

CHANGING THE ATTITUDES OF LEARNING DISABLED
CHILDREN THROUGH BIBLIOTHERAPY

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Faculty of Education
State University College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

by

Diane Z. Virzi

State University College at Brockport

Brockport, New York

May, 1980

Submitted by:

Diane J. Virzi

Approved by:

<u>F. Moroney White</u>	<u>5/27/80</u>
Graduate Advisor	Date
<u>F. Moroney White</u>	<u>5/27/80</u>
Thesis Advisor	Date
<u>Norman J. Hill</u>	<u>5/27/80</u>
Chair, Graduate Policies Committee	Date

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if bibliotherapy is an effective means of improving the reading attitudes of learning disabled children. The sample consisted of nineteen children, ages nine to thirteen years old, designated as learning disabled according to federal guidelines. The subjects were from two self-contained, special education classes in an urban school district. Nine of the students were randomly assigned to the control group and the remaining ten students were assigned to the experimental group.

All subjects were pretested using the Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory. This same instrument was used as an initial posttest and a long term posttest.

The experimental group met for three, thirty minute sessions per week for ten weeks. In each session, a ten minute passage or story was read aloud to the group and discussed. The initial posttest was administered at the conclusion of the ten week therapy program. The long term effects of the therapy were assessed ten weeks after the conclusion of the therapy program.

The data were analyzed using an analysis of variance repeated measures design. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in the reading attitudes of the experimental group after bibliotherapy. The implications of this study for further research were discussed as were the classroom applications of bibliotherapy.

Table of Contents

	Page
List of Tables	iii
Chapter	
I. Statement of the Problem	1
Need for the Study	1
Purpose	4
Definition of Terms	4
Limitations	5
Summary	5
II. Review of the Literature	6
Attitudes	6
Bibliotherapy	12
Summary	18
III. The Design of the Study	19
Method	19
Summary	23
IV. Analysis of the Data	24
Purpose	24
Summary	26
V. Conclusions and Implications	27
Purpose	27
Conclusions	27
Implications for Further Research	29
Implications for the Classroom	30
Summary	31
References	33

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Source Table for the Analysis of Variance in Reading Attitudes	25

Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

Need for the Study

Research has indicated that attitudes toward reading are related to a child's success in learning to read. Wilson and Hall (1972) have suggested that a positive attitude toward reading is "essential for successful mastery of the printed page" (p. 11). These attitudes affect performance in instructional settings and the child's use of books for his own purposes.

Several factors influencing the development of attitudes toward reading have been identified. Askov and Fischbach (1973) and Ransbury (1973) have demonstrated that success in reading leads to positive attitudes toward reading. These attitudes, in turn, affect the child's response to instructional reading tasks and the amount of independent reading the child chooses to do.

Attitudes toward reading can be affected by reading programs implemented in the schools. Healy (1963) found that the reading attitudes of poor readers improved as instructional programs were individualized. Carver (1971) concluded that the improvements were not due to the type of programs used but to an improvement in motivation resulting from the increased attention given to reading. Bullen (1970) reported that increased exposure and availability of books improved the reading attitudes of economically deprived

children. Thus it can be concluded that reading attitudes can be significantly improved through school intervention.

Bibliotherapy has been identified as one means of changing children's reading attitudes. It is defined as the use of books to help individuals solve personal problems or deal more effectively with life problems. Bone (1959) used this method in his classroom in an attempt to change children's attitudes about family responsibilities. Appleberry (1969) and Herminghaus (1954) reported that after participating in bibliotherapy, subjects showed significant improvement in the Adjustment subtests of the California Test of Personality.

In a similar study, Mattera (1961) concluded that children benefited most from books of interest to them, that is, stories about children facing problems similar to their own. The books helped the children by providing them with insights into life problems. Mattera also reported that individual and group bibliotherapy could be successful in a classroom situation.

As these studies demonstrated, bibliotherapy can be an effective means of changing normal children's attitudes. This evidence suggests that bibliotherapy may also be effective with other populations such as learning disabled children. In recent years, classes for children designated as learning disabled have been established in increasing numbers. While the definitions of learning disabilities vary widely, four areas of agreement have been identified by Kaluger and Kolson (1978).

1. Intellectual capacity is average or better.
2. There is a discrepancy between expected and actual achievement.
3. There is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychophysical processes involved in using spoken or written language.
4. The deficiencies are not primarily due to visual, hearing or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbances or environmental disadvantage.
(p. 2-3)

The following definition has been formulated by Congress and used by schools to designate those children meeting requirements for supplemental federal funding.

Children with special learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language. . . . They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbances, or to environmental disadvantages.
(Children with Specific Learning Disabilities, Act of 1969, PL 91-230)

Thus a learning disabled child is one who has normal intelligence and sensory abilities but for some reason has difficulty processing language in its spoken or written form. The result is that academic performance falls short of expectation and this failure affects the child's attitude toward reading. Kaluger and Kolson (1978) described this attitude as one of expected failure and avoidance of reading. Then, in addition to the problems of everyday life, learning disabled children must also deal with their failure in school.

