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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mary Lou Johnson entitled "The Attitude and Self-Concept of Children Who Read before Grade One." 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.

Paul C. Burns
Paul C. Burns, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

John P. [Signature]
J. Estelle Alexander
Earl M. [Signature]

Accepted for the Council:

L. Evans [Signature]
Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

THE ATTITUDE AND SELF-CONCEPT OF CHILDREN
WHO READ BEFORE GRADE ONE

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study were to determine the self-concept and attitude toward reading of a group of kindergarten children who had begun to read. In addition, interrelationships among self-concept, reading attitude and level of reading ability were examined.

Ten different kindergarten classrooms were selected in two school systems in West Tennessee. Teachers in the classrooms were asked to identify children they thought to be reading. The Classroom Reading Inventory was administered to the children so identified in order to determine that they were reading on or above preprimer level. Twenty children whose reading levels ranged from preprimer to grade four comprised the sample.

The Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory and the Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test were administered to the children by the investigator to measure self-concept and attitude toward reading. Each teacher completed a questionnaire designed by the investigator to provide information concerning the child's reading behavior.

The stated purposes of the study were to report information that would indicate how selected children felt about themselves when they learned to read before first grade, how they perceived that their mothers, teachers and peers felt about them, and what attitude they had toward reading. Test results showed that the early readers in the sample had very positive self-concepts as determined by their own view of self and their view of the perceptions of their mothers, teachers

and peers about them. The most positive view was that of the child and the teacher. The view of the mother and peers was slightly lower but also positive. The attitude toward reading varied widely with a majority of the children having poor attitudes.

Four additional questions were formulated for the study. Question one asked if a generalization could be drawn about the level of reading ability and the self-concept and/or attitude toward reading. All self-concept scores were positive regardless of the level of reading ability. Although great variability existed in reading attitude, it did not correlate with reading ability; however, generally lower scores were made by children reading above the preprimer level.

Question two asked if there were any notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both. There were no notable differences in self-concept. Girls tended to have more positive attitudes toward reading than boys.

Question three asked if children with the most positive self-concept also had the most positive attitude toward reading. Reading attitude could not be inferred from self-concept.

Question four asked if information gained from the teacher questionnaire would be important to consider with regard to early reading children. Teachers indicated that those children who learned to read in kindergarten could be expected to start after the beginning of the calendar year. The classroom behaviors that could be expected were reading labels in the room, writing on the chalkboard and classmates' names in written form rather than books.

The following tentative conclusions were reached for the children in the sample:

1. The self-concepts of early reading children were positive.
2. The attitude toward reading among children who read in kindergarten varied widely with generally lower scores occurring for those reading above preprimer and with girls generally scoring higher than boys.
3. Consistent classroom behaviors of early reading children could be identified by teachers.

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CHAPTER I

THE STUDY

Presented in this chapter are an introduction to the study, the purposes and questions, an overview of methods and procedures, definitions, delimitations and limitations, and the organization of the study.

Introduction

The affective domain and its relationship to cognitive achievement has become an area of emphasis for educators in the past twenty-five to thirty years. Although teacher educators have advocated fostering positive attitudes and self-concepts in children, there has been little direct research to support the relationship by supplying evidence that learning is affected either positively or negatively.

Textbooks used in teacher education often emphasize the importance of the child's attitude in attainment of reading skills. Zintz (1975) said that ensuring an affective response to the reading act was one of the best ways to build a permanent attachment to reading. Bamman, Dawson and McGovern (1973) stated that a child with an enthusiastic attitude toward reading is likely to make rapid progress even though poorly taught. Similarly, Robeck and Wilson (1974) wrote that the reading teacher who makes the necessary effort to create positive affective associations with the reading act may expect a high payoff in the reading ability of the child. Tinker and McCullough (1975)

reported that in addition to initiating and developing attitudes that promote reading growth, the teacher should be able to detect the presence or beginning of an undesirable attitude and to appraise the development of desirable attitudes. According to Harris and Smith (1976), the teacher should help the child recognize his/her own attitudes and beliefs.

The relationship of self-concept to reading has been treated similarly by authors of textbooks for prospective teachers. Zintz (1970) stated that high self-esteem is related to academic success and that it is crucial that the primary teacher accept his/her role in ensuring the personal success of children. The concept of self is a determining factor in a pupil's accommodating to instruction in reading in addition to other achievement and development. There is little doubt that self-concept factors are related to academic achievement according to Stauffer (1975). There was little empirical research justification in these sources for the attention to affective aspects of learning.

Heilman (1961) stated that the development of positive attitude and self-concept is more significant at the time when the child first learns to read. Attitude toward reading is considered one factor in determining readiness to read by Dallmann, Rouch, Chang and DeBoer (1974) and by Pikulski (1978). Cunningham, Arthur and Cunningham (1977) stated that a positive self-concept should be included as a goal for kindergarten classes. Ollila (1972), an advocate of preprimary reading instruction, suggested that a better attitude toward reading is one of the benefits of these programs.

Although little research has been done on the relationship among achievement, self-concept and attitudes toward reading, research that has been done shows strong evidence for a positive correlation between the level of reading achievement and self-concept according to Quandt (1972). Alexander and Filler (1976) found that there is not always a positive correlation between high achievement and favorable attitudes.

There is need for further research and it should include children who learn to read early. Research that has been done on early readers has focused on the type of home environment that encourages reading such as the availability of reading material and parental behavior. Sheldon and Carrillo (1952) found that the relationship of the number of books in the home was correlated with the ability of the reader. Durkin (1961) reported a high regard for reading among families of early readers and that these children were read to regularly. Davidson (1931) found that parents of bright children read more and better books themselves. These studies do not include any attempt to assess the self-concept of the child who reads early or his/her attitude toward reading beyond being interested in books and words. However, it seems reasonable to assume that these children are forming aspects of their self-concepts and reading attitudes that may affect future reading success. If this is true, it is important to gather information which will indicate whether the attitude and concept of self of early readers is positive or negative.

The present study will explore the problem by assessing the self-concept and reading attitude of a sample of identified early readers

through the use of inventories to determine whether they are positive or negative.

Statement of the Purposes

The purposes of the study were:

1. To report information that will suggest how selected children feel about themselves when they learn to read before first grade.
2. To report information that will indicate how selected early reading children perceive that their mothers, teachers and peers feel about them.
3. To report information that will point out the attitude that selected early readers have toward reading.

The following questions were also considered:

Question one: Could a generalization be drawn about the level of reading ability and the self-concept and/or attitude toward reading?

Question two: Were there any notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both?

Question three: Did children with the most positive self-concept also have the most positive attitude toward reading?

Question four: Was information gained from the teacher questionnaire that would be important to consider with regard to early reading children?

Overview of Procedures

The subjects were twenty kindergarten children from public kindergartens in West Tennessee. They were selected originally on the

basis of teacher recognition of their reading ability after written permission was obtained from superintendents and principals for the teachers to participate. The classroom teacher or school principal was asked to verify that this was the first year that the child had been enrolled in kindergarten. Each subject's teacher also had to be willing to answer a questionnaire about the child's classroom reading behavior. Written permission was obtained from the parents of each child so identified. A final criterion was that the child was found to be reading on or above preprimer level when tested by the experimenter using the Classroom Reading Inventory (1965).

After the selection of subjects was completed, measures of self-concept and reading attitude were administered. The experimenter made an initial visit to the classroom in order to become better acquainted with the teacher and the child and to familiarize the child with the area in which the testing was to be done. On the second visit the Classroom Reading Inventory was administered. If the child was found to be reading on or above the preprimer level, subsequent visits were made to give the Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory (1973) and the Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test. The teacher questionnaire was given to the teacher at the time of the second visit.

Results of the tests were reported in the form of presentation of scores and summaries of information. The summaries were based on the aspects of self-concept and the attitudes that a majority of the children indicated by their scores. There was also a summary of those activities and behaviors most typical of reading children as indicated by their teachers.

