Influences on Young Adults' Selection of Books for Outside Reading


Dick A. Renner, Ph. D.
English Department
Approved [Signature] 6/2/72
Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter I - Overall Results of the Survey

Chapter II - Comparison of Survey Results Between College And Non-college Bound Students

Chapter III - Comparisons With Other Reports

Afterthoughts

Appendix I - The questionnaire Used in the Survey With The Results Reported in Percentages

Appendix II - The Questionnaire Showing in Percentages The Differences Between College and Non-college Bound Students
Introduction

This paper presents the results of a questionnaire sent through the three Muncie, Indiana high schools in October, 1971. The purpose of the study was to find what influences young people in their selection of books for outside reading.

One of the main questions that I felt needed an answer was whether or not the teacher, especially the English teacher, has any influence on the book a youth chooses to read for pleasure. If the teacher does affect the choice to a significant degree, then her cooperation with the librarian in suggesting books to be acquired should be utilized. The other influences that impress the youth to read a book in his free time should also be known to teachers and librarians so that they can use these same sources and familiarize themselves with the types of books likely to be enjoyed by the students. Since many English teachers have classroom collections, often of paperbacks, my findings may aid them in selecting books which will circulate more often.

As a student with an English major and a Library Science minor, I was also interested from a librarian's point of view in the criteria used by young adults for selection. Although many of my questions did not apply directly to classroom or library influences, I believe they are important
for aid in selecting more current material while not neglecting the standard and necessary material which has already been accepted for the library.

The two-page questionnaire was sent to Northside, Southside, and Central High Schools in Muncie with approval from the superintendent's office and cooperation of the three principals involved. Of the 120 questionnaires sent out, 40 to each of the three schools, 117 were returned. The survey was limited to English students in the eleventh grade for two reasons. First, I wanted the questionnaire to be distributed to one academic and one general English class in each of the schools. Since twelfth graders are not required to take English, I felt I could get a more representative tally by using the eleventh graders. Secondly, the students would have had enough experience in selecting from the sources I mention while they were ninth and tenth graders to enable them to answer the questions. This would not be so if I had used younger students, since the survey was taken so early in the academic year.

The questions were simple so that the students would not feel they were being tested. I felt they would give more honest answers if they had no reason to become impatient or annoyed by trying to find a "right" answer. Most of the questions called for a simple choice of "Never," "Seldom," or "Often." In interpreting the results I added
"Seldom" and "Often" responses together to get the total percentage of the students who were sometimes influenced by a certain factor.

I found that more students were reading for pleasure than I had expected. Also it was interesting to note that, while the English teacher's influence was much higher than I had thought it would be in the combined college and non-college bound tally, I found that a higher percentage of those going to college were influenced by classes other than English. The English teacher had a slightly higher influence on those who were not going to college, which was something that I had not expected to find. Since my own goal is to become a high school librarian, it was disappointing to find that about two-thirds of the students never asked the librarian to suggest a good book to read. While I was aware that this had been noticed by others, I had hoped the trend would be changing. As I expected, more of the students preferred fiction for their outside reading; however, the percentage difference between fiction and non-fiction preference was not as great as I had thought it would be. Although I was not surprised that the favorite category of the non-college bound student was "Love," I had thought perhaps "Current Events" or "Historical Fiction" might be the choice of the college-bound group; instead they chose "Sports" as their favorite category.
Almost all of the students browse around until they find something that looks interesting. At least the librarian can have some indirect influence here by having a good selection of interesting titles. She would also be wise to watch the movies and try to get books connected with them in some way because I found an overwhelming influence of the motion picture on young adults' selection of outside reading. Television influence was only slightly below that of movies. We often hear that our youth are so audio-visual oriented that they have quit reading; I was happy to find that movies and television definitely have a positive effect on reading. The influence of friends is also significant, equal to that of television. The above mentioned influences were those which I feel were the most important.

Since I was not interested in the sociological differences which might exist between the schools, I combined all the questionnaires for the overall results; these are reported in Chapter I.¹ Then I separated those who plan to go to college from those who do not; Chapter II contains the comparison of the results of those two tabulations. The last chapter is a comparison of my data with the

¹In this report the percentages are rounded to the nearest one. More accurate statistics are reported in the appendices.
findings of other researchers. I have included, as Appendix I, the actual questionnaire form used. Appendix II shows the breakdown of the college bound and non-college bound tabulations.