In an experiment with fourth-graders who were underachieving in reading but were not classified as learning disabled, King (1972) reported that subjects in the study faced similar problems in failing

to meet expectations. As a result of the therapy program, the children's attitudes toward reading, their self-concept and reading achievement significantly improved.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if bibliotherapy is an effective means of improving the reading attitudes of learning disabled children. The short term and long term effects of the bibliotherapy were analyzed. The following questions were investigated:

1. Was there a significant difference in reading attitudes between the control group and the experimental group immediately after therapy and after an extended period of time following therapy?

2. Was there a significant difference in reading attitudes for the experimental group immediately after therapy and after an extended period of time following therapy?

Definitions of Terms

Reading attitude refers to a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation (Alexander & Filler, 1976).

Learning disabled refers to children who exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language (PL 91-230, The Elementary and Secondary Amendments of 1969).

Bibliotherapy refers to the reading of books to aid in modifying the attitudes and behaviors of boys and girls (Riggs, 1971).

Limitations

The sample in this study was limited to a total of nineteen children from two classes in an urban school district. Assessment of attitudes toward reading was limited to evaluation by one reading attitudes scale. The scale was administered once as a pretest, as an initial posttest, immediately following therapy, and again as a long term posttest, ten weeks after the conclusion of the bibliotherapy.

Summary

Research has indicated that attitudes toward reading are closely related to a child's success in learning to read. Special programs, implemented in schools to improve reading attitudes, have proven successful. Among them is bibliotherapy, which is defined as the reading of books to modify behaviors and attitudes. The purpose of this study was to determine if bibliotherapy can be an effective means of changing the reading attitudes of learning disabled children. It was suggested that research in this area was needed as increasing numbers of children are being designated learning disabled and because the reading attitudes of this population, in general, are described as that of expected failure and avoidance. The study was limited to a small sample of children from an urban school district and one attitude survey was used to assess the short term and long term effects of the bibliotherapy.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to identify a means by which the reading attitudes of learning disabled children can be improved. Literature in the areas of attitudes and bibliotherapy was reviewed and the findings reported in the research were discussed.

Attitudes

Educators have maintained that a child's attitudes toward school or a specific subject affect his achievement in school, but to date research in this area has not identified a strong relationship between attitudes and school achievement. This lack of conclusive evidence may be due in part to the nature of attitudes themselves, as an attitude is not a directly observable behavior and is difficult to define and measure.

Definitions and Measurement of Attitudes

Summers (1979) reported that Allport's (1967) definition of attitudes has been accepted as a general definition for use in social research.

An attitude is a mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. (p. 8)

This definition provided a conceptual framework for the discussion of attitudes, suggesting that attitudes are a system of affective reactions to stimuli which are relatively consistent over time. This definition, however, did not indicate a means of assessing or quantifying the reactions. Summers (1979) concluded that Good's (1973) definition may be more useful in educational research.

The predisposition or tendency to react specifically towards an object, situation, or value; usually accompanied by feelings and emotions; attitudes cannot be directly observed but must be inferred from overt behavior, both verbal and non-verbal. (p. 49)

One of the major difficulties in assessing an affective element such as attitudes toward reading has been the fact that attitudes themselves cannot be measured, only the behaviors attributed to that attitude. This has led to a twofold problem in developing reliable attitude measures. First, it has been difficult to identify those behaviors that are reflective of a specific attitude; second, it has been more difficult to identify the specific attitude motivating a behavior in a specific situation. Alexander and Filler (1976) and Summers (1979) reported that few standardized measures of attitude have been developed and that current instruments were restricted by narrow validation and applicability. Furthermore, many of the studies investigating the relationship between reading and attitudes have relied on instruments which have been developed by the researchers themselves and used only within the context of their specific study. As a result few studies have been replicated and conclusions drawn are limited to the narrow contexts of the individual investigations.

Relationship of Attitudes and Achievement

Given the limitations of the various measures of attitude currently available and limited number of studies in the area, conclusions drawn from the research investigating the relationship between attitudes were not conclusive. Khan and Roberts (1969) reported that some affective variables such as attitudes toward teachers and need achievement were significant predictors of scholastic achievement but that not all the criterion variance was explained. The authors concluded that modifications of attitudes through counselling "may help to provide a more conducive psychological environment which in turn may improve an individual's scholastic performance" (p. 954). Results and conclusions of this study were substantiated by a longitudinal study by Khan (1970). It was further suggested that affective components remain stable over time and can predict academic performance. In both studies a self reporting survey of attitudes was used to assess attitudes toward school in general while standardized tests were used to measure achievement. Malpass (1953) also assessed children's attitudes toward school in general but employed three instruments designed to measure perceptions of school: a sentence completion test, an apperception test and an autobiographical composition in which students expressed feelings about school. Results indicated that attitudes reported through these measures were not predictive of success in school as measured by standardized achievement tests but were predictive of report card grades. Using a semantic differential to measure attitudes toward school, Neale, Gill and

Tismer (1970) reported a positive significant correlation between attitudes and achievement as measured by standardized tests.

