

1992

A Status Survey of the Reading Habits of Starmont High School Graduates

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A Status Survey of the Reading Habits of Starmont High School Graduates

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Abstract

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A STATUS SURVEY OF THE READING
HABITS OF STARMONT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
Division of Library Science
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Linda Wallace

July, 1992

Abstract

A Status Survey of the Reading Habits of Starmont High School Graduates reports on the reading habits of the graduates of the classes of 1976, 1981, 1986, and 1991. The purpose of the study was to determine if Starmont is producing graduates who are self-motivated readers. The author's intent was to also gain insight into the relationship between ability, education level achieved, reading attitude and the actual reading habits of Starmont graduates. A survey was sent to 289 graduates and resulted in 198 surveys being returned. Six hypotheses were tested with one, three, five, and six being accepted and two and four being rejected. In summary, Starmont graduates have a positive attitude toward reading and do read a variety of types of information; the graduates with above average ability read consistently more than the rest of the graduates, but not a great deal more; many, but not a majority, read more for information than for recreation; there is no significant difference in amount of reading done among different age groups included in this study; graduates with a positive attitude toward reading, read more books than those with a negative attitude. The researcher found that Starmont graduates exhibit all the characteristics of a LIFE READER except for the amount of reading done.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

What is the status of reading in our culture? This question is often asked, but is hard to answer because of the complexity of the variables involved and the difficulty of measuring these variables. In 1977, Congress established the Center for the Book to study the place of books and other printed media in our society and to stimulate interest in books and reading.

As a result, the Book in the Future project was approved by Congress on November 18, 1983. The purpose of the project was to study "the changing role of the book in the future" and was to be carried out under the direction of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Initially this project came about because of concern about the effect new technology would have on reading, books and learning.

Some experts feel that technology and books can complement each other and that technology is not the threat. The two real threats to the future of books in America and other countries are illiteracy and aliteracy. An illiterate person is one who never learns to read in any language (Sharon, 1973). About five percent of the population fall into this category. An aliterate is defined in Books in Our Future (Cole,

1987) as "a person who can read but who does not, or who reads only under compulsion" (p. 366). The percentage that fall into this category is not as clear and is not easy to measure.

Each year the Center for the Book selects a theme. For 1990, the theme was "Year of Literacy" and in 1991 it was the "Year of the Lifelong Reader". This seems a good time for the researcher, as the media specialist at the Starmont schools, to look into the reading patterns of American adults- in this study more specifically the patterns of adult Starmont School graduates.

Starmont is a rural school with 800 to 900 students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Starmont is made up of the three small farming communities of Strawberry Point, Lamont, and Arlington which are all located in northeast Iowa. The school is sixty miles from the larger cities of Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, and Dubuque. A high percentage of Starmont graduates go on to advanced schooling after completion of high school. Many graduates either remain in the communities or eventually return to the area. Starmont area residents place a high value on education; this is evidenced by the new six million dollar elementary and middle school building project which is now underway at the present site of the high school. When

completed, the entire school system will be located at one central site.

One already may be familiar with the term "lifelong learning", which has been defined as "the belief that learning should be an ongoing, self-motivated, lifelong activity rather than something done for credit"(Ngandu, 1980, p. 2). What, then, is a lifelong reader? In arriving at a definition for lifelong reader, one may use the definition of lifelong learning as a guide. The key words that stand out are ongoing and self-motivated. People whose reading is ongoing and self-motivated certainly would not be classified as aliterate. Rather than use the term lifelong readers in this study, the term self-motivated reader will be used. The continuum therefore goes from illiterates who cannot read, to survival readers who can read only enough to survive in this society, to aliterates who can read but do not unless it is required, to self-motivated readers who make the choice to read beyond what is required.

Self-motivated readers read to meet the two needs of recreation and information. The recreational reading can include fiction and non-fiction and other materials. Recreational reading may mean escape reading for some and for others it may mean reading for intellectual stimulation. Both approaches make reading

an enjoyable experience. Informational reading can be job related or non-job related. The non-job related reading can be for general information (to keep the reader generally informed) or for specific information (a particular interest).

Self-motivated readers may read books (fiction and non-fiction), non-books (magazines, newspapers and other materials), or both. Reading can include many things such as reading reference materials for facts, skimming to get the main ideas or reading to digest for greater understanding and enjoyment. These are all ways to use books and other printed materials. The factors of who, what, why, and how will be looked at as the status of Starmont graduates' reading patterns are examined

Purpose and Significance of Study

This study focused specifically on the reading habits of the graduates of Starmont Schools, a K-12 public school system in northeast Iowa. By comparing the data results with other studies done in America on normal reading habits and trends, the researcher can make some general conclusions.

By looking at the data gathered in this survey, however, one might use the results as support to show the need to add or change a curriculum program that would result in Starmont's desired outcome--the

development of readers who are active concerned citizens.

Starmont's mission statement is "Empowering all students with knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for responsible, productive, fulfilling lives" (Starmont Community School Board, 1989, p. 5). Reading is required to fulfil that mission statement. An individual must be able to read to live a functional, responsible, active life. The questions then become: Is Starmont educating students to be readers? Do Starmont graduates leave school with the reading skills and motivation to read or attitude toward reading that they need for life?

Previous studies have looked at the amount of reading of books that is being done, but this study looked deeper than that. Is the Starmont curriculum (K-12) allowing students to graduate with the necessary skills to become intelligent consumers of many types of written information? This written information may include not only books, but also newspapers, magazines, legal papers and practical items such as labels, recipes and directions--information needed not only for survival but for an active life.

From this survey, the author hoped to gain insight into the following relationships: 1) between ability indicators such as IQ scores, grade point averages and

reading scores on (ITED) Iowa Tests of Educational Development and the reading habits of adult Starmont graduates; 2) between educational levels completed and adult reading habits; and 3) between recalled attitudes toward reading as a student, present attitudes toward reading and actual reading habits as adults.

In addition, the results of this study will be available for use in future years, probably 10 years and beyond, as baseline data when the adult reading habits of today's elementary children who are now going through the whole language approach to learning reading are investigated. Researchers will be able to compare that data to the adult reading patterns of the Starmont graduates who did not have exposure to the whole language approach. Will today's children have different adult reading habits than today's adults?

If a large percentage of Starmont graduates in this study are in the aliterate category, there could be a problem in the current curriculum. Perhaps the love of reading is not being developed or adequate reading skills are not being taught. By looking at what self-motivated readers are reading, Starmont can ask if those areas are being covered in the curriculum. If they are being covered, are they over

or under emphasized? If they are not being covered, why are they being ignored?

Problem Statements

1. What are the reading habits of the Starmont graduates of 1991, 1986, 1981 and 1976?

2. Are scores on the three ability measures of IQ, grade point, and ITED reading test of seniors in high school predictive of adult reading habits?

