

CRITERIA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOOKS FOR SLIGHTLY
RETARDED HIGH SCHOOL READERS

by 680

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B. A., Northwestern University, 1968

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

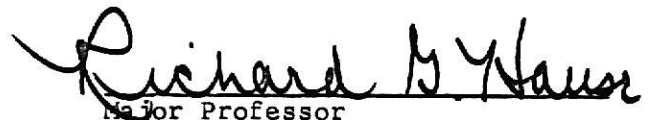
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

Approved by:


Major Professor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem. Reading is a form of communication with purposes extending from factual learning experiences to experiences of aesthetic enjoyment. For effective communication to occur, the reader must know the language of the author and must want to communicate. Barriers to this relationship may include the ability, the experiential background and the interest of the reader. Studies indicate that thirty-five to fifty per cent of today's high school students do not read as effectively as their general ability indicates they should; some estimates show that seventy to eighty per cent of the public secondary school population of the great cities of the United States are poor readers.¹ These students seldom like to read because they cannot find literature which takes into account their background, appeals to their interests, and at the same time considers their reading level and attitude toward reading. Although reading specialists are beginning to help some of these students improve their reading skills, there has been a distinct lack of research concerning the identification and location of books which are appropriate to the needs and interests of these students.

Statement of Purpose. It was the purpose of this study (1) to develop a set of criteria which would enable teachers, librarians and parents to

¹James H. Duggins, "Reading and Social Difference," English Journal, 54 (April, 1965), 284.

evaluate books for juniors and seniors in high school who have an eighth grade reading ability; and (2) to identify and recommend some books which these students might enjoy reading.

Importance of the Study. Reading is frequently associated with the general goals of education to widen the students' intellectual, emotional and moral perspective. So that all students may have the opportunity to realize these goals, educators must be aware of the books which are appropriate for the individual student. Although there have been several booklists published recently for slow readers, most of the books are recommended for the high school student with an elementary reading level. The criteria and booklist in this study may serve as a guide to adults who want to choose the right book for the high school student with a junior high school reading level.

Scope of the Study. Although interests are clearly individual, there are some generalizations that are applicable to students in the eleventh and twelfth grades, which was the level of interest selected for this study. Recent studies show that the success or failure of a student often is a matter of only one grade level in the difficulty of reading material.² Thus, the criteria and the recommendations in this study pertain to the student with an interest level of eleven or twelve and a specific reading level of eight.

It was not the concern of this study to explore methods of using these books in the classroom or to consider remedial work with basic reading skills for these slow readers.

²Ned D. Marksheffel, Better Reading in the Secondary School (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1966), p. 75.

Limitations of the Study. The research in this study was confined to materials available at Kansas State University Library, the library at Emporia State Teachers College, the public library in Manhattan, Kansas, and the library at Manhattan High School. Students in the senior English Classes of Mr. Louis Kaupp at Manhattan High School contributed information concerning attitudes and interests in reading.

Definition of Terms.

Retarded Reader. The retarded reader is an underachiever who fails to use his potential to achieve at a rate commensurate with most of his peers. His intelligence quotient may be average or above average. He often dislikes school because learning usually depends upon reading, which is a source of frustration to him. The retarded reader may want to learn to read but refuse to admit it. He is a reluctant reader who does not have a severe reading disability, but his reading level is at least two grades below that of his peers.

CHAPTER II

STUDENTS AND READING INTERESTS

It is imperative that a discussion of the retarded reader preface the development of selection criteria because experiential background and interests are extremely influential when the reader selects a book. There are innumerable inter-related factors which affect his choice. In order to guide the student to a suitable book, the teacher must know the student--his experiential background at home and at school and his interests.

Experiential Background at Home. Retarded readers often come from homes which are culturally, emotionally and/or economically deficient. Studies indicate that more than half of these readers live in homes which have poor family relationships. In these homes there is no evident understanding of the student's reading disability.³ The parents seldom show a sincere interest in the student's work at school and he therefore fails to receive the encouragement he needs. He often lacks the motivation to read because he does not observe anyone in his home reading. Studies indicate that it is not unusual to find no reading materials in the home of the retarded reader; the number of books at home bears a positive correlation to a student's success in reading.⁴

³George D. Spache, Toward Better Reading (Champaign: Garrard Publishing Company, 1963), p. 122.

⁴Ibid.

Such an environment devoid of encouragement, interest and reading models usually is accompanied by a lack of communication and shared experiences. Meaningful reading requires a background of experience. The problem of the young ghetto child attempting to imagine a vacation on a farm continues to be a dilemma to the high school student who is expected to have a knowledge of time and space so that he understands what life was like in another place and another time. Limited experiences provide an inadequate background for reading. These unfavorable conditions at home are a major factor in reading retardation.

Partly as a result of this poor home environment, seventy per cent of all retarded readers show personality maladjustment.⁵ Their insecurity, feelings of inferiority, shyness which is sometimes masked with defensive aggressiveness, self-consciousness and guilt feelings about their reading inadequacies often become manifest in an apathetic attitude toward reading. They generally retreat from their problems so that their fears impede their study efforts. Because a large percentage frequently change schools for various reasons, they fail to make friends and develop a clear self concept. Such personal problems clearly affect their reading progress.

Although many retarded readers are from middle and upper class families, it should be noted that many come from low economic-based homes. A different background and culture from the dominant culture greatly magnifies the reading problems related to a lack of experiential background. Fifty per cent of the culturally deprived have reading problems. They tend to read and learn more slowly because they are cautious and because they have

⁵George D. Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers (Champaign: Garrard Publishing Company, 1962), p. 3.

a desire to learn thoroughly. They learn less from what they hear because they are unaccustomed to standard English at home.⁶ Unfortunately, since there is a lack of money at home, they have less opportunity to obtain reading materials, to travel outside their neighborhood and to receive help for their emotional problems. As a result of these compounded problems, the culturally deprived student who is a retarded reader deserves special attention which is outside the realm of this study. However, many of the criteria used for evaluating literature as well as some of the books in this study are appropriate for the culturally and educationally disadvantaged student.

Experiential Background at School. It is impossible to escape the fact that the high school itself contributes to reading retardation. There are innumerable complex and subtle factors at school of which the teacher must be aware in order to guide the retarded reader who does not like to read. Unlike many home environments, situations within the schools can be overcome so that the reluctant reader discovers some positive elements in reading, which is the source of eighty to ninety per cent of all his learning in the high school.

The most obvious cause of a dislike for reading is simply that the student does not know how to read well. He may not have been properly taught, or he may have learned improperly. Whatever the cause, the result is often persistent reading failure and a distaste for reading. Penty's study of dropouts reveals that ninety per cent of those who leave school early have reading problems. Three times as many poor readers as good

⁶Constance M. McCullough, "The School's Concern With the Underachiever," The Underachiever in Reading, H. Alan Robinson, editor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 14.

readers are dropouts, and the majority of these students have good potential but state that their reading problems are the reason for leaving school.⁷ These students clearly need to experience success in reading.

Many students associate reading with distasteful assignments and homework. Too often the student develops the impression that a book must be covered rather than experienced; that it must be analyzed and dissected rather than enjoyed. Frequently, students find that only certain books are acceptable to the teacher. Unfortunately, teacher-selected books are often too difficult to read, not to mention somewhat dull for the retarded reader. Once the student becomes discouraged in his repeated attempts and failures to read these inappropriate required books, it is unlikely that he will independently try to find a book to read just for personal pleasure.

High school students may also notice the disparity between what they are taught and what they observe. Parents and teachers demand that students read because they seem to feel that there is some innate value in perusing certain books. Reactions by readers to such pressure may be rebellion, withdrawal, or antagonism with the logical consequence--a reluctance to read. This attitude is compounded when the student observes the lack of prestige which reading actually has among adults. A study recently showed that only seventeen per cent of the adults in the United States are currently reading a book at any given time.⁸

If the student has experienced failure in reading, if he has found books dull and difficult, if he has not recognized any personal reason to

⁷Ruth C. Penty, Reading Ability and High School Dropouts (New York: Columbia Teachers College, 1956), p. 73.

⁸Richard S. Alm, "Causes of Reluctance," The Underachiever in Reading, H. Alan Robinson, editor, op. cit. p. 104.

read except to appease adults, he will inevitably reject reading for other more interesting and satisfying activities. Particularly in high school, jobs, television, and participation in sports and clubs consume a great amount of the average student's time. These activities invariably gain priorities over reading because they often yield success, enjoyment and a meaningful learning experience.

The teacher has a responsibility to the retarded reader--to help him realize that reading does not have to be a distasteful, unsuccessful chore. He must discover that reading can be enjoyable; that it leads to an understanding of human behavior; that it provides fascinating and exciting vicarious experiences; that it reinforces and enriches social attitudes and values; and that it aids an attempt to discover and clarify his own life.

Properly selected books can be a positive factor in helping a retarded reader to overcome his deficiencies as a result of inadequate experiential background at home and at school. Reading can be a relevant and meaningful source of profit and pleasure to the retarded reader.

Reading Interests.

Interest is the primary factor to be considered in attempting to stimulate reading. When it is present, reading is vitally satisfying to the needs of the personality. Without it, reading is sterile and mechanical.⁹

Interests naturally vary to a certain extent with each reader. However, it is possible to predict a reader's interests to a limited degree if one knows the age, the experiential background, and the sex of the student. It is important to note that mental ability and reading ability are relatively

⁹Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers, op. cit., p. 2.

insignificant factors in determining reading interests. Reading preferences change from year to year as readers broaden their scope of experiences. Sex is a notable factor for identifying interests until the reader enters high school when interests begin to reflect individual personality and taste. By the last two years of high school, interests of boys and girls are maturing and broadening to the extent that they are becoming quite similar. Their interests are approaching those of an adult, and the students generally want to believe they they have already reached that level.

