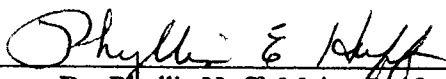


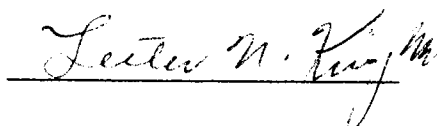
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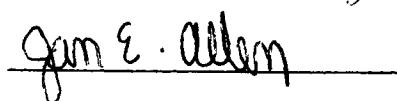
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by James E. (Buddy) Martin Jr. entitled Perceived Causes for Reading Problems of First Semester Remedial and Developmental Reading Students at the Campbell County Extension of Roane State Community College. I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.


Dr. Phyllis Huff, Major Professor

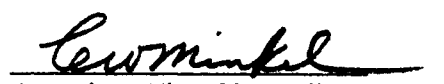
We have read the dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:







Accepted for the council:


Associate Vice Chancellor
and Dean of the Graduate School

**PERCEIVED CAUSES FOR READING PROBLEMS OF FIRST SEMESTER
REMEDIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL READING STUDENTS AT THE
CAMPBELL COUNTY EXTENSION OF ROANE STATE COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

James Earl (Buddy) Martin Jr.

December 1995

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Ruby Day Martin, who has encouraged and supported me in all of my undertakings. It is also dedicated to the memory of my father, James Earl Martin Sr., who taught me more than any book ever could.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to being a good friend, Dr. Phyllis Huff has been my advisor from my very first day at The University of Tennessee. Her willingness to advise and offer assistance in any form or fashion is unsurpassed. Without her patience, encouragement, and kindly "push" this dissertation would remain incomplete.

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Dr. Lester Knight is a long-time friend dating back to my undergraduate years. I have enjoyed our conversations either academic or social and I have always found him to be a gentleman in every aspect of the meaning.

Dr. Jan Allen is a new-found friend and though our academic interaction has been somewhat limited, her valued advice and expedient return of submitted documentation is a reflection of her commitment to her students and profession.

Others who deserve special thanks are Mary Jane Hayes, secretary in the Holistic Teaching Unit. In addition, Miss Faye Benjamin, secretary in the Business Office has also become a good friend and I thank both of these ladies for their miscellaneous help throughout the years.

I would also like to thank the students who participated in my research. Their willingness to cooperate and provide honest responses was instrumental in the development of this study.

Last, I would like to thank my wife Melissa Pierce Martin. Her love, trust and support were the necessary ingredients for the completion of this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine potential factors contributing to first semester Roane State Community College students being placed in remedial/developmental reading courses. More specifically, this study was delimited to those students attending the Campbell County site.

The study was conducted using twelve male and female students ranging in age from 18 to 30. After reading and signing letters of consent, students were interviewed using a sixteen question interview guide. Classroom and social interaction observations were also utilized to analyze student responses and formulate conclusions.

The major findings included:

- 1) Many students perceive that the Campbell County School System did not demonstrate a genuine interest in their obtainment of an education.
- 2) The absence of the father due to divorce or lengthy work days was viewed as a detrimental factor. Participants from homes where the father was absent due to divorce or work displayed pronounced animosity when addressing this subject.
- 3) Some students reported that their reading related problems were due to a lack of effort on their part. Most of these students went on to clarify their responses. They were eager to point out that their lack of effort was due to inappropriate behaviors demonstrated by teachers, the school system, or other individuals with whom they interacted.
- 4) Economics also appear to be a factor relevant to student's deficiencies in reading. Baby sitting younger siblings while parents work and limited funds for school needs were given as factors contributing to delinquency.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Students entering their first semester of college bring with them a variety of background knowledge related to the teaching methodologies they have experienced during the previous 12 or more years of school. The remedial/developmental reading professor is thus faced with a closet full of skeletons of teaching methodologies that were ineffective. He/she is also challenged with the task to create a successful approach that will aid the student in developing the appropriate reading skills necessary for college.

Statement Of The Problem

The acquisition of knowledge is based on the student's ability to comprehend information presented by the instructor. Today's education system is faced with several problems. Lack of funds for transportation, textbooks, and other materials are becoming more common. Over crowded classrooms and split grade classes are on the increase due to county, state, and federal budgetary limitations.

Public school classrooms are made up of individual students who for the most part are taught homogeneously. A nation wide decline in ACT and SAT scores indicate that many students are exiting high school deficient in the skills necessary to become a proficient reader and thus productive citizen (Ryan, 1992).

In addition to problems being created by budgetary limitations, more and more students are coming from homes where family related problems persist. Currently in the United States one in three school children have parents who are divorced. Thirty percent of these children live in step-families. The remaining 70% live in single parent homes (Clarke-Stewart, 1989).

Having low ACT or SAT scores require first semester college students to enroll in classes designed to remediate reading deficiencies. College classrooms are overcrowded, as are elementary and secondary classrooms. As a result, individuality is sacrificed for the good of the whole.

Many Community Colleges governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents offer classes in locations away from their main campus. Although this arrangement offers opportunities for many students who would otherwise be unable to attend college, it is not without problems. At times the college must combine lower level remedial reading classes with more advanced developmental reading classes as a measure to insure that the class will make. At other times combined classes are established due to a lack of funds or budgetary impoundments.

Students who are combined in these classes are sometimes faced with the same problems they experienced in elementary and secondary classes: crowded classrooms and instructors who teach the entire class rather than the individual. Oftentimes students repeat past failures, rather than resolve existing ones.

Purpose Of The Study

The specific purpose of this study was to identify factors that may have contributed to first semester Roane State Community College students being placed in

remedial/developmental reading courses. The interview guide utilized for this research was designed to report participants' perceptions of factors related to deficiencies in reading skills necessary for college success. An evaluation of the research findings may aid educators in identifying and implementing appropriate remediation at an earlier stage in the students' education.

Methods and Procedures

This study investigated factors that may have contributed to first semester college students being placed in remedial/developmental reading courses at the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. The study was conducted using a descriptive method of research (Gay, 1987). In doing so, the researcher incorporated qualitative methods consisting of a 16-question interview guide and classroom observations. Each participating student was interviewed one at a time in the privacy of the researcher's office. Each interview was recorded on audio cassette and participants were allowed to take as much time as necessary to respond to each of the 16 interview questions. After the completion of the interviews, each participant was observed in a classroom situation by the researcher. Notes taken during the classroom observations regarding student behaviors were then compared to interview question responses in order to develop a more complete understanding of each participant as an individual. Social interactive observations were conducted outside of class to further clarify participant responses to the interview guide. This study allowed the researcher to grasp a better understanding of the thoughts and feelings shared by many of the participating students.

Site Selection

This study was conducted at the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. The site consists of an administration office, seven classrooms, and a student lounge located in Woodson's Mall in the town of LaFollette, Tennessee. LaFollette is the largest town in Campbell County, which has a population of about 35,079 according to the 1995 census. The majority of students who attend the Campbell County extension are from LaFollette, Jacksboro, Caryville, or Jellico. Most students live within 30 miles of the site. Students participating in this study were graduates from Campbell County Comprehensive High School, Jellico High School, or G.E.D. recipients from the Campbell County Job Training Partnership Act office. All students received part if not all of their elementary, middle, or high school education from Campbell County schools.

At the time of this study, Campbell County had an unemployment rate of 6.7% compared to a rate of 4.3% for the state of Tennessee. Job opportunities are somewhat limited. Blue collar residents not employed in agriculture or mining compete for general employment positions or travel to jobs in neighboring counties.

Since its opening in 1990, enrollment at the Campbell County site has continued to increase. Spring semester 1995 had an enrollment of 389 compared to 240 for Fall semester 1991. This continued interest in higher education by students led me to conduct my study at the Campbell County site.

Data Collection

Upon receiving approval of the committee on Research Participation and Dissertation Proposal Committee at the University of Tennessee, data collection began with the use of the descriptive method of research. This method incorporates participant observation and ethnographic interviewing.

According to Gay (1987), descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study. A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. Descriptive studies are concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions, and procedures.

Interviews were conducted with 12 volunteer students using a 16-question interview guide (appendix A). Interviews began one to two weeks after the beginning of class during the fall semester. Each student participated in one-on-one sessions in the privacy of my office. Each session was conducted in an informal environment and students were informed that there were no time constraints and that they could proceed at a pace that was most comfortable for them. Each interview was taped and transcribed for analysis. Prior to the interview, each student was reminded of the purpose of the study and reassured of the confidentiality of his/her participation. Students were then presented with a participation consent form to sign (appendix B). During the interview process, students were allowed and encouraged to expand upon any information they felt relevant to the question being addressed. Likewise, students were informed that they could ignore questions that had no relevance to their personal history. Students were made aware that they could discontinue the interview at any point without the risk of penalty or prejudice.

Each participant completed the interview in its entirety and no participants chose to have their comments deleted from the study.

Data Analyses

Student responses to the questions on the survey instrument were tallied and converted to percentages. Histograms and circle graphs were used to summarize the results. Data on the various questions were compared and contrasted in order to establish relationships or dissimilarities.

Validity and Reliability

Each student proceeds through the education system with various strengths and weaknesses. Many students entering college for the first time find that they are deficient in areas necessary for successfully obtaining a college degree.

This study was delimited to students attending the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. The methodology and results can be used to give a better understanding of factors that may contribute to first semester college students being placed in remedial/developmental courses at other institutions. This study dealt specifically with the area of reading but the issues raised could also be applicable to the areas of writing and mathematics.

With the use of a qualitative study, reliability is often difficult to achieve. To provide as a reliable study as possible, the researcher used the following methods of data collection (Gay, 1987):

- 1) Research techniques including ethnographic interviewing, tape recordings and participant observation were used.
- 2) The participating students were clearly identified as deficient in skills necessary for entry into college level courses.
- 3) Direct quotations and verbatim accounts were recorded and used for analysis and reporting of study findings.
- 4) The site selected for research was clearly defined and described.

The original 20 question interview guide was reduced to 16 questions after eliminating items considered possibly biased. The remaining 16 question interview guide was reviewed and considered a valid research instrument by Dr.s Lynn Cagle, John Ray, and Kathleen deMarrais. All these examiners are professors at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Chapter I contains the introduction to the study, methods and procedure, site selection, data collection, data analysis and the validity and reliability of the study.

Chapter II contains a review of literature related to stage/non-stage theories of child development, classroom application, and social, family, and educational factors effecting the acquisition of reading skills.

Chapter III describes the methods and procedures used to gather and analyze the data, and also contains a description of the site where the study takes place.

Chapter IV presents the analysis and findings of the study.

Chapter V consists of a summary of the study, conclusions of the research, and recommendations for educators.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Intoduction

The major purpose of this study was to identify possible causes related to first semester students being placed in remedial/developmental reading courses at the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. In addition, research findings are reported regarding issues deemed relevant to the acquisition of knowledge and personality development.

Stage and non-stage theorist have offered many suggestions and reasons for how we develop as individuals. This chapter will review the ideas of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Carl Rogers. Each of these educators has developed a theory of human development that when examined, offers the teacher a better understanding of the learning process. The researcher will also report findings that were obtained as a direct result of interaction between researchers and elementary, high school, and college classrooms. These findings elaborate on factors identified as being pertinent to the establishment of an educational environment conducive to learning. Finally, factors that may impede the acquisition of learning skills due to problems associated with social class, family situation, and the educational system will be discussed.

Theories Of Human Development

An understanding of how children grow, learn, and mature into adults is essential if classroom teachers are to educate their students. Theorists who study human development can be classified into two major groups.

One group proposes that children proceed through hierarchical stages of development. According to these theorists, the success or failure of the child can be traced to positive or negative events in the preceding stages. This philosophy places an emphasis on the importance of the family and the environment in the development of the child. These theorists also argue that by closely observing children at different levels of development, a list of skills, competencies and expectations can be established that will aid the teacher in developing lessons that are within the child's mental and physical capability.

Non-stage theorists believe that human development is on-going, and that no particular stages exist. However, many non-stage theorists do agree with the stage theorists idea that the home and the environment are important factors related to the child's development.

Jean Piaget

One of the major stage theorists in the field of human development was the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. Much of his theory has been examined closely by educators in an attempt to better understand and thus educate children. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is a foundation piece for curriculum for education majors throughout the world. The major aspects of this theory are maturation, experience, social transmission, and the process of equilibration (Kaplan, 1993).

Piaget formulated his theory in an effort to show that children think and understand differently from adults. To illustrate how childhood development takes place, Piaget built his theory around the concept of continuous reorganization and alteration of the environment by the child.

The four principal factors responsible for allowing the child to be able to reorganize and alterate are summarized by Kaplan (1993):

- A) Maturation is the gradual unfolding of an individual's genetic plan for life.
- B) Experience involves the active interaction of the child with the environment.
- C) Social transmission refers to the information and customs that are transmitted from parents and other people in the environment to the child.
- D) Equilibration is viewed as a balanced state between what the child knows, and what he/she is experiencing.

Piaget proposed that cognitive development occurs sequentially through four stages. He does give approximate ages for the four different stages, but also emphasizes that not all children progress at the same rate. The specific ages linked to the stages are viewed as general guidelines and cannot guarantee absolute behaviors on the part of the child.

Woolfolk (1993) describes Piaget's stages of cognitive development as:

- 1) Sensorimotor - approximate age is birth to 2 years of age. Children in the sensorimotor stage begin to imitate, memorize, and think. They also begin to realize that objects do not cease to exist when they are hidden from view. A movement towards goal-directed activities as opposed to basic reflex actions is also viewed as characteristic of this stage.
- 2) Preoperational - approximate age is 2 years to 7 years. The development of language skills and the ability to think symbolically are characteristics of this stage.

Children also begin to follow through operations and procedures logically in one direction. At this point in development children have trouble viewing another person's point of view.

3) Concrete operational - approximate age is 7 years to 11 years. Children in this stage begin to use hands-on operations to solve problems in a logical fashion. They are now able to understand the laws of conservation and can incorporate reversibility when problem solving.

4) Formal operational - approximate age is 11 years to 15 years. The ability to solve abstract problems is characteristic of this stage. Scientific thinking is further developed and a concern for social issues and identity is emphasized.

According to Woolfolk (1993), there are implications of Piaget's theory for teachers. Teachers should strive to promote new situations where students can apply principles they have learned. Often times students will have to assimilate or accommodate their existing ability or the new situation to solve the problem at hand. The learning process takes place when students fluctuate between equilibration and disequilibration. Because students may demonstrate characteristics of different stages simultaneously, teachers must be aware of the abilities possessed by their students. The teacher should create a learning environment that is neither boring because of simplicity or frustrating because of extreme difficulty.

Erik Erikson

German born Erik Erikson is another stage theorist who has contributed greatly to the undertaking of child development. Though he never received a college education, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Harvard in 1978 (Ryckman, 1993). Early in his career, Erickson worked with the father-daughter team Sigmond and Anna Frued.

After emigrating to the United States in 1933 he continued his work as a child analyst and became increasingly popular among psychologists, historians, psychiatrists, anthropologists, philosophers, theologians, and biologists (Coles, 1970, p.255).

Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development offer insight to child development for educators. Woolfolk (1993) summarized his findings in the following way:

1) Basic trust vs. mistrust - approximate age is birth to 12 to 18 months. In the first few months of life, infants begin to understand whether they can trust the world around them. Parents or care givers who consistently respond to the infants need of food, care, and comfort, provide a sense of trust. When these necessities are missing or given in an inconsistent manner, the infant begins a life with a feeling of mistrust.

2) Autonomy vs. shame/doubt - approximate age is 18 months to 3 years. Children who are allowed and encouraged to assume responsibility for their needs and well being, are striving towards autonomy. Children who are discouraged from taking responsibility or who are shamed when their attempts fail, may develop a lack of confidence in dealing with future events.

3) Initiative vs. guilt - approximate age is 3 years to 6 years. Initiative involves imitating adults in positive ways. Helping mother clean house or helping father repair a broken appliance are examples of the child demonstrating responsibility and seeking acceptance for his/her limited contributions. Children who are not allowed to interact with adults may believe that what they want to do is wrong. As a result, these children may develop a sense of guilt which stifles future interactions.

4) Industry vs. inferiority - approximate age is 6 years to 12 years. Interaction with peers, society, academics, and group activities helps to build the child's sense of industry. Children who experience difficulty in dealing with these issues develop a sense of inferiority.

5) Identity vs. role confusion - approximate age is the period of adolescence.

Children who have developed a strong sense of identity are able to make approximate choices regarding vocation, sexual orientation, and a philosophy towards life. Role confusion develops when children are unsure of their ability to make responsible decisions.

6) Intimacy vs. isolation - approximate age is young adulthood. Intimacy refers to the development of a deep level relationship with another person. Individuals who are unable to establish a relationship develop a sense of isolation.

7) Generativity vs. stagnation - approximate age is middle adulthood. Generativity refers to an individual's feeling of being productive and able to make contributions to future generations. Individuals who attempt no contributions and simply exist, are in a state of stagnation.

