

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF ATTITUDES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
AMONG JUNIOR HIGH AMERICAN HISTORY STUDENTS
ASSIGNED TWO KINDS OF READING MATERIAL

by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND LIMITATIONS

History courses have a reputation for being both difficult and dull. Of the studies which have been carried out on the teaching of history, many have been concerned with developing new materials. History textbooks have been mentioned by some critics as offenders in the difficult and dull syndrome. The critics believe that something more vital than the traditional textbook is needed for history students at the secondary level.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to (1) investigate possible attitude changes which might occur in a group of eighth grade American history students who were expected to read a current and well written textbook as compared to a similar group of American history students who were expected to read a series of non-textbook history books from the library; and (2) determine whether there would be differences in achievement between the two groups as revealed through a fact test and grades.

Importance of the study. Interest and achievement are generally considered essential and complementary elements in any part of education. Although the teacher plays a major part in the growth and attitudes of a classroom student, the reading material cannot be ignored. With reading assignments

that do not appeal to the students, a teacher can be seriously handicapped. It is necessary, then, to look for materials that will be of interest to all the junior high school students, even the ones who are not interested in history.

II. LIMITATIONS

This experiment was conducted at Highland Park Junior High School in Topeka, Kansas during the spring semester of the school year 1967-1968 among two eighth grade American history classes. Classes were already in progress when the experiment began. Only two classes were used. The total number of students included in the experiment was fifty-four. The students were not matched or selected randomly. Because of the nature of the experiment, the dependent variables could not be precisely the same. The school had separated the students into classes of slow readers and classes of average readers in an attempt to make the classes more homogeneous. This experiment was with two classes of average readers.

The review of the literature was limited to articles and books written in the last ten years. It was also limited to the literature available at the Kansas State University and Kansas University libraries.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Control class. The control class was the class given reading assignments only from their textbook.

Experimental class. The experimental class was the class given reading assignments in sources other than their textbook, other textbooks, or encyclopedias.

Non-textbook materials. The non-textbook materials were any reading materials other than a textbook or encyclopedia. As the experiment progressed, the non-textbook materials became primarily library books. Very few magazine or newspaper articles were read.

Textbook materials. The textbook materials were readings from the students' textbook: The United States of America: a History for Young Citizens by Brown, Helgeson, and Lobdell.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written on supplemental reading materials and new techniques for history classrooms, but no experiments were found in the literature which used either non-textbook materials or inductive methods in an average eighth grade American history classroom.

I. THE TEXTBOOK IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

New techniques of teaching social studies, such as audio-visual aids, field trips, informal instruction and core curriculum, have been suggested as means of increasing interest in and improving social studies classes, yet reading assignments are unlikely to be eliminated from the social studies classroom. One way to expand the concepts of pupils and to increase their store of information and understanding is to encourage reading from a wide variety of sources. This requires good libraries and enthusiastic teachers. Both Brummer and Benosky placed a great emphasis on the teacher's role in education. "A good teacher can take any approach and, through enthusiasm, skill and subject matter know-how, achieve commendable results."¹

¹Alan L. Benosky, "Induction, Discovery, and the Conceptual Approach in Social Studies," New York State Education, 55:27, February, 1968.

A textbook is the usual reading requirement for American history students. Alilunas and Chezanof conducted a study in which they considered the content of American history textbooks.² Most textbooks, they found, have about thirty chapters with about sixty percent being on the pre-1865 period. The pre-reconstruction era was found to be generally presented in a chronological order, whereas the textbooks presented the post-reconstruction period in a variety of organizational styles. Usually the greatest attention was given to political and economic history rather than social history.

Most authors seemed to agree that textbooks have improved as a teaching tool over the last twenty or thirty years. One of the major advantages of the textbook, as pointed out by its advocates, was its organization. "It can provide needed information, organize details into meaningful patterns, show relationships, and yes, even stimulate thinking."³ Roselle suggested that good textbooks should incorporate extracts from "primary sources, moving descriptive passages, dramatic narrative accounts, striking illustrations of artistic achievement," in order to keep them from becoming encyclopedic and dull.⁴

²Leo J. Alilunas and William Chezanof, "Trends in Eighth Grade American History Textbooks," Social Studies, 50:214-7, November, 1959.

³Daniel Roselle, "In Defense of Good Textbooks," Peabody Journal of Education, 44:89, September, 1966.

⁴Ibid.