What I learned about young adults' outside reading indicates that books are complementary to television and movies, and the majority of young people still enjoy reading. I feel encouraged by the survey results; it's good to know that reading for pleasure is not a thing of the past to today's youth.
Chapter I

The Overall Results of the Survey

This chapter will present the results of a survey, the aim of which was to find what influences young people in their selection of books for outside reading. I asked students from the three Muncie, Indiana high schools some questions about their personal reasons for choosing a book. In order to get as representative a picture as possible, I chose to send my questionnaire through eleventh grade English classes, one academic and one general, in each school. I combined all the questionnaires to get an idea of the sources used by the students as selection aids and also those sources which were not used by students. Hopefully the results will help teachers and librarians in their selection of books for their classroom or library collections by showing which sources are having a current influence on young people.

In an attempt to keep the questionnaire simple so that no one would feel frustrated when answering the questions, the responses for most of the questions were a choice of "Never," "Seldom," and "Often." In reporting the results, I have added "Seldom and "Often" responses together to get the total of those who were at some time influenced by any
factor. In this chapter the results will be given in percentages rounded to the nearest one. More accurate statistics are reported in Appendix I on the actual questionnaire form used in the survey.

I had hoped to find that the English teacher had a high percentage of influence on her students, and the survey showed that she does have; in fact, she had more than I had expected. The librarian had very little influence in comparison, which was really not an unexpected finding, but disappointing just the same. Audio-visual impact on reading selection is highly significant and pleasing, as is that of friends.

The answer I was most interested in was whether or not the English teacher's suggestion of a book that the student might find interesting had influenced the student's selection. Her suggestion had often influenced 27 percent of the students. This is a high percentage when you consider that only 28 percent often read for pleasure. Another 55 percent reported that they sometimes read for pleasure, and 51 percent reported that the English teacher had sometimes influenced their selection of a book for reading on their own time. This makes her quite influential with those who are reading. Only 21 percent had never been influenced by the English teacher, which naturally includes the 16 percent who read only what is required.
When asked if the required reading for an English class had influenced them to read a book on a similar subject, a low 14 percent said it had often influenced them. It had never influenced 28 percent. Yet, if it does only seldom influence 58 percent, this indicates that the required reading does influence most of those who do read at some time for pleasure. One other question pertaining to the importance of the English classroom influence was whether or not the required reading of any particular author influenced students to read a book by the same author outside of class; to 30 percent of the respondents it did not, while to 23 percent it often did. Forty-seven percent were seldom influenced by this required reading of a particular author. A suggestion of the English teacher, then, is five percent more influential than required reading of a certain theme and eight percent more influential than required reading of a certain author. Therefore, it is important for the English teacher to make suggestions that are interesting so she will not lose her place of trust with her students. Perhaps some of the other answers will give ideas she can use, in addition to the prepared bibliographies available to her as a teacher, to keep her suggestions timely.

In an effort to be objective and not claim all of the reading influences for the English Department, the students were asked if their selection of outside reading had been
influenced by classes other than English. This was rather broad and would include the subject as well as the teacher influence. Those who had never been influenced in any way was equal for English and all other subject combined (21 percent). It is a little deflating to note that 30 percent had often been influenced by other subjects, compared to the 27 percent who had often been influenced by the English teacher. Another 49 percent had been influenced at some time, giving all other subjects a total of 79 percent who were influenced in their choice of a book to read in their free time. Almost every subject was mentioned at least once, including Foods and Gym, when the students were asked to name the subject or subjects which had influenced them, showing a wide range of influence throughout the school. However, History was mentioned most often. It was influential with 50 percent of the students, but the English teacher still leads with a 78 percent influence. Science, all categories, influenced 24 percent, with the next runner-up, Latin, influencing only a small seven percent.

There were other factors that had as much or more influence on student's selection than teachers or classroom subjects, and the rest of the questionnaire was devoted to these possible influences. Librarians, for instance, depend on reviews in newspapers and magazines for much of their selection, so I wondered if students used these as selection sources also.
Students who never consult book reviews in newspapers numbered 67 percent, which is not very surprising since there are seldom any reviews in the local papers. Nine percent said they did use them often, which indicates that nine percent probably read out-of-town newspapers. Those who consult book reviews in magazines was a little higher, 15 percent; although 53 percent never did. The 31 percent who sometimes use them and the 15 percent who often did were asked to list which magazines they consulted. As with the list of school subjects which had influenced them, almost every conceivable, and some inconceivable, magazine was mentioned at least once. Librarians often read book reviews from Newsweek and Time; although 33 percent of the students use Time, only 13 percent use Newsweek book reviews. Surprisingly, Life lead with 40 percent of the students, and Look (another surprise) tied with Newsweek at 13 percent. Perhaps Life as a good selection source is being overlooked by librarians.

