activities which are ordinarily used to develop readiness for reading.¹

In his 1971 study, Reilly found that auditory-visual integration skill development was related both to grade level and to sex. He suggested that auditory-visual integration ability needs to be carefully considered in developing appropriate and differentiated teaching techniques by grade level. He also suggested that these same techniques be developed for males and females at different grade levels, with a particular focus on developing auditory-visual integration of skills of males at kindergarten and first grade levels. The results suggested that the differences in reading achievement of males and females may be a function of auditory-visual integration skills.²

Intellectually there is greater variability among boys, many of them being at the extreme ends of the intellectual curve. Girls show greater skill in rote learning and verbal tasks while boys do better on tasks requiring mathematical ability and inductive reasoning. Our culture


expects boys to be aggressive and athletic and reading is often associated with femininity. Boys are usually introduced to reading by female teachers, which may have some adverse effects on their view toward the reading act.\textsuperscript{1} Criscuolo referred to the previous findings because they pointed out the importance of developing different organizational patterns and unique reading programs to account for the sex factor and its influence on reading achievement.

In summary, the maturation and growth problems facing boys, both physical and psychological, were described. Opinions differ concerning the extent to which sex differences are related to physical development. Nevertheless, the evidence does demonstrate that girls have more advanced visual and auditory discrimination ability and are superior in reading, spelling and language achievement in the primary years. Clark seems to summarize this section on sex differences best when he says:

For the most part, characteristics that differentiate between boys and girls are no greater than the differences found among themselves. The problem is not whether significant differences exist between the sexes but whether their differences have educational implications.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Emotional Problems.}—Many authorities in the field of reading have accepted the factor of emotional maladjustments as a primary cause of reading disability. Robinson says:

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{1}] Nicholas Criscuolo, "Sex Influences on Reading," \textit{Reading Teacher}, XXI (May, 1968), 762-63.
  \item[\textsuperscript{2}] Willis W. Clark, "Boys and Girls: Are There Significant Ability and Achievement Differences?" \textit{Phi Delta Kappan}, XLI (November, 1959), 73.
\end{itemize}
The emotionality of an individual at the time he is learning a task has a definite influence upon his efficiency in the learning situation. His emotional balance or imbalance also has a definite effect upon his retention of the material that he has learned and upon his ability to recall and put into use that which he may have learned well previously.¹

Maturation in emotional behavior differs from maturation in many other fundamental areas of child development. Maturation is essential to physiological growth, mental growth, creative growth, and any other growth that follows a natural pattern of unfolding design. Emotion, however, is not a concrete and orderly growth which can be characterized in stages of development. Rather it is an effect or an accompaniment of other growths. According to Smith, "the range of emotional behavior at any particular age, however, is still undetermined, and there is no scale of normative emotional behavior at certain age levels."²

Most psychologists believe that the foundation patterns of lifetime emotional response are laid in the earlier years but modified in certain respects as the individual develops physically and mentally. Emotional maturity is reached when an individual has attained the ability to respond appropriately in personal-social situations.

¹Helen Mansfield Robinson, Why Pupils Fail in Reading (The University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 76.

Heilman reports that during the primary and early elementary years, the emotional, personality, and behavioral problems which schools refer to various agencies include a disproportionate number of boys as compared with girls. Since boys are the poorer achievers, it follows that in American culture the school, the teacher, and the home put more pressure on boys at this age level. Frustration results and is reflected in poor or inadequate response in any stress situation such as learning a very complicated symbol system. The disproportionate number of boys found as referrals to guidance clinics and reading clinics may be related to this cultural tendency.\textsuperscript{1}

Sexton adds to Heilman’s report by saying “Men are more troubled by social roles and sex norms and lead rougher lives than women. More is expected of them and their emotional outlets are more limited. They are under more pressure and have fewer escape valves.”\textsuperscript{2}

Emotional and personality maladjustment in children who failed to learn to read properly seems to be very common. Emotional maladjustment appears to be either a cause or a result of reading failure, or each might interact on the other intensifying both. Robinson found upon


analyzing her data that emotionally immature children might fail to learn to read when starting school. It was likewise stressed that neurotic children should be carefully studied before reading training is provided. Children who failed to read either accepted their failure and lost confidence, or explained away, or refused to accept failure. The evaluation of children's emotional response is such a complex problem that few studies have been made in this field, although most investigators recognize the problem.\(^1\) It should be added that emotional reactions may also aid in learning to read as much as they may interfere with it. Some children become highly motivated when confronted with failure.

In conclusion, the effects of emotional disturbances are so diverse and their manifestations so varied that they should never be overlooked during the instruction and evaluation of young readers.

Social Problems.---Socially, the important basic needs are: approval, belongingness, similarity to others, friendship and love. The child who is reading will feel that he has the approval of parents, teachers, and classmates. He also feels that he is like others in his group and that he belongs to them and with them.\(^2\) From previous discussions


we should be aware that this sense of acceptance and belonging is very important to young boys. Because the reader reads well he feels that those with whom he associates admire him, recognize him favorably and with affection.

Clark has stated that during a boy's infant years he develops first an identity with his mother because of the nurturing dependency he has upon her. As he grows out of this stage and becomes more independent in his actions, identity with the father or another dominant male within the family is essential. It would then seem appropriate to say that the first reading right for boys as they enter the school setting is to be permitted to function within the male pattern of characteristics which became dominant during the preschool years.¹

In 1961, a study by Stanchfield using 6,646 boys and 6,468 girls in grades two through eight was published. Stanchfield found that the scores derived from the Gates Reading Survey showed those of girls were significantly higher than those of boys at all grade levels. It was felt that the poor showing of boys on the tests indicated an environmental rather than a hereditary explanation. Perhaps more girls than boys experienced life situations in which there were greater opportunities, incentives and respect for reading. Because of the different role conception in our culture,

the boys may have failed to be motivated. Perhaps too, they were less interested in the school routines and materials of instruction than were the girls. In the same vein, it was also stated that our cultural heritage encourages boys to seek out roles which exemplify the all-American boy image, and that role does not emphasize reading in the idealized male.