3. Does level of education completed beyond high school relate to amount of reading done as an adult?

4. Do Starmont graduates read more per week for recreation or for information?

5. Which age group spends more time per week reading both job related and non-job related materials?

6. Do Starmont graduates perceive reading as a necessary part of their lives and approach reading with a favorable attitude?

Hypotheses

1. At least 75% of all Starmont graduates read some books (both fiction and non-fiction), newspapers and magazines during a six month period.

2. The majority of Starmont graduates who were above class average on all three indicators (IQ, grade point and ITED reading test) have become self-motivated readers and therefore read more than six books during a six month period whereas graduates who did not score

above average on all three indicators read fewer than six books during a six month period.

3. Starmont graduates who graduate from a four-year college read more books every 6 months than high school graduates who do not graduate from a four year college.

4. The majority of all Starmont graduates spend more time per week reading for information than for recreation.

5. There is no significant difference in the amount of time per week spent reading among different age groups.

6. Graduates who reported a positive attitude toward reading as an adult do fifty percent more reading of books during a six month time period than do graduates who reported a poor attitude toward reading as an adult.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study an assumption was that Starmont graduates can read, do buy books, will return the survey and are representative of average Americans.

Another assumption was that the three measures: IQ, grade point average, and reading test scores on the ITED, will together accurately reflect a student's ability.

The researcher assumed that in Starmont elementary school, children are taught how to read and are introduced to much literature in the attempt to develop the love of reading. The task of the middle and high school levels is to teach discriminatory reading.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that the number of books purchased may not accurately reflect the amount of reading because this does not allow for books purchased, but not read and books borrowed from the library or a friend.

There are many variables affecting reading habits such as education, age, sex, interests, rural/urban or geographical location, occupation, availability of reading materials and family environment. It is difficult to measure how different combinations of the above variables would create different results.

As with any questionnaire, the respondents may decide to answer the way they think they should rather than answer accurately. When subjects have to look back over a time period, they tend to forget what they really read and may under-report or over-report.

The recent 1991 high school graduate may not have established reading habits that could be considered adult reading habits. The five year graduate (1986)

may just be completing their college years and may not have established their adult reading patterns.

Another limitation is that the three indicators of ability level may not have been measured consistently during the many years involved, therefore, that would affect the comparison among age groups.

Definitions

The definitions used in this study were taken from many sources. There are many variables involved in the study of reading attitudes and habits.

READING (Cole, 1987, p. 362) Reading can mean anything from browsing to careful perusal with note taking.

LIFE READERS (Steinley, 1985, p. 38) Life readers are adults who never seem to tire of reading and learning and possess the following characteristics: (a) enjoy reading, (b) read a variety of literature and a lot of it, (c) are self-motivated, and (d) have varied interests and a good attitude.

LITERATE PERSON (Sharon, 1973, p. 150) Generally defined as one who can, with understanding, both read and write simple statements in his everyday life.

ILLITERATE (Sharon, 1973, p. 168) An illiterate has never learned to read in any language.

ALITERATE (Cole, 1987, p. 366) A person who can read but who does not, or who reads only under compulsion.'

FUNCTIONAL LITERATE (Cole, 1987, p. 41) A person who "possesses the skills perceived as necessary by particular persons & groups to fulfill their own self-determined objectives as family & community members, citizens, consumers, job holders, and members of social, religious, or other associations of their choosing." (p.41)

FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATE (Sharon, 1973, p. 168) A functional illiterate is a person who is able to read, but not well enough to function effectively in a job, community, or society.

SURVIVAL LITERATE (Sharon, 1973, p. 151) A person who has only the ability to fill out common application forms, or to simplify, the individual is able to meet reading demands necessary to survive in contemporary America.

READING ATTITUDE (Smith, 1989, p. 1) Those feelings directed towards reading activities that contribute to, or are associated with, the good or poor reading behaviors of an individual.

The following definitions are from Yankelovich (1978):

NONREADER--Has not read books, magazines, or newspapers in the past 6 months.

NONBOOK READER--Has read newspapers and /or magazines but has not read a book in the past 6 months.

BOOK READER-- Has read one or more books in the past 6 months.

MODERATE/HEAVY BOOK READER--Read 10 or more books in past 6 months.

LIGHT BOOK READER--Read one to nine books in past 6 months. (p. 12)

SELF-MOTIVATED READER-- A person who makes the conscious choice to read beyond what is required of him or her. This definition was adopted by the author for purposes of this study.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Much concern exists about the question of whether the United States is turning from a nation of readers into a nation of watchers. Because of this great concern about the status of reading in America, and other countries of the world, many studies have been done about the reading habits and patterns of Americans. Since reading behavior is at least partially determined by attitudes toward reading, both as a child and an adult, many studies also have been done to see if there is data to support this assumption about the role of attitudes.

These studies are not always comparable because of the differences in definitions, and differences in the categories of the age groups studied. Most of these studies have used either a questionnaire or an interview as the data gathering instrument.

Attitudes Toward Reading

An important factor in the development of a reader is an individual's attitude toward reading. Cheatham (1989) reports on a study done with 500 urban children, ages six to 10, in which she used a questionnaire to determine their enthusiasm for reading. The results were that 51 percent really liked to read, 42 percent sort of liked to read, and only 7 percent did not like

reading at all. As a free-time activity, the girls rated reading as their second favorite activity and boys rated it sixth. More of the six and seven year olds were highly enthusiastic about reading compared to the eight to 10 year olds. One might ask if the trend to dislike reading starts about as soon as children really learn to read. The family appeared to be an influence for those children who were enthusiastic about reading. Three activities were prevalent: (a) the parents were readers, (b) the parents read to the children, and (c) the parents helped the children to read. These activities would all transfer to the children the idea that reading is valuable.

Another study on children's attitudes toward reading (Chiu, 1984) dealt with 1131 middle class boys and girls, grades one through six. The survey results indicated that 70 percent of the subjects liked to read and a majority of those who liked to read were girls. These children also liked school and had varied interests.

The study by Duncan & Goggin (1981) also stressed the important influences in early years, which may include the existence of a home library, family members reading together, use of a public library, receiving books as gifts and a parent reading to the children.

Gary Steinley (1985) offers his opinion that children will be more enthusiastic about reading if they view reading as a way to learn for their own purposes. He says that school reading currently does not develop independent lifetime readers because students do not get to determine what and when to read. Instead, teachers are determining that. He feels we need to make school reading more like life reading. He characterizes "life readers" as (a) enjoying reading, (b) reading a variety of types of literature and a lot of it, (c) being self-motivated, and (d) having a variety of interests and a good attitude toward reading.