Most textbooks are written by a team of authors. "Apparently, publishers prefer to have both a college historian and a junior high school teacher who is currently teaching in the classroom."⁵ Alilunas and Chezanof commended textbook authors for their application of the findings of educational and adolescent psychology to the interest and ability levels of junior high students. Roselle supported the textbook authors for their balanced treatment of involved issues. The history textbook "is almost always a product of historical scholarship, pedagogical expertness, and editorial skill."⁶

Yet, the history textbook has been sharply criticized by other people. Not all people approved of multiple-authorship of textbooks. "The end product is sometimes a watered-down, inane textbook in which the original contribution of the author or authors is not always clearly evident."⁷ Another problem was that texts too often show signs of national bias. Textbooks have been used in which essential facts were distorted or omitted. Teachers have feared to teach the truth when it ran counter to national prejudices. In a comparative study of English and American history textbooks,

⁵ Alilunas and Chezanof, op. cit., p. 214-5.

⁶ William H. Cartwright, "History in the Social Studies," Social Education, 31:194, March, 1967.

⁷ Mark M. Krug, "Distant Cousins: A Comparative Study of Selected History Textbooks in England and in the United States," The School Review, 71:426, Winter, 1963.

Billington found some form of national bias in all of the American textbooks he studied.⁸

Even though textbooks have been commended for their organization, they have also been severely reprimanded for their generalizations and condensations. "The textbook simply isn't adequate; it covers and condenses too much. It rushes through history, seldom pausing long enough to bring life to the people of its pages."⁹ Facts are compiled and condensed into an encyclopedic-like book which is about as exciting as an outline. McAulay would have textbooks used either as an introduction or conclusion to a unit.¹⁰ Textbooks, too often, have not shown students how the author got his information or arrived at his conclusions. Too many history classes are little more than the presentation of facts. These facts are rarely related to anything more than a convenient topic or to a forthcoming examination. Huus stated that too many texts are above the reading level of certain students and that allusions and figures of speech are used that necessitate some form of explanation.¹¹ Almost contrary to what Huus stated, others have criticized

⁸Ray Allen Billington, "Bias in History Textbooks," The Education Digest, 31:38, April, 1966.

⁹Richard L. Warren, "The Voices of History," Social Education, 26:305, October, 1962.

¹⁰J. D. McAulay, "The Social Studies Dependent on Reading," Education, 82:87, October, 1961.

¹¹Helen Huus, "Reading," National Council for the Social Studies, 33:96, 1963.

the failure of textbooks to deal with the complex issues of history.

Poor textbooks, regardless of their colorful formats, deny the students this opportunity to study controversial issues under competent guidance, and via this 'tyranny of silence' keep the student in blissful ignorance.¹²

Another serious problem with textbooks was the difficulty of keeping them up to date. No matter how hard publishers and authors tried, they were unable to keep textbooks current.

Historical methods were not often presented in American history texts. The textbooks that Shaver reviewed were concerned with "teaching the results of historical inquiry, not the process of inquiry."¹³ The textbook is considered by many pupils as the absolute authority and beyond criticism.

One of the more prominent dangers involved in letting the textbook rule the class is that the students themselves are deprived of learning the proper use of the book. From the very onset, students should learn that the textbook is indeed a tool, nothing more and nothing less.¹⁴

Most social studies textbooks introduce many facts and ideas in a relatively small space. The background needed by the student to understand briefly noted events, places, and ideas is greater than most children possess. Yet, at the same time, the textbook presents little that might encour-

¹² Nicholas C. Polos, "Textbooks -- What's Wrong with Them?" The Clearing House, 38:453, April, 1964.

¹³ James P. Shaver, "Reflective Thinking, Values, and Social Studies Textbooks," The School Review, 73:248, Autumn, 1965.

¹⁴ Walter E. McPhie, "The Textbook: Tool or Taskmaster?" Social Education, 28:451, December, 1964.

age independent thought. Conclusions are given with few specific examples for support.

The teacher must use the textbook properly if it is to be meaningful.

Whereas the teacher normally uses other tools to assist him, when using the textbook the teacher too often becomes the assistant! In far too many classrooms the social studies text becomes the curriculum; it becomes the objective of the course; it becomes the end rather than a means to the end.¹⁵

Memorizing the textbook is hardly an experience directed to the students' full learning capacity.

II. NON-TEXTBOOK MATERIALS IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Innumerable forms of literature have been suggested by a variety of authors aimed at tempting the history student into reading. It was generally agreed that history pupils should have readings that go beyond a single textbook. Fiction - such as Little House in the Big Woods or Gone with the Wind - which is also related to the reading level of the student has been suggested.

