

**EFFECTS OF A CHILDREN'S BOOK AND A TRADITIONAL  
TEXTBOOK ON THIRD GRADE STUDENTS'  
ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTITUDES  
TOWARD SOCIAL STUDIES**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The search to find ways to teach primary social studies well is frustrating. Child development specialists (Weikart, 1988) following Piagetian theory believe that young children develop mental schemata through active involvement. They must act on the environment and do their own learning. Thought develops through motor activities and sensory experiences. Children come to know something only when it is incorporated into action schemata. Piaget believed that every person must construct his/her own reality. Knowing becomes a process of reacting to the environment. Thus, reality comes from receiving limited information that becomes more refined over time and through activity.

Textbooks, however, are not constructed in a way to help the child incorporate the knowledge they present into an action schemata. Larkins, Hawkins and Gilmore (1987) concluded after studying social studies textbooks that much of the content in current texts is redundant, superfluous, vacuous, and needlessly superficial. Texts that were designed for young children in the primary grades were especially lacking in the concrete material and vibrant experiences so necessary for the learning process. Larkins et al. (1987) concluded that if asked to choose between teaching

primary-grade social studies with the available texts or eliminating social studies from the curriculum, they would choose to do the latter.

However, textbook selection and production was originally designed to make a positive contribution to America's schools during a period of great political and economic change. Textbook selection was a product of state governments in the early 1900s. In an effort to provide free and uniform textbooks to a poor and mobile population, state legislators enacted laws to limit the excesses of the textbook industry, and to control the problems of a free-wheeling, post-frontier society (Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1986).

Many of these regulations are still state laws and numerous of them are antagonistic to the production of textbooks that are creative and productive. State authorities justified these decisions because they believed that the regulations gave them more control over books that would fit the state curriculum guidelines. However, as time passed the notion of state enforcement of curricular standards has eroded in practice, if not in rhetoric (Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1986).

Publication dates, readability formulas, special interest groups, the conservative backlash of the 1970s, more narrowly defined goals to meet the needs of the demands for higher tests scores, the need to avoid controversial topics, and the call to meet the demands of each state's curriculum has produced textbooks that have resulted in a shallow form of congruence. Conscientious authors, professional associations, foundations, and publishers



have tried to bring more focused, coherent textbooks. They have been frustrated because publishers would not publish them, adoption committees would not choose them, and teachers would not teach them (Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1986).

#### Statement of the Problem

Teachers have been encouraged by many writers to expand the use of children's literature in the classroom to teach social studies (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1981; Bennett, 1986; Cullinan, 1987; Finn & Ravitch, 1988; Goodman, 1986; James & Zarrillo, 1989). Yet, little research has been conducted to support this idea. The research has been limited to a few dissertations that examined children's literature to evoke a change in student attitudes and a comparison of the achievement of students using factual and story forms in social studies. A few studies were found that investigated the effects of children's books on knowledge acquisition.

The specific research questions to be addressed in this study were:

1. Will third grade students who are taught social studies with a children's book evidence a higher score on a teacher made test than third grade students taught social studies by using a textbook?
2. Will third grade students who are taught social studies with a children's book evidence more positive attitudes toward social studies than children taught by using a textbook?

### Hypotheses

Although there was very little research to indicate that using children's literature to teach social studies to young children would influence attitudes and achievement, opinion literature led the researcher to test the following directional hypotheses:

H1: Achievement scores of third grade students who are taught a unit on the American Revolution by using a children's book will be significantly higher than scores for students who are taught from a classroom textbook on a test of content common to both the children's book and the traditional textbook.

H2: Third grade students who are taught social studies with a children's book will evidence a more positive attitude toward social studies as measured by an attitude survey than students taught by a traditional textbook.

H3: Third grade students who were taught social studies with a children's book will show a more positive attitude toward their social studies class on a post-test than those students taught with their regular textbook.

H4: Third grade students taught with a children's book will rank social studies more positively on a post-test than students taught with a regular textbook.

H5: Third grade students taught with a children's book will prefer hearing their teacher read the children's book to reading their regular textbook.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions were used:

1. Children's literature refers to fiction and nonfiction books written for children.
2. Primary social studies refers to social studies taught in the primary grades, specifically grades one through three.
3. Trade books refer to books that are written and published for children and are available through libraries and book stores. They may be fiction or nonfiction.
4. Young children refers to children from primary grades from one to three.
5. Piagetian theory is theory concerning child development developed by Jean Piaget.
6. Textbooks are books developed by an author or a group of authors to teach a skill or a series of skills in a particular field of knowledge.
7. Attitudes are feelings or emotions toward a fact or state. They are defined in this study as responses made to four researcher developed questions related toward social studies and the type of books used.
8. Achievement is defined in this study as scores on a 15-item teacher-made multiple choice test.

### Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to third grade students in an elementary school located in a university community in a southwestern state.

2. The sample was delimited to those students who had parental permission to participate.

### Assumptions

The subjects who participated in the study were a representative sample of the population of the selected school.

### Overview of the Study

The statement of the problem, hypotheses, and definitions were discussed in Chapter I. A review of relevant literature will be discussed in Chapter II. The methodology used will be discussed in Chapter III. Findings are presented in Chapter IV. Conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study are presented in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

For more than seven decades authors have stated that there is a trade book-social studies connection, and they have explored this connection at length. Because of this persistence, the literature is rich in opinion literature concerning the importance of using trade books to teach social studies. Teachers have been encouraged by these writers to expand the use of children's literature into the classroom to teach social studies (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1981; Bennett, 1986; Cullinan, 1987; Finn & Ravitch, 1988; Goodman, 1986; James & Zarrillo, 1989). Yet, little research has been conducted to support this idea. A few dissertations have examined using children's literature to evoke a change in student attitudes and a comparison of the achievement of students using factual and story forms in social studies. A few studies were found that investigated the effects of children's books on knowledge acquisition.

In summary, because of the lack of research related to the use of children's literature to influence attitudes and achievement, this study compares the effects of using children's literature and the effects of using textbook material upon achievement in learning and attitudes toward social studies.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with the following:

1. A review of opinion literature concerning the use of textbooks in the teaching of social studies to young children.
2. A selected review of representative opinion literature related to the use of trade books in the teaching of social studies.
3. A review of research studies which have investigated the effects of using children's literature upon achievement.
4. A review of research studies which have investigated the effects of using children's literature upon attitude change toward social studies.

### Opinion Literature

#### Textbooks

Despite widespread advocacy, the literature-social studies connection remains largely unrealized. The National Science Foundation and Educational Products Information Exchange Institute found in surveys that 90 percent of instructional time involved print materials. Furthermore, these sources rarely extend beyond a single textbook (Hall, 1985).

Hoge (1986) states that too often the hard-cover basal textbook dominates teaching and learning in the classroom. One of the reasons for this dominance lies in the environment of the school. Because the supply of up-to-date supplementary materials has been depleted as budgets have been reduced, there has been an increase in textbook-alone instruction. Teachers have also responded to the

pressure of state-wide testing and criticism of all but the most traditional teaching practices. The temptation is, therefore, to allow the textbook to determine the curriculum in math, science, social studies, and health.

A problem that young children have in reading and comprehending elementary textbooks is the lack of an experiential background that allows the complex social studies content to be understood. Hoge (1986) states that students who have never left their community to travel may not see any point in learning about distant places. Students, he states, who have no sense of personal or family history may also find it difficult to relate to historical settings in their textbook.