Because it is so difficult to discriminate between what these students like to read, what they read because they think they should, and what they read for their own interest and enjoyment, studies of their interest patterns have been negligible. The few attempts have been contradictory and unreliable.

An authority on reading, George Spache, stated that juniors and seniors enjoy "reflective, philosophic, religious, and artistic literature...while interest in science fiction and the supernatural decreases."¹⁰ Paul Farmer, on the other hand, suggests that high school students like stories of war, sports, animals, romantic love, home and family life, patriotism, and obvious humor.¹¹ In an examination by the author of five lists of books recommended for reluctant readers, seventy-seven per cent of the books were about (1) teenagers, (2) adventure, (3) information about careers and how to do things, (4) history, and (5) animals. Only a fraction, three per cent, were mysteries or science fiction. The author

¹⁰Spache, Toward Better Reading, op. cit., p. 167.

¹¹Paul Farmer, "Literature Goals: Myth or Reality," English Journal 56 (March, 1967), 459.

assumed that the number of titles in one category corresponded in a positive sense to the popularity of that type of book.

The teacher who examines the literature about student interests in order to help his students select books is likely to become confused. He finds himself between two extremes: one suggests that stories about teenagers would be most interesting to the reader while the other promotes the classics, which are intended to challenge the student to work to his potential and to enhance his appreciation and enjoyment of books.

Teachers are accused of their lack of awareness of the student's interests. A recent survey in New York schools found that "only a few of the titles identified as preferred by the pupils could be found on the lists of "good" books recommended by the teachers. Over half of the selections read in literature classes ranked distinctly low in student interest."¹²

The author verified the reaction of the New York students in a survey of approximately one hundred seniors in Manhattan High School. Not one of the types of books which the lists most frequently suggested to readers was among the first five preferences of the students. The students were almost unanimous in their selection of humor as their favorite type of book. It is interesting to note that only one of the five booklists even suggested humorous books. Furthermore, the seniors indicated a special interest in satirical fiction; whereas the five suggestions on the one list were books of jokes and cartoons. Other types of books which the students enjoyed reading, in order of preference, were (2) biography, (3) mystery, (4) science fiction, and (5) sports. As there were only

¹²Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers, op. cit., p. 7.

eleven categories on the lists and the survey, it is apparent that the lists formulated by four reading specialists and one publisher could hardly have been less suitable for these seniors.

With such unexpected results, the author questioned the students concerning their intense dislike to teenage and adventure stories. Their comments clearly indicated the source of their aversion. Books about teenagers were "corny," "fake," "outdated," and "not realistic." They felt that the characters were "phony" in that they were all good or all bad. The seniors justified their preference for science fiction in that although the situation might be unreal, the characters reacted realistically. Moreover, the student from a low economic environment is negatively affected by this phoniness much more than the sheltered middle class reader. This student does not enjoy reading about a world which is too orderly, too proper and too happy when he has experienced a much different world.¹³

Some educators are beginning to recognize the seniors' objection as a valid one. Burton agrees that the adolescent novel is too superficial with its taboos on such things as drinking and swearing. There is a "failure to plunge below the surface into the deeper and more complex human emotions and motivations."¹⁴ Carlson suggests that by the time the reader reaches eleventh grade, he is tired of the teenage novel which is condescending with its unrealistic language and stereotyped plot which is

¹³Geraold Weinstein, Mario Fastini, "Phony Literature," English Journal, 54 (April, 1965), 260.

¹⁴Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study in the High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 62.

obviously centered around young people.¹⁵ This objection to the literature most recommended for high school readers is summarized in a comment by Richard Alm:

...most novelists present a sugar-puff story of what adolescents should do and should believe rather than what adolescents may or will do and believe. Such stories reveal the novelists' lack of knowledge or insight into adolescent behavior as well as a lack of writing ability. These writers do not penetrate beneath the surface of the situation they create. Their stories are superficial, often distorted, sometimes completely false representations of adolescence.¹⁶

From the readers' comments, the author feels that the seniors may have a distorted view of adulthood, but they want to try to read adult-type books. Their conception of this adult book is rather vague except for the requirement of realism. Many of them use the words "unrealistic" and "relevant" interchangeably and associate these characteristics with adult books. The fact that many mentioned Catcher in the Rye as an example of an adult book would seem to indicate that they are interested in books which reflect their personal feeling, needs and emotions as teenagers, but it must be in a realistic manner. Some of them suggested that young people should write books for their own age so that the generation gap would not interfere. They indicated an enthusiastic preference for contemporary books. Their theory seemed to be that the more recent the book, the more relevant it was likely to be. Their favorable attitude toward autobiographies and biographies of famous people further reflects their interest in adult realism. Generally, these students

¹⁵G. Robert Carlson, Books and the Teenage Reader (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 74.

¹⁶Richard Alm, "The Glitter and the Gold," English Journal, (September, 1955), 317.

prefer to read about plausible situations and genuine, down-to-earth, believable characters.

What then does the junior or senior expect to gain from this communication? He has reached a stage when he questions himself and his relationship to the world. He searches for personal values and books of social significance. Today the books concerning social issues are extremely popular with these students who seem to be newly aware of a world outside their own. They want a book to

...address itself to the live controversies and pivotal ideas of contemporary life--of minority problems, of survival problems, of problems of human interaction, and so on. And this is not abandoning literature for sociology, but using interest in the human condition as a means of making a connection with literature...Nor is this a "give 'em what they want" solution, but a "give 'em what they possibly can aspire to" approach.¹⁷

It is difficult to ascertain how those who are considered reading authorities could have judged the interests of high school students so inaccurately. Perhaps the students deserve credit for changing and developing adult interests earlier than their parents. The present generation seems to be giving a new definition to education which incorporates their belief that education begins with an understanding of one's own life and what it means to live in this world. "Nothing we try to teach him, no experience that we try to lead him toward has meaning until it connects and the youngster sees the connection, until he sees its relevancy to his own life."¹⁸

¹⁷Arthur Daigon, "Literature and the Schools," English Journal, 58, (January, 1969), 36.

¹⁸Charles F. Greiner, "Hook'Up, Plug In, Connect: Relevancy Is All," English Journal, 58 (January, 1969), 25.

Certainly there are significant implications for the retarded reader and his teacher. An attitude of reluctance and resistance may appear to be stupidity and severe retardation in the student who is given to read mechanical and inappropriate books which are clearly unrelated and even contradictory to his own experiences. Unfortunately, there are few materials which are available to the retarded reader with an eighth grade reading level and a near-adult level of interest, motivation and maturity.

A significant discovery has been made concerning the relationship of interest and reading ability. Reading authorities do concur with the fact that if the student has high interest in a book, he is able to read one to two levels above his measured ability. Conversely, if his interest is low, he usually considers the book too difficult even though it is below his measured ability. Because of this correlation, it is imperative that individual interest be a fundamental consideration in the selection of a book.

A Comment on the Classic. Mark Twain said, "A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read."

Educators have long questioned the value of teaching the classic in the high school. The following definition of the classic seems to describe the type of literature that interests today's student. According to Carlson, a classic "confronts the reader with one of the eternal dilemmas of life;" it portrays the absurdities of human beings; it shows the superiority of spirit over alienation and loneliness of the individual; it renders a vision of a better world which is not possible because of man's nature; and it describes the yearning of the human spirit.¹⁹ Classics usually have

¹⁹Carlson, op. cit., p. 119.

enduring themes which proffer a mature, profound, and significant appraisal of human life. However, it is often the language with its interpretive and figurative levels, subtleties, and unusual words which is the real challenge to the student who lacks reading experience and sophistication. Forcing the retarded reader to read "classics" undoubtedly is the best way to destroy any possibilities for helping him develop an interest in reading.

In recognition of the problems which the retarded reader confronts with the classic, many publishers have promoted the adapted classic, which usually retains the structure and plot of the original, but changes the language to a contemporary, often conversational style which is suitable to rather low reading levels. Assuredly, the retarded reader can understand the simplified version easily, but he generally takes away from the book something equivalent to what he would gain from reading Masterplots.

If adapted literature is a part of the retarded reader's syllabus, it should have its own literary merit. All too often it lacks the depth, richness, and subtleties of the original book which, indeed, made it a classic. The retarded reader undoubtedly would strengthen communication and develop a genuine interest in reading if he were guided to contemporary works which offer some of the same profundity in a language that he understands.

CHAPTER III

BOOKLISTS BY EXPERTS

The author began her study of available literature for retarded readers under the impression that although many educators had begun to work diligently to discover books suitable for the severely retarded student, no one had demonstrated concern for the older adolescent who is literate but who is unable to read much of the material in the standard high school curriculum. However, the author was able to locate a few booklists which included some recommendations for high school students with junior high reading level. This chapter includes a review of these recommendations and an examination of the criteria used in their selection in order to determine the adequacy of the lists.