Definitions

Reading. For the purposes of the study, reading was defined solely in terms of the score achieved by the child on the Classroom Reading Inventory. If the child read below preprimer level, he/she was termed a nonreader and, therefore, not included in the sample. If the child read on or above preprimer level, he/she was termed a reader and included.

Attitude. According to Alexander and Filler (1976), attitudes consist of a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid the reading situation. For the purpose of the study, the child's reading attitude was defined in this way and was evidenced by the child's willingness to use his reading ability (as noted through the response of the child and his/her teacher).

Self-concept. According to Carl Rogers (1969), positive self-concept is a positive regard for oneself from oneself and from others. Alexander and Filler (1976) have defined it as an individual's perception of himself or herself gotten from others in a significant amount. For the purpose of the study, self-concept was used in terms of the child's regard for himself or herself as well as the child's perception of how his/her mother, teacher and peers regard him/her.

Delimitations/Limitations

The study was limited to children who were in kindergarten for the first time and were able to read. Whether or not there was a reading or reading readiness program used in the classroom was indicated by the

teacher. The only attempt to determine whether the child had received reading instruction at home was through the teacher's knowledge of the child's home situation. Both of these factors could influence attitude and self-concept. General background information was given about the group of subjects. Statistical analysis was not used because of the exploratory nature of the study, but it was hoped that future statistical research would be suggested by the results of the project.

The responses of the child may have been affected by the fact that he was not well acquainted with the examiner. They may also have been affected in that kindergarten children are likely to have taken few, if any, formal tests. The reading test may have eliminated some children who were reading specialized words only, such as words they had learned from television. The attitudes and self-concept of young children may change much more easily than that of older children and, therefore, a response on a particular day by a specific child might have been different from that given at another time. The teacher questionnaire was not validated through prior testing and may not have contained all essential questions.

Organization of the Study

This study is reported in the following divisions:

Chapter I includes the statement of the problem, procedures, definitions of terms and delimitations and limitations of the study.

In Chapter II there is a review of related literature and research.

The procedures followed are contained in Chapter III.

Chapter IV contains a presentation of results.

The summary and conclusions are contained in Chapter V.

There is a section of appendices at the end which include a permission blank, teacher questionnaire and a description of test items.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Presented in this chapter are an introduction to and a review of literature and research related to early readers, early reading programs, attitudes toward reading, and self-concept and reading, and the chapter summary.

Introduction

While little research was found that relates specifically to the attitudes and/or self-concepts of children who learn to read before first grade, there are areas of research that relate to the topic or include references to these aspects of early readers. The attention given to early readers focuses mainly on their home environment, but in some studies personality characteristics of the children are included. Likewise, in the fairly extensive amount of research being done on teaching reading in kindergarten, behavior indicating an attitude or self-concept is occasionally reported along with the success or failure of the reading program itself. Research that has been done on the attitudes and self-concepts of elementary children, particularly in the primary grades, may have implications for kindergarten children and may suggest what the conclusions of a study of five-year-olds will be.

The Study of Early Readers

A number of major studies of the home environment and behavior of the parents of children who read early or show advanced reading readiness

have been done. These studies have reported some conclusions that relate to the self-concept and reading attitude of the child including the reading environment in the home, parental education and reading attitude, parental interaction with children, the child's attitude toward learning, and emotions and personality characteristics of the child.

The home environment as it relates to reading is often characterized by the availability of books. A study by Milner (1951) reported that children who were high scorers on measures of reading readiness at the beginning of first grade had more books available to them in their home. Sheldon and Carrillo (1952) also found a positive correlation between the number of books and reading ability and stated that the percentage of good readers increases as the number of books increases. A broader conclusion was reached by Plessas and Oakes (1964) showing that early readers could be characterized by having homes where encouraging and stimulating activities related to reading took place. In the study of early readers by King and Friesen (1972), both readers and nonreaders had reading materials available. The greatest difference between the two groups was that the early readers visited the library more frequently.

There were four studies in which conclusions were found with regard to the influence of parents. Mothers of children who were more ready to read were more likely to have a professional level of education according to Milner (1951). King and Friesen (1972) also found the educational attainment of the mother to be a significant factor while the father's was not. Sheldon and Carrillo (1952) found that the higher educational level was true of both the mother and the father. In Durkin's first

study (1961), it was shown that families of early readers had a high regard for reading, and Davidson (1931) found that parents of bright children read more and better books themselves.

Most research indicated that there was a high degree of parent-child interaction, some of which involved reading. In her study of children's experiences prior to first grade, Almy (1972) found that successful children had been read to by their parents and that the parents had pointed out or explained words to the children as they read. Milner (1952) corroborated the fact that children who showed ability in reading were read to and that they were read to more frequently. She also found that they were more often "taken places" by their mothers and that affection was more often expressed overtly for their children by both parents. Durkin's study (1961) also showed the frequency of being read to as well as the willingness to answer questions about words and reading. The majority of the mothers of the early readers in the research of Plessas and Oakes (1964) did not work outside the home. All the children were read to extensively in the home and at kindergarten. In addition, a majority of the children were given some type of reading instruction at home. King and Friesen (1972) found that similar numbers of the early reading group and the nonreading group were read to; however, almost all of the early readers received some informal help from family members with the most frequent kinds of help being that of teaching letter sounds and names and telling the child specific words on request.

Of the factors found to be characteristic of early learners, Durkin (1961) reported curiosity, conscientiousness, serious-mindedness,

persistence and self-reliance to be evidenced in the majority. They also had exceptionally good memories. Early learning children showed an early interest in words, letters and numbers wherever they appeared (Almy, 1972) and asked questions about the story or words in the story as they were read to. Durkin (1961) also reported persistent question asking about words related to books as well as words from other sources. Parents of the children in her study said that they had decided to teach their children to read because he or she was so interested. Plessas and Oakes (1964) found that all of the children in their study had a personal interest in reading.

Two studies touched briefly on the emotions of early readers. Milner's research (1961) included the result that early learners are more likely to be aware of experiencing the feeling of happiness or to recall events that induced happiness. Sheldon and Carrillo (1952) included fears of the child but found no significant difference in the fears indicated by children regardless of reading ability. None of these studies undertook self-concept as a variable.

The Study of Early Reading Programs

There has been controversy concerning the formal teaching of reading in kindergarten and much research and literature based on this controversy. Most of the results of the research have been focused on the success of the instruction rather than the effect on the child's attitude and/or emotions, but some studies have reported the behavior of the children incidentally.

Opinions vary regarding the early teaching of reading as it may influence the affective domain. Ausubel and Coleman exemplified the negative side. Ausubel (1959) warned that when a child is prematurely exposed to a learning task, he learns to fear, dislike and avoid it. Coleman (1962) reported that she has seen kindergarten children being taught phonics who displayed signs of tension due to the difficulty of the material.

Hymes and Sheldon were concerned about the uncertainty of the results in the areas of attitude and self-concept. Hymes (1963) stated that we may produce results in achievement but that we do not know what the results will be with regard to attitudes and feelings. Sheldon (1963) wrote that it is not known how preschool children's emotional stability may be affected and whether or not we may be creating a permanent distaste for reading. Kelley (1963) felt that favorable attitudes may be enhanced by offering reading to those children who are ready.

One of the most extensive studies of early reading was a large scale, longitudinal study conducted in Denver, Colorado. Brzeinski (1964) reported that results seemed to indicate that parents can help their children in beginning reading, many children in a large public school system can be taught successfully, and that early reading instruction can have a measurable, positive and continuing effect. The possibility that early reading instruction might cause problems related to social adjustment was considered, and it was found that adjustment problems occurred in the same percentage of those who were given instruction and those who were not. However, teachers were advised to delay instruction

for any child who seemed to be too immature to begin the program with the group (Brzeinski, Harrison and McKee, 1967). After the children had been observed through the fifth grade, the authors stated that there was no evidence that the early instruction had created problems of school adjustment or caused a dislike for reading.

One of New Hampshire's educational television stations was asked to test the parent program of the Denver project. The parents who participated in this experiment reported that some of their children did not wish to proceed with the activities. For those children who did, parents indicated that there was an increase in the self-confidence of the children and that they experienced pleasure in their ability to handle the information (McManus, 1964).