During the past few years the study of various pre-reading factors has been of interest to many research workers. One of their objectives has been to identify abilities which are predictive of reading achievement. Research has given special attention to the investigation of environmental factors which influence the students' opportunity to develop their abilities. Socio-economic status has been one of the more important environmental factors under investigation. Mortenson found in his research that "Boys from the lower socio-economic strata need a great deal of practice in visual and auditory discrimination prior to formal reading instruction." However, it must be acknowledged that the improvement of

---


visual and auditory discrimination abilities is only one part of a pre-reading program. Caukins agrees with Mortensen, but makes the educational suggestion that the Fernald method of instruction be used to compensate for the visual and auditory deficiencies.¹

Peltier in discussing the social effect of reading upon boys suggests:

The socialization process in contemporary America is so organized that expectations toward girl's behavior tend to be more clearly defined and more consistent than is the case for boys of ages nine to fifteen. Boys are also expected to be more rebellious and aggressive, and such behavior is unacceptable in many social situations in school and no educational adjustments have been made to compensate. In the family, girls often have more opportunities to interact with their mothers than boys do with their fathers. The pattern is about the same in school. Girls, however, are greatly nudged toward conformity and passivity. They tend to be more sensitive to human relations and are permitted to express their emotions more fully.²

In conclusion, a number of social factors have been reported which suggest certain relationships between the social setting of American culture and acquiring skills. It would be wise to keep these facts in mind when contemplating a discussion on boys and the problems they face in acquiring the skill of reading.

¹Sivan E. Caukins, "Why Johnny Can't Learn to Read, or Sex Differences in Education," ERIC, V (December, 1970), 75.

Educational Problems

Teacher Problems.--In public elementary schools, eighty-five per cent of all teachers are women. In all public schools, women are sixty-eight per cent of the total number of teachers. Men are now a bare majority in secondary schools. Though they are usually administered by men, schools are essentially feminine institutions. Women set the standard for adult behavior, and many favor students who most conform to their own behavior norms: polite, clean, obedient, neat and nice. While there is nothing wrong with the code for those who like it, it does not give boys much room to flex their muscles, physical or intellectual.

Sexton has stated that school words tend to be the words of women. They have their own fragrance. Boys usually prefer tough and colorful short words while female teachers and girls lean toward longer, more floral words. School words are clean, refined, idealized, and as remote from physical things as the typical schoolmarm is from the tough realities of ordinary life.¹

In any examination of the school setting and in a search to sort out discriminating elements, many elements can be found which create a potential conflict within boys.

The student's self-concept is a topic to which many researchers have addressed themselves. Richardson feels that teachers contribute to the child's poor self-concept: "(1) by not having set high expectations for children so as to stimulate learning, (2) by not setting an emotional climate which is healthy for children, (3) by not having a flow of verbal interactions which include all children, (4) by not analyzing class groupings to see how the individual child reacts in the group situation, (5) by not supplying mature incentives for children and (6) by not setting a discipline climate for the child."¹

In agreement on one point with Richardson is Palardy. He believes "boys are less successful than girls in reading instruction because their teachers believe they will be less successful."²

The emotional relationship between teachers and students is highly stressed by Heilman. He suggests that the difference in reading success between boys and girls is related to their emotional relationship with their teachers. He again suggests, as other researchers mentioned earlier, that emotionally it is easier for girls to identify with women teachers and that boys are not provided with enough outlets for the feelings of aggression they hold within them.


His various studies all agree that boys show more aggression tendencies than girls.¹

Several studies have indicated that elementary school girls receive significantly greater approval from teachers than do boys. Peltier relays the message that even in the home girls perceive themselves as being more accepted and valued by parents than do boys. In the school setting, he suggests that women teachers scold boys more often and much more harshly than they do girls.²

The comparison of active, aggressive behavior of the boys versus the conforming, nice behavioral responses of girls was understood by Stanchfield who suggested:

Niceness is a very important value to school age girls, connoting nonaggression, interpersonal conformity, restraint, and nurturance of helpfulness. Because aggression has been considered a major component of badness by many teachers, it is not surprising that boys have experienced the discrimination that they have. Further, teachers criticizing a boy were more likely to use a harsh or angry tone, while criticisms of girls were generally conveyed in a normal tone.³

It is not surprising that she reported that boys receive significantly more disapproval and blame than girls.


³Jo M. Stanchfield, "Differences in Learning Patterns of Boys and Girls," Claremont Reading Conference Yearbook, XXXII (1968), pp. 221-23.
Sears agrees with Stanchfield and when discussing tone of voice for disapproval, she found that teachers criticizing a boy were more likely to use a harsh or angry tone and the criticism of girls was more likely to be conveyed in a normal voice.\(^1\) Brophy also found that boys received more negative teacher feedback, although this fact is attributed to sex differences in classroom behavior and not to discriminatory teacher behavior.\(^2\)

Caukins, in his dissertation, reported on a study in which the reading achievement of German and American children was contrasted. While the means of American girls exceeded those of American boys at both grade levels studied, grades four and six, the reverse was true in the German samples. He noted that teachers in Germany are predominantly male.\(^3\)

In Preston's study, cited by Cardon, 1,380 sixth grade boys and girls in Philadelphia schools were matched and compared with 1,053 sixth grade boys and girls in schools of Wiesbaden, Germany. They were matched on the basis of intelligence quotient, parental occupation, and


\(^2\) Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, "Questioned Equality for Grade One Boys and Girls," *Reading Teacher*, XXV (December, 1971), 248.