Then there are the book lists, those recommended for students who plan to go to college and those of most interest to the publishers, the best-seller lists. The college preparatory lists vary but often contain many of the same selections, and probably both teachers and librarians use one or another at some time for selection or suggestions to students. Since 48 percent of the students plan to go to college and 40 percent sometimes use these lists, in addition to the 17
percent who often use them, this speaks well for their effec-
tiveness. The best-seller lists, which librarians and teachers
are often wary of due to the sensational and transitory nature
of some of the books that sell best, are used often by only
one percent more than often used the college preparatory lists.
But they were used at some time by 55 percent and never used
by only 27 percent. Neither type can be ignored. Perhaps the
lists designed for the future college student need to be
given more publicity to increase the percentage of those who
use them often.

The question answered "Often" more than any other was,"Do you browse around until you find a title that looks inter-
esting?" Obviously the teacher can be of little help here, un-
less by suggesting enough titles in class that the student may
find a familiar one as he browses. The selection here seems
to depend mostly on the author's choice of title. Only five
percent said they never select a book in this manner.

Unhappily for the librarian, she rates lowest of all in
the amount of influence on selection of books for outside
reading. Only six percent often ask her for suggestions, while
a large 67 percent never do. Any influence she may have with
most of the students would have to be indirect, such as book
displays or selection of "interesting" titles.

The clear plastic book covers used in many libraries
preserve the book jacket with its unique and often colorful
design. They are a good investment since the attractiveness of the book jacket often influences 33 percent to read the book, while another 43 percent occasionally select a book for this reason. The internal attractiveness of the book is not as important. Only ten percent often choose a book because it has illustrations inside, and 47 percent never choose on this basis. Only book reviews and librarian's suggestions had more "Never" responses.

When it comes to buying their own book rather than checking it out at the library, only 19 percent often prefer to do this; 42 percent never do. When asked if they had a definite subject in mind when they went to a library or book store, 42 percent said that they often did have. Since 50 percent seldom have a definite subject in mind and another eight percent never do, possibly the librarian could make herself more useful to this large group by having more interesting displays of books.

The card catalog is checked by 40 percent of the students before going to the shelves when they are looking for books on specific subjects. Their knowledge of the card catalog, whether taught by the English teacher or by the librarian in special instruction classes, is worth while to them. Only 15 percent never use it, so it seems that there has been a good degree of success on the part of their instructors; however these few students need to be identified by the teacher.
so they can be given individual help if they are not using the card catalog because they do not know how it is arranged.

These young people have grown up in an audio-visual oriented world, so it is not surprising that motion pictures and television (including televised movies) have a large number of students responding that they are often or sometimes influenced by these two factors. Only six percent have never been influenced by motion pictures; in fact, motion pictures had the highest percentage of total influence of any item that the students were asked about. Television was only slightly behind with ten percent reporting that they have never been influenced by it. Movies often influenced 44 percent to choose a book for outside reading; television often influenced 39 percent. Teachers and librarians need to be more aware of these two major sources of influence and find ways to incorporate current programs on television and recent movies into their own book selection choices and suggestions.

The suggestion of a friend had the identical number of "Never" responses that television had, making this a valuable influence on a student's choice for free-time reading. Moreover, friends had the highest number of "Often" responses, with the exception of "browsing," which actually makes this slightly more influential than television. Perhaps teachers could have more informal, non-graded book talks to give
students more opportunities to recommend books to their friends that they have enjoyed reading.

When indicating their preference for fiction or non-fiction for outside reading, the largest group (47 percent) reported that they read the two equally. The next largest group (34 percent) read mostly fiction, but only two percent read only fiction. "Non-fiction Only" was not chosen by any of the students; however, 18 percent said that they read mostly non-fiction. Sixty percent said that they did prefer to read books in only a few categories. They picked "Love" slightly over "Crime" followed by "Sports" and "Science Fiction" as their favorite categories.

The students were then given an opportunity to mention any other influences on their choice of outside reading. Fourteen percent responded with a variety of answers. Only one, "Parents," was mentioned more than once.

If young people in Muncie are typical, there is a good amount of reading being done by students other than assigned school reading. This should be pleasing to both teachers and librarians regardless of the sources of influence.
Chapter II

Comparison of Survey Results Between College and Non-college Bound Students

Since almost one-half of the students (48 percent) indicated that they were going to college after graduation, this seemed significant enough to merit further study to note the differences between the college bound and non-college bound groups. In the "College Only" tabulation there were slightly more males (52 percent) than females planning to continue their education. By contrast, only 36 percent of those not going to college were males.