Readability Measurements. Readability has been defined with varying emphasis on legibility, interest and ease of reading. Most reading specialists express the belief that interests are individual and that a book is not rated interesting by the reader unless he can read it with understanding. Jeanne Chall represents the attitude of most experts in stating that vocabulary and sentence length distinguish between what can be read easily by most people and what is understood by highly literate readers.²⁰ This concept was first adapted to a readability formula in 1923. Since that time more than thirty formulas have been developed for the purpose of

²⁰Jeanne S. Chall, Readability (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1958), p. 7.

measuring the level of difficulty in reading materials. Of the six most widely used formulas, Dale-Chall, Flesch, Lorge, Spache, and Yoakam, five of these use vocabulary and sentence length as their criteria for evaluation. The sixth also includes the number of prepositional phrases and the average word length.

Vocabulary is considered the best single predictor of readability.²¹ Vocabulary level is generally determined by word lists. Most formulas use either Thorndike's 10,000 word frequency chart or Dale's list of 769 words. A selection is rated difficult if it contains many words not on Dale's list or many words on Thorndike's low frequency list. One objection to dependency on these lists is that technology and mass media contribute to rapid change and development of vocabulary. Words like television and astronaut would not appear on these lists. Similarly, they contain outdated words which would not be familiar to the young reader. It is evident that such a measurement of vocabulary difficulty has its limitations.

Proponents of readability formulas stress that formulas are the best method in objectively identifying factors inherent in the material because they are a statistical analysis of structural traits.²² They yield a point of reference from which comparisons can be made. On the other hand, easy words and short sentences do not necessarily make a book more understandable. Formulas do not reflect the manner of presentation, the difficulty of content, or the rate that ideas are presented.

There is a further objection to the use of readability formulas which has decided implications for this study. Chall has stated that criterion

²¹Ibid. p. 46.

²²Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers, op. cit., p. 22.

passages for these formulas have been generally limited to children's books and that it is wrong to apply a formula based on children's reading to materials that are beyond its range of difficulty.²³ These formulas were not developed to measure readability above the primary grade level; however, in three of the five booklists, reading level was determined by the Spache and Lorge formulas.

Other methods of readability measurement have been attempted, but few have been adopted as a suitable means of evaluation. The most recent procedure is the cloze method in which words are deleted, and the success which the reader has in understanding the material is evaluated. The stress here is on comprehension and because the evaluation is computerized, it may prove to be an efficient method but reliability has not yet been estimated.

Professionals—including writers, editors, teachers and librarians—often make recommendations concerning readability based on their experience and work with developmental psychology. With these subjective and often arbitrary judgments, there is wide variation in opinion and an inability to make fine discriminations.

It is apparent that no one method of measuring readability, particularly for adolescents, has been found to be accurate and efficient. Although readability formulas are the most widely used method of evaluation, books which are determined suitable for a particular grade level are often quite inappropriate.

A Review of Five Booklists. The following booklists were evaluated with consideration given (1) to the type of books recommended, (2) to the range of grades for which they were supposed to be suitable, and (3) to

²³Chall, op. cit. p. 35.

the procedure by which the author chose the books. As a result of the student attitude ascertained in this study, the author assumed that a good booklist would recommend books of humor, autobiography or biography, mystery, science fiction and sports for junior and senior level.

Of all the lists, only Woolf and Woolf edited a list designed specifically for retarded readers in junior and senior high school. Of the one hundred books, most were recommended for any readers within the six year span, and no specific reading level was suggested. The greatest objection to Woolf's list, however, was the overabundance of books about wildlife, Alaska and Indians. There were no science fiction, mystery, or humor and perhaps two or three that a student might describe as relevant. Woolf did not indicate how he selected these books, but it is clear that he was not overly concerned with choosing books that corresponded with high school interests.

A publication by Scholastic indicated that twenty per cent of their paperbacks were recommended for reluctant readers in the junior and senior high schools. They did not list a specific reading level or interest level. Although they indicated an apparent response to the student's preference for humor, many of their suggestions were joke books. Their sports selections were adequate. While they offered a disproportionate amount of teenage fiction, they recommended relatively few science fiction, mystery and biography or autobiography. The publisher stated that the books were selected by the "Large Readability Analysis plus a careful assessment of book content."²⁴ This list contained fifty-eight titles.

²⁴Scholastic's Readers' Choice Catalog, 1969-1970. (Englewood Cliffs: Scholastic Book Service, 1969), p. 2.

The National Council of Teachers of English recently published an extensive book list for reluctant readers in junior high and high school, but 99 per cent of the titles were for students with an elementary reading level. Although the list of forty-six books recommends reading and interest levels, the interest level commonly extends from the seventh to the twelfth grades. Interest level properly should be lower because a great many of the books were the type of teenage stories to which the seniors objected because of their phony characters and situations. Although there was no humor category, there were a few science fiction books and biographies suggested. There was no indication how these books were evaluated; however, it might be safe to assume that they were recommended by teachers. With its many weaknesses, this list seemed to be the best of the five.

Strang used the composite judgment of several evaluations, recommendations, and the Lorge formula in order to formulate her list. Unfortunately, only thirty of her 836 books have a suggested reading level of eight. Her recommendations are for high school students, although the vast majority are teenage fiction and informational books. Humor, biography, autobiography, science fiction, mystery, and sports selections are negligible.

Spache, a reading authority like Strang, listed 500 books for high school students of which only forty were recommended for junior high reading level. Spache also depended upon the judgment of educators, other lists and his own readability formula to develop his list. Again, the emphasis was on teenage and adventure stories with little regard for humor, science fiction, biography, autobiography and mystery.

Three conclusions are quite evident on the basis of the selections included in these five booklists for the retarded reader. (1) There are very few books recommended for the junior or senior who has an eighth

grade reading level. (2) Reading specialists and publishers are not aware of the current reading interests of the older adolescent who enjoys humor, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, mysteries and sports more than teenage and adventure stories. (3) There is a need for evaluative criteria and recommendations which are appropriate to the interests and reading ability of these high school students.

CHAPTER IV

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR BOOK SELECTION

It is difficult to justify the neglect of the reluctant reader. This is the student whose potential is not recognized and therefore is wasted because no one helps him select a book that is appropriate to his interest and reading level. If this student is able to experience several positive relationships with books whose style, format, and content interest him, he may begin to enjoy reading. This chapter suggests criteria that might be suitable for evaluating books for high school juniors and seniors with an eighth grade reading level. These criteria are a synthesis of suggestions made by students, various research materials--especially those of Ruth Strang--and conclusions reached by the author.

Format. Retarded readers usually are more influenced by format than the average reader. The reluctant reader usually does not like to read and will seldom consider selecting a long book for he is well aware of his reading deficiency and the probability of his not finishing a lengthy book. Although he may be inclined to choose a very thin book, he will not read a book with a childish appearance for it is a threat to his self-esteem. Furthermore, although he may like pictures and large print, he usually passes up such books. While some authors suggest that the retarded reader read short stories, he usually prefers a medium size book with an adult appearance because reading it gives him a true sense of accomplishment and success. Some students indicated that colorful, interesting jackets and unusual titles influence their initial selection of a book.

The general appearance of the book should invite the reader to investigate its contents.

Style. Style generally determines how easy a book is to read. If much of the vocabulary is unfamiliar or if the organization is confusing, the retarded student is not likely to read beyond the first few pages. First impressions are extremely important to the student who really does not want to read any book. The retarded reader must experience immediate success reading the first few pages before he can involve himself with the content, which then determines how much of the book he reads.

The students agreed with the developers of the readability formulas that vocabulary is a primary consideration in choosing a book. Readers prefer books which have few difficult, unfamiliar words. Words should be defined by context as much as possible. Foreign words and dialects are objectionable because the reader must either skip those passages or slow down his reading rate to the extent that he loses meaning. An occasional unfamiliar word may help to expand his vocabulary, but too many new words elicit a greater rejection and distaste for reading.

The language should be colloquial. Retarded readers are seldom impressed with formal prose, in that artificial or stilted language does not seem natural and is often difficult to understand. These readers prefer to communicate with the author with common expressions. Books which include current vernacular are extremely popular with these readers.

Similarly, conversation is preferred to narrative, which in turn is more popular than exposition. Research suggests that the vocabulary of conversation is usually easier and that there is no significant preference

when the vocabulary is held constant.²⁵ Yet, conversation remains appealing because it reads faster and generally contains more action than does narrative. This is not to say that the entire book should be conversation; retarded readers desire sufficient description to make the scene and characters real.

Because retarded readers often read rather slowly, long sentences tend to lose their impact and meaning by the time the student reaches the end. Basic sentences with one or two conjunctions are acceptable provided that the content is fairly clear. Length, whether it be of a word, sentence, paragraph, chapter, or entire book, is a psychological but very real criterion when the retarded reader determines if he will begin to read a book.

Content. Whereas style determines if the retarded reader succeeds or fails to advance beyond the first three pages, it is content which encourages him to finish the book. A basic requirement is that the material in some way be realistic or believable. Although few readers would admit to wanting to read with the purpose of learning, most of them want to identify with a character and experience the situation.

The plot is usually responsible for ensuring that the reader continues to turn the pages. Plots naturally vary according to the type of book. Readers generally prefer books with some adventure, action and suspense. Complicated and detailed plots are frequently too confusing, but an organized plot with fast-moving action which gradually builds to a climax at the conclusion of the book is highly desirable. The plot must help to capture the reader's interest immediately and retain it throughout the book.

²⁵Chall, op. cit., p. 15.