\(^3\) Sivan E. Caukins, "Why Johnny Can't Learn to Read, or Sex Differences in Education," *ERIC*, VII (December, 1970), 75.
instructional level. Using crosstranslations of the Gates Reading Survey and Frankfurt Test, he found that in Philadelphia girls were superior to boys in reading but in Wiesboden, boys were superior to girls. He felt that the reason for these results was that women teachers are interested in girl weaknesses, and men teachers are interested in male weaknesses in young children.¹

Two somewhat opposing viewpoints were found on the treatment of boys in female orientated classrooms. Good reported the results of a 1970 study which indicated that teachers extend equal treatment to boys and girls during reading instruction. The data did show differential teacher treatment by student's achievement level with high achievement students, both male and female, receiving preferential teacher behavior.² McNeil found that kindergarten boys' achievement was more superior to that of girls when initial instruction depended exclusively on the use of programmed materials. The programmed instruction was followed by four months of instruction with women teachers, and girls' achievement was superior to boys. The research


²Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, "Questioned Equality for Grade One Boys and Girls," Reading Teacher, XXV (December, 1971), 249.
indicated that there were teacher variables within the classroom which war against the performance of young boys in early reading experiences.¹

Thus from the limited evidence surveyed, it appears that girls could be given preferential treatment by teachers. Educators should be aware of this variable and how it could possibly affect youngsters' educations. The evidence also suggests that boys should be permitted to function within their nature and faculties.

Materials.--Some boys have trouble with beginning reading instruction not because they are immature, but because everything about the typical primary reading program is much more feminine than masculine. "Allow boys to select their own stories, put up a bulletin board highlighting current sport heroes and watch the boys suddenly come to light."²

"Basal readers are less motivating and satisfying to boys than girls." Heilman also alleges that the content is a far cry from what the culture has taught to and expects of boys. Therefore beginning reading instruction which should be an exciting, challenging, new adventure,

---


is actually a dull regressive sort of experience unless the teacher can project a great deal into the material.¹

Some investigators have given the content of basal readers as reasons why boys tend to have difficulty in reading. They claim that since the interests of boys and girls differ, the reading material in books should be adjusted to compensate for the difference. Smith believes, however, that the reason boys and girls who are equally ready to read do not make the same progress is in the fact that the material is not properly motivated.²

In terms of self-consistency, Clark found that boys considered elementary reading material infantile and effeminate.³ It then follows that the schools need to consider learning strategies more appropriate to the interests of boys in order to utilize their own personal and group vocabularies.

When comparing the content of first grade primers and the free choice library book selection made by first grade students, Otto's research data showed a marked disparity


between the story content of primers and what is made available and preferred in an elementary school library. The findings also support the conclusion that primers currently in use do not contain the kind of content that is most appealing to the children who use them.\(^1\)

The dominant theme of all the research is that instruction and materials need to be adjusted to the individual needs of the student. Stanchfield agrees with the preceding comment and adds that she "found it difficult to interest boys in subject matter that did not have the appearance of the universal and the dynamic."\(^2\)

While educators can know and understand all the general findings that have been reported, they can still be hopelessly misled in dealing with the individual child. Several general approaches exist to guide teachers in finding the right material for the right student. Washburne suggests:

> Use teacher made questionnaires about pupil experiences, provide opportunities for informal discussion, have regular procedures for sharing pupil enthusiasms, and have a mental file of children's books in order to fit the necessary skill material to the child.\(^3\)


\(^2\) Jo M. Stanchfield, "Increasing Boy's Reading Achievement through Instructional Materials," *Vistas in Reading*, XI (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1967), 441.

\(^3\) C. Washburne, "Reading Interests," *Elementary English*, LXIX (April, 1972), 540.
School Environment Problems.--The responsibility of society, school, and teachers are entwined, it is difficult to separate their unique responsibilities. The role of the school as an institution further complicates the problems of sex differences. Obviously, sex differences complicate teaching, yet schools have been essentially sex neutral institutions, treating unequals as equals.

Increasingly, boys within the school environment are drawn toward female norms. The attraction is the rainbow that lies at the end, graduation with honor, the school diploma, the college degree. Of course, school achievement is not identical with life achievement, though the two are closely related. Sexton writes that many exceptional boys can break all school rules and still rise to the top in life. Nor are those who lead the most powerful organization usually the most feminized males. More often they are those who have managed to escape the influences of the school environment. She further suggests that by stressing individual competition within the schools' makeup and ignoring group achievement, schools ignore the group loyalties of boys.¹ It seems that the incentive system of grading drives boys to a position of resistance to achievement and is negatively effective as a means of motivating boys to achieve.

In his writings about the effectiveness of schools, Heilman indicated that the American culture, and schools as a part of that culture, have assumed that there is no difference between sexes.

He feels this way because:

(1) standardized achievement and reading tests use the same problems and norms for both boys and girls, (2) both sexes enter school at the same chronological age and (3) schools recognize no differences.¹

Bentzen also agrees with Heilman over the finding that schools have lacked the initiative of allowing for differences in test construction. It does seem to her that any rationale that deliberately ignores evidence of sex differences in achievement and/or intelligence among children is more apt to be unfair to both sexes than to one or the other.²

A boy's natural curiosity needs little stimulation at school but needs acceptance and direction. It usually meets repression and rules that dampen curiosity and the enjoyment of the learning act. Boys enjoy role playing, games, and sports which offer group loyalty. The school violates the natural loyalties that boys work to make and builds resistance in boys who are responsive to the best


²Frances Bentzen, "Sex Ratios in Learning and Behavior Disorders," National Elementary Principal, XLVI (November, 1966), 16.
interests of their groups. As a result schools cannot remain inflexible and not provide learning experiences for all children.