With regard to the measurement of children's reading attitudes and their achievement in reading, procedures have been more standardized. While no single instrument was used to assess reading in any two studies, Askov and Fischbach (1973), Chall and Feldman (1966) and Roettger, Szynczuk and Millard (1979) all employed standardized reading tests to measure achievement and self reporting reading attitude inventories or studies. Chall and Feldman (1966) found significant correlations between word reading, paragraph meaning and word study skills and the San Diego County Inventory, a questionnaire measuring attitudes toward reading in general. Askov and Fischbach (1973) used a pairing technique instrument, measuring attitudes toward recreational reading and found a significant correlation with the paragraph meaning subtest. Roettger et al. (1979) developed a modification of the Estes Reading Attitude Scale, a summated rating scale, for use with younger children and reported a positive relationship between attitudes and reading comprehension and vocabulary. All of these studies dealt with elementary school students and while none reported a significant correlation between overall reading achievement and reading attitudes, a positive relationship did appear to exist between reading attitudes and some components of reading as measured by standardized reading tests.

Attitude Formation and Change

The research reported thus far has not investigated the cause and effect relationship between attitudes and achievement. In a

discussion of this relationship, Malpass (1953) offered two possible explanations: first, that poor achievement is caused by negative attitudes toward school or second, that negative attitudes are the result of low grades. In either case it was suggested that there was a cyclical relationship between the two factors. For example, the negative feelings or attitudes can be said to be reinforced by poor grades further perpetuating the negative attitudes. Malpass also stated that the converse of this cycle may also be true but that the result is the same, low grades and a dislike of school. After interviewing sixty grade school students, Ransbury (1973) concluded that children attribute their reading attitude to their success in reading, supporting the theory that failure in reading leads to negative attitudes toward reading. There appeared to be little other evidence of this type to support this conclusion.

Research does indicate however, that attitudes can be changed through school intervention. In a program designed to improve children's attitudes toward reading, Healy (1963) reported that attitudes and achievement could be improved by altering the instructional setting from one of large, inflexible groups to a more individualized program. Children in the flexibly grouped program were allowed to group themselves according to interests to work on various interest building activities. Instruction was done on an individual level. Results indicated that children grouped according to interest made significantly greater gains in attitude and achievement than did children permanently placed in large inflexible groups.

Rowell (1973) found that attitudes and achievement improved after students participated in a summer clinic. Bullen (1970) demonstrated that increased exposure to books led to improved attitudes and achievement among children from economically depressed backgrounds.

Of the studies investigating the change in attitudes, Healy (1963) was the only author to suggest that the experimental program led to an improvement in attitudes which led to improved achievement. In a longitudinal study which followed the initial experiment, Healy (1965) also concluded that "the influence of initial reading experience appears to crystallize adverse attitudes" (p. 273) or that early failure in reading leads to poor attitudes. One possible explanation for this apparent contradiction was that attitudes toward reading are formed in response to early experiences in reading but the cycle of negative attitudes and achievement perpetuates failure. As the child grows older he continues to avoid reading despite the fact that he may no longer experience failure in his attempts to learn to read. A remedial or special program may offer the child encouragement to try again, to increase his use of reading materials and result in an overall improvement in reading achievement, effectively breaking the cycle of failure. Thus it can be concluded that the special reading programs initiated by Bullen (1970), Healy (1963) and Rowell (1973) improved motivation, which can be defined as a change in attitude, which led to increased achievement.

This view of attitude formation was supported by Brookover and Thomas (1964), Carver (1971) and by Strang, McCullough and Traxler

(1967). Brookover and Thomas (1964) suggested that a child's perception of himself as a learner within a specific skill area is related to his achievement in that particular skill area. That is, a child who views himself as a failure will fail. Strang et al. (1967) stated that "the self concept may be predictive of reading improvement. It also affects and is affected by reading improvement . . . A student's self concept also affects his motivation" (p. 22). Carver (1971) attributed the improvement made in a child's achievement to the child's change in his perception of himself as a reader which is caused by the attention he received in the special program. Results of Carver's experiment using retarded readers indicated that no particular method of remedial instruction improved reading achievement more than any other but by virtue of the group atmosphere and approval that were part of the remedial programs, the students' attitudes were improved.

Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy or the practice of reading literature to gain insight into one's personal problems was first employed by the medical profession for the treatment of individuals with various personal problems. In recent years this practice has been adopted by librarians and educators for use with school-aged children. To date there is little evidence documenting the effectiveness of this type of program or clearly defining the process the reader undergoes as he reads.