Another problem students face with the textbook is the heavy technical concept load found in the passages. These passages contain concepts comprised of one or two word ideas which have specialized meaning in social studies. Basal social studies textbooks are notorious for their heavy technical concept load and their thin discussion of that load (Hoge, 1986). Hard-to-pronounce names, references to long periods of time or distances, and abstract concepts that have no meaning to students' schemata make social studies difficult for children.

The Educational Products Information Exchange which is based at Teachers' College, Columbia University (1986) reviewed nine major textbook series initially to determine what skills and content are really desired to effectively teach social studies. They found, however, the following:

(a) In the majority of series, there was inadequate cohesion and progression both from grade to grade and within a single grade.

(b) The prior years' treatment of international and cross cultural subjects has been replaced by concentration on the United States.

(c) Most of the series prescribed rote treatment of subjects and issues.

(d) Consideration of certain topics was the exception, while the mention of them was the rule.

(e) Also, in most series subjects important to today's world such as telecommunication, computers, robots, poverty, and population were given virtually no discussion.

(f) Although women and some minorities were included, mostly through illustrations, other minorities such as Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans were not fairly portrayed.

(g) Quantitative skills such as map and globe reading took precedence over qualitative skills such as judgement exercises.

(h) The biggest concern was the lack of any tied-together skills. The books, the EPIE stated, were simply a hodgepodge of information.

Woodward, Elliot, and Nagel (1986) also charged that textbooks are too broad in scope, thus lacking in substance. They believed that current social studies textbooks are really collections of loosely related volumes with little continuity from one year to another.



Larkins, Hawkins, and Gilmore (1987) criticized primary social studies textbooks for their noninformative content. Information, they stated, may be defined as noninformative if it is needlessly redundant and already a part of the knowledge that children possess, such as the terms mother, father, and home. Furthermore, noninformative information may also be superfluous information that children will acquire without instruction such as the topic of community helpers.

Larkins, Hawkins, and Gilmore (1987) also stated that knowledge treated vacuously is labeled as superficial information. An example of this would occur when a student having no prior knowledge of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is exposed to a textbook that covers the topic by using three sentences. Other types of nongenuine knowledge included sanitized information, which is content that has been purged of any opportunity to give offense, biased information, which represents a single point of view, and aimless information, which is information that is not clearly related to important goals of social studies, or even to the text.

Readability formulas have added their own set of problems to textbook publishers. The developers of these formulas intended them to be informal, approximate ways to check on the reading level of textbooks, and therefore only one of many factors applied to the analysis of books. However, states began to mandate certain scores on the readability formula as a pre-condition for adoption. As a result, publishers were forced to use formulas as a style manual. Today, with one exception, publishers will not take the chance that

a book will be eliminated from consideration because a readability check yields a score too high or too low (Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1986).

Tyson-Bernstein and Woodward (1986) also stated that the formula adds to the problem of comprehension by producing the vapid writing style found in many textbooks. The connective tissue of the language has been stripped away leaving writing that is unnatural, and rhythm that is choppy and monotonous. Complex sentences, therefore, which are so essential to explain the relationship between ideas are broken into short simple sentences. As a result, children often fail to make essential connections necessary to understanding because the inferences are not clear to the readers. This form of writing results in what teachers and legislators have called the "dumbing down" of the material. Because readability formulas eliminate the connection of ideas, there is an argument that the readability formulas can make the text harder, not easier to understand.

Special interest groups, such as the conservative groups, the minorities, the handicapped, the environmentalists, and the elderly have added to the complexity of textbook development and adoption. They have created a political tug-of-war in every community. These special interest groups are often blamed when the superficial treatment of too many topics is mentioned (Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1986).

As curriculum departments in state agencies have become larger and more concerned about specifying narrowly defined goals and

objectives, the idea of curricular congruence has become unchallenged. The book must match the curriculum, and both must match the test (Tyson-Bernstein & Woodward, 1986). Therefore, burdened by readability formulas, special interest groups, narrowly defined goals, lack of cohesion from grade to grade, emphasis on qualitative skills, heavy technical concept loads, and lack of any tied-together skills have caused textbooks to struggle to deal effectively with the tasks they have been assigned to do.

#### Trade Books

The trade book-social studies connection is not a new phenomenon. For more than 70 years authors have explored this relationship at length (McGowan & Sutton, 1988). One of the most popular social studies books published during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, by Bostonian Samuel Goodrich, was literature based. Samuel Goodrich was a well known publisher in Hartford and Boston. However, it was under the pen name of Peter Parley that he became famous. He was the first author to write explicitly for American children about the American culture. Before his death he had also written tales of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Over twelve million copies of his books were printed between the years of 1828 and 1912 (Davis, 1988).

His work was based upon the thinking of John Amos Comenius and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Comenius urged the teacher to appeal to the child's sensory perceptions by using material based on the child's own experiences. By also using Rousseau's theory of allowing the

child to develop naturally as he searched for knowledge, Goodrich frequently utilized dialogues, conversations, and illustrations (Smith & Vining, 1989).

In his notes to teachers, Goodrich stated that children wished to participate in their own learning and that the teacher should begin with the child's present location in time and space. With the help of books, the child could make connections with content that the teacher wished to address (Smith & Vining, 1989).

Teachers who were interested in this strategy advocated by Goodrich had available 39 sources of literature by 1949. By 1988, a literature search of journals, and unpublished materials from 1929 to 1988 yielded a minimum of 164 relevant citations. One sign of a relationship's maturity, McGowan and Sutton (1988) state, is the sizable body of literature that supports it.

The definitions of the terms trade book and children's literature showed little change over the seven decades. A trade book was characterized as works written for a library or bookstore market rather than for pedagogical use. Children's literature was characterized as any non-textbook which could include fiction, poetry, biography, and non-fiction accounts (McGowan & Sutton, 1988).

Although definitions were held constant, perceptions of the literature-social studies relationship grew more realistic and technical over time. Before 1949, trade books were envisioned as a means to foster abstract personal qualities. Children's literature was said to encourage sympathetic understanding of other cultures,

and to extend students' awareness beyond immediate experiences. It could capture the tenor of another era, illustrate social studies concepts, provide background information about world events, and provide material for character development (Gray, 1947; Jackson, 1931; Lyons, 1941; Ramsey, 1936).

In the 1950s and 1960s children's literature became a means to supplement textbook instruction with more readable materials, enrich social studies with detail, support key concepts with factual information, and add an emotional dimension to social studies. Trade books might help develop values essential for citizenship, teach history through primary sources, and convey social studies subject matter more effectively (Chambers & O'Brian, 1969; Dahmus, 1956; Dawson, 1965; Larrick, 1955; Tuttle, 1954; Usery, 1966).

During the 1970s the trend toward a practical, functional view of the trade book-social studies connection intensified. Some reformers of that period nominated children's literature as the cornerstone of future social studies curriculum. They believed that literary works could augment traditional social studies materials, aid in individualizing instruction, and serve as resources for curriculum development (Fassler & Janis, 1985; Levstik, 1983; McGowan, 1987; McGowan & Sutton, 1988; O'Donnell, 1977; Schreiber, 1984; Wheeler, 1971).