Lastly, Robinson concludes that research shows that sex differences are prevalent in reading achievement during the initial years of a child's early school instruction, but it is not clear whether being a girl gives a child a better chance for reading success or whether there is something within the school setting that militates against the progress of boys.

From the previously mentioned research on school environmental problems, it can be deduced that the planned curriculum and rules can only be a base from which to use one's own judgment in order to work with children and assist them in reaching their potential, working within the school's framework. It should also be the function of the school to analyze and accept reliable research findings and to make adjustments within the confines of the school so that boys' group loyalties and natural incentives can be used to aid them in reaching their potential within the school atmosphere.

Parental Problems

The family is one of the particularly significant units by which a culture perpetuates itself. All of its

---


previous history is invested in the parental roles. Early learning takes place in the home and it is there that the parental contribution is truly significant.

Few parents realize the tremendous amount of education a child gets in the home long before he is ready for school. His language and speech patterns are well-established by then. There are meanings behind the words he uses, relationships among them, and experience associations with them. What is more important, there is a feeling about everything he does: what he thinks of himself and what he thinks of others. Parents are creating his whole outlook on life.

Sadly, many parents get bored with the simplicity of such early beginnings of learning; there is so much routine and monotony in caring for little children. Cohn has estimated that fifty per cent of all children with reading disabilities come from disinterested homes. Unless parents can understand, appreciate and enjoy their roles, Head-Start Programs may have to be provided for all.

Robinson found that it was not just organic and emotional problems which influenced a student learning to read but also that problems apparently remote from the school exert considerable influences. She also emphasized the

---

importance of the home and of the social environment on the total adjustment of the child. Furthermore, the findings show that a child's failure to learn to read may be due to social and psychological factors far beyond his own control, and perhaps beyond the control of those charged with the responsibility for his progress. Unfortunately, many families are either unaware of the relationships just considered or are unable to control the conditions that create favorable results.¹

An ideal family situation would be one in which the relationship and interaction between the parents is a model for the children's relationship and interaction with each other. Liss applies this theory to the student atmosphere. He says that "A child that comes to school from a background where family life has been reasonably developed in give and take is best prepared to cope with relationships in the classroom."²

Cohn ways when discussing the parents of children with reading problems:

Parents do express an interest in their children's schooling and want them to do well. Many have taken an active role in trying to help their children learn to read, however, very few express confidence or hopes regarding these particular children. On the whole the parents are disappointed and discouraged and the


frightening thought is that this feeling will inevitably be conveyed to the children. As a result, the child feels unwanted and fails to develop a normal feeling of self worth, which could continue to, or instigate a free attitude toward education.\(^1\)

Agreeing with Cohn, Smith reported a study of thirty children of normal intelligence with reading difficulties. She found that a third of the children had hostile mothers, four suffered from acute jealousy reactions, two others were indulged, then neglected or rejected as they reached school age, and two were over-indulged. Practically all the children tested were insecure, restless, and emotionally ill.\(^2\)

To investigate the relationship between children's success in reading in school and parental opinion regarding that school, Otto compared the ratings assigned to two Kansas City primary schools by mothers of successful readers with those assigned by mothers of unsuccessful readers. Overall there were no significant differences; however, some additional facts were that mothers of girls evaluated the schools more highly than did the mothers of boys; but mothers of boys were more apt to blame the child himself. In another study conducted by Otto, he concluded that a summer school reading program utilizing


parents as tutors was feasible for kindergarteners who had begun reading.\footnote{Wayne Otto, "Teaching of Reading," \textit{Journal of Educational Research}, LXV (February, 1972), 263.} This philosophy is currently being followed in some Title I programs which use the Distar Program authored by Engleman and Bruner.\footnote{Siegried Engleman and Elaine C. Bruner, \textit{Distar Reading Program} (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1971).}

In discussing activities in which mothers participate outside the home and their relationship to learning, Hess found that mothers active in the community provided their children with incentive, information, and learning opportunities. He also found that such opportunities are not available for children whose mothers tend to be isolated from the community in which they live and who do not make use of the resources available to them.\footnote{Robert D. Hess, "Maternal Behavior and the Development of Reading Readiness in Urban Negro Children," \textit{Claremont Reading Yearbook}, XXXII (1968), p. 94.} These same findings were stressed by Sexton and Cardon, when they made pleas to mothers to activate their children's language facilities and give them the outside experiences which are necessary for children to learn the skill of reading.\footnote{Bartell W. Cardon, "Sex Differences in School Achievement," \textit{Elementary School Journal}, LXVIII (May, 1968), 430.}
Finally, a study by Thayer found that in the case of twenty-one boys, reading was not at the root of their problems. Twenty-one boys in grade four were achieving nearly a full year ahead of grade norms, but three years later they were almost a full year below grade norm. What happened? Information given by students and parents indicated that family problems directly involving the boys commenced at about the fourth grade and in some cases progressed to the point where the home communication broke down.¹

In dealing with children, teachers sometimes forget their basic needs and how much they rely on parents for guidance and counseling. Behrmann has offered this quote for all people who in some way touch and influence children.

T.L.C. Tender, loving, care. Does your child leave home feeling secure in your love for him? His whole day can be made or destroyed by his attitude on leaving home. (Isn't yours?).²

Reasons for the Problems Confronting Boys

It is difficult to separate a discussion of the problems confronting boys in learning to read from the reasons for the problems. In this section, however, discussion is


intended to focus on the reasons which have not already been mentioned.

