

CURRICULAR CONTENT OF FIFTY SECOND GRADE  
REPORT CARDS IN RURAL AND  
URBAN OKLAHOMA

By

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	5
Report Cards in Use in the Public Schools . . . . .	5
Experimental Report Cards . . . . .	7
Trends . . . . .	11
Summary . . . . .	12
III. PROCEDURE . . . . .	14
Selection of Districts . . . . .	14
Securing Report Cards . . . . .	14
Analysis of the Data . . . . .	15
IV. RESULTS . . . . .	21
Curricular Areas . . . . .	21
Mathematics . . . . .	21
Social Studies . . . . .	23
Health . . . . .	25
Science . . . . .	26
Reading . . . . .	27
Language . . . . .	29
Spelling . . . . .	31
Writing . . . . .	32
Art . . . . .	33
Physical Education . . . . .	34
Music . . . . .	35
Remedial Reading and Dictionary Skills . . . . .	36
Social Behavior and Citizenship . . . . .	37
Work and Study Habits . . . . .	40
Comments and Signatures . . . . .	42
Number of Judgments Per Card to be Made by	
Teacher . . . . .	43
Grading Systems . . . . .	45
Summary . . . . .	46

Chapter	Page
V. SUMMARY . . . . .	47
Discussion . . . . .	51
Recommendations . . . . .	52
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	54
APPENDIXES . . . . .	56
APPENDIX A - LETTER TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS . . . . .	57
APPENDIX B - CORRESPONDING PER CENTS AND FREQUENCIES . .	59

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Mathematics . . . . .	22
II. Social Studies . . . . .	24
III. Health . . . . .	25
IV. Science . . . . .	26
V. Reading . . . . .	28
VI. Language . . . . .	30
VII. Spelling . . . . .	31
VIII. Writing . . . . .	32
IX. Art . . . . .	33
X. Physical Education . . . . .	34
XI. Music . . . . .	35
XII. Remedial Reading . . . . .	36
XIII. Dictionary Skills . . . . .	36
XIV. Social Behavior and Citizenship . . . . .	38
XV. Work and Study Habits . . . . .	40
XVI. Comments and Signatures . . . . .	42
XVII. Number of Judgments per Card to be Made by Teacher . . .	43
XVIII. Grading Systems . . . . .	45

## CHAPTER I

### PROBLEM DEFINITION

#### Introduction

With the "space-age" emphasis on science and mathematics education during the early 1960's, the public schools, of necessity, developed curricular programs stressing these subjects. The early 1970's marked the beginning of self-awareness, self-actualization programs and the public schools entered a new area of emphasis utilizing individualized education and non-comparative evaluations. These scientific and individualized emphases were viewed as panaceas until it was realized by parents and educators alike that these programs did not meet the needs of all children. The scope of the educational curriculum would have to be broader and further curricular changes would have to be made.

Because of the rapidity with which curricular changes have been made, there is a need in the mid-1970's for research that studies the curriculums currently being taught in elementary schools. The research reported here was a status study concerning the report cards or grade cards currently used in second grade classes in rural and urban school districts in Oklahoma. In this study, the report cards were considered a reflection of the schools' curriculums. (The writer's definition of curriculum includes all areas for which the schools accept responsibility.)



There is evidence to support the contention that report cards have been modified in response to curricular changes. One example comes from a study conducted in selected elementary public schools in urban Minneapolis, Minnesota. An experimental progress report card was evaluated. Six areas of reports on the card were evaluated:

- (1) Reading;
- (2) Language Arts, including listening, speaking, and writing;
- (3) Mathematics;
- (4) Social and physical sciences;
- (5) Music and art;
- (6) Physical and personal development.

Following the use of the experimental card, teachers and parents completed questionnaires to determine their opinions of the card. The majority of the parents stated a preference for the new report card and felt the card reflected progress by their children. More than half of the teachers said that the new card expressed a different teaching philosophy, a philosophy with which they agreed--"personalization, individualization, and a lack of comparison and grading." However, most teachers stated that further revisions, such as check lists for attitudes and skills, were needed.

Another example is the report of an effort to improve rural schools, the Staffing Plan for Upgrading Rural Schools (SPURS) program, in Pennsylvania. Peterson and Smith (1972) said that two current needs of rural schools are specialized education services and faster implementation of improved educational practices. SPURS' long-range goal was to provide children with a Life-Involvement Model curriculum. To insure the attainment of this goal the subject matter was taken from

the environments of the students.

The evaluation cards for the program included the following areas:

- (1) Reading;
- (2) Language experiences;
- (3) Computation;
- (4) Life internship activities (social studies and science).

Skills to be evaluated in each of the curricular areas were also included. For example, "communicates well with others" was a language arts skill.

Two types of ratings were used in the grade cards. Teachers could check "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory," as well as indicate the child's position on a scale of "minimum growth - maximum growth."

The researches that were summarized above present valid data. However, these studies also suggest categories for further research. Because changes in curricular programs and the accompanying evaluation cards occur rapidly, research must be constantly conducted to reflect these changes. Thus, it is for this reason the writer conducted this research.

The population for the study reported here was all public school districts in Oklahoma. From this population 62 districts were randomly selected, using a table of random numbers. Districts were then categorized as either urban or rural.

A letter was sent to all 62 school districts (after the random selection of one elementary school within each district) requesting a report card currently used in second grade evaluations. The report cards from the 50 responding districts were then analyzed to determine the major curriculum areas taught and the skills expected in each

curricular area. In addition, the child's social development and study habits that the school evaluated were analyzed. The existence of teacher and parental comments, the number of judgments per card, and the type of marking system were noted for each card. The results of this study will be reported through the use of per cents.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature concerning curricular areas included in second grade report cards is limited. The review of available literature that is reported below is in two parts:

- (1) Report cards in use in the public schools;
- (2) Experimental reports designed by means of research and opinions of parents, teachers, and researchers.

#### Report Cards in Use in the Public Schools

The curricular content of report cards used in the public schools has been the subject of several research studies. Chansky (1963), Phelps (1964), and Brodinsky (1972) are among the authors who have contributed to this area of research.