As opinion literature shows, educators have long believed that teaching about the known world through the memorization of selected facts and static knowledge has several limitations. Therefore, in an effort to make social studies more effective, Hilda Taba, Jerome

Bruner, and Robert Gagne developed a curriculum that provided a set of categories in which children might sort out and respond to the world about them (James & Zarrillo, 1989). Many teachers, however, had difficulty in creating a meaningful unit of study out of seemingly unrelated curricula. The factor that provided a sense of unification and cohesion was history. The movement toward history-based social studies became nation wide with many supporters from higher education, government and business (The Bradley Commission on History in the Schools, 1988). California's History-Social Science Framework (1988) consisted of the embodiment of history-as-the-core social studies. The curriculum had the expectation that children should learn history not through inquiry or discovery but through experiences in art, music, drama, and especially children's literature (James & Zarillo, 1989). In the 1980s, the pedagogical use of children's literature in the study of history was frequently addressed (Brown & Abel, 1982; Ciaciolo, 1981; Gallo & Barksdale, 1983; Heinly & Hilton, 1982; Lehman & Hayes, 1985; Oldland 1980; Tovey & Weible, 1981; Van Dongen, 1987).

Teachers were asked to teach history using children's literature with the following guidelines: (a) As many selections as possible should be primary sources, written or dictated by eyewitnesses, or be well written, child appropriate accounts based on referenced primary sources. (b) The material should hold the same perspective as that held by the period being studied. (c) Classroom reading levels should determine the literature chosen. (d) Children should be exposed to songs, poetry, speeches, diaries,

and letters of the period studied. They should also experience historical fiction, nonfiction and biographies (James & Zarillo, 1989).

In summary, the trade book-social studies connection is not a new phenomenon. Roughly 70 years ago, authors began exploring this relationship. Today, a literature search yields more than 164 relevant citations found in journal articles and unpublished material alone. In the 70 years that have passed, authors' views of children's trade books have changed from thinking of trade books as a supplement to social studies textbooks, to thinking of trade books as the curriculum itself.

#### Research Related to Achievement

Though the amount of opinion literature concerning achievement through the use of children's literature is rich, a review of research which investigated the effects of using trade books upon achievement in social studies show research is sparse. Research has been limited to areas that border the area of achievement.

Kingdon (1957) conducted one of the first research studies related to this subject. Kingdon undertook to find if there were any significant differences in the use of story form and factual form recall. The researcher, after studying a group of fourth grade social studies students who used selections in story form and a group who used factual forms, reported that there was no significant difference, regardless of reading achievement, among fourth grade students in recalling social studies material from either story or

factual forms of reading. To Kingdon's surprise in the 547 expressions of preference, 58 percent preferred the story form to the factual form. However, no matter which preference was expressed, students made scores on both tests that were about the same. Kingdon concluded, therefore, that the main implication to be drawn from the study was that neither form of material possessed any consistent advantage to pupils in the learning of facts.

However, in 1961 Smith had studied the effect of the expansion and condensation of science and social studies reading selections upon the comprehension of fifth grade students. She reported that the effect of the expanded social studies reading selection upon the comprehension of fifth grade pupils was significantly different from the effect of the condensed social studies reading selection. The difference obtained favored the use of the expanded version. The comprehension of the fifth grade students of superior reading ability was significantly enhanced by the expanded versions of the social studies reading selection. The effect of both the expanded reading selection and the condensed selection upon comprehension of the fifth grade pupils of average and below reading ability was not significantly different. She concluded that in the teaching of science and social studies topics in the elementary school that students should be helped to arrive at understanding the technical terms and concepts which are prerequisites to the course. Smith also concluded that the total number of topics studied should be decreased so that only those topics considered crucial should be



studied. She further recommended that these crucial concepts should be augmented with amplifying material.

Smith's conclusions (1961) have enormous significance to the social studies teacher. Because of the heavy technical concept load found in textbook passages, because of the students' frequent lack of experience, and because of the lack of discussion of those concepts, many students do not readily have the ability to comprehend what they have read in the text. Therefore, Smith's recommendations that the total number of topics studied be decreased to allow time for the augmentation of amplifying material to be used makes sense to the teacher who is faced with the problem of children's lack of comprehension.

Talley (1988) added to the knowledge of how children learn by researching the effect of picture and story text structure on recall and comprehension. She concluded that the use of literature text resulted in significantly greater recall of correct details than the use of the basal text. The use of the basal text resulted in significantly more recall of details as errors and significantly more logical additions than either story grammar text or literature. She defined story grammar as methods of analyzing the internal structure of stories. The common elements of all story grammars are the theme, the plot, and the resolution of the story. A story grammar may also be a method of rewriting stories so that the text follows an identified structure.

Talley (1988) also concluded that the use of a literature text resulted in a higher proportion of appropriate detail substitutions

than either the basal text or the story grammar text. An appropriate detail substitution occurs when children use language from their own life experiences for those of the text. An example may be the use of the word "colors" for crayons. The implication being that students who read literature texts were better able to apply what they have read to their own personal experience.

According to Talley (1988), the average number of words per story and the average sentence length per story were computed for all basal, story grammar and literature selections. While the basal texts contained more words and shorter sentences than either the story grammar or literature texts, the story grammar and literature texts produced significantly higher recall and comprehension scores as compared to the basal text. As discussed previously, textbook publishers control sentence length on the assumption that shorter sentences produce more accurate comprehension and recall. As a result of this study, it may be seen that this practice is based on a false premise. Longer sentences within a well structured text may increase rather than decrease reading comprehension and recall.

The results of this study (Talley, 1988) showed that the readers of literature obtained significantly higher scores than readers of basal texts on comprehension and recall. School districts spend a large amount of their budget on basal texts, supplementary charts, workbooks, and teaching masters. While it seems impractical to rewrite basal texts in story grammar form, it is practical in terms of time, cost, and educational value to use existing children's literature which follows a logical story

structure. The researcher also found that students who were read aloud children's literature selections did better on the end of chapter tests than students in the control group who only read the textbook.

McKinney and Jones (1992) found in a study of the American Revolution, which utilized a sample of fifth graders, that two groups taught with a children's book differed significantly from the group taught with the textbook on a 15-item teacher-made test that covered only the children's book. They concluded that children who are taught with a children's book may learn more because more content can be included in a book than can be included in a textbook. The authors reported that children did not learn content that was common to both books any better if taught by a children's book. The statistical significance occurred only on the content which was included in the children's book.

Kovalcik (1979), who had also utilized fifth grade students to study the American Revolution, reported different results from the McKinney and Jones (1992) study. Kovalcik found that the experimental group who had used children's literature to supplement their work done with the traditional textbook had been exceeded by the information gain of the control group which had not used the children's literature. Kovalcik, who was primarily interested in a change in student's attitudes toward social studies, did not draw any inferences about the reason for this gain.

In summary, although there appears to be no difference in recalling social studies material when either story form or factual

forms of reading are used, Smith (1961) found that using expanded social studies reading selections did improve reading comprehension of fifth grade students. It was recommended that students should be helped to understand technical social studies terms. Talley (1988) concluded that students who used a literature text recalled significantly more details than students who used a basal text. The use of the basal text resulted in significantly more recall of details as errors. The use of the literature text resulted in a higher proportion of appropriate detail substitutions than basal texts. This occurs when a child identifies with the story and substitutes language from his/her own life experiences into the text. Longer sentences within a well structured text may increase reading comprehension and recall. As a result of the findings of the study, Talley (1988) recommended that school districts could make better use of money by using existing children's literature as instructional material. McKinney and Jones (1992) concluded that one of the reasons that students show higher achievement with a literature text than with the textbook is because more content can be included in a tradebook than can be included in a textbook. However, Kovalcik (1979) reported that students who were in a control group and used only the traditional textbook scored significantly higher in achievement than those who had read supplementary material in addition to using their regular textbook.