The literature of historical fiction includes much that is top-flight history in its own right because the author of historical fiction often engages in the type of research commonly associated with the scholar.¹⁶

The documentary has been recommended as a dramatic way to present history. Primary source materials have long been advocated

¹⁵Ibid., p. 450.

¹⁶Norris Gall, "Using Paperback Classics in the Social Studies," Social Education, 27:141, March, 1963.

as a teaching tool in which students may develop an understanding of a part of history, if the student is an able reader. An alert teacher with the help of an authoritative secondary source can correct errors in understanding that may occur when pupils read from source materials. Current reading matter, such as newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets were recommended as another means of promoting interest and vitality in the classroom. One article even suggested the use of epic poetry in history instruction.¹⁷

Paperback books, being relatively new, inexpensive, and convenient, have come into their own as a source of historical reading. They may be used with or without textbooks. Books of readings or several textbooks might be utilized in a classroom. Some authorities favored a series of small booklets. Each series of booklets could be written about a significant topic, unit, problem, theme, generalization, or some one concern appropriate for the general area of junior high American history.

Some pedagogues have suggested that non-textbook materials should be used in the class room along with traditional textbooks. The textbooks may be used as tools to survey a unit of history, to present a specific concept, or to locate certain facts. Non-textbook materials present students with

¹⁷Byron G. Massialas, "Selecting a Social Studies Textbook," Social Education, 25:237-8, May, 1961.

an opportunity to learn reference skills and the excitement of scholarship.

The learning task becomes internalized, for the student now sees that his job involves much more than learning what happened, how, and why. He has to regard his textbook as one source, and to see that there are many others. He learns that scholars disagree, and disagreement often stems from differing data, as well as differing interpretations. And he has to do the same chores as they do; gather evidence, evaluate it, make judgements. The goal goes beyond the grade, and becomes the goal of every inquirer: to discover the facts, and to see what they mean. Isn't this what we would want every citizen to do?¹⁸

The pupil must be presented with readings he is able to understand and he must know exactly what he is expected to learn from his readings, if his experience is to be meaningful.

Some common aims among teachers are to encourage their students' ability to make comparisons, to question, to keep an open mind, and to evaluate.

If students are to learn to think critically through the study of history, it must be through analysis of the text carried out by the teacher, or through the use of original documents and an approach to historical method not included in available textbooks.¹⁹

The second method mentioned is often called the inductive approach to learning and is one alternative to the textbook method of education. Historical research was thought by some

¹⁸William M. Hering, Jr., "Social Science, History, and Inductive Thinking," Social Education, 32:38, January, 1968.

¹⁹Shaver, op. cit., p. 249.

to be better than memorization of facts, which may often become the case with strict reliance on textbooks. "Creating in students the ability to see how different sorts of scholars see different processes in history cannot be done effectively with history books alone."²⁰ In the process of becoming his own historian, the pupil must have guidance from his teacher in making his discoveries. Primary sources need to be carefully selected so that the student will be able to frame his own conclusions without becoming stymied by too difficult materials. Another advantage of this inductive approach to history education is that in learning to critically analyze historical data, pupils might transfer this method of meeting problems into contemporary life.

In teaching of historiography it is possible to provide the student with adequate experiences for him to evaluate and choose alternatives, to question the view points of authors, to make comparisons of view points, critically to analyze and evaluate documents, to study cause-and-effect interpretations of events in history, and to learn the limitations involved in an attempt to find exact truth in history.²¹

The end result of inductive inquiry need not always be a formal research paper. It was suggested that historical fiction writing is of equal value, as it also requires specific information and an understanding of the period under study.

²⁰Hering, op. cit., p. 37.

²¹Bernice Goldmark and Morris Schmieder, "Not 'History' but 'Historiography,'" Social Education, 31:205, March, 1967.

The historical method has had its critics. Children who cannot read well, it has been pointed out, will not fare well when asked to do historical research. Even if a student may be an adequate reader, he may be frustrated in locating and interpreting historical data. Rundell objected to the inductive approach to history for other reasons. "It strikes me as highly unrealistic to disregard the work of generations of historians by making every child his own historian."²²

III. PREVIOUS EXPERIMENTS

Several studies have been performed on superior history students or poor readers. No experiments were found in the literature that studied average junior high school American history students who used non-textbook materials.

In 1966 Carnegie Institute of Technology built a history program around three days of readings in sources and secondary materials which was followed by a summary essay.²³

At Newton, a great variety of public documents, biographical and autobiographical accounts, diaries, pieces of fiction, and analytical articles in both European and American history have been collected to accompany an existing short text which carries the narrative.²⁴

²²Walter Rundell, Jr., "History Teaching: A Legitimate Concern," Social Education, 29:524, December, 1965.