Two additional reports indicated positive results for partial class instruction. Sutton (1964) reported a kindergarten program in which voluntary reading was introduced. For those children who were interested and did begin to read, reading became the favorite activity. The classroom attitude of both the readers and nonreaders was enthusiastic for some and not for others. Following these children through third grade, Sutton (1969) found that the children who had attained a measurable level of reading ability in kindergarten had a positive attitude toward books and expressed this to their primary teachers by the demand for books in addition to the basal readers.

In a study involving the acceleration of two bright children, Mayne (1963) said that the plan was to terminate the reading program at any time that the children seemed unhappy but this did not occur. She stated

that the results of the study did not indicate that the children became tense. They were self-confident and independent. There was no evidence that the children were harmed emotionally or socially.

Wilson, Flemming, Burke and Garrison (1938) conducted a study of the teaching of reading in kindergarten through third grade. The authors stated that the children showed keen interest and had a serious desire to learn even though they were under no formal compulsion. The behavior of the children was described as sustained frowning, alternate squirming and rigidity of body, pointing tensely, labored breathing, grunting, whispering and weeping. The authors felt that this was indicative of the intense effort to learn and that it was irrational to suppose that children could learn easily and painlessly.

Other studies reported less favorable results. In Mason and Prater's examination (1966) of the psychosocial effects of reading instruction in kindergarten, it was found that boys developed less acceptable behavior as a result of the instruction although the teacher reported that the children enjoyed and remained interested in the program.

Kelley and Chen's investigation (1967) of the effects of formal reading instruction on kindergartners with respect to reading achievement, attitude toward reading and attitude toward school had interesting conclusions. The children in the formal reading program scored significantly higher than those in the readiness program in achievement. However, attitude was found to be a function of intelligence or readiness level rather than the type of program in which they participated when measured by a teacher rating scale. When assessed by a self-reporting

inventory, the children in the readiness program had more favorable attitudes than those in the formal reading program.

In another study (Georgiady, Romano, and Baranowski, 1965) in which reading was taught in kindergarten, teachers kept records of subjective findings. It was noted that some children took pleasure in learning and looked forward to the lesson while others dreaded the learning period. The teachers felt that the latter children showed a lack of emotional readiness indicated by inattentiveness, boredom, nail-biting, balking or crying at having to participate. Such reactions occurred in those who scored well as well as those who did not.

The Study of Attitudes and Reading

The study of a child's attitude toward reading and its relationship to reading ability is being looked at more closely. Research is focusing on factors that correlate with the establishment and/or maintenance of positive reading attitudes. Alexander and Filler (1976) have determined nine factors that correlate with reading attitude development. Of the nine, research concerning the parents and home environment of early readers was reviewed in Section II and that concerned with the self-concept of kindergarten and primary pupils will be presented in Section V. Additional research with this age group concerning attitude toward reading will be reviewed in this section.

One factor that may correlate with attitude is test intelligence. Strang (1956) interviewed gifted students of various ages in order to gain insight into reading. At all ages this group expressed enthusiasm

for reading. Elementary students valued reading both for learning and for enjoyment and few expressed any dissatisfaction.

In considering sex as a correlate of reading attitude, it has often been assumed that girls have a more positive attitude than boys. The studies of Johnson (1965) and Askov and Fischbach (1973) bear this out. Johnson found that girls had a better attitude toward reading than boys at second, fourth, and sixth grade. For the first- and third-graders in Askov and Fischbach's study, it was also found that the girls had significantly higher positive attitudes than did the boys both before and after removing the effects of achievement. However, in a study of first graders Denny and Weintraub (1966) found that the attitudes exhibited by boys and girls in response to questions about reading did not differ significantly.

The method of instruction may be a correlate of reading attitude as shown in a study by Wassermann (1978). She assessed the impact of the key vocabulary approach in beginning reading instruction on the attitude of first- and second-grade children and found that those children who were taught by this approach showed significantly higher attitudes than children in a regular program. From the research conducted at the primary grade level, it appears that a more significant relationship may exist between the teacher and reading attitude than instruction and reading attitude. Palardy (1969) conducted a study of first-grade boys to determine whether teachers' reported beliefs about probable success in reading had a significant effect on measured achievement in reading. His conclusion was that boys whose teachers

believed they would do less well than girls did so. In classrooms in which teachers believed boys' achievement in reading would equal the girls, it did. In research on second-grade children of whom a large percentage were Chicano, Mendenhall (1974) found that method of instruction did not significantly relate to self-concept, reading achievement or attitude but that there was a teacher effect on self-acceptance and on reading attitude.

Sartain (1960) studied progress in reading skills in an individualized self-selection program as compared to the method of ability grouping using basal readers plus supplementary books at the second grade level. His findings were that greater gains in skills were made through basal instruction but that individualized reading was more valuable in terms of developing a personal relationship between teacher and child resulting in children who were motivated to read more extensively and to make individual improvement.

Another study related to the classroom environment concerned the status of the child with the group. Kibby (1977) studied second graders to determine how a child's group status would affect his/her attitude toward reading. He postulated that the child's perception of his/her reading ability and his/her attitude is based on his status as a reader rather than actual reading ability. The children in the sample were in a homogeneously grouped reading program. He found that high achievers who were, however, the poorest readers in their group had poorer self-concepts and more negative reading attitudes than the low achievers who were the best readers in the lowest ability group.

The relationship of reading achievement to reading attitude may also be significant. Johnson (1959) found that those first graders whose attitudes toward reading were characteristic of eager readers exceeded children who were characterized as being reluctant readers in all areas of reading achievement measured and these differences remained or widened during second grade. Askov and Fischbach (1973) studied the attitude of first and third graders toward recreational reading and its relationship to achievement in reading. They found that attitudes were positively related to paragraph meaning scores which assess the global reading process but not reading scores which measure vocabulary only. The conclusion was that attitudes toward reading improve with improved achievement. However, in Johnson's study (1965) of children at the second grade level as well as fourth and sixth, it was found that children in lower grades had better attitudes toward reading than children in each successively higher grade tested.

Although Sutton (1964) did not formally assess the attitude of the kindergarten children in her study, she did report on attitudes based on her observation of the children. She said that positive attitudes toward reading were evidenced by the fact that about half requested instruction before the end of the year, that most of the children saw reading as evidence of increased maturity, that those who learned to read found pleasure and amusement in books they chose, that the children handled books with great care, and that there was a high level of self-motivation. She suggested that poor attitudes on the part of those few who exhibited them could be attributed either to parental attitude or

to kindergarten teachers who did not allow time or show interest in a five-year-old who is ready to read or already reading.

The Study of Self-Concept and Reading

Investigations have been conducted to ascertain the relationship between various aspects of reading ability and self-concept for children during the elementary years. Studies of young children show conflicting results at the primary level. Research with kindergarten children has focused on the relationship between self-concept and reading readiness or the use of measures of self-concept as a predictor of achievement.

In one of several studies encompassing more than one age or grade level including primary children, Bodwin (1957) investigated the relationship between immature self-concept and educational disabilities in reading and arithmetic. The subjects were third and sixth graders. Three of the conclusions are relevant here. It was found that a positive and very significant relationship existed between immature self-concept and reading disability, that the relationship between immature self-concept and reading and arithmetic disability was greater than the relationship between immature self-concept and disability in other school subjects, and that the relationship between immature self-concept and reading disability was greater at the third grade level than the sixth.

Toller (1967) studied boys from ages seven to twelve. The results were that the retarded readers' evaluations of themselves were significantly different from the achieving readers. Retarded readers felt less

adequate and less secure in their relationships with others and described themselves less positively. Another study conducted on male children aged eight to twelve was done by Abrams (1956). The group of nonreading boys were found to be more insecure and experienced more difficulties in home and school adjustment than did reading achievers.