### Research Related to Attitudes

Although most educational research deals primarily with cognitive behaviors, affective behaviors such as attitudes are also important. Attitudes will be defined for the purpose of this study as a preference for a group, institution, or an object.

Attitudes, according to Howe, (1990) are important to consider when studying learning because attitudes may be causally related to achievement. Students with positive attitudes toward a subject are more likely to want to continue or extend their learning in that area. Attitudes also do not exist in isolation but are conveyed to others such as parents, teachers, and other students.

There are a few studies which examine attitude toward social studies. Jersild and Tasch (1949) reported that social studies was the least liked subject in school, while art was the most liked. Schug, Todd, and Berry (1982) found that frequently students considered social studies to be boring because of the content and the methods used. Only 13 percent of high school students surveyed believed that social studies was important because of its emphasis on citizenship education. Therefore, the authors concluded that social studies was not perceived as enjoyable or important because students thought that it had little meaning for them in their future lives.

### Attitudes Toward Groups

Research studies have been divided over the possibility that it is possible to change student attitudes toward an object, or a group

by the use of children's literature. Three studies were found that dealt with the relationship between children's reading and their attitude toward the Negro, the American Indian, and the Eskimos (Tauran, 1967; Fisher, 1965, Jackson, 1944). All three studies used the same methods. The subjects were divided into experimental and control groups and their attitudes were recorded by means of a questionnaire. A story or stories dealing with the racial group was then read to one or more of the groups. The children's attitudes were finally measured with another questionnaire.

Tauran (1967) attempted to change students' attitudes toward Eskimos. Favorable and unfavorable stories dealing with Eskimos were read to two groups of third grade classes. The results showed that third grade students' attitudes were positively affected when the students read positive accounts of Eskimos and negatively affected when the students read negative accounts.

Fisher (1965) used three groups of fifth graders. Six stories favorable to Indians were read to the first group. In the second group, the stories were read and discussed. The third group acted as a control and was not read to, nor was there any discussion about Indians. The findings of these studies showed that fifth grade students who read and discussed stories about American Indians displayed more positive attitudes toward Indians than students who only read stories with no discussion and those who did not read any stories about Indians. Students who read stories but did not discuss the stories had a more positive attitude than those students who did not read any stories.

Jackson (1944) administered a post-test immediately following the lessons and again after a period of two weeks. Whatever favorable attitudes toward Negroes the children had gained from the story were lost over that period. These studies were criticized by Kimmel (1973) because the children did not do any reading but were read to, thus causing the studies to be misnamed. None of these studies, Kimmel stated, measure the influence of reading alone. If the studies actually measured the influence of an adult, then there may be little point in recommending books. Yancey and Singh (1975) developed a multifactor program, the major component being literature, using 20 white first grade students. The purpose of the study was to promote favorable attitudes toward black people. The study produced significant results with the experimental group showing fewer anti-Negro responses than the control group.

Woodyard (1970) found that ninth-grade black students who read and discussed black literature for one semester significantly increased their self-esteem over the control group that read the traditional material.

Robertson (1979) conducted a study for one school year which used a sample of 407 elementary students from the first through fifth grades. The students used a variety of materials in social studies to study specific countries and cultures in a favorable manner. The results showed that there were statistically significant positive changes in racial attitudes toward a majority of the countries and cultures.

### Attitudes Toward Social Studies

Kovalcik (1979) studied the use of children's literature to change fifth grade students' attitudes toward social studies. Students in the control group used the traditional textbook as the primary means of instruction, while students in the experimental group used a collection of trade books to supplement the instruction materials. He reported no statistically significant difference in attitude change toward social studies between the experimental and control group. The implications of the study suggest that something more must be done than adding one element to an instructional program if attitude and achievement is to be influenced. Another implication of the study is that the time it takes to change an attitude might be longer than the time needed to teach a unit dealing with one historical period.

Kimmel (1973) hypothesized that students exposed for a period of three months to a collection of books, tapes, and related materials about four countries would come to regard those countries more positively. The findings, however, did not validate the hypothesis. There was no difference between pretest and post-test scores which could not be attributed to chance.

Shirley (1966) attempted to establish a link between thinking and reading through a study of the general effect of reading on the development of concepts, attitudes and behavior of Arizona high school students. Shirley asked 420 students to report any changes in concepts, attitudes and behaviors that they had experienced as a result of reading. Of the 420 students, only 16 reported no



personal influences traceable to reading. Of the 1184 different influences reported, 45 percent were new concepts, 40 percent were new attitudes, and 15 percent were behavioral responses. Other important findings were: (a) No difference in the influence between fiction and nonfiction was found. (b) There was a positive relationship between the number of total influences and the intelligence, vocabulary, and the comprehension levels of the subjects. (c) Students were more likely to be influenced by voluntary reading than by assigned reading. Kimmel (1973) criticized the study by saying that asking people to evaluate their own attitudes, not measuring that evaluation against any other type of response, and accepting it at face value is an extremely unreliable method to use when dealing with possible attitude change.

Howe (1990) reported that reading ability was shown to be a strong predictor of student attitudes toward the subject areas of reading and social studies. Reading ability was also found to be a strong predictor of student attitudes concerning their self-concept in social studies. Students with below average reading ability were found to be at a disadvantage when reading the expository writing of the social studies textbook. She reported that there were no significant differences in student attitudes toward the relevance of social studies in their lives nor in student attitudes toward the social studies textbook, no matter what the reading level. The treatment had no significant effects on student total attitude inventory. She stated that an intervention lasting three months was a relatively short time to influence and change attitudes.

McKinney and Jones (1992) randomly assigned three fifth-grade classes to one of three groups and taught a unit on the American Revolution. One group received instruction based on a children's trade book. The second group received instruction on the students' regular textbook. The third group received instruction based on their regular textbook, and they were asked to read the children's book at home. The students were pre and post-tested to determine their knowledge of the American Revolution and on their attitudes toward social studies. The group taught with the textbook only showed the most dramatic improvement, although attitudes improved for all groups.

In summary, though much has been written about the role of books in building positive attitudes toward a group, institution or an object, research has been inconclusive about the way an attitude is formed or changed. There is still a need for experimentation to determine whether exposure to books can change attitudes.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Is it possible to teach social studies effectively in the primary grades? Teachers have been encouraged by many writers to expand the use of children's literature in the classroom to teach social studies (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkerson, 1981; Bennett, 1986; Culliman, 1987; Goodman, 1986; James & Zarrillo, 1989). Yet, there has been little research done to support this idea. The research has been primarily limited to a few dissertations that examined the use of children's literature to evoke a change in student attitudes and to a comparison of the achievement of students using factual and story forms in social studies. The result of these studies has been equivocal.

In this chapter, description of the sample, treatments, and teachers are described. In addition, the experimental design and instrumentation are also discussed.

#### Subjects

The sample for this study consisted of third grade students who returned parental permission forms allowing them to participate in the study. It was drawn from an elementary school in a small southwestern city of 40,000. The school serves predominantly

children of college students attending a state university in the city and children of professionals who are involved in university or community employment. The student body was comprised of 11 percent native American students, ten percent black students, five percent Asian students, and 74 percent caucasian students. The total student body population was 412. The school served students from pre-kindergarten through the fifth grade.