In a study by Chansky (1963) in which teachers were asked to rate report cards used in New York elementary schools, 70 teachers with a minimum of two years of teaching experience rated report cards of 30 randomly-selected school districts. It was found that highly rated cards evaluated the development of the "whole child." Evaluations by teachers were given in the areas of subject matter, social adjustment, work habits, and health. Cards that were given lower ratings dealt only with subject areas, or subject areas plus one other area of the child's development, such as social adjustment or work habits.

Phelps (1964), in explaining how to design a report card that can be understood by parents, suggests that the following subjects are basic to the primary grades' curriculum: reading, language arts, spelling, and arithmetic. Special curriculum areas that should be included in a report card are art, physical education, and citizenship. All of these subject areas were included in the primary report cards of the Westside Community Schools in urban Omaha, Nebraska, in 1964.

Brodinsky (1972) described the second grade report card used by the Glen View School of the Escondido Union School District, California. The following curriculum areas and sub-skills were evaluated:

#### Reading, Phonics

- Long vowel sounds
- Short vowel sounds
- Can unlock words using phonetic analysis
- Uses pictorial and context clues to aid in reading
- Reads with understanding
- Is able to read orally in complete thought units

#### Language Arts

- Is able to spell assigned and basic vocabulary words
- Is able to write simple sentences
- Understands use of periods, question marks and capital letters
- Can form letters legibly and correctly
- Can express ideas clearly in written form
- Takes part in oral discussion
- Verbalizes ideas clearly

#### Mathematics

- Can form numerals correctly
- Can identify cardinal and ordinal numbers to 10
- Knows addition and subtraction facts to 10
- Understands math vocabulary
- Can work with manipulative materials profitably

#### Social Studies

- Understands the idea of a community
- Knows the uses of maps and globes
- Understands the use of scale and legend
- Can locate simple points and areas on the globe

### Science

Understands the idea of molecules  
 Participates in discussions and experiments  
 Is able to draw conclusions on the basis of  
 experiments

### Music

Enjoys music activities  
 Participates in music activities  
 Is able to listen and interpret music

### Art

Shows originality  
 Is able to use a variety of media  
 Can use materials effectively (pp. 1-64).

In a study conducted by Phillips (1956) concerning the characteristics of elementary report cards, it was found that a number of the primary grades' report cards had main subject matter headings with sub-categories below the major headings. These sub-categories provided greater detail in determining the strong and weak points of the children's work.

## Experimental Report Cards

This section presents a review of the available literature concerning report cards developed as a result of research by educators. Suggestions by parents and teachers were included in the majority of research. Peck (1941) reported that a new report card was developed for the British Columbia elementary schools after teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the older form. Reading, language, social studies, number work, music, and art were the curriculum areas being evaluated. Each major area had sub-categories, which are listed below:

### Reading

Is interested in reading  
 Understands what he reads  
 Reads well to others  
 Works out new words

#### Language

Expresses thoughts clearly  
 Tries to learn and use new words  
 Spells needed words correctly  
 Writes plainly

#### Social Studies

Is interested in surroundings  
 Contributes to activities

#### Number Work

Learns number facts  
 Uses numbers well

#### Music

Enjoys musical activities  
 Takes part in singing

#### Art

Works out ideas in arts  
 Uses good colour  
 Does good hand-work  
 Is careful with materials (pp. 873-877).

Suggestions from parents and teachers have been requested often in the development of better grade cards. Research by Chansky (1965) suggests items of importance to parents. Parents wanted their children to acquire knowledge in the areas of health, safety, physical education, mental health, proper modes of conduct, getting along with others, geography, reading, writing, listening, arithmetic, computation, and arithmetic reasoning. Values of importance were reading for information, reading for leisure, writing to inform others, writing to express feelings, and computing to solve number problems.

Knowledges of the nation, state, and community and skills in observing phenomena of nature systematically, drawing, painting, writing poetry and drama, and attitudes toward nature were of lesser importance to the parents. They requested omission of these knowledges and skills from the report cards.

As a result of a one-year research study by Kvaraceus (1939), a new report card for the primary grades was developed with evaluations to be made in the following curriculum areas: reading, language, spelling, arithmetic, social studies, handwriting, music, and art.

An experiment with report cards, conducted by Hobbs (1936) at the Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College, involved several weeks of report card research. Activities included interviewing parents and teachers, study and reading, and drafting of experimental report cards. The result was a report card comprised of the following curriculum areas:

#### Rating Sheet for Elementary Grades

##### Oral English and Oral Reading

- Voice
- Pronunciation and enunciation
- Ability to interest hearers
- Originality
- Choice of correct English
- Attention to other speakers

##### Written English and Spelling

- Interest
- Accuracy in following assignment
- Originality
- Independence
- Efforts toward improvement

##### Silent Reading

- Accuracy in following assignments
- Speed
- Comprehension
- Independence
- Efforts toward improvement

##### Library

- Interest in reading
- Self-reliance
- Conduct
- Care of books and magazines
- Promptness in returning books



### Social Studies

- Interest
- Mastery of facts
- Independence
- Ability to impart information
- Help in group activities

### Arithmetic

- Interest
- Accuracy
- Reasoning ability
- Speed
- Self-reliance

### Writing

- Neatness
- Legibility
- Speed
- General quality of all written work
- Efforts toward improvement
- Care of assignment book

### Music

- Interest
- Voice quality
- Rhythm
- Appreciation
- Notation

### Art

- Attitude
- Originality in expressing ideas
- Development in use of tools
- Persistence in completing work
- Criticism--self and class
- Care of materials

### Physical Education

- Attitude toward play and exercise
- Poise and self-control
- Development of skills
  - Sports
  - Self-testing stunts
- Sportsmanship
- Improvement (p. 20)

After studying evaluation methods for reporting pupil progress in the Vancouver, British Columbia schools, Gilbert and Ellis (1972) described primary report cards developed by a committee of elementary school principals. The first card emphasized the basic skills of

reading, arithmetic, and language; the second report card evaluated skills in language arts and arithmetic, plus a general progress report in the remaining subjects. Basic subjects of the third report card were language arts, arithmetic, social studies, science, physical education, music, art, and safety.