Hamachek (1961) studied third through seventh graders with respect to growth age to determine whether high status children showed positive self-image and low status children, a negative self-image. He found that high status children on mental age, reading age, and education age exhibited a more positive intellectual self-image and achievement self-image. One of the results of the research done by Sopsis (1966) was that boys with a high self-image as a reader have better reading achievement than boys with average or low self-image. This was not upheld for the girls. The subjects were elementary students in grades two through five.

Butcher (1968) found a positive correlation between self-concept and academic achievement for third through sixth graders attending high-achieving elementary schools; however, the correlation for the entire sample was not significant. The only significant correlation occurred at the fourth grade level. The results of this investigation showed that there was a closer relationship between intelligence test and self-concept scores than between achievement test and self-concept scores. Lawson's study (1974) of first, third, and fifth year elementary students found no significant relationship between self-concept and reading achievement for the first and third graders but did find the relationship to be significant at fifth.

As stated earlier, conflicting results have been reported based on studies conducted only on the primary level. Cummings (1970) studied third-grade children. She found evidence to support the relationship between self-concept and reading achievement. This research showed that children's reading achievement in relation to that of others in their own classroom seemed to be more closely related to their self-concepts than was achievement in comparison to their performance in reading.

Another study at the third grade level was done by Swartz (1972). The purpose of her research was to determine whether there was a significant correlation between self-esteem and reading performance. She found a significant positive correlation between the total self-esteem score and the instructional reading level score. When correlations were computed for the subscales of self-esteem, significant correlations were found between reading and self-esteem related to school and to home. Self and social self-esteem correlated positively with reading but not significantly.

McClendon (1967) studied first graders to determine which factors in the affective domain accounted for the variance that existed when mental age alone was used to predict reading achievement. Concept of self was a significant contributor to the variance for boys but not for girls. A longitudinal study by Lamy (1962) suggested the possibility of a cause-effect relationship between the self-concept and reading achievement. Measurements of self-perception were made during kindergarten prior to reading instruction. Self-perception scores correlated as highly with achievement in reading as did intelligence scores. Since

the self perceptions were inferred prior to reading instruction and showed a high correlation with first grade reading success, Lamy suggested that self-perception may be a causal factor in reading success or failure.

However, a number of studies have failed to find this correlation. Cobb, Chissom and Davis (1975) found no significant relationship between self-concept and academic ability for the children in kindergarten and grades one and two in their research. Ruhly (1971) failed to find a significant difference between the self-concept scores of successful and unsuccessful second-grade readers. Lewis (1974) found that first graders who received self-concept training did not make significant gains in either self-concept or reading achievement over those who did not receive the training. There was no significant correlation between self-concept scores and reading scores for either group. Williams (1973) reported that self-concept scores failed to add to predictability of either first or second grade reading achievement beyond the prediction of intelligence or readiness scores. She stated that there was essentially no relationship between children's self-concepts and their first and second grade reading achievement.

A longitudinal study by Wattenberg and Clifford (1964) attempted to determine whether positive self-concept preceded or followed reading ability. Kindergarten children were tested for mental ability and self-concept. These children were tested again at the end of second grade and measures of self-concept and reading ability were obtained. Self-concept at kindergarten level was found to correlate with reading

achievement at the end of second grade while the mental test scores did not. Also, the self-concept in kindergarten had a greater influence on reading skill than did reading experience upon the self-concept. Therefore, according to Wattenberg and Clifford, self-concept is predictive of reading achievement.

Ozehosky and Clark (1970) found that self-concept was useful as a predictor of academic achievement at the kindergarten level. Giuliani (1968) reported that self-concept was positively related to reading readiness as a result of his research at the kindergarten level.

Lynch and Haase (1976) reported the results of tutorial reading programs where both self-concept and reading achievement measures were obtained. One of these programs was designed to tutor kindergarten children in basic auditory and visual reading skills. As a result of the program, there were sizable gains in the word meaning, listening, matching and knowledge of the alphabet subtests of the readiness test accompanied by sizeable increases in teacher identification and the concept of self as a reader. The writers concluded that there was indication that changes in self-concept do accompany changes in reading achievement.

A majority of these studies do confirm a positive relationship between a child's reading ability and his concept of himself. The research seemed to show that a kindergarten child's self-concept may predict later academic and/or reading success and that there is a positive correlation between self-concept and reading readiness. However, none of the previous studies attempted to determine the

self-concept held by the kindergarten child who was already reading as a specific variable of the study.

Summary

A review of the research related to the description of early readers showed that they tended to be characterized by homes in which there was a high regard for reading with books available and where activities related to reading took place. Early readers were reported to be curious and interested in words and books.

Reading programs for young children have been reported to be successful in terms of reading skills but results of these programs with regard to attitudes and emotions were conflicting. Some programs resulted in children having more self-confidence and a positive attitude toward reading. The negative behavior of the children in other programs evidenced a struggle with reading and indicated a less favorable attitude.

Conflicting results were also reported in studies of reading attitude or self-concept and the relationship of each to reading. In studies of primary children, the most consistent correlate of attitude toward reading was the influence of the teacher. Reading achievement tended to correlate with attitude but not in all research. Likewise, many studies supported a positive correlation between self-concept and reading but not all. For kindergarten children, the self-concept seemed to predict later reading success and correlate with readiness.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Presented in this chapter are the purpose of the study, the instruments used, the process used for the selection of the sample, the procedures used for data collection and presentation, and the chapter summary.

Purpose of the Study

The present exploratory investigation was designed to assess the reading attitudes and the self-concept of children who learned to read before entering first grade. If the assumption is made that these are two influential factors in the development of reading ability, then it becomes important to assess them at the earliest possible time of the child's reading experience. The purposes of the study were:

1. To report information that will suggest how selected children feel about themselves when they learn to read before first grade.
2. To report information that will indicate how selected early reading children perceive that their mother, teacher and peers feel about them.
3. To report information that will point out the attitude that selected early readers have toward reading.

In addition to these purposes, the following questions were also considered:

Question one: Could a generalization be drawn about the level of reading ability and the self-concept and/or attitude toward reading?

Question two: Were there any notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both?

Question three: Did children with the most positive self-concept also have the most positive attitude toward reading?

Question four: Was information gained from the teacher questionnaire that would be important to consider with regard to early reading children?

Instruments Used

A teacher questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the child's reading behavior in the classroom. The Classroom Reading Inventory was administered to determine that each child was reading and to indicate the level of the child's reading ability. The Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test was used to determine the child's self-concept based on his/her perception of himself/herself as well as the child's determination of how certain significant others perceive him/her. The Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory measured the child's attitude toward reading.

Teacher Information on the Reading Child

A teacher questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to gain information from each child's teacher concerning his/her observations of the child's reading behavior. The questionnaire was constructed in

consultation with professors at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. It was intended to be easy to answer and to contain only those questions that seemed relevant to the study. Teachers were asked to indicate when and how they first knew that the child could read. They were also asked to respond to questions concerning their approach to reading in the classroom. They answered questions about the child's reading attitude by indicating the type of reading the child did in the classroom and by indicating whether or not the child was willing to identify himself/herself to peers as a reader.

Classroom Reading Inventory

An informal reading inventory was used to determine the reading level of each child because it is an individualized test. It was assumed that the testing of five-year-old children with little test experience would be more sound if done on an individual basis in an informal atmosphere. The design of the study also lent itself to individualized testing since the children were in different classrooms and were tested at the convenience of the teacher and his/her schedule.

The Classroom Reading Inventory by Silvaroli (1965) was selected because it could be administered in a relatively brief period of time. The manual suggested twelve minutes. A review by Cleland (1969) suggested approximately fifteen minutes. This time frame seemed appropriate for a five-year-old. The instructions were clear both in terms of administering the inventory and interpreting the results. This advantage was pointed out by Johnson (1978) as well as by Cleland.

In a review of the inventory by Johnson, she stated that the CRI was an adequate instrument to provide information on the child's reading level. Since the inventory extended to the preprimer level, it identified beginning readers which many kindergarten children would be expected to be as well as those who might read at higher levels. It was also important to select an inventory that was not based on any specific set of reading materials since most of the children were not receiving formalized reading instruction. The CRI met this criterion.