8) Ego integrity vs. despair - approximate age is late adulthood. Individuals who have accepted themselves for who they are and are able to come to terms with death, have reached a sense of ego integrity. Those who can not, sink into despair.

Erikson's research has practical application to the classroom setting. His premise is that complications arising in any one stage, can lead to an imbalance in development that impedes the child's progress. Thus, children's behavior can be explained by examining events they experience as they progress through each stage.

Carl Rogers

American born Carl Rogers offers a phenomenological approach to personality development. Rogers began his college course work at the University of Wisconsin and received his Ph.D. in 1931 from Teachers College, Columbia University (Pervin, 1993). Rogers theorizes that development is ongoing and there are no particular stages through which individual progresses. Although there are marked differences between stage and

non-stage theorists, non-stage theorists also offer insights that can be applied to the field of education.

Ryckman (1993) discusses three of Roger's concepts that offer explanations of behavior that may be significant for classroom teachers. First, the need for positive regard is desired from others. When individuals satisfy another's needs, they are able to receive satisfaction themselves. Secondly, experiences and behaviors that are perceived as acceptable are known as conditions of worth. And finally, an individual's experiences with these two concepts leads to the seeking of a balanced state known as "unconditional positive regard - a deep and genuine caring by others, uncontaminated by judgments or evaluations of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors (p. 408)."

Pervin (1993) summarized major aspects of Roger's theory that classroom teachers should be aware of. One aspect deals with the importance of a healthy home environment. The degree of acceptance that children feel from their parents influences their sense of self-worth. Also, the degree of self esteem can be directly attributed to issues regarding permissiveness and punishment. Well defined rules accompanied by consistent punishment/rewards promotes high self-esteem. Parents who present unclear rules and use punishment/rewards in inconsistent manners produce children low in self-esteem. And finally, parents who utilize a democratic approach that recognize the rights and opinions of the children, have children who possess higher degrees of self-worth and self-esteem.

Although stage and non-stage theorists disagree in the manner that individuals develop, there are issues that are viewed as being important by both schools of thought. In either case, parental influence, stable home environments and positive social interaction are determining factors in the development of the individual.

Classroom Observation And Applications

Students who experience difficulty with reading often demonstrate a variety of classroom behaviors. In describing college students, Wren and Segal (1991) report that many times students do not realize that they have learning disabilities. Brozo (1990) offers an opposing observation. He states "young adults who lack literary skills are often painfully aware of their own inadequacies. To avoid ridicule by exposing their stupidity in the classroom, many resort to hiding out and bluffing behaviors (p.324)." This behavior offers students no chance to improve on skills in which they are deficient. As a result, these students fall further and further behind, leading to an increased state of anxiety and frustration.

Communication is a key issue in recognizing and remediating reading problems. Brozo (1990) points out that classroom teachers need to look beyond their initial observation of student behavior. Students at the high school and college level have years of experience in coping with academic weakness and of developing ways to manipulate the teacher. He identified seven different coping strategies:

- 1) Avoidance of eye contact with the teacher is the most common strategy utilized.
- 2) Engagement in disruptive behavior. Students who can distract the teacher from the task at hand are less likely to be called on to participate.
- 3) Become a good listener. Students often find that certain teachers will provide the information that they should have already read.
- 4) Relying on a classmate or a good reader is another method of obtaining classroom information.
- 5) Having someone else to actually do the required assignment is another practice utilized by poor readers.
- 6) Forgetting books and other materials reduces teacher - student interaction.

7) Manipulating the teacher's perception by offering pertinent information that comes from a source other than the reading assignment.

By reaching out to the students who appear disruptive or disinterested, the teacher may grasp a better understanding of the student's hidden problem. Brozo (1990) offers the following suggestions for reaching poor readers:

- 1) Develop a personal rapport with less able readers by creating an informal atmosphere of communication.
- 2) Become more aware of behaviors and biases that may cause students to isolate themselves from instruction.
- 3) Teach poor readers to monitor their performance.
- 4) Adapt instruction to meet the needs of low ability students.
- 5) Utilize the reading specialist to help develop individual assignments for poor readers.

In order for reading disabled students to view reading as a satisfying event, they must be exposed to activities that are functional, relevant, enjoyable, realistically challenging, and success oriented (Morawski & Brunhuber, 1993). In an attempt to motivate and reach students, classroom teachers utilize several methods of instruction.

In some classes group reading has been replaced by whole class reading instruction. Other classes incorporate a whole language philosophy of instruction. Goodman (1989) refers to whole language as a perspective, or orientation, toward the development of literacy based on the idea that (a) the function of language is making meaning, (b) writing is a language activity, so what is true for oral language is also true for written language, (c) systems of language (structural features) are presented and interact in all instances of language, (d) use of language occurs in real-life situations, and (e) real-life situations are crucial to the meaning aspect of language. This is done in an effort to show the student how ideas and situations interact to create daily events.

Cooperative learning is another method used to enhance and develop the students' abilities. One technique involves grouping students of different ability levels to promote peer tutoring, encouragement, and achievement. This methodology is a break from the more traditional method of instruction. Primarily, Cooperative learning reduces the amount of time spent lecturing. It also allows the teacher to assume the role of facilitator. In referring to Cooperative learning, Glasser (1987) found that more than half of today's students do not succeed because they do not feel that the school meets their needs of love, caring, belonging, sharing, and cooperation. Kagan (1990) offers what he terms a "structural approach" to cooperative learning. He reports that the student's situation will influence his/her development abilities. For that reason Kagan feels that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a stimulating environment with appropriate learning materials.

A theory of motivation was established by Tolman (1932). He found that individuals use prior information as a background for the development of an expectation of a future goal. He further hypothesized that the individuals expectation of a future goal served as an incentive which aroused, initiated, and drove a special behavior.

A theory of motivation based on attributes was developed by Weiner (1972). He sees attributes as the psychological qualities ascribed to a person and attributers as the cause of events as inferred by the individual. Weiner feels that a person's actions are based on prior experiences. Personal history, social norms, performance patterns and time on task are characteristics an individual uses to generate future goals. Weiner clarifies his theory of motivation based on attributes by identifying four categories that affect an individual's success or failure. Those categories are: (1) how the person thinks, (2) whether the experience is seen in positive or negative terms, (3) the intensity level, and (4) the individual's success on reading by affecting ability, effort, and task difficulty.

An individual's inferences regarding the causes of his/her successes and failures are governed by three dimensions: stability/instability, controllability/uncontrollability, and

internal/external (Weiner, 1980). The stability/instability dimension guides the expectancy of future consequences based on the individuals' opinions of their intrinsic ability. An individual who feels that failure is due to a lack of effort may be able to improve his/her reading ability (McMahan, 1973). Psychologists consider the attribute of ability to be stable. The attributes of effort and task difficulty are considered unstable (Weiner, 1980).

In regard to the controllability/uncontrollability dimension, controllability governs the attributers of ability and task difficulty. These attributes are frustration that an individual experiences when approaching the reading task.

The internal/external dimension governs the motivation factors that influence the individual both from within and from outside sources. Lack of success that creates a negative self-image further inhibits future accomplishments.

Research related to motivation based on attributes suggests that an ideal learning situation is one that creates a stable and controllable environment (Weiner, 1980). Internal motivation is seen as a positive influence for creating a better self-image. The learner's expectancies are key factors in determining how to proceed with a task. To enhance motivation the task should be neither too easy nor too difficult (Slavin, 1983). Instructors who confer too many A's relay the impression that the task is menial and unworthy of serious intellectual attention. The awarding of too few A's can intimidate students and create a sense of hopelessness. When assigning a reading task, the individuals ability level should be considered by the instructor.

Rogers (1968) emphasized the importance of realness on the part of the teacher to facilitate the learning process. Teachers who present a facade are less likely to be effective than those who meet their students on a person-to-person basis. The mask which many teachers don day after day throughout the school year can create a rift which may impede the learning process. Teachers who demonstrate a willingness to accept students as individuals, having worth of their own, institute a sense of trust within the classroom.

Trust is further enhanced when teachers exhibit an empathetic understanding of the educational process that students encounter.

Schmuck (1966) reports that in classrooms where students perceive their teachers as being understanding, there is a greater sense of satisfaction in regards to feelings of acceptance and worth. Students in these classrooms demonstrated a greater positive attitude about themselves, and towards school than those who viewed the teacher as someone who simply dispersed knowledge with little regard for individualism.

Aspy (1965) conducted a study involving six third grade classes. Teachers in each of these classes tape-recorded each of their interactions with students during the periods devoted to the teaching of reading. Afterwards, four-minute segments were randomly selected for analysis of the degree of congruence or genuineness demonstrated by the teacher, the degree of unconditional positive regard, and the degree of empathetic understanding. Reading Achievement Tests (Stanford Achievement) were then administered to the six classes. Students in the three classes rated as higher in the degree of the attitudes previously mentioned, demonstrated a significantly greater gain in reading achievement than those students in the three classes with lesser degrees of the same qualities.

Clearly teachers' attitude towards their students is a contributing factor to the acquisition of knowledge. Developing a sense of trust and self-worth at an early level is instrumental in creating a positive attitude for the learning process. Teachers who reach out and attempt to understand their pupils as individuals are better able to address reading deficiencies and recognize student teacher manipulation strategies of students.

Social Class

The influence of social class on academic achievement has been of interest to educators for years. Gillet and Temple (1990) commented "reading, writing, and even language itself have values and uses that differ among social groups (p. 6)."

Otto, Peters & Peters (1977) discuss the relationship between social class and the development of language and reading skills. They report the manner in which children use, utter, and string together words, reflects social boundaries that influence the communication process. Middle-class children are more likely to be exposed to abstract speech that offers alternative meanings dependent on the context and environment in which it was utilized. They further suggest that child-rearing factors associated with social class have characteristics which could be of enormous importance to the development of reading skills. Factors such as hope in the future, self-confidence and feelings associated with the ability to control the environment, shape cognitive development. Middle-class citizens are likely to interpret events as caused by themselves. Citizens from lower socio-economic backgrounds often see fate or luck as the cause of what happens to them.

Warden (1968) examined the influence of social class on the level of academic achievement for children. She said, "Children's achievement motivation is heavily dependent on parental attitudes. If these attitudes are positive, and if they are supported by the child's secondary contacts in his more general social environment, then these attitudes will support the child's motivation to achieve in the school situation. However, if parental attitudes or those of the subculture environment, or both, are negative toward educational achievement, the child may lack both initial motivation to achieve and subsequent support for any motivation that may be aroused by his teachers and classmates (p.37)."

Hieronymus (1951) conducted a study involving 610 ninth-grade students from four separate schools. After evaluating attitude, socioeconomic, expectation, intelligence and performance levels, he concluded that lower socio-economic children hold less positive attitudes toward education.

Rosen (1956) examined the idea that differences between social-classes influence attitudes towards achievement. Rosen's study consisted of 120 male Caucasians age fourteen to sixteen, with lower and middle socio-economic backgrounds. Using Thematic Apperception Tests and questionnaires, he discovered that lower-class boys scored lower on achievement motivation and expressed fewer achievement oriented values than middle-class boys. He further discovered that positive motivational attitudes in lower-class boys may not in itself be enough to allow for the achievement of desired goals. Rosen suggests that in lower-class homes where parents place a high value on education, the lack of appropriate training in socialization skills accompanied by the parents' inability to provide positive role-modeling may inhibit goal obtainment by the child.

A previous study by Kahl (1953) supports Rosen's findings that a high level of motivation towards academic achievement is not the only factor that influences goal obtainment. Kahl relates that lower-class parents who are unhappy with their own status tend to train their sons to take education seriously and to use it as a means to obtain upward social mobility. However, he notes that only those children who are able to internalize the value of education are sufficiently motivated enough to hurdle the cultural, social, and economic handicaps they may encounter.

Otto et al. (1977) report that middle-class parents have a more realistic idea of their childrens' reading ability than do working-class parents. Working-class parents were more likely to be disappointed with their child's first report than were middle-class parents.

Communication skills are another factor that may influence academic achievement. Research shows that middle-class homes typically have an abundance of reading materials.

In addition to a variety of literature, children residing in middle-class homes and communities are also exposed to more advanced levels of vocabulary usage.

Newton (1962) collected data related to children who are different in language skills. Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have more limited vocabularies, are less articulate, and use shorter and more fragmented sentences than do their middle-class counterparts. Newton found that the child's verbal development is influenced by:

- 1) the general cultural level of the home,
- 2) the parent's language pattern,
- 3) the language patterns of peers,
- 4) the general cultural level of the community and,
- 5) the educational resources available in and outside of school,

Newton has also developed a list of personal characteristics that typically represent what she terms the "verbally destitute" child. Those characteristics are:

- 1) usually a member of a family in which there is less than two full generations of literacy;
- 2) often the product of a small, substandard public school system located in communities barren of cultural opportunities, or of a large, overcrowded, outmoded public school system located in ghetto-like urban areas;
- 3) frequently a racial or cultural minority group member or a resident of a geographically isolated place, or both, or he is a migrant;
- 4) during his formative years communicating customarily through nonstandard English, characterized by: (a) casual observance of standard inflections, (b) simple words, (c) frequently mis-pronounced and incorrect words, (d) rare use of descriptive or qualifying terms, (e) simple sentences or sentence fragmentation in both oral and written expression, and (f) speech heavily infused with vernacular expressions;

5) usually performing two or more years below grade expectancy on verbal tests, but frequently demonstrating adequate scholastic potential on nonverbal tests;

6) generally disenchanted with all types of book-centered learning, which he displays through aggressive, defensive, or indifferent attitudes in the classroom; and

7) generally experiencing difficulty in relating present activity to future goals.

The review of literature regarding the relationship between social class and academic achievement appears to reflect a positive correlation. Though exceptions do exist, the overwhelming amount of literature examined reports social class may be a factor contributing to the academic success that students may achieve. The most current literature reviewed for this study offers findings similar to those reported from the early 1950's. Lipson and Wixon (1991) concluded, "students who have trouble adjusting to various social situations with peers, and or adults may experience academic difficulties (p. 31)."

Family Situation

Studies regarding the relationship between family influence and the personality development and educational interest of children, have long been an interest to educators. Warden (1968) commented "Each child brings to school an already developed collection of values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior patterns through which these values and meanings are expressed. These cognitions and behaviors are based on preschool experiences gained largely from the home situation (p.57)." Warden feels that the developmental process of socialization is most greatly influenced by parents, teachers, siblings, peers, and others deemed significant by the child. The traditional two parent home, surrounded by an entourage of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins has

dissipated greatly due to increasing numbers of children born out of wedlock, and a dramatically higher incidence of divorce. It is estimated that one-third of the children born in the 1980's will live in a single-parent family before reaching the age of 18 (Appel, 1985). According to Appel, the absence of one parent may be a significant factor contributing to problems such as low achievement, personal maladjustment, and delinquency. Problems associated with live-in lovers and rivalry between children of different parents may also contribute to poor performance in the classroom.

Children who experience family separation and divorce, often times develop a sense of confusion, anxiety, and mistrust. They may have to relocate to new homes and schools. Developed friendships may be lost and children have to re-establish themselves in an unfamiliar environment. Appel (1985) relates that because of the emotional demands that divorce imposes, some parents are insensitive to the emotional needs of their children. Similar findings were reported by Clarke-Stewart (1989). According to her, one in three school children have parents who are divorced. Thirty percent of these children live in step-families and the remaining 70% live with either their mother or father. Children whose parents divorce, initially show signs of being distraught, shocked, and a fear of their futures.

Both Appel and Clarke-Stewart report that boys from divorced homes demonstrate higher levels of emotional behaviors. Aggressiveness and impulsive reactions appear to be more pronounced but the reasons for this increase is unclear. Similarly, Warden (1968) reports that, "early experiential deprivation prevents the formation of adequate models and means of coping with the environment of the school (p. 66)."

In addressing the significance of the mother/child relationship, (Watson, 1960) views the mother as being the first agent of socialization, and the most significant other

who influences the development of the child's personality. The significance of a positive early mother/child relationship is also addressed by Appel (1985). She reports that in situations where the mother leaves the home, children sometimes develop a sense of rejection. If the child feels unloved by the mother, the stigmatism created by society may create problems for the child even if there is a father who provides lots of love and care.

Research findings related to behaviors of mothers from different social classes are discussed by Otto et al. (1977). They found that middle-class mothers allow their children to work at their own pace, offering general structuring suggestions on how to search for a problem's solution. These mothers also praised their children for identifying correct responses. Lower-class mothers, on the other hand, made more controlling and disapproving comments. Their suggestions to their children were also more specific and little emphasis was placed on basic problem-solving strategies.

According to Appel (1985), divorced mothers and fathers react differently toward their children, with mothers being more restrictive. She also reports that educated women with a career and some social status have more successful relationships with their children than mothers with a lower socioeconomic status.

In describing factors related to divorce which may be of interest to teachers Clarke-Stewart (1989) summarized:

1) Age. Children between the ages of 9 to 12 and 13 to 16 when a divorce takes place, have the bleakest prognosis for a complete adjustment.