In a study by Hightower (1952), primary report cards were sent to all parents and teachers of a primary division. It was requested they express likes, dislikes, and comments about the card to a committee consisting of one teacher from each of the 12 elementary schools, one principal, and the author. After receiving this input, the committee developed a primary report card that evaluated the curriculum areas of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, language, science, social studies, health-physical education, music, and art. This report card was sent to the primary division's parents and teachers for an evaluation, and the committee received favorable responses.

#### Trends

Peters (1942) stated progress in the subject matter areas should be shown on the report card; in addition, other traits, such as physical and emotional traits, work habits, and social development, should be evaluated. Main curricular areas should be sub-categorized for further evaluation.

Hammel (1964) reported his belief that the philosophy of a school system should be reflected in its report cards. As support for the inclusion of mathematics in a report card he cited his 1962 study of individualized reporting where he found that 96 per cent of the elementary teachers contacted believed mathematics should be one of the most

important subjects in the elementary curriculum.

An "expanded" report card is suggested by Thorndike (1969) as an alternate method for evaluating progress. For example, in the main category of reading, the sub-skills could be auditory and visual skills, comprehension, silent and oral reading, oral and written language, and dictionary skills.

#### Summary

The review of literature concerning curricular areas included in second grade report cards suggests the following:

1. The majority of the researchers agreed that the basic subjects were reading, mathematics, language, social studies, music, and art.
2. Science, writing, physical education, health, and spelling were considered basic curricular areas by several researchers, but not a majority of the researchers.
3. The curricular areas of safety, geography, and library skills were rarely included in the report card evaluations.
4. One-half of the authors encouraged the inclusion of sub-skills below subject matter headings. The sub-categories provided a more extensive evaluation of the children's progress.

The writer used the subjects listed in the "Annual Bulletin for Elementary and Secondary Schools" (1975-76) as a guide for an appropriate second grade curricular program. The Bulletin suggested mathematics, social studies, health, science, reading, language, spelling, and writing as basic second grade subjects. Art, physical

education, music, remedial reading, and dictionary skills should also be included in the curriculum, but were not considered basic subjects.

A comparison of the results of the available research with the Bulletin shows that subjects considered as basic in the Bulletin that were not considered as basic by a majority of the researchers were health, science, spelling, and writing. The researchers included art and music in the basic curriculum, and the authors of the Bulletin did not. The authors of the Bulletin listed remedial reading and dictionary skills as part of the second grade curriculum, and the researchers did not agree. However, the researchers would evaluate safety, geography, and library skills, which were not listed in the Bulletin.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

The research reported in this thesis involved a content analysis of report cards used in second grades of public schools in Oklahoma. The report cards were secured from a random sample of districts and schools within districts.

#### Selection of Districts

The school districts in this study were chosen from a complete listing of Oklahoma school systems in the "Oklahoma Educational Directory" (1976-77). Only those districts with at least one elementary school were included in the selection process. A table of random numbers was used in selecting those districts for the study. A total of 50 school districts were chosen.

In the districts with more than one elementary school, a table of random numbers was again used in order to determine which one of the elementary schools would be included in the study.

#### Securing Report Cards

Letters requesting a currently-used second grade report card were mailed to all 50 elementary school principals. The principals were assured that the school districts would not be identified nor would the report cards be used for any purpose other than the study. A

stamped, self-addressed envelope was included with each letter. A total of 39 replies was received as a result of the first mailing.

One month later, a second letter was sent to the 11 school principals who did not respond to the original request. Because a sample of 50 report cards was desired, an additional 12 school districts were randomly selected by the previous method. The same selection method for the elementary schools within those districts was used, and letters were sent to the principals of these 12 elementary schools requesting currently-used second grade report cards.

As a result of mailings one and two, a total of 50 responses was received. The data were obtained during the months of April and May, 1976.

#### Analysis of the Data

The report cards were placed in the categories of "urban" or "rural" as defined in "Number of Inhabitants - Oklahoma," the 1970 census of population: "According to the definition adopted for use in the 1970 census, the urban population comprises all persons living in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 inhabitants or more . . ." (1973). The rural population consisted of areas of less than 2,500 inhabitants. The sample included report cards from 19 urban areas and 31 rural areas.

The curriculum areas to be tabulated were listed in the "Annual Bulletin for Elementary and Secondary Schools," 1975-76. These subjects are listed as follows, with the basic subjects being marked with an asterisk: \*mathematics, \*social studies, \*health, \*science, \*reading,

\*language, \*spelling, \*writing, art, physical education, music, remedial reading, and dictionary skills.

The calculations for the subject of social studies will be shown as an example of the analysis of the data. The procedures listed below were followed identically for all of the analyses of the urban and rural report cards.

First, tabulations of the subject and sub-skill frequencies were made. Each time the subject of social studies was listed on a grade card, a single mark "1" was placed beside the words social studies on the tabulating sheet. Frequencies for social studies sub-skills were recorded in the same manner. The results are listed below:

Urban Schools (N = 19)

Social Studies	<del>111</del> <del>111</del> 111	(13)
History	11	(2)
Civics	1	(1)
Geography	1	(1)
Oklahoma History	1	(1)
Home Economics	1	(1)
Work and study skills	11	(2)
Factual knowledge	1	(1)
Thinking and problem solving skills	1	(1)
Discussion process	11	(2)
Understanding relationships	1	(1)
Maps and globes	1	(1)
Observes surroundings	1	(1)
Knows community information	1	(1)

Rural Schools (N = 31)

Social Studies	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>	lll	(18)
History	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>		(15)
Geography	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>	llll		(14)
Civics	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>	1		(11)
Home Economics	<del>lll</del>	<del>lll</del>	1		(11)
Oklahoma History		llll			(4)
Industrial Arts	<del>lll</del>	1			(6)
Drug Education	1				(1)
Humanities	1				(1)
Is learning about our world and people	ll				(2)
Is learning about community life	1				(1)
Contributing to discussions	ll				(2)
Understands ideas presented through discussion and reading	1				(1)

The next step was the computing of per cents for the frequencies (Appendix B), and arranging the sub-skills in an appropriate order. The frequencies for urban schools were divided by 19, the number of urban schools in the sample; the frequencies for rural schools were divided by 31, the number of rural schools in the sample.