In order to determine the approximate starting level, each child was presented the preprimer graded word list and each successive list until he/she missed five or more of the twenty words. The child was then asked to read orally the graded paragraph that matched the last word list on which he scored 100 percent. Errors were recorded as the child read orally and comprehension questions were asked covering the passage. If the scores indicated independent level, he was asked to read the next level paragraph. The instructional level score on oral reading and comprehension was accepted. A scoring guide was given in the manual for each level.

One previous study also used the Classroom Reading Inventory in connection with self-concept. Swartz (1972) administered the CRI to third graders in her research on the relationship of self-esteem to reading performance. Another study used the CRI with young children. With this inventory, Cassidy and Vukelich (1980) measured the reading performance of a group of gifted kindergarten children.

Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test

The Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test, a self-report measure in which the child is asked to describe himself, was selected because it was designed for young children and had been administered to large samples (Coller, 1971). Brown constructed the test for use with four-year-olds and recommended it for both four- and five-year-old children. The measure consisted of a series of questions in either-or format because he felt that young children would have difficulty differentiating points between extremes as in a Likert scale. These questions were stated in terms that occur in the vocabulary of a four-year-old (Brown, 1966). The instrument was designed to be individually administered and untimed (Walker, 1973); however, Brown recommended that two shorter testing periods were preferable to one longer one because of the attention span of the young child.

In accordance with the designated testing procedures, the child was photographed and then asked to respond to eleven oral bipolar questions as he/she looked at the picture. The questions (Appendix B) either asked the child to choose from a pair of opposite adjectives or to choose whether he/she possessed a certain characteristic (Walker, 1973). There were four referents: The child as he sees himself, the child as he sees his mother seeing him, the child as he sees his teacher seeing him and the child as he sees other children seeing him. Evaluating the test provided the examiner with a self-as-subject score, a self-as-object score, and a score for each referent taken singly (Coller, 1971).

Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory

The Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory was selected to assess attitude because it was designed for young children and did not require reading or writing. Askov (1969) stated that the purpose was to measure recreational reading attitudes so the PPRAI seemed appropriate in that the majority of the children in this study were not receiving formalized reading instruction.

The original instrument was based on the nine most frequently chosen after school and weekend activities of a sample of second and third graders. Three reading activities were also determined and all twelve were depicted by an artist. Pictures were paired and children were asked to make forty choices between two activities. Twenty-seven of the pairs contained a reading choice. Thirteen of the pairs were nonreading activities (distractor items) (Askov, 1969).

The test-retest reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.906. The inventory was also tested for concurrent validity using a sample of children of which one half had very positive recreational reading attitudes and one half had negative attitudes. The mean scores of the two groups were significantly different suggesting that there was concurrent validity. In order to determine if achievement was being measured, attitude inventory scores were correlated with achievement test scores and the results were not significant (Askov, 1969; Summers, 1977).

The version used in the present study was a revised one (Askov, 1972). Askov eliminated one reading picture found to lack reliability

or internal consistency. With the elimination of one distractor page the inventory was reduced to thirty pairs of pictures of which eighteen included a reading choice (Appendix C). A review by Zirkel and Greene (1976) stated that Askov had strengthened the pictorial activity—preference instrument as a measure of attitude. They suggested that the seasonal basis of the pictures was a limitation; however, Askov (1969) designed the instrument for early fall and late spring. The study was conducted in late spring and the choices were viable.

Although there was no research found that used the inventory for kindergarten children, two studies administered it to first graders. Askov and Fischbach (1973) used it to measure the reading attitude of first- and third-grade children in their study of the relationship between attitude toward reading and achievement, sex and grade placement. In Lamb's research (1971) to assess the effectiveness of the language experience approach with culturally deprived first graders as compared to more traditional approaches, the reading attitudes of the children were assessed by means of the Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory.

Selection of a Sample

Various kindergarten classrooms in two school systems in the northwestern portion of the state of Tennessee were used in the study. A total of ten classrooms were involved and the number of children from these classrooms meeting the criteria for the sample was twenty.

School administrators gave permission to use the kindergarten in their systems. After the school principals and teachers had agreed to

participate in the study, teachers were requested to recommend children from their classrooms whom they considered to be reading. Based on this recommendation, permission slips (Appendix D) were obtained from parents permitting the children to be included. The experimenter administered the Classroom Reading Inventory to these kindergartners to determine that the child was reading on or above preprimer level. Children meeting the reading level criterion formed the sample.

Selected information was gathered concerning the families of the children in the sample. The occupations of the fathers of thirteen of the children were at the managerial level or above. All of the fathers were regularly employed. A majority (fifteen) of the mothers were full-time housewives. One mother was a school teacher and four had previously been school teachers. In terms of birth order, the most frequent rank was youngest (nine children), then oldest (six children). Two of the children were middle siblings and three were only children.

The Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory was used to assess each child's attitude toward reading and the Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test was administered to determine the child's concept of himself and his concept of how his mother, teacher and peers saw him. In addition, each child's teacher completed a questionnaire related to her observation and teaching of the child. All of the tests were administered and scored by the experimenter. The experimenter met with each participating teacher at the conclusion of the study and discussed the results pertaining to the child (children) in her classroom.

Analysis of Data

The purposes and questions of the study provided a framework for the presentation of the data. Results of the inventories were presented in the form of tables of individual scores and summaries of scores which pertained to the purposes. Tables comparing the scores obtained from the inventories provided responses to the questions. A summary of information obtained from the teacher questionnaire was included.

Summary

The present study was designed to assess the reading attitude and self-concept of children who read before entering first grade. Comparisons of reading levels, attitude scores and self-concept scores were made.

A questionnaire was constructed to gain information about the reading children from their teachers. Reading levels were determined by administering the Classroom Reading Inventory. The Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory was used to measure attitude toward reading and an assessment of concepts of self was made using the Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test.

Ten kindergarten classrooms in two school systems in northwestern Tennessee were used in the study. After the principals and teachers agreed to participate, teachers identified children whom they considered to be reading. Children from this group who met the reading level criterion comprised the sample.

The data were analyzed by presenting tables of individual scores, summaries of scores and comparisons of scores.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Presented in the chapter are the data related to the study's three statements of purpose, the four research questions and the chapter summary.

Results

In order to report the information gained from the study, the scores from the inventories were tabulated and compared in various ways. The individual self-concept scores are reported in Table I along with the mean score for each subtest to show the level of self-concept for the sample as a whole. The highest possible score for each subtest was 11. The attitude scores are presented in Table II, indicating the number of children making each score from a high of 18 to a low of 0. Comparisons include those of self-concept to attitude, preprimer level readers to primer and above readers, and boys to girls as presented in Tables III, IV, and V. No scores were widely divergent. All self-concept scores were high and the attitude scores for the sample covered a wide range. Information gained from the teacher questionnaire was summarized to report that which was characteristic for a majority of the children in the sample.