Smith (1989) cited another study by A. K. Healey done in 1963 and 1965 that supports Steinley's opinion by indicating that if children are able to choose what they may read, their attitude is better. Smith says that attitude may change in the negative direction before sixth grade because of the way the curriculum is set up with restraints on free choice. By sixth grade or later, attitudes may start to improve as students again gain more freedom of choice and a wider variety of materials is available to them. Youngsters seem to start school with positive attitudes, but often the attitudes take a turn for the worse by the time the students leave grade school. These attitudes,

hopefully, will improve before the high school years are completed. Educators need to try to keep children's attitudes positive and maintain the high level of enthusiasm children have at the age of six and seven.

Smith's own longitudinal study of 84 white adult subjects, 35-44 years old, from 10 Wisconsin communities, investigated attitude as a factor in developing reading ability. He points out that these subjects had been involved in earlier studies as children in 1962 and 1966 when Kreitlow had studied, among other factors, their attitudes. Smith defined reading attitude as "those feelings directed toward reading activities that contribute to or are associated with the good or poor reading behaviors of an individual" (p.1). Smith also cited previous work done on reading attitudes by Alexander & Feller in 1976 that found attitude is a factor in developing reading ability. Smith found several studies that had documented the importance of exposure to good reading. In addition, he mentioned a study by Dwyer & Joy, 1980, that used sixth grade students, young adults (both college bound and non-college bound) and adults more than 60 years old as the subjects. Dwyer & Joy found that the non-college bound young adults had the least positive attitudes toward reading.

Smith concluded that if children had positive attitudes toward reading in school, they would have a better attitude as an adult; it is important for children to be exposed to good reading in order to develop good attitudes that will lead to favorable reading habits; and that the best predictor of adult reading habits is the attitude one has as a young adult. Results also indicated that occupation and level of continued education have an impact on the attitudes toward reading and behavior. Smith also found that adults with a positive attitude (a) read more, (b) read a large variety of materials, and (c) do better on standardized reading tests.

In 1969, Congress mandated that an assessment be made on students' performance in several subject areas. Reading was one of these subjects. The NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) measurement of reading proficiency, a project of the Educational Testing Service, is also called "The Nation's Report Card." It tests the reading proficiency of 9, 13, and 17 year olds in grades 4, 8, and 12 as well as collecting information on these students' instructional experience, home support and reading attitudes and habits. These factors all affect reading performance.

Some of the factors cited as influencing reading comprehension are: (a) if the student values reading,

he will continue to read; and (b) if he sees a worthwhile purpose, he works hard to comprehend (Educational Testing Service, 1989).

Adult Reading Habits

In considering the reading patterns and habits of American adults, much work has already been done. Studies such as Duncan & Goggin (1981) and Ngandu (1980) agree that adults read for two reasons, recreation and information. This also was noted by Robert Carlsen and Anne Sherrill (1988) in Voices of Readers: How We Come to Books. They add that more Americans read for information than for recreation. The 1988 Gallup Survey reported that in 1987 Americans bought more non-fiction, especially biographies, than fiction (Piiro, 1989).

Carlson and Sherrill (1988) also state, "It appears that ready access to reading materials at a young age is an important factor in creating adult readers, whether the family is poor or comfortably situated" (p. 67).

Nicholas Zill and Marianne Winglee (1988) tried to determine which adults in the United States during the 1980s were reading fiction, poetry and drama. Their survey relied heavily on a 1985 study conducted by the Bureau of Census for the National Endowment for the Arts, some data taken from the book industry on

publishing and sales statistics, and a 1983 Consumer Research study. They found that literature reading by young adults declined in the 1970s and 1980s. Zill and Winglee also found that education level and sex are the strongest demographic predictors of literary participation.

In addition, Zill and Winglee found that a lot of recreational reading still is being done. Recreational reading is primarily done by women, the college educated, whites, the affluent, and the middle aged. A 1988 Consumer Expenditure Survey showed the amount spent on recreational reading increased each year from 1984-87 (Shelsky, 1990). Most of the literature read is the popular genre fiction that is not considered to be high quality literature. A 1988 Gallup survey reported that in 1987, mystery/ spy/ suspense was the most popular genre with romance being the second most popular genre (Piirto, 1989).

Zill and Winglee (1988) reviewed a nationwide survey taken in the mid-1980s and found that 56 percent of those surveyed had read some fiction, drama or poetry within the past year and 86 percent had read magazines or books of some sort. When analyzed more closely, fewer than 25 percent had read works of literary merit. The number who read novels, short stories, plays and poetry increases through the ages of

35-44 and then decreases. As in other studies, a finding was that literature reading is a habit established early in life. The information that was not clearly presented in this research was a good definition of what the researchers considered quality literature.

Do Americans read? Statistics show that they do. In 1938, 21 percent of the Americans surveyed said reading was a favorite activity. By 1960, only 10 percent made that same statement. After 1960, the percentage started to increase. Since 1974, the percentage has remained fairly constant at 14 percent (Piiro, 1989).

Another report was based on a Gallup survey to see if television, videos and video games were affecting reading habits. More than 1000 adults were part of a national representative sample participating in a telephone interview. Thirty-seven percent had read 11 or more books per year and a majority were women, were college educated, and were those from the West or Midwest. In 1988, television watching was up from 1962, reading newspapers was down and the reading of magazines and books was up.

We are reminded in Books in Our Future (Cole, 1987) that for many years there has been competition for the activity of reading. First the radio was

blamed, then television and now we add videos, computers and video games. Another concept introduced in Books in Our Future is "elastic time", or people being able to do more in the same amount of time.

How much do American adults read? Mikulecky (1978) reported 2.7 hours per day of reading time by middle-aged adults for leisure and job related activity. Sharon (1973) indicated 89 minutes per day reading time for adults more than 60 years old. Studies indicating that reading decreases at an older age are: Mikulecky (1978), Sharon (1973), and others. A study by Ngandu (1980) examined reading habits of older Americans with 101 senior citizens responding to a questionnaire. She found that senior citizens read on the average of 2.5 hours per day; they use public libraries; they spend most of their reading time on newspapers, then magazines, then books. In Books in Our Future, Cole (1987) reported that the average American spends 10.8 hours per week on all forms of reading, 16.8 hours watching television and 16.7 hours listening to the radio. These data were gathered from the 1983 Consumer Research Study.

Kingston, in his article in Reading World (1980-81) uses Mikulecky's definition of aliteracy as "one who can read and write but fails to do so." He also cites Sharon (1973) and the study that found

older people read more than young adults. Kingston apparently was saying that today's senior citizens read more than young adults. If Americans continue to read less as they get older, then in the future, we may have many aliterates. He feels this is a big concern.

Kingston also questions our culture and the value placed on reading. He cited an earlier article in which he had found and reported that parents feel reading is good, up to a point. They become concerned if their child is a "book worm".