In arranging the sub-skills, any areas within the broader subject of social studies that were usually taught in the form of separate courses were listed in the first section of the table in alphabetical order. Within the curriculum area of social studies, for example, civics, drug education, geography, history, home economics, humanities, industrial arts, and Oklahoma history would fit into this category.



The remaining sub-skills were further categorized into like groups in alphabetical order. It was the intent of the writer to present the data in a concise form, yet retaining characteristics as similar as possible to the report cards in the sample.

An example of step two is listed below:

Urban Schools (N = 19)

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
Social Studies	13	68
Civics	1	5
Geography	1	5
History	2	11
Home Economics	1	5
Oklahoma History	1	5
Contributes to discussions	2	11
Factual Knowledge	1	5
Maps, globes	1	5
Observes surroundings	1	5
Knows community information	1	5
Thinking and problem solving skills	1	5
Understanding relationships	1	5
Work and study skills	2	11

Rural Schools (N = 31)

Social Studies	18	58
Civics	11	35
Drug Education	1	3
Geography	14	45

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
History	15	48
Home Economics	11	35
Humanities	1	3
Industrial Arts	6	19
Oklahoma History	4	13
Contributes to discussions	2	6
Understands ideas presented through discussion and reading	1	3
Is learning about community life	1	3
Is learning about our world and people	2	6

These rural and urban tables were then combined into one chart.

See Table II--Social Studies for the combined social studies chart.

The frequency columns were omitted due to lack of space, and the sub-skills for each curricular area were placed in alphabetical order.

The procedures explained above were used in compiling the tables for social behavior and citizenship, work and study habits, comments of parents and teachers, number of judgments per card to be made by the teacher, and the types of grading systems used.

Some factors may have influenced the results of this study, one of the factors being the distribution of standardized report cards to several school districts in the random sample. One form was distributed by an Oklahoma school supply company, but the source of the second form was not identified on the card itself. One standardized form was used by five rural schools. The second form was used by two rural schools and one urban school.

In addition, the report card form used by one rural elementary school provided blank spaces for the teacher to fill in the second grade curricular areas being evaluated. However, the curricular areas were not listed by the principal before sending the card to the writer.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in Tables I - XVIII. Tables I - XV show the per cents of the 19 urban and 31 rural schools that evaluated pupil performance in the curriculum areas of mathematics, social studies, health, science, reading, language, spelling, writing, art, physical education, music, remedial reading, dictionary skills, social behavior and citizenship, and work and study habits. Sub-categories of the curriculum areas are also included.

Tables XVI - XVIII show the per cents of comments, number of judgments per card, and grading systems for the urban and rural schools in the sample.

#### Curricular Areas

Each table will be prefaced by a description of the major differences between rural and urban per cents within the curricular area. The tables may be reviewed for greater detail.

#### Mathematics

As shown in Table I, a greater per cent (94%) of rural schools evaluated mathematics than did urban schools (79%). A larger per cent of rural report cards also rated second graders' progress in the use of numbers in everyday problems, basic addition facts, and basic subtrac-

tion facts. None of the urban schools evaluated these areas of mathematics.

The students' progress in basic facts and skills of mathematics were examined in a larger per cent of urban report cards. More urban report cards than rural cards evaluated problem solving and computation.

As recorded in Table I, there are 16 sub-categories of mathematics that are not evaluated in both urban and rural report cards.

TABLE I  
MATHEMATICS

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
MATHEMATICS	94	79
Geometry	3	5
Measurement	6	5
Number readiness	--	5
Accuracy	6	--
Application	10	5
Uses numbers in everyday problems	19	--
Computation	--	11
Basic addition facts	13	--
Basic subtraction facts	13	--
Use of place value	6	--
Effort	--	5
Knows sets	3	--
Math vocabulary	--	5
Number knowledge	16	16
Correlates number value	--	11
Knows number words	3	--
Number sequence	--	5

TABLE I (Continued)

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Problem solving	10	21
Oral problem solving	3	--
Story problems	--	5
Thought problems	6	11
Reasoning	6	--
Speed	3	5

#### Social Studies

A larger per cent of the report cards of urban schools included evaluations of social studies. The greatest difference between the urban and rural schools' evaluations of social studies occurred in the sub-categories.

For example, a greater per cent of rural schools examined progress in the areas of history, geography, civics, home economics, and industrial arts. The urban schools emphasized the sub-categories of contributions to discussions and work and study skills.

TABLE II  
SOCIAL STUDIES

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
SOCIAL STUDIES	58	68
Civics	35	5
Drug education	3	--
Geography	45	5
History	48	11
Home economics	35	5
Humanities	3	--
Industrial arts	19	--
Oklahoma history	13	5
Contributes to discussions	6	11
Understands ideas presented through discussion and reading	3	--
Factual knowledge	--	5
Maps, globes	--	5
Observes surroundings	--	5
Is learning about community life	3	5
Is learning about our world and people	6	--
Thinking and problem solving skills	--	5
Understanding relationships	--	5
Work and study skills	--	11

## Health

The curriculum area of health was included in a greater per cent of rural report cards than urban report cards. Sub-categories of cleanliness, dental care, investigation, practice of healthful living, understanding of the physical and biological environment, and being well-rested were listed in three per cent of the rural cards and none of the urban cards.

The urban cards showed a slightly greater per cent than did the rural cards in the sub-category of observing health and safety rules.