As would be expected, about three times as many non-college bound read only what is required for class. Twenty-five percent of the non-college group, as compared to 32 percent of the college bound group, read often for pleasure. The majority of both groups read sometimes for pleasure.

The required reading in the English classroom influences more college than non-college bound to read a book on a similar subject. Only 22 percent of the college bound were never influenced by this required reading contrasted to 33 percent of non-college bound. A low 18 percent of the college bound were often influenced but an even lower ten percent of the non-college students were often influenced. An impressive
total of 78 percent college and 66 percent non-college bound students were influenced to some degree by this required reading.

Another question pertaining to the English classroom influence was, "Has the required reading in English class of the work of any particular author influenced you to read a book by the same author outside of class?" Only 20 percent of the college bound had never been so influenced, but almost twice as many non-college bound (39 percent) had never been influenced by any one author. Expectedly, 29 percent of the college bound had often been so influenced, and only 18 percent of the non-college. Since this does affect 80 percent of the college bound students favorably, as well as 61 percent of the non-college bound it shows the value of the selection for required reading of authors with more than one good book to recommend them.

It was disappointing to note that the English teacher had never made a suggestion that influenced 23 percent of her college bound students in outside reading, and 20 percent of the non-college bound students were never influenced by her. She had often influenced more of the college students (32 percent). The English teacher's total influence of 80 percent on the non-college compared with 77 percent on the college bound student is impressive, although I had hoped to find a little more influence on the college bound than the other way around. The English
teacher appears to be doing a commendable amount of influencing of outside reading choices.

While 87 percent of those going to college had been influenced by classes other than English (seven percent more than were ever influenced in any way by English classes) only 72 percent of those not going to college had. This is still a high percentage, but the English teacher's 80 percent influence is still a little higher for non-college students. Only 13 percent of the college bound had never been influenced by another subject. Of those identifying which subject had had the most influence, 66 percent chose history. Forty percent of those not going to college named history as an influence, although this was way ahead of the 15 percent who named science. Science was also second in other subject influences in the college bound group where 37 percent said it had affected their choice of outside reading.

Book reviews in newspapers had a negligible effect on both groups with 74 percent of the non-college never using them and 60 percent of those going to college never using them. Only eight percent of the non-college and 11 percent of college bound students used them often. Magazine reviews fared slightly better with the college bound group, 20 percent often using them, and 45 percent reporting that they never use them. They were less popular with those not going to college; 62 percent never use them.
The best-seller lists were more popular than I had expected with the college bound; 16 percent used them often and 64 percent sometimes. Although 20 percent said they never consulted them, 34 percent of the non-college group never did. Of course the lists recommended for those who plan to go to college were utilized much more by the college bound than non-college. A large 61 percent of those not going to college never use these lists in contrast to the 23 percent of college bound who never do.

Attractive book jackets influenced the selection of about one-third in each group often. The total amount of influence on 71 percent of the college bound and 80 percent of the non-college bound was higher than I had expected. This knowledge could certainly be utilized by the librarians in book displays.

Movies had a strong influence on both groups. Eighty-nine percent of the college bound and almost all of the non-college bound, 98 percent, had selected books from which motion pictures had been made. Television had a lesser effect than movies on non-college bound, only 90 percent. The identical amount, 89 percent of college bound, had been influenced by television as by movies in their book selection. Television, then, is almost equal in influence on college and non-college students.
I do not think teachers should attempt to sway young people away from these audio-visual sources which have such a significant amount of influence on young adult's choice of free-time reading.

Not one student in my survey read only non-fiction. Only one college bound and one non-college bound read only fiction. Fifty percent of the college bound and 43 percent non-college bound read equally fiction and non-fiction. The next highest category was "Mostly Fiction," which was about one-third of each group. Strangely enough, more non-college (22 percent) said they read mostly non-fiction than those planning to go to college (14 percent).

Slightly over half of the college and one third of the non-college bound often had definite subjects in mind when they went into the library or book store. Only five percent college and ten percent non-college bound never had a definite subject in mind. Forty-eight percent of those going to college check the card catalog often before going to the shelves, while only 33 percent of those not going do so, yet an almost equal amount checked "Never" (16 percent college and 15 percent non-college). Almost all of the students like to browse. Only four percent of those going to college and seven percent of those not going never browse around looking for an interesting title.
The librarian is often asked for suggestions by only nine percent of those students going to college. A bottom-scraping three percent of those not going to college often ask her for suggestions for outside reading. Two-thirds of students in each category never ask her for suggestions. Twenty-one percent of college bound and 16 percent non-college often prefer to buy a book rather than checking it out of the library. They are outnumbered by those who never do, 37 percent of those going to college and 46 percent of those not going. The total of those who have preferred to buy at some time equal 62 percent for college bound and 53 percent for non-college bound.