2) Sex. Divorce is harder on boys and they are more likely to have problems than girls.

3) Family competence and confidence. Children from families with strong personal qualities tend to handle the divorce situation more easily.

4) Economic Situation. The families financial situation may be the best predictor of the long-term consequences of divorce.

5) Parents' caring and availability. The ability of both parents to provide supervision, discipline, and affection is important for a healthy adjustment.

6) Parents' current relationship. Children suffer more from divorce if parents are constantly hostile towards each other.

7) Stability of circumstances. The more changes that a child experiences as a result of divorce, the harder it is for adjustment to take place.

8) Access to outside help. The parents and children who adjust best to divorce are those who get help.

The next section will discuss issues of importance for parents and educators relevant to educational practices for children with lower socioeconomic, and divorce backgrounds.

Educational Factors

Research shows that children from lower socioeconomic environments benefit from early interaction with programs designed to provide health, nutrition, and education. It is important for parents and teachers to recognize that heredity and the environment interact to shape and mold the child's physical, emotional, and intellectual potential (Cryan and Surbeck, 1979). They suggest that total competence, rather than academic competence alone should be the goal of any educational program.

Cryan and Surbeck (1979) offer five factors thought to be critical antecedents for a child's later success in school. Their findings are summarized as follows:

1) Intelligence is not fixed and the child's potential for change in a positive or negative way is great.

2) Young children have strong needs for emotional security and affection. Children who are emotionally secure grow in independence and learning skills.

3) The child's relationship with the mother is significant because she provides opportunities for the child to experience and master the whole world around him/her.

4) Infants require language at an early age in order to learn to communicate. This is significant for children under the age of one year.

5) Finally, the methods of control utilized by parents is important. Overly authoritarian parents may stifle their children's social behavior.

Successful preschool programs may be an advantage for children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Berruela-Clement, Schweihart, Barnett, Epstein, and Weikart, 1984). They report that disadvantaged children who attend a good preschool as compared to a randomly assigned control group, were significantly more likely to complete high school, enroll in post-secondary education, and find employment. They were also less likely to be assigned to special education classes, commit crimes, have children themselves during their teenage years, or find themselves receiving welfare assistance.

As discussed previously, children from homes where divorce has taken place may need special understanding from the classroom teacher. Clarke-Stewart (1989) suggests that teachers can better address the needs of these students if they are well informed about what to expect. First of all, research shows that boys are more likely to act up, withdraw, or ignore their schoolwork for as long as two years after the divorce of their parents. Secondly, teachers should attend workshops, read materials related to divorce, and talk to their colleagues about solutions to problems related to divorce. Third, teachers who have students whose parents have just divorced may allow some period of adjustment and transition by reducing assignments and providing extra attention. For some children the teacher may be the only stable role-model the child encounters. And finally, teachers might raise the level of awareness of their other students regarding what divorce means through discussion or by introducing stories which address the realities of divorce.

Appel (1985) offers suggestions that teachers and school administrators can utilize to show support for children experiencing problems with family change. The following points are aimed at the classroom teacher:

1) Acknowledge the pain - Teachers can establish a bond of understanding with the child by reassuring the child that his/her feelings are legitimate.

2) Deal with Denial - Older children are more likely to deny the emotions they are experiencing. Teachers should not assume that students are not feeling emotional pain simply because there are no external signs.

3) Positive Affirmation - A hug, pat or encouraging note can affirm the student's importance.

4) Deal Directly with the Family Change Process - Teachers who have personally experienced divorce as a child or adult, can tell children what to expect in an objective manner.

5) Universal Feelings - Introducing stories about children in single-parent homes and life in changing families can be beneficial for elementary students. Secondary level teachers can help develop groups for students who have recently experienced family change. These groups can offer support and hold discussions regarding ways of dealing with common problems.

6) Giving Advice - Being a good listener is often times more important than giving good advice. Advice that a student may not be able to achieve can lead to a sense of failure on the part of the student.

7) Teacher Expectations - Teachers should continue to be consistent with their discipline and student expectations. Teachers can provide direction in solving problems, but should be careful that students don't become overly dependent.

8) Avoiding Stigma - Father-son or mother-daughter banquets and events can create a negative stigma regarding divorce or separation. Teachers should be aware of this, and suggest other options that might include siblings, relatives or friends.

9) Communicating with Parents - Teacher/parent conferences can be used to let the parents know that the teacher cares about the student. The conference can also be used to introduce parents to community or school resources available to help the student adjust to changes in the home environment.

Because changing families may present challenges for school administrators, sound school policies should be developed that promote awareness for staffs and communities. Appel (1985) offers these guidelines:

1) Inservice Program on Changing Families - Inservice programs at the building level or district level can build awareness among the staff and provide knowledge and resources for dealing with the problems of family change. This would also be an opportune time to introduce personnel from community social agencies.

2) Child Abuse Policy - Because physical and sexual abuse is becoming an increasing factor in family breakups, administrators should see that their schools have a written policy on reporting suspected child abuse.

3) Counseling Referrals - Administrators should familiarize themselves with community agencies that provide counseling for parents and children. This information should be shared with teachers and staff so that referrals can be made when necessary.

4) Adjudicating School Boundary Violations - Administrators should maintain some flexibility in dealing with students needing a boundary waiver due to relocation caused by divorce or separation.

5) Protecting School Records - In cases of joint custody, administrators should be prepared to deal with each parent separately when he/she request information regarding children's records.

6) Providing Supplementary Student Services - Administrators should offer support for families who are in need of assistance due to their changed status. Reduced or free lunches and funds for activity fees are examples of the assistance that schools may offer.

7) Providing Sources of Child Care - The school might help single-parent families by providing a list of child care facilities within the neighborhood.

8) School Secretaries - Because school secretaries are often the first person in the school to have contact with a parent who is registering a child, they obtain the information that might be significant to teacher. Therefore, the secretary is a prime source of information regarding problems associated with changes in the family status.

Summary

The literature researched in this chapter relates factors relevant to personality development and the successful acquisition of educational goals. These findings suggest that a stable home environment, family and peer influence, socioeconomic level, and teacher behavior and expectations are significant to the obtainment of knowledge by the student. The teacher's ability to develop a sense of trust and worthiness with each student within the classroom, appears to be an element that influences the success or failure of the child.

The literature suggests that although the teacher has little or no control over factors such as socioeconomic status or divorce, he/she can instill a sense of security and caring that may transcend these barriers and create an environment conducive to learning. Teachers who present themselves as being genuine and understanding of their students' needs, have a greater chance of reaching those students who are distracted by situations unassociated with the curriculum. Equal treatment of all students, accompanied by

consistent practices regarding discipline and student expectations are also necessary for achieving the greatest possible outcome.

Interaction with administrators and the students' family can also give the teacher insight into what is best for the student. Inservices and current literature related to hindrances to the student's potential for success, provide information that the teacher can utilize with each student on an individual basis.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Purpose Of The Study

The specific purpose of this study was to identify factors that may have contributed to first semester Roane State Community College student's placement in remedial/developmental reading courses. Students were asked to respond to questions addressing their educational backgrounds, family history, and future aspirations.

The following questions guided the research:

- 1) Why are students graduating high school and G.E.D. programs deficient in reading skills necessary for enrollment in a community college governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents?
- 2) Are there identifiable factors that students and educators can address in order to better meet the needs of students enrolled in remedial/developmental reading courses?

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, a qualitative method of research was utilized. This method allowed the researcher to collect data in depth, describing students' feelings regarding factors preceding their placement in remedial/developmental reading courses.

Methods

This study was conducted in the privacy of the researcher's office located in the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. The site of this study

was located in LaFollette, Tennessee. Data collection for this study took place during August, 1995.

The procedure used for data collection was a descriptive method of research as described by Gay (1987). The primary instrument utilized was a 16-question interview guide, designed to report the current status of the participants. This was achieved by incorporating questions related to the students' family background and previous educational experiences. Participants were allowed to respond to each question at a leisurely pace. They were also encouraged to expand upon any question they felt to be specific. This provided the researcher with a better understanding of the participant's own individual circumstances related to each question addressed. The 12 participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- 1) You have been identified by the AAPP exam as having a reading deficiency.
Do you agree with this diagnosis?
- 2) a. Why do you agree?
b. To what do you attribute these problems?
- 3) Would you please describe your educational background?
- 4) a. Which subjects did you like?
b. Which subjects did you dislike?
- 5) a. Do you read for pleasure?
b. What do you read?
- 6) Did your parents influence you in your school work?
- 7) Do they encourage you now?
- 8) How much education do your parents have?
- 9) Are they strong readers?
- 10) Do you have brothers or sisters?
- 11) Do they read well?

- 12) How do you feel about reading?
- 13) For what do you need reading?
- 14) What is your major?
- 15) What do you intend to do after college?
- 16) Would you take a reading course if it weren't required of you?

Participants

Twelve first semester Roane State Community College students participated in this research project. Each of the 12 participants received part if not all of their education from Campbell County Schools. Seven males and five females volunteered for participation. All participants were Caucasian ranging in age from 18 to 30. Each of the females were unwed or divorced mothers. One of the seven males was a married father. Three of the participants were recipients of a general education diploma, while the majority of the remaining students were graduates of either Jellico High School or Campbell County Comprehensive High School. At the time of this research all twelve participants appeared to have a genuine interest in performing to the best of their ability.

Participant Observations

To further clarify responses to the interview guide, the researcher conducted objective observations of the participants during the interview process. This was important because the researcher was interested in seeing if particular questions would elicit a physical response that would indicate the degree of relevance to the student's personal history. Because of the small size of the Campbell County site, it was also

possible to observe the participation in various classrooms and during social interactions. In addition to these observations, time was also spent in the student lounge where students gathered before and after class. This allowed the researcher to observe the participants as they discussed their family and scholastic situations. Observation notes, combined with the interview question responses, provided a more complete understanding of the students participating in this study.

Transcriptions And Taped Responses

The responses of each of the 12 students participating in this study were audiotaped. The tapes were then transcribed and assigned a number for analysis. Appendix B includes student responses verbatim.

Validity And Reliability

This study was delimited to first semester remedial/developmental reading students attending the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. Participants were volunteers and received no compensation for their participation from either the researcher or the college. Each student was informed in depth by the researcher regarding the purpose of the study. Each student was required to sign a consent form (appendix B). Each of the 12 participants completed the study.

This study was conducted using a descriptive method of research that incorporates the following methods of data collection (Gay, 1987).

- 1) Research techniques including ethnographic interviewing, tape recordings, and objective participant observations were used.

2) The participating students were clearly identified by the AAPP as deficient in skills necessary for entry into college level courses.

3) Direct quotations and verbatim accounts were recorded and used for analysis and reporting of student findings.

4) The site selected for research was clearly defined and described.

The interview guide used in this study was designed by the researcher. The original interview guide consisted of 20 questions. Four questions were discarded due to the possibility of bias. The remaining 16 questions were examined and approved as a valid research instrument by professors of Educational Research.

Data Analyses

Student responses to the questions on the interview guide were tallied and converted to percentages. Histograms and circle graphs were used to summarize the results. Data on the various questions were compared and contrasted in order to establish relationships or dissimilarities.

The Setting

Campbell County is located in the Appalachian Region of Northeastern Tennessee. It borders Anderson, Scott, Claiborne, and Union County Tennessee. The Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College is located in Woodson's Mall in the town of LaFollette. The site consists of seven classrooms, an administration office and student lounge. Three of the seven classrooms are equipped with computers that students can utilize for in class and out of class assignments. In addition, one classroom is

equipped with a large screen television for interactive courses taught by professors in Oak Ridge and Harriman. The limited number of classrooms, has at times, created course scheduling difficulties. This is a problem, but the site does provide access to college classes that many students otherwise would be unable to receive. The University of Tennessee and Lincoln Memorial University are within driving distance but the ease of access and lower tuition fees are more attractive to many of the residents of Campbell County. In addition, smaller class size is another benefit the college offers.

Campbell County School System

Campbell County is served by a county wide school system. The system consists of seventeen schools serving a total of about 6,811 students. The system contains twelve elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, and one k-12 school. Campbell County Comprehensive High School has roughly 1,590 students. The majority of remaining high school students attend Jellico High, with a student enrollment of 419 students.

The school system has an elected superintendent and five elected school board members. The school system utilizes a state mandated curriculum and state achievement tests. A 1992 report conducted by the state Department of Education reports that 10.4% of Campbell County classes are oversized. This was the second highest percentage of the twenty-two East Tennessee school systems participating in this study. The percentage of teachers involved in Career Ladder was also targeted by this study. In this category Campbell County placed sixteenth with 11.1% of it's teachers participating in the Career Ladder program.

Budgetary problems have been an ongoing concern and at times teachers have not received their paychecks on the designated date of dispersal. A restricted budget has also interfered with busing on more than one occasion. In addition, schools have at times been closed due to lack of budgetary funds for air-conditioning and heat repair.

Because part of the county is located in a mountainous area, inclement weather forces school closing quite often during the winter months. This has been a special concern for many of the residents of LaFollette because often times their town remains clear of snow and ice, while the smaller town of Jellico located in a higher altitude receives precipitation which forces a county wide closing of schools.

Roane State Community College

Roane State Community College serves an eight-county area in East Tennessee including Roane, Anderson, Cumberland, Scott, Loudon, Campbell, Fentress, and Morgan counties. In addition to these counties, Roane State's Health Sciences service area also includes Knox and Blount counties.

Roane State provides opportunities for transfer education, career education, continuing education, and developmental education. Designed for students who plan to transfer to senior institutions, the Roane State academic transfer curricula include two years of instruction in the humanities, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences to build a strong liberal arts background during the freshman and sophomore years.

Roane State's career preparation programs train students in business management, health sciences, office administration, police science, and other fields for students desiring associate degrees or certificates. In addition, continuing education opportunities are provided through a variety of non-credit courses that do not require admission to the

college. These courses are offered for personal enrichment, for compliance with business and industrial requirements, for specific technological information and for general cultural benefits.

Roane State now serves more than 5,500 students who are enrolled for credit. More than 5000 students are served yearly through non-credit courses, programs, and workshops.

Summary

This chapter describes the qualitative research methods used to identify factors that may lead to first semester students being placed in remedial/developmental reading courses. The 16-question interview guide was used to help the researcher better understand what factors may have contributed to students being able to exit high school and G.E.D. programs deficient in reading skills considered necessary for success in college level courses.

This chapter also contains a description of the participating students. In addition, the site of the study, Campbell County school system and Roane State Community College are also discussed.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Teachers of remedial/developmental courses have within their classrooms students with a hodgepodge of educational backgrounds. The majority of these students have experienced only limited success at the elementary and secondary level. Their strengths and weaknesses vary for each individual. Often, the attitudes and motivational levels are less than desirable. For many, failure in academics has been a way of life. The realization of the importance of education has come about as a result of limited possibilities in the work place.

The role of the educator has profound significance for many of these students. Often, this is the last attempt for respectability and a sense of worthiness. A better understanding of the trials and tribulations of these students may mean the difference between the development of a productive citizen capable of contributing to society or a life dependent on welfare and other governmental assistance programs.

The 16-question interview guide was designed to identify possible factors contributing to limited success on the part of the student. The questions utilized addressed the skill of reading in particular. Although educational curriculums cover numerous subject matters, the ability to read is the foundation upon which all learning takes place.

The following charts and histograms depict student responses to questions that may have significance for early interventions. As was addressed earlier in this study, the school has limited or no control over issues such as socioeconomic status or home environment. However, the findings of this study may give the educator a better insight to

issues outside of the classroom that may influence the success or failure of the student. By better understanding the educational and economic backgrounds of students, the classroom teachers can better prepare themselves to help their students reach the goals they seek.

Analyses Of Student Responses

Question One

Interview question 1: You have been identified by the AAPP exam as having a reading deficiency. Do you agree with this diagnosis?

This question was designed to determine the participants' perception of their academic strengths and weaknesses. In response to this question, 11 of the participants felt that the AAPP exam correctly identified a need for remedial/developmental reading instruction. The remaining participant who disagreed with the AAPP diagnosis felt that given an opportunity to enroll in regular college courses, he/she would be as successful as any other first semester freshman (figure 1.).