TABLE III

## HEALTH

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
HEALTH	81	58
Cleanliness	3	--
Dental care	3	--
Investigation	3	--
Observes health and safety rules	3	5
Practices healthful living	3	--
Understanding of physical and biological environment	3	--
Well-rested	3	--



## Science

As shown in Table IV, science was evaluated in a greater per cent of the report cards of rural schools. There was a marked difference in the per cent of schools that included agriculture in the second grade report cards. Thirty-two per cent of the rural schools and five per cent of the urban schools evaluated achievement in agriculture.

Conservation, domestic science, participation in experiments, curiosity and appreciation of the world, and understanding of the physical and biological environment were included in the rural school report cards and were not included in the urban school report cards. The cards of the urban schools emphasized inquiry skills, problem identification, and scientific knowledge; these two latter sub-categories were omitted in rural school evaluations.

TABLE IV

## SCIENCE

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
SCIENCE	84	74
Agriculture	32	5
Conservation	3	--
Domestic science	3	--
Nature study	6	5

TABLE IV (Continued)

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Curiosity and appreciation of world	3	--
Inquiry skills	3	11
Participation in experiments	6	--
Problem identification	--	5
Scientific knowledge	--	5
Understanding basic concepts	3	5
Understanding of physical and biological environment	3	--

#### Reading

As shown in Table V, reading was evaluated in 97 per cent of the rural schools and 79 per cent of the urban schools. Rural schools included ratings of 16 reading sub-skills that were not evaluated by the urban schools. Library skills and listening skills were not examined in the urban schools of this sample.

In the sub-category of phonics, there was a small difference in per cent between the urban and rural report cards. However, phonics sub-skills were evaluated by rural schools, but not by urban schools.

Another major area of difference was in the reading sub-category of reading and study skills. Only three per cent of the rural schools, in comparison with 21 per cent of the urban schools, evaluated these skills. Of the reading and study sub-skills, there was a larger per cent of urban schools that evaluated oral reading, reading independently,

vocabulary development, silent reading, and comprehension.

TABLE V  
READING

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
READING	97	79
Library skills	3	--
Reads library books with interest	10	--
Reference skills	6	--
Listening skills	3	--
Hears likenesses and differences in sounds	3	--
Listens attentively	3	--
Remembers what he heard in proper sequence	3	--
Phonics	29	26
Associates sounds with letters	6	--
Blends sounds into words	6	--
Learns and uses sounds	10	--
Reading readiness	6	11
Reading and study skills	3	21
Comprehension	35	68
Does seatwork independently	3	--
Effort	--	5
Fluency	--	5
Knows alphabet sequence	3	--
Oral reading	29	42
Reads independently	13	21
Reads with expression	--	5
Recitation	3	--
Rhyming word identification	3	--
Satisfactory reading level	3	--
Knows letter names	3	--

TABLE V (Continued)

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Shows interest	--	5
Silent reading	3	11
Speed	6	--
Vocabulary development	6	16
Learns and uses new words	3	--
Sight vocabulary	3	--
Word attack	--	16

#### Language

As shown in Table VI, the subject of language was evaluated by a greater per cent of urban schools than rural schools. Spanish was included in five per cent of the urban report cards and none of the rural cards. The urban schools also indicated a larger per cent of evaluations of oral language and listening skills.

The subject of English was examined in a larger per cent of rural schools, as were written language skills, such as capitalization and punctuation. However, oral language skills were included in a larger per cent of the report cards of urban schools.

TABLE VI

## LANGUAGE

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
LANGUAGE	61	74
English	32	16
Grammar	--	10
Oral	10	5
Written	10	5
Spanish	--	5
Oral language skills	19	37
Expresses ideas well when speaking	13	--
Speaks clearly	--	11
Written language skills	19	11
Capitalization	10	--
Correct spelling in written work	3	--
Expresses ideas well when writing	6	21
Neat written work	3	--
Punctuation	10	--
Spaces letters and words correctly	3	--
Writes simple sentences correctly	3	--
Effort	--	5
Follows directions	--	5
Listening skills	3	16
Uses language skills correctly	--	11
Vocabulary	3	--

## Spelling

Ninety per cent of the rural schools included spelling grades on the report cards, in comparison with 84 per cent of the urban schools. A larger per cent of rural schools evaluated the application of spelling skills and rules in other work. However, an identical per cent of urban and rural schools graded mastery of new word assignments.

TABLE VII

## SPELLING

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
SPELLING	90	84
Applies spelling skills and rules in other work	29	21
Follows written work directions	--	5
Learns words for level	3	--
Masters new word assignments	26	26
Retention and use of new words learned	6	--
Sentence dictation	--	5
Uses phonetic concepts	6	--

## Writing

In the curriculum area of writing, there was only a one per cent difference between the urban and rural cards. The per cents for the sub-category of writing neatly and plainly were identical. However, a greater per cent of rural schools evaluated the sub-categories of forms and spaces letters and words correctly.

TABLE VIII

## WRITING

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
WRITING	94	95
Forms and spaces letters and words correctly	32	21
Good muscular control	--	5
Speed	3	5
Writes neatly and plainly	26	26
Writes well in other work	3	--

## Art

As shown in Table IX, the subject of art was included on a greater per cent of rural cards than urban cards, and drawing was evaluated by a larger per cent of rural schools. Also, three per cent of the rural schools included art appreciation, domestic art, and the use of art in other school activities, and these sub-categories were not present in the urban report cards.

Participation, skills, and the use of art tools and materials were graded by 11 per cent of the urban schools. None of the rural schools included these sub-skills.

TABLE IX

## ART

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
ART	61	53
Art appreciation	3	--
Drawing	10	5
Enjoys creative work	--	5
Expresses ideas creatively	3	11
Participation	--	11
Skills	--	11
Uses art in other school activities	3	--
Uses art tools and materials well	--	11



## Physical Education

Physical education was evaluated by a larger per cent of rural schools than urban schools. In the sub-categories of good sportsmanship and participation, there was only a one per cent difference between the urban and rural schools. However, a larger per cent of the urban schools graded the sub-categories of skill development and application, and body management.