Retarded readers are students for whom learning to read presents a marked difficulty. Even though they are equipped by chronological age and general intelligence and should be able to benefit normally from instruction, they do not benefit. They are members of all kinds of families. Some of their parents are illiterate; some speak little English; but others are widely read and some are college graduates.¹

Retarded readers appear in all kinds of schools. Contrary to some opinions, pupils with reading difficulty are not new to this generation nor this century. However, more of the pupils who have failed to learn to read are in the upper elementary grades and in the secondary schools than formerly. This is because they are usually held back only once in the primary grades, where formerly they use to be retained year after year.²

Physical Reasons

The large number of pupils who are not prepared to benefit by the regular reading program calls for earnest effort and study to insure initial success in reading. In 1952, Sister Mary Nila tested three hundred


²Ibid.
first graders. Using both group and individual tests, she determined that boys and girls as individual groups were equally ready to read, but in a reading achievement test administered at the end of the school year, girls significantly exceeded boys in reading growth and achievement. Five reasons were given: "(1) wrong start in grade one, (2) advancement was faster than ability would permit, (3) lack of adequate materials, (4) lack of a balanced and systematic instruction and (5) faulty teaching."¹ The present writer questions the implication of "faulty teaching." Was it faulty for boys but not for girls?

Wilson and Burke made a three-year study in New York City, and found no differences in mental test results between boys and girls in the first grade. Yet in reading at second grade level chances were eighty-eight in one hundred that the girls would be superior. The study gave these reasons for girls progressing at a faster rate: "(1) girls' interests and attitudes were better set for learning in female-orientated classrooms, (2) girls had greater social maturity and, (3) girls were more mature physiologically."² The researchers also found boys to be "(1) less physiologically mature, (2) less able to give prolonged attention,


(3) likely to make less and slower progress due to inadequate muscle behavior and (4) less responsive to teacher guidance and to profit less from it.\textsuperscript{1}

School Reasons

When seeking solutions for the problems in education, researchers have tried experiments in hoping to find a sound educational cure to the problems. One reason for boys having reading difficulties was given by one researcher when it was suggested that boys and girls are so different in their patterns that perhaps they should be taught separately.

Anderson used five hundred and fifty children in the first grades of the Los Angeles City schools. Reading was taught in sex segregated groups. Care was taken to provide a wide range of socio-economic levels. Two reading periods were offered for one year, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The outcome of this study was that after statistical analysis of reading achievement and reading growth, boys taught in the absence of girls did not show more significant gains in achievement or growth than boys taught in mixed sex groupings. Again, the girls as a group achieved more significantly than boys and showed greater reading growth.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.

After reading the available research up to this point in the paper, this reviewer found that a consideration of materials, teachers, techniques, and student background would also be variables which would need to be considered in reporting the above research.

Solutions to the Problems Confronting Boys

Success is perhaps the strongest motivational force. Maturation, school environment and materials, teacher attitude and personal interest play important roles in assuring success.

Most writers suggest that more must be known about what motivated and what is responsible for boys wanting to learn. Quast says:

In particular we need to understand the nature of games and sports so that we may apply their principles to other types of learning. The uses of stimulation in learning and games in military and industrial training might give us some useful leads.¹

Maturational Solutions

As early as 1950, Pauly presented research before the American Educational Research Association demonstrating achievement differences by sex among children of the same age. Pauly's latest large scale study involved 29,992 Tulsa children attending grades two through eight in 1956 through 1957. The results of the research led him to make these recommendations:

(1) If boys are admitted six months or so later than girls, there will be less frustration for boys, their parents, and their teachers; and there will also be fewer

drop-outs of boys in high school because of failing or unsatisfactory work. (2) State Legislatures or boards of education should raise the legal entering age of boys. If custodial care for immature children is needed, it can be provided much less expensively than by placing such children in the school room with more advanced children. (3) All mental age norms published should be revised to provide norms for each sex. (4) It is conceded that there are many plateaus intermingled with periods of rapid growth in a child's learning. But these facts should not obscure the picture of the generally slower growth patterns of boys.\footnote{1}

Concluding statements about maturation are difficult to acquire when discussing the maturity of children and what we as teachers, parents and administrators can do for children to ease the frustrations of growing up. Levine seems to sum it up best when she says:

If a child is not mentally defective he can be taught to read in the first grade. If one basically understands the nature of maturation lags and how good methodology can ready the immature for reading, one can see that materials, tailor made, will produce a full complement of readers by the end of first grade. Materials can serve as correctives and should be devised to compensate for the inadequacies, until such time as the individual child will mature and depend on his own mental growth and visual apparatus for the task of learning to read.\footnote{2}

Teacher Solutions

There have been periodic complaints that the elementary school is a feminized organization in which young boys lack masculine models for good academic achievement.

\footnote{1}{"Let's Give Boys a Break," \textit{Phi Delta Kappan}, XXXIX (April, 1959), 281.}

\footnote{2}{Shirley Levine, "Teaching Readiness for Reading to the Immature," \textit{Education}, LXXXIX (November, 1966), 121-23.}
Sears and Grambs, as cited by Grambs and Waetjen, reported on a study of teacher characteristics involving a national sample of over 1,400 elementary teachers, of whom eighty-six per cent were women. Differences between the sexes in personal and social characteristics were as follows: men were less responsible and business-like in classroom behavior, more favorable toward democratic classroom practices, more inclined toward permissiveness, had child-centered educational viewpoints, and were more emotionally stable than women in the classroom. Peltier agreed with Sears and Grambs, but he also suggested that such jobs as counselors, psychologists, principals, tutors and aides, should be infiltrated by men at all levels of the educational ladder but especially in the elementary school. With the filling of professional jobs with male teachers, our schools and the children that fill their seats will be better off for it and their educational enrichment will be increased. It is only with a balanced proportion of teachers in a school, that children will receive the social example which they so readily need.