Question Two

***Why do you agree?
To what do you attribute these problems?***

This question was designed to clarify affirmative responses from question one. An analysis of student responses provided four categories that represent participant comments. Lack of effort or interest by the student was given as the most common reason

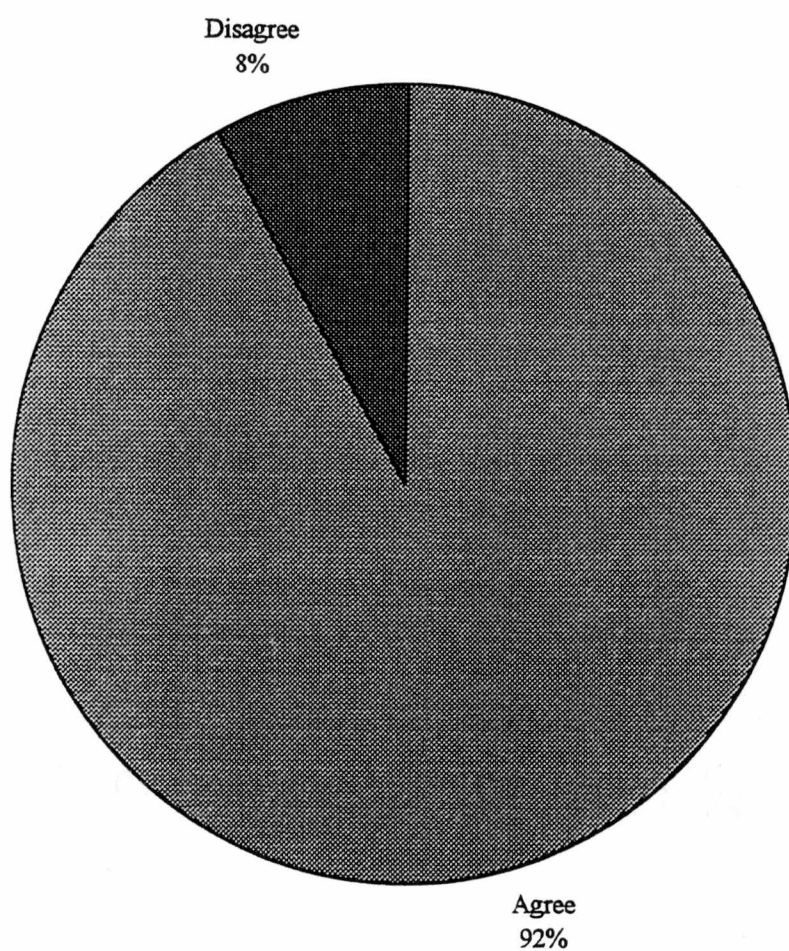


FIGURE 1
Students' Agreement with AAPP Placement
(Question 1)

for reading problems. This category received 42% of participant responses. Thirty-three percent of the participants felt that their problems were directly related to family affairs. Lack of quality instruction in the form of unqualified or uncaring teachers accounted for seventeen percent of participant responses. Finally, 8% attributed their reading problems to reasons that could not be specifically identified (figure 2.).

Question Three

Would you please describe your educational background?

Students responses to this question were somewhat short, vague, and void of any specific comments indicating that the participant's educational background was enjoyable or meaningful. Several students stated that the school or teachers did little to encourage their success. Other students responded in a fashion that appeared lackadaisical. Each participant possessed a strongly developed attitude that their own success is at least in some part attributed to his/her educational background.

Question Four

Which subjects did you like?
Which subjects did you dislike?

Six of the participating students stated that mathematics was their favorite school subject. One student made it clear that he/she liked none of the subjects he/she had taken while attending school. Each of the five remaining students chose a separate subject. Those choices included history, health, english/reading, science, and social studies.

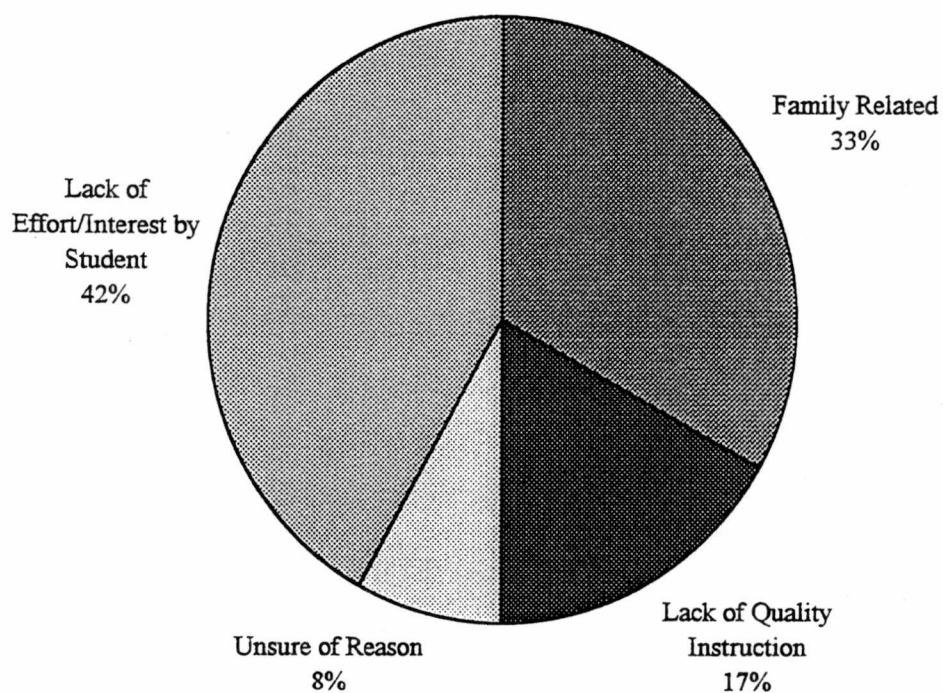


FIGURE 2
Students' Perceived Factors Contributing to Reading
Problems
(Question 2b)

In response to subjects disliked, 33% of the participants stated that english/reading was their least favorite subject. The subjects of science, history, and math tied for the second least favorite subject, with a 17% response for each subject. One student described the fine arts as his/her least favorite subject, and one student had stated previously that he/she disliked all subjects (figures 3. and 4.).

Question Five

Do you read for pleasure?

What do you read?

When the participants were asked if they read for pleasure, seven students responded that they found reading pleasurable. Two students reported that they enjoyed reading mystery stories for pleasure. Two additional students reported that they read magazines and newspapers for pleasure. The remaining three students reported either science fiction, nonfiction, or novels as the material they read for entertainment.

Four students stated that they did not read for pleasure. The only time that they did read was when it was required. In a situation where they had time to spare, reading was the last activity in which they would choose to participate (figures 5. and 6.).

Question Six

Did your parents influence you in your school work?

Forty-two percent of the participants stated that both their parents had attempted to encourage them to excel in their K-12 school work. Thirty-three percent of the

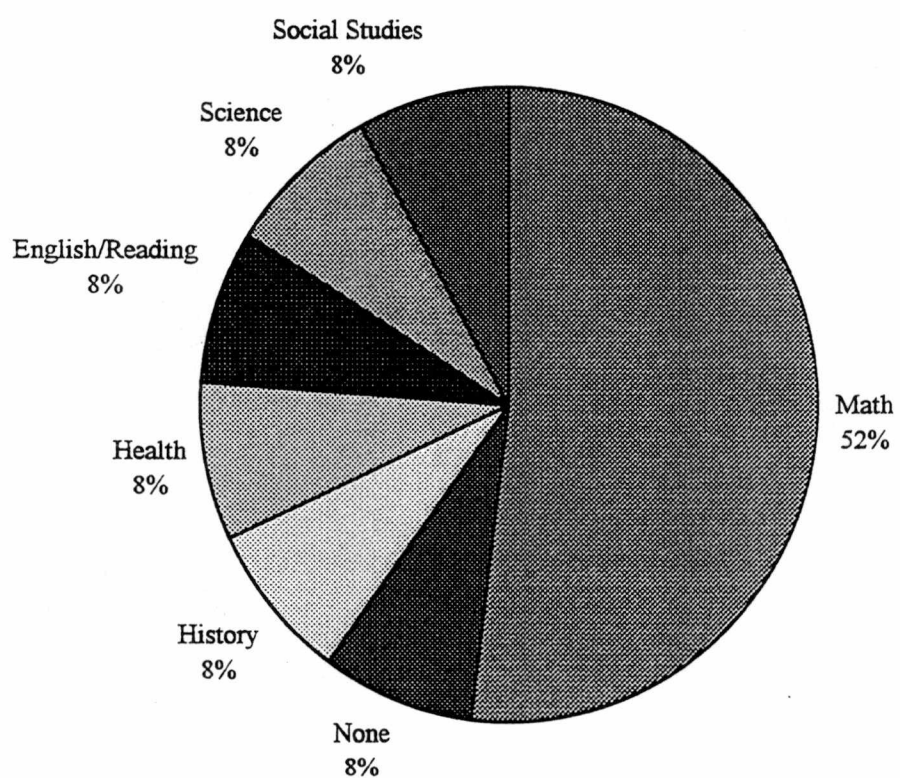


FIGURE 3
Students' Favorable Subjects
(Question 4)

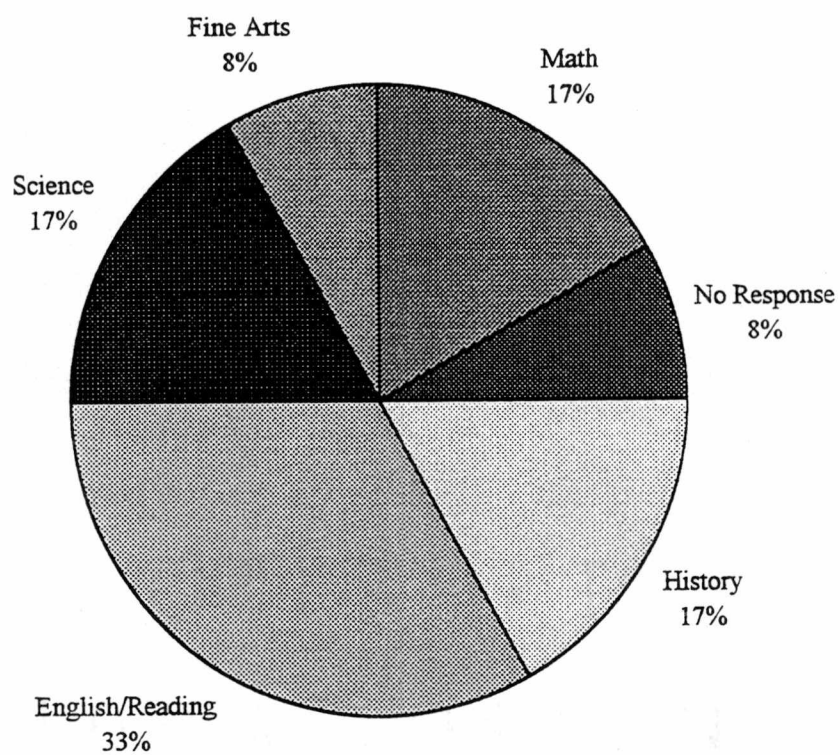


FIGURE 4
Students' Least Favorable Subjects
(Question 4)

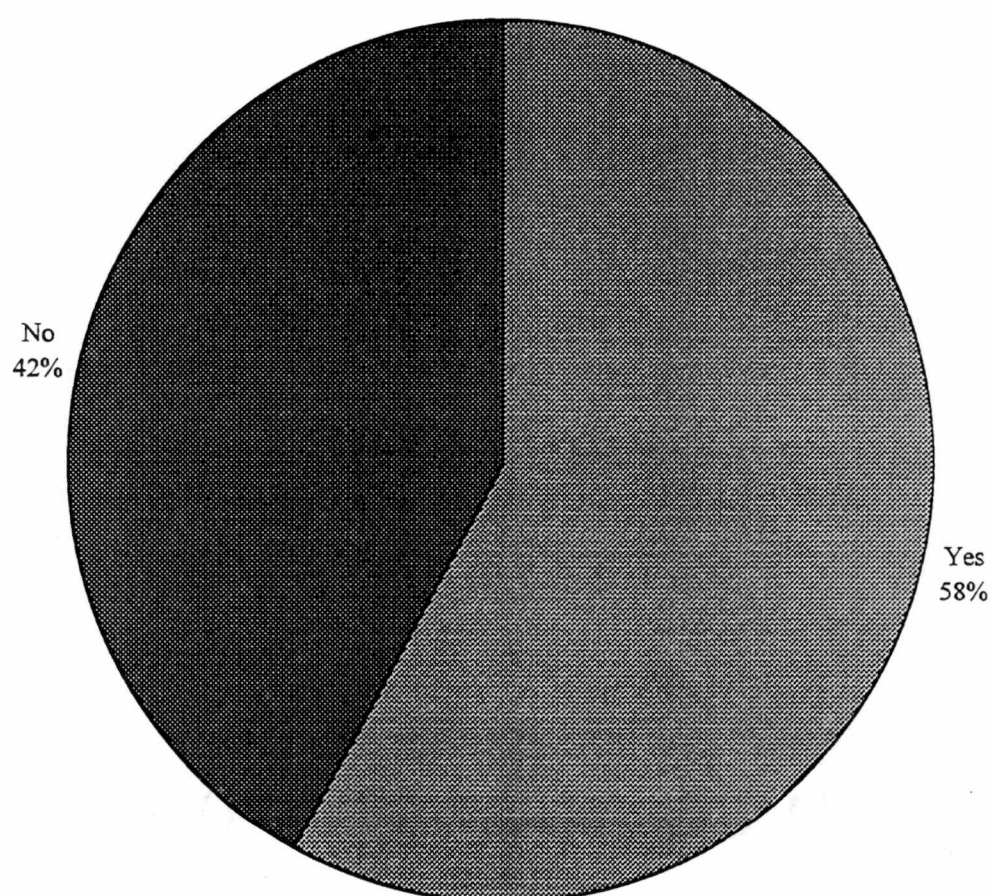


FIGURE 5
Students' Willingness to Read for Pleasure
(Question 5)

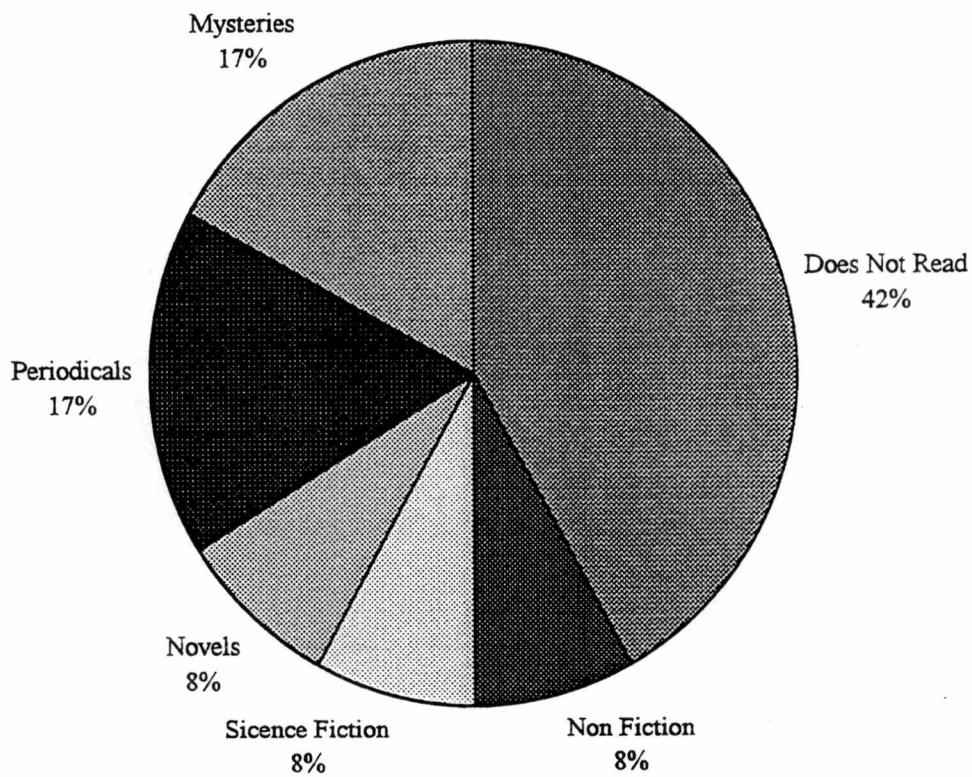


FIGURE 6
Students' Preferred Reading Material
(Question 5)

respondents felt that their parents had offered little or no encouragement. The remaining 25% received encouragement from the mother only. The three students that comprised the 25% were united and adamant in their statements that their fathers had offered no encouragement what so ever (figure 7.).

Question Seven

Do they encourage you now?

An examination of current parental influence reveals that 50% of the parents support and encourage their child to succeed in the college setting. Forty-two percent of the mothers only supported their child's attempt to further his/her education. And finally, one student reported that neither of his parents supported his attempts to obtain a college education.

In relationship to question six, it is important to note that divorce and re-marriages had occurred during the time span that these two questions transcend. It is also important to note that no parent of any of the 12 participants is deceased at the time of this study. Therefore, changes or the lack of changes in parental attitude, is represented by the original 24 parents (figure 8.).