Purpose One of the present study was to report information that would indicate how selected children felt about themselves when they learned to read before first grade. The highest possible score on the

TABLE I
PRESENTATION OF SCORES FOR SELF-AS-OBJECT
AND SELF-AS-SUBJECT

Child	Self-As-Object	Self-As-Subject			Total
		Peers	Teacher	Mother	
1	11	7	10	11	28
2	10	11	10	10	31
3	9	9	10	10	29
4	11	10	11	11	32
5	10	9	10	9	28
6	10	9	9	9	27
7	11	9	10	9	28
8	10	10	10	10	30
9	10	10	10	10	30
10	9	9	9	9	27
11	10	10	10	9	29
12	10	10	10	10	30
13	11	11	11	11	33
14	11	11	11	11	33
15	8	7	10	9	26
16	9	11	10	10	31
17	10	10	9	8	27
18	11	10	10	8	28
19	10	10	10	10	30
20	11	11	11	10	32
Mean	10.1	9.7	10.05	9.7	29.45

TABLE II
SUMMARY TABLE FOR READING ATTITUDE SCORES

Scores	Number of Children Making Score
18	0
17	0
16	0
15	0
14	0
13	0
12	0
11	1
10	0
9	1
8	1
7	1
6	6
5	2
4	2
3	2
2	1
1	1
0	2

TABLE III

PRESENTATION OF SCORES FOR SELF-AS-OBJECT, SELF-AS-SUBJECT
AND ATTITUDE ACCORDING TO READING LEVEL

Child	Reading Level	Self-As-Object	Self-As-Subject			Attitude
			Peers	Teacher	Mother	
1	PP	11	7	10	11	5
2	PP	10	11	10	10	11
3	PP	9	9	10	10	4
4	PP	11	9	10	9	7
5	PP	10	10	10	10	0
6	PP	9	9	9	9	4
7	PP	10	10	10	10	1
8	PP	11	11	11	11	9
9	PP	11	11	11	11	6
10	PP	8	7	10	9	6
11	PP	9	11	10	10	5
12	PP	10	10	9	8	3
13	PP	11	10	10	8	6
14	PP	10	10	10	10	8
15	P	10	10	10	9	0
16	P	10	10	10	10	6
17	P	10	9	9	9	2
18	2	10	9	10	9	6
19	2	11	11	11	10	6
20	4	11	10	11	11	3

TABLE IV
COMPARISON OF SELF-CONCEPT SCORES AND ATTITUDE SCORES
BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS

Child	Self-As-Object	Self-As-Subject			Attitude
		Peers	Teacher	Mother	
<u>Boys</u>					
1	11	7	10	11	5
2	9	9	10	10	4
3	11	10	11	11	3
4	10	10	10	10	0
5	10	10	10	9	0
6	10	10	10	10	1
7	8	8	10	9	6
8	11	11	11	11	6
Mean	10.0	9.375	10.25	10.125	3.125
<u>Girls</u>					
1	10	11	10	10	11
2	10	9	10	9	6
3	10	9	9	9	2
4	11	9	10	9	7
5	10	10	10	10	6
6	9	9	9	9	4
7	11	11	11	11	9
8	11	11	11	11	6
9	9	9	10	10	5
10	10	10	9	8	3
11	11	11	10	8	6
12	10	10	10	10	8
Mean	10.167	9.92	9.92	9.5	6.08

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF SELF-CONCEPT SCORES AND
ATTITUDE SCORES IN RANK ORDER

Total Self-Concept Score	Attitude Score
44	9
44	6
43	6
43	3
41	11
40	0
40	6
40	1
40	5
40	8
39	6
39	0
39	7
39	5
38	4
38	6
37	3
37	2
36	4
34	6

Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test was 11, indicating a very positive self-concept. Nineteen of the twenty children scored 9 and above, with seven of the children scoring 11. The twentieth child scored 8 (Table I).

Of the eleven choices (see Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test in Appendix B) only three were marked negatively by any child. The most frequently marked negative characteristic was "don't talk a lot." This might have been expected due to school environment and would, therefore, have been seen as positive by some children. The two remaining characteristics marked that were also negative scores were "like to have other kids' things" and "am scared of a lot of things." The child who scored 8 chose all three of these.

The mean score of the sample for self-as-object was 10.1 indicating that the early readers in this sample had very positive self-concepts.

Purpose Two of the present study was to report information that would indicate how selected early reading children perceived that their mothers, teachers and peers felt about them. With regard to peers, eighteen of the twenty children scored 9 and above and five of these scored 11. The remaining two children scored 7 (Table I). In addition to the three negative characteristics recorded in the self-as-object section reported earlier, several children indicated that their peers saw them as not liking to play with other children although no child had marked this in relation to himself. One of the children who scored 7 chose all four of the characteristics. The other child who scored 7 chose sad rather than happy. He said that his peers felt that he was sad but he was really just thinking. This was the only child in the sample who chose sad in any category.

The mean score of the sample for self-as-subject (peers) was 9.7, slightly lower than self-as-object, but positive.

With regard to teachers, all children scored 9 and above, with four of the sample scoring 11. The negative characteristics chosen did not differ. The mean score for self-as-subject (teacher) was 10.05, very positive.

With regard to mothers, eighteen of the twenty children in the sample scored 9 and above and four of these scored 11. The remaining two children scored 8 (Table I). Two characteristics were chosen in the negative form that had not been previously chosen but, in each case, only once. One child said his mother saw him as being dirty and another child indicated that his mother felt that he was afraid of a lot of people. The mean score for self-as-subject (mother) was 9.7, indicating positive self-concept.

The scores indicated that these children who were reading before first grade had positive concepts of themselves both in their own view and in relation to the view of significant others as seen by the children.

Purpose Three of the study was to report information that would point out the attitude that selected early readers had toward the reading act. The attitude toward reading varied among early readers (Table II). The majority of the sample had low scores. The highest possible score on the Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory was 18; the highest score in the sample was 11. Sixteen of the children scored 6 and below, with two children scoring 0. The indication was that most

kindergarten readers would choose activities other than reading when selecting for themselves.

Question One of the study asked if a generalization could be drawn about the level of reading ability and the self-concept and/or attitude toward reading. A comparison of these scores did not lead to a generalization for this sample (Table III). Self-concept scores were high regardless of level of reading ability. It was interesting that all of the self-concept scores for those reading above preprimer level fell into the 9-11 range and the few 7's and 8's that there were occurred at the preprimer level. Ordering the attitude scores according to reading level also did not result in a generalization. However, the full range of scores occurred within the preprimer level while those reading at primer level and above scored 6 and below which was the reverse of what might have been expected.

Question Two of the present study asked if there were any notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both. With regard to all self-concept scores, there was no appreciable difference (Table IV). There was, however, a notable difference between the reading attitude scores. Boys' scores fell into the lower range including both scores of zero. Girls' scores included all higher scores as well as low ones. Comparing the groups, the mean attitude score for the girls was 6.08 and the mean for the boys was 3.125 (Table IV).

Question Three of the study asked if children with the most positive self-concept scores also had the most positive attitude toward reading. Arranging the attitude scores in order according to total self-concept scores did not reveal a meaningful trend (Table V).

Question Four of the study asked if information gained from the teacher questionnaire would be important to consider with regard to early reading children. One point of information that seemed pertinent was that most readers could be expected to start during the kindergarten year since only five of the twenty children were reading prior to entrance, and they could be expected to start after the beginning of the calendar year.

The most frequent ways that teachers knew the child was reading was by the child's classroom behavior or by his or her response to instruction. The most frequent classroom behaviors according to the teachers were reading labels in the room, reading what had been written on the chalkboard and recognizing the names of classmates in written form. All of the teachers indicated that they were teaching phonics and using a commercial readiness program. Evidence that parents had contributed to the instruction of the child was found for only five children.

All but one of the children readily admitted ability to read. The teacher of the reluctant child commented that she was extremely shy. However, the majority of the children in the sample had not told their classmates that they could read nor had they asked to read to the class.

Summary

The purposes of the present study were concerned with the self-concept and reading attitude of children who read before first grade. The questions formulated for the study dealt with (a) whether a generalization could be drawn with regard to the level of reading ability in relation to

self-concept and/or attitude toward reading; (b) whether there were notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both; (c) whether children with the most positive self-concept also had the most positive reading attitude; and (d) whether important information gained from the teacher questionnaire would be revealing with regard to early reading children.

The kindergarten children in the study had positive self-concepts as determined by their view of themselves and as determined by their view of the way their mothers, teachers and peers perceive them.

No conclusion was reached with regard to an early readers' attitude toward reading. The scores from the attitude inventory ranged from 0 to 11 on a possible scale of 0 to 18. The indication was that kindergarten children would choose activities other than reading when allowed a choice.

Since all self-concept scores were positive, a comparison to reading level did not reveal a significant trend. Likewise, the attitude score could not be inferred from the reading level. The children who read at primer level and above did have attitude scores that were at the lower end of the range.

There was no notable difference between the self-concept scores of boys and girls; however, there was a notable difference in reading attitude scores with girls tending to have a more positive attitude than boys possibly due to the difference in the types of behavior considered socially appropriate for girls and for boys.