TABLE X  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	42	26
Body management	--	11
Good sportsmanship	6	5
Muscular action	3	--
Participation	6	5
Skill application	--	11
Skill development	3	11

## Music

The curriculum area of music was included on six per cent more rural cards than urban cards. In addition, the sub-categories of band, music appreciation, and good listening habits were evaluated on rural, but not urban, report forms.

Group participation was rated on a greater per cent of urban cards, and there were six sub-categories of music that were included in the urban report cards and excluded from the rural report cards.

TABLE XI

## MUSIC

Curriculum Area and Sub-Skills	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
MUSIC	74	68
Attitude	--	5
Band	6	--
Carries simple tune	--	5
Good listening habits	3	--
Group participation	6	16
Keeps time to music	--	11
Learns rote songs	--	5
Matches tones	--	5
Music appreciation	10	--
Skills	--	11

## Remedial Reading and Dictionary Skills

As shown in Tables XII and XIII, a small per cent of the rural schools included evaluations of dictionary skills and remedial reading. These two curricular areas were omitted from all of the urban schools' report cards.

TABLE XII  
REMEDIAL READING

Curriculum Area	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
REMEDIAL READING	3	--

TABLE XIII  
DICTIONARY SKILLS

Curriculum Area	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
DICTIONARY SKILLS	3	--

### Social Behavior and Citizenship

As summarized in Table XIV, courtesy was evaluated by a larger per cent of rural schools than urban schools. The opposite was true for conduct. In the sub-categories for courtesy and conduct, the urban schools specified a greater number of specific behaviors, such as good manners and polite habits of speech. One sub-category of courtesy and conduct emphasized by the urban schools, and not the rural schools, was listening while others talked.

Cooperation was graded in 16 per cent of the urban and rural schools. In the cooperation sub-category, the rural schools' emphasis was working and playing well in groups, with minor emphasis on seven additional sub-skills. More urban schools than rural schools emphasized the cooperation sub-category of working and playing in groups. The two sub-categories of participating in group activities and getting along well with others received substantially higher per cents in the urban schools than the rural schools.

Twenty-one per cent of the urban schools evaluated responsible behavior, as compared with none of the rural schools.

Rural schools included an evaluation of physical health which was omitted in the urban evaluations. The rural schools also examined the pupils' mental health in greater detail by including statements such as happy while at work and sense of humor.

Small differences in per cents between urban and rural schools were indicated in the areas of fairness, initiative, personal habits, respects school regulations, self-control, and safety habits.

TABLE XIV  
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND CITIZENSHIP

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Cooperation	16	16
Cheerful acceptance of suggestions	3	--
Cooperates well with teacher	3	--
Gets along well with others	6	37
Helpful attitude	3	--
Participates in group activities	6	21
Shares	3	--
Takes turns	3	--
Works and plays well in group	35	47
Courtesy and Conduct	32 19	26 26
Does not disturb others	--	5
Annoys others	--	11
Good manners	--	5
Inclined to mischief	--	11
Listens while others are talking	3	32
Inattentive	--	11
Obedience	6	--
Polite habits of speech	--	11
Quiet and orderly	--	5
Remains quiet when necessary	10	--
Rude and discourteous	--	11
Talks and laughs quietly	--	5
Talks too much	--	5
Whispers too much	--	11
Fairness	10	5
Cares for appearance of room, buildings, and grounds	3	--
Cares for own property	--	11
Considers feelings of others	3	5
Respects rights and property of others	19	26

TABLE XIV (Continued)

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Good sportsmanship	3	--
Initiative	16	11
Leadership	3	--
Mental health	10	5
Happy while at work	3	--
Sense of humor	3	--
Thinks for himself	3	--
Personal habits	13	11
Cleans up after self	3	--
Hangs up wraps	3	--
Keeps desk orderly and neat	6	5
Neat and clean	--	5
Sits, stands and walks correctly	--	5
Physical health	16	--
Respects authority	3	16
Respects school regulations	13	11
Responsible	--	21
Dependability	--	5
Safety habits	3	5
Self-control	13	11
Self-confidence	6	11
Lacks self-confidence	--	11
Self-discipline	3	16
Self-expression	--	11
Thrift	3	--

### Work and Study Habits

As shown in Table XV, the areas of emphasis for both rural and urban schools were similar. Completing work on time was evaluated in 45 per cent of the rural schools and 63 per cent of the urban schools. Listens to and follows directions was also emphasized by a larger per cent of urban than rural schools.

Other areas of emphasis for both rural and urban schools were neat work, taking care of books and materials, using time wisely, and working independently. Urban schools had a higher per cent of ratings in all of these sub-categories of work and study habits.

Working without disturbing others was evaluated by 13 per cent of the rural schools. None of the urban schools graded this behavior.

TABLE XV  
WORK AND STUDY HABITS

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Able to concentrate	3	--
Accurate work	3	--
Works carefully	--	5
Capable of doing better	3	--
Contributes to class discussions	3	11
Effort	3	11

TABLE XV (Continued)

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Industry	13	5
Gives up too easily	--	11
Tries challenging activities	3	--
Listens to and follows directions	45	73
Follows written directions	3	--
Listens in class	16	--
Neat work	23	32
Pride in work	6	5
Strives to improve work	9	--
Needs home study	3	--
Paces self in doing work	3	--
Begins work promptly	6	--
Completes work on time	45	63
Slow worker	--	11
Poor study habits	--	11
Takes good care of books and materials	16	32
Comes without needed materials	--	11
Has necessary materials	3	--
Uses time wisely	29	37
Wastes time	--	16
Works independently	29	37
Seeks help only when needed	6	--
Works without disturbing others	13	--



### Comments and Signatures

The per cents for urban schools were greater than those of the rural schools in the areas of teacher comments and parental signatures and comments. The greater differences were in the provisions for teacher comments and parental comments.

TABLE XVI  
COMMENTS AND SIGNATURES

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Teacher		
Comments	35	95
Parent		
Comments	6	47
Signatures	94	100

Number of Judgments Per Card  
to Be Made by Teacher

The number of judgments per card to be made by the teachers in the rural schools ranged from 13 to 62; the median was 34.5. The range for the urban schools was from 11 to 42, and the median was 27.