The setting may be fanciful, but the retarded reader generally prefers a concrete situation about which he knows something. Fiction too remote in time and place from his own background of experience is usually difficult for the reader to become involved in. Historical literature or books with a foreign setting should generally be avoided unless the plot and characters do not depend on the setting and customs of the time or place.

Realism is of ultimate importance with the characters. If the reader is unable to see a relationship between himself and the characters, he will undoubtedly fail to find a purpose in reading. This does not imply that the principle character must be a junior or senior in high school for an identifying element to take place. On the contrary, the fourteen year old girl who loves to read about the experiences of the seventeen year old finds that they have lost their appeal when she is seventeen and knows the reality of the situation. Most retarded readers like to read about realistic characters in unusual situations like rags to riches stories or accounts of a good man taking bribes. Perhaps the realism factor accounts for their particular enthusiasm for autobiographies and biographies.

This interest in realistic characters and experiences reflect the desire of most retarded readers for some vicarious experiences which render insight into human emotion, motivation and behavior. These students seem to want to read material that is worthwhile and significant--that in some way helps them to understand themselves and their relationship to the world.

Again, the key to content seems to be relevance. If the format is attractive, if the style is not prohibitive, if the content is meaningful and enjoyable, and if the topic is appealing to his personal interests, the reader will probably like his reading experience.

Specific Criteria Used for Evaluations. The author studied and evaluated over one hundred books according to the following criteria based on significant factors determined previously in this study.

I. FORMAT

- A. Length
- B. Margins and Print

II. STYLE

- A. Vocabulary
- B. Language
- C. Conversation
- D. Sentences
- E. Organization

III. CONTENT

- A. Characters
- B. Setting
- C. Suspense
- C. Action and Adventure
- E. Dramatic Beginning
- F. Humor
- G. Significance

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following books were originally recommended to the author by students, teachers, librarians, and general booklists for young people. Some were selected by the author in an attempt to examine books published in the last three years. These books were then evaluated by the author according to the established criteria. Each factor was given one of three grades. This subjective decision was influenced at times by student reaction, by somewhat unavoidable comparisons with similar books and by personal bias.

All of the books in this list are suitable to the interests of juniors and seniors in high school who have an eighth grade reading ability. However, not every retarded reader can be expected to consider each or all of these books appropriate to his interest and ability. In as much as the reading ability varies with the interest in the book, it is of primary importance for the teacher or librarian to determine the student's interest in terms of experiential background, age, and personal taste before making a recommendation.

The following list of books was arranged in general categories. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES was informally grouped into sub-topics. The first books in each category are most highly recommended not only because of their own excellence but also because they have a wider appeal than the books which follow them. The first paragraph following the title is a brief summary of the essence of the book. The second paragraph indicates

the outstanding features which may be positive or negative. If a certain aspect of the criteria is not mentioned, it should be assumed that it contributes positively toward the general suitability of the book.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Wojciechowskam, Maia. Tuned Out. Harper, c1968. 122p.

(youth and drugs) Journal of 16 year old boy whose "wholesome" brother returns from his first year of college and takes LSD and pot. Encounters disillusionment, confusion, fear, the Establishment, and events in 1967. A subtle warning about drugs.

Extremely realistic account. The sophisticated reader may laugh at the boy's naivité, but he will inevitably identify with the boy. The vernacular is contemporary: up-tight, groovy. Recommended for middle class youth. Excellent in every way.

Karp, David. The Last Believers. Harcourt, c1964. 307p.

(youth and protests) A playwright in New York tells his story about his youth, idealism and work with Communists to his son, Abram. Focus is on 19 year old Abram, an idealist, who pickets the White House and wants to give up his citizenship in protest of nuclear war.

Extremely realistic. Much of it is narrative but colloquial style. Recommended for the more mature student who is aware of the world about him. Intriguing, excellent.

Butterworth, W. E. Orders to Vietnam. Little, Brown, c1968. 162p.

(youth and Vietnam) A 19 year old boy does not want Army life like his father, a West Point grad. He rebels but is drafted and is a helicopter pilot. Detail of Vietnam warfare, question killing, death.

Realistic portrayal of boy's feelings and doubts as well as his courage and skill. Very timely. A great amount of conversation with much army and aviation lingo. Picture of the war seems too nice and somewhat superficial. Very easy to read.

Hentoff, Nat. Jazz Country. Harper, c1965. 146p.

(black prejudice) A white upper middle class high school boy wants to break into jazz with a group in Harlem. He faces discouragement and a struggle for acceptance on his individual merits.

Realistic portrayal of blacks and the barriers between the two races. Extremely interesting and enjoyable book, particularly for jazz fans. (William Allen White recommendation) Possibly for younger readers.

Whitney, Phyllis A. Willow Hill. David McKay. c1947. 243p.
 (white prejudice) Black factory workers move into all white community.
 High School students question their values, rebel against parents and
 help integrate the community. Painful experiences for all involved.

Extremely realistic and inspiring story. Beautifully simple but
 perhaps too simple for some readers. Highly recommended for social
 material rather than literary value. Possibly for younger readers.

Barrett, William E. The Lilies of the Field. Doubleday, c1962. 92p.
 (black and white in faith) Homer Smith, a black man travels in
 the west and stops to help some nuns build a church. A touching
 and amusing story.

Reaction of teenage reader may be negative in that the story is
 not directly relevant and may appear isolated and naive. There
 is little action or excitement. Recommended for a quiet thoughtful
 girl who likes simplicity and a short book.

Baldwin, James. Go Tell It on the Mountain. Knopf, c 1953. 300p.
 (black family) Story of a 14 year old black boy and his family in
 Harlem in 1935. Deals with family problems, an insensitive father,
 and religious difficulties.

Although students like Baldwin, this book is suitable for few retarded
 readers. It begins with description rather than action, but the style
 is generally poetic narrative. Challenging vocabulary: implacable,
 laboriously. Setting is not currently realistic.

Bartusis, Constance. Shades of Difference. St. Martin's, c1968. 180p.
 (white prejudice) Greg, a white high school student, takes recreation
 job in black area. He becomes aware of white superficiality and
 hypocrisy and becomes disenchanted with the values of his peers.

Some students will complain that the story is not realistic in that
 the portrait of the high school is somewhat superficial and naive.
 However, this is an excellent exploration of prejudice and presents
 no easy solutions. Very young author.

Bacon, Martha. Sophia Scrooby Preserved. Little, Brown, c1968. 225p.
 (black history) In 1768 a young girl is raised in Africa and
 shipped to Connecticut as a slave. She lives with a kind Tory
 family and then is sold.

The account lacks a realistic quality. The older, wordy style of
 writing is difficult to become involved with because there is little
 supporting action or excitement. Not recommended for most retarded
 readers. It is not desirable for a study of black history.

Golding, William. Lord of the Flies. Coward-McCann, c1962. 243p.
(primitive, modern man) In this satire on modern society, man sees a choice between self annihilation and civilized survival. Several boys are stranded on an island while the world is destroyed. Their moral and social codes become savage and primitive.

A popular book with the students who can read it on various levels. The less perceptive reader enjoys the adventure and action and emotion while the more mature reader identifies a potential reality.

Wiesel, Elie. Dawn. Hill and Wang, c1960. 90p.
(justify killing) 1st person narrative of Elisha who must shoot an English prisoner. He remembers Auschwitz but finds it hard to justify killing one man. Book covers time from sunset to dawn and death.

Unusually profound and thought-provoking in its simplicity. The flashbacks might be confusing at times. There is little action. Somewhat philosophical and contemplative. Recommended for the reader who thinks seriously about values, especially war and killing.

Knight, Brigid. The Citadel Is Yours. Doubleday, c1957. 239p.
(fatal mistake) Story of a promising doctor who makes an error in judgment and his guilt becomes an obsession. Man struggles to understand himself.

Realistic story which is interesting and entertaining. It is not profound but is enjoyable reading. This may be the adult Sue Barton that the students want to read.

Snow, C. P. Strangers and Brothers. Scribner's Sons, 309 p.
(fraud) Another sequence novel with narrator, Lewis Eliot. It is the story of a gifted man, an idealist, who is very influential among young people. Suddenly he is tried for fraud.

An interesting book with a great amount of mounting tension rising to the climax. At times the thought becomes complex and there is little action. Snow's style may be too challenging for most retarded readers.

Kiefer, Middleton. PAX. Random House, c1958. 279p.
(illegal sale of drugs) Buddy, a talented young man, gets mixed up in an illegal drug business. Romance, politics.

Subject has potential but the story becomes rather dull and superficial. It does not really involve the reader in the issue and becomes just another story.

Jones, Madison. An Exile. Viking, c1967. 145p.

(deception) An honest, dignified sheriff slips into a world of deception and violence when he fails to arrest a boy criminal.

Rather easy reading but the content is not unusually exciting. The characters lack depth so that it is difficult to identify with them.

Orwell, George. Animal Farm. Harcourt, c1946.

(totalitarian state) A brilliant satire on a frightening view of the future. Animals rise against man and establish their own state where everyone is equal but some are more equal than others. Eventually the ruling pigs become indistinguishable from their human neighbors.

Average readers highly recommended this book and 1984 but many retarded readers may not be as enthusiastic. Animal Farm is primarily narrative although colloquial in style. Words like scullery, esconced and tushes may be unfamiliar and discouraging.

Tyler, Theodore. The Man Whose Name Wouldn't Fit. Doubleday, c1968. 262p.

(computer vs. man) A. D. Cartwright-Chickering makes war against machines because the computer can write only twenty of the twenty-one letters in his name. He involves the Air Force and CIA in a protest.