Contrary to my expectations, more of the non-college students (52 percent) than college bound students (40 percent) never chose a book because it had illustrations inside. Sixty percent college and 47 percent of the non-college did choose on this basis at some time.

A majority of students preferred to read books from only a few categories, 62 percent of those going to college and 70 percent of those not going. I asked the students to check their three favorites. "Love," "Crime," and "Science Fiction" were chosen in that order by those not going to college. It was hard to believe that "Sports" led the college bound list (it was fourth with non-college students) followed by "Crime" with just one less vote, then by "Love."
"Science Fiction" was fourth with college bound, but much further down the list in popularity. "Current Events" was the least read category for those not going to college and next to last for those going. "Historical Fiction" was read least by the college bound group.

Friends influenced more college bound students (93 percent) than any other single factor, followed by movies and television. Fourth in influence was teacher and classroom influence in some subject other than English, with the English classroom influence ranking fifth for those going to college. For those not going to college, movies, television, and friends in that order, were followed by English classroom influence on selection of books for outside reading. As can be seen, the differences between these positive influences on college and non-college students are not extreme.
Chapter III

Comparisons With Other Reports

There are abundant reports on what young people are reading. Lists of titles, usually in the order of popularity as rated by the students, can be found in many periodicals. Since no two are identical, I saw no need for one more to be made, so I asked no questions about specific books. There are also many articles written about reading programs in the classroom, some even devoted to encouraging reading for pleasure, but they are always from the teacher's point of view. Few researchers, however, seem interested in why young people choose a certain book for reading in their free time. Those who do not read for pleasure during high school years are not likely to do so after graduation; therefore, I felt that knowing why some do read for pleasure could help the teacher find the way to guide others to read for pleasure.

One survey of books that were most popular among high school students in Flint, Michigan, Los Angeles, California, and Nassau, New York showed that of the thirty titles listed only four or possibly six could be considered relatively new.¹

Of the twenty which were mentioned more than once, only three were relatively recent. The researcher felt that this was the fault of the teachers and librarians for not acquainting young people with exciting new titles. She felt that the librarian had a responsibility to communicate more with the teachers and students about new books. My finding that the librarian has very little direct influence on the student, while teachers of English and history do have, indicates that the librarian should keep the teachers informed of new books and encourage them to suggest these to the students.

Ruth Warnke, Deputy Director of the American Library Association is quoted as saying, "Librarians and their patrons are of one mind about beautiful books, and the ugly book will sit on the shelf until its content is recognized as necessary."² Seventy-six percent of the students that I surveyed were influenced by attractive book jackets, which indicates that she is correct. She also states, "Good illustrations can lure librarians into buying books and the absence of illustrations drive them into a frenzy."³ The librarian might be getting upset with little cause since only ten percent of the students in my survey often chose a book

²Dorothy R. Sutherland, "Chicago Clinic Opens Show and Hears Librarians' Opinions," Publishers Weekly, 194, 1 July, 1968, pp. 78-86.
³Ibid.
on the basis of good illustrations, contrasted with 117 percent who never do. Warnke continues in the same article, "The name and frame of an author can nudge the librarian into buying a book." While I can find no other studies on how students feel about a particular author, I found that only 30 percent were never influenced by this and 23 percent often were. This seems to be a good basis for selection of some of the books in libraries or classroom collections.

In reporting on a 1970 survey of the most popular and most frequently circulated books in all Detroit school libraries, Ella Jean Wilson made the broad generalization that sentiment expired with World War II.\(^4\) Although I found that "Love" topped the list of categories students prefer most, I have to admit that "Crime" was a close second. Then she comments, "Relevancy is the operative word for this age group. . . . Under the cool, youth is involved and passionate, searching for grave answers to agonizing questions."\(^5\) Unless Detroit's young people are extremely different from those in Muncie this seems too strong a generalization, for here only 18 percent read mostly non-fiction and not one student reads only non-fiction. Also

\(^5\)Ibid.
"Current Events" was chosen less often than any other category as one they preferred to read. She had no definite statistics in the article but concluded, "It is indeed possible that boys and girls with real curiosities, needs and anxieties might prefer simple lucid non-fiction kinds of discussion." I did not survey for curiosity, needs, or anxieties, and "might" is too general a term to quarrel with. However, I do not feel that the non-fiction preference level is as high as she believes it is in Detroit, since only 18 percent of the students I surveyed read mostly non-fiction.