Definitions of Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy has been identified as a means of changing specific attitudes of groups or individuals through literature. Brown (1975) defined bibliotherapy as "the use of selected reading materials as therapeutic adjuvants in medicine and psychiatry; guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading" (p. 1). As the first part of this definition implied, this practice has been employed by various medical professions for the treatment of patients. Jackson (1962) described this type of bibliotherapy as explicit therapy to be administered by a trained therapist. Brown (1975) identified this practice of prescribing reading as the science of bibliotherapy used to treat actual mental or physical illness. A survey of educational and medical specialists, conducted by Tewes (1962) was used to develop a composite definition of clinical bibliotherapy.

Bibliotherapy is a program of selected activity involving reading materials, planned, conducted, and controlled as treatment under the guidance of the physician for emotional and other problems. It must be administered by a skilled, professionally trained librarian within the prescribed purpose and goals. (p. 99)

The second part of Brown's (1975) definition suggested that bibliotherapy may have a broader application in which attempts are made "to remedy personality defects or help an individual solve personal problems through proper reading suggestions given by a librarian, teacher, guidance counselor or other individual outside the medical field" (p. 3). Brown referred to this type of therapy as the "art" of bibliotherapy. Jackson (1962) defined this as

"implicit" guidance provided by an advisor outside the medical profession. Riggs (1971) reported that the International Reading Association formulated the following definition of the art of or implicit bibliotherapy which was used in this study. It was stated that "for teachers and librarians, bibliotherapy is simply the reading of books to aid in modifying attitudes and behaviors of boys and girls" (p. 5).

A Theoretical Approach to Bibliotherapy

In the development of a theoretical explanation, Russell and Shrodes (1950) defined bibliotherapy as a "process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and literature--interaction which may be utilized for personality assessment, adjustment and growth" (p. 335). This theory suggested that reading has an effect on the reader and that this effect could be utilized to bring about changes in the reader's behavior. According to this theory, change is attributed to the process of identification, catharsis and insight the reader is said to undergo in bibliotherapy. The reader identifies with a character in a story and through this identification tensions are released. As the reader comes to understand the needs and reactions of the character he becomes aware of his own motivation and needs. These insights may then help the reader break certain habits or adjust to a problem as did the character in the story. After reviewing the literature dealing with the process of bibliotherapy, Russell and Shrodes concluded that most authors agreed that bibliotherapy provides an opportunity for the release of tensions and insights into personal

motivation and allows for the integration of intellectual perceptions and emotional drives. That is, the identification leads to an easing of tensions, an understanding of motives and provides the reader with insights into possible solutions or means of meeting personal needs.

The Effects of Bibliotherapy

Some research supported the conclusion that bibliotherapy did effect changes in children's attitudes. Zucaro (1972) demonstrated that bibliotherapy could be used to favorably change racial attitudes of suburban school children. Bone (1959) and Mattera (1961) used bibliotherapy as a preventative agent by attempting to change children's attitudes concerning the problems faced in everyday living. Bone observed that children's attitudes toward family responsibilities changed after bibliotherapy and as a result the students were better able to deal with these responsibilities. Mattera stated that the children in this study were primarily concerned with developmental tasks and basic human needs and that the reading done in the bibliotherapy served to prevent future problems for the children by providing insights into the problems of others. Both of these studies dealt with elementary school children and in each case the bibliotherapy was conducted in both group and individual settings.

Appleberry (1969) and Herminghaus (1954) reported that bibliotherapy could be used to positively influence children's attitudes as measured by the California Test of Personality. Herminghaus (1954) stated that bibliotherapy could be used to modify attitudes and to

increase personal and social adjustment among junior high school students in a regular classroom. Appelberry (1969) stated that group bibliotherapy could be used to improve the mental health of children in elementary schools.

Findings reported by Ponder (1968), however, did not support the hypothesis that bibliotherapy could improve self acceptance scores of economically disadvantaged children as measured by the California Test of Personality. One explanation for this contradiction in findings may be in the methodology employed in the bibliotherapy. In the two previous studies the reading was done both aloud in group settings and independently by individuals. Subjects were given the opportunity to select their own materials for independent reading while in Ponder's experiment all of the reading was done aloud by the teacher in a whole group setting and children were not given the opportunity to select their own materials. Given the highly individual nature of the bibliotherapeutic process of identification, catharsis and insight theorized by Russell and Schrodes (1950), it can be concluded that due to the limited amount of material presented to the students in this experiment, the possibility for strong identification was also limited. Sufficient numbers of students may not have been affected by the materials presented to produce statistically significant changes in test results.

Use of Bibliotherapy with Learning Disabled Children

The effects of an individual's attitudes on his academic achievement have already been discussed. While there were no conclusive

data to suggest that poor attitudes led to poor academic achievement, the two factors were said to be related and that an improvement in attitude toward reading may cause the child to realize some success in reading. It was also demonstrated that bibliotherapy was one method of improving children's attitudes.