The subjects were 75 third grade students who attended the elementary school discussed above. Intact classes were randomly assigned to treatment groups. Consent forms (see Appendix A) were sent to the students' parents requesting permission for their children to participate in the study. All the students attended self-contained classrooms. The students were also served by physical education, and music teachers. Students with special needs were served by speech, reading, and learning labs. Each class had access to a computer lab each day.

#### Teacher

A certified, licensed, elementary teacher taught the lessons for both groups. This teacher had 15 years experience teaching at the elementary level. The teacher was chosen because she was familiar with all the children in the third grades. She had been both a full time employee and a substitute at the school. She was given the lessons a week before teaching them. After reading the lessons, the foreseeable problems were discussed. The teacher was very concerned that the research would not become biased.

## Treatment

### Treatment 1

Different lessons were created for each treatment group. In Treatment 1, the teacher daily read and discussed a segment of a trade book with the students. This was followed by an activity designed to develop interest and understanding of the material presented.

On Day 1 the teacher read pages 1-12 from the trade book, Why Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?, by Jean Fritz. The teacher initiated discussion of the book during the reading, and asked students to draw a picture of King George as a young student to help the children to understand the development of his character.

On Day 2 the teacher read pages 13-24 of the trade book. After discussing the book, the children dressed a paper doll to illustrate the way King George chose to dress during that period of history. The children were asked to consider the question, how did the character of King George influence the way he dressed?

On Day 3 the teacher read pages 25-37 from the trade book. After reading these pages, the children were given the opportunity to role play King George deciding to tax the American Colonies. The children were asked to consider the following question: Did King George's character influence his decision to fight the American Colonies?

On Day 4 the class read pages 38-45. After a discussion the children were asked to work cooperatively to make a time line of the

American Revolution. The children were asked to consider the following questions: In your opinion, which side was right? Which side would you have chosen to join?

On Day 5 a game was played to review the material that had been presented previously.

On Day 6 the students were asked to complete a survey of their attitudes toward social studies and were given a post-test to check their understanding of the material on the American Revolution.

### Treatment 2

The children who were assigned to Treatment 2 read daily from the adopted text, Communities Near and Far published by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Publishing Company. Each day the reading of the text was followed by a discussion and an activity.

On Day 1 the children read pages 251-252. Students were asked to find definitions for the following words: colony, colonists, and American Revolution. The students used a map found on page 252 of the text to locate the 13 American Colonies. Then they illustrated the front of the student folder by drawing a picture of the American Revolution. Also, the students completed a map of the 13 colonies. This became a part of a collection of Revolutionary War materials acquired by the students and kept in their folders.

On Day 2 the students read pages 253-254 from the text. Using material found in the teacher's guide, the teacher gave the students background information on the English Tax Laws. The students examined the words to a song presented on page 253 of the

text. They listened to a cassette of the music, which was provided by the publisher. Upon becoming familiar with the melody, they sang the song.

On Day 3 the students read page 255 in the text. The students were given a handout to help them sequence the events of the Revolutionary War and to develop a time line.

On Day 4 the students read pages 256-258. They were given a copy of a handout which, upon completion, showed a diagram of the three parts of the government created by the Constitution.

On Day 5 the children played a game to review the material presented on the previous days.

On Day 6 the students were given a post-test to check their understanding of the material. The students were also asked to complete an attitude scale toward social studies.

#### Instrumentation

Three days prior to the beginning of the lessons students were asked to complete a teacher-made attitude survey toward social studies along with a teacher-made pretest of the American Revolution. On the seventh day students were asked to take the tests again.

The pre and post achievement test was comprised of a 15-item teacher-made multiple choice test. Students were asked to select the correct answer from three choices (see Appendix B). The test was comprised of 15 items that were common to both the traditional

text and the trade book. The reliability of the test, as estimated by Cronbach's alpha, was 0.52.

The pre and post attitude surveys were comprised of a four-item teacher-made multiple choice test. Students were asked to select the answer that best fit their feelings about social studies. The items may be found in Appendix C.

#### Experimental Design

A quasi-experimental pre and post-test design was used. Intact classes were randomly assigned to the treatment groups.

Analysis of covariance was used to test the achievement hypothesis. Scores on the 15-item pretest was used as the covariate. Students were pretested three days prior to the start of the lessons. On Day 7 the students were tested again. Originally, Chi square was to be used to test the hypotheses related to attitudes. However, because of small numbers within cells, no analysis was attempted. Instead, frequencies and percentages are reported.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

The present study attempted to: (a) Determine if achievement scores of third grade students who were taught a unit on the American Revolution by using a children's book would be significantly higher than scores for students who were taught from a classroom textbook on a test of content common to both the children's book and the traditional textbook. (b) Determine if third grade students who were taught with a children's book would show a more positive attitude toward their book on the post-test than those students taught with their regular textbook. (c) Determine if third grade students who were taught with a children's book would show a more positive attitude toward social studies on a post-test than those taught with a regular textbook. (d) Determine if third grade students taught with a children's book would rank social studies more positively on a post-test than students taught with a regular textbook. (e) Determine if third grade students taught with a children's book would prefer hearing their teacher read the children's book to reading their regular textbook.

Four groups of students were randomly assigned to two treatment groups. Those groups of students assigned to Treatment 1 were read

to daily from the trade book, Why Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? by Jean Fritz. During the class period the teacher also discussed the book and followed the discussion with an activity that was designed to help the children to understand the material presented. Those students assigned to Treatment 2 read daily from the adopted text, Communities Near and Far, published by Macmillan/McGraw-Hill School Publishing Company. Each day the text read was discussed, and an activity suggested by the teacher's guide for that day was used.

Three days prior to the beginning of the study, both groups were asked to complete a teacher-made attitude survey toward social studies along with a teacher-made pretest of knowledge of the American Revolution. Two days after the lessons were completed the students in both groups were asked to complete a post achievement test and an attitude survey of the American Revolution. Results are presented below.

#### Achievement

Results of analysis of covariance indicated that the two groups did not differ significantly,  $F(1, 58) = 1.615$ ,  $p = .21$ . The adjusted mean for the group of students taught with the children's book was 11.44 (standard deviation = 2.27), while the adjusted mean for the group taught with the textbook was 10.66 (standard deviation = 2.49). The unadjusted means were 11.38 and 10.72 respectively (see Tables I & II).

TABLE I  
RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE

Source	DF	Sum Squares	Mean Square	F Ratio	F Prob
Covariate	1	16.927	36.927	6.571	.01
Treatment	1	9.073	9.073	1.615	.21
Residual	58	325.935	5.620		
Total	60	371.934	6.199		

TABLE II  
MEANS, ADJUSTED MEANS, AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Group	N	Means	Adjusted Means	Standard Deviation
Children's Book	29	11.38	11.44	2.27
Textbook	32	10.72	10.66	2.67
Total	61	11.03		2.49

### Attitude

Originally Chi Square analysis was planned, however, this analysis was not attempted because of small numbers in some cells (see Tables III, IV, V, & VI). Furthermore, it was decided that it would be misleading to collapse across cells. Therefore, no statistical analysis was conducted. Data are presented as frequencies and as percentages.

I Like Reading My Social Studies Book. The first attitude item asked the students to rate their attitudes toward their regular textbook. Students were asked to respond to this statement: I like reading my social studies book. Students could respond by marking that they enjoyed reading their book "Yes", "No", and "Sometimes". Prior to the study two students who were later taught from the children's book and 11 students who were taught with the textbook marked "Yes" to this item. Three students who were taught with the children's book and two taught with the regular textbook marked "No". Twenty-four students who were taught with the children's book and 19 who were taught with the regular textbook marked "Sometimes" (see Table III).