Reporting on a detailed study, made by James R. Scuire and Roger K. Applebee, of advanced students in superior high schools only, Robert Lucas says that they found that students "relied heavily" on book lists provided by the school and teachers. I am sure none of my three schools would qualify as "superior," but in comparing college-bound youth, I found that 23 percent never use recommended lists and only 28 percent do often. They also found that their students "relied heavily" on teacher recommendations as well as those of fellow students. The teacher influence was less impressive here in Muncie where only 32 percent

often used the suggestion of an English teacher. By contrast, 55 percent of my college-bound group were often influenced by friends. Since only seven percent never were influenced by a friend's suggestion, I feel this is a rather "heavy" reliance; again there were no actual statistics given in the article, only conclusions. The same article reported that more college-bound students preferred history, current problems and science; my findings agreed with the history and science preference, but current events was very low in preference. Their non-college bound preferred detective or mystery novels and romance stories, while I found that only five percent more of my non-college bound chose "Crime" than did college bound; 22 percent more non-college bound chose "Love" as a preferred category.

Donald R. Gallo made an interesting study of the entire eleventh grade at two different central New York State schools in order to get a representative cross-section of American youth. His article is the only one I found that asked "Who, or what, influences adolescent reading tastes?" "In answer to the simple question 'Do you like to read?' a majority . . . said Yes . . . and

7Donald R. Gallo, "Free Reading and Book Reports--An Informal Survey of Grade Eleven," Journal of Reading, 11 April 1968, pp. 532-538. Subsequent references will be made to this article.
slightly more than 20 percent of the students said No." Only slightly more than 16 percent of the students I surveyed said they read only what was required. Gallo found that 62 percent read primarily for enjoyment (a few read to get into college or to satisfy parents), while I found that 83 percent read sometimes or often for pleasure.

He found that the majority of students preferred light fiction, with spy thrillers dominating. I found "Love" was selected only slightly more than "Crime." More of my answers were "Equally fiction and non-fiction," (47 percent), while another 34 percent were "Only fiction," which indicates a majority of Muncie students also prefer fiction.

Gallo found, as I did, that movies "... have a positive effect on reading. More than 62 percent of the students had read a book after seeing the movie version." He had included movies seen on television in this question. My survey showed vastly more influence; a large 91 percent were influenced by movies.

Gallo's survey showed that, "What students have to say to each other about the books they read has far more influence on future reading than any other person or any other device. ... For suggestions of good books to read, a majority of the eleventh graders go most often to friends."
My survey also showed that a large number (90 percent) of the students were influenced by friends. (Gallo gave no percentage for this influence.) Although I found that a friend's suggestion had more influence than any other factor on college bound students, movies and television were more influential on those not going to college.

Gallo found the influence of English teachers somewhat disturbing. In one school they were at the "bottom of the list of sources," with only three percent of the students going to them often for suggestions. "By contrast, in the other school, the third largest percentage of students listed teachers first." This is hard to compare since I did not ask which source was used first; however, I did find that English teachers were often a source of influence to 27 percent of the students and never were to only 21 percent. Only six percent of my students surveyed go often to the librarian. Similarly, Gallo found that less than five percent of the students in his survey went most often to the librarian. In fact, she was "farthest down the list" in both New York schools surveyed, just as she was in Muncie.

When asked what prompted them to read the book they were reading at present or had read most recently, after the influence of friends, Gallo found that most students were reading a book they had "just picked up." This would
probably be comparable to my question about browsing, which
62 percent (my highest "Often" percentage recorded) of the
students said they often did before selecting a book to
read.

The recommendation of an English teacher was "far from
significant," Gallo found, although 14 percent of boys were
then reading a book suggested by the English teacher. A
few students in his survey were reading books suggested by
history teachers. I also found that history teachers were
mentioned more than any other subject except English. "A
few more were reading books after having seen the movie or
after having read another book by the same author. . . .
Only one boy was reading a book that had been suggested
by a librarian," said Gallo in his summary.

The results of my survey were comparable with Donald
Gallo's in most areas. We both used eleventh grade stu-
dents of various learning abilities, and, in most instances,
the conclusions were similar.
Afterthoughts

If I had ever done a questionnaire before and had known how difficult the tabulation would be when done by hand, and if I had known that Ball State University had an Educational Research Department which would have been happy to have counted my results in several different ways by computer, I would have devised a questionnaire that could have been answered on standard computer forms with perhaps five degrees to choose from, such as: Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, and Always. One of the students wrote on the paper that "Sometimes" should have been included. Until then, I had not realized that "Seldom" probably had a negative connotation to many people.