The learning disabled child was previously described as one who has normal intelligence and sensory abilities yet has failed to meet expected norms of school achievement. Kaluger and Kolson (1978) described the attitudes of the learning disabled child as that of expected failure and avoidance of reading. Thus it can be hypothesized that a learning disabled child may benefit from a program of bibliotherapy designed to improve his attitudes toward reading. There was some limited evidence to suggest that bibliotherapy may be effective with learning disabled children. Kantrowitz (1967), Lerner (1976) and Roswell and Natchez (1977) all cited case studies in which bibliotherapy was used with disabled readers to bring about a change of attitude toward reading and improved academic performance. More empirical evidence was provided by King (1972) in his study of fourth grade males. The subjects, although not classified as learning disabled in this study, were described as having reading scores falling two stanines below their IQ scores indicating a discrepancy that was said to be characteristic of the learning disabled children. As a result of the bibliotherapy, students demonstrated significant improvements in their attitudes toward reading, their reading self concept and their reading comprehension scores. As a result of this study, King concluded that

bibliotherapy could be successful with certain students who were underachieving in reading.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate that the reading attitudes of the learning disabled child can be improved through bibliotherapy. While research in this area has been limited, it can be concluded that children's attitudes toward reading appear to be related to their achievement levels. Studies have demonstrated that intervention with special programming designed to meet the needs of children underachieving in reading can positively affect reading attitudes. Several researchers have concluded that bibliotherapy can be an effective means of improving children's adjustment to daily life problems. Lastly, evidence further suggested that bibliotherapy can be used successfully to improve the attitudes and reading comprehension scores of poor readers.

Chapter III

The Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if bibliotherapy, as practiced in the school setting, is an effective means of improving the attitudes of the learning disabled child toward reading. Both the short term and the long term effects of bibliotherapy were studied. The following questions were investigated:

1. Was there a significant difference in reading attitudes between the control group and the experimental group immediately after therapy and after an extended period of time following therapy?
2. Was there a significant difference in reading attitudes for the experimental group as shown by the scores on the pretest, the initial posttest and on the long term posttest?

Method

Subjects

The subjects were nineteen learning disabled children, ages nine to thirteen years old, drawn from two self-contained special education classes in an urban school district. The following criteria, from Public Law 91-230, the Elementary and Secondary Amendments of 1969, were used to identify the children as learning disabled.

1. All students were found to be of at least normal intelligence as measured by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (Revised).

2. All students were evaluated using a projective technique such as the Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test or the Draw-A-Person Test and were shown not to be suffering from any emotional disturbances.

3. All students were tested by a school nurse and were considered to have normal or corrected vision and hearing and no physical handicaps.

4. All children were at least two years below other children of comparable age in academic achievement.

All children from the two classes were randomly assigned to the experimental group or to the control group. Numbers were assigned to the students' names as they appeared on an alphabetized class list. A deck of cards with corresponding numbers was then shuffled and divided into two groups. The children whose numbers appeared in the first group composed the control group while children whose numbers appeared in the second group formed the experimental group. This procedure was repeated for the second class. Thus the experimental group consisted of nine students, five from one class, four from another. The control group consisted of ten students, five from each class.

There was no significant difference between the experimental and control group in age, IQ or reading grade equivalent as measured by the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test administered in October, 1979. The mean age for the experimental group was 10.7, SD .57; the mean IQ was 86.5, SD 5.15; and the mean reading grade equivalent was 2.3, SD 1.0. The mean age for the control group was 10.86, SD 1.15; the mean IQ was 83, SD 6.62; and the mean reading grade equivalent was 1.9, SD .85.

Instruments

Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory was used as a pretest and posttest measure of reading attitudes. In an attempt to establish the validity of this instrument, the inventory was administered to a regular class of fourth and fifth graders. These scores were then correlated with scores from the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale and reading scores on the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test administered in October 1979. A correlation of .24 between the Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory and the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test was found to be not significant while the correlation of .49 between the Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory and the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale was found to be significant at the .05 level. These findings suggested that while reading attitudes, as measured by the Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory, were not related to a child's reading achievement, they were related to his overall self concept.

Procedure

All subjects were given the Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory during the sixth week of the 1979-1980 school year. The inventory was presented to both classes orally. The children were told that the answer sheets would not be shown to their teacher and that names were not required. Answer sheets were numbered and matched with the students' names without their knowledge.

The bibliotherapy sessions were begun the following week and continued for a ten week period. There were three thirty-minute sessions a week. During each session a fifteen minute passage or

story was read and then discussed. The procedure for discussion suggested by Cianciolo (1965) was used to structure the discussion.

1. The story was retold emphasizing the feelings and relationships between characters.

2. Changes in feelings, relationships and behaviors were discussed.

3. Similar events from the children's lives or other readings were identified.

4. The consequences of behaviors were explored.

5. Generalizations were formed about the consequences of certain behaviors.

6. The desirability of alternate behaviors was determined.

During these discussion sessions the control group remained in their classrooms and listened to stories read by a teacher or played language games with other students.

In the week following the bibliotherapy the researcher again administered the Sartain Reading Attitudes Inventory. To assess the long term effects of the bibliotherapy these data were collected again ten school weeks after therapy. These data were then analyzed using a t test and a single factor analysis of variance, repeated measures design.