²³Edwin Fenton, "History in the New Social Studies," Social Education, 30:327, May, 1966.

²⁴Ibid.

A summer study was conducted at Lyons Township High School in Illinois which utilized non-textbook information in a world history class.²⁵ At George W. Hewlett (New York) High School, there was a course for superior students which combined English and history classes into periods of ninety minutes each. Students in this class did not read a textbook, but read supplemental books on required topics or periods. Evaluation was by essay question tests.²⁶ A three year study was performed in Houston, Texas in which poor readers in the junior high school were encouraged to read stimulating library books especially selected for the individual student. Three English teachers, three social studies teachers, and one science teacher helped in the first year of the experiment. The results after three years of study were incomplete, but those involved were encouraged by the apparent reading improvement and increased interest of the students.²⁷

No experiments were found in the literature which were aimed at studying the effects of an inductive or non-textbook educational approach to American history on junior high school students of average abilities.

²⁵ David L. Maish and Robert E. Peryon, "A Project in World History," The Social Studies, 56:221-5, November, 1965.

²⁶ Marie Underhill Nell, "Senior Seminar in American History and English," Social Education, 27:377-8+, November, 1963.

²⁷ Ruth E. Reeves, "An Experiment in Improving Reading in the Junior High School," The English Journal, 47:15-20, January, 1958.

CHAPTER III

THE EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

A control group design was used in this experiment. An attempt was made to make the independent variable the kind of reading material used in the American history classes comprising the experiment.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION

At the time of the study, the students at Highland Park Junior High School were between twelve and fifteen years old. They generally came from working families. Some were from broken homes or had step-parents. Approximately ten percent were Negro and one or two percent were from other minority groups. It appeared to the writer that there were two common views toward school among the general student body. One view of school was that it was a place one had to attend until sixteen years of age, the other view was that it was a place to have fun with one's friends.

II. SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

There were five classes that the writer was in contact with during the period of the experiment. Two of the American history classes were designed for poor readers and slow learners. These two classes were considered inappropriate for this experiment which was developed for average students. Three classes were designated as "regular"

classes and accommodated average and above average students. Of these three classes, one had several students who were behavioral problems. Therefore, that class was not considered for the experiment, as control of the class was essential if meaningful action research was to be accomplished. Two classes remained for the research. Those classes were third hour and sixth hour American history classes. A coin was flipped to decide which class would be the control and which the experimental. The sixth hour group became the control class and the third hour group became the experimental class. Five students originally in these classes were not included in the experimental statistics for reasons of discipline or insufficient information.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Boys and girls. In the experimental class there were fourteen boys and twelve girls. In the control class there were fifteen boys and thirteen girls.

I.Q. The I.Q. scores used were from the records of the Henman-Nelson test that is given to Topeka students in the sixth grade. Three students in the experimental class had no record of having taken this I.Q. test and in the control class seven I.Q. scores were missing. From the scores available, both the experimental class and the control class were found to have mean I.Q. scores of 110. The range of scores in the experimental class was forty-two, while the range for the control class was thirty-one.

Achievement. During the first three grading periods, the control class had class averages of 2.393, 2.179, and 2.286 on a four-point scale. The experimental class had received during this same time, group averages of 2.269, 2.500, and 2.500 also on the four point scale.

TABLE I
DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Description	Control	Experimental
Boys.....	15	14
Girls.....	13	12
I.Q. Average.....	110	110
Grading period 1.....	2.393	2.269
2.....	2.179	2.500
3.....	2.286	2.500
4.....	2.429	2.308

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENTS

Textbook. The textbook used by the control class was their regular book which is used by the Topeka Public Schools: The United States of America: A History for Young Citizens by Richard C. Brown, Arland C. Helgeson and George H. Lobdell, Jr. and published by Silver Burdett Company in 1964.

Reading lists. Three reading lists (Appendix A) were given to each of the experimental class members at approximately one week intervals throughout the experiment. The lists included books appropriate for the topic being covered. Most

of the books on the lists had been checked out of the school or public library and were available in the classroom on a three day loan basis.

Fact test. The test (Appendix B) used to determine scholastic development during the experiment was one developed from tests in several history textbooks and from questions brought out in The History of the United States: A History for Young Citizens.

Attitude Questionnaire. The attitude questionnaire (Appendix C) consisted of thirteen questions which attempted to measure the degree students liked history and reading. The questionnaire was developed by the writer.

V. DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

Although the nature of the two kinds of reading material necessitated variations, all possible measures were taken to keep the control and experimental group class procedures as similar as possible.

Textbook method. The part of the textbook used was about the peaceful aspects and internal affairs of American history from the progressive era through the depression of the 1930's. The reading assignments were from the textbook. Classroom work consisted of discussions, filmstrips, films, and individually worked written exercises over the reading assignments.

Non-textbook method. In the experimental group, the reading lists provided a broad spectrum of books on each

period of history studied. Students did not often read the same things, as there was a wide variety of books available for each section. Toward the end, however, there was some sharing of information discovered. Classroom work consisted of discussions, filmstrips, films, time for finding and reading books, and group discussions on the exercises the other class worked individually.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

This experiment - to test the differences among classes given textbook and non-textbook materials as reading assignments - may be studied by the results of the attitude questionnaire, the fact test, and the class grades of the two groups.

I. ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire gave the students an opportunity to respond to each question somewhere along a five point scale that ranged from, "you like it very much" (#1) to "you dislike it very much" (#5). The questionnaire was composed of three equal parts. One set of four questions related to how much the students like to read, another was concerned with what kinds of history the students liked, and a third set of questions tried to determine what form of history the students like to read.

The questions concerning how much the students liked to read showed some differences between the control group and the experimental, as may be seen in Table II. The "do you like to read?" question had a change in response in the control group toward the middle of the opinion scale. The experimental group increased its favorable response by the addition of three "like it very much" answers and the loss of one "dislike it very much." In response to the question

TABLE II
ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS AND GROUP	PRE-TEST		POST-TEST		CHANGE
	liked it	dis- liked it	liked it	dis- liked it	
Concerning how much students liked to read					
"Do you like to read?"					
Control.....	16	6	14	3	+ 1
Experimental.....	14	2	17	1	+ 4
"Do you like to read magazines and newspaper articles outside of school?"					
Control.....	11	3	9	2	- 1
Experimental.....	13	1	5	2	- 9
"Do you like to read novels?"					
Control.....	13	3	8	7	- 9
Experimental.....	8	2	10	6	- 2
"Do you like to read things written by people who have lived in the time of history that they wrote about?"					
Control.....	12	5	10	1	+ 3
Experimental.....	10	2	13	1	+ 4
Concerning what kinds of history students liked					
"Do you like his- tory?"					
Control.....	7	1	6	0	0
Experimental.....	5	4	7	2	+ 4
"Do you like Amer- ican history?"					
Control.....	9	1	5	0	- 3
Experimental.....	9	3	9	1	+ 2

TABLE II (continued)

"Do you like to read about one or more special areas of history?"					
Control.....	10	1	9	1	- 1
Experimental.....	11	2	8	0	- 1
"Would you like to take more history, that is not required, if you have the time?"					
	(yes)	(no)	(yes)	(no)	
Control.....	4	8	6	5	+ 5
Experimental.....	7	8	9	6	+ 4
<hr/>					
Concerning what form of history students liked to read.					
<hr/>					
"Do you like to read about history?"					
Control.....	8	2	8	1	+ 1
Experimental.....	8	2	6	1	- 1
"Do you like to read short articles on history?"					
Control.....	8	4	5	3	- 2
Experimental.....	8	2	6	3	- 3
"Do you like to read novels about history?"					
Control.....	6	7	7	5	+ 3
Experimental.....	8	2	5	6	- 7
"Do you like to read history textbooks?"					
Control.....	4	9	4	5	+ 4
Experimental.....	2	11	4	2	+11

"do you like to read magazines and newspaper articles outside of school?" the control group, again, moved toward the center of the scale. Nine people in the experimental group moved toward the negative end of the spectrum. On the question, "do you like to read novels?" the control group changed more than the experimental. The control group responded in the second questionnaire considerably more negatively; five people left the positive range and four people joined the negative. On the other hand, the experimental group became more polarized by gaining responses at both ends of the scale. Concerning the question on primary source materials, the control group moved toward the center of the scale, while the experimental moved toward the positive end of the spectrum with four changed opinions. In this first section on the degree students liked to read, the control group did not change greatly, except on the question concerning novels. The experimental group became more positive about reading in general and reading primary source materials while it became quite negative toward reading periodicals outside of school.