The 1985 Gallup Annual Report on Book Buying compared data collected by interviewing 1,630 people in 1955 and 1,541 people in 1984. In 1955, one of five people had read a book the day before with 13 percent having graduated from college. In 1984, one in four had read a book the day before with 31 percent having graduated from college. Book reading was highest among (a) women, (b) people less than 50 years old, (c) the college educated, and (d) westerners. At the same time, the Gallup Youth Survey taken during the summer months of 1984 indicated that 60 percent of the 13-18 year olds had read a book the day before and 25 percent had read an hour or more. The most reading was done by girls, with above average grades, whose parents were college educated. Teens read books more than magazines or newspapers (Gallup, 1985).

Apparently, books still are being read in the United States because a September 27, 1986, article "A Nation of Lookers-into" in The Economist reported that 5,000 new books were published and 230 new magazines started in the previous year in the United States. Another finding reported in the article was that magazine and book sales were up. Daily newspaper reading had decreased from 80 percent to 63 percent in the preceding 25 years, but the number of readers had not decreased and 85 percent of those surveyed still read a paper at least once a week.

The time used to read magazines has remained constant at one-half hour per day for about the past 20 years. A 1985 Gallup survey found reading to be the second favorite activity after watching television. Book reading, however, has declined with 44 percent of the Americans who can read books, not reading them. This 44 percent would include non-book readers and aliterates.

Yankelovich, Skelly and White reported on the 1978 Consumer Research Study on Reading and Book Purchases done for the Book Industry Study Group. The non-reader is described as being six percent of the population and 60% of these non-readers have never read because they wanted to, only because they had to. If they had done

any reading, it was a magazine or newspaper and it had been more than 5 years ago.

Non-book readers usually read for general information and do not read unless they have a long period of time available. They are on/off type readers. Book readers read for general knowledge and recreation, maintain a stable level of reading over time, find time to read and tend to be the heavy readers.

Kennedy (1989) found that book buying is an important indicator of book reading. One must, however, be cautious and remember that buying a book does not always mean that it is read.

In Books in Our Future (Cole, 1987), a comparison is made between the 1978 and 1983 Consumer Research Study on Reading and Book Purchasing. In 1978, 1,450 people were interviewed and in 1983, 1,429 people ages 16 and over were interviewed. A book reader was defined as one who reads one or more books in 6 months; a heavy book reader is one who reads 26 or more books in 6 months; a non-book reader reads newspapers and magazines only, (no books); a non-reader does not read books, magazines or newspapers. From 1978-83, there was a big increase in the number of heavy book readers. Heavy readers buy half of the books they read.

The bad news is that from 1978 to 1983 fewer people read books and non-readers increased. If one looks at all reading materials such as books, magazines and newspapers, the same percentage of people were reading. So if the amount of book reading decreased, then the amount of magazine and newspaper reading increased. The age categories of 16-20 and 50-60 showed decreases in reading amounts.

Other observations were made when comparing the results of the 1978 and 1983 Consumer Research studies. The book reader reading fiction tends to be a woman and the book reader reading non-fiction tends to be a man. Book reader characteristics are: female, white, less than 50 years old, college educated, higher income and white collar profession. Fifty-five percent of book readers read both fiction and non-fiction.

Non-book readers read for information, are usually men, are blue collared workers, and have a high school education or less. Non-readers tend to be non-white, less educated and have lower incomes.

Forty percent of Americans read for education or work purposes. They tend to be men, better educated, have higher incomes and they are reading mostly journals and magazines.

Some reading patterns have changed a little since Sharon released the results in 1973-74 of interviews of

5,067 adults (16 years and older) during April to November, 1971. At that time, Sharon found people read almost two hours a day. All types of reading including the reading of mail, recipes and labels, however, were included. Sharon found the 16-20 year old read the most. The next two categories (21-29 and 30-59) read about the same and the 60-89 category read the least. The study also found that the main news was the most often read section in newspapers; general interest magazines were the most often read magazines; general fiction (after the Bible) was the type of book most often read; and that 96 percent of the population received mail but only 53 percent read it (Sharon, 1973).

Another interesting fact reported in a study done in 1972 by Purves and Beach was that 20 percent of American readers are reading 70 percent of all the books read (Boraks, 1981).

Purchasing of Materials

Who then purchases books people are reading? A consumer expenditure survey done in 1988 shows westerners buy and read the most (Shelsky, 1990). That may be explained by the fact that there are fewer public libraries and more book stores in the West.

The 1975-87 annual reports for the Book Industry Study Group show the number of units of books sold, and

the expenditures on books continues to increase. The consumer expenditures survey by the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics reflect that the money spent on recreational reading increased each year from 1984-1987 as shown in U.S. Bureau of the Census Statistical Abstract of the United States 1990. Of course, the average price per book also went up, explaining some of this increase.

In 1988, newspapers took the highest portion of expenditures for reading materials, followed by books, then magazines. Expenditures for newspapers, however, is decreasing while expenditure for books and magazines is increasing (Shelsky, 1990). Consumer spending on books increased by 5 percent in 1988 (Piirto, 1989).

Another report of the 1980s says the heaviest book buying is by the 35-49 year-old category (Gallup, 1985). This is a result of the Baby Boom because it is a category with a larger percent of the population.

This review has included the literature available on attitudes toward reading by children and adults. The literature on reading habits and reading materials expenditures have also been reviewed. How does this relate to education and schools?

A survey of characteristics of Iowa high school students choosing to go on to college shows us these students tend to be females, students in higher income

families, students in college prep classes and those in the upper half of their classes (Iowa Department of Education, 1990). These statistics support earlier research that says ability, socio-economic level and parents' educational level are all determinants of who goes on to college. Most of these characteristics also are characteristics of those people doing most of the reading.

In December 1981, Nancy Boraks presented a speech at the annual meeting of the American Reading Forum. Boraks said that visability and accessibility relate to the use of books and media (Boraks, 1981). The School Library Journal in 1983 stated the price of books for school libraries had increased by 30 percent and the amount expended on books for school libraries had increased by only seven percent (Cole, 1987). That means fewer books are purchased and fewer are accessible to students. This is a negative factor for education when it is trying to increase exposure to literature and other forms of information in order to develop healthy attitudes. Studies have supported the idea that children with good attitudes are more likely to become adults with good attitudes and attitude is a key factor for desired reading behavior.

Boraks (1981) asks the question: If the goal of education is to develop concerned active citizens

who continue to read, are we meeting our goals?

Starmont School needs to ask that same question.

Many factors influence an individual's attitude toward reading. A person's attitude toward reading will at least partially determine whether he or she chooses to read. School children go through various lows and highs of liking to read. Leaving demographic factors aside, if a student leaves high school with a favorable reading attitude, likely he or she will read more as an adult.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

To determine the status of the reading habits and patterns of Starmont graduates, the researcher used a survey questionnaire as the data gathering instrument.