The comparison of self-concept scores with reading attitude scores was not revealing because self-concept scores were positive.

Teachers reported that the children showed reading ability by their classroom behavior and response to instruction. Specifically, the behaviors that were common among reading children were reading labels in the classroom, writing on the chalkboard and classmates' names in written form. The majority of the children did not talk about being able to read but were not reluctant to admit it, if asked.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this chapter are the summary of the study, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research suggested by the study.

Summary

The purposes of the study were to determine the self-concept and attitude toward reading of a group of kindergarten children who had begun to read. In addition, interrelationships among self-concept, reading attitude and level of reading ability were examined. The idea for the study arose from current attention to aspects of the affective domain and their relationship to reading.

Textbooks on the teaching of reading were found to stress the importance of attitude and self-concept with respect to reading. Authors wrote that establishing or maintaining a positive attitude toward reading contributes to progress in reading ability and helps build a permanent attachment to reading. Self-concept was considered to be related to academic achievement in general and to progress in reading. Several authors stated that attention to positive self-concept and reading attitude were considered appropriate during the kindergarten year or reading readiness period.

Four areas of research were identified that related to the present study. The areas included the study of early readers, the study of early

reading programs, research that dealt with the relationships of attitude to reading and research that dealt with the relationship of self-concept to reading. The related literature revealed the information reported in the following four paragraphs.

In the home environment of the early reader books were available to the child and activities that were related to reading took place. Early reading children were characterized as persistently asking questions about words and having a personal interest in reading. Parents of early readers had higher educational levels, particularly the mother, and were themselves models of reading. A high degree of parent-child interaction existed in the homes of early readers. Parents read to the children frequently, answered questions about books and words, and often gave some type of reading instruction such as teaching letter sounds and names.

The relationship of the teaching of reading to preschool children and the affective domain was reported in some of the research on the effectiveness of early reading programs. In studies that supported preprimary reading instruction, early instruction was not found to cause problems with school adjustment or dislike for reading. Children were reported to be more self-confident and to be enthusiastic about reading. In studies that did not support the teaching of reading prior to first grade, behavior of the children that indicated tenseness and anxiety evidenced a poor attitude.

Several factors that correlate with reading attitude have been identified. Research was found to support the correlation of

intelligence, sex, effect of the teacher and reading achievement with attitude toward reading at the primary level. Children with high test intelligence tended to have positive reading attitudes. Of the research on the relationship of sex to reading attitude, a majority showed that girls had more positive attitudes than boys. Studies found that a personal relationship with the teacher correlated with positive reading attitudes. Much of the research on the correlation of reading attitude with reading achievement found that there was a positive relationship between improved achievement and improved attitude.

The research that dealt with the relationship of reading ability to self-concept showed conflicting results for children at the primary level. A number of studies found a strong positive correlation between self-concept scores and scores of reading ability or achievement; however, several studies found no correlation. Research at the kindergarten level showed that self-concept was a predictor of academic success and reading achievement.

In order to investigate the reading attitudes and concepts of self of children who were reading during their kindergarten year, ten different kindergarten classrooms were selected in two school systems in West Tennessee. The teachers in the classrooms were asked to identify children they thought to be reading based on their observation of the child's classroom behavior. The Classroom Reading Inventory, an individualized informal reading inventory that extends to the preprimary level, was administered by the examiner to the children who had been recommended by their teacher to determine that they were reading on or

above preprimary level. Twenty children were identified as readers and comprised the sample for the study.

On subsequent visits to each classroom the Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory and the Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test were given to each child in the sample by the examiner. The PPRAI was administered to determine attitude toward reading because it was designed for young children. The children in the sample responded to pairs of pictures of children performing a variety of activities including reading by selecting the picture from each pair of the activity that they preferred. The total number of reading selections indicated the attitude toward reading.

The Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test was also designed for young children. The test consisted of four subtests: self-as-object, self-as-subject (mother), self-as-subject (teacher), and self-as subject (peers). Each child was asked to choose between pairs of descriptors that he/she felt described himself/herself, and then the child responded to the pairs as he/she thought that his/her mother, teacher and peers would. The score for each subtest was the total number of positive characteristics chosen.

In addition, each teacher completed a questionnaire that provided information concerning the child's reading behavior.

The purposes of the study were:

1. To report information that would suggest how selected children felt about themselves when they learned to read before first grade.

2. To report information that would indicate how selected early reading children perceived that their mother, teacher and peers felt about them.

3. To report information that would point out the attitude that selected early readers had toward reading.

The following questions were formulated for the study:

Question one: Could a generalization be drawn about the level of reading ability and the self-concept and/or attitude toward reading?

Question two: Were there any notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both?

Question three: Did children with the most positive self-concept also have the most positive attitude toward reading?

Question four: Was information gained from the teacher questionnaire that would be important to consider with regard to early reading children?

The data were presented in tables of individual scores, summaries of scores and comparisons of scores.

Findings

One purpose of the study was to report children's feelings about themselves when they learned to read before first grade. Test results showed that the early readers in the sample had very positive self-concepts.

Another purpose was to report how the children perceived that their mothers, teachers and peers felt about them. The test results indicated that the children in the sample had positive self-concepts as determined

by their perception of the way these significant persons regarded them. ✓
The most positive view according to the responses of the children was that of the teacher. The view of their peers and mother was slightly lower but also positive.

A third purpose of the study was to report the attitude of selected early readers toward reading. The attitude toward reading varied widely ✓ among the sample with the majority of the children having poor attitudes. This suggested that kindergarten children would choose activities other than reading when given a choice.

Four additional questions were asked in the study. Question one asked if a generalization could be drawn about the level of reading ability and the self-concept and/or attitude toward reading. A generalization could not be drawn for either comparison. All self-concepts were positive regardless of the level of reading ability. Great variability existed in reading attitude but it did not correlate with reading ability. The lack of a conclusion for either comparison may have been due to such factors as sample size, validity of instruments or the lack of stability of feelings of young children.

Question two asked if there were any notable differences between boys and girls in self-concept, reading attitude or both. There were no notable differences in self-concept; self-concept scores were high regardless of sex. Girls did tend to have more positive attitudes toward reading than boys. This may have been due to the belief that in our society quieter activities such as reading are seen as more socially appropriate for girls.

Question three asked if children with the most positive self-concept also had the most positive attitude toward reading. Reading attitude could not be inferred from self-concept since all of the children in the sample had positive self-concepts.

Question four asked if information gained from the teacher questionnaire would be important to consider with regard to early reading children. The results of the questionnaire indicated that children who started to read in kindergarten could be expected to start after the beginning of the calendar year. The classroom behaviors that might be expected from early readers were reading labels in the classroom, writing on the chalkboard, and classmates' names in written form. Children who read early did not volunteer their reading ability but were not reluctant to acknowledge it, if asked.

The children in the sample were apparently fairly homogeneous on the measures applied. Few generalizations could be made from the scores. This may have been because the instruments were not sensitive enough or the sample size was too small to reveal any possible real differences among early reading children. Another possible explanation is that young children's feelings change easily and, therefore, scores of self-concept or reading attitude may have been quite different had the children been tested at a different time. In addition to positive self-concept, it was hoped that positive reading attitude scores would be found for the majority of the children. It was also hoped that the results would show a trend toward more positive self-concept and better attitude toward reading as children read at higher ability levels.

Appropriate research to follow the present study is suggested at the end of this chapter.

Conclusions and Discussion

As a result of the study, the following conclusions were reached for the children in the sample. These conclusions are of a tentative nature due to the limitations of the study.

1. The self-concepts of the children were positive as measured by the Brown-IDS Self-Concept Referents Test.

2. As measured by the Primary Pupil Reading Attitude Inventory, the attitude toward reading varied widely with generally lower scores for the children at reading levels above preprimer and with boys generally scoring lower than girls.

3. Consistent classroom behaviors could be identified by the children's teachers. The majority of the children began to read after the beginning of the calendar year. The children evidenced reading ability by reading written information displayed in the room rather than by asking to read books and did not volunteer the information that they could read.