One suspects that the last word on this subject has not been said. It is likely that many reporters will

---


continue to research this topic and make conservative estimates on the assets of having balanced staffs at all levels of the school program. It is especially the hope of this writer that more men will enter teaching at the primary level.

With many students suddenly descending upon them, teachers have no easy task in meeting the expectations of every child. However, Anderson, Broderick, and Liss, have developed certain guidelines that may be helpful to teachers and administrators solving their problems in treating children equally as the students begin their educational program. They suggest the following guidelines:

(1) accept every child for what he is and where he is in the educational program, (2) as we help each child succeed at his own potential, we attempt to develop situations in which the student can feel the thrill of success, (3) be fair, and have standards which are equal to all children: male and female, (4) create an educational environment in which children can sprout as individuals and learn the essentials of the school curriculum and at his own rate, (5) be cautious directors as we manipulate the children into the separate skills which they need to become successful in their tract of learning, (6) to develop as teachers our own personalities and

---


interests so that students will have the advantage of learning to associate with people of different interests and feelings.¹

Throughout the paper many statements have been made about teachers and their reactions with children and within the school walls. In conclusion, Polardy details one point which has not already been mentioned and that deals with the self-concept of children. He contends that as the teacher perceives the abilities of the student, this is how the student perceives himself. For example, he reports a significant correlation between the self-appraisal of over two hundred elementary school pupils and their perceptions of their teacher's feelings toward them. The findings revealed that the teachers do have an impact, both positive and negative on the development of their pupils' self-concept.²

School Environment Solutions

Coping with the problems of sex differences is a difficult problem, since schools tend to operate from the premise that in the early grades there are no significant sex differences between boys and girls in learning to read. Although evidence from primary classrooms does not support this premise, established use is often accepted as the best evidence that the premise is


Since reading is such an important achievement in the American culture, educators should not think of male and female differences in learning to read as just another statistic. If there is anything that the school can do to prevent the present number of failures in learning to read, it should be done. The following suggestions focus on school practices which might alleviate this problem.

The school solution in Plainfield, New Jersey was the fluid halfway house for kindergarten boys who wouldn't achieve well in first grade. However, only male children who showed promise of eventual success were chosen by teachers, parents, and other school personnel. Classes were kept to fifteen in number, and a complete reading readiness program was stressed with field trips included up to November. Formal instruction began at first grade level and lasted for at least two hours each day.¹

Guidelines for a sound school reading program are at best difficult to find because of the differences in schools and the boy-girl population they serve. Even though the forthcoming may be considered a listing of subject matter, the author feels that the potential risk of missing these suggestions is too great and therefore they should be included. Robinson has given careful consideration to these guidelines and the suggestions can serve as food for thought even though educators situations may differ. Robinson makes these suggestions.

¹"How to Avoid First Grade Dropouts," Grade Teacher, LXXXV (November, 1967), pp. 115-16.
1. A good reading program in an elementary school is consciously directed toward specific valid ends which have been agreed upon by the entire school staff.

2. A good reading program coordinates reading activities with other aids to child development.

3. It recognizes that the child's development in reading is closely associated with his development in the language arts.

4. At any given level the program should be part of a well-worked out, larger reading program extending through all the grades.

5. It should provide varied instruction and flexible requirements as a means of making adequate adjustments to the widely different reading needs of the pupils.

6. It should afford, at each level of advancement, adequate guidance of reading in all the various aspects of a broad program of instruction--basic instruction in reading, reading in content fields, literature, and recreational free reading.

7. It should make special provisions for supplying the reading needs of pupils with extreme reading disability.

8. Lastly, it should provide for frequent evaluation of the outcomes of the program and for such revisions as will strengthen the weaknesses discovered.¹

Sex Grouping.--Stanchfield's report on sex grouping was mentioned earlier in this research review. However, several other authors have reported results which, if considered carefully, could aid in solving some problems within the confines of this nation's schools. It is realized by the author that not all programs can work for all boys, yet

¹ Alan H. Robinson and Sidney J. Rauch, Guiding the Reading Program (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1965), pp. 77-79.
the other viewpoints on grouping need to be reported so that the reader can evaluate and perhaps negotiate solutions for his own situations.

Lyles in 1960 reported on a program underway at the Wakefield Forest Elementary School in Fairfax County, Virginia. Thirty-one fourth grade boys, of whom twenty-seven were repeaters, were assigned to one classroom. In the special class, they were instructed on their own level with materials suited to their abilities and to their interests as boys. Group morale developed as the boys became aware of their common interests and problems and began to accept themselves and one another. The following year, these same boys were placed in mixed groups and were successful. Since that first year of the program sex-separated classes have been continued and expanded, and the results have been rewarding.¹

An opposing view on this topic was reported by Herman and Criscuolo in 1966. Using eighty-two subjects in two control and two experimental groups, and using the Merrill Linguistic Reader,² they found no difference in the

¹Thomas B. Lyles, "Grouping by Sex," National Elementary Principal, XLVI (November, 1966), 38-40.

²Charles E. Fries, Merrill Linguistic Reader (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1971).
work recognition, letter knowledge, and literary comprehension achievement of boys in segregated classes as compared to boys in mixed classes.  