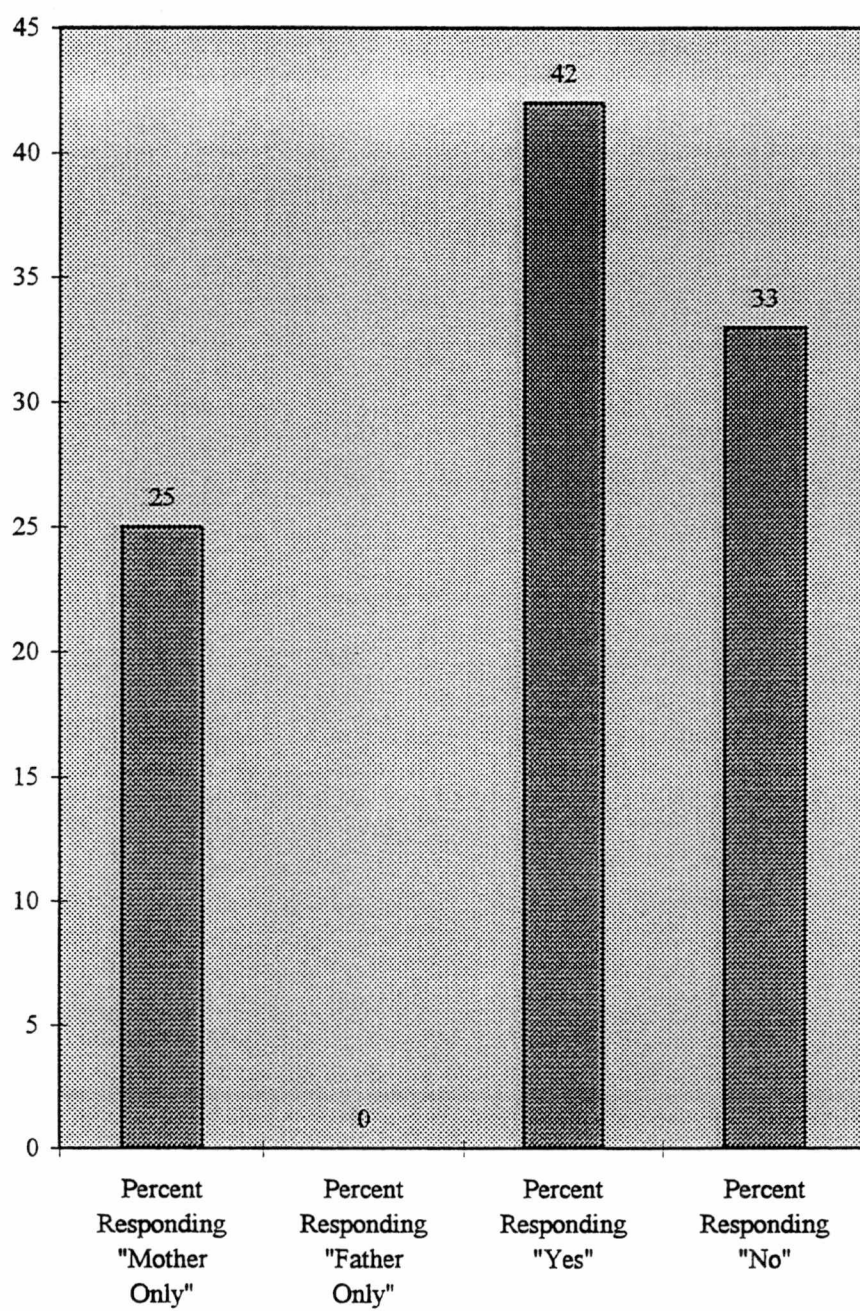


FIGURE 7
Students' Perception of Prior Parental Influence
(Question 6)

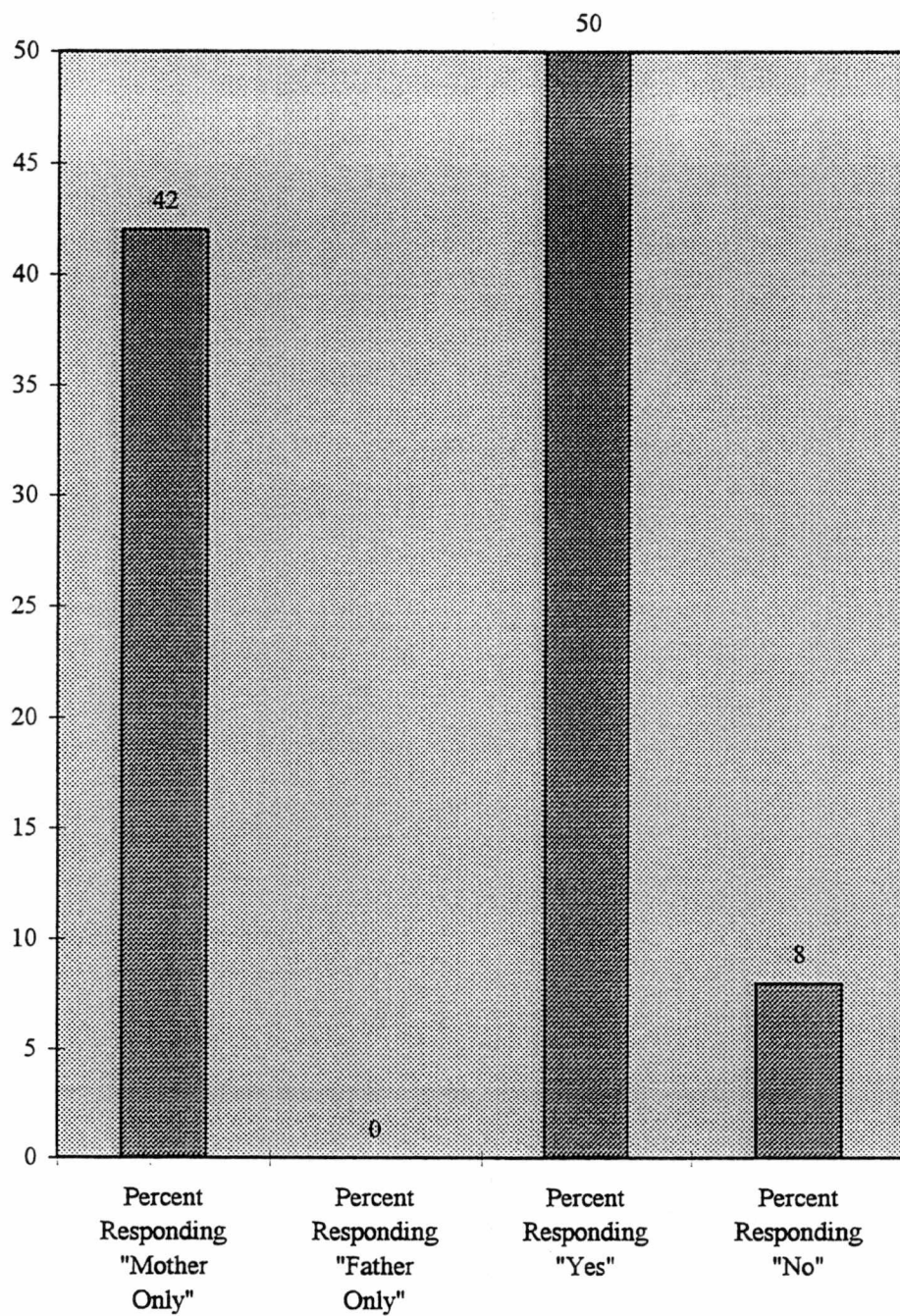


FIGURE 8
Students' Perception of Current Parental Influence
(Question 7)

Question Eight

How much education do your parents have?

Question eight addresses the educational background of the 24 parents of the participating students. The data were divided into elementary, middle, high school, and post secondary areas. In addition, an area identified as "unknown" is also included.

Seventeen percent of the parents' education was terminated at or before the end of the sixth grade. Thirteen percent of the parents completed their education during or at the completion of middle school. The majority of parents made it to or through high school. This area has a percentage of 28%. Seventeen percent of the parents were involved in post secondary education, with one parent successfully obtaining a bachelor's degree. The "unknown" category reflects participant statements involving either or both parents. This area shows that for 25% of the parents, their children had no idea of the extent of their educational backgrounds (figure 9.).

Question Nine

Are they strong readers?

Question nine was designed to determine the reading strengths of the parents of the participating students. Regarding the mothers' reading strengths, 63% of the participants stated that mother was a strong reader. Twelve percent stated that they didn't know if mother was a strong reader.

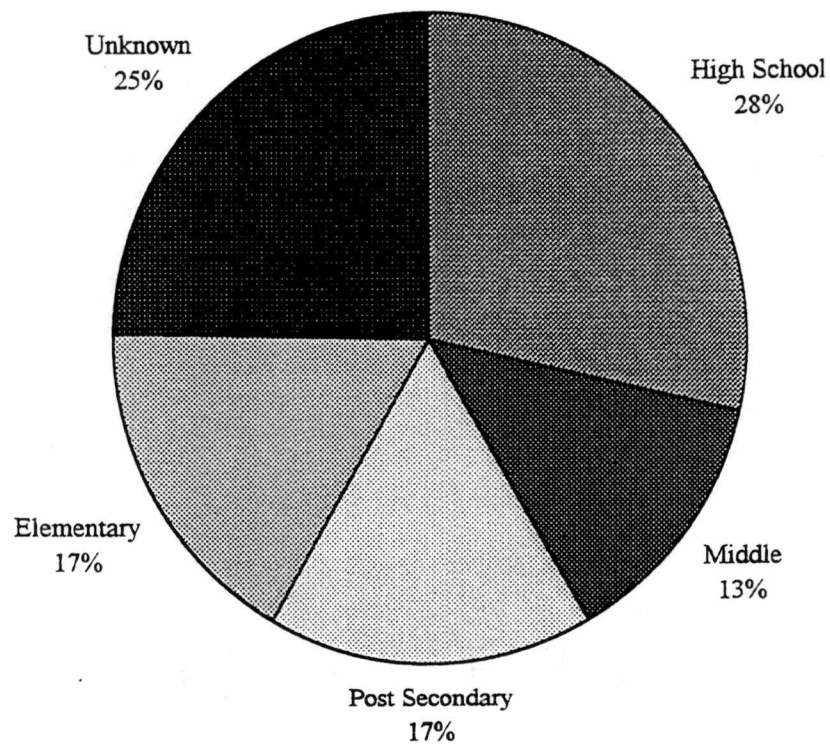


FIGURE 9
Students' Description of Parents' Education
(Question 8)

In addressing the reading strengths of the father, 75% of the students said that their father was not a strong reader. The remaining 25% responded that they were uncertain of their fathers' reading ability. (figures 10. and 11.).

Questions Ten and Eleven

***Do you have brothers or sisters?
Do they read well?***

The participants of this study reported a combined total of 36 full or half-brothers and sisters. More specifically, 14 brothers and 15 sisters. One participant stated she has 7 brothers and sisters, but she didn't specify the number of each sex. An analysis of data revealed that 6 brothers and 14 sisters can read. A total of 4 brothers and 1 sister can not read. Four participants stated that they didn't know if their siblings can read. This statistic accounts for the 7 remaining brothers or sisters (figure 12.).

Question Twelve

How do you feel about reading?

Seventy-five percent of the participants reported they enjoyed reading. Twenty-five percent stated they disliked reading (figure 13.).

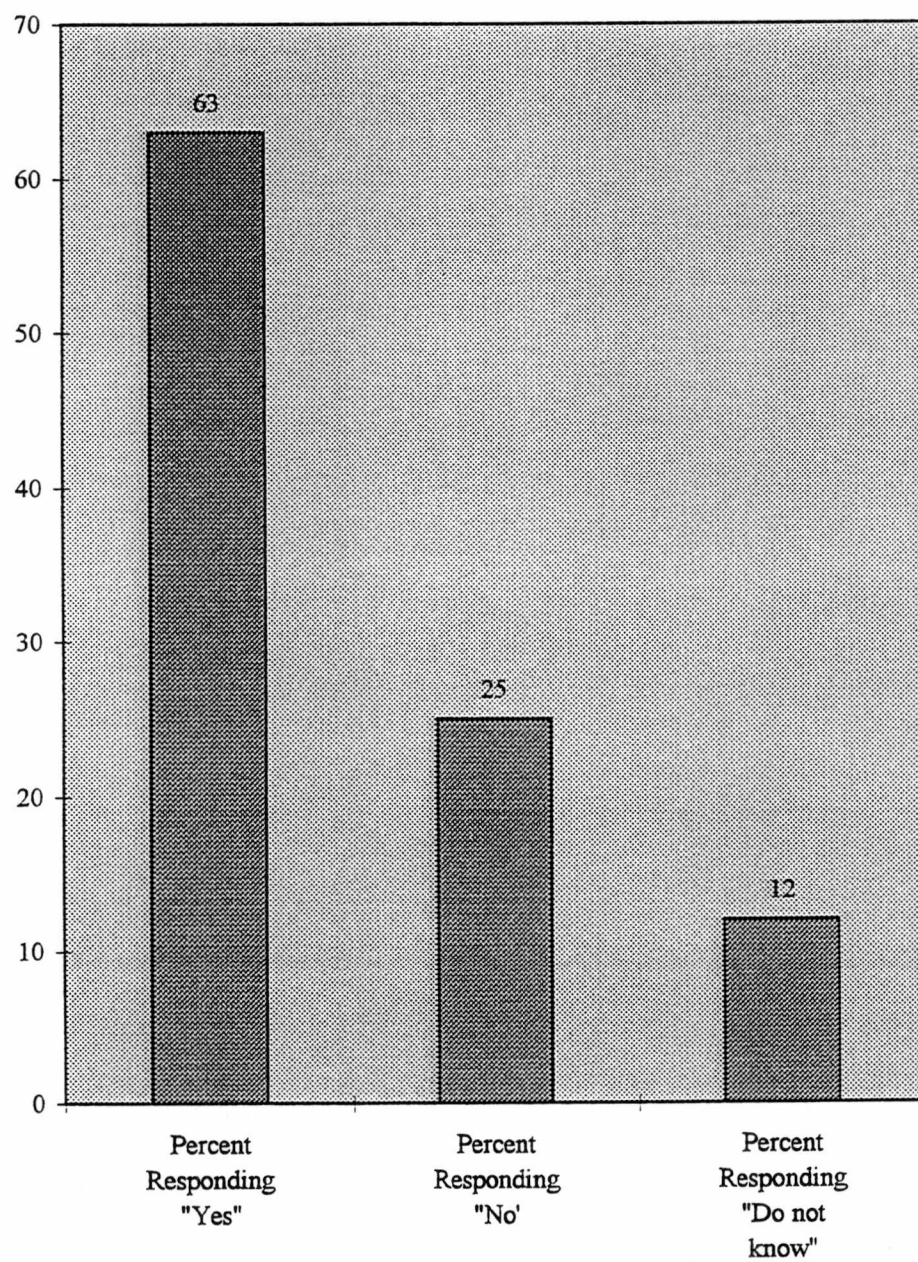


FIGURE 10
Students' Perception of Mothers' Reading Strength
(Question 9)

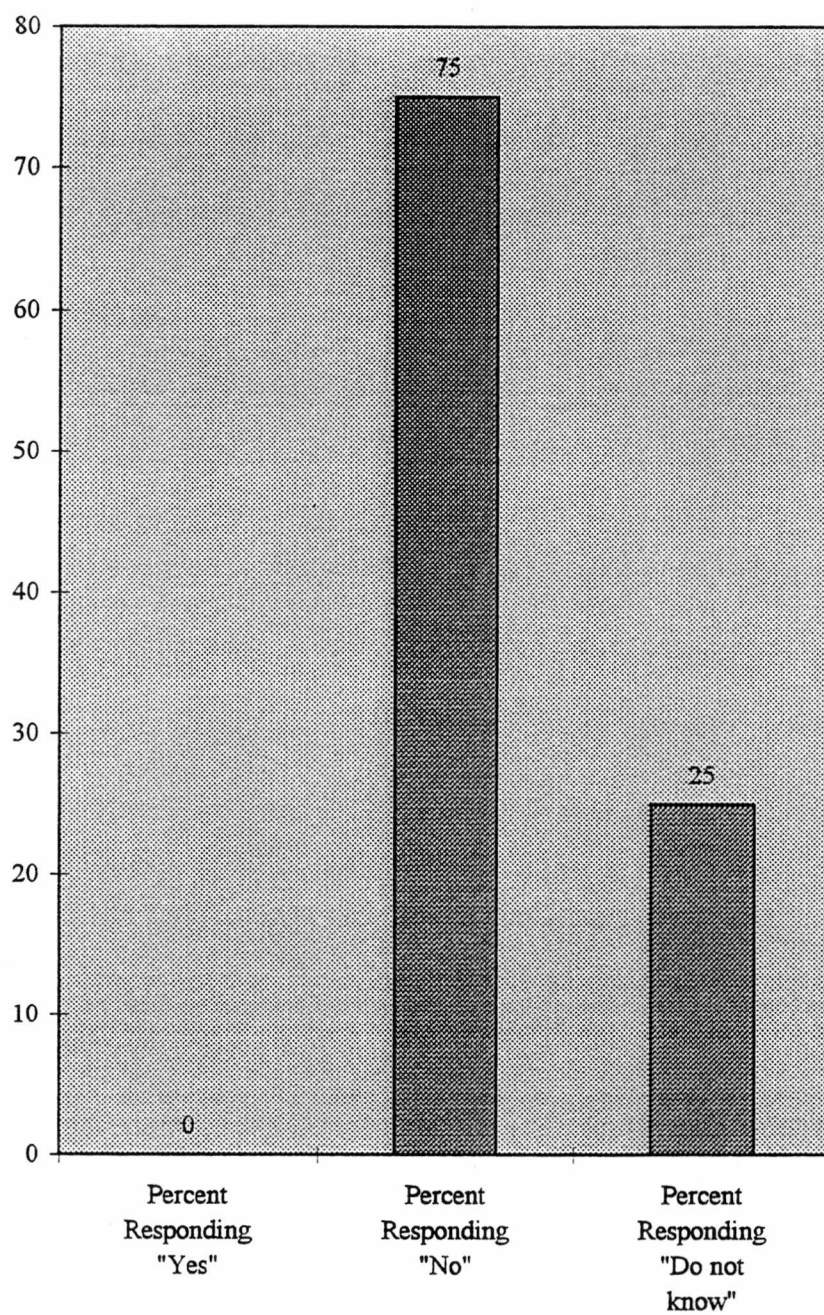


FIGURE 11
Students' Perception of Fathers' Reading Strength
(Question 9)