As stated in chapter I, Quandt (1970) found that research shows strong evidence for a positive correlation between the level of reading achievement and self-concept. The present study appeared to corroborate this. The highest scores for the sample were in the categories of self as viewed by self and self as viewed by teacher. In the opinion of the investigator, this result could be explained in terms of the testing

situation. The children seemed to realize that they were selected because of their reading ability and could be expected to respond as they viewed their achievement. The teachers would also be seen as viewing the children in terms of achievement while the perceptions of mothers and peers would not be based solely on school performance. A conclusion about self-concept and early reading cannot be reached without determining the self-concept of both reading and nonreading kindergartners to find whether a significant difference exists between the two groups and whether the self-concept of young children varies over a period of time.

As stated in Chapter I, Alexander and Filler (1976) found that there is not always a positive correlation between high achievement and favorable attitudes. A number of factors other than reading ability may have influenced attitude toward reading. For kindergarten children, variables such as home environment and parental attitudes, interests, peer expectations and sex-typed behavior might have correlated more positively with reading attitude. Attitude scores might have shown as much variation over time for a single child as there was for the sample. The result also may have been due to the nature of the inventory. Choice of an activity other than reading did not necessarily indicate dislike of reading. If the attitude scores did indicate a dislike for reading and if reading attitude is a correlate of reading achievement, the investigator feels that further study should be made to determine the causes of poor attitude in early readers, that effort should be made to improve attitude and that formal reading instruction should be delayed.

The identifiable classroom behaviors could have implications for curriculum planning if found to be true for larger groups of kindergartners. Teachers need to be aware of observable behaviors indicating reading ability since the children did not voluntarily identify themselves as readers. The teacher can then plan for these children including the display of written material in the classroom.

Recommendations

1. The study should be replicated with a control group of nonreading kindergarten children and a larger sample in order to determine whether the results of the self-concept and reading attitude studies would remain the same and whether they would differ significantly from the control group. As a part of the larger study, boys' attitude toward reading should be compared to girls' to determine whether girls consistently have better attitudes. A preferable order of procedure might be to administer the self-concept and reading attitude inventories before testing for reading ability. This would reduce the likelihood that responses might be based on the reading test or perception of self as a reader.
2. A longitudinal study should be conducted with a sample of children who began to read before first grade to determine whether attitude toward reading and/or self-concept remains constant.
3. Children who read before first grade should be tested for reading attitude at several different times during the kindergarten year to determine whether attitudes vary widely for a single child and for the group over a period of time.

4. Further research is needed that will attempt to isolate the variables that correlate with attitude toward reading for children who read before first grade.

5. Further research is needed to determine with what validity and reliability self-concept and reading attitude tests measure these aspects of the affective domain in children who read before first grade.

6. A study should be conducted in which all kindergarten children are tested for reading ability, not only those recommended by their teachers, to determine how well teachers are able to detect reading ability in kindergarten children.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TEACHER INFORMATION ON THE READING CHILD

1. Was the child able to read at the beginning of the kindergarten year?
yes _____ no _____
2. If not, at approximately what month did you discern that the child could read?

3. How did you first recognize the child's reading ability?
_____ told by child _____ through child's classroom
_____ told by child's parents _____ behavior
_____ other (describe briefly)
4. Which of the following does the child do in your classroom? (You may check more than one.)
_____ reads labels in the room
_____ relays information to you after reading from a book
_____ reads what you write on the chalkboard
_____ recognizes names of classmates in print
_____ reads stories to the class
5. Do you have information that indicated that the parents helped the child learn to read?
yes _____ no _____
6. Do you teach phonics?
yes _____ no _____
7. Do you use a commercial reading or reading readiness program?
yes _____ no _____
If yes, which one? _____
8. Is the child reluctant to admit that he can read?
yes _____ no _____
9. Has the child told his classmates that he can read?
yes _____ no _____
10. Does the child ask to read for the class?
yes _____ no _____

Please make any additional comments on the back that you feel will be helpful:

APPENDIX B

BIPOLAR QUESTIONS FROM BROWN-IDS SELF-CONCEPT

REFERENTS TEST

happy	sad
like to play with other kids	don't like to play with other kids
like things of my own	like to have other kids' things
smart	stupid
nice	bad
clean	dirty
talk a lot	don't talk a lot
pretty or good looking	ugly
am scared of a lot of things	am not scared of a lot of things
am scared of a lot of people	am not scared of a lot of people
like the way my clothes look	don't like the way my clothes look

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTION OF PICTURES FROM REVISED VERSION OF THE
PRIMARY PUPIL READING ATTITUDE INVENTORY

Nonreading Activities [Boy's Version]	Reading Activities [Boy's Version]
1. Boy playing on monkey bars	1. Boy reading book in living room
2. Boy playing with toy cars and trucks	2. Boy reading book outside
3. Boy riding bicycle	
4. Boy watching T.V.	
5. Boy swinging on rope	
6. Boy drawing picture	
7. Boy building model airplane	
8. Boy climbing tree	
9. Boy going swimming	
Nonreading Activities [Girl 's Version]	Reading Activities [Girl's Version]
1. Girl playing on monkey bars	1. Girl reading book in living room
2. Girl playing with dolls	2. Girl reading book outside
3. Girl riding bicycle	
4. Girl watching T.V.	
5. Girl on swing	
6. Girl drawing picture	
7. Girl making puppet	
8. Girl jumping rope	
9. Girl going swimming	

APPENDIX D

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET AND PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parents,

I am studying children who learn to read early. Your child's teacher has told me that your child is reading at this time. That is quite an accomplishment at this age! I would like to find out more about your child along with other early readers. I am interested in finding out how well he reads as well as how he feels about himself and being able to read. In order to do this, I need your permission.

If you allow me to work with your child, I will give him some reading passages from which I can determine the level of his reading ability. I will also give him some pictures to respond to which will be an indication of how he feels about being able to read.

Your child will not be questioned about his family or other personal information. He will be out of his classroom twice but only with his teacher's permission and at her convenience so that he will not miss valuable learning experiences in the classroom. No one but myself and the teacher will know how your child responded. His name will not be used in connection with any report of the study nor will it be written on any of the tests used. It will appear only on the permission slip signed by you. The results of the information gained from the study will be shared with the teacher in order to help her understand your child better and to help him with his reading in the way that is most beneficial to him.

If you have questions about the procedures to be used or the results, you may contact me through your child's teacher and I will be glad to answer them. There is no penalty for not allowing your child to participate. If you do allow him to, you are still free to withdraw him at any time during the study, also without penalty.

Please sign and return the form below to the teacher. I greatly appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mary Lou Johnson

I give my permission for _____ to participate in the activities with Mrs. Johnson that are a part of the study on children who read early. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Date

Signature

VITA

Mary Louise Johnson was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, on January 23, 1943. She received her elementary education in the public schools of Knoxville and her secondary education in the public schools of Knoxville and Huntsville, Alabama. After graduating from high school, she returned to Knoxville and entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. During her junior year she transferred to Auburn University and received the Bachelor of Science degree from Auburn in 1965. She taught second grade in Columbus, Georgia. She was awarded the Master of Education degree with a major in early childhood education from the University of Mississippi in 1971. While there, she taught in the campus laboratory kindergarten and later became the teacher and director of the laboratory kindergarten at The University of Tennessee at Martin.

She entered the graduate school of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and majored in Curriculum and Instruction with emphasis in elementary education. Her collateral areas are reading/language arts and higher education. She expects to complete all of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree by the spring of 1981. Her dissertation topic is "The Attitude and Self-Concept of Children Who Read before Grade One." She is currently an assistant professor of elementary education at The University of Tennessee at Martin teaching courses in language arts, reading and early childhood education. She is a member of the local, state and national councils of the International Reading Association; the state and national chapters of the National Association for the

Education of Young Children; the Association for Childhood Education International; the National Council of Teachers of English, and Phi Delta Kappa.