

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: “CHILDREN SELECTING BOOKS IN A LIBRARY”:
EXTENDING MODELS OF INFORMATION BEHAVIOR
TO A RECREATIONAL SETTING

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Literacy researchers suggest that book-selection strategies are part of successful literacy development, and in several research studies children reported that finding books they like is the biggest barrier they face to reading. Despite much attention to particular aspects of children’s reading habits, few studies have examined the processes children use to select books. Against this backdrop, this study undertook a qualitative investigation of primary-school children’s selection of books for recreational reading in a public library over the summer.

Book selection was examined from the perspective of library and information science (LIS) models of information behavior and relevance assessment. To expand LIS research into the recreational realm, the study also drew upon reader-response theory in education and uses-and-gratifications theory in communications.

Using a multiple-case study design, the study collected questionnaire, interview, and observation data from 20 7- to 9-year-old children and their parents during several sessions at their homes and at the public library. The data were analyzed with a grounded-theory approach.

During the study, the children spoke in general of the gratifications—cognitive, emotional, and social—that reading provides. When embarking on book selection at the library, however, they did not mention specific needs they sought to fill. When browsing the library, the children exhibited successively more involvement with books, examining them externally and internally and focusing on a variety of elements. The central aspects influencing children's selection of books were contents and reading experience.

Several differences emerged among the children: older children were more purposeful in their behaviors than younger children; girls were more independent than boys; some children had strong preferences that influenced their book-selection practices; and children exhibited distinct book-selection strategies. Finally, children rarely acknowledged receiving formal instruction in book selection and faced a number of obstacles related to library terminology and concepts.

Within the LIS field, this research contributes to an expanded understanding of information behavior. The findings have implications for strategies to encourage effective book selection through library instruction and parental involvement as well as for approaches to improve library services and systems, such as readers' advisory, shelf arrangement, and digital libraries.

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TO A RECREATIONAL SETTING

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father who gave me the confidence to ask questions and to seek my own answers, the driving force behind this project and, indeed, all my endeavors.

This work was completed in loving memory of Quincy.

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I am indebted to the participants in this study—the children and their parents—for sharing their experiences with books, reading, and the library with such candor, good humor, and liveliness.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In his 1955 poem “Children Selecting Books in a Library,” Randall Jarrell (1969) paints a scene:

The child’s head, bent to the book-colored shelves,
Is slow and sidelong and food-gathering,
Moving in blind grace...

Throughout the poem, Jarrell describes his vision of the process of book selection as potentially nourishing and curative, offering children escape and the promise of self-knowledge. This popular conception of reading as a powerfully enriching activity is shared by many librarians and educators whose stated mission is the development of lifelong readers.

A major thrust of reading research has been to determine the influence of reading on children’s achievement at school. In previous releases of the nation’s *Reading Report Card* that addressed school and home contexts for learning, the National Assessment of Educational Progress has associated students’ reading scores with the amount that they read both at school and at home (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2001). These surveys report the unsurprising finding that students who read more pages daily and read more for fun on their own time have higher test scores in reading than their peers who do so less frequently. Recreational reading may, in fact, have particular benefits in literacy development. Studies have found that young people engage more fully and demonstrate more sophisticated understanding of texts when they focus on the personal experience of reading rather than on comprehension (Cox & Many, 1992; Many, 1991). A number of studies have also found that children who read regularly throughout

the summer months show substantial achievement gains upon returning to school in the fall (H. Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, & Greathouse, 1996; Heyns, 1978; Krashen & Shin, 2004).

At the same time, there has recently been a widespread concern—sometimes cast as a crisis—about the growth of illiteracy and aliteracy in the United States (Krashen, 2004). Research indicates that reading for pleasure is on the decline, especially among young adults (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004) and children (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2001). When it comes to young people’s recreational reading, many literacy researchers theorize that low motivation and poor literacy achievement might stem from an inability to select the right books, arguing that book selection strategies are therefore a part of successful literacy development (B. Carter, 2000; Hunt, 1996/1997; Krashen, 2004). Indeed, one researcher and first-grade teacher reports that her students said that “choosing the books was the hardest part of learning to read” (Timion, 1992, p. 204). A recent survey commissioned by the publisher Scholastic found that the top reason children said they do not read more was because of “trouble finding books I like” (Yankelovich, 2006, p. 10).

Jarrell’s poem continues to describe how adults often disregard the voices of children:

...The children’s cries
Are to men the cries of crickets...

Indeed, overall, few studies have examined the book-selection practices of children from their own perspectives. Research on children in the fields of library and information science (LIS) and literacy education has focused largely on academic environments and classroom settings. Furthermore, the LIS literature has not examined children’s

information behavior with books, instead focusing on young people's use of electronic resources. Although many studies in both fields have examined children's reading interests and preferences and responses to literature, to date no published study that has examined children's processes of book selection for recreational reading has been identified.

A better understanding of how children choose books and of the factors that influence children's book selection could help librarians, educators, and policy makers develop strategies that address the decline in recreational reading. Research in this realm will not only contribute to the understanding of book-selection practices but will also expand our overall knowledge of children's information behavior. Previous research efforts primarily with adults have resulted in rich models and frameworks for understanding information behavior (Bates, 1989; Dervin, 1992; T. D. Wilson, 1981, 1997), including such aspects as relevance assessment (Barry & Schamber, 1998; Schamber, Eisenberg, & Nilan, 1990; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999); reader responses (Odell & Cooper, 1976; Purves & Rippere, 1968; Sebesta, Monson, & Senn, 1995); and mass-media choices (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Palmgreen, 1984; Rubin, 2002). Similar research should be undertaken to develop and validate a model of children's book-selection processes that includes a framework of the factors at work within book selection.

This dissertation describes a study of children selecting books in a library—drawing from research on information behavior, literacy development, and mass-media communications to build a comprehensive understanding of children's book selection. It

seeks to understand the process of children's book selection for recreational reading by studying what children are seeking—and, indeed, how and why—as they select books in a public library. Ultimately, the study attempts to answer Jarrell's question about children selecting books:

In slow perambulation up and down the shelves
Of the universe are seeking ... who knows except themselves?

Chapter 2: Literature review and conceptual framework

This study brings together three distinct research traditions to build preliminary understanding of children's processes of book selection for recreational reading. First, research from the LIS field contributes to the understanding of book selection as a *process*. Next, the literature in the area of literacy education offers insights into book selection from the reading *domain*. Finally, approaches developed in mass communications provide insight into book selection in a recreational *context*. This chapter reviews the literature from each of these traditions and presents an interdisciplinary conceptual framework of book selection for recreational reading fashioned from it.

2.1 Library and information science

2.1.1 Book-selection behavior

Surveys of public-library use indicate that people perceive public libraries as a source for leisure resources. For instance, one study revealed that 87% of adults viewed the library as a source of entertainment, 42% used the library for the purpose of hobbies or enjoyment, and 50% borrowed books (Vavrek, 2000). According to Vavrek (2000), these results suggest that the library is considered "a place where people borrow books and seek to entertain themselves" (p. 62). Curiously, however, little LIS research has actually addressed book selection. Indeed, in the early decades of the 20th century, reading for pleasure was deemed frivolous and morally suspect; the provision of fiction by libraries ran counter to their objective to be educational and "improving" (Hayes, 1992; Ranta, 1991; Ross, 1991; Walker, 1958). Remnants of this bias may exist in the current lack of

scholarly attention to the study of information seeking for entertainment (Case, 2007)—an area that is largely unexplored territory, or what Hartel (2003) has termed the “leisure frontier.”

In the past three decades, only three major empirical studies in LIS have focused on the selection of books for pleasure reading. In an extensive survey of British adults, Spiller (1980) found that browsing for books is “an almost instinctive activity” (p. 248) and that people have deeply personal reasons for their book preferences. More recently, Ross (1999) conducted open-ended interviews with adults in Canada about their book-selection behavior, finding that avid readers have “well-developed heuristics” (p. 797) for selecting books, focusing especially on mood as the “bedrock for choice” (p. 790). As part of work on design specifications for a fiction-retrieval system for children, Pejtersen (1986) analyzed Danish children’s negotiations with librarians when selecting books, finding that children’s requests focused particularly on the accessibility and emotional experiences of books. Twenty years later, Pejtersen’s study remains the only major LIS study to have examined children’s book selection in any way.