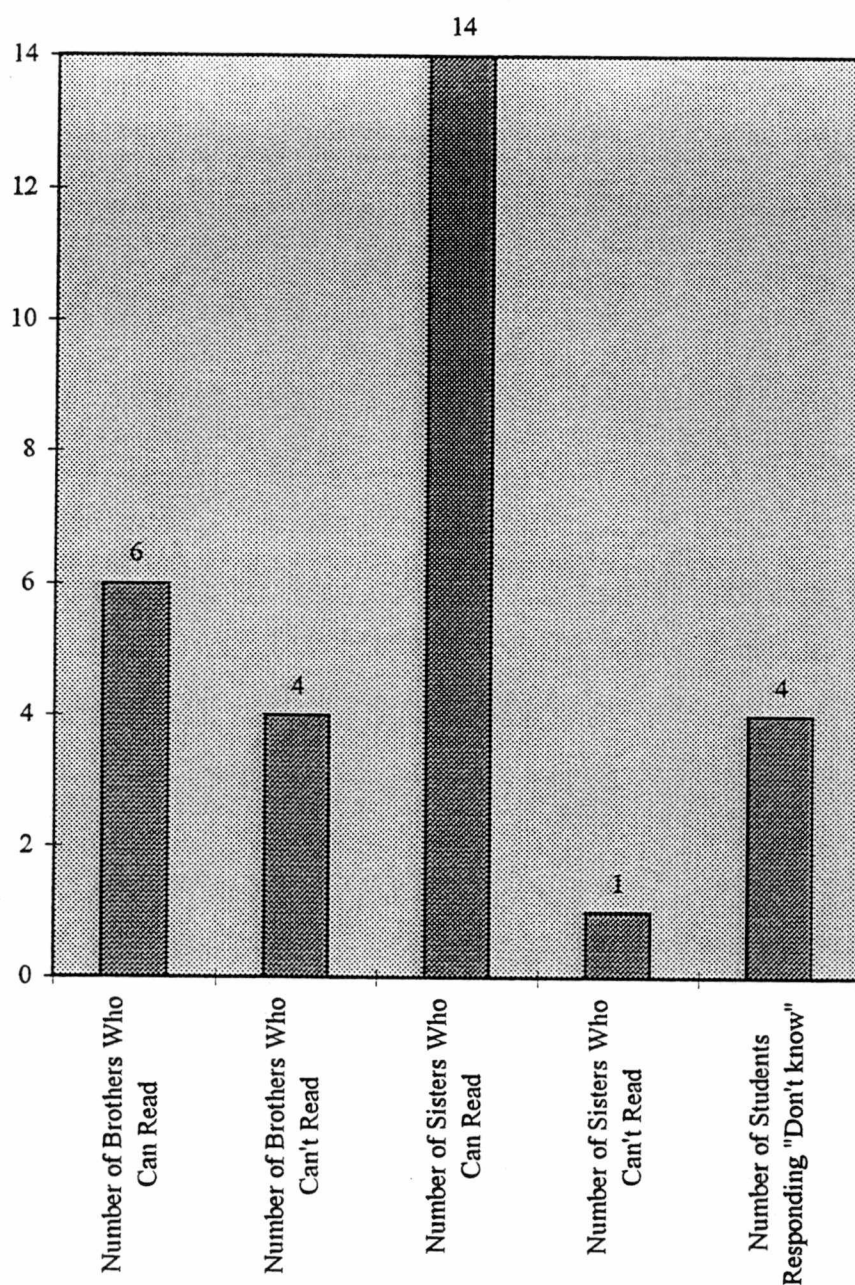


FIGURE 12
Students' Perception of Siblings' Reading Ability
(Question 10 and 11)

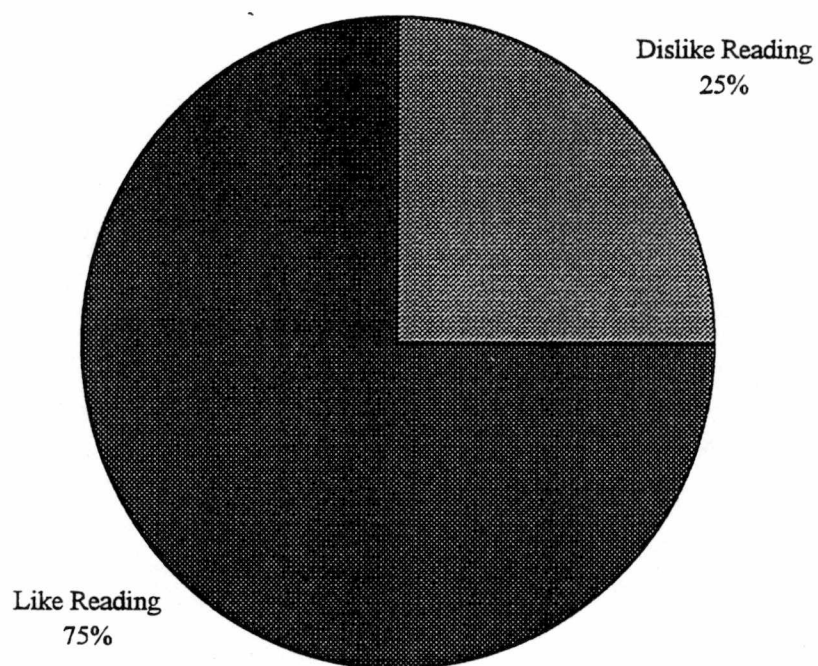


FIGURE 13
Students' Appreciation for Reading
(Question 12)

Question 13

For what do you need reading?

Eighty-three percent of the students responded that reading was necessary for either obtaining an education, a job, or every day survival. The remaining 17% responded they enjoyed reading for pleasure (figure 14.).

Question Fourteen

What is your major?

Five participants were undecided about a major field of study. Their intentions are to take a variety of courses and select a major at a later date. Two participants have selected Computer Science as a major. Two additional students chose the field of Nursing. The remaining three participants chose Business Administration, Physical Therapy, and Pre-Engineering as his/her respective field of study.

After analyzing student responses, it is the opinion of the researcher that some of these students have chosen a major without carefully considering all of the requirements involved. Although students were not questioned regarding career counseling, it appears that they are pursuing a field of study without the guidance of a qualified counselor or mentor (figure 15.).

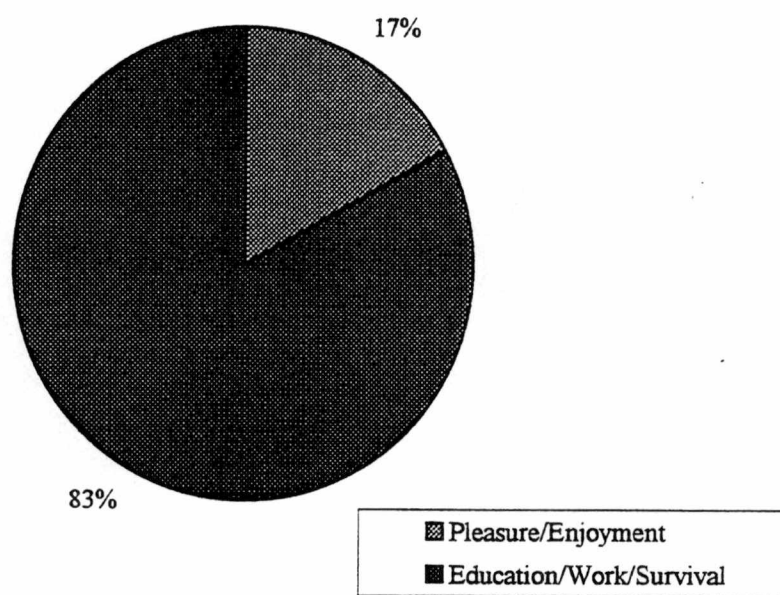


FIGURE 14
Students' Usage of Reading
(Question 13)

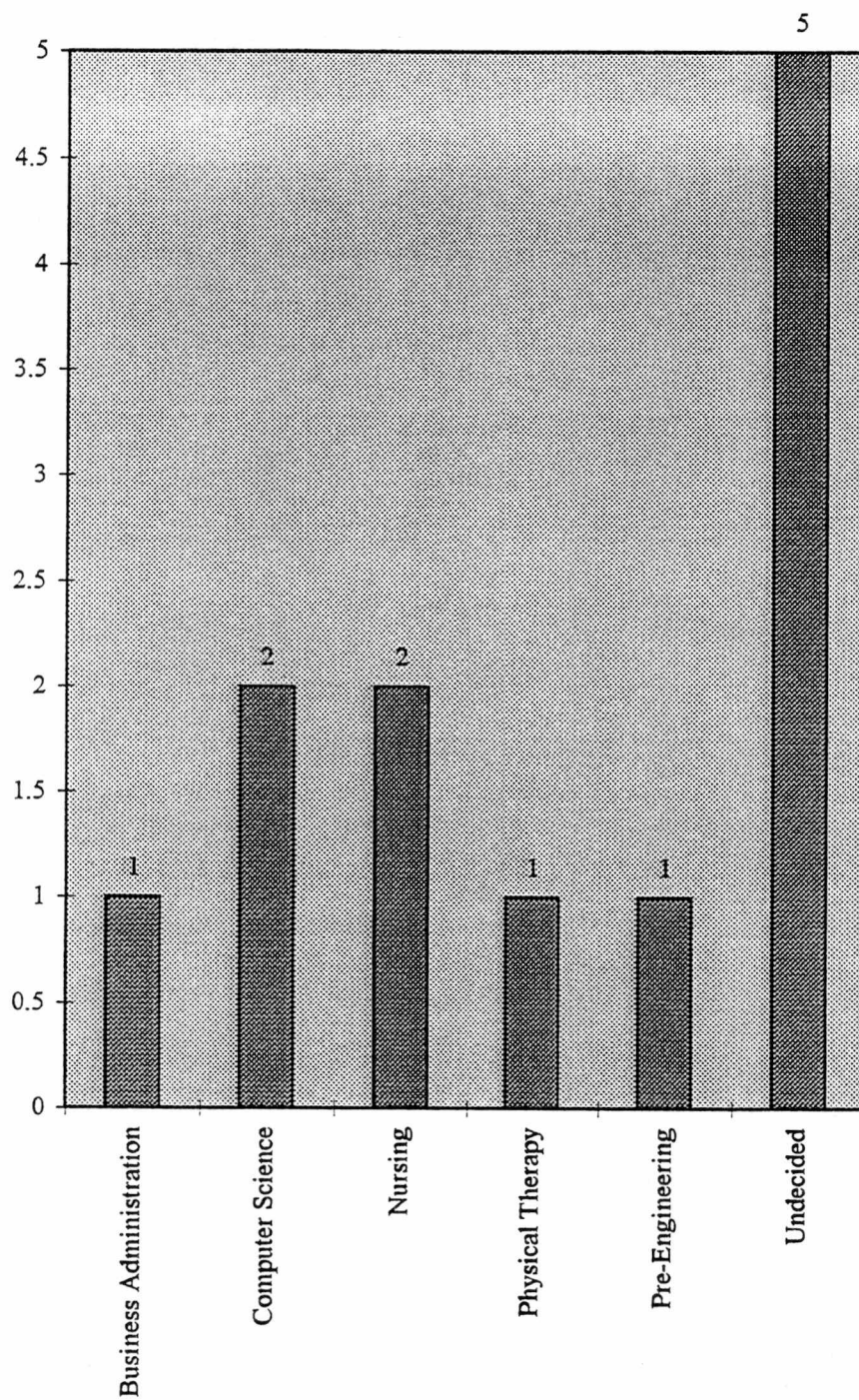


Figure 15
Students' Declared College Majors
(Question 14)

Question 15

What do you intend to do after college?

An analysis of participant responses to this question can be grouped into two general categories. Some students responded with answers that are extremely specific offering little room for variation. For example, one student stated she wanted to be a flight nurse on a Life-star helicopter in Florida. It is the opinion of the researcher that this limited scope creates an environment that may promote frustration and failure.

The second general category is made up of students who appear to have only general goals and undisciplined attitudes. These students stated that they simply want to obtain a college degree and move away from Campbell County.

Question Sixteen

Would you take a reading course if it wasn't required of you?

Fifty-eight percent of the participants stated they would take a reading course even if it was not required. Forty-two percent responded they would not take a reading course. This percentage is high in comparison to question one where eleven students stated they agreed with the AAPP diagnosis that they have reading deficiencies. An analysis of these responses indicates that some students, even after being placed in a remedial/developmental reading course, fail to grasp the significance and importance of reading (figure 16.).

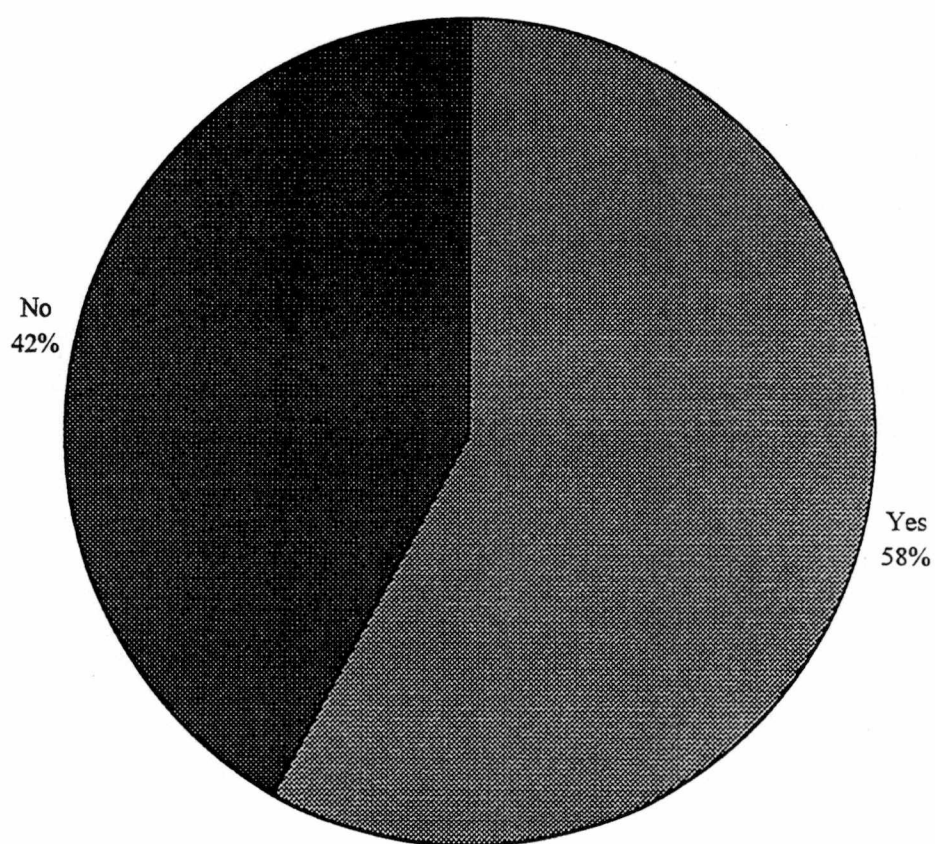


FIGURE 16
Students' Willingness to Enroll
in a Non-required Reading Course
(Question 16)

Summary

The students involved in this study were enthusiastic about their participation. It is the opinion of the researcher that these students felt that by participating they were being allowed to justify their reasons for being placed in a remedial/developmental reading course. In other words, they wanted to be heard. For that reason, it is the opinion of the researcher that the data collected are valid interpretations of perceived reading problems of these twelve particular students. Responses to the 16-question interview guide were specific and represent 12 individual students. However, general categories and conclusions were generated that may be applicable to other students in similar situations. Chapter V presents summaries, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS

AND IMPLICATIONS

The Tennessee Board of Regents has mandatory requirements governing admission for students entering all universities, community colleges, and technical institutes in its system. Students under 21 years of age must submit an official ACT or SAT score when applying for admission. Students who have not taken the ACT or SAT must take the ACT before enrolling in classes. In addition, students under the age of 21 who have a composite score of 18 or less on the ACT must take the AAPP test in reading. Students 21 years of age or older must take the full battery of AAPP tests before registering for courses.