An extremely amusing, imaginative, contemporary book. The vocabulary may be challenging to some: elusive, disseminate. A relevant, interesting and entertaining book especially for a reader who knows anything about computers.

Wilson, Sloan. The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit. Simon, Schuster, c1955.

304p. (materialism) A satire on typical middle class man and his family in mid-twentieth century USA. There is a real look at the value of money, love and family.

An extremely realistic account with a serious purpose behind the story. It is not necessary to recognize the subtleties in order to enjoy the book. Recommended for the middle class reader who has given some thought to current values.

Trevor, Elleston. The Shoot. Doubleday, c1966. 233p.

(science vs. love) A realistic novel about a scientific team at a launching cite. They discuss ICBM's role and war while struggling with their beliefs. They become too involved with science to love as humans.

The plot seems somewhat hard to follow. Seems to be realistic. Recommended for readers interested in science and space in particular.

Sutton, Jeff. Apollo at Go. Putnam's Sons, c1963. 181p.

Although there is no "issue" in this book, it is timely in that it is a fictionalized account of the first lunar landing. Three astronauts are chosen to go. Several references to recent space history.

Fascinating and factual story using space lingo which is probably familiar to most readers. Although it is extremely realistic and appropriate now, after the first actual landing it may be outdated. Exceptionally fine book for anyone interested in space.

Hinton, S. E. The Outsiders. Viking, c1967. 188p.

(gang rivalry) Story about teenagers in their fumbling search for personal integrity. The conflict is between the urban slums and middle class youth. Murder, violence, loyalty, and affection for friends.

The author was 17 and wrote in first person from personal experience. Contains much contemporary vernacular. Beginning is rather slow. Treatment of the situation is rather gentle and nice. It lacks an earthy, realistic quality. Interesting reading but not for students who are aware of the actual situation. (Recommended by Booklist 1967)

HUMOR

King, Alan. Help! I'm a Prisoner in a Chinese Bakery. Dutton, c1964. 190p. Monologue by Alan as a family man who tells his experiences. The situations are very familiar and common but King has a funny way of telling and describing them.

Excellent. Extremely funny, fast moving and quite entertaining. His satire on things like Bufferin is superb. Very readable.

Guareschi, Giovanni. Little World of Don Camillo. Pellegrini, c1950. 205p. Satire. Story of Catholic priest and his struggle with a communist mayor in a small Italian town. Don frequently goes to his chapel to talk informally, and sometimes argue with Christ.

Excellent. Has serious subtleties but is very entertaining without reading at the sophisticated level. Very funny and sarcastic. Not recommended for an orthodox Christian to whom it might appear to be extremely blasphemous. Very readable. Short Chapters.

Coxe, Emily and Warfield, Frances. Mother of the Maid. Holt, Rinehart, Winston, c1960. 223p.

An entertaining account of a mother whose parents would not let her enter a beauty contest so she pushed her 17 year old daughter into many contests. She did not win Miss America.

Most appealing to girls who can identify with this girl who worked to please her mother. Very realistic situations. Extremely funny.

Kerr, Jean. Please Don't Eat the Daisies. Doubleday, c1953. 187p.
A charming account of the author's personal experiences with her four children and drama-critic husband. Hilarious situations.

Realistic experiences, quite entertaining. Readable.

Buchwald, Art. More Caviar. Harper, c1956. 212p.
The noted columnist relates his adventures in Russia, France, England, America and other countries.

Many students stated that they enjoyed Buchwald but this does not seem to be one of his better books. The humor is straight-faced and requires some knowledge and feeling for European manners and places. Not all retarded readers would understand his humor.

Sheklow, Edna. So Talently, My Children. World, c1966. 158p.
The author recalls her life with her mother who was a Jewish immigrant in New York. She was very loving, a realist, and an unsuccessful matchmaker. She refused to spell knife with a 'k' or do anything else that was not practical. Amusing experiences.

The humor depends entirely on the situation rather than the skill of the author. The stories are not in chronological order and they become rather episodic and could easily become boring to the retarded reader. Vocabulary is somewhat challenging.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Sands, Bill. My Shadow Ran Fast. Prentice Hall, c1964. 212p.
Fascinating account of his violent boyhood, his delinquency, his years in San Quentin prison, his temptations on parole, his wandering life, and his experiences as a man of wealth who cannot escape the fact that he is an ex-convict.

Outstanding book. Highly recommended by the students. Extremely realistic account which could discourage only the reader who could not read fast enough to find out what happened next. Good picture of the problems and hope that he lives with. Not preachy.

Gibson, Althea. I Always Wanted to Be Somebody. Harper, c1958. 176p.
A candid, sincere account beginning in the streets of Harlem. She portrays vivid poverty which caused her to hate school and begin fighting. She relates her career climbing to a place on Wimbledon's center court. Honest discussion of race and why she does what she does.

Excellent. Particularly good for black readers. Primarily narrative but colloquial style. Her presentation is particularly honest and appealing, especially to sports fans.

Gonzales, Poncho. Man with a Racket. A. S. Barnes, c1959. 250p.

A real individualist who overcame opposition of parents, teachers and friends to play tennis. He reveals a tremendous amount of self confidence. No concern for social pressures and no time for custom or cocktail parties.

Exceptional. Easy reading yet it is adult reading. Inspiring portrait of an individual who made up his mind to do something great.

Kitt, Eartha. Thursday's Child. Duell, Sloan, c1956. 250p.

Life begins for Eartha on a farm in the South. She moved to Harlem where she rose to stardom. Much of the book concerns her hardships as a child in desperate poverty.

Excellent, particularly for black students. Very readable style. Interesting and entertaining reading.

Roth, Lillian. I'll Cry Tomorrow. Frederick Fell, c1954. 350 p.

Extremely moving account of her childhood acting forced by her mother who gave directions but no love. She relates quite honestly how she began drinking until she lost control of herself. She tells of her treatment in a mental institution and her recovery.

Excellent. Realistic and honest picture of the life of acting and the problems of drinking. Very readable. Although the book is fairly long, interest should hold the reader to the end.

Scott, Col. Robert L. God Is My Co-Pilot. Ballantine, c1943. 203p.

Experiences of a boy who wanted to fly and learned almost by himself. He became a combat pilot in World War II.

Realistic and humorous account full of adventure and excitement. Narrative style but the paragraphs are short. Technical and factual portions which would be of interest to boys who have some interest in flying. Entertaining. Recommended by the students.

Anderson, Marian. My Lord, What a Morning. Viking, c1956. 312 p.

Story of her poor childhood in Philadelphia where she sang in church to her success in Europe and New York. Painfully realistic account of her first failure in New York.

Narrative style which is not prohibitive. Extremely realistic and human story which would probably be preferred by the girls.

Bannister, Roger. The Four Minute Mile. Dodd, c1956. 249p.

Fascinating story of a British medical student who overcame childhood disease to become the first to run the four minute mile. He relates the motivating forces which made him do what people said he could not do. Includes experiences at the Olympics.

Interesting and honest account of his trials. Mostly narrative. Especially for boys and those interested in running.

Mantle, Mickey. The Quality of Courage. Doubleday, c1964. 185p.
Tells own story but also that of many other athletes. The emphasis is on courage, the hardships and problems and values of professional sports.

The style is somewhat difficult and the tone may be too moralistic and preachy for most students. However, the desire to learn the inside story of many heroes may keep the reader interested.

Hautzic, Esther. The Endless Steppe. Crowell, c1968. p243.
Hautzic relates her experiences as a girl in 1941 when her family lived in Poland and was arrested and taken to Siberia to live for five years. Intense struggle for food, clothing and existence.

Little historical or geographical orientation required for understanding. Narrative style but short paragraphs. The vocabulary might be difficult for some: facade, circumscribed. Fascinating story which may be challenging for some but most rewarding and interesting.

Breslin, Jimmy. The World of Jimmy Breslin. Viking, c1967. 282p.
Story of the unusual journalist. Quite candid and very human. Many fascinating and humorous experiences.

Style is somewhat difficult to read at times. Experiences and adventure may interest the reader enough to enjoy the book.

Rowe, Capt. Basil L. Under My Wings. Bobb-Merrill, c1956. 240p.
The captain relates his life of flying. Racing, seaplanes, World War I and II, Korean War flying and commercial flying. Experiences in all types of flying.

Obviously realistic experiences and easy vocabulary but somewhat episodic. Lacks excitement and a climax. Explanations about flying generates some interest and appreciation but reader must have some prior interest in flying to read with real enjoyment.

Robinson, Jackie. (ed. Charles Dexter) Baseball Has Done It. Lippencott, c1964. 216p.
Robinson relates how he and many other black men have faced race problems in baseball. He was the first black player in the major leagues. The focus is on the pride of the black man.

The book is rather slow because of a lack of organization and abstractness. There is no story but simply interviews and experiences. No unification or rising climax. Quite preachy. May be interesting to a few readers who like baseball and want to know about the black athlete.

Harris, Mark. Twenty-one Twice. Little, Brown, c1966. 284p.
Unusual journal of the author's experiences while waiting for Sargeant Shriver to clear him with security before going to Africa for sixteen days to report on the Peace Corps for a newspaper.

If the reader gets past the first few pages, he may plod through the rest of the book. Some satire which makes many of the experiences seem unreal. Might be interesting for a future journalist.