Another problem arose when I tried to count the answers to question Number 24. The students were asked to pick three categories they preferred to read and number them as one, two, and three in the order of preference. Some just checked three with check marks, so I found it impossible to put them in preference order as I had intended. Instead, I listed them by the amount of marks each category received.

Some of the other researchers mentioned Parents, Book Displays, Advertising, and Hobbies. I had not thought to include these particular items, and although I did ask them
APPENDIX I

RESULTS REPORTED IN PERCENTAGES

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine what influences young adults in their selection of books for outside reading. Please put a check mark after your choice of answers, or fill in the blanks. Are you

1. Male 43.6 or Female 56.4

2. Would you describe yourself as one who:
   - 16.4 Reads only what is required.
   - 55.0 Reads sometimes for pleasure.
   - 28.6 Reads often for pleasure.

3. Will you be going to college after graduation?
   - 47.9 Yes 17.9 No 34.2 uncertain

4. Has your required reading for an English class influenced you to read a book on a similar subject?
   - Never 27.6 Seldom 58.6 Often 11.8

5. Has a suggestion, by your English teacher, of other books that you might find interesting influenced your selection of outside reading?
   - Never 21.4 Seldom 51.3 Often 27.4

6. Has your required reading in English class of the work of any particular author influenced you to read a book by the same author outside of class?
   - Never 29.9 Seldom 47.0 Often 23.4

7. Has your selection of outside reading been influenced by classes other than English?
   - Never 20.7 Seldom 49.1 Often 30.2

8. If other classes have influenced your selection, would you please specify which classroom subject or subjects. History 50.0
   Science 23.9

9. Do you consult book reviews in newspapers?
   - Never 66.7 Seldom 23.9 Often 9.4

10. Do you consult book reviews in magazines?
    - Never 53.8 Seldom 20.8 Often 25.4

11. If you use magazine reviews, which magazine or magazines do you consult? LIFE 40.0 - NEWSWEEK 13.0 - LOOK 13.0 - TIME 33.0

12. Do you select a book because it has made a best-seller list?
    - Never 27.4 Seldom 24.7 Often 17.9

13. Do you select books from lists recommended for students who plan to go to college?
    - Never 42.7 Seldom 40.2 Often 17.1
14. Do attractive book jackets influence your selection?
Never 23.9 Seldom 42.7 Often 33.3

15. Do you select books from which motion pictures have been made?
Never 6.0 Seldom 49.6 Often 44.4

16. Does television (including televised movies) influence your selection?
Never 10.3 Seldom 50.4 Often 39.3

17. Do you select - (check one) Only non-fiction 0 Mostly non-fiction 18.1 Mostly fiction 33.6 Equally non-fiction and fiction 46.6

18. Do you have a definite subject in mind when you go to the library or book store?
Never 7.8 Seldom 50.0 Often 42.2

19. Do you check the card catalog for books on specific subjects before going to the shelves?
Never 12.7 Seldom 44.6 Often 40.2

20. Do you browse around until you see a title that looks interesting?
Never 3.1 Seldom 33.3 Often 61.5

21. Do you ask the librarian for suggestions of interesting books?
Never 66.7 Seldom 27.4 Often 6.0

22. Do you prefer to buy a book rather than checking it out of the library?
Never 41.9 Seldom 32.3 Often 25.8

23. Do you tend to choose a book because it has illustrations inside?
Never 66.4 Seldom 33.6

24. Do you prefer to read books from only a few categories? Yes 1 NO 0
If you answered Yes, would you please select up to three of the following, and rate them in the order you like most (1, 2, and 3). Love 3 War 4 Crime 36 Sports 39 Historical fiction 15 Biography 16 Current Events 11 Science fiction 26 (any other, please specify)

25. Does the suggestion of a friend have influence on what you select to read?
Never 10.3 Seldom 42.2 Often 47.4

26. Are there other sources or influences which determine your selection of books to read, outside of required school reading, which have not been mentioned here. Yes 14.4 No 85.6
If Yes, please specify (various responses)

I appreciate your taking time to fill out this questionnaire. Thank you.
APPENDIX II

COLLEGE AND NON-COLLEGE DIFFERENCES

The results of the questionnaire showing the differences between students who are planning to go to college and those who are not. (Reported in percentages, except Numbers 11 and 24.)