The Academic Assessment and Placement Program (AAPP) has two purposes. Its first purpose is to check whether or not students are ready to succeed in college-level courses. The second purpose is to help place students in college-level courses or courses to prepare them for college-level courses.

The Academic Development Department of Roane State Community College offers three reading courses. Essential Reading (RSR 076) refers to a provision for the combination of whole-group and individualized instruction in the basic reading competencies of finding main ideas and supporting details, determining sequence of events, locating facts, drawing conclusions, identifying persuasion, making accurate inferences, and understanding mood and figurative language. These skills are further developed in DSR 085 and DSR 086. Systematic vocabulary building through instruction in the use of context, structure, and the dictionary is a special focus of the course. Each

student's reading skills are assessed through diagnostic testing; weaknesses are remediated through an individualized course of study employing textual, audio-visual, and computer-aided instruction. RSR 076 is designed for those students who score 21 or less out of a possible 45 questions on the AAPP. These students typically demonstrate extreme weaknesses in each of the areas stated above.

The term Developmental Reading (DSR 085) is designed to provide a combination of whole-group and individualized instruction in the basic reading competencies of finding main ideas and supporting details, determining sequence of events, locating facts, drawing conclusions, identifying persuasion, making accurate inferences, understanding mood and figurative language, and using appropriate rate of reading speed. Systematic vocabulary building through instruction in the use of context, structure, and the dictionary is a special focus of the course. Each student's reading skills are assessed through diagnostic testing; weaknesses are remediated through an individualized course of study employing textual, audio-visual, and computer-aided instruction. Students in DSR 085 have scored between 22 and 27 out of a possible 45 on the AAPP. These students typically demonstrate varied ability levels for the areas stated above.

Last of all, Critical Reading (DSR 086) is designed to develop college-level reading competence through an immersion in content. Class time is devoted to whole- and small- group discussion of selected nonfiction and fiction readings, with evaluation based on student's ability to respond to the meaning and significance of whole passages. Higher-order critical and creative thinking-- the ability to interpret, analyze, synthesize, evaluate-- is consistently emphasized. Textbook reading is a special focus of the course; students are provided ample practice in applying the SQ3R method which is an acrostic standing for survey, question, read, recite, and review. Other related systems for the organized study of the textbook chapters are also examined. Writing is another focus.

DSR 086 is the terminal class for the reading program at Roane State. At the completion of this course, students are given the exit form of the AAPP. Pre and post scores are then examined to check students progress.

Purpose Of The Study

The major purpose of this study was to identify factors that may have contributed to first semester Roane State Community College students being placed in remedial/developmental reading courses. This study was conducted in an effort to better meet the needs of students, as well as provide findings that may allow educators to better understand the students in their classrooms.

Many students required to take a reading course are unclear about the reasons why. This misunderstanding often leads to poor attitudes or a sense of inadequacy. As a result, student behaviors are at times misconstrued. Many students are sensitive to being placed in remedial/developmental courses. Having experienced failure before, some students demonstrate an attitude of rebellion or disinterest when confronted with a failing score or homework assignment. Other students simply quit coming to class without bothering to discuss their feelings with the classroom professor.

Because of the many responsibilities and large number of students that instructors must deal with on a daily basis, superficial impressions are often misleading. Students who are in need of an encouraging statement, or individualized instruction may be ignored if they transmit an attitude that insinuates a lack of interest or concern.

This chapter contains a summary of the methods and procedures, and the major findings of this study. Next, conclusions based on the study's findings are discussed. Finally, recommendations for students and educators are offered.

Methods And Procedures

This study was conducted using a descriptive method of research (Gay, 1987). A 16-question interview guide and classroom observations were used to gather data. Twelve students volunteered for participation in this research project. Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and then presented with a consent form (appendix B), that thoroughly detailed his/her role as a research subject. Each of the 12 participants approved and signed his/her consent form.

Having obtained approval of the committee on Research Participation and the Dissertation Proposal Committee, student interviews were scheduled. No time limit was placed on students participating in the interview process. Students were encouraged to answer the interview questions as thoroughly as they felt necessary in order to correctly explain their responses. Each interview session was conducted in the privacy of the researcher's office at Roane State Community College. Each participant was audio taped during the interview. The tape recorder was situated on a desk separating the participant and the researcher. All participants were aware that their responses were being recorded.

The 16-question interview guide used in this study was created by the researcher. A panel of College of Education Research Professors examined the interview guide and found it to be a valid research instrument.

In addition to using the interview guide, the researcher also conducted classroom and social interaction observations. The observations ranged in time from a few minutes to entire 50 minute class periods. Observations were conducted in an attempt to ascertain whether participant responses appeared to be consistent with actions displayed, and responses given, during the interview process.

After the completion of participant interviews and observations, data were analyzed and basic categories were identified. These categories were then compared and contrasted. The resulting findings are discussed in the next session.

Summary Of Findings

Due to the numbers of students that enter and exit post secondary education, it is nearly impossible for the college reading instructor to diagnose individual problems. Tests such as the AAPP are used to identify general weaknesses. Students placed in remedial/developmental reading courses are typically taught as one. Lectures and the materials used in the reading classroom, are for the most part, structured for a homogeneous group. This format leaves little time for individualization. This section looks at the interview guide questions and summarizes the major findings related to each question.

Questions one, two, and three required students to reflect on current and previous educational experiences. With the exception of one student, the participants readily admitted they were not good readers. A few participants reported that they put forth little effort in attempting to acquire reading skills. Most participants felt that someone else was to blame for their lack of ability. An analysis of these responses left the researcher with the impression that participants were resolved with the idea that they could do very little about the position they are in. Bad teachers, divorce, socioeconomic status, and an overall poor school system were some of the more common responses given as reasons for poor reading ability. These responses may be valid factors contributing to poor reading skills, but no participants indicated they had made special attempts to overcome adversities.

An analysis of questions four and five requested participants to respond to whether or not they read for pleasure, and if so, what type of material? This percentage is a bit misleading. Classroom and social observations revealed that these participants read sporadically for short periods of time, and only when the material was of interest to them. In stating subjects most liked at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, 50% of the participants chose mathematics. Not surprisingly, these participants concentrated their efforts on the subject that required the least amount of reading.

An examination of responses to questions six, seven, eight, and nine, offers insight to the parents of the participants. Mothers were more likely than fathers to offer support and emphasize the importance of education. For participants in homes void of divorce, the father is reported as the primary source of income. Interaction with the school and monitoring of the student's progress is left to the discretion of the mother.

Overall, mothers of the participants were better educated than the fathers. Participant responses indicate that many of the fathers left school early out of necessity to support their families. It is also interesting to note that 25% of the participants had no knowledge of their father's educational backgrounds.

Participants who reported their parents as being strong readers indicated that their mothers were better readers and read more often than did the fathers. An interpretation of student responses indicates that one reason is due to higher education levels of the mother. A second possible reason was that the father's limited education, accompanied by a concentrated effort to work and support his family, left little time or interest for the act of reading.

Questions ten and eleven were designed to provide information regarding family size. Each participant had at least one sibling, with ten participants having two or more. Sibling education varied from one extreme to the other. Some participants had siblings

who dropped out of school at various grade levels. Other participants report siblings with college degrees. All participants indicated that they were concerned with how their siblings viewed their attempt to obtain a college degree.

In response to question twelve, 75% of the respondents said they liked to read. In response to question thirteen, 83% said that reading was essential for obtaining an education, a job, or simply surviving in today's society. While student responses indicate that reading is important, researcher observations suggest that it is not taken as a high priority.

Questions fourteen and fifteen reveal participant self-expectations and long term goals. Some participant responses to these questions were vague and in the opinion of the researcher, unrealistic. For example, one participant stated he wanted to obtain a degree in engineering and then join the Marines for nine years. A second student stated she wished to obtain a bachelors degree and then go on to be a surgeon at the University of Tennessee Hospital. Career counseling could be beneficial for all of the 12 participants.

The final interview question asked the participants if they would take a reading course if it were not required of them. Fifty-eight percent said they would take an un-required course. Forty-two percent responded that they would not.

Conclusions

An analysis of the findings has led to the following conclusions regarding first semester students perceptions of factors leading to their placement in remedial/developmental reading courses at the Campbell County extension of Roane State Community College. The results may be useful in helping students and educators identify factors that may be addressed early on in the students' education.

- 1) Many students perceive that the Campbell County school system did not demonstrate a genuine interest in their obtainment of an education.
- 2) The absence of the father due to divorce or lengthy work days was viewed as a detrimental factor. Participants from homes where the father was absent due to divorce or work, displayed pronounced animosity when addressing this subject.
- 3) Some students reported that their problems related to reading was due to a lack of effort on their part. Most of these students went on to clarify their responses. They were eager to point out that their lack of effort was due to inappropriate behaviors demonstrated by teachers, the school system, or other individuals with whom they interacted.
- 4) Economics also appear to be a factor relevant to students deficiency in reading. Some students reported that, on occasion, they were required to stay home and baby sit younger siblings while their parents worked. One student reported that there was no money available to purchase school clothes and, for that reason, she stayed home from school.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed after an analysis of data collected for this study:

- 1) Students identified by the AAPP exam as being deficient in reading skills should be assigned an advisor from the Academic Development Department.
- 2) Students should be required to participate in career counseling and also be required to meet with an assigned counselor at the start and finish of each semester.
- 3) Students should be limited to 12 credit hours per semester until all remedial/developmental courses have been completed.
- 4) Students should be advised to participate in cost free tutoring sessions.

5) Students should be discouraged from participating in interactive courses or at home video courses.

6) Students should be made aware of support groups and encouraged to participate.

7) Students should be given assignments which promote success and build self-esteem.

8) Many academic development students have limited learning experiences. A curriculum that allows for the incorporation of teaching materials that have practical applicability may promote greater success.

One thing that makes teaching such a challenging profession is the fact that classroom teachers attempt to meet the individual needs of each of their students. The methods taught in teacher education programs are for the most part designed for homogeneous groups. Teaching to the "average" student leaves the needs of the "gifted" and "slow" unattended. Advanced students, though often bored, can adapt to the classroom environment and still experience success. On the other hand, slower students whose needs are not met experience failure and fall further and further behind each school year.

The ideal learning environment appears to be one where the school system reaches out to each and every student, displaying an interest for all students. Secondly, a home life void of dysfunction, where stability and order are permanent fixtures, is a desirable atmosphere. Finally, economics, often influencing the development of student cliques and pre-determining a child's destiny, appear to be a factor influencing the acquisition of knowledge.

In closing, teachers have little or no control over factors such as divorce and the economical situation of their students. However, teachers do have within their means the ability to reach out and display an interest in the progress of each of their students. Time

and time again this is the characteristic mentioned most often when students are asked to describe their favorite teacher.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

1. You have been identified by the AAPP exam as having a reading deficiency. Do you agree with this diagnosis?
2. a. Why do you agree?
b. To what do you attribute these problems?
3. Would you please describe your educational background?
4. a. Which subjects did you like?
b. Which subjects did you dislike?
5. a. Do you read for pleasure?
b. What do you read?
6. Did your parents influence you in your school work?
7. Do they encourage you now?
8. How much education do your parents have?
9. Are they strong readers?
10. Do you have brothers or sisters?
11. Do they read well?
12. How do you feel about reading?
13. For what do you need reading?
14. What is your major?
15. What do you intend to do after college?
16. Would you take a reading course if it wasn't required of you?

APPENDIX B

Informed consent for participation in research conducted at the Campbell County Extension of Roane State Community College. The research project is entitled "Perceived Causes For Reading Problems Of First Semester Essential And Developmental Reading Students At Roane State Community College", and will be used as partial requirement for the completion of the Ed.D. program at The University of Tennessee.

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that may contribute to first semester Roane State Community College students being placed in essential/developmental reading courses. As a participant in this study, you will be asked to respond to a sixteen question interview guide which covers educational experience, family background, and socioeconomic status. Participation time is not expected to exceed one hour although no time limit will be enforced. Responses to this study will be analyzed and results will be used to better address the needs of Roane State students at the Campbell County Site. This study may not have any direct benefit for you, but results may be used with future students.

Your participation and identity will be kept confidential. You will be assigned a number for identification and your name will at no time be used. Due to the open ended format of the interview guide, your responses will be recorded on cassette tape. The tapes will be locked in my desk at the Campbell County Extension of Roane State Community College and I will erase all tapes after they have been transcribed. Your participation will be voluntary, and you may decline or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. You may also ask at any time during the interview, that the tape-recording be terminated and the recorded tape at that point shall become your personal property to deal with as you see fit. Signed consent forms will remain locked in my desk at Roane State Community College for a period of three years past the completion of this research project. If you have any questions about the research, either now or later, or if you wish a copy of the findings, please contact James Martin at Roane State Community College or call 483-0816.

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX C

Student Responses

Student # 1

- Question 1. Yes, I do because I have really liked reading and never read alot. I want to improve it.
- Question 2. a. Even in school I never read well, then if you can't read you don't like it. I made bad grades.
- b. I went to class and just couldn't read. I went alot, but missed alot of school in the first through fifth. I think these are important grades to learn to read. Mother and dad didn't make me go. I had to take care of my brothers and sisters.
- Question 3. I did well in math and poorly in everything else. I had to read but it wasn't that well all through school, I just went. Others were doing better. I was always behind cause I didn't get alot of attention. I was too shy to ask and didn't want to bring attention to myself. I kept falling behind.
- Question 4. a. I'm really not sure. I was better in math. It was easier to understand. I liked math.
- b. They passed me when they shouldn't have. I would read, but it wasn't that well. All through school I just went, other students were doing well.
- Question 5. a. I guess maybe in the last two years reading novels and true stories things like that, started reading a little.
- b. Now? Maybe twice a week. Not alot. Lay it down pick it up in maybe two weeks or longer.
- Question 6. No. Parents were never at school for anything. Never.
- Question 7. I quit school in tenth grade. The first year did pretty good. Second year well, I never had clothes. My first pair of blue jeans was when I was in the ninth grade. Had to wear that one pair everyday. I was ashamed was one reason why I quit. Everybody else dressed fine and I quit you know grades started falling. I love my mom and dad and when the little brother and sisters was old enough to go to school, I went. I had to repeat sixth grade. Mom likes it thinks it's great I'm going to college, dad don't think so.

- Question 8. My dad never went to school. Mom thinks she went three or four months in the first grade. Dad well, used to work in the coal mine. Mom never has worked. They've always lived here.
- Question 9. No - dad reads the Bible all the time. I never remember one time him reading to me, not once. No, never read to me. Reads silently.
- Question 10. I have one brother and five sisters, one sister graduated. Brother can't read or write. Quit in sixth grade - he's twenty three or twenty four. Two sisters quit in the sixth grade, can't read or write. One sister quit in the seventh, two quit in the ninth. Four years ago I decided to get my G.E.D.. Don't know how I made it. I want to make a better life for my three children. My two and one half year old is in day care, one in the first the other in the fourth. All girls. I'm a single parent. I read to all three. Doing fine. I encourage them.
- Question 11. Brother can't read or write, sisters can read and write. I think he would like to. Guess he thinks it's too late.
- Question 12. Well, think it's educational. Important to learn to read, but didn't realize that. I didn't know. I don't really remember remember. Just decided.
- Question 13. Reading is important. Helps to get an education.
- Question 14. No major.
- Question 15. Like to be an R.N. and live in Clinton, work in Oak Ridge. No date set for when I'll finish.
- Question 16. Yes, definitely. I choose extra work. Would take a reading course not required.

Student # 2

Question 1. Yes, I do believe I have some reading problems.

Question 2. a. Main ideas, supporting details and so forth. When ever I read something I have problems trying to remember. If it is something I am interested in I may study more for it.

Question 3. In elementary school I got along pretty well - in junior high I started loosing interest. I felt I was spending more time in school than with my friends I ran around with. Just a bunch of bad influences. I just went to school because I had to.

Question 4. a. Math was always good. I liked to add and subtract. Most of the jobs you get you have to.

b. Science. I didn't like cutting anything open. I quit in the ninth grade. Later I got a G.E.D.. I couldn't get along with the teachers. Wasn't so smart like other kids, I never got along with the teachers. I went to Campbell County High School. Not many friends, I never socialized with them very much. I just did my work. I got along with people in elementary and middle school until I moved to Wisconsin.

I didn't like to go to school there. In the ninth I got in trouble - they passed me on. Me and the teachers didn't get along in the seventh. In the eighth I didn't do much of the work, because I didn't like the teacher. In the seventh the teacher flunked me. I went and stole a gun from a gun cabinet. I was on my way to school to kill the teacher. I don't know why I didn't. I had to spend the week in detention.

In the ninth I only went two months. I was sixteen when I dropped out. They were going to send me off and I went back and at seventeen dropped out again. After I got out I saw what a mistake it was, but it took me four years to realize it.