The total population of the study is the members of all graduating classes of Starmont High School. The sample population includes all graduates of the classes of 1991, 1986, 1981, and 1976 so that a range of ages from approximately 17-34 was used. Changes in curriculum and teaching methods through the years made going any further back in graduating classes unproductive for the purposes of this study. Class lists were obtained from the school files. One of the reasons for selecting these classes was that they were expected to plan class reunions for the summer of 1991 and addresses would be more readily available. The survey was sent to all graduates on the class lists for whom addresses could be located. Parents of the students, class officers and chairmen of the reunion committees were all contacted for addresses.

Surveys (see Appendix B) had three main sections. The first section asked for demographic information, such as age, sex, and education level. Another section elicited responses to determine attitude toward reading

now as an adult Starmont graduate and the recalled attitude toward reading as a student. The third section helped the researcher look at the sample population and their current reading habits and patterns such as what, why and how much they read. The researcher was then able to compile data on the current reading habits of various ages, attitudes, and educational levels.

The section of the survey used to determine the adult reading attitude was based on the model scale described by Estes (1971). Ten of the twelve items from the survey were used to determine the reading attitudes of the graduates as adults. Responses to items three and eleven of that section were not used to determine attitude score. As Estes suggested, some items were positive statements and some were negative. A response of "strongly agree" or "agree" to a positive statement reflected a positive attitude and a value of four or three was given. If, however, the response to a positive statement was "disagree" or "strongly disagree", a value of two or one was given. A response of "strongly agree" or "agree" with a negative statement reflected a negative attitude and a score of one or two was given, and a response of "disagree" or "strongly disagree" to a negative statement was given the value of three or four. A response of "undecided"

was considered to be a neutral position and a point value of 0 was then given. The point values of all ten items were added to arrive at the individual's attitude score. The possible range of attitude scores was 0 - 40. Twenty and below was considered a negative attitude and 21 and above was considered a positive attitude toward reading.

Ability levels were determined by the three measurement indicators, which were all taken from the students' cumulative files. The indicators are IQ, grade point average as a graduating senior, and reading score on standardized ITED tests as a senior. Only the students' identification numbers were used by the researcher as data were collected from these files to safeguard the former students' right to privacy.

The survey was sent with a cover letter to all graduates of the classes of 1986, 1981 and 1976 late in the spring semester of 1991. The cover letter explained the purposes of this research project. Each survey included the student's identification number as a means of keeping track of which surveys had been returned and which ones required a follow-up note. The members of the 1991 graduating class were given the survey to complete during the last two weeks they were in school.

All graduates in the sample were informed that their responses would be confidential and the data compiled and described in the final report would not identify individual people. The graduates were given a pre-addressed, stamped envelope in which to return their survey. They were asked to complete and return the survey within two weeks of receiving it.

A week after the deadline date, follow-up reminder post cards were sent to those graduates who had not returned their surveys. Only responses received within two weeks after the reminder was sent were included in this study.

All data were obtained from two sources: (a) the completed surveys returned, or (b) from the students' cumulative files kept in the school office. The student identification numbers were used to keep all information confidential, especially the ability scores. The researcher took care not to match names with numbers except in the case of needing to send out reminder notices.

After the cut-off date, all completed surveys were used to compile data to complete the report on the status of reading habits of Starmont graduates. Appleworks was used to set up a database file to compile data.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

The researcher assigned a number to each Starmont graduate of four particular classes with one class receiving a series of numbers in the 400's, another class was given a series of numbers in the 300's, another the 200's, and another the 100's. A total of 289 surveys were sent or given to the Starmont graduates of the classes of 1976, 1981, 1986, and 1991. The return rate was 69% with 199 being returned to the researcher. One of the 199 surveys was returned with the identification number crossed off so this survey was omitted from the research leaving 198 surveys to be analyzed.

Table 1
Surveys Sent and Returned by Classes

Surveys	Class				Total
	1976	1981	1986	1991	
No. sent	95	81	67	46	289
No. returned	57	61	43	38	199
Percent returned	60	75	64	83	69

From the returned surveys, the researcher tabulated the responses to the variables. The demographic data were categorized and compared to reading habits and attitudes.

The reading ability was taken from the cumulative files of the students. The average score per graduating class was figured for each indicator. Then the researcher was able to determine which people were in the above average category. Those who were above average on all three measurement indicators were a distinct category. These individual's responses could then be tabulated.

The first hypothesis was stated as follows. **"At least 75% of all Starmont graduates read some books, newspapers and magazines during a six month period."** Questions 4, 6, and 7 were analyzed on the 198 surveys to address the first hypothesis. This involved looking at the type of materials and amount of reading being done during a specified amount of time.

After entering the data into a database, the researcher extracted from the database the identification numbers of surveys with responses indicating an individual had read some books, some magazines, and some newspapers in a six month period. The result was that 155 individuals had read all three in a six month period. This is 78% of the graduates responding and so the researcher's hypothesis is supported by the data collected.

The second hypothesis of this study was **"The majority of Starmont graduates who were above the class**

average on all three indicators (IQ, grade point, and ITED reading test) have become self-motivated readers and therefore read more than six books during a six month period, whereas graduates who did not score above average on all three indicators read fewer than six books during a six month period." This required determining the class average on each indicator, finding each individual score on the three indicators, determining who was above average on all three indicators and then comparing the number of books the individuals in the above average group read to the number of books the rest of the sample population read.

Scores of the graduates were obtained through the guidance office after seeking school officials permission to use this data. Class averages were figured on each test for each class. The researcher then determined which graduates fell above the class average on all three ability indicators. This was one category and the remaining graduates were put into the other category.

Table 2
Ability Indicator Class Averages

Ability Indicators	Class				Total
	1976	1981	1986	1991	
I.Q. class averages	107.80	110.50	107.00	105.80	-
G.P.A. class averages	2.70	2.90	3.15	2.90	-
Reading scores class ave.	59.02	61.19	58.70	56.88	-
Percent above average on all 3 indicators	34	36	19	46	-
No. above average on all 3 indicators	33	30	13	21	97
No. above average who returned survey	23	22	11	19	75

By looking at the data collected on question four of the survey, the researcher could determine if higher ability graduates had indeed read more books in a six month time period than the lower ability graduates.

The researcher tabulated the responses to question four and found that one graduate from the class of 1976 had neglected to answer the question and so only 197 responses could be tallied from the 198 surveys being analyzed.

Data on Table 3 show that 15% of Starmont graduates from the above average group had read six to ten books in six months and an additional 12% had read ten or more books in six months making a total of 27%

who had read six or more books during a six month period. The average and below average group had 7% reading six to ten books and an additional 16% reading more than ten books during a six month period for a total of 23% reading six or more books in a similar six month period.

Even though the findings showed that a slightly higher percentage (27%) of Starmont graduates from the above average group did read six books or more during a six month period compared to the other graduates (23%), the findings do not support the second hypothesis that a majority (51%) of above average graduates would read more than six books during a six month period. The findings indicated that lower ability graduates did read fewer books in a similar six month period, however, there was only a slight difference at the six and above level of reading. The second hypothesis is rejected.