Stanchfield reported another study completed by her which gave the same results as her earlier one. Findings of the six years of research were:

The sex gaps in language and reading were investigated. Studies which indicated that girls generally excell over boys in the language development and reading areas were reviewed. Three educational levels were included in the investigation. Pre-primary, primary, and upper elementary. Analysis of the data did not show that boys taught alone gained significantly more in achievement or in growth than boys taught in heterogeneous sex groupings. The study did reveal several basic areas of differences in the language development patterns of boys and girls: verbal facility, listening skills, auditory discrimination, attention span, story preference, personality styles, activity levels, goals and motivation.

From the data presented it would appear that sex grouping is not a factor which would aid schools in solving the reading problems facing boys in reading instruction. However, one study by Lyles found improvement by boys in sex-separated classes. Because of his finding, sex groupings may be worthwhile investigating in certain situations.

1 Barry E. Herman and Nicholas P. Criscuolo, Sex Grouping Instructor, LXXXVII (March, 1968), p. 97.

2 Jo M. Stanchfield, "The Sexual Factor in Language Development in Reading," ERIC VI (February, 1970), 76.
Materials.—The present review of literature has revealed that a considerable degree of sex role stereotyping is present in the contents of early readers. In the light of the public schools' avowed purpose of educating all children to strive for the achievement of their greatest potential, further research needs to be done in the area of materials.

To assist educators further in teaching boys to achieve in reading, materials should be selected whose content is highly motivating, satisfying, exciting, and tuned to what our culture expects of boys. Materials such as The American Adventure Series,1 Deep Sea Adventure Series,2 Morgan Bay Mysteries,3 and the Dan Frontier Books4 are samples of materials that have been adopted for the use by both sexes but because of their high interest and excitement level they are especially valuable when used with young boys.


Robinson in his book *Guiding the Reading Program*, has developed some cautions which should be taken when selecting materials for students by school systems and their representatives. It may be well for those individuals to read his list of recommendations before selecting an abundance of materials in order to meet their students' individual needs at multiple levels.

On the basis of criteria presented and with proper discretion teachers, school officials, and other concerned individuals could obtain materials for boys and girls which would aid them in helping children reach their potential, and make the learning of the skill of reading a more rewarding and exciting achievement.

Parental Solutions

As my son struggles to learn to read and write and to comprehend I am constantly reminded of my own unhappy school experiences and realize the importance of convincing him that learning, however difficult, is worth the effort, and though more difficult for some, it is surely not indicative of lack of intelligence.

Zuercher expressed the inner feeling of many parents in society. Parents want their children to succeed in life and hope that they make the proper decisions for them in their formative years. In the area of reading there are many vital

---


steps which parents can initiate and follow through which will help their children be successful in future learning situations. Anderson, Knudson, Smith, and Robinson agree on points which parents can aid their children in reading. Since many of their suggestions overlap the author will only quote one source. Robinson suggests the following thoughts for parents:

1. Create a strong family unit in which children can feel secure.
2. Provide adequate nutrition, rest, respect, and love for the child.
3. Talk to your child, so that language interaction can be experienced.
4. Listen to your children so that they may have opportunities to express themselves.
5. Read to your children so that they may learn to appreciate books.
7. Teach your children respect for books.
8. Take them on trips so that they can experience a wide array of experiences.
9. Check your child's report card and consult with the teacher and find out how you can help if need be.
10. Set aside a regular time for homework and reading time for the whole family.
11. Accept your child as he is. Don't compare him with others but encourage him to do the best he can.
12. Show a real interest in school and library, because your attitude is so very important.¹

In summary, parents should take an active interest and role in their children's life and become continually more active in their children's activities.

Summary

There is presently much concern about the teaching of reading to children in elementary school. The Right to Read Program has especially drawn much attention to the facts about reading instruction and the directions educators need to take in order to assure that all children have the opportunity to reach their mental potential. This research review dealt with the problems facing boys in the area of reading. The subject matters discussed, in relation to the topic, were the maturation and growth development of children, reasons for their difficulties, and solutions to the problems confronting boys. These basic ideas were further enriched and clarified by discussing the effects of the physical, social, emotional, parental and educational influences upon them. In Chapter III more detailed summary with implications and conclusions will be presented.

---

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this review of literature was to determine the problems confronting boys in reading experiences, and to suggest possible solutions to those problems.

Only those investigations were reviewed that dealt with the physical, social, motivational, material, environmental, parental, and teacher effects on boys and their reading experiences. Although the majority of the studies reported were based on material published within the last five years, a few readings prior to that time were used because of their direct contribution to the topic.

Conclusions

The following statements are answers to the purposes posed earlier. These conclusions were reached through findings in related literature.

Problems Confronting Boys in Reading Experiences

Maturation Problems.--Boys are less mature than girls both physiologically and psychologically. However, boys
generally are superior to girls in analytical thinking, problem solving and scientific pursuits.

Emotional Problems.--The emotional, personality, and behavior problems which schools refer to various agencies include a disproportionate number of boys as compared with girls. This may be caused by cultural controls on boys which expect more of boys and give them less emotional outlets in dealing with their frustrations. Emotional maladjustments adversely affect the acquisition of reading skills by boys.

Social Problems.--Socially, the important basic needs are: approval, belongingness, friendship, similarity to others, and love. As an extension of the previous statement, elementary school society does not provide boys with opportunities to identify with male figures upon leaving the confines of the female-orientated household. As a result the first reading right of boys should be that as they enter school they should be permitted to function within the male pattern of characteristics. In the case of boys from lower-economic backgrounds, the needed practice in visual and auditory discrimination prior to formal reading instruction is often not provided.

Teacher Problems.--Male identification models and opportunities for playing their sex roles are limited for boys within the traditional school. Because of the female-dominated elementary school, boys receive less teacher...
approval and more adverse comments than girls. Teachers contribute to the boys' poor self-concept by not allowing them to be more robust and boyish within the school environment, and by not setting high expectations for them when competing with girls. In conclusion, women teachers understand and evaluate work of girls more accurately than they do that of boys.