BIOGRAPHY

Kane, Harnett T. The Amazing Mrs. Bonaparte. Doubleday, c1963. 396p.
Betsy Patterson grew up in Baltimore and met the brother of Napoleon. Against the advice of her wealthy family, they married. She was a tragic victim of world events in the 1880's. Her husband betrayed her in Europe while she remained faithful.

Excellent characterization of Betsy who is spirited, headstrong and compassionate. Very realistic. Mentions many historical figures. High society situations and historical orientation might prevent some readers from becoming involved and identifying with characters.

de Trevino, Elizabeth B. I, Juan de Pareja. Bell, c1965. 180p.
Juan is a black slave given to Velazquez, the famous painter in the Spanish court in 17th century. As he becomes the painter's friend and assistant he becomes an excellent painter himself.

Unfamiliar time and place orientation is complicated by the fact that the portrait has been fictionalized and appears somewhat unrealistic. Rather slow beginning but the reader who is interested in art and famous artists will undoubtedly like this book.
(Recommended by William Allen White, 1968)

Eaton, Jeanette. Trumpeter's Tale. Morrow, c1955. 190p.
Story of Louis Armstrong. Childhood in the worst slum of New Orleans. Account of his struggles from the time that he was arrested when he was thirteen, and placed in a detention home and given a coronet.

The dialect may be the greatest problem to the reader. The story is interesting and realistic but if the reader does not understand the language in the first few pages, he will probably quit. This success story is fascinating and should appeal especially to blacks and musicians. (William A. White recommendation, 1958)

Eelk, George. The Life That Late He Led. Putnam's Sons, c1967. 370p.
Story of Cole Porter, a wealthy man who was aloof from his childhood. He was pushed into music by his family. A gifted playboy. Very charming man who suffered frustration and tragedy.

Interesting but too factual and objective for most retarded readers to enjoy. It lacks a human touch and excitement. Rather lengthy for many readers who would not enjoy it unless they were particularly interested in music and Cole Porter.

Bocca, Geoffrey. The Woman Who Would Be Queen. Rinehart, c1954. 310p.
 Story of Wallie Warfield who became Duchess of Windsor. Her life begins in Baltimore. She has two marriages and divorces, the last divorce in order to marry the King of England who abdicated.

The fascinating and spectacular story is dulled by the author's attempt at objectivity. The emphasis on facts lessens the impact and interest in the story. The retarded reader would read past the slow detailed beginning only if he previously knew what would happen and was interested in the facts.

Olsen, Jack. Black Is Best. Putnam's Sons, c1967. 250p.
 Biography of Cassius Clay. It appears to be an objective portrait of the man in the last five years. His image as a good clean boxer is juxtaposed to that of a black power leader and of a protester to Vietnam. The book seems to be a criticism of his recent work.

The book is very chaotic. The beginning is slow, the sentences are long and confusing, and the portrait of blacks is extremely confusing. This might be interesting and enjoyable if the reader is familiar with Clay and the Black Power movement.

Ripley, Elizabeth. Leonardo daVinci. Oxford, c1952. 66p.
 Biography of the painter with most of the emphasis on his paintings, and his inventions. Many illustrations and copies of his prints.

Recommended only for the student who likes art. The style is dull. Interest stems from wanting to know about a great artist and inventor. Inadequate as a literary work.

Tynan, Kenneth. Alec Guinness. Macmillan, c1953. 108p.
 A critical account of his life with emphasis on his acting and different roles. Extremely factual and chronological.

Recommended only for the student who wants to know something about Alec Guinness. The book does not relate the human side of the actor or any of his experiences other than his roles. Much name dropping. Too many cold details to consider the book enjoyable reading.

Dooley, Agnes. Promises to Keep. Farrar, Straus, Cudahy, c1962. 271p.
 Biography of Thomas Dooley as told by his mother. Emphasis on his work in Vietnam.

Books begins rather slowly. It is severely hurt by the fact that his mother wrote it with obvious prejudice and love for her son. The account is too nice and complementary. It lacks the realism and adventure and danger that might keep the reader interested.

SCIENCE FICTION

Simak, Clifford D. Time Is the Simplest Thing. Doubleday, c1961. 260p.
Fishhook is a secret organization of telepaths who can throw their minds into space. Ship Blaine becomes an "alien" during an experiment and tries to escape from Fishhook.

Very readable. Characters react very realistically and humanly.
Fascinating and enjoyable to read.

Joseph, M. K. The Hole in the Zero. Dutton, c1968. 190p.
Story of 1000 years from now in outer space where man enters "no space" where everything is possible and nothing is certain.

Slow beginning. Long descriptive sentences which seem to be superfluous. Not particularly thrilling or entertaining to read.

Heinlein, Robert A. Starman Jones. Scribner, c1953. 315p.
Max Jones leaves his farm as a boy with a somewhat unrealistic interest in astrology. He finally takes an opportunity to go to the moon.

Easy reading with a few slow parts. Max is not a realistic character in that his reactions are superficial and shallow. Although recommended by NCTE for high school readers, many would feel it was an insult to their intelligence. There may be some who enjoy Heinlein however.

Asimov, Isaac. The Rest of the Robots. Doubleday, c1964. 556p.*
*Collection of two novels and eight short stories about robots.
The precision engineered machines seem very real.

Recommended by average high school readers but the vocabulary may discourage the retarded reader. There are many technical and scientific words like beryllium-iridium that add to the realism but detract from the readability.

Verne, Jules. A Journey to the Center of the Earth. Dodd, c1959. 235p.
Harry and his uncle, Professor Hardwigg take a journey to explore the center of the earth. They venture down the funnel of a volcano in Iceland.

Vocabulary may be the main obstacle for retarded readers: subsidence, lucid, fissure. The boy does not seem real and is difficult to identify with. The account is quite scientific and factual and demands a patient and imaginative reader.

Allen, Henry Wilson. Genesis Five. Morrow, c1968. 256p.

Twenty-first century science fiction and horror story which takes place in Siberia. Russian trained men in the headquarters of secret Genesis District Five encounter a bizarre experiment with wolves and humans.

Unusual story. Retarded reader may become impatient with the vocabulary and the unfamiliar customs of Asia. The names are Asian.

MYSTERY

Christie, Agatha. At Bertram's Hotel. Dodd, c1965. 270p.

Mystery in London. Respectable and dignified people become involved in a murder. Young people involved.

Excellent. Realistic character portrayal. Vocabulary may give some problems: traverse, unportentious. Fascinating and entertaining. The author is highly recommended by students.

Uris, Leon. Topaz. McGraw-Hill, c1967. 340p.

An exciting spy novel which is contemporary with its references to Russia, France, United States, Cuba and Algiers. Topaz is USSR spy code name.

The espionage is extremely realistic. An exciting book to read. There are many characters which might confuse some readers. Highly recommended by students.

Marric, J. J. Gideon's River. Harper, c1968. 213p.

One of a series of mysteries with investigator Gideon from Scotland Yard. Mystery involves a stolen diamond. Setting is on the Thames.

Easy reading. Quite entertaining with realistic characters. Good.

Kamarck, Lawrence. The Dinosaur. Random House, c1968. 205p.

Suspense and murder mystery. Ken Leeds is involved in a murder plot of his best friend.

Excellent. Very readable, exciting, interesting and entertaining. Characters are realistic.

Innes, Michael. A Change of Heir. Dodd, c1966. 216p.

An actor accepts the role of impersonator at a wealthy old aristocrat's home in England for the lady's nephew, in order to get her money for the nephew as heir. Murder mystery.

Unusual mystery but very interesting. An enjoyable twist to the ordinary murder mystery. Very readable and enjoyable.

HISTORY

Westheimer, David. Von Ryan's Express. Doubleday, c1964. 325p.
Col. Von Ryan of USAF enters German prison camp and establishes order. Unity of hate against him and when he makes a wrong decision, all are sent to a worse prison camp where he plans and executes a daring mass escape plan.

Excellent. Very realistic. Reader probably will become involved and interested enough so that the vocabulary will not discourage him although it is challenging at times, with many war terms. Funny, entertaining, and thoroughly enjoyable reading.

Capote, Truman. In Cold Blood. Randon House, c1965. 343p.
Non-fiction novel of 1959 murder of Clutter family in Kansas. Story of the two murders until the time of their hanging five years after the murder.

Although average readers recommend this book, it may be difficult for the retarded reader. The artistic style which is narrative description, added to the vocabulary: obliterate, annihilation, may be too challenging. There is action but it is slow. Portraits of the characters and town are very realistic.

Forbes, Esther. Johnny Tremain. Houghton-Mifflin, c1943. 240p.
Johnny is a young silversmith apprentice in Boston in the late 1700's. He burns his hand, becomes a messenger boy, see political intrigue and war preparations. Meets John Hancock, James Otis, etc.

If the historical orientation is not a barrier, this is a good book. The characters are extremely realistic and the reader should be able to identify with them. Possibly for younger readers but NCTE recommends it for high school readers.
(Newberry Award winner)

Speare, Elizabeth George. The Witch of Blackbird Pond. Houghton-Mifflin, c1958. 249p.
Young woman arrives in America in 1687 to live with her aunt and uncle. She rebels against Puritan restrictive living and is tried as a witch but is declared innocent at the last moment.

Contains adventure, excitement, suspense, romance. Very readable. Reader should have some knowledge of Puritanism. Interesting. Good. (William A. White award, 1961; Newberry Award, 1959)

Twain, Mark. Prince and the Pauper. Harper, c1901. 283p.