The data also showed that 26% of the average or below average group read no books in a six month period compared to only nine percent of the above average group of Starmont graduates reading no books. For both groups, the category receiving the highest percentage of responses was the 2-5 books per six month period.

Table 3
Number of Books Read in a Six Month Period by Those Above Average on
All Three Indicators and Those Average and Below
on at Least One Indicator

No. Books Read	Class				Total	Percent
	1976	1981	1986	1991		
Above average on all three indicators						
0	2	4	1	0	7	9
1	3	3	1	1	8	11
2-5	10	10	3	17	40	53
6-10	5	3	2	1	11	15
10+	3	2	4	0	9	12
Total	23	22	11	19	75	100
Average and below on at least one of indicators						
0	10	12	9	1	32	26
1	4	5	4	5	18	15
2-5	9	15	9	11	44	36
6-10	4	2	0	2	8	7
10+	6	5	9	0	20	16
Total	33	39	31	19	122	100

The third hypothesis was that "Starmont graduates who graduate from a four year college read more books every six months than high school graduates who do not graduate from a four year college." To test this hypothesis, the questions on the survey which had to be analyzed were questions three and four which deal

with education level achieved and number of books read in the last six months.

Of the 198 surveys returned, 148 individuals indicated having less than a bachelor degree and 49 individuals indicated a bachelor's degree or more and one individual left this question blank. However since the class of 1991 had just finished high school and could not possibly have a bachelor's degree, this group was excluded from this portion of the study. Instead of looking at the responses to 197 surveys, therefore, only the responses to 159 surveys were analyzed for the third hypothesis.

Table 4 data show that forty-nine (31%) of those responding to the survey have attained the educational level of bachelor's degree or more. Of the 49 with at least a bachelor's degree, four individuals have their master's degree and two have their doctorate degree.

Table 4
Educational Level and Number of Books Read
in a Six Month Period

Nb. of Books Read	Class			Total No.	Percent	
	1976	1981	1986		H.S.	B.S
0						
H.S. Grad	12	16	10	38	35	0
B.S. Degree +	0	0	0	0	0	0
1						
H.S. Grad	6	6	4	16	15	0
B.S. Degree +	1	2	1	4	0	8
2 - 5						
H.S. Grad	11	16	5	32	29	0
B.S. Degree +	8	9	7	24	0	49
6 - 10						
H.S. Grad	4	2	1	7	6	0
B.S. Degree +	5	3	1	9	0	18
10 plus						
H.S. Grad	7	4	6	17	15	0
B.S. Degree +	2	3	7	12	0	25
Total	56	61	42	159	100	100
Nb. H.S. Grads	40	44	26	110	69	0
Nb. B.S. + Grads	16	17	16	49	0	31
Total	56	61	42	159	69	31

The most frequent response from those with a bachelor's degree was the reading "2-5 books" response. Forty-nine percent of that group gave the "2-5 books" response. In support of the third hypothesis, the findings show that the most frequent response (35%) from the high school graduates group was reading "0

books" with compared to no such responses coming from college graduates.

In addition, 43% of the individuals with a college degree had read six or more books in a six month period compared to 21% of the individuals with only a high school diploma. Eight percent of college graduates had reported reading only one book as compared to 15% of high school graduates. In summary, at the lower levels of reading, the high school graduates had the greater percentage of responses. As the number of books increased, the percentage of responses coming from college graduates also increased. These statistics support the researcher's third hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis was **"The majority of all Starmont graduates spend more time per week reading for information than for recreation."** The key word in this statement is **majority**. The sample population of four classes of Starmont graduates were asked in question eight the amount of reading done per week for information and recreation. Choices were less than 1 hour, 1 -3 hours, and 4 or more hours.

To tally the responses in a quantitative manner, each response was given a point value: no response = 0 points, less than 1 hour = 1 point, 1 -3 hours = 2 points, 4 or more hours = 3 points. Each survey was given two point values for the two parts of question

eight, one score for information reading done and one score for recreation reading done. Tallying the responses then made it possible to assign an M, L, or S depending on whether they read more for information than recreation, less for information than recreation, or the same for information as recreation. They were tallied by classes.

Table 5
Reading for Information or Recreation

Type of Reading Done	Class				Total	
	1976 No.	1981 No.	1986 No.	1991 No.	No.	%
Reading more for information than for recreation	23	34	22	17	96	48
Reading less for information than for recreation	10	10	4	8	32	16
Reading equally for information and recreation	24	17	16	13	70	35
Total	57	61	42	38	198	99*

*Rounding

Of 198 responses, 96 indicated they read more for information than for recreation. This is only 48%, however, rather than the 51% required for the fourth hypothesis to be accepted. The fourth hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis five was stated as "There is no significant difference in the amount of time per week spent reading among different age groups." Sharon (1973) reported that as people get older, they read less. Zill and Winglee (1988) reported that reading by young adults had decreased. The concern exists that if today's young people are reading less than the young people of times past, and they continue the trend of reading even less as they get older, then one day the United States may be a nation of non-readers. Other studies, however, did not indicate age as a factor in the amount of reading done. Factors such as education level, attitude toward reading, and the need for reading were analyzed. For the purposes of this study, the researcher wanted to determine if any differences in the amount of time spent reading became apparent at the various age levels included in the study.

Table 6 shows the number of responses by class to the inquiry about time spent reading for different purposes. The information for this table was taken from the responses to question eight on the second page of the survey. To check the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the amount of time spent reading by different age groups, chi square was used to test for significant difference for each type of reading category. Expected values were computed based

on the hypothesis that age level has no effect on the time spent reading per week. At the .05 level of probability with six degrees of freedom, the value of chi square is significant if equal to or greater than 12.59. The researcher found the following chi square values for the four different types of reading categories: "reading for information - on the job," 3.4365; "reading for information - not on the job," 9.9702; "reading for recreation - relaxation," 8.7141; and, "reading for recreation - intellectual stimulation," 3.9417. None of the four values was equal to or greater than the 12.59 required for there to be a significant difference. Therefore the fifth hypothesis was accepted.

Table 6
Time Spent Reading per Week

Reading Done	Class				Total No.
	1976 No.	1981 No.	1986 No.	1991 No.	
For Information					
On the job					
Less than 1 hr.	15	14	13	13	55
1 - 3 hrs.	25	23	13	14	75
4 + hrs.	14	20	15	11	60
Chi square = 3.4365					
For Information					
Not on the job					
Less than 1 hr.	15	17	12	18	62
1 - 3 hrs.	24	30	20	17	91
4 + hrs.	15	13	10	2	40
Chi square = 9.9702					
For Recreation					
Relaxation					
Less than 1 hr.	16	31	15	18	80
1 - 3 hrs.	25	23	16	12	76
4 + hrs.	13	7	11	8	39
Chi square = 8.7141					
For Recreation					
Intellectual stimulation					
Less than 1 hr.	27	34	26	20	107
1 - 3 hrs.	21	19	14	12	66
4 + hrs.	4	5	1	5	15
Chi square = 3.9417					

Note. Total number of responses in each category under a class varied due to incomplete responses.