The ranges for the rural and urban schools varied considerably. However, there was a difference of only 7.5 between the mid-scores of the urban and rural report cards, and the distributions were even for both urban and rural report cards.

TABLE XVII  
NUMBER OF JUDGMENTS PER CARD  
TO BE MADE BY TEACHER

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
62	3	--
59	3	--
57	3	--
52	3	--
51	3	--
45	6	--
42	--	5
41	16	--
40	6	--
39	--	5
38	3	--
36	--	5

TABLE XVII (Continued)

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
34	--	5
31	6	11
30	6	5
29	3	--
28	6	--
27	--	16
25	--	5
24	3	--
23	--	5
22	--	5
21	3	--
20	6	5
19	3	11
17	6	--
13	3	--
12	--	11
11	--	5
	Median 34.5	27

One rural report card did not indicate the number of judgments per card.

### Grading Systems

As shown in Table XVIII, a report card grading system that is a combination of two or more systems (such as letter grades, check marks, or the school's own system) was most common for both rural and urban schools.

For the rural schools the letter grades system and the school's own system had identical per cents. The grading system used by the smallest per cent of rural schools was the check marks system.

The check marks system received the second highest per cent for the urban schools, followed by the school's own system. The urban schools' grading system showing the smallest per cent was the letter grades system.

TABLE XVIII  
GRADING SYSTEMS

	Per Cent	
	Rural N=31	Urban N=19
Check marks	10	32
Letter grades (A, B, C, D, F)	13	5
School's own system	13	21
Combinations of the above systems	61	42

One rural report card did not indicate the grading system used.

### Summary

The results of this study indicate that a larger per cent of rural schools included evaluations on their report cards of the curricular areas of mathematics, health, science, reading, spelling, art, physical education, music, remedial reading, and dictionary skills. A larger per cent of urban report cards included evaluations of social studies, language, and writing than did the rural schools. In addition, rural schools evaluated a greater number of curricular sub-categories than did urban schools.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The main purpose of this study was to analyze the curricular content of report cards used in second grades in Oklahoma public schools. The randomly-selected sample was composed of 50 public school districts, 19 urban and 31 rural. Report cards from these districts were requested, and the data were collected during the months of April and May, 1976.

The curricular areas used in the analysis of the data were listed in the "Annual Bulletin for Elementary and Secondary Schools" (1975-76) and were mathematics, social studies, health, science, reading, language, spelling, writing, art, physical education, music, remedial reading, and dictionary skills. The results of this study were reported through the use of per cents.

The results of this study were as follows:

1. A greater per cent of rural schools evaluated mathematics than did urban schools. There was little agreement between the urban and rural schools as to the mathematics sub-skills that should be included in an evaluation.

2. A larger per cent of the urban schools' report cards contained progress reports of social studies and social studies sub-categories, such as work and study skills. A greater per cent of the rural schools' report cards emphasized social studies subject areas, such as history,

geography, civics, home economics, and industrial arts than did the urban cards.

3. The curriculum area of health was evaluated in a greater per cent of rural cards. In addition, the rural report cards contained more evaluations of health sub-categories, such as cleanliness, dental care, and observation of health and safety rules.

4. A larger per cent of rural schools included progress reports of science than did urban progress reports. Also, achievement in agriculture, conservation, domestic science, and nature study were graded in a larger per cent of rural report cards.

5. Reading progress was rated by a greater per cent of rural report cards. Rural schools included evaluations of library skills and listening skills; these skills were not evaluated by the urban schools. There was little difference in the per cents of rural and urban schools evaluating the sub-category of phonics. However, a larger per cent of urban schools graded reading and study skills, such as oral reading, comprehension, and vocabulary development, than did the rural schools.

6. Language evaluations were included in a larger per cent of urban cards. Oral language skills were included in a larger per cent of the urban cards. In contrast, written language skills were included in a larger per cent of the cards from rural schools.

7. A larger per cent of rural schools than urban schools evaluated spelling. The sub-skill of mastering new word assignments was included in an equal per cent of the urban and rural report cards. There was little agreement between the urban and rural schools about the spelling sub-skills that should be evaluated.

8. One per cent more of the urban report cards included progress evaluations of the curricular area of writing than did the rural report cards. The sub-category writing neatly and plainly was evaluated by an equal per cent of rural and urban report cards.

9. A greater per cent of rural school cards graded the subject of art and the art sub-category of drawing. Also, the sub-category of art appreciation was included on a small per cent of the rural cards and none of the urban cards. However, the urban report cards evaluated a greater number of art sub-categories, such as expressing ideas creatively and participation.

10. Physical education was evaluated by a larger per cent of rural report cards.

11. Music was evaluated by six per cent more rural school report cards than urban school report cards. The rural and urban cards evaluated different music sub-categories with the exception of group participation. This sub-category was evaluated by a larger per cent of urban schools.

12. The curricular areas of remedial reading and dictionary skills were evaluated by a small per cent of the rural schools and none of the urban schools.

13. In social behavior and citizenship evaluations, an equal per cent of rural and urban schools included the sub-category of cooperation. The rural report cards evaluated a greater number of specific cooperative behaviors, such as cooperating with teacher and sharing. A larger per cent of rural schools evaluated courtesy with the opposite being true for conduct. In this sub-category, the urban schools evaluated a greater number of specific behaviors relating to courtesy and conduct



than did the rural schools. Urban schools evaluated responsible behavior, as compared with none of the rural schools. There were small differences in the per cents between urban and rural schools in the sub-categories of fairness, initiative, personal habits, respect of school regulations, self-control, and safety habits.

14. In evaluating work and study habits, a larger per cent of urban schools rated the sub-categories of following directions, neat work, completing work on time, taking care of books and materials, using time wisely, and working independently. The rural report cards included evaluations of ability to concentrate, capable of doing better work, home study needed, and working without disturbing others; these sub-categories were omitted in the urban report cards.

15. A much larger per cent of urban schools included teacher comments than did rural schools. In addition, a larger per cent of urban cards included parental comments and signatures.