In sixteenth century England a prince and pauper were born the same day and happened to look very similar. Tom Canty, the pauper, is mistaken for the prince and lives the life of a prince for a time.

Although recommended by many booklists, there are few retarded readers who would plod through the narrative. The British dialect and expressions as well as many archaic words would undoubtedly discourage the reader. Reading the novel demands perseverance and imagination.

Warren, Robert Penn. All the King's Men. Harcourt, c1946. 461p.

Account of the rise to power and ultimate downfall of a demagogue based on notorious career of Huey Long. Portrait of the South, poor whites and unattractive portrait of the blacks.

Too massive, too descriptive and too artistic for the retarded reader. Dialect may also be an obstacle. Story itself is interesting but it would be the unusual retarded reader who would appreciate and enjoy it.

Pyle, Howard. Men of Iron. Harper, c1891. 328p.

Life in fifteenth century England. Story of nobles training for knighthood. Account of one boy who becomes a man and revenges his father.

Although recommended by several booklists for retarded readers, few readers would ever finish the book. The older language is difficult to understand, the beginning is dull and slow, the portrait of the boy is not realistic to the modern reader. The older style is generally prohibitive.

Aschmann, Helen T. Connie Bell, MD. Dodd, c1963. 300p.

Historical novel during the Chicago fire. Story of a pioneer woman doctor who struggles to be a success in a man's career.

Excellent, sensitive portrayal of young girl. The vocabulary might be an obstacle: implacable, myriad, intricate. The pioneering situation may require some background for understanding the situation. Girls would enjoy the book more than boys. (Winner of Librarian and Teacher Prize)

Knebel, Fletcher and Bailey, Charles. No High Ground. Harper, c1960. 263p.

History of World War II with the account concerning Hiroshima. Relates the facts which involved the bombing and all those people involved, the President, the scientists, the bomber pilot, the military, and civilians.

Extremely factual and objective account omitting dramatization and discussion of moral aspects. Perhaps somewhat outdated now in that students are generally aware of what war is like from mass media. Good book for obtaining factual account of the famous event.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. The Black Arrow. Books, 252p.
Adventures in England in the reign of King Henry VI during the War of the Roses.

NCTE recommends this book for 7-9 reading level and Spache suggests a fifth grade reading level. The language barrier is extremely difficult to overcome: yews, knoll, russet, betided, salet. The book begins very slowly and the writing style is difficult to understand. Any student would find it hard to identify with these characters. There are many unusual names.

INNER STRUGGLES OF ADULTS

Steinbeck, John. The Pearl. Viking, c1945. 122p.
Story of how two simple people discover wealth, and consequently learn fear, treachery and the agony of human loss. Kino finds a pearl to pay for a doctor's help for his child.

Popular novel which is quite profound in its simplicity. This book does not need fast-moving action to maintain interest. Excellent.

Faber, Nancy. Strange Way Home. Regnery, c1963. 292p.
Story of Henri who was born a Jew and raised a Catholic by a priest who kidnapped him. Henri became a priest. Found his family after thirty years. Henri struggles to understand himself and his environment.

Very readable. Not necessarily profound but the reader may identify with Henri and his doubts and spiritual crisis. Interesting and enjoyable.

Shaw, Robert. The Hiding Place. World, c1959. 254p.

Two British airmen are captured and kept in a cellar by a maniac in Germany for seven years. They are finally released unexpectedly. The maniac and the prisoners search themselves for reasons.

Although the account seems rather fantastic, it is compelling. The suspense is exciting. Fascinating thoughts. Enjoyable reading.

Kanin, Carson. Blow Up a Storm. Random, c1959. 336p.
First person narration of musicians who play jazz and try to work together. Many different personalities that gell with music. Theme is communication, with self and with others.

Interesting story particularly for readers who like jazz. Realistic account of musicians' life. At times there seems to be a lack of organization in the novel which is rather lengthy for this type.

Brower, Brock. Debris. Atheneum, c1967. 225p.

Psychological novel of two hunters in search of themselves. They want to be more than "debris." Conflicts of inner violence.

This book would appeal to very few retarded readers. The style is exposition for the conflicts are in the mind. There is little action. The language is artistic, abstract and often obscure. The book might be entertaining to a few readers, but it is generally difficult to understand.

"ADULT" BOOKS ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE

Smith, Lee. The Last Day the Dogbushes Bloomed. Harper, c1968. 175p.

Story of nine year old Susan Toby and her summer. Intrusion of reality on an idealistic child. Told by Susan. Smith is 20 years old.

Extremely realistic. Delightful and charming book for the reader who can look back a few years and identify with the child. Retarded reader may be offended in condescension to read about young child, but if he permits himself, he will undoubtedly thoroughly enjoy this book.

Richter, Conrad. The Aristocrat. Knopf, c1968. 180p.

Fifteen year old boys tells of experiences with his aunt, an aristocrat who always tells the truth. Portrait of the aunt is quite realistic and rather amusing. Author is Pulitzer Prize winner.

Although somewhat interesting and amusing, the book is nothing special. It lacks the vigor and excitement that the retarded reader likes. Few readers would identify with the boy or his aunt. Plodding story.

Forsee, Aylesa. Louis Agassiz: Pied Piper of Science. Viking, c1959. 225p.

Story of a Swedish boy who is a genius. He is curious and loves nature. He struggles with poverty and rises against his parent's opposition in his enthusiasm for natural science.

Very interesting and human account. The beginning is not dramatic, but it is interesting. Relates courage and skill of the young man. Very readable and not technical. Shows realism and humanness of the scientist.

Horgan, Paul. Everything to Live For. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, c1968, 215p.

High school boy goes to the country to spend the summer with his cousin. They develop a close relationship and Max dies. Feelings of guilt, love, forgiveness and remorse for a lost opportunity. First person point of view.

Upper class vocabulary which may be difficult: refectory. At times there is a stream of consciousness effect with long but natural sentences. Somewhat artistic style. Deals more with emotions than actions.

Frolov, Vadim. What It's All About. Doubleday, c1968. 250p.
 Teenager in Russia tries to cope with life. He seems to be surrounded by selfish or narrow-minded adults. He searches for honesty. First person point of view.

Superficial story. Slow beginning. Rather confusing with its abstractions and suggestions. Characters are not realistic. Interesting portrait of Russian life by a Russian author.

Carroll, Gladys, H. As the Earth Turns. Macmillan, c1933. 335p.
 Story of the Shaw family and their experiences in one year. Jen, a nineteen year old girl runs the large family. They encounter many situations such as the Pollack family which moves near them.

Lacks energy and actions to appeal to most readers. Slow beginning. Character portrayal is not realistic. Emotions are superficial. Many of the sentences are rather long. Rather typical family story.

Hangaard, Erik Christian. The Little Fishes. Houghton, c1967. 214p.
 Story of Guido, twelve year old beggar in Italy. A very sensitive boy who grows in understanding and compassion. Takes place in 1943 during the war with Germany. First person point of view.

Easy style. Interesting and enjoyable. May require some orientation concerning World War II and Catholicism and the Italian culture. Realistic characters.

RECOMMENDED TEENAGE FICTION

Wolff, Ruth. A Crack in the Sidewalk. John Day, c1965. 281p.
 A young girl in high school has lived all of her life in a small midwestern town. She is an individual and struggles with values and an understanding of herself. Written in first person.

Excellent. Extremely realistic and contemporary. There is no sense of phoniness or superficiality. Especially recommended for readers from low income families. Easy to identify.

Felsen, Henry Gregor. Hot Rod. Dutton, c1950. 188p.
 Budd, a 17 year old is an excellent driver of his hot rod. He matures with a new perspective toward driving and learns that speed is important sometimes. Earns a scholarship for safe driving.

For the student who likes this type of book, this is good in that it is realistic. Very readable with much action and excitement. Hot rod vocabulary. Possibly for younger readers but recommended by some high school students and many booklists.

Bowan, Robert Sidney. Hot Rod Outlaws. Chilton, c1969. 206p.
In Hawaii an 18 year old boy builds a hot rod. He becomes mixed up with some hoods and taken advantage of by criminals.

Very readable. Simple enjoyment of a simple and ordinary plot. Excitement and action sustains interest. Possibly for younger readers.

Hurt, Irene. Up a Road Slowly. Follett, c1966. 192p.
Story of a very young girl whose mother dies and she must adjust. She learns the value of integrity, compassion, strength of character, tolerance and love.

Rather ordinary story which offers a challenging vocabulary: sepia, equanimity, desolation. Much narration with little action. Boys would not like this book but some girls might.
(William A. White Award, Booklist, 1967)

Tarkington, Booth. Penrod, Complete Story. Doubleday, c1913. 590p.*
*Three books in one. Penrod's experiences as a young boy with his dog. They either find or make trouble. Similar to Tom Sawyer but not as polished.

Very funny stories which tend to be episodic. Vocabulary might be challenging: cryptic, morosely, inscrutable. This has been an exceedingly popular book in the past but has lost its appeal to contemporary readers to whom it does not seem relevant.

Halacy, D. S. Jr. Duster Pilot. Chilton, c1961. 149p.
Richey Martin, high school graduate, no parents, loves planes and gets a job as a pilot for crop dusters. He has to sell his car to get a pilot license.

Interesting but not too realistic. Certainly not profound. Although NCTE recommended, younger readers would find more enjoyment in this. Some detail about this type of aviation.