On the post-test, 27 students who were taught with the children's book and 19 who were taught with the textbook marked "Yes". None of the students taught with the children's book and one student taught with textbook marked "No" that they did not like reading or hearing read their social studies book. Two who were taught with the children's book and 12 taught with the textbook said

TABLE III

## I LIKE READING MY SOCIAL STUDIES BOOK . . .

Responses	Children's Book	Textbook
Pre-test		
Yes	2 (.07)*	11 (.34)
No	3 (.10)	2 (.06)
Sometimes	24 (.83)	19 (.59)
Post-test		
Yes	27 (.93)	19 (.59)
No	0 (.00)	1 (.03)
Sometimes	2 (.07)	12 (.38)
*Percentage		

that they "Sometimes" liked reading their social studies book (see Table III).

Social Studies Class Is Usually. The second attitude item asked the students to describe their social studies classes. Three choices, "Exciting", "Interesting", and "Boring" were provided. None of the students who read the children's book and two of the students who read the textbook described their social studies class as being usually "Exciting" on the pretest. Twenty-three of the students said that social studies is usually "Interesting". Six of the students who read the children's book and four who read the textbook concluded that the social studies class is usually "Boring" (see Table IV).

On the post-test, 12 students who were taught with the children's book and six who were taught with the textbook said that social studies is usually "Exciting". Fifteen who were taught with the children's book and 23 taught with the textbook said that social studies is usually "Interesting". Two students who were taught with by the children's book and three taught with the textbook said that social studies is usually "Boring" (see Table IV).

Social Studies Is My. The third attitude item asked the students to rate social studies class as their "Most Favorite Class", "In-between Favorite Class", and "Least Favorite Class". On the pretest, one of the students who used the children's book and nine who were taught by the textbook said that social studies is "My Most Favorite Class". Twenty-three who studied from the children's

TABLE IV  
SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS IS USUALLY . . .

Response	Children's Book	Textbook
Pre-test		
Exciting	0 (.00)*	2 (.06)
Interesting	23 (.79)	26 (.81)
Boring	6 (.21)	4 (.13)
Post-test		
Exciting	12 (.41)	6 (.19)
Interesting	15 (.52)	23 (.72)
Boring	2 (.07)	3 (.09)
*Percentage		

book and 21 who studied from the textbook indicated that social studies "Is My In-between Favorite Class", while five who used the children's book and two who used the textbook said that social studies is "My Least Favorite Class".

On the post-test five students who used the children's book and seven who used the textbook responded that social studies was their "Most Favorite Class". Twenty-two students who used the children's book and 21 who used the textbook said that it was their "In-between Favorite Class", and two who used the children's book and four who used the textbook reported social studies to be their "Least Favorite Class" (see Table V).

I Prefer Reading. The students in Group 1 who were read Why Can't You Make Them Behave, King George by Jean Fritz were asked to complete a fourth question, "I Prefer Reading. . . ." on the post-test. The students were able to choose among the following choices: "My Regular Book", "My Paperback Book", or "Both". Four of the 29 students preferred "My Paperback Book", or "Both". Four of the 29 students preferred "My Regular Textbook", 23 preferred "My Paperback Book", and two said they preferred both the "Regular Textbook", and the "Paperback Tradebook" (see Table VI).

#### Summary

In summary, the study found that the achievement scores of third grade students who were taught a unit on the American Revolution by using a children's book was not significantly higher than scores for students who were taught from a classroom textbook



TABLE V  
SOCIAL STUDIES IS MY . . .

Response	Children's Book	Textbook
Pre-test		
Most Favorite Class	1 (.04)*	9 (.28)
In-between Favorite	23 (.79)	21 (.66)
Least Favorite	5 (.17)	2 (.06)
Post-test		
Most Favorite Class	5 (.17)	7 (.22)
In-between Favorite	22 (.76)	21 (.66)
Least Favorite	2 (.07)	4 (.13)
*percentage		

TABLE VI  
I PREFER READING . . .

Response	Children's Books	Textbook
Pre-test		
My Regular Book	4 (.14)*	9 (.28)
My Paper Book	23 (.79)	21 (.66)
Both	2 (.07)	2 (0.6)
Post-Test		
Most Favorite Class	5 (.17)	7 (.22)
In-between Favorite	22 (.76)	21 (.66)
Least Favorite	2 (.07)	4 (.13)
*Percentage		

on a test of content common to both the children's book and the traditional textbook. However, third grade students who were taught a unit on the American Revolution by using a children's book did show a more positive attitude toward the children's book and social studies than those who were taught with a textbook.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

Because of the lack of research related to the use of children's literature to influence attitudes and achievement, this study proposed a comparison of the effects of using children's literature and the effects of using textbook material on achievement in learning and attitudes toward social studies.

For more than seven decades authors have written about a trade book-social studies connection, and they have explored this connection at length. Because of this persistence, the literature is rich in opinion literature concerning the importance of using trade books to teach social studies (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1981; Bennett, 1986; Cullinan, 1987; Finn & Ravitch, 1988; Goodman, 1986; James & Zarrillo, 1989). Despite this richness, very little research has been conducted to support this idea. In later years, a few dissertations have examined the use of children's literature to evoke a change in student attitudes and a comparison of the achievement of students using factual and story forms in social studies. A few studies were found that investigated the effects of children's books on knowledge acquisition.

In this chapter the findings from the present study are discussed, and recommendations for further research are suggested.

Findings from this study should be interpreted in the light of the following delimitations and assumptions.

#### Delimitation

1. The study was delimited to third grade students in an elementary school located in a university community in a southwestern state.
2. The sample was delimited to those students who had parental permission to participate.
3. The results of the study was delimited by the fact that the children's book was read to the group and the textbook was read by the children.

#### Assumptions

1. The subjects who participated in the study were a representative sample of the population of the selected school.
2. The teacher was equally capable of teaching both groups.

#### Purpose of Study

The present study attempted to: (a) determine if achievement scores of third grade students who were taught a unit on the American Revolution by using a children's book would be significantly higher than scores for students who were taught from a classroom textbook on a test of content common to both the children's book and the traditional textbook. (b) Determine if third grade students who were taught with a children's book would

show a more positive attitude toward their book on the post-test than those students taught with their regular textbook.

(c) Determine if third grade students who were taught with a children's book would show a more positive attitude toward social studies on a post-test than those taught with a regular textbook.

(d) Determine if third grade students taught with a children's book would rank social studies more positively on a post-test than students taught with a regular textbook. (e) Determine if third grade students taught with a children's book would prefer hearing their teacher read the children's book to reading their regular textbook.

#### Test of the Hypotheses

Although there was very little research to indicate that using children's literature to teach social studies to young children would influence attitudes and achievement, opinion literature led the researcher to test the following directional hypotheses:

H1: Achievement scores of third grade students who are taught a unit on the American Revolution by using a children's book will be significantly higher than scores for students who are taught from a classroom textbook on a test of content common to both the children's book and the traditional textbook.

Results of analysis of covariance indicated that the two groups did not differ significantly,  $F(1, 58) = 1.615$ ,  $p = .21$ . The adjusted means for the students taught with the children's book was 11.44 (standard deviation = 2.27), while the adjusted mean for the

group taught with the textbook was 10.66 (standard deviation = 2.49). The unadjusted means were 11.38 and 10.72 respectively. Thus, the data failed to support this hypotheses.