$p=.05$, 6df

Even though the data supported the fifth hypothesis, one must be cautious not to base conclusions about influence of age as a reading determinant since this study included data on the reading habits of people in the rather narrow range of

18 to 35. Some of the trends referred to in the literature review were summarized studies based on data covering a much wider age range.

The final hypothesis of this study was "Graduates who reported a positive attitude toward reading as an adult do fifty percent more reading of books in a six month time period than do graduates who reported a poor attitude toward reading as an adult." Again the researcher looked at statistics gathered on reading of books in a six month time period from question four on the survey and also at the reading attitude score.

The reading attitude score was determined by assigning values of four, three, zero, two, and one to the individual responses of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree to the items in the reading attitude section of the survey. As suggested by a model attitude scale developed by Estes (1971) some questions were positive statements and some were negative statements. A strongly positive response received four points and a positive response received three points. A strongly negative response received one point and a negative response received two points. A response of "undecided" received no points.

Of the twelve questions in the section of the survey that elicited responses about adult reading attitudes, only ten questions were used to determine the attitude score. Question three did not relate to reading attitudes and question eleven could be

interpreted in two different ways by the reader and could be answered as a positive statement or as a negative statement.

Possible scores ranged from zero to 40 with one being a low negative attitude and 40 being a high positive attitude. The researcher determined that any score above the mid-point on the scale would reflect a positive attitude and any score mid-point and below would reflect a negative attitude. A score of 21 and above, therefore, indicated a positive attitude and a score of 20 and below indicated a negative attitude toward reading as an adult.

Table 7
Adult Reading Attitudes

Attitude Scores	Class				Total No.
	1976 No.	1981 No.	1986 No.	1991 No.	
40 - 31	35	25	21	7	88
30 - 21	18	28	15	19	80
20 - 11	4	7	6	12	29
10 - 1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	57	60*	42*	38	197
Percent with positive attitude	93	88	86	68	85

Note. *One survey in this category was returned incomplete so could not be used.

The data from Table 8 reveal that the "number of books read" response given most often by three of the classes was the "2 - 5" category. The class of 1986, however, had 30% of the class reading "10+" books. By looking at Table 9, one can see the percent of books read by the individuals in each class with positive reading attitudes and those with negative reading attitudes. In all four of the classes, the readers with a positive attitude read at least 50% more books in a six month period than did readers with a negative attitude. The responses, therefore, support the researcher's sixth hypothesis.

Table 9
Percent of Total Books Reported Read in a Six Month Period by Those with
Positive and Negative Attitudes

Attitude	Number of Books Read					Total %
	10+ %	6 - 10 %	2 - 5 %	1 %	0 %	
1976						
Positive (40 - 21)	16	14	34	13	16	93
Negative (20 - 0)	0	0	2	2	4	8*
1981						
Positive (40 - 21)	12	6	38	15	19	90
Negative (20 - 0)	0	0	5	0	5	10
1986						
Positive (40 - 21)	28	4	26	12	15	85
Negative (20 - 0)	2	0	2	0	10	14*
1991						
Positive (40 - 21)	0	6	48	13	3	70
Negative (20 - 0)	0	3	26	3	0	32*

Note. *Numbers used to arrive at this were rounded.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions, Recommendations, Summary

The author of this study looked at factors such as reading ability, education level, and reading attitudes in relation to actual reading done as an adult by four classes of Starmont graduates. First of all, the response rate for a survey of this type was very high with 69% of the surveys being returned.

The results show that many Starmont graduates have a positive attitude toward reading (168 of 197) according to their score on the attitude scale. The results also show that Starmont graduates (78%) do read books, magazines, and newspapers. Hypothesis one of this study was accepted. Of the 198 responding to the survey, twenty-one Starmont graduates indicated they don't like to read as adults. Of these twenty-one, fourteen indicated that not only do they not like to read as an adult but also that their reading history was one of reading only what they had to.

Earlier in the study the definition of an ALITERATE was given as a person who can read but who does not, or who reads only under compulsion. A SELF-MOTIVATED READER on the other hand was defined as a person who makes the conscious choice to read beyond what is required of him or her. It would appear the sample respondents have a small number of aliterates

and a very much larger number of self-motivated readers.

The statistics are not totally encouraging, however, since only 27% of the graduates with above class average scores on all three indicators read six or more books in a six month period and only 23% of the remaining graduates in the sample read six or more books in the same time period. See Table 3. It would seem that according to the earlier given definitions Starmont has mainly developed LIGHT BOOK READERS who read one to nine books in a six month period. The most frequently reported category for the number of books read in a six month period was 2-5 for both the above average group and for the average and below group. Hypothesis two was rejected.

Of the 14 individuals discussed earlier who did not like to read as an adult and also read only when required to, none were above average on all three ability indicators. Only four of the 14 had reading test scores above 70. This would tend to support the idea that lack of reading skills or ability would naturally lead one to feel more negative about reading.

The researcher also found that Starmont graduates with bachelor's degrees consistently read more than those with just a high school diploma when comparing

the three classes of 1976, 1981, and 1986. See Table 4. Hypothesis three was accepted.

Hypothesis four was rejected when the researcher found that only 48% of Starmont graduates spend more time reading for information than for recreation, not a majority as the hypothesis stated.

There was not a significant difference in the amount of reading done by different age groups in this study and, therefore, the null hypothesis (five) was accepted.

The findings showed that people with a positive attitude toward reading do much more reading of books in a six month period than do those with a negative attitude. The sixth hypothesis stated they would do 50% more reading and the findings supported this statement. The hypothesis was accepted.

The researcher feels Starmont school district is producing readers with an appropriate attitude toward reading who read a variety of types of materials. They are not, however, reading a great deal. The definition of a LIFE READER given earlier in this study stated that the individual must enjoy reading, reads a variety of literature and a lot of it, is self-motivated and has varied interests and a good attitude. The only criteria where perhaps Starmont graduates fall short is the amount of reading done.

How does Starmont produce graduates who read a great deal? The author feels that can be accomplished only by developing skilled readers who make reading an enjoyable part of their day each and every day. In other words, students should be encouraged to get in the habit of reading for their own enjoyment. A kindergarten through twelfth grade program of silent sustained reading would be one way of starting the habit at a young age and continuing it long enough for it to become an important part of the student's life. In today's world reading is necessary for individuals to become intelligent consumers of information. This will be necessary if Starmont graduates are going to be able to live responsible, productive, fulfilling lives which is Starmont's goal.