Neville, Emily. It's Like This, Cat. Harper, c1963. 180p.
Story of 14 year old boy in New York City with his stray tomcat. His friend is a college dropout. Some flavor of the city: Bronx, Fulton Fish Mkt., Coney Island.

Slow beginning. Almost all narrative but very colloquial. Characters are not realistic. Few emotions and little compassion is evident. There are fights but they are very "nice." Possibly for younger readers. (Newberry Award winner)

Lawrence, Mildred. Girl on Witches' Hill. Harcourt, c1963. 180p.
 Story of Stacey, a high school girl, who moves to Witches' Hill.
 Romance problems. Must choose between Barry, a scientist and
 Oliver, an architect-to-be.

Phony and superficial. The characterizations are weak. Very
 readable. Lacks insight. Some fun with superstition. Recom-
 mended by several lists. Possibly for younger readers.

Cavanna, Betty. Going on Sixteen. Westminster, c1966. 220p.
 Julie, is 14 years old and wants to be popular and also wants to
 be an artist. She has no mother and is poor. She learns to
 overcome her shyness working with a collie in a dog show.

Phony. Easy and fast reading which is enjoyable if the reader
 does not mind the superficiality and lack of realism. Although
 recommended by NCTE for high school readers, it is much too simple
 for most of them to really enjoy.

Shotwell, Louisa R. Adam Bookout. Viking, c1967. 256p.
 Story of a boy whose parents are dead. He must move from Oklahoma
 to Brooklyn. Finds himself lost in a mixed urban neighborhood.

Slow beginning. Pace never picks up. Rather confusing narrative
 with little conversation. Language tends to be artificial. Some
 discussions of values such as stealing.

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. Eyes in the Fishbowl. Athineum, c1964. 165p.
 A 14 year old boy becomes involved in a mystery at a department
 store.

Slow beginning. Narrative with much repetition. Plot moves very
 slowly with little action and no climax. Fanciful involvement at
 the department store. Very unrealistic. Lacks interest factors.
 (Booklist, 1968)

Bonham, Frank. Mystery of the Fat Cat. Dutton, c1968. 160p.
 Four boys form a secret club to save the Dogtown Boys Club. They
 get \$500,000 if they can discover the identity of a cat. They
 steal a cat and experience guilt and need to do what is right.

Very easy reading. Light mystery which is not too exciting.
 Entertaining but for younger readers. Characters are not real-
 istic. (Booklist, 1968)

MISCELLANEOUS

Koestler, Arthur. Darkness at Noon. Macmillan, c1961. 167p.
 Story of the Moscow trials in a conflict of individual and state.
 A Party leader is arrested for plotting against the state and is
 forced to "confess" by the Communists.

Exciting and very realistic. Perhaps description and flashbacks
 would cause problems for some readers. Interesting.

Keyes, Daniel. Flowers for Algernon. Harcourt, c1966. 275p.
 Unusual story of Charlie Gordon, 33 years old, who has a brain
 problem. Writes a diary of his work with psychiatrists. He
 wants to be very smart and he does become smart for a while with
 the help of Algernon, a white rat that runs mazes. The entire
 book is his diary.

Recommended by student. Interesting but unusual. Words at the
 beginning may discourage the reader in that they are spelled by
 sound as a moron might spell. Gradual change to familiar spelling
 and speech.

Winton, John. Down the Hatch. St. Martin's, c1961. 204p.
 Submarine life in the Royal British Navy. Battles with US subs
 and whales. Parliament causes some opposition.

Somewhat dull but might be interesting for the reader who knows
 something about submarines. Some technical words. Characters
 lack depth. At times the story is slow and confusing.

Kelley, William Melvin. A Different Drummer. Doubleday, c1962. 240p.
 Unusual story about blacks and one who goes crazy and persuades
 all of the blacks to move out of the state. Black author. Story
 takes place in 1957.

Slow beginning. Confusing organization in that the narrators
 shift. Complex plot with little exciting action. Lacks spirit
 and realism. A fantastic story which seems to lack purpose.
 Might entertain a few readers.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. It was the purpose of this study (1) to develop a set of criteria which would enable teachers, librarians, and parents to evaluate books for juniors and seniors in high school who have an eighth grade reading ability, and (2) to identify and recommend books which these underachievers might enjoy reading.

An examination of the typical experiential background in the home and in the school was made in order to understand further the personal needs of the retarded reader and to determine the factors in the reading experience which might help the student to overcome his problems so that he might develop a positive attitude toward reading.

An examination of reading interests was made to determine what types of books appeal to contemporary high school students. A comparison of junior and senior reading interests by seniors in one high school and by several reading authorities revealed a wide disparity of opinion. The students' objection to most fiction written for teenagers, which was the most highly recommended type of book by the reading specialist, was verified by a New York study and supported by several authors. Reading ability bears a positive correlation to interest although reading disability cannot be entirely overcome by interest.

A study of five booklists revealed that three of the authors used readability formulas as their criteria for evaluation of their recommended books. There were many objections to this type of evaluation, including

the fact that the formulas merely measured style and were intended to be used only for elementary books. Some educators recommend books on the basis of their experience with books. Because their evaluation is the result of a general opinion rather than of specific criteria, the educators make an arbitrary and not altogether reliable recommendation. A review of the five booklists indicated the strengths and excessive weaknesses of each.

Specific criteria was developed which would guide an examination of format, style and content of any book. Consideration of format concerned general appearance. Aspects of style included vocabulary, language, conversation, sentences, and organization. Characters, setting, suspense, action and adventure, the beginning, humor and the general significance of the book were factors which comprised the content criteria.

Over one hundred books were identified, evaluated, and recommended as suitable and appropriate to junior and senior retarded readers. The evaluations were made according to the criteria developed in the study. It was the hope of the author that with these criteria and these recommendations, adults may more wisely guide the retarded reader to an interesting book through which he can discover the rewards and pleasures of reading.

Conclusions. Emerson once wrote that "in the highest civilization, the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfaction is provided with a resource against calamity." And yet, three million secondary school students in the United States cannot read the required material in their English classes and less than twenty-five per cent read a book for enjoyment when they conclude their formal education. Too often the students themselves are not responsible for their underachievement and distasteful attitude toward reading. Teachers, parents

and librarians must become aware of the personal needs and problems of the retarded reader so that they can help him select the right book. Those who want to help the reader must also know what books are available.

There may be 41,000,000 books in our Library of Congress, but there seems to be very few that are appropriate for the high school reader whose reading achievement lags three to four years behind his potential. The problem may be that suitable books are in print, but the average person cannot identify them. Little research has been attempted in this field. Several reading specialists who have developed excellent booklists for young children made the mistake of applying their formulas to books of a higher reading level. Other attempts to recommend books have been arbitrary and based on general opinion rather than close examination of various aspects of readability. These past attempts have been inadequate.

This study was an attempt to overcome the weaknesses of both types of criteria. Clearly it still involves a subjective evaluation, but careful consideration of each aspect of the criteria should yield a more reliable estimate of readability. This study further represents an attempt to select and recommend books which correspond to the reading interests of the juniors and seniors. Because the author is keenly concerned about the large number of students who do not enjoy reading, her recommendations were influenced by the amount of enjoyment they might afford the reader rather than by the merit of factual learning experiences.

It is imperative that educators become involved in further research of this reading problem. Further study should include an attempt to verify the recommendations of this study. Student interest must be examined more carefully and thoroughly. Perhaps a more objective yet realistic method of evaluation can be developed. Certainly more books can be identified

and made available to teachers who must become more aware of individual differences and of materials which are appropriate for each student. There should certainly be an attempt to select realistic and relevant literature for classroom use so that reading may be a meaningful form of communication providing the "highest delight."

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CRITERIA AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOOKS FOR SLIGHTLY
RETARDED HIGH SCHOOL READERS

by

NANCY JEAN CARTER

B.A., Northwestern University, 1968

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

The purposes of this report were to develop criteria for the evaluation of books for juniors and seniors in high school who have an eighth grade reading level and to identify and to recommend literature which these students might enjoy reading. These readers have average and above average potential, but because of experiential background at home and at school, they lag three to four years behind their ability level.

A student's judgment of reading ease bears a positive correlation to his interest in the book. A survey of the reading interests of seniors in one high school revealed preferences for types of books much different than those recommended by most reading authorities. Five booklists were examined and judged as inadequate because of the apparent lack of consideration for student reading interests.

Five booklists were selected for study because they included some recommendations for high school students with junior high school level reading ability. An examination of their criteria for selection revealed that three used readability formulas and two used professional subjective judgment. The strengths and excessive weaknesses of their criteria and resultant booklists were examined.

On the basis of suggestions by the students and conclusions of library research materials, specific criteria were developed which would guide an examination of the format, style, and content of any book. Consideration of format stressed general appearance. Aspects of style included vocabulary, language, conversation, sentences and organization. Characters, setting, suspense, action and adventure, the introduction, humor, and the general significance of the book were factors which comprised the content criteria. Evaluations using this specific type of criteria yielded a more reliable estimate of readability.

Over one hundred books were identified and evaluated for suitability and appropriateness to the interests and reading ability of the retarded readers. The evaluations were made with the established criteria. Although some of the recommended books have a limited appeal appropriate to the interests of a few readers, many of the books would appeal to a large proportion of retarded high school readers.

It was the hope of the author that teachers, parents and librarians might use these criteria and these recommendations to guide the retarded reader to the selection of an interesting book through which he can discover the rewards and pleasures of reading.