H2: Third grade students who are taught social studies with a children's book will show a more positive attitude toward their book on the post-test than those students taught with their regular textbook.

Originally, Chi square analysis was planned, however, this analysis was not attempted because of small numbers in some cells see Tables III, IV, V, & VI). Furthermore, it was decided that it would be misleading to collapse across cells. Therefore, no statistical analysis was conducted. Data are presented as frequencies and as percentages.

Although no test of significance was given, a dramatic shift in the attitude occurred when 25 more students who were taught with the children's book, or 86 percent more students, responded by saying "Yes" I like reading my social studies book than had done so on the pretest. Of those using the textbook there was a less dramatic rise of those saying "Yes" on the post-test. Eight students, or 25 percent more, said "Yes" I like reading my social studies book. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not rejected.

H3: Third grade students who were taught social studies with a children's book will show a more positive attitude toward their social studies class on a post-test than those students taught with their regular textbook.

None of the students who used the children's book and only two, or six percent, of the children who used the textbook, considered social studies "Exciting" when asked to respond on the pretest. This corresponds to the reports that Jersild and Tasch (1949), Schug, Todd, and Berry (1982) published saying that social studies was not chosen by students as the best liked subject in school.

Twenty-three students, or 79 percent of the group who would use the children's book, were sufficiently interested in social studies to mark it "Interesting" on the pretest. A slightly larger group, 26 students or 81 percent of those who would use the textbook, said that they thought social studies was "Interesting", also.

Six students who were to use the children's book, or 21 percent, said that social studies was "Boring" on the pretest. A smaller group, four students, or 13 percent of those who were to use the textbook, said that social studies was "Boring".

Following the work with the children's book, there was an increase of 12 students or 41 percent who changed their minds and marked on the post-test that their social studies class was "Exciting". A smaller group of six students or 19 percent who used the textbook said that social studies was "Exciting" when they marked the post-test. With the increase in the number of students who thought social studies was "Exciting" there was a following decrease in children who regarded it "Interesting" or "Boring". Fifteen students, or 52 percent, marked "Interesting" and only two, or seven percent who used the children's book, marked "Boring" on the post-test. With those children who used the textbook, only



three children changed their opinion and marked that they believed social studies is "Exciting" on the post-test. Therefore, 23 students, or 72 percent, marked on the post-test that they find social studies "Interesting" after using the textbook. Three of the students who used the children's book, or nine percent, marked that social studies is "Boring" on the post-test.

In summary, a comparison of the pre and post-test scores show an increase of 12 students, or 41 percent, who changed their attitude toward their social studies class after using the children's book and said that social studies is "Exciting". Of those students who used the textbook, there was an increase of four students, or 13 percent, who changed their attitude from "Interesting" to "Exciting". In all, there was an eight person, or a 27 percent gain, in attitude toward the social studies class over the group who used the textbook. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not rejected.

H4: Third grade students taught with a children's book will rank social studies more positively on a post-test than students taught with a regular textbook.

On the pretest only one student or four percent of the students who were scheduled to be taught using children's literature chose social studies as their "Favorite class". Nine of the students, or 22 percent who were scheduled to be taught by the traditional textbook, chose social studies as their favorite class. Most of the students, 23 choices or 79 percent, chose social studies as their "In-between favorite class" in the group scheduled to be taught by

using the children's literature. Among the group who were chosen to use the traditional textbook, 21 students, or 66 percent, chose social studies to be their "In-between favorite" class. Five students, or 17 percent, of the children's book marked social studies as their "Least favorite" class. Only two students, or six percent, marked on the pretest that social studies was their "Least favorite" class. On the post-test, there was very little evidence of any change in ranking from either group. Only five students, or 17 percent, ranked social studies as the "Most favorite class" among the students who used the children's book. Among the students who used the traditional text book only seven students, or 22 percent, ranked social studies as being the "Most favorite class". This was a drop of two students from the pretest. Most of the students, 22 students or 76 percent, who used the children's book continued to rank social studies as their "In-between favorite class". Among the students who used the traditional textbook 21 students, or 66 percent, ranked social studies as their "In-between" favorite class. Results between the pre and post-test did not change in the group who used the traditional text.

In summary, five students, or 17 percent of the students who would use the children's book ranked social studies as their "Least favorite" class on the pretest. Two students, or six percent of the students who would use the traditional textbook ranked social studies as their "Least favorite" class. On the post-test the students reversed themselves and two students who used the

children's book, or seven percent, ranked social studies as their "Least favorite" class while four, or 13 percent, ranked social studies as their "Least favorite" subject.

Because the data failed to support the hypothesis, Hypothesis 4 was rejected.

H5: Third grade students taught with a children's book will prefer hearing their teacher read the children's book to reading their regular textbook.

Third grade students who were read the children's book, Why Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? by Jean Fritz, were asked to respond to the questions I prefer reading . . . "My regular book", "My paperback book", or "Both" on the post-test. Only four students, or 14 percent, agreed that they would prefer reading the regular textbook. Twenty-three students, or 79 percent, preferred to have the children's book read to them, and only two students, or seven percent, said that they would prefer both the regular textbook and the children's book. Because of the large number of students who chose to have the children's book read to them read to them, Hypothesis 5 was not rejected.

#### Discussion

##### Achievement

Although the data failed to support the hypothesis, there may be several reasons why the achievement scores of the third grade students who used the children's book were not higher. (a) Although within accepted limits, an increase of the reliability of the

teacher-made test would have been desirable. (b) The instruction time for both methods was limited to five days. More time spent on instruction may well have raised achievement scores. (c) Because of scheduling problems, individuals were not randomly assigned to a treatment. Intact classes were assigned randomly, therefore, allowing the possibility of one or more treatments to have a higher or lower I. Q. average. This possibility would affect achievement. (d) Another occurrence that may well have affected achievement was the possibility that the teacher-made test did not measure the higher order thinking that may have occurred during the use of the children's literature. The test measured only lower order thinking such as the recall of details that was common to both books. The lessons which accompanied the children's book Why Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? more frequently used material and activities related to higher order thinking skills than did the traditional textbook.

#### Attitudes

The results of the present study indicated the following:

- (a) A dramatic shift in the attitude occurred when 25 more students who were taught with the children's book, or 86 percent more students, responded by saying "Yes" I like reading my social studies book than had done so on the pretest. The implication is that students who like reading their book will also enjoy the class more.
- (b) Following the work with the children's book, there was an increase of 12 students, or 41 percent, who changed their minds and

marked on the post-test that their social studies class was "Exciting". A smaller group of six students, or 19 percent who used the textbook, said that social studies was "Exciting" when they marked the post-test. Using a children's book had changed the students' attitude toward social studies to a more positive one.

(c) While students in both groups were content to rank social studies as their "In-between favorite" on the pretest, exposure to neither the textbook nor the children's book seemed to effect a change in their attitude. Jersild and Tasch (1949) listed art as the first preference among elementary students. Perhaps it would be very hard to overtake a subject such as art to become first choice.

(d) Seventy-nine percent, or 23 students, indicated their preference to having the children's book read and discussed with them rather than reading the regular textbook.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Following the results of this present study the following recommendations are made:

1. Different kinds of test items, especially those that include the use of higher order thinking skills, should be used.
2. Content specific to the children's book only should also be included on the test.
3. To further the study of the effects of children's literature on social studies, it is recommended that a larger study involving more classrooms be considered.