Materials

The following books were read to the students in fifteen minute presentations.

Beim, Jerrold - Thin Ice
Bulla, Clyde - Shoeshine Girl
Coleman, Hilda - Ethan's Favorite Teacher
de Paola, Tomi - Bill and Pete
Fassler, Joan - The Boy with a Problem
Hall, Elizabeth Starr - Evan's Corner
Keats, Ezra Jack - Apt. 3
Kessler, Leonard - Here Comes the Strikeout
Sendak, Maurice - Kenny's Window
Smith, Doris B. - Kelly's Creek
Viorst, Judith - Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible,
No Good, Very Bad Day
Yashima, Taro - Crow Boy

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify a means of changing the reading attitudes of learning disabled children using bibliotherapy. Nineteen students were randomly assigned to a control group or an experimental group and pretested using an attitude inventory. Over a ten week period, several stories were read to the children in the experimental group and then discussed. A posttest was administered to both groups in the week following the bibliotherapy. The data were analyzed to identify any short term changes in reading attitudes. Ten weeks later the students were given a second posttest using the attitude inventory and the data were analyzed to assess any long term changes in reading attitudes.

Chapter IV

Analysis of the Data

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if bibliotherapy is an effective means of improving the reading attitudes of learning disabled children. The initial and long term effects of the therapy were assessed. The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There will be no significant difference in reading attitudes between the control group and the experimental group as evidenced by scores on the initial posttest and the long term posttest.

2. There will be no significant difference in the reading attitudes of the experimental group as evidenced by the scores on the pretest, initial posttest and long term posttest.

The data were analyzed using an analysis of variance, repeated measures design. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Source Table for the Analysis of Variance
in Reading Attitudes

Source of Variation	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between Subjects (S)	18	611.65	33.98	
A	1	0.02	0.02	0.00
SWA	17	611.63	35.98	
Within Subjects (MS)	38	233.33	6.14	
B	2	3.82	1.91	0.29
AB	2	4.25	2.13	0.32
B x (SWA)	<u>34</u>	<u>225.26</u>	<u>6.63</u>	<u> </u>
Total	56	844.98	15.09	

The analysis of the data failed to show any significant interaction effect between the treatment program and the testing occasions. The computed \underline{F} value for the interaction between these factors was $\underline{F} = 0.32$.

The hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in the reading attitudes between the control group and the experimental group was accepted in the analysis of variance. The \underline{F} value for the variance between groups was $\underline{F} = 0.00$.

The analysis of the data also failed to reject the hypothesis that there would be no difference in the reading attitudes of the experimental group as measured by the pretest, initial posttest and long term posttest. The \underline{F} value was computed to be $\underline{F} = 0.29$.

Informal Observations

While the formal test results did not indicate any significant changes in reading attitudes, informal observations made by the researcher and a classroom teacher did suggest that some children exhibited a change in reading behavior. Children participating in the experimental program appeared to select reading as a free time activity more frequently than they did prior to the bibliotherapy. That is, children chose to read rather than play games or do other activities available to them in the classroom. This apparent change could be attributed to the bibliotherapy as there did not seem to be any other factors in the school program influencing this behavior.

Summary

In this study, the effects of bibliotherapy on the reading attitudes of learning disabled children were investigated. The short term and long term effects of the bibliotherapy on the experimental group were also analyzed using an analysis of variance, repeated measures design. The data reported accepted the hypotheses that there would be no change in reading attitudes. However, informal observations made by the researcher and the classroom teacher suggested that children in the experimental group did tend to select reading as a free time activity more frequently than they had before bibliotherapy.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Implications

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if bibliotherapy could be used to change the reading attitudes of learning disabled children. Two questions were investigated. The first question was concerned with the significant differences in reading attitudes between the experimental and the control group after therapy. The second question dealt with the significant differences in the reading attitudes of the experimental group before and after bibliotherapy. Results indicated that there were no significant differences in reading attitudes between the groups or within the experimental group after the bibliotherapy.

Conclusions

The data in this experiment failed to show any significant differences in reading attitudes that could be attributed to the bibliotherapy. This conclusion must be limited to the type of bibliotherapy program and the specific sample used in this research. The conclusions drawn in this study were consistent with the findings of Ponder (1968) but conflicted with the results of other research (Appleberry, 1969; Herminghaus, 1954; King, 1972; Mattera, 1961). In those studies where bibliotherapy has proven successful, the therapy consisted of a combination of both group and individual reading and

discussion. In this study, as in Ponder's (1968), the reading was done only in a whole group setting due to the limited number of materials available to the disabled readers in this sample. Outside reading was encouraged but not monitored or discussed. The effects of bibliotherapy in which the reading is done on an independent and group level by learning disabled children have not yet been assessed.