A second series of questions was on what kinds of history the students liked. There was very little change in response in the control group on the question "do you like history?" The experimental group had a moderate change in attitude toward a more favorable opinion. "Do you like American history?" had a slight change toward the negative end of the scale in both the control and the experimental groups. The question, "do you like to read about one or more special areas

of history?" might also have been included under the form of history students liked to read, but it appeared best classified as a question about a kind of history. There was little change in the control group, but the experimental group moved toward the center of the scale in answer to the question on special areas of interest. The question concerned with taking more history in the future brought a more favorable response on the second questionnaire in both the control and experimental groups with five and four more positive answers respectively. The only difference between the two groups in this second section on kinds of history liked was in the attitude toward history in general in which the experimental group grew to like history slightly more than the control. However, the other responses in this section - "Do you like American history?" "Do you like to read about one or more special areas of history?" and "Would you like to take more history, that is not required, if you have the time?" - did not appear to support this one question.

The third section on what form of history the students liked to read, showed some considerable differences between the two groups. The responses to the general question, "do you like to read about history?" indicated no major change in either group. The question, "do you like to read short articles on history?" showed little change among the control group, while the experimental group moved slightly toward a negative attitude. The question on student interest in reading historical novels gained some interest in the control

group. Seven people in the experimental group, however, lost interest in historical novels. "Do you like to read history textbooks?" was probably the most revealing question. The control group gained interest in textbooks as was indicated by four fewer people giving more than a "you dislike it very much" response on the second questionnaire. Eleven people moved to a more favorable opinion of textbooks in the experimental group. Thus, the negative attitude toward textbooks at the beginning of the experiment was not strong by the end of the experiment. In this section, the control group increased its interest in reading novels and textbooks, to a limited degree. The experimental group had a decreased interest in novels and a considerably increased interest in the textbooks they had not read for a month.

In summary, there were not many changed opinions on reading or history as a result of this experiment, except in attitudes to certain kinds of reading material. The control group liked reading novels - but not historical novels - more at the beginning of the experiment than at the end. The experimental group found periodicals read outside of class less desirable, and textbooks more desirable reading material at the end of the experiment than at the beginning.

II. FACT TEST

When the fact test scores of the control and experimental groups were compared statistically with a t-test, there was no significant difference shown between the two groups in

either the pre-test (+1.412) or the post-test (-.757). When the t-test was applied to the control group and the experimental group separately, in an attempt to discover any differences within the groups, it was found that the control group had a t of -5.719 and the experimental group had a t of -5.396. Both of these scores are significant.

TABLE III

FACT TEST

Group and test	Standard deviation	t-test
Control pre-test.....	3.26	
	 +1.412
Experimental pre-test.....	4.42	
Control post-test.....	4.50	
	 - .757
Experimental post-test.....	5.13	
Control pre- and post-tests.....		-5.719
Experimental pre- and post-tests.....		-5.396

Although there was no significant difference between the two classes as a whole from pre- to post-test, there were some differences between the classes as far as individual change was concerned (see Table IV). The median improvement in the control class was five points, whereas, the experimental

class median improvement was six and a half points. The greatest individual improvement, however, was found in the control group, where two people improved by seventeen points. The greatest individual improvement in the experimental class was fourteen points. One person in the control class lowered his score in the post-test. Three people lowered their scores in the experimental class. The fact that the mode of the control class (+ 4 points) was five points lower than the mode of the experimental class (+ 9 points), may explain, in part, why there seems to be a contradiction in the high-low scores and the medians of the two groups.

III. GRADES

There were four grading periods in the school year in the Topeka school system. This experiment took place during part of the fourth quarter. Although the fourth quarter grades were not based solely on the work done during the experiment, the experiment did have an influence on the grades given for that period. During the first three grading periods, the control class had grade point averages (based on a 4.0 scale) of 2.393, 2.179, and 2.286. The fourth quarter average came up to 2.429 - the highest of the year. The experimental class grade averages were 2.269, 2.500, and 2.500 during the first three quarters. The average for the final nine weeks was 2.308 - lower than the second and third period averages, but not as low as the first. Thus, during the period in which the experiment took place, grades rose

It is recommended that students in such an experiment be introduced to the inductive method of study rather slowly. Perhaps, the requiring of reports at the end of a unit could introduce the idea of independent study to children without frightening them. When such an experiment is begun, the students should be given explicit instructions as to what will be expected of them and what books may be read. Perhaps, a list of available books with an indication of the reading level of each, a brief summary, and a list of questions that the student should be able to answer after completing the book, should be given to every student at the beginning of each unit of study. For this inductive method to be carefully studied, it needs to be used in many schools for more than a few weeks at a time.