16. For rural schools the range for the number of judgments per card was from 13 to 62, a span of 49. The range of the urban cards was from 11 to 42, a span of 31. The median number of judgments for rural schools was 34.5 in comparison with an urban median of 27, a difference of 7.5.

17. A grading system that was a combination of check marks, letter grades, or the school's own system received larger per cents for both urban and rural schools' report cards. In the urban report cards, in order from the highest to the lowest per cents, the grading systems used were check marks, the school's own system, and letter grades. For the rural schools, letter grades and the school's own system received identical per cents, followed by check marks.

## Discussion

The curricular areas suggested by Phelps (1964) for inclusion in the elementary report cards for the Westside Community Schools in urban Omaha, Nebraska were reading, language arts, spelling, arithmetic, art, physical education, and citizenship. Reading was evaluated in 79 per cent of the urban report cards in this study; language arts, 74 per cent; spelling, 84 per cent; arithmetic, 79 per cent; art, 53 per cent; and physical education, 26 per cent. The majority of the urban schools in this study agreed with Phelps by including every curricular area that he suggested, with the exception of art.

The results of a study conducted in elementary public schools in urban Minneapolis, Minnesota (1972) showed that the curricular areas of reading, language, mathematics, social and physical sciences, music, art, and physical development should be included in an elementary progress report. The majority of the urban schools in this study included all of these curricular areas but physical development.

Peterson and Smith (1972) included the following curricular areas in the Staffing Plan for Upgrading Rural Schools program: reading, language, computation, social studies, and science. The majority of the rural schools in this study included evaluations of these curricular areas, with the exception of computation, in their report cards.

The results of this study indicate that a larger per cent of the rural report cards evaluated the basic curricular areas of reading, mathematics, health, science, and spelling. In addition, the curricular areas of art, physical education, music, remedial reading, and dictionary skills were evaluated by a larger number of rural schools.

A larger per cent of the urban schools' report cards contained evaluations of social studies, language, and writing. It is the opinion of the writer that educators in urban school districts recognize the importance of the communication skills to urban dwellers.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of Americans who moved to rural areas. The urban area school districts must resolve problems such as segregation and decentralization, thus detracting from the task of education. Morphet, Johns, and Reller (1974) stated the citizens of the core city in a metropolitan area were disenchanted with the schools because they did not believe the board of education acted in the interest of their children. The writer wondered whether or not this attitude has influenced the results of this study that showed the rural schools evaluated more curricular areas in greater depth than did the urban schools.

#### Recommendations

It is suggested that much preparation and thought be given in the development of report cards. In some instances, the report card is the only contact between parents and the school. The report card should reflect the philosophy of the school system.

In gathering data for this study the writer encountered standardized report card forms distributed by a school supply company. Questions such as "Who is the person or persons responsible for developing the report card for the school supply firm?" and "Is this person a trained educator?" should be answered before a school system uses a standardized form. The advisability of using a standardized form is questioned as individual school systems have different philosophies and goals that

would not be considered in a mass-produced report card.

It is also suggested that report cards stress the positive aspects of the child whose work is being evaluated. Negative statements, such as "annoys others" should be avoided. In rating a child's social behavior all statements by the teacher should be carefully considered in order to insure a fair and objective evaluation free of the influence of personality conflicts.

The writer discovered that there is a small amount of research concerning the curricular areas included in report cards. The majority of available report card research studied the types of marking systems, such as check marks or letter grades. Research concerning the curricular areas included on report cards is needed in order to improve the accuracy and objectivity of evaluations. It is the belief of the writer that quality evaluations should be a prime goal of today's educators. The writer suggests replication of this study over a period of years to determine if, in fact, report cards do change to reflect changes in curriculums.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Date

Name  
Address  
City, State Zip

Dear

I am a graduate student in elementary education at Oklahoma State University. I am now working on my thesis which is a study concerning the curriculum areas taught and evaluated in second grade classes in Oklahoma. The report card is being used as an indicator of those curriculum areas taught by each district.

I randomly chose 50 school districts from the population of all school districts in Oklahoma, and your school district was one of the 50 chosen for the sample.

Will you please return in the enclosed envelope a report card used in your second grade evaluations? I assure you that the report card will be used for no other purpose than the one stated above, and no school district will be in any way identifiable in the study. If you do not use some form of report card, won't you write "none" on this letter and return it to me in the enclosed envelope.

Being a full-time student I cannot pay for the report card. However, I shall be happy to send to you an abstract of my thesis findings. If you want a copy of the abstract, please return this letter with your report card.

Your response will be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Austin  
Address  
City, State Zip

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDING PER CENTS AND FREQUENCIES

<u>Rural</u>		<u>Urban</u>	
<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
1	3	1	5
2	6	2	11
3	10	3	16
4	13	4	21
5	16	5	26
6	19	6	32
7	23	7	37
8	26	8	42
9	29	9	47
10	32	10	53
11	35	11	58
12	39	12	63
13	42	13	68
14	45	14	73
15	48	15	79
16	52	16	84
17	55	17	89
18	58	18	95
19	61	19	100
20	65		
21	68		
22	71		
23	74		
24	77		
25	81		
26	84		
27	87		
28	90		
29	94		
30	97		
31	100		

VITA

Stephanie Hewitt Austin

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

**Thesis:** CURRICULAR CONTENT OF FIFTY SECOND GRADE REPORT CARDS IN  
RURAL AND URBAN OKLAHOMA

**Major Field:** Curriculum and Instruction

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in McAlester, Oklahoma, March 14, 1951, the  
daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Hewitt; married August 11, 1972,  
to William J. Austin.

**Education:** Graduated from Midwest City High School, Midwest City,  
Oklahoma in May, 1969. Graduated from the University of  
Nebraska at Lincoln in May, 1973, with a Bachelor of Science  
in Home Economics, with a double major in Elementary Education  
and Human Development. Completed requirements for the Master  
of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1977.

**Professional Experience:** Substitute Teacher and Reading Assistant,  
Westside Community Schools, Omaha, Nebraska, 1974-75.