**Material Problems.**--Basal reading materials are less interesting and motivating to boys than to girls. Boys also tend to find the content of the materials infantile and effeminate.

**School Problems.**--School experiences are more confining and frustrating to boys than to girls, because schools do not account for maturational differences in curriculum development, teaching, and evaluation procedures. Even though boy and girl maturation differences are known, all children are made to enter school at approximately the same age. Schools also stress individual achievement and ignore group achievement which is highly important and necessary to young boys both in and out of school.

**Parental Problems.**--Many boys with reading disabilities come from maladjusted homes, where the emotional stability of the parents can be questioned. Parents become bored with the high degree of simplicity in the early stage of learning and therefore discontinue their association with
child education by giving the excuse that their assistance would not help their child anyway. Mothers of boys feel less concerned about the school climate than do mothers of girls.

Reasons for the Problems Confronting Boys

**Physical Reasons.**--Because of their immaturity boys are less able to give prolonged attention to school matters. Boys also show less progress than girls because of their lack of muscular control.

**School Reasons.**--Sex-segregated class organizational plans make little difference in the better achievement of girls over boys. However, this organizational plan should not be ignored in all cases because it has shown success in some circumstances. Within the classes comprised of both boys and girls, compensations in the use of materials and teaching techniques are not made so as to meet the apparent needs of boys.

**Social Reasons.**--Society fails to recognize the vulnerability of the male and only slightly admits to the existence of a developmental difference between boys and girls.

Solutions to the Problems Confronting Boys

**Maturation Solutions.**--Change the school entrance age for boys and allow them to begin their school experiences when they are physically and psychologically ready to benefit
more fully from instruction. A suggested entrance might be six months later than that of girls of the same chronological age.

**Teacher Solutions.**—Improve female teacher understanding on the nature and interests of boys. Assist teachers in becoming acquainted with the kinds of materials available for the use with young boys. Hire and involve more male professionals within the elementary schools.

**School Environment Solutions.**—Sex-segregated classes, and instructional grouping by sex are organizational plans for meeting boys' needs within the classroom. Classroom projects and activities which stress group achievement should be used because of their direct bearing upon the nature of boys. Schools should also take note of Robinson's guidelines for initiating a sound and realistic school reading program.

**Material Solutions.**—Materials should be chosen to meet the current learning needs, interests, and nature of boys in our society. Robinson has mentioned criteria which would help all those concerned with the selection of materials, so that boys can reach their potential and teachers can make the acquisition of reading skills a more rewarding and masculine achievement.

**Parental Solutions.**—Parents must become actively involved in their boys' education. It is necessary that parents
discover the activities that they can employ to aid their children in becoming successful readers. School publicity departments, newspapers, and local parent groups will need to assist educators in imparting the knowledge which parents need in order to aid their pre-school and school age children to become successful readers.

Implications

The conclusions suggest certain inequities which handicap boys in achieving their educational potentials in reading.

1. Boys tend to have a more difficult time in school because of their maturational lag and the schools' inadequacy to adapt the curriculum to fit the needs of boys.

2. There is definite need for school systems to analyze their testing devices and procedures, teaching techniques, and criteria for selecting materials, so that the school curriculum can truly meet the needs of all of the school population.

3. More males need to be employed within the elementary grades so that boys can identify with a male figure since our society demands that fathers spend a great deal of time outside of the home.
4. Teachers need to be made aware of the nature of boys and how to make best use of their interests and abilities.

5. Parents need to understand their educational responsibilities to their children and the influences they truly have over their offspring. It is also necessary that they learn the educational skills that they can teach their children during the pre-school and school years, especially in the area of reading.
SELECTED
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles in Journals or Magazines


Chenfield, Mimi B. "My Son is a Nursery School Dropout." Today's Education, LX (September, 1971), 75.


Clark, Willis W. "Boys and Girls: Are There Significant Ability and Achievement Differences?" Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (November, 1959), 73-76.

Criscuolo, Nicholas. "Sex Influences on Reading." Reading Teacher, XXI (May, 1968), 762-4.


Good, Thomas L., and Brophy, Jere E. "Questioned Equality for Grade One Boys and Girls." Reading Teacher, XXV (December, 1971), 247-52.


Harris, Larry A. "Interest and the Initial Acquisition of Words." Reading Teacher, XXII (January, 1969), 312-14.

Herman, Barry E., and Criscuolo, Nicholas P. "Sex Grouping." Instructor, LXXVII (March, 1968), 97.


"How to Avoid First Grade Dropouts." Grade Teacher, LXXXV (November, 1967), 115-16.


"Let's Give the Boys a Break." Phi Delta Kappan, XXXIX (April, 1959), 281-83.


Lyles, Thomas B. "Grouping by Sex." National Elementary Principal, XLVI (November, 1966), 38-41.


Stanchfield, Jo M. "Differences in Learning Patterns of Boys and Girls." Claremont Reading Conference Yearbook, XXXII (1968), 218-227.


Washburne, C. "Reading Interests." *Elementary English*, XLIX (April, 1972), 538-41.

Wilson, Frank T.; Burke, Agnes; and Fleming, C.E. "Sex Differences in Beginning Reading in a Progressive School." *Journal of Educational Research*, XXXII (April, 1939), 570-82.


**Educational Resources Information Center Materials**


Good, Thomas L. "Do Boys and Girls Receive Equal Opportunity in First Grade Reading Instruction." *ERIC*, V (December, 1970), 96.


Unpublished Materials


Materials