In summary, Starmont graduates have a positive attitude toward reading and do read a variety of types of information; the graduates with above average ability read consistently more than the rest of the graduates, but not a great deal more; many, but not a majority, read more for information than for recreation; there is no significant difference in amount of reading done among the different age groups included in this study; graduates with a positive attitude toward reading, read more books than those with a negative attitude. In conclusion, the

researcher found that Starmont graduates exhibit all the characteristics of a LIFE READER except for the amount of reading done. A recommendation is made to include daily silent sustained reading as part of the kindergarten through twelfth grade curriculum. The author believes this would so develop the habit of reading that graduates would continue to make reading an enjoyable part of their daily lives. The results of this study could also be used in the future as baseline data if the adult reading habits of today's students, who are learning through the whole language approach, were to be studied and compared to students who did not have exposure to the whole language approach.

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Appendix A

Cover Letter

212 E. Mission
Strawberry Point
Iowa 52076

June 20, 1991

Dear Starmont Graduate,

I am the media specialist/librarian at the Starmont High School and Elementary School. I am presently doing a research study on the reading habits of Starmont graduates.

1991 has been designated as "The Year of the Lifelong Reader" by the American Library Association. This seemed like a good tie-in to my area of interest. This study will show the status of reading in the lives of Starmont graduates. The results will also be available as baseline data for use in possible future studies for comparison to students now going through the whole language program.

Since you are a member of one of the four graduating classes of 1991, 1986, 1981, or 1976 that I have selected as my population sample, I need your input.

I would appreciate your taking the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelop by July 10, 1991.

Please circle the appropriate response or fill in the blank with the needed information. All responses will be kept confidential and individual responses will not be identified in the study report. The code number on this survey is necessary to determine non-responses and will be eliminated when the questionnaire is returned and data compiled.

This research study is being done for the fulfillment of the requirements for my Master of Arts degree in Library Science at the University of Northern Iowa. Please let me know if you would like to see the results of the study. Your cooperation will be appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Linda Wallace

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

STARMONT GRADUATES READING HABITS AND PATTERNS
A SURVEY
1991

This survey has been designed to gather information regarding the reading habits and patterns of Starmont graduates. Please circle or check the response which is most correct.

1. Age on last birthday:

under 20 20 - 25 26 - 30 31 - 35 36 - 40

2. Sex : male female

3. Highest educational level achieved:

high school diploma _____
high school + 2 years _____
Bachelor's degree _____
Bachelor's degree plus _____
Master's degree _____
Doctorate degree _____

4. In the last 6 months, how many books have you read?

none at all _____
1 book _____
2 - 5 books _____
6 - 10 books _____
over 10 books _____

5. If you read books in the last 6 months, what type did you read?

fiction _____
non-fiction _____
both fiction and non-fiction _____

6. In the last 6 months, how often did you read magazines and how many did you read?

HOW OFTEN

daily _____
weekly _____
occasionally _____
not at all _____

HOW MANY

1 2 or more
1 2 or more
1 2 or more

7. In the last 6 months, how often did you read the newspaper and how many did you read?

HOW OFTEN

daily _____
weekly _____
occasionally _____
not at all _____

HOW MANY

1 2 or more
1 2 or more
1 2 or more

8. How much time do you spend, on the average, reading per week for:

Information:

on the job or for school: less than 1 hour _____
 1 - 3 hours _____
 4 or more hours _____

not job or school related: less than 1 hour _____
 1 - 3 hours _____
 4 or more hours _____

Recreation:

relaxation: less than 1 hour _____
 1 - 3 hours _____
 4 or more hours _____

intellectual stimulation: less than 1 hour _____
 1 - 3 hours _____
 4 or more hours _____

READING HISTORY

Check the one response which best fits your reading history.

_____ 1. Have always read quite a bit: amount has been consistent over the years.

_____ 2. In the past didn't do much reading, but now am reading a lot more.

_____ 3. Reading has been an "on and off" kind of thing for me.

_____ 4. Have to do quite a bit of reading for work/school, but don't expect to continue reading this much in the future.

_____ 5. Was a period in my life when I read quite a bit, but just don't read very much anymore.

_____ 6. The only time I did much reading was when I was required to in school.

_____ 7. Uncertain

READING ATTITUDES AS AN ADULT AND RECALLED READING ATTITUDES AS A STUDENT

Circle the response which you feel best describes your feelings.

Strongly agree= SA
 Agree= A
 Undecided= U
 Disagree= D
 Strongly disagree= SD

1. Money spent on books is well spent.

SA A U D SD

2. There are many good books I hope to read.

SA A U D SD

3. I prefer to borrow the books I read from the library rather than purchase them.

SA A U D SD

4. I look forward to a free evening so I can read a good book.

SA A U D SD

5. Most books are too long or dull.

SA A U D SD

6. Reading is for learning but not enjoyment.

SA A U D SD

7. There is nothing to be gained from reading books.

SA A U D SD

8. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.

SA A U D SD

9. Reading is something I can do without.

SA A U D SD

10. Books make good gifts.

SA A U D SD

11. I would like to read, but don't seem to find the time.

SA A U D SD

12. I only read what I have to.

SA A U D SD

Now please think back to your days as a student and recall what your attitude toward reading was as a student.

1. Sharing books in class was a waste of time.

SA A U D SD

2. Reading was only for those after good grades.

SA A U D SD

Appendix C
Followup Letter

212 E Mission
Strawberry Point
Iowa 52076

Date

Dear Starmont Graduate,

I have not, as of this date, received your reply to the questionnaire I sent you regarding the reading habits of Starmont graduates.

I would greatly appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete the questionnaire at this time and return it in the envelope that was provided.

If you have returned the questionnaire in the last few days, I appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda Wallace



June 11, 1991

Ms. Linda Wallace
Library Science
212 E. Mission
Strawberry Point, IA 52076

Dear Ms. Wallace:

Your project, "A Status Survey of Reading Habits of Starmont Graduates", which you submitted for human subjects review on May 14, 1991 has been determined to be exempt from further review under the guidelines stated in the UNI Human Subjects Handbook. You may commence participation of human research subjects in your project.

Your project need not be submitted for continuing review unless you alter it in a way that increases the risk to the participants. If you make any such changes in your project, you should notify the Graduate College Office.

If you decide to seek federal funds for this project, it would be wise not to claim exemption from human subjects review on your application. Should the agency to which you submit the application decide that your project is not exempt from review, you might not be able to submit the project for review by the UNI Institutional Review Board within the federal agency's time limit (30 days after application). As a precaution against applicants' being caught in such a time bind, the Board will review any projects for which federal funds are sought. If you do seek federal funds for this project, please submit the project for human subjects review no later than the time you submit your funding application.

If you have any further questions about the Human Subjects Review System, please contact me. Best wishes for your project.

Sincerely,

Norris M. Durham, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. John Somervill, Graduate Dean
Dr. Bargara Safford