Because of the independent organization of this type of classroom teaching, it would seem advisable that the teacher be experienced in classroom control, and instruction before such an experiment be performed for a prolonged period of time. Students studying a textbook have an advantage over students studying independent readings when it comes to taking a fact test. It is recommended, therefore, that provision should be made for an essay section in the scholastic evaluation of this kind of experiment.

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APPENDIX A

ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Check the number of the response which is closest to your own opinion at this time.

- 1. means that you like it very much
- 2. means that you like it more than many things
- 3. means that you sometimes like it and sometimes dislike it, but not as much as some other things
- 4. means that you dislike it, but not as much as some other things
- 5. means that you dislike it very much

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Do you like history?.....					
2. Do you like American history?.....					
3. Do you like to read short articles on history?.....					
4. Do you like to read novels about history?.....					
5. Do you like to read history textbooks?.....					
6. Do you like to read magazine and newspaper articles outside of class?.....					
7. Do you like to read about one or more special areas of history?.....					
8. Do you like to read novels?.....					
9. Do you like to read about history?.....					
10. Do you like to read?.....					
11. Do you like to read things written by people who have lived in the time of history that they wrote about?.....					
12. Would you like to take more history, that is not required, if you have the time? Yes___; Maybe___; No___.					

APPENDIX B

FACT TEST

I. Match the following terms, places and people by placing the letter of the correct term, place or person before each definition.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| ___ 1. One who favors reform or change | A. Muckrakers |
| ___ 2. Name given to writers who exposed corruption in the Progressive era | B. Bull Moose |
| ___ 3. One who is against the sale and manufacture of alcoholic beverages | C. Standpatter |
| ___ 4. A follower of Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 | D. Progressive |
| | E. Prohibitionist |
| <hr/> | |
| ___ 5. First person to fly across the Atlantic, alone and non-stop | A. Jack Demsey |
| ___ 6. Boxing champion of the 1920's | B. George Washington Carver |
| ___ 7. First woman to swim the English Channel (1926) | C. "Red" Grange |
| ___ 8. Scientist who developed ways to make sweet potatoes and peanuts into useful products. | D. Gertrude Ederle |
| | E. Charles Lindbergh |
| <hr/> | |
| ___ 9. Wise use of natural resources | A. Reclamation |
| ___ 10. Restoration of large areas of waste land by irrigation | B. Logrolling |
| | C. Conservation |
| <hr/> | |
| ___ 11. Ran for President three times and lost each time, Was a Democrat | A. Theodore Roosevelt |
| ___ 12. A former President who caused the Republican Party to split in 1912 | B. Woodrow Wilson |
| ___ 13. Ex-governor of New Jersey who became President in 1913 | C. William Howard Taft |
| ___ 14. The postal savings and parcel post systems were started while he was President | D. Calvin Coolidge |
| | E. Franklin D. Roosevelt |
| <hr/> | |
| ___ 15. Gave Congress power to lay and collect taxes | A. Fifteenth Amendment |
| ___ 16. Gave women the right to vote | B. Sixteenth Amend. |
| ___ 17. Forbade the sale or manufacture of intoxicating liquors | C. Eighteenth Amend. |
| | D. Nineteenth Amend. |

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| ___18. State where Yellowstone National Park is found | A. California |
| ___19. State where Glacier National Park is found | B. Maine |
| ___20. State where Acadia National Park is found | C. Wyoming |
| ___21. State where Yosemite National Park is found | D. Montana |
| | E. South Dakota |

II. Write on the line the name of the man who was President of the United States when the following events happened.

William McKinley	Herbert Hoover	Warren G. Harding
Franklin Roosevelt	William Taft	Calvin Coolidge
Theodore Roosevelt	Woodrow Wilson	

1. Congress passed laws establishing a quota system for immigrants _____
2. The Social Security Act was passed by Congress _____
3. Crash of the stock market, which was followed by the Great Depression _____
4. A period of great prosperity (economic well-being) that came before the Great Depression _____
5. The country had a "Square Deal" _____
6. The country received a "New Deal" _____

III. Put in the parentheses the number of the word or phrase which completes the statement or answers the question.

- () 1. Which of the following is common as a cause of depression? (1) High prices, (2) Low prices, (3) Wild speculation on borrowed money, (4) Farm surpluses
- () 2. The President who said, "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," was (1) Theodore Roosevelt, (2) Calvin Coolidge, (3) Herbert Hoover, (4) Franklin Roosevelt
- () 3. The Wagner Act aided (1) Europe, (2) Labor unions, (3) The unemployed, (4) Bankers

V. Read carefully the following statements. If you think the statement is correct put "yes" in the parentheses; if you think it is incorrect, put "no"; if you are in doubt put "D".