4. It is also recommended that the study be expanded to include a longer period of time.

5. Researchers should also examine other types of books, including biographies and historical fiction.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PARENTS

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PARENTS

May 1, 1992

Dear Parents,

In order to help elementary teachers make effective choices about social studies teaching methods, a study has been designed that involves the four third grade classes at Will Rogers. This seven day study is a part of research currently undertaken by me to complete doctoral studies in the field of Curriculum and Instruction from Oklahoma State University.

The four classes will learn about the American Revolution, by using two different methods. Two groups will be using the traditional social studies textbook and its accompanying materials. Two groups will be using the second method, a child's book about the American Revolution titled Why Can't You Make Them Behave, King George? by Jean Fritz. This group will also use a series of activities designed to teach the American Revolution. Both groups will be asked to take a test over the material presented, and to complete an attitude survey.

The study will begin May 8, 1992 and be concluded on May 18, 1992. Both groups will be taught by a certified elementary teacher, and each child's records will remain confidential. The students will undergo no risks or discomfort as a part of the research. The study of the American Revolution is a regular part of the third grade curriculum, and only the two methods will vary. The participation of your child is voluntary. You may withdraw your child from participation at any time.

Therefore, I will allow my child

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

to participate in the group study of the American Revolution.

Parental signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Gwendolyn Swift  
Teacher  
Grade Three

APPENDIX B

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST: THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

## Pre-test

Directions: Choose the right answer from either A, B, or C.

Draw a circle around the correct letter.

1. A colony occurs when
  - A. people from one country are FRIENDS with people from another country.
  - B. people from one country are at WAR with people from another country.
  - C. people from one country are RULED by people from another country.
2. The Revolutionary War occurred when
  - A. the Americans fought with England to become a free country.
  - B. the Americans wanted to pay England extra tax on goods.
  - C. the Americans wanted to remain English subjects.
3. Today the 13 colonies are called
  - A. cities.
  - B. rivers
  - C. states
4. Most American colonists
  - A. did NOT want to pay English taxes.
  - B. WANTED to pay taxes.
  - C. DID NOT CARE whether they paid or not.
5. The leaders of the colonies sent the Declaration of Independence to the king to
  - A. explain why they wanted to be free
  - B. show their loyalty to the king
  - C. celebrate the king's birthday



6. Who was the King during the American Revolution?
  - A. King George
  - B. King William
  - C. King John
7. The King of England believed
  - A. the Americans would give up the war because he deserved to win.
  - B. the Americans would win the war very soon after it started.
  - C. that the Americans would never start a war because they were afraid of him.
8. King George's personal character influenced his decision to
  - A. tax the American colonies to pay for the French and Indian War.
  - B. spend the English money as fast as he could.
  - C. say he would surrender immediately to the Americans.
9. King George's character showed that
  - A. he liked the world settled and everything in its place.
  - B. he liked to spend lots of money.
  - C. he liked to wear lots of fancy clothes.
10. King George was the King of
  - A. Europe.
  - B. France.
  - C. England.
11. The English government
  - A. agreed with King George that the war should NEVER stop.
  - B. disagreed STRONGLY with King George and stopped the war.
  - C. did NOT really care who won the war.

12. The Fourth of July is celebrated because
- A. it was the day the American colonies lost the war.
  - B. it was the day colonial leaders signed the Declaration of Independence.
  - C. it was the king's birthday.
13. Many American colonists
- A. really DISAPPROVED of the Boston Tea Party.
  - B. really had NO sympathy for the king.
  - C. did NOT care what the king did.
14. The MAIN REASON for the American Revolution was to
- A. tell the king that they didn't want to pay taxes.
  - B. have the American colonies become an independent country.
  - C. tell the king that they didn't like him.
15. Today, America and England are
- A. friends.
  - B. enemies.
  - C. are at war with each other.

## Post-test

Directions: Choose the right answer from either A, B, or C.

Draw a circle around the correct letter.

1. The MAIN REASON for the American Revolution was to
  - A. tell the king that they didn't want to pay taxes.
  - B. have the American colonies become an independent country.
  - C. tell the king that they didn't like him.
2. Many American colonists
  - A. really disapproved of the Boston Tea Party.
  - B. really had no sympathy for the king.
  - C. did not care what the king did.
3. The Fourth of July is celebrated because
  - A. it was the day the American colonies lost the war.
  - B. it was the day colonial leaders signed the Declaration of Independence.
  - C. it was the day the Revolutionary War began.
4. The English government agreed with the king that the
  - A. agreed with the king that the war should NEVER stop.
  - B. disagreed STRONGLY with the king and stopped the war.
  - C. did NOT really care who won the war.
5. King George was the King of
  - A. Europe.
  - B. France.
  - C. England.

6. King George's character showed that
  - A. he liked the world settled and everything in its place.
  - B. he liked to spend lots of money.
  - C. he liked to wear lots of fancy clothes.
7. King George's personal character influenced his decision to
  - A. tax the American colonies to pay for the French and Indian War.
  - B. spend the English money as fast as he could.
  - C. say he would surrender immediately to the Americans.
8. The King of England believed
  - A. the Americans would win the war very soon after it started.
  - B. the Americans would give up the war because he deserved to win.
  - C. that the Americans would never start a war because they were afraid of him.
9. Who was the King during the American Revolution?
  - A. King George
  - B. King William
  - C. King John
10. The leaders of the colonies sent the Declaration of Independence to the king to
  - A. explain why they wanted to be free.
  - B. show their loyalty to the king.
  - C. celebrate the king's birthday.
11. Most American colonists
  - A. did NOT want to pay English taxes.
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13. The Revolutionary War occurred when
- A. the Americans fought with England to become a free country.
  - B. the Americans wanted to pay England extra tax on goods.
  - C. the Americans wanted to remain English subjects.
14. A colony occurs when
- A. people from one country are FRIENDS with people from another country.
  - B. people from one country are at WAR with people from another country.
  - C. people from one country are ruled by people from another country.
15. Today America and England are
- A. friends.
  - B. enemies
  - C. still at war.

APPENDIX C

PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

ATTITUDE SCALE\*

## PRE-TEST

I like reading my social studies book in class.

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Sometimes

Social Studies is

- A. Usually exciting
- B. Usually interesting
- C. Usually boring

Social Studies is

- A. My most favorite subject
- B. My least favorite subject
- C. In-between favorite subject

## POST-TEST

I liked by social studies book about the American Revolution.

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Somewhat

During this week, social studies was usually

- A. Exciting
- B. Interesting
- C. Boring

Social Studies is my

- A. Most favorite subject
- B. In-between favorite subject
- C. Neither one

\*given to the group who used the traditional textbook



## POST-TEST

I liked by social studies book about the American Revolution.

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Somewhat

During this week, social studies was usually

- A. Exciting
- B. Interesting
- C. Boring

Social Studies is my

- A. Most favorite subject
- B. In-between favorite subject
- C. Neither one

I Prefer Reading

- A. My regular book
- B. My paper back book
- C. Both

\*test given to students who used the children's book

VITA 2

Gwendolyn Walker Swift

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis: THE EFFECTS OF A CHILDREN'S BOOK AND A TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOK  
ON THIRD GRADE STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTITUDES TOWARD  
SOCIAL STUDIES**

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, the daughter  
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**Education:** Graduated from Gentry High School, Gentry,  
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