

1-1-1978

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Recommended Citation

Nielsen, P. (1978). Attitude Toward Reading and Reading-Related Concepts Among Elementary Students. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 18 (2). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol18/iss2/5

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ATTITUDE TOWARD READING AND READING-RELATED CONCEPTS AMONG ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study measured student attitude toward reading and reading-related concepts to determine the effects of grade level, reading achievement, sex, race, and social status upon reading attitudes.

Measurement instruments included the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, Diehl Reading Attitude Scale, Metropolitan Achievement Test, and Two Factor Index of Social Position. The sample included 260 grade four and grade six students from three elementary schools in a large mid-southern urban school district. The achievement test was administered approximately two weeks prior to the administration of the attitude scales.

Girls had a significantly more favorable attitude toward reading than boys. A significant difference existed in attitude toward reading in relation to reading achievement with the most positive attitude found among students with high reading achievement. No significant interaction existed between sex and reading achievement.

No significant difference existed for attitude toward reading between grade four and grade six students. White students had a significantly more favorable attitude toward reading than black students. A significant difference existed in attitude toward reading in relation to social status with the most positive attitude found among upper social status students. No significant interaction existed between race and social status.

The study was designed to measure student attitude toward reading and to determine the effects of grade level, reading achievement, sex, race, and social status upon reading attitudes. The study also investigated student attitude toward 25 reading-related concepts.

Because reading is an academic as well as a recreational factor, it is vital that students develop a positive attitude toward reading. Attitude toward reading may influence reading ability. The student with an unfavorable attitude toward reading has little chance of becoming a mature reader (La Pray, 1972; Sutton, 1964; Yarrington and Boffey, 1971).

This study is significant since it includes independent and dependent variables which have received little or no attention in previous investigations. No reported studies combined the two measures of attitude used in this study. Reading attitude was not compared between black and white students in other studies. Most studies of attitude toward reading did

not include social status as a variable. This study was unique in its inclusion of the variables of grade level, reading achievement, sex, race, and social status.

Design

Attitude toward reading was measured by the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, which consists of twenty items relating to reading. The Diehl Reading Attitude Scale, a semantic differential, was used to ascertain attitude toward 25 reading-related concepts. Reading achievement was assessed by the total reading subtest score of the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Social status was determined by the Two Factor Index of Social Position.

The instruments of the study were administered to 260 grade four and grade six students from three elementary schools in a large mid-southern urban school district. There were 125 boys and 135 girls in the sample.

The two measures of attitude were administered on the same day. The achievement test was administered approximately two weeks prior to the attitude scales. Parents of the students provided information used to assess social status. Data analysis included analysis of variance and the Newman-Keuls procedure.

Results

Girls had a significantly more favorable attitude toward reading than boys ($F = 6.6$, $p < .05$). The girls also had a significantly more favorable attitude toward reading-related concepts than boys ($F = 8.9$, $p < .05$).

A significant difference ($F = 32.3$, $p < .050$) was found to exist among three reading achievement groups for attitude toward reading. The mean attitude score of the above grade placement students was significantly more positive than the mean attitude score for both the below and at grade placement students. The mean attitude score of the at-grade placement students was significantly more positive than the mean attitude score for the below grade placement students.

A significant difference ($F = 4.87$, $p < .05$) was found to exist among the three reading achievement groups for attitude toward reading-related concepts. The mean attitude score for students reading above grade placement was significantly more positive than the mean attitude score for students reading below grade placement. No other comparisons were found to be significant. No significant interaction between sex and reading achievement was found for attitude toward reading or for attitude toward reading-related concepts.

No significant difference existed in attitude toward reading or attitude toward reading-related concepts between grade four and grade six students.

A significant difference ($F = 8.75$, $p < .05$) was found to exist for attitude toward reading in relation to social status. The mean attitude score for the lower social status students was significantly less positive than the

mean attitude scores for the upper, upper middle, and lower middle social status students. The mean attitude score for the upper lower social status students was significantly less positive than the mean attitude scores for the upper and middle social status students. No significant differences in attitude toward reading-related concepts were found as a function of social status.

A significant difference ($F = 1.20, p < .05$) was found to exist for attitude toward reading between black and white students. White students had a significantly more favorable attitude toward reading than black students. No significant difference was found between black and white students for attitude toward reading-related concepts. No significant interaction was found between race and social status for attitude toward reading or for attitude toward reading-related concepts.

A positive attitude was found to exist toward all 25 of the reading-related concepts. The four concepts which received the most favorable ratings were reading to myself, comic books, going to the library, and reading during a free reading period. Students expressed a positive attitude toward reading games and paperback books. Unfavorable concepts were reading workbooks, school reading textbooks, mimeographed reading materials, reading aloud in a group, and writing about what I read.

Discussion

Replications of this study would be helpful since the variables of reading achievement, sex, grade level, race and social status were combined with two measures of attitude. Elementary teachers would find the instruments used in this study simple to administer. Teachers at all levels should be more concerned about developing positive attitude toward reading. To promote positive attitude toward reading more use should be made of reading games, paperback books, and magazines along with a corresponding decrease in the use of reading workbooks and mimeographed reading materials. Student attitude toward reading may affect reading achievement and the likelihood that the student reads voluntarily for information and pleasure.

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