Question 5. a. Yeah.

b. Mysteries, spies, stuff like that.

Question 6. My parents were divorced when I was nineteen. They were separated thirteen years before the divorce was final. I was only six when they separated. I lived with my mom. I didn't see my dad much. He forgot about us when he got richer.

Question 7. No, mom didn't influence me to do well. She didn't attend P.T.A. or meet with any of my teachers.

Question 8. Mom dropped out in the fifth grade. Dad was in the military. He was from Wisconsin. My mother was from here. She came from a large family and dropped out to care for the kids.

Question 9. No. She can't or doesn't want to read.

Question 10. I've got two sisters ages thirty and twenty-seven. They got their G.E.D.'s. Both are now LPN's. They both dropped out of high school.

Question 11. Yes.

Question 12. It's important.

Question 13. It's for pleasure.

Question 14. Major? Pre-engineering.

Question 15. Join the marines. I plan on going in for about nine years if I can handle it.

Question 16. Yeah, I would. Everyone has to read. The more you read the more you make. You can understand more. The class is important. If I had applied myself more I probably wouldn't need this class.

Student # 3

Question 1. Why sure, that's why I'm here.

Question 2. a. When I was young, my parents had a real bad divorce. The psychiatrist told mom that I blocked everything out.

b. I was five. Dad would take me places and leave me while he was cheating on my mom. He would take me to Long John Silver's and leave me. I haven't been back in there since. I'm over that now. I had to go back and re-learn stuff. I blocked out a lot of everything. I can't remember main ideas. I didn't take any classes that helped me to remember. Yes, I always had a deficiency.

Question 3. I didn't fail any classes. I only had two good friends. I went to school here. I finished high school in this county.

Question 4. a. Science and Math, I like science because it interests me and I can apply some of it.

b. Reading.

Question 5. a. Yes.

b. Mostly adventures, Tracy Weaver, dragons and the like, science fiction.

Question 6. My mom did. She was very pushy. Went to school meetings. No, my dad didn't understand. He works at RCA now. He own his own wrecker service. I see him twice a year.

Question 7. Yes, my mom encourages me now.

Question 8. My mom finished high school in Virginia, then went to cosmetology school.

Question 9. Yes, mom is a strong reader. She reads all the time, novels and etc. She'll read in two or three days. What it would take me two or three months. Dad, I don't know.

Question 10. Yes, one half brother and a half sister, illegitimate. My dad's been married three times. Sister is twenty and my brother is twenty-one. My brother had to drop out because he got a girl pregnant. He got a good job at Oak Ridge. He's getting his G.E.D.

Question 11. My brother has a reading deficiency- slow reader.

Question 12. I like reading, it can help you be successful.

Question 13. It's important.

Question 14. Computer Science.

Question 15. I want to get a job somewhere in East Tennessee, not around here.

Question 16. Probably not. My teachers should have recognized my problem hearing. I graduated in 1991. I had to go to summer school. I failed that class. The teacher said I didn't try. They used stories and asked simple questions. Some teachers were good, others didn't give a _____.

Student # 4

Question 1. Yeah.

Question 2. a. Yes, I agree.

b. Because I didn't go to far in high school. Too much pressure. Probably a lack of reading ability. Well, I quit because I didn't want to go. I was a foolish kid, no responsibility, didn't listen.

Question 3. I was seventeen when I dropped out of high school. I attended East LaFollette Elementary School. I went two years at East LaFollette High School and then dropped out. I did very well in elementary school, A's and B's. My parents divorced when I was eight years old. My dad was five hundred miles away. I could never get his attention, he was so far away.

Question 4. a. Social Studies.

b. English and reading. I didn't do well. If I made an A, I knew it was on something I wanted to read. But an F meant it wasn't anything I liked or wanted to read about.

Question 5. a. No, not much, I would forget.

b. Newspapers and something I want or need to learn about.

Question 6. Dad did, but it was more like a responsibility. Yes, mom encouraged me.

Question 7. Yes.

Question 8. Mom graduated from vocational school. Dad went to the army.

Question 9. Yes.

Question 10. Yes, my brother took engineering at the University of Tennessee. My sister went to East Tennessee State University. My brother helps me financially when he can.

Question 11. Yes.

Question 12. I feel reading is important in everyday life.

Question 13. I need reading to go through college and live with other people.

Question 14. Business Administration.

Question 15. Go to more extensive business school.

Question 16. To be honest with you, I was told to put down something if I didn't know the answer. I could have been more attentive. I wouldn't go in depth. I do find the difference in high school and college teachers to be that high school teachers aren't interested in explaining reading. They should use material on a day-to-day basis, materials that apply. If they wanted my opinion on something about Campbell County. I could give it to them better than about South America. I can relate to things that apply to my everyday living.

Student # 5

- Question 1. Yeah - cause I don't read a lot, not anymore. Some words I can't identify. I can't relate them to anything. I don't understand. It keeps my mind off of it.
- Question 2. a. Yes, there are times I have trouble. I say a word I think it's right but when I say it, it's wrong. I have trouble with spelling also.
- b. Schools fault. teachers didn't care.
- Question 3. I never went to kindergarten. In the first and sixth grades, I had very hard teachers. I learned a lot more than I did in high school. Junior high was not hard but not easy. In eighth grade I did fine. I graduated when I was fifteen years old by doubling up on courses. I had a half a year in economics, one year in history, one year in english and agriculture. I was weak.
- Question 4. a. I can't do math. I didn't like it. I am a quick learner. Nobody touched me. I like science.
- b. Physical education, art, and music were my favorites.
- Question 5. a. Read a lot. I own two thousand books and read constantly.
- b. Well, what is on in my personal life is hard to cope with, and school. I try to find something to take up my time, but I can't. I like to paint but can't get into it anymore. I don't know what's wrong.
- Question 6. Mother helped with our math. Dad can't read or write but mother did. I was in about every school event there was. I joined the chorus and they took pictures of me. I still look like that.
- Question 7. Mom is all for it. I'm trying to get her to come back to school. Dad don't like for me to go to college.
- Question 8. Mothers high school and dad went to the third grade. Grandmother had twelve children. Grandfather liked to run around leaving her for months at a time. She had to work. My dad had to help take care of the others. Dad works in construction, a laborer. They didn't have a chance to go to school.
- Question 9. Mother reads well and dad can't read or write.

- Question 10. One brother who has less education. He dropped out when he was twenty years old. Didn't want to go. Repeated seventh grade, missed forty-two days. I didn't tell, I thought my dad would kill him. We both got in trouble for not telling him.
- Question 11. No.
- Question 12. I like reading, has to be quite to read. I like certain parts of the story. I don't know why. I like history. I get into fights with my husband, he has a fit. He doesn't like me to read.
- Question 13. Learn new words. In a way I have learned how to put words together to make sentences.
- Question 14. Undecided. We paint to take care of the bills, pay the rent and for materials. Had to learn to use a computer. Get up at three or four in the morning. You meet rich people. Some are nice, some are a pain. I work my behind off down at the store. My husband don't like me to talk. With three stores, we check on each other.
- Question 15. Don't know.
- Question 16. No cause I've been out of school. I use my head too little. Teacher not teaching what I want but I'm learning reading. Mother read a lot to us like the Bible. I'm not saved but I believe in God. My husband went to a Bible college- he wanted to be a teacher. I'm forty years old and mother talks to me a lot. She says keep up the school. I don't have anything to fall back to. I want to be somebody else's boss for a while. I like school.

Student # 6

Question 1. Yes.

Question 2. a. Why do I agree? Well because where I went to school we just read, that was it.

b. I didn't get anything out of what we read.

Question 3. I went all the way through kindergarten through high school at Jellico. Had reading class in high school, teacher didn't expand.

Question 4. a. English literature.

b. Math - I was not good in it.

Question 5. a. Yes.

b. Edgar Allen Poe stories.

Question 6. Yes.

Question 7. Yeah, they want me to keep going.

Question 8. Mom graduated from college. Dad went to high school in Jellico.

Question 9. Dad don't read much, mom reads things I like. We read short stories.

Question 10. One sister and one brother. He's twenty-six and she's twenty-two. She goes to school at the vocational center. My brother does constructional work.

Question 11. No. They're good at english and math, but not reading.

Question 12. I like it. I've learned more how to read here at college, what to look for.

Question 13. Reading is everything. You're smart, you're intelligent if you know how to read.

Question 14. Nothing.

Question 15. Be a nurse at the University of Tennessee Hospital.

Question 16. Yes, because I knew I needed it when I got out of high school.

Student # 7

Question 1. Yes.

Question 2. a. I've always had a reading problem since I started in elementary school.

b. I just couldn't read. I was held back in second grade.

Question 3. I went to Campbell County High School. I didn't do good. I went to East LaFollette Elementary. In grammar school I didn't make one mistake. I didn't have much English in high school.

Question 4. a. Math.

b. History.

Question 5. a. Very little.

b. I just read to find out something I wanted to know.

Question 6. No.

Question 7. They are glad. They want me to get an education.

Question 8. Dad went to sixth grade. Mom finished high school. She is a nurses aide at Campbell County Health Department. Dad is ill and has been for three years. He hurt his back in a canning factory.

Question 9. Yes.

Question 10. I have two sisters. One is fourteen, the other is twenty-three. My older sister lives in South Carolina.

Question 11. The younger one can read if she wants to, but she doesn't study. You can tell by her grades. The older sister can read.

Question 12. I enjoy it, I like it.

Question 13. To get a college education.

Question 14. Physical Therapy.

Question 15. Get a job and move away.

Question 16. Yeah, I would. In fact, if I could go back to my freshman year I'd make alot of changes. My teachers didn't care. My geometry teacher was not worth anything. Nobody learned. He just gave grades.

Student # 8

Question 1. Yes.

Question 2. a. I never thought about it before. I didn't comprehend before, that would be for my own benefit.

b. When you start back in school, you see where you really missed it. I took a lot of tests and put down answers the best I could. I didn't realize how far off I really was. I just didn't pay attention, not really.

Question 3. I went to Campbell County High School. I got married when I was eighteen. I have a son who is three years old. My husband is a drunk who works in construction.

Question 4. a. None really, some I did good in but I didn't like any subjects.

b. History and math. One teacher was so boring, I went to the principle. He put me in a different class. I made straight A's. I still can't do math.

Question 5. a. No. School don't prepare students for college. They pet the good students and don't pet you if you are a poor student. I never had an interest.

b. Much of nothing. School is more social. In Campbell County, I think it's who you are and how much money you have. The teachers were hard.

Question 6. Not too much. They support me now that I am in college.

Question 7. Yes. I get letters from them in Florida, saying don't give up. They made fun of me in Campbell County. I wouldn't take my books out of the car when I got home.

Question 8. My dad, I don't know. Maybe in ninth grade. He went to military school and became a police officer in Ohio. My mom has a high school diploma. She works with Bell Electric as a book keeper.

Question 9. I don't know.

Question 10. I have seven brothers and sisters. The oldest is thirty-six or thirty-eight.

Question 11. I don't know.

Question 12. Essays are excellent. I had a friend that went to Lincoln Memorial University. She asked me how to write an essay. I like it better now that I've been in this class.

Question 13. To get a good education and a job.

Question 14. Nothing.

Question 15. Move to Florida. I'd like to work as a flight nurse on Life Star.

Question 16. No. I think I'm to blame for some of my lack of knowledge. In school, we didn't think about main ideas. We just read down the rows and didn't discuss what we read.

Student # 9

Question 1. Yes.

Question 2. a. Reading is my weakest subject.

b. Well, I guess in high school I didn't take time to try to learn. I've learned more in this class in the last two months than in all four years of high school. I never listened to the teacher. Didn't take time to study. High school was just a big joke.

Question 3. I went to Campbell County High School and Pine Crest Elementary. Teachers are in it for the pay. They laid the test on your desk and you could cheat or what ever. It wasn't a learning process like it is here at Roane State Community College.

Question 4. a. Health and Biology.

b. Math and english literature. I couldn't read the essays and term papers. I was so forgetful.

Question 5. a. Very little.

b. Whatever is assigned.

Question 6. Yes, they tried to pressure me into making A's and B's, I was timed as to how long I could look at television. It was too late when I realized I was in trouble.

Question 7. Yes.

Question 8. Both completed high school at Campbell County. She has arthritis. He is disabled from a heart attack. He was a carpenter.

Question 9. Yes.

Question 10. Yes, one brother and one sister. Both are older. My sister has a B.S. from the University of Tennessee. My brother went six months to East Tennessee State University. He's a parts manager in Kentucky. My sister works in psychology.

Question 11. Yes.

Question 12. I like it. I'm starting to love it. I can comprehend it more.

Question 13. Need reading to learn how to reach my goal of being a registered nurse.

Question 14. Nursing.

Question 15. Go to the University of Tennessee and get a B.S.. My long term goal is to be a surgeon at the University of Tennessee Hospital.

Question 16. Yes, I would feel very uncomfortable to go right into college without taking this course.

Student # 10

Question 1. Yeah.

Question 2. a. Lack of understanding.

b. Well, sometimes I have to go back and re-read it. I'm not concentrating on what I'm doing. I get bogged down, mostly personal things.

Question 3. I attended West LaFollette Elementary School. The old junior high downtown. It's torn down now. Then Campbell County High School.

Question 4. a. Math.

b. Science.

Question 5. a. Yes, I've enjoyed reading, still do.

b. Newspapers occasionally.

Question 6. Yes.

Question 7. Yes.

Question 8. Dad quit in junior high. He went to class on Kingston Pike to learn how to read. Mother didn't finish school. They both had to quit school and go to work. I think she's finished the eighth grade.

Question 9. Father doesn't read but mom takes the paper and reads it.

Question 10. I've got three brothers and two sisters.

Question 11. All have college degrees. Masters in Education. One of the twins is a doctor. The other has a degree in education. All are smart except me, I have an inferiority complex.

Question 12. It's important.

Question 13. To understand what you're reading. Helps understand what's going on in the world.

Question 14. Nursing.

Question 15. Like to get a B.S. degree. I'd be willing to relocate.

Question 16. I would if I wasn't doing well in my courses.

Student # 11

Question 1. Yes, I agree. I agree!

Question 2. a. I've been out of school for nine years.

b. I forgot a lot I learned.

Question 3. West LaFollette Elementary and Campbell County High School. I finished in 1983.

Question 4. a. History, I like the past.

b. English, all the grammar was boring and not interesting.

Question 5. a. Yeah.

b. History. I belonged to a history book club. I read factual, Indians, Civil War, Time Life Books.

Question 6. Uh! My maw stood by me a lot - if I needed any help she would help me. Dad wasn't interested. Parents been divorced two years. But when I was in high school they were separated a lot.

Question 7. I was the first in my whole family to try college. Mom encourages me. Dad and I are not close. My brother says I'm too old for college. I think he is jealous.

Question 8. Dad went to fifth grade, mom the eighth grade.

Question 9. My dad can't read. My maw reads a lot, like newspapers, magazines, and some books.

Question 10. My brother, he dropped out in tenth grade.

Question 11. He can read a little. He works. He finishes dry wall.

Question 12. Reading is educational. I read a lot of history books.

Question 13. An escape from yourself into another world by reading a story I like. For pleasure.

Question 14. Can't decide.

Question 15. Go to school during the summer, after I get my associates degree. I hope to transfer to the University of Tennessee and finish B.S. in two years. Makes no difference where I live as long as I can get a good job and the money is good.

Question 16. I've learned a lot. Class is very good. I've enjoyed it. Yes I'd take a class.

Student # 12

Question 1. Well, I've got average ability - yeah it's adequate. I feel like if they would give me a chance to take the classes I could make it.

Question 2. More interested in baseball and softball than reading.

Question 3. I attended Campbell County High School.

Question 4. a. Math.

b. Reading and English.

Question 5. a. No.

b. I have no interest in it.

Question 6. To read in school? Yes, they encouraged me positively to do well.

Question 7. Yeah.

Question 8. Mom went two years to college. Dad is an R.N. he can teach also, he has a four year degree. Mother is a teacher's aide.

Question 9. Uh - no, just newspapers.

Question 10. Four brothers, all older. The two oldest are school teachers. One is an accountant. The other is a store manager.

Question 11. I have no idea. The second one had problems. He just didn't try. He was wild - you know? We were all too busy with sports. My parents just want me to stay home and be a student.

Question 12. Truthfully, I don't like it. Papers and stuff are okay. Comic books are okay but that's all.

Question 13. It's an everyday thing, essential - purpose?

Question 14. I'm thinking Computer Science.

Question 15. Transfer to a four college. Maybe, Tennessee Technology.

Question 16. No.

VITA

James Earl (Buddy) Martin Jr. was born in Pensacola, Florida, on December 28, 1958. The son of James and Ruby Martin, he is a third generation teacher currently employed at Roane State Community College. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Tennessee in 1986. In 1989 he received a Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and in 1995 completed his Doctor of Education degree from the University of Tennessee majoring in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Reading.