- () 1. While the New Deal succeeded in making many social and economic reforms, it failed to completely solve the unemployment problem.
- () 2. Membership in labor unions grew rapidly during the Great Depression.
- () 3. The depression which started in this country in 1929 also occurred (happened) over most of the world.
- () 4. President Hoover favored spending large amounts of federal money for public works that would take care of the relief problems.
- () 5. The Presidential campaign of 1928 was the first in which the radio played an important part.
- () 6. The old guard Republicans and new Deal Democrats both believed in letting big business alone.

APPENDIX C

BIBLIOGRAPHIES GIVEN TO STUDENTS

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The American Heritage History of Flight
- Bixby, William. The Impossible Journey of Sir Ernest Shackelton
- Brunn, H. O. The Story of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band
- Chandler, Caroline A. Famous Modern Men of Medicine
- Charnwood, Lord. Theodore Roosevelt
- Cincinnati Public Schools. The Negro in American Life
- Colby, C. B. America's Natural Wonders
- Darling, J. N. Ding's Half Century
- Dodds, J. W. Everyday Life in Twentieth Century America
- Dukert, J. M. This is Antarctica
- Eimerl, S. The History of Flight
- Faber, H. American Heroes of the 20th Century
- Fast, H. M. Goethals and the Panama Canal
- Flohefy, J. J. Behind the Microphone
- Foster, G. A. Votes for Women
- Garraty, J. A. Theodore Roosevelt
- Garst, S. Ernest Thompson Seton, Naturalist
- Hill, R. N. The Doctors Who Conquered Yellow Fever
- Halas, J. The Technique of Film Animation
- Harrison, G. Road to the Right: the Tradition and Hope of American Conservatism
- Hart, V. The Story of American Roads
- Hill, F. E. The Automobile
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- Pearce, C. O. The Woodrow Wilson Story
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 Steinberg, A. Woodrow Wilson
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The World and Its Peoples: U.S.A., vol. 2
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B. THE PROSPEROUS 1920's

Allen, F. L. The Big Change: America Transforms Itself, 1900-1950
The American Heritage History of Flight
 Brecks. America's Coming of Age
 Bruner, H. O. The Story of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band
 Butterfield, American Past
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 Darling, J. N. Ding's Half Century
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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF ATTITUDES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
AMONG JUNIOR HIGH AMERICAN HISTORY STUDENTS
ASSIGNED TWO KINDS OF READING MATERIAL

by

MARGARET ELLEN WILSON

B. S., Kansas State University, 1964

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

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College of Education

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1969

The purposes of this study were to (1) investigate possible attitude changes which might occur in a group of eighth grade American history students who were expected to read a current and well written textbook as compared to a similar group of American history students who were expected to read a series of non-textbook history books from the library; and (2) determine whether there would be differences in achievement between the two groups as revealed through a fact test and grades.

This experiment was conducted among two eighth grade American history classes at Highland Park Junior High School in Topeka, Kansas, during the spring of 1968. Classes were already in progress when the experiment began. Only two classes were used. The total number of students included in the experiment was fifty-four. The students were not matched or selected randomly. This experiment was with two classes of nearly average students.

The recent and available literature on this subject was concerned mainly with theories of textbook and non-textbook teaching. Within the literature no experiments were found which were directed toward the study of non-textbook methods in American history classes on junior high school students of average abilities.

A control group design was used in this experiment. An attempt was made to make the independent variable the kind of reading material used in the American history classes comprising the experiment. The control class read their textbook and

the experimental class read library books on the general topic being studied.

When the fact test scores were reviewed at the end of the experiment, no significant differences were found between the improvement of the control and the improvement of the experimental groups. Changes of significance did occur, however, within the classes. Both the control and experimental groups had major changes in their pre- and post- experimental scores.

The study revealed that during the period in which the experiment took place, grades rose for the control class and fell for the experimental class.

There were not many changed opinions about reading or history as a result of this experiment as was revealed by an attitude questionnaire. The control class liked reading novels - but not historical novels - more at the beginning of the experiment than at the end. The experimental class found periodicals read outside of class more desirable, and textbooks less desirable reading material at the beginning of the experiment than they did at the end.

Both classes knew they were a part of an experiment. The control class appeared to become a little more serious about their work as a result. Most of the experimental group students tried to make the project a success, but it seemed that they were not sure what was expected of them or what they could or should read. There was a great deal of concern about finding the information needed to pass the tests. A few of the less motivated students did not respond well to the experiment.

Although this experiment had only a limited success, other experiments might prove more fruitful, if modified.