1. Male. 51.7 College 36.0 Non-college
   Female. 48.2 College 62.9 Non-college

2. Would you describe yourself as one who:
   Reads only what is required.
     5.9 College 23.3 Non-college
   Reads sometimes for pleasure.
     58.9 College 51.6 Non-college
   Reads often for pleasure.
     32.1 College 25.0 Non-college

3. Will you be going to college after graduation?
   Yes 47.8 College No and Uncertain 52.1 Non-college

4. Has your required reading for an English class influenced you to read a book on a similar subject?
   NEVER 21.8 College 32.7 Non-college
   Seldom 60.0 College 57.3 Non-college
   Often 18.2 College 9.8 Non-college

5. Has a suggestion, by your English teacher, of other books that you might find interesting influenced your selection of outside reading?
   NEVER 23.2 College 19.6 Non-college
   Seldom 44.6 College 57.3 Non-college
   Often 32.1 College 22.9 Non-college

6. Has your required reading in English class of the work of any particular author influenced you to read a book by the same author outside of class?
   NEVER 19.6 College 39.3 Non-college
   Seldom 51.7 College 42.6 Non-college
   Often 32.7 College 18.0 Non-college

7. Has your selection of outside reading been influenced by classes other than English?
   NEVER 12.7 College 28.2 Non-college
   Seldom 54.5 College 45.0 Non-college
   Often 32.7 College 26.6 Non-college

8. If other classes have influenced your selection, would you please specify which classroom subject or subjects?
   HISTORY 65.7 College 40.3 Non-college
   SCIENCE 37.1 College 14.5
9. Do you consult book reviews in newspapers?
   NEVER 58.9 College 73.7 Non-college
   Seldom 30.3 College 18.0 Non-college
   Often 10.7 College 8.2 Non-college

10. Do you consult book reviews in magazines?
    NEVER 44.6 College 62.2 Non-college
    Seldom 35.7 College 26.2 Non-college
    Often 19.6 College 11.4 Non-college

11. If you use magazine reviews, which magazine or magazines do you consult? (not in percentages)
    Time 8 College 2 Non-college
    Look 2 College 2 Non-college
    Life 8 College 4 Non-college
    Newsweek 3 College 1 Non-college

12. Do you select a book because it has made a best-seller list?
    NEVER 19.8 College 34.4 Non-college
    Seldom 64.2 College 45.9 Non-college
    Often 16.0 College 19.6 Non-college

13. Do you select books from lists recommended for students who plan to go to college?
    NEVER 23.2 College 60.6 Non-college
    Seldom 48.2 College 32.7 Non-college
    Often 28.5 College 6.5 Non-college

14. Do attractive book jackets influence your selection?
    NEVER 28.7 College 19.6 Non-college
    Seldom 39.2 College 45.9 Non-college
    Often 32.1 College 34.4 Non-college

15. Do you select books from which motion pictures have been made?
    NEVER 10.7 College 1.6 Non-college
    Seldom 53.5 College 45.9 Non-college
    Often 35.7 College 52.4 Non-college

16. Does television (including televised movies) influence your selection?
    NEVER 10.7 College 9.8 Non-college
    Seldom 57.1 College 44.2 Non-college
    Often 32.1 College 45.9 Non-college
17. Do you select--(check one)
- Only non-fiction
- Only fiction
- Mostly non-fiction
- Mostly fiction
- Equally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only non-fiction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only fiction</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly non-fiction</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly fiction</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Do you have a definite subject in mind when you go to the library or book store?
- NEVER
- Seldom
- Often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. Do you check the card catalog for books on specific subjects before going to the shelves?
- NEVER
- Seldom
- Often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Do you browse around until you see a title that looks interesting?
- NEVER
- Seldom
- Often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Do you ask the librarian for suggestions of interesting books?
- NEVER
- Seldom
- Often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Do you prefer to buy a book rather than checking it out of the library?
- NEVER
- Seldom
- Often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Do you tend to choose a book because it has illustrations inside?
- NEVER
- Seldom
- Often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. Do you prefer to read books from only a few categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>62.5</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
<th>70.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>Non-college</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Those who answered YES were to choose their three favorite categories from these. There are 35 college and 35 non-college who answered this. The total choosing each category is given rather than the percentages.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Fiction</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. Does the suggestion of a friend have influence on what you select for outside reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. Are there other sources or influences which determine your selection of books to read, outside of required school reading, which have not been mentioned here?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>14.2</th>
<th>Non-college</th>
<th>14.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>Non-college</td>
<td>85.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Various answers, most mentioned only once.)