The results of this study suggested that bibliotherapy was not effective in changing the attitudes of learning disabled children. This conclusion can only be applied to the sample of the population participating in this study. The subjects in this study were from an urban setting, nine to twelve years old and in self-contained learning disabilities classrooms. The findings of this study must be limited to this sample alone. It may be possible to use bibliotherapy successfully with younger children whose attitudes toward reading have not yet been firmly shaped. Bibliotherapy may also be possible with learning disabled children who were capable of functioning in the mainstream or in resource programs where an individualized program may be feasible.

It may also be possible to use bibliotherapy successfully with children from suburban backgrounds. Ponder (1968), reported that bibliotherapy was not successful with disadvantaged children. Due to a limited experience with books or an intervening language problem, a disadvantaged child may require an extended program of bibliotherapy and other experiences with books before any significant changes in attitudes can be brought about.

Lastly, the results of this study indicated that bibliotherapy was not a successful means of changing reading attitudes as measured by the attitude measure employed in this research. The problems of constructing valid measures of attitudes have been discussed. In this study, a self-reporting technique was used in which children were asked to indicate which statement best described their feelings. It is impossible to determine what attitudes prompted the responses the children selected. Some children may have indicated responses they felt were correct or that would please the examiner instead of responses that were characteristic of their reading attitudes. In addition, the one attitude measure used may not have been sensitive enough to detect all changes in the children's attitudes. The informal observations made by the classroom teachers indicated that there may have been some changes in behavior that were not reflected in the scores on the attitude survey.

Implications for Further Research

The limitations of this study have identified several areas requiring further research. There is still little conclusive information within the area of attitudes and their relationship to achievement. Before attempts can be made to improve achievement by improving attitudes the nature of the relationship between these factors must be defined. It may be pointless to invest time and effort into improving attitudes if they are predetermined by achievement. A teacher's time would therefore be better spent in programs that would give the child opportunity to succeed academically rather than trying to improve the child's attitudes.

There is also a need for further research in the area of attitude measurement and change. If it is demonstrated that attitudes do significantly influence achievement, means of affecting attitudes must be defined. Valid instruments for assessing and measuring attitude changes are also needed.

More research is also required in the area of bibliotherapy and its use with various populations. Previous research has centered on children in the upper elementary grades. The effects of this type of program on younger and older children should also be investigated. More evidence is needed to determine if bibliotherapy in a classroom situation can be effective and to determine the format of the therapy program that is most effective. Individual bibliotherapy may be necessary with some children while other children may benefit from a group format or a combination of the two. The types of attitudes responsive to bibliotherapy in school must also be identified. Attitudes toward school or school related activities may not be affected by bibliotherapy especially if the child views the therapy as just another task in which he may fail.

Implications for the Classroom

The results of this study did not suggest that the affective component is not significant to achievement in school. Teachers must continue to be aware of the attitudes children bring to the learning situation, accept and deal with these attitudes. A learning program that considers the child's interests and attitudes while providing opportunity for academic success will be more meaningful to the child

than a program that increases achievement but does not consider the child's interests or attitudes toward it. A child who finds school enjoyable and satisfying will be a more willing participant in school activities than the child who succeeds but dislikes school.

This study offers several insights as to the way bibliotherapy can best be employed in the classroom. Teachers must carefully identify the attitudes to be targeted for the therapy, determine if the students are capable of responding to this type of program and provide for independent as well as group reading and discussion. Bibliotherapy may be successful with learning disabled children if they are given an opportunity to read independently and discuss their reactions to the material with the therapist individually. A learning disabled child may also be more responsive to materials designed to improve his overall self concept before he is able to change specific attitudes toward reading. The teacher must also consider the experiences the child brings to the therapy program. A child who does not perceive himself capable of successfully reading a whole book may require many experiences to familiarize him with printed materials before he is capable of realizing the type of insights presented to him in the stories read.

Summary

The effects of bibliotherapy on learning disabled children were investigated in this study. The results indicated that bibliotherapy as defined in this study did not significantly affect the reading attitudes as measured by the self reporting instrument used. It was

concluded that a bibliotherapy program that allowed for individual as well as group reading and discussion may be more successful with this population. The limitations of the form of attitude assessment used were discussed and it was suggested that a combination of an attitude survey and a behavioral checklist compiled by an observer may be a more effective means of assessing attitudes. The implications for further research in the areas of attitudes and bibliotherapy were discussed as were the implications for the classroom use of bibliotherapy.

References

References

- Alexander, J. E., & Filler, R. C. Attitudes and reading. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1976.
- Allport, G. W. Attitudes. In M. Fishbein (Ed.), Readings in attitude theory and measurement. New York: John Wiley, 1967.
- Appleberry, M. H. A study of the effect of bibliotherapy on third-grade children using a master list of titles from children's literature (Doctoral dissertation, University of Houston, 1969). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1969, 30(7), 2718A.
- Askov, E. N., & Fischbach, T. J. An investigation of primary pupils' attitudes toward reading. Journal of Experimental Education, 1973, 41, 1-7.
- Bernstein, J. E. Books to help children cope with separation and loss. New York: R. R. Bowker, 1977.
- Bone, R. Using literature to extend children's experiences. Elementary English, 1959, 36, 314-318.
- Brookover, W. B., Thomas, S., & Patterson, A. Self-concept of ability and school achievement. Sociology of Education, 1964, 37, 271-279.
- Brown, E. F. Bibliotherapy and its widening applications. Mechum, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1975.
- Bullen, G. A study in motivating children to read. Paper presented to the Conference of American Educational Research Association, Minneapolis, March 1970. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 040 018)

- Carver, C. Motivation versus cognitive methods in remedial reading.
Paper presented at the meeting of the International Reading
Association, Atlantic City, April 1971. (ERIC Document Reproduction
Service No. ED 050 921)
- Chall, J. S., & Feldman, S. C. A study in depth of first grade
reading. New York: City College of the City University of New
York, 1966. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 010 036)
- Cianciolo, P. J. Children's literature can affect coping behavior.
Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1965, 43, 897-903.
- Good, C. (Ed.). Dictionary of education (3rd ed.). New York:
McGraw-Hill, 1973.
- Healy, A. K. Changing children's attitudes toward reading. Elementary
English, 1963, 40, 255-257, 279.
- Healy, A. K. Effects of changing children's attitudes toward reading.
Elementary English, 1965, 42, 269-272.
- Heimberger, M. J. Sartain reading attitudes inventory. Paper presented
at the meeting of the Pennsylvania Educational Research Association,
Pittsburgh, April 1970. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.
ED 045 291)
- Herminghaus, E. G. The effect of bibliotherapy on the attitudes and
personal adjustment of a group of elementary school children
(Doctoral dissertation, Washington University, 1954). Dissertation
Abstracts, 1954, 14(10), 1641. (Publication No. 8971)
- Jackson, E. P. Reading guidance: A tentative approach to theory.
Library Trends, 1962, 11, 118-126.

- Kaluger, G., & Kolson, C. J. Reading and learning disabilities. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1978.
- Kantrowitz, V. Bibliotherapy with retarded readers. Journal of Reading, 1967, 11(3), 205-212.
- Khan, S. B. Affective correlates of academic achievement: A longitudinal study. Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance, 1970, 3(2), 76-80.
- Khan, S. B., & Roberts, D. M. Relationships among study habits and attitudes, and grade 8 achievement. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1969, 29, 951-955.
- King, N. A. The effect of group bibliocounseling on selected fourth grade students who are underachieving in reading (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Pacific, 1972). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1972, 33(6), 2714A. (University Microfilms No. 72-30, 788)
- Lerner, J. W. Children with learning disabilities (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.
- Malpass, L. F. Some relationships between students' perceptions of school and their achievement. Journal of Educational Psychology, 1953, 44, 475-482.
- Mattera, G. Bibliotherapy in a sixth grade (Doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1961). Dissertation Abstracts, 1962, 23(1), 165. (University Microfilms No. 62-2642)
- Neale, D. C., Gill, N., & Tismer, W. Relationship between attitudes toward school subjects and school achievement. Journal of Educational Research, 1970, 63(5), 232-237.

- Ponder, V. B. An investigation of the effects of bibliotherapy and teachers' self-others acceptance on pupils' self-acceptance and reading achievement scores (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1968). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1969, 29(9), 2900A-2901A. (University Microfilms No. 69-4704)
- Ransbury, M. K. An assessment of reading attitudes. Journal of Reading, 1973, 17, 25-28.
- Riggs, C. W. Bibliotherapy: An annotated bibliography. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 076 936)
- Roetgger, D., Szymczuk, M., & Millard, J. Validation of a reading attitude scale for elementary students and an investigation of the relationship between attitude and achievement. Journal of Educational Research, 1979, 72(3), 138-142.
- Roswell, F. G., & Natchez, G. Reading disability (3rd ed.). New York: Basic Books, 1977.
- Rowell, C. G. An investigation of factors related to change in attitude toward reading. Journal of Reading Behavior, 1973, 5(4), 266-272.
- Russell, D. H., & Schrodes, C. Contributions of research in bibliotherapy to the language-arts program. I. The School Review, 1950, 58, 335-342.
- Strang, R., McCullough, C. M., & Traxler, A. E. The improvement of reading (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.
- Summers, E. G. Instruments for assessing reading attitudes: A review of research and bibliography. Journal of Reading Behavior, 1979, 11(2), 137-165.

Tewes, R. M. Introduction. Library Trends, 1962, 11, 97-105.

Wilson, R. M., & Hall, M. A. Reading and the elementary school child: Theory and practice for teachers. New York: Van Nostrand and Reinhold, 1972.

Zucaro, B. J. The use of bibliotherapy among sixth graders to affect attitude change toward American Negroes (Doctoral dissertation, Temple University, 1972). Dissertation Abstracts International, 1972, 33(4), 1340A. (University Microfilms No. 72-27, 216)