2.1.2 *Information behavior*

LIS research has paid vastly more attention to information behavior in professional or academic settings than in recreational contexts (McKechnie, Baker, Greenwood, & Julien, 2002). While some LIS researchers have recently tended to emphasize the totality of a range of information behaviors (Case, 2007; T. D. Wilson, 1997, 1999), much of LIS research has focused more narrowly on the process of information seeking. This longstanding research emphasis has resulted in several major models and frameworks of

information seeking, including Dervin's (1992) sense-making model, Bates's (1989) berrypicking model, Kuhlthau's (1991) information-search process, Taylor's (1991) information-use environments, and T. D. Wilson's (1981, 1997) interdisciplinary model. Although the models differ in explanatory detail and particular emphasis, they share a vision of information-seeking behavior as motivated by an information need; undertaken in stages; influenced by specific social, environmental, cognitive, and affective factors; and resulting in information use. Because of their grounding in research tasks in academic or professional contexts, these models tend to treat information behavior as fundamentally problem-oriented.

Like the research on adults' information behavior, research on children's information seeking has focused largely on children's performance related to specific academic tasks. Early studies examined the difficulties young people can experience in locating books in traditional libraries, especially using catalogs (Eaton, 1989, 1991; Edmonds, Moore, & Balcom, 1990; Lavery, 2002; P. A. Moore & St. George, 1991; Solomon, 1997). Particular attention has been given to the study of young people's information seeking using electronic resources, such as online library catalogs (Borgman, Hirsh, Walter, & Gallagher, 1995; D. Neuman, 1993; Solomon, 1993, 1994); online and CD-ROM encyclopedias and databases (Large, Beheshti, & Breuleux, 1998; Large, Beheshti, Breuleux, & Renaud, 1994; Liebscher & Marchionini, 1988; Marchionini, 1989; Marchionini & Teague, 1987; D. Neuman, 1993; Shenton & Dixon, 2003a); and, of course, the World Wide Web (Bilal, 2000, 2001, 2002; Fidel et al., 1999; Large & Beheshti, 2000; Shenton & Dixon, 2003a). Such studies have identified a number of

challenges that young people face in information seeking, such as developing search terms (Callison & Daniels, 1988; Chen, 1993; Marchionini, 1989; D. Neuman, 1995; Solomon, 1993, 1994) and navigating Web sites (Bilal, 2000, 2001, 2002; Bowler, Large, & Rejskind, 2001; Fidel et al., 1999; Large & Beheshti, 2000). Although a few researchers have produced generalized models of young people's information seeking (Burdick, 1996; Kuhlthau, 1991; Shenton & Dixon, 2003b), these kinds of studies have been used primarily to evaluate young people's information-literacy skills as a prelude to offering suggestions for tailoring curriculum and instruction to prepare young people to be effective information seekers.

2.1.3 *Relevance assessment*

Although not often explicitly considered within information-behavior models, the concept of relevance exists at the crux of people's interactions with information: assessing relevance connects information needs and information uses through document selection. In contrast to earlier systems-oriented perspectives on relevance that are focused on logical or topical relationships between a user's query and a document's subject (W. S. Cooper, 1971; P. Wilson, 1973), current user-centered notions of relevance focus on the cognitive, situational, multifaceted, and dynamic aspects of the process of relevance assessment (Bean & Green, 2001; R. Green & Bean, 1995; Park, 1994; Schamber et al., 1990; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999). Previous studies of relevance have identified dozens of criteria employed in document selection by different populations in a variety of contexts (Barry, 1994; Hirsh, 1999; Lawley, Soergel, & Huang, 2005; Park, 1993; Tang & Solomon, 1998; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang &

White, 1999). Barry and Schamber (1998) sought to identify certain common kinds of criteria and dimensions that might apply across situations, such as accuracy, currency, and accessibility. So-called “dynamic” approaches to exploring relevance have broadened the perspective on relevance (Schamber et al., 1990), examining relevance assessment not simply as a one-time binary decision but rather as part of a broad, unfolding process of decision making with regard to document selection (T. D. Anderson, 2005; Bateman, 1998; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999).

Although many recent studies and discussions of relevance acknowledge the social and affective dimensions at work in selection (Barry & Schamber, 1998; Cosijn & Ingwersen, 2000; Saracevic, 1996; Schamber et al., 1990; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999), these factors are rarely observed in the academic and professional settings of most relevance studies and, thus, are underdeveloped in LIS research and theory (Julien, McKechnie, & Hart, 2005). For instance, Wang and Soergel (1998) found that very few selection decisions were based on social or emotional values. Instead, the overwhelming majority of decisions related to the perceived epistemic or functional values of documents. However, in the realm of leisure reading, affective and social factors take center stage. In work exploring the nature of humanistic writing, Green (1997) foregrounds “the desire for certain types of aesthetic experiences” (p. 75) among readers and briefly introduces the concept of “aesthetic relevance” to describe how readers might engage with literature during the selection process. However, as Green notes, very little is known about how individuals might actually assess aesthetic relevance. To date, the research focus on information seeking in academic and

professional contexts, especially in order to complete research tasks, has emphasized the cognitive and functional aspects of relevance assessment.

2.2 *Literacy education*

2.2.1 *Book-selection strategies*

Some research in literacy education has looked at children's book-selection strategies as part of literacy development. The most robust studies made extensive use of observations of children's book-selection behavior. First-grade teacher Timion (1992) observed students in her own classroom over the course of a year and noted that "each student seemed to have a unique style in selecting books" (p. 207). For instance, one child "scavenged" for books hidden away or in out-of-the way locations. Reutzel and Gali (1997) observed first-, third-, and fifth-grade children selecting books in their school library in a staged setting and suggested that "the task of selecting a book relies on a set of ... rudimentary routines" (p. 159). This research posits a basic model of book selection, occurring in steps: Pull (from shelf); Look at Cover; Open Book; Make a Judgment; and Select/Reject the Book. Most other studies focused more narrowly on factors that influence children's book selection, such as physical characteristics (Campbell, Griswold, & Smith, 1988; Fleener, Morrison, Linek, & Rasinski, 1997; Kragler & Nolley, 1996; Reutzel & Gali, 1997) and emotional responses and personal connections (B. Carter & Harris, 1982; Moss & Hendershot, 2002; Rinehart, Garlach, & Wisell, 1998; Samuels, 1989; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000).

Although these studies looked at the selection of leisure-reading materials, they tended to highlight the classroom context of reading by associating selection strategies

with reading ability and achievement levels. In fact, all these studies were conducted in schools. Furthermore, several studies of this ilk report piecemeal findings based on surveys or questionnaires (B. Carter & Harris, 1982; Lewis, 1989; Samuels, 1989; Wendelin & Zinck, 1983) or controlled experiments (Campbell et al., 1988; Robinson, Larsen, Haupt, & Mohlman, 1997), focusing on the significance of predetermined variables in relation to children's selection habits. All in all, the findings of this research do not paint a holistic picture of children's book selection processes for recreational reading from the children's own perspectives.

2.2.2 *Reading interests and preferences*

The thrust of research into reading interests and preferences has been to identify the kinds of books or reading materials that are most popular with children (Sebesta & Monson, 2003). Many studies note differences attributed to age, gender, achievement level, and other characteristics (G. Anderson, Higgins, & Wurster, 1985; Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer, 1997; Childress, 1985; Fisher, 1988; Greenlaw, 1983; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Simpson, 1996; Worthy, Moorman, & Turner, 1999). For instance, findings suggest that reading interests and preferences evolve with age, with younger children preferring fairy tales and older children becoming more interested in realistic fiction (Boraks et al., 1997; Fisher, 1988). Researchers also report different interests and preferences for reading material among children based on gender, with girls overwhelmingly preferring narrative fiction and boys preferring nonfiction (Childress, 1985; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Simpson, 1996).

Findings from these studies have been based largely on surveys or questionnaires (Boraks et al., 1997; Fisher, 1988; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Worthy et al., 1999) or on circulation records (Childress, 1985). Researchers have rarely engaged in naturalistic observation of children's book-selection behavior. Few studies adequately contextualize children's preferences and interests. For instance, studies fail to acknowledge the ways in which children's preferences by gender are socially constructed (Dressman, 1997; Dutro, 2001). Furthermore, researchers often focus on one aspect of books, such as genre, when classifying children's selections (Sebesta & Monson, 2003). As Purves and Beach (1972) have observed, findings based on such a narrow focus might be misleading: although a researcher might classify a child's book selection as nonfiction or a fairy tale, the child might have actually made the selection not because of genre but because of the length of the book, the presence of illustrations, or even the color of the book's cover. Overall, the research on reading interests and preferences does not adequately describe children's book selection. One serious shortcoming is the lack of evidence drawn from the perspective of children themselves.

2.2.3 *Reader-response theory*

Approaches to literary studies have shifted from an emphasis on the authority of the text to a focus on the reader—a shift that emphasizes students' perspectives (Benton, 1999; Sipe, 1999). In her work on reader response, Rosenblatt (1994) describes the process of reading as a transaction between the reader and the text. The reader-response paradigm highlights the influence of the personal and social context of reading on how readers construct meaning from texts (Probst, 2003). Some studies with children and

young adults have analyzed response patterns to look for connections between certain kinds of responses and individual characteristics (Martinez & Roser, 2003), finding that younger children respond differently to texts than older children. Younger children's responses tend to focus on plot and physical actions in stories, while older children's responses focus on interpretation and thematic meanings (Applebee, 1978; Beach & Wendler, 1987; Galda, 1990; Hickman, 1981; Lehr, 1988). A number of researchers have produced frameworks organizing literary responses into categories, such as Odell and Cooper's (1976) personal, descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative statements or Purves and Rippere's (1968) literary judgments, interpretational responses, narrational reactions, and self-involvement. These kinds of findings have been used primarily to provide insight into literacy development and to propose strategies for supporting responses to literature in the classroom (Purves, Rogers, & Soter, 1995).

Many approaches to literacy education have focused on what Rosenblatt (1994) refers to as *efferent reading*, reading that is directed outward to some goal outside the text, such as solving a problem or addressing a need. Reading the instructions on a fire extinguisher in order to put out a fire or reading a short story for main ideas in order to pass a quiz are both examples of efferent reading. In contrast, *aesthetic reading* is a self-contained and inner-directed activity in which the reader experiences a text and creates some personal meaning from or about it. The focus is on reading for the sake of reading. Some studies have found that when teachers adopt aesthetic approaches to reading in their classrooms, elementary-school students as well as undergraduates engage more deeply with texts (Many, Gerla, Wiseman, & Ellis, 1995; Many & Wiseman, 1992; Many, Wiseman, &

Altieri, 1996). Indeed, research in this vein has shown that elementary- and middle-school students not only engage more fully but also demonstrate more sophisticated understanding of texts when they focus on the personal experience of reading rather than on comprehension (Cox & Many, 1992; Many, 1991). Other research with students from elementary school up through college has demonstrated that personal interest in texts also influences reading engagement and comprehension (Iran-Nejad, 1987; Jose & Brewer, 1984; Schraw & Lehman, 2001). However, the research in education has not examined aesthetic reading outside of the classroom context. Prominent reader-response scholars have called for further attention to aesthetic reading, suggesting that researchers might be able to describe “some sort of a common world of subjective experiences” (Purves et al., 1995, p. 52) or produce “a possible typology of pleasures” (Sipe, 1999, p. 124).

2.3 *Mass communication*

2.3.1 *Uses-and-gratifications theory*

The literatures of LIS and literacy education have largely neglected information behavior and reading habits in recreational contexts. In contrast, research adopting the uses-and-gratifications perspective in mass communications has focused explicitly on recreational pursuits and pastimes (Bryant & Miron, 2002), especially when it comes to people’s choices for various kinds of media, such as television, film, or music. Some approaches to understanding the effects of media—such as the hypodermic-needle model or the magic-bullet theory—have characterized people as passive, uncritical receivers of media messages (Severin & Tankard, 2001). In contrast, within the uses-and-gratifications approach, people are assumed to possess understanding of their motivations

and interests in media selection and use and to make active media choices to gratify particular needs (Katz et al., 1974). As in reader-response theory, uses-and-gratifications theory emphasizes the individual's role in making meaning from media content. Researchers suspend value judgments about people's uses of media (Katz et al., 1974), paying careful attention to the perspectives of individuals in a particular context of media use.

Most uses-and-gratifications research has addressed the gratifications that individuals derive from television viewing (e.g., Harwood, 1999; Lin, 1993; Perse, 1990) and, more recently, from Internet use (e.g., Ferguson & Perse, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). The uses-and-gratifications approach has also distinguished between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained (Palmgreen, 1984), thus recognizing the fluid, dynamic nature of gratification. Research in this area has identified the powerful social and cultural context of media consumption and has identified a number of gratifications that people seek and obtain from media—such as satisfying curiosity, building self-esteem, creating feelings of belonging, and leading to enjoyment and relaxation (Katz et al., 1974).

The process of seeking gratifications through various media choices resembles the process of relevance assessment as part of document selection. When making choices, people assess media content for potential gratification, just as they assess the expected relevance of specific documents. Like LIS research in information behavior, uses-and-gratifications research focuses explicitly on need; however, the latter is more directly concerned with affective and social needs than with cognitive ones (Bryant & Miron, 2002; Palmgreen, 1984; Rubin, 2002).

Interestingly, shortly after uses-and-gratification theory originated, a few researchers in literacy education adopted the approach to investigate children's recreational reading habits. Studies identified a few broad gratifications pursued by children, such as enjoyment, escape, and instrumental learning (Greaney & Neuman, 1983; S. B. Neuman, 1980). However, the application of the uses-and-gratification approach to reading habits appears to have been short-lived. In the LIS literature, T. D. Wilson (1997) and Case (2007) have advocated applying the approach to understanding information behavior, but their suggestion has not been widely adopted. Nevertheless, a complement to existing models and theories in LIS and literacy education, uses-and-gratification theory clearly offers potential for developing understanding of book selection for recreational reading.

2.4 Conceptual framework

From an LIS perspective, browsing the library for recreational reading materials is considered first and foremost a kind of information behavior. More narrowly, book selection is considered a process of relevance assessment. By adopting the approaches from the research traditions on information behavior and relevance assessment, this study explored both "external behaviors" and "internal cognitions" (Dervin & Nilan, 1986). Because these are not entirely discrete—behaviors are motivated by cognitions and cognition often results in behavior—this study blends these approaches to focus on the process of book selection more holistically than can either approach alone.

As noted above, the literatures of both information behavior and relevance assessment have emphasized academic and professional settings rather than recreational ones. To gain a broader understanding of book selection for recreational reading, this study drew

upon uses-and-gratification theory and reader-response theory to undergird the information-behavior and relevance-assessment models. The conceptual framework for the study brings all these perspectives together to focus on several key constructs in an integrated approach to investigating the process of selecting books for recreational reading.

Following from T. D. Wilson's (1981, 1997) interdisciplinary model of information behavior, this study conceives of gratification as the activating mechanism for the book-selection process (*Figure 2-1*). Building on Bates's (1989) berrypicking model of information seeking and reflecting the distinction between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained (Palmgreen, 1984), the study considers gratification as dynamic, evolving, and likely to shift during the book-selection process. Finally, the study considers Rosenblatt's (1994) kinds of reading as kinds of relevance. In particular, her notion of *aesthetic reading* is closely related to *aesthetic relevance* (R. Green, 1997; Reuter, in press), which involves assessing a book's ability to provide gratification through the experience of reading.

Just as the fluid nature of information needs makes them difficult for individuals to specify and researchers to observe (Belkin, 1980; Taylor, 1962; T. D. Wilson, 1981, 1997), identifying gratifications is problematic. Children's discussion of books before,

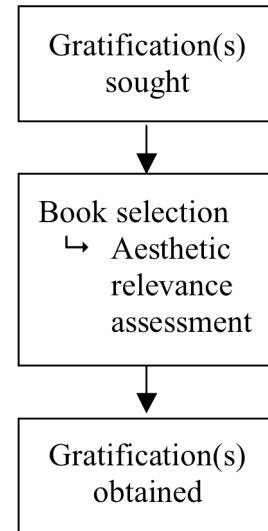


Figure 2-1. Preliminary model of the book-selection process.

during, and after selection may provide some insight into the gratifications that children seek and obtain from reading and suggest the factors that children use to assess the relevance of their selections to these gratifications. Drawing on a conceptual framework that encompasses LIS models of information behavior and relevance assessment, uses-and-gratifications theory, and reader-response theory, this study aims to identify the gratifications sought, the aesthetic-relevance factors considered, and the gratifications obtained during children's book selection for recreational reading in a public library.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Using qualitative methods, this study extended existing theories and examined how related constructs apply under different circumstances (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The work aimed to describe the complex phenomenon of children's book selection by accounting for multiple interacting factors (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). It focused particularly on understanding meaning, context, and process from the participants' perspectives (Maxwell, 2005). This chapter provides an overview of the research questions and design and describes the methods used in this study—including participant selection, data collection, and data analysis—as part of a systematic design that ensures the validity of the findings reported here.

3.1 Research questions

The research question addressed in the study is:

- How do primary-age children select books in a public library for recreational reading?

This broad question touches on issues related not only to process but also to motivation and to other factors related to readers, books, and context. Related foreshadowing questions address these specific aspects:

- What behaviors do these children exhibit in the process of book selection for recreational reading?
- What gratifications do these children seek when selecting books for recreational reading?

- What impels these children to seek out reading experiences? (Sebesta & Monson, 2003)
- What factors influence these children when selecting books for recreational reading?
 - What personal characteristics influence these children's selection decisions?
 - What aspects of books influence these children's selection decisions?
 - What contextual conditions influence these children's selection decisions?
 - How do other children and adults (e.g., peers, siblings, parents, and librarians) influence these children in book selection?
 - How do mass-media and technology use influence these children in book selection?
 - Do these children mention the same selection factors consistently?
 - Are there patterns within and across these children?
- How do these children engage with the books they select for recreational reading?
 - What kinds of gratifications do these children obtain from reading?
 - What aspects of books influence these children's engagement with books?
- In the selection of books for recreational reading, what relationships exist among the gratifications sought, aesthetic-relevance factors, and gratifications obtained?

3.2 *Research design*

Although many qualitative research projects undertake exploratory work with a loose, inductive design, this study was able to draw upon several existing theories and well-developed constructs and could thus use a somewhat tighter design (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researcher used a collective (Stake, 1995) or multiple-case (Yin, 2003) design to identify how a sample of twenty participants (i.e., twenty cases) select books for recreational reading in a public library. The work was structured as an instrumental case study, in which the cases themselves are not the focus but are used to shed light on a central issue (Stake, 1995)—in this instance, children’s book selection. Because of its emphasis on understanding the contextual conditions of a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003), the case-study approach is well-suited to this study’s aims to identify the factors that influence children’s selection of books for recreational reading. Furthermore, the multiple-case study design offers potential for replication (Yin, 2003), which is necessary to build a generalized model of children’s book-selection processes.

In keeping with the principles of prolonged engagement and persistent observation (Guba, 1981), the study undertook multiple field visits with each participant over a three-month period in summer 2006. Multiple sessions with the participants permitted the collection of a wider variety of data than could be achieved with single encounters. These multiple sessions aided the researcher in understanding the influence of context in book selection, in clarifying the relationships among factors, and in identifying patterns within and across the participants.

3.3 *Participants*

3.3.1 *Site selection*

Permission to conduct the study at the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) was granted by its director, Ms. Maralita Freeny. Under her guidance, the Hyattsville and New Carrollton branch libraries, with large and well-trafficked children's departments, were selected as research sites. The children's department supervisors at both branches—Ms. Kelley Perkins at Hyattsville and Ms. Kathy Kirchoefer at New Carrollton—were identified as gatekeepers who could provide access to participants (Creswell, 1998).

3.3.2 *Sampling-and-recruitment strategy*

The selection of study participants followed both purposive and convenience sampling strategies (Creswell, 1998; Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Participants were sought from among regular users of the selected PGCMLS sites, using several recruitment strategies. First, informational fliers advertising the study coupled with forms collecting preliminary information about potential participants were made available at the information desks at both branches. (See *Appendix A: Recruitment flier*.) Library staff members at the branches were also asked to identify prospective participants from among regular patrons to whom to distribute the materials. Second, the children's department supervisors identified several local public and private schools served by their branches with which they had had strong relationships in the past. The school library media specialists at these schools were asked to distribute fliers to prospective participants among their students. Third, an email describing the study was distributed to

the mailing lists of two neighborhood community groups. (See *Appendix B: Recruitment email*.)

As an incentive to participate in this study, participants were offered \$50 in gift cards to area retailers and their choice of three books. In the spirit of reciprocity, the gifts were offered to acknowledge the substantial time and effort the participants invested in the study (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Participation in this study also offered parents and children an increased awareness of their book-selection practices as well as opportunities to share an enthusiasm for books and to underscore the value of reading.

3.3.3 Participant selection

In total, 47 children volunteered for the study. Because only four identified the New Carrollton branch as their primary library, that branch was excluded as a research site. Of the 43 who identified the Hyattsville branch as their primary library, twenty children were selected to participate, as explained below. The final group was balanced in grade and gender and diverse in demographics, representing a variety of school and home environments. (See *Appendix C: Participants* for full details on the participants selected.)

Library use. The sample included only children who regularly use the public library to select and borrow books. For the purposes of this study, regular use of the public library was defined operationally as one visit per month during the six months prior to the study's beginning.

Grade. To reduce differences due to development and education, the sample included only children who were completing second and third grades and who were generally

between the ages of seven and nine. Children at this age are quite capable of expressing themselves clearly to provide rich data. Furthermore, because research indicates that the decline in recreational reading does not occur until after fourth grade (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2001; Roberts & Foehr, 2004; Yankelovich, 2006), children at this age are expected to represent a population of avid readers. Half the participants had completed second grade; the other half, third grade. Participants ranged in age from 7 years 5 months, to 9 years 6 months. (See *Appendix C: Participants* for further details.)

Gender. Because other studies have found differences in reading habits between boys and girls (Childress, 1985; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Simpson, 1996), the sample was balanced by gender: half the participants were female and half male. Gender was counterbalanced by grade level, resulting in a group consisting of five second-grade girls, five second-grade boys, five third-grade girls, and five third-grade boys.

Other demographics. Most of the 43 Hyattsville children who expressed interest in the study were self-identified as high achievers who attend private schools and who live in households with two parents who were both highly educated (i.e., with graduate degrees). About half of these children were excluded in order to create a participant group with a wider range of backgrounds. Participant selection therefore favored the few children in the overall study who were average or low achievers; who came from single-parent households; who attended public schools or were home schooled; or whose parents had lower levels of education. Although participants were not selected for race or home language, the final group of twenty participants was also diverse ethnically and linguistically. (See *Appendix C: Participants* for full details.)

The group represents the demographics of the population the library serves, in support of a replication strategy (Yin, 2003). It also maximized the range of data collected, in support of transferability of the study's findings (Guba, 1981). However, despite the diversity among the participants in this study, the group was not large enough to permit analysis by criteria beyond gender and grade.

3.4 *Ethical considerations*

3.4.1 *Informed consent*

An informational flier, letter of information, parental consent form, and assent form for children were developed in compliance with the requirements set by the University of Maryland's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects. Official approval to undertake the research was initially received April 28, 2006. A modification to the permission letters was approved May 25, 2006. The application was renewed on April 28, 2007, to permit the final data analysis. (See *Appendix L: IRB Application Approval*.) Parents and children indicated their informed consent for participation in the study at the opening of the initial meetings before research commenced.

3.4.2 *Confidentiality*

To protect the privacy of the children and their families, no participants are discussed or identified by name in this report. Pseudonyms are used here and in all reports arising from this research. Tape-recorded, transcribed, and hand-written data have been maintained in a secure location. Any contact information (i.e., names, addresses, and phone numbers) will be purged from these records after the research is concluded.

3.5 *Data collection*

To protect against systematic biases, the study relied on several data-collection methods representing the mainstays of qualitative data collection: observations, interviews, and document review (Creswell, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Questionnaires were also used to gather standardized background data on all participants. The combination of a variety of data-gathering techniques has allowed a complete picture of children's book-selection practices to emerge.

3.5.1 *Data-collection methods*

3.5.1.1 *Questionnaires*

At an initial screening meeting, children's reading interests and attitudes and media use were gauged using questions adapted from the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990) and other interest and reading attitude inventories (Johns & Lenski, 1997). (See *Appendix E: Reading-Attitude Questionnaire* and *Appendix F: Media-Use Questionnaire*.) Questions from similar instruments asked parents to describe their children's reading habits and library usage (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1990; Johns & Lenski, 1997). (See *Appendix G: Reading-Habits Questionnaire*.) In addition, parents also completed questionnaires establishing their educational levels, socioeconomic status, language(s) spoken at home, and other socio-demographic factors. These data provide insights into aspects of home and family life that might influence children's reading habits. (See *Appendix H: Information Form*.)

3.5.1.2 *Interviews with children*

Interviews with children offered access to the children's thoughts, feelings, and expectations—providing insight into the children's experiences from a holistic perspective. A background interview at the initial meeting established each child's reading habits and book-selection practices to contextualize the behavior observed during the study. (See *Appendix I: Background Interview Questions*.)

Following the background interview, three library visits were scheduled over the course of several weeks to look for patterns in children's book selection over time. To capture the totality of book-selection practices, interviews occurred at three checkpoints: first, when a child arrived at the library, before selecting any books; second, after the child selected books for checkout; and, third, when the child revisited the library to return the selected books. (See *Appendix J: Library-Visit Interview Questions*.) This multi-stage interviewing approach captured the range of factors mentioned throughout the process of book selection and the progress of gratification as it evolved. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

3.5.1.3 *Observations of children's behavior*

In any qualitative study, care must be taken to protect against the influence of the researcher on the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998). Self-report data, such as participants' responses to interview questions, can be influenced by the research setting and are potentially reactive (McGrath, 1995); child participants might be particularly prone to provide socially acceptable answers to adult researchers (Greig & Taylor, 1999).

For these reasons, observations were conducted to capture any potential differences between what children say they did and what they actually did.

3.5.1.4 Trace measures of children's behavior

Trace measures (i.e., the physical evidence of behavior left behind) were also used as an additional—and nonreactive, unobtrusive—source of data (McGrath, 1995). In this study, such trace measures as the specific titles of books were carefully noted. When children referred to specific titles and aspects of books in interviews, the physical artifacts were used as sources of data to contextualize children's behaviors. Other trace measures collected include the start and end times of children's book selection sessions.

3.5.1.5 Diaries and diary-interviews with parents

To supplement the firsthand data collected through observation and interview and to permit access to children's reading habits outside the library setting, the research also involved the “diary: diary-interview” method (Zimmerman & Wieder, 1977). Parents were given notebooks and asked to record their observations for the duration of the study about their children's library usage habits, reading habits, and any patterns exhibited with regard to book selection. Notebooks included a combination of pre-structured questions and an opportunity for open-ended remarks. (See *Appendix K: Reading Diary*.)

3.5.2 Data-collection procedures

3.5.2.1 Initial meeting

Nearly all the initial meetings took place in the children's homes; three took place in the Hyattsville branch library; one took place in a parent's office. To begin, each child was given a University of Maryland pencil, and each parent was given a University of

Maryland pen. To offer the children some measure of ownership in the process, they were also given a checklist for the meeting (see *Appendix D: Initial-Meeting Checklist*) and encouraged to track the process by checking off completed items. The meetings generally lasted for 45 minutes to one hour.

Questionnaires. The initial meeting focused on collecting data via a variety of questionnaires, some designed as worksheets for the children to complete and others as surveys for their parents. The questionnaires were designed not only to collect relevant data but also to keep the children occupied with a pleasant activity throughout the meeting, as in the self-portrait exercise (see *Appendix F: Media-Use Questionnaire*, page 2).

Interviews. Each initial meeting culminated in a background interview that lasted for approximately 10 minutes. In addition to gathering background information on children's reading habits and book-selection practices, this interview provided an opportunity for children to become accustomed to the research process, including the use of a tape recorder.

3.5.2.2 *Library visits*

At the conclusion of the initial meeting, the parents of the participants scheduled their three subsequent library visits; dates and times were noted in the Reading Diary. Because these visits were often scheduled weeks and, in some cases, months in advance, the researcher called the participants to confirm all library-visit appointments one or two days before the scheduled dates. Although parents sometimes rescheduled appointments, all twenty participants completed all sixty library visits.

Care was taken to ensure a measure of consistency across the library visits. At each session, the researcher greeted the participant and his or her parent(s) in the lobby of the library and walked with them to a table in the children's room that was used as a home base for the duration of the visit. Parents were invited to remain nearby. Many remained present for the duration of the library visits, while others attended to siblings elsewhere in the children's room or left the children's room to browse other areas of the library.

Interviews. Interviews took place at the table. To make children feel comfortable, the interviews were conversational in nature. Notes were rarely taken, as all interviews were tape-recorded, permitting the researcher to engage more closely with the children. The interviews followed the protocol described in the Library Visit Interview Questions (see *Appendix J: Library-Visit Interview Questions*), with one exception. At the first library visit, children were asked during the book-return interview to comment in a free-form way on whether they liked their selections. At subsequent library visits, children were asked to rate how much they liked their selections using a modified version of the scale in the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990).

Although asking the children to rate their selections was a helpful way to focus the book-return interviews, there was little consistency discovered in the book-return habits of the children who participated in this study. In many cases, the children and their parents made additional visits to the library when the researcher was not present, and many of the books the children had selected in the researcher's presence were not actually returned in the researcher's presence; in addition, several children did not actually return any books while the researcher was present. As a result, only about a

quarter of the books selected were subsequently rated during these interviews. Children's expressions of their general liking or disliking for books they returned was taken into account only for identifying factors that influenced children either positively or negatively during the book-return stage as well as for use in the cross-case comparisons as noted below. The children's individual ratings were not used in the analysis in any other way.

Observations. Observations were undertaken with the full knowledge of the child participants and their parents. The researcher generally stood near the information desk, which offered a vantage point to observe the entire space. She repositioned herself as necessary to view the children as they moved between shelves and behind furniture or as they traveled to other areas of the library. Children were instructed to alert the researcher when they were finished selecting books, thus signaling the conclusion of the period of observation.

Observations attended to children's movements around the library space, interactions with books at the shelves, interactions with other people at the library, and audible remarks or comments. Field notes recorded both descriptive and reflective elements and were used to structure follow-up interviews (Creswell, 1998). The start and end times were noted to calculate the amount of time children spent selecting books. Time spent undertaking activities apart from book selection—such as visiting the restroom or completing paperwork for the summer-reading program—was also noted.

Diaries. Parents were asked to bring the reading diaries with them for each library visit. At each visit, the researcher briefly scanned the entries to develop targeted follow-

up interview questions for both children and parents. Because the parents were inconsistent in their use of diaries, the data collected in them were not analyzed.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Questionnaire data

3.6.1.1 Reading attitudes

Children's reading attitudes were assessed using a version of the Garfield Elementary Reading Attitude Survey modified by the researcher (see *Appendix E: Reading-Attitude Questionnaire*). The survey asked the children to indicate how they felt about reading in each of ten scenarios by circling a drawing of Garfield in one of four different moods: *very happy*, *a little happy*, *a little upset*, and *very upset*. Following procedures described by McKenna and Kear (1990), the researcher converted children's choices into scores, with high scores (*very happy*) assigned four points and low scores (*very upset*) assigned one point. Average scores were calculated for the five questions focused on recreational reading, for the five questions focused on academic reading, and across all ten questions—resulting in a recreational score, an academic score, and a composite score.

3.6.1.2 Reading habits

Data on the children's reading habits and the household context of reading were gathered using a questionnaire completed by the parents (see *Appendix G: Reading-Habits Questionnaire*). Questions asked parents to indicate the presence of books, other print materials, and computers in the household and the frequency with which the children participated in such reading-related activities as reading to their parents and

listening to their parents read to them. Responses to this questionnaire were assembled by participant to characterize the children's reading habits.

3.6.1.3 Media use

Data on the children's use of a variety of media were gathered using a questionnaire completed by the children (see *Appendix F: Media-Use Questionnaire*). Questions asked the children to determine the number of books they read each week; the number of days each week they used a computer; the number of movies they viewed each week; and the number of television shows they viewed each day. The individual numbers were used to determine averages for each form of media and then to identify children who were below average, average, and above average with regard to their use of the various forms of media. Responses to the question about the presence of computers in the household from the parents' questionnaire on reading habits were combined with responses to this questionnaire and assembled by participant to characterize children's media use.

3.6.2 Trace measures

3.6.2.1 Selection times

Start and end times for selection at each library visit were extracted from the observation field notes and used to calculate the time spent selecting books at each library visit. The individual selection times were used to determine the average time spent selecting books per library visit for each child, across each child's library visits, and across all participants' library visits.

3.6.2.2 Books selected

The titles of the books mentioned during the interviews were extracted from the transcripts and assembled in a spreadsheet and tallied for each child. Only books selected by the children were included in the tally; non-print materials (such as audiobooks and music compact discs) and books selected by parents without any input from their children were excluded from the tally. The individual tallies were then used to determine the average number of books selected per library visit for each child, across each child's library visits, and across all participants' library visits.

Using the PGCMLS online catalog, full title and author information was gathered for each of the books the children selected and returned. Call numbers were used to classify the books according to their locations in the children's room of the library—picture books, juvenile fiction, or juvenile nonfiction. The titles selected by each child were categorized to determine the distribution of the kinds of books selected across each child's library visits and across all participants' library visits.

3.6.3 Observation and interview data

In order to provide a well-rounded account, the analysis of both the observation and the interview data consisted of three main kinds of activities that parallel Bradley's (1993) succinct summary of the qualitative analytic endeavor: "breaking down data into smaller pieces by identifying meaningful units, grouping these together in categories, and developing relationships among the categories in such a way that patterns in the data are made clear" (p. 445). Although the findings related to the observation data and the

interview data are reported separately below, the process of analysis for both kinds of data was identical.

At the conclusion of the data-collection phase, the audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim, and images of book covers were inserted into the transcripts. Hand-written field notes from the observations were also transcribed. The interview transcripts, combined with the observation notes, resulted in 1,096 pages of raw data. Documents containing the raw data were imported into QSR NVivo software, version 7 (QSR International, 2006) for analysis, following a grounded-theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In particular, the analysis phase sought to identify (a) data related to the foreshadowing questions and (b) relationships among the concepts outlined in the conceptual framework.

Both observation field notes and interview transcripts were reviewed line by line to identify instances of *actions* and *factors* related to book selection. Twenty-eight actions—such distinct, observable activities as “rummage through books” or “read back cover”—were gleaned from the field notes. Seventy-seven factors—such traditional relevance criteria as “topic” or “level of difficulty” along with such “document information elements” as a book’s title, front cover, or summary (Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999)—were gleaned from the interview data. Further analysis led to the consolidation of the 28 actions into seven facets related to children’s book selection and of the 77 factors into 13 facets related to this process. Together, these 20 facets represent the main findings of the study. Discussion of how these facets emerged and the role they played in children’s book selection comprises the balance of this report.

3.6.3.1 Observation data

The observations resulted in rich field notes characterizing children’s activities within the library, capturing the behavioral component of book selection. Individual actions were coded in NVivo as “free nodes,” and categorizing strategies were used to group the data into meaningful categories through inductive analysis. As the analysis proceeded, contextualizing strategies were used to identify relationships among the actions, and groups of related actions were clustered into “tree nodes”—that is, the seven *facets* of book-selection actions, such as “shelf interaction” and “parental involvement.” (See *Figure 3-1* for an illustration of the sequence of this analysis. See *Appendix M: Coding scheme* for an overview of the specific actions—organized by facet—observed in this study. See *Appendix N: Code definitions* for complete definitions of the individual action codes and facets.) Finally, NVivo’s matrix-coding query function was used to produce matrices comparing the relative frequencies of the instances of book-selection actions by gender, by grade completed, and by individual participant.

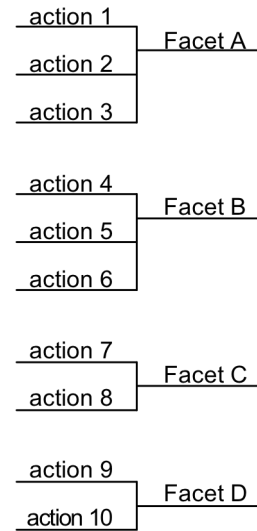


Figure 3-1. Sequence of analysis for the behavioral aspect of book-selection, from actions to facets.

3.6.3.2 Interview data

To identify the range of factors that influence children’s book selection and to capture the cognitive process of book selection, interviews were conducted at multiple points

during the course of the study—at the initial meetings, during each of the library visits, and at the conclusion of the final library visits. All interview data were pooled and analyzed together.

Mentions of book-selection factors were coded in NVivo as “free nodes,” and groups of related factors were clustered into “tree nodes”—that is, the 13 *facets* of book-selection factors, such as “format-genre,” “contents,” and “social ties.” (See *Figure 3-2* for an illustration of the sequence of this analysis. See *Appendix M: Coding scheme* for an overview of the specific factors—organized by facet—that emerged in this study. See *Appendix N: Code*

definitions for complete definitions of the individual factor codes and facets.) Finally, NVivo’s matrix-coding query function was used to produce matrices comparing the relative frequencies of the mentions of book-selection factors by gender, grade completed, individual participant, and interview type and stage—background interview, pre-selection interview, post-selection interview, book-return interview, and closing interview.

Additional data from the background and closing interviews were used to contextualize the book-selection actions and factors. Analysis of the background interviews identified the motivations children identified for reading, that is their *reading*

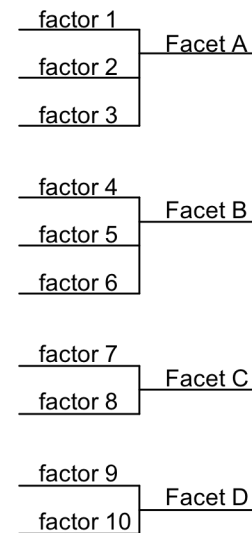


Figure 3-2. Sequence of analysis for the cognitive aspect of book selection, from factors to facets.

gratifications. Analysis of the closing interviews identified the origins of children's book-selection practices, that is their *knowledge sources*.

The analysis of the observation and interview data described above is consistent with successive levels of analysis corresponding to Miles and Huberman's (1994) procedure for arriving at increasing levels of abstraction from raw data to a generalized model. The final product of this study—this report—provides a richly textured and holistic description and explanation of children's book selection for recreational reading.

3.7 *Validity*

Taken together, the research methods described above form a systematic design that undergirds the validity of the findings of the study. In addition, intrarater-reliability testing was conducted to establish the reliability of the coding scheme, as described below. Further, particular attention was paid to Guba's (1981) concepts of credibility and transferability in order to ensure the overall truth value of the findings and to support the applicability of the findings to additional settings and populations.

3.7.1 *Reliability*

Interrater-reliability testing is a method for establishing the consistency of measures or scores commonly used in quantitative research but eschewed by some qualitative researchers (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997; Morse, 1994). Because of the large amount of data collected and the high number of codes in this study, the related method of intrarater-reliability testing was used to ensure the consistency of the application of the coding scheme across the data.

A sample of 55 pages—representing 5% of the total data—was selected at random from the transcripts based on numbers generated by an online randomization program (Urbaniak & Plous, 2007). The random sample included pages from both interview and observation transcripts, across participants and coded at different times. The sampled pages were assembled into one document, imported into NVivo as a new project, and recoded according to the original coding scheme. The coding from the original transcript was compared to the recoded sample, and agreement was calculated by dividing the number of codes that matched between the original and the recoded document by the total of the agreements and disagreements combined. The final result was 93% agreement, within the recommended 90% range (Miles & Huberman, 1994), suggesting the overall reliability of the coding scheme. Upon closer examination, the differences in coding were seen to consist solely of codes that had been overlooked during the recoding process, further suggesting the completeness of the original coding.

3.7.2 *Credibility*

The study design included several important practices recommended by Guba (1981) to ensure the credibility of the findings. First, multiple encounters with participants in multiple sessions over time provided prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field. Next, triangulation of data collection methods—including observations, interviews, and diaries—as well as of data sources—including children and their parents—allowed for cross-checking data and interpretations.

Through member checks, two of the child participants representing different genders and grade levels and with distinct points of view—Jeanette and Bobby*—were asked to confirm the study’s findings with regard to their own book-selection practices. In order to suit the children’s abilities, the researcher prepared brief member-check report forms in a comic-book format. (See *Appendix O: Member Check Reports*.) Each report form was individualized, including an overview of the child’s personal reading habits and book-selection practices as observed during the study. Each report highlighted major aspects of the findings—such as reading attitudes, reading gratifications, book-selection actions, book-selection factors, and sources of book-selection knowledge—and emphasized characteristics unique to each child. The researcher met with the children and their parents and supplied them with copies of the reports, asking them to verify or correct each statement and to provide any additional information not already captured in the report. At the conclusion of this process, the researcher spoke with the children and the parents about any changes the children experienced with regard to their reading habits and book-selection practices in the months since the study had concluded.

Both Jeanette and her mother confirmed the accuracy of the researcher’s interpretations presented in the report. They both said that Jeanette’s interest in reading had, in fact, been amplified since the study. According to her mother, Jeanette had “really blossomed more as a reader.” Bobby and his mother also confirmed that the researcher’s interpretations presented in the report accurately described Bobby’s reading habits and book-selection practices at the time of the study. However, both Bobby and

* These and all subsequent uses of children’s names are pseudonyms.

his mother stressed that Bobby's interest in recreational reading had increased significantly since the study and that he was less reliant on his mother in book selection than he had been during the study. She credited Bobby's access to the "right type of books"—namely, graphic novels—as the source of his turnaround. Although both children acknowledged growth related to reading interests, neither noted any differences in his or her practices in selecting books. Although the member-check reports focus narrowly on the book-selection practices of just two participants, the positive results obtained establish some measure of credibility of the findings reported here.

3.7.3 *Transferability*

Although the findings of the study are necessarily limited to the population and setting studied, several practices allow future researchers to judge the transferability of the findings. The multiple-case study design involved a diverse group of children to maximize the range of data collected (Guba, 1981). This study design offers the potential for multiple-case replication design, which can provide convincing evidence of a general phenomenon regardless of particular settings and contextual conditions (Yin, 2003). The data collection was also structured to gather rich data from a variety of sources, in a variety of formats, so that this report provides thick description of the participants and the research context (Guba, 1981).

3.8 *Limitations of the study*

Although care has been taken to ensure the validity of the findings reported in this dissertation, the study has several limitations in regard to transferability, related especially to the population studied and the setting:

- A sample of twenty is rather large for a qualitative study, but it is still small and might not have uncovered the full range of children's book-selection practices.
- The participants selected represent a narrow age group; children at this age no doubt differ from younger and older children in their book-selection practices.
- The participants selected included only regular library users whose book-selection practices might differ from those of the general population.
- The physical environment—such as layout and shelf arrangement—of the Hyattsville public library might have influenced the participants' book-selection practices; children selecting books in other environments might exhibit different practices.
- Book-selection practices during the summer months, when children are on vacation from school, might not be typical of book selection in the public library throughout the year.
- Despite the multiple field visits, the study occurred over a limited period of time; richer results might be uncovered by working with children at greater length.
- For the convenience of the researcher and the participants, library visits in this study were arranged in advance. Such pre-planned visits to the library might not represent the participants' regular library use. Book-selection practices during pre-planned visits might differ from more impromptu uses of the library.

- Finally, participants' library use outside the study was not monitored, and no attempt was made to account for book-selection practices that occurred at library visits made in addition to those scheduled as part of the study. Book-selection practices during the scheduled library visits probably does not represent the totality of the participants' library use.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the study organized according to the stages of data collection and the sources of data. The first section offers a thick description of the context of reading by presenting the results of the initial meetings: data collected from the questionnaires offer insights into the participants' attitudes toward reading, reading habits, and habits of media use, while data collected from the background interviews offer insights into the gratifications children seek from reading and the children's conceptualizations of their book-selection processes. The second section presents a holistic analysis of the full range of data collected during the library visits by, first, providing an overview of the library visits through the trace measures; next, describing the actions the children performed during the observations; and finally, identifying the factors that they mentioned during the multi-stage interviews. The third section presents the results of the closing interviews, which offer insights into the origins of the participants' book-selection practices observed and described in this study. These three sections lay the groundwork for the penultimate section, which synthesizes findings and offers a series of embedded analyses of patterns in children's book selection. The final section summarizes the findings and characterizes several central aspects of children's book selection, culminating in an overview of the process of book selection.

Throughout this chapter, in the interest of building confidence in the interpretations offered in this report, data have been presented in full in a series of tables that summarize all aspects of the findings.

4.1 *Initial meeting*

This section presents the findings that emerged from the initial meeting, providing a backdrop to the book selection that occurred during subsequent library visits. Data from the questionnaires provide a thick description of the participants, shedding light on characteristics that might play a role in children's book selection. Data from the background interviews conducted at the conclusion of the initial meetings provide a first glimpse into the process of book selection from the children's perspectives.

4.1.1 *Questionnaires*

Data from the questionnaires were used to characterize the children's reading attitudes, reading habits, and media use.

4.1.1.1 *Reading attitudes*

The results of the Reading Attitude Questionnaire (see *Appendix E: Reading-Attitude Questionnaire*) suggest that the children in this study exhibited a range of attitudes toward reading (*Table 4-1*).

Table 4-1. Comparison of participants' attitudes toward reading.

Name	Grade	Gender	Recreational score	Academic score	Composite score
Mitchell	3	M	4.0	4.0	4.0
Susanna	2	F	4.0	3.8	3.9
Erin	3	F	4.0	3.4	3.7
Maya	2	F	3.6	3.8	3.7
Stella	3	F	3.6	3.8	3.7
Jeanette	3	F	3.6	3.7	3.7
Hugo	2	M	3.8	3.4	3.6
Sangita	2	F	3.8	3.3	3.6
Acton	2	M	3.6	3.0	3.3
Lily	3	F	3.8	2.6	3.2
Eva	3	F	3.6	2.8	3.2
Jonah	3	M	3.6	2.6	3.1
Demario	2	M	3.0	3.0	3.0
Hannah	2	F	3.4	2.2	2.8
Josef	3	M	3.2	2.2	2.7
Keisha	2	F	3.4	1.8	2.6
Joel	3	M	3.1	2.0	2.6
Jason	2	M	3.0	2.2	2.6
Bobby	2	M	2.6	1.6	2.1
Bryce	3	M	2.3	1.4	1.9
Average			3.5	2.8	3.1

The average composite score across all the participants indicates that the children had a generally positive attitude about reading, with a strong preference for recreational reading over academic reading, as indicated by the higher average recreational score when compared with the average academic score. A few children—Mitchell, Susanna, Erin, Maya, and Stella—exhibited particularly positive attitudes. Two children—Bobby and Bryce—exhibited especially negative attitudes. Notably, the “positive” readers are nearly all girls, while both “negative” readers are boys.

Overall, the girls exhibited more positive attitudes in general than the boys (*Table 4-2*). Reading attitudes were consistent between the children who had finished second grade and those who had finished third grade.

Table 4-2. Average composite reading attitude scores, by gender and grade level.

Group	Average
Total	3.1
Female	3.4
Male	2.9
2nd graders	3.1
3rd graders	3.2

When the reading-attitude scores from this study are adjusted according to the original Elementary Reading Attitude Survey instrument, the average score of the children in this study ranks at the 60th and 64th percentiles for second and third grades, respectively (McKenna & Kear, 1990), suggesting that the children in this study have a somewhat more positive attitude toward reading than the general population. Although there was some variation in the reading attitudes of the children in this study, there is not sufficient diversity among the participants to permit further analysis according to reading attitude.

4.1.1.2 *Reading habits*

The children came from a variety of family backgrounds. Although all families were supportive and encouraging of their child's reading, the results of the Reading Habits Questionnaire (see *Appendix G: Reading-Habits Questionnaire*) suggest that the children exhibited some variety in their reading practices within the home environment (*Table 4-3*).

Table 4-3. Comparison of participants' reading habits and access to books and other reading materials.

Name	Grade	Gender	Independent recreational reading*	Parental involvement*	Books/reading materials in home?	Personal books?	Personal reading materials?
Susanna	2	F	above	above	yes	yes	yes
Erin	3	F	above	above	yes	yes	yes
Stella	3	F	above	above	yes	yes	yes
Mitchell	3	M	above	above	yes	yes	yes
Maya	2	F	above	average	yes	yes	yes
Sangita	2	F	above	average	yes	yes	yes
Demario	2	M	above	average	yes	yes	yes
Jeanette	3	F	above	average	yes	no	no
Jonah	3	M	above	average	yes	yes	yes
Acton	2	M	average	above	yes	yes	yes
Hannah	2	F	average	average	yes	yes	yes
Keisha	2	F	average	average	yes	yes	yes
Hugo	2	M	average	average	yes	no	yes
Bryce	3	M	average	average	yes	yes	yes
Joel	3	M	average	average	yes	yes	yes
Josef	3	M	average	average	yes	yes	yes
Lily	3	F	average	below	yes	yes	no
Bobby	2	M	below	above	yes	yes	yes
Jason	2	M	below	average	yes	yes	yes
Eva	3	F	below	below	yes	yes	no

* The average rate of both independent recreational reading and parental involvement was "one or more times a *week*." Responses ranged from "one or more times a *year*" to "every *day*."

Independent recreational reading. Parents indicated that the children tended to read independently and for fun, with 17 indicating that they did so at or above the average frequency across the participants, which is *one or more times a week*. Indeed, eleven parents said their children read on their own on a daily basis, with nine indicating that their children read for fun daily. Among the three children who read independently less frequently than their counterparts, both Bobby and Jason exhibited lower reading-attitude scores. Eva, by contrast, had a high reading-attitude score; however, her mother was

unable to identify her daughter's reading preferences and might not have provided an accurate representation of her reading habits.

Parental involvement. The parents tended to read to their children regularly, with 18 indicating that they did so at or above the average frequency across the participants, which is also *one or more times a week*. In fact, half the parents said they read to their children on a daily basis. Children read to their parents and spoke with their parents about what they read somewhat less frequently: while fifteen parents indicated that their children read to them at least once a week, only four of those said that their children read to them daily. Fourteen parents indicated that their children talked with them about what they read at least on a weekly basis; six of those said they talked daily. Some children seemed to be asserting their independence from their parents. For instance, during the initial meeting, Lily revealed, "Actually, I read in private. I don't show [my mom] that I read. And I don't tell her that I read, either." Parental involvement for Lily was below average: according the questionnaire, Lily's mother rarely read to her, they rarely talked about what Lily was reading, and Lily never read to her mother.

Access to books and reading materials. All the children had access to books and other kinds of reading materials (such as comic books, magazines, and newspapers) in their homes. Nearly all of them also had access to their own collections of books. Only two children—Hugo and Jeanette—did not have their own books. Notably, these two children come from large families—five and six siblings, respectively—in which books are shared among all members of the family. Nearly all the children also had access to

their own reading materials. Only three children—Eva, Jeanette, and Lily—did not have their own copies of such materials.

Concluding remarks. In national studies looking at children's reading habits at home, nearly three-quarters of fourth graders said they read for fun on at least a weekly basis; more than half said they talk about what they read with their families on at least a weekly basis; and two-thirds said they have access to books and at least two other kinds of reading materials (e.g., newspapers, magazines, or an encyclopedia) in their homes (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2001). Compared to the general population, the children in this study have somewhat higher rates of independent recreational reading and parental involvement and broader access to books and reading materials. The household reading habits of children in this study are more consistent with findings from a national study of adult literacy practices, in which more than three-quarters of parents at the highest literacy levels (i.e., *intermediate* or *proficient*) reported reading to their children at least weekly and all parents at these literacy levels said they had reading materials in their homes (Kutner et al., 2007).

Not surprisingly, children's reading habits were connected to their reading attitudes: the children with below-average rates of independent recreational reading tended to have below-average reading-attitude scores. However, the children with lower reading-attitude scores did not lack for parental involvement or access to books and other reading materials in their homes. The uniformity in reading habits among the participants obviates the value of any further analysis according to reading habits.

4.1.1.3 Media use

The results of the Media Use Questionnaire (see *Appendix F: Media-Use Questionnaire*) reveal that the children exhibited a range of media-use patterns (*Table 4-4*).

Table 4-4. Comparison of participants' access to computers and use of media.

Name	Grade	Gender	Home computer?	Own computer?	Computer use ^a	Movie viewing ^b	TV viewing ^c	Book reading ^d
Sangita	2	F	yes	no	above	above	above	above
Demario	2	M	yes	no	above	average	average	below
Jonah	3	M	yes	yes	above	average	average	average
Bryce	3	M	yes	no	above	average	average	below
Josef	3	M	yes	no	above	average	average	below
Eva	3	F	yes	no	average	above	above	below
Keisha	2	F	yes	no	average	above	average	average
Acton	2	M	yes	yes	average	above	average	above
Jeanette	3	F	yes	no	average	above	average	average
Hugo	2	M	no	no	average	average	above	average
Lily	3	F	yes	no	average	average	above	below
Hannah	2	F	yes	no	average	average	average	below
Jason	2	M	yes	no	average	average	average	average
Erin	3	F	yes	yes	average	average	average	average
Stella	3	F	yes	yes	average	average	average	below
Joel	3	M	yes	no	average	average	average	below
Maya	2	F	yes	yes	average	average	below	average
Susanna	2	F	yes	no	below	average	below	above
Bobby	2	M	yes	no	below	average	below	average
Mitchell	3	M	yes	no	below	below	below	above

^a The average rate of computer use was 4 days a week; responses ranged from 1-7 days a week.

^b The average rate of movie viewing was 2 movies a week; responses ranged from 0-5 movies a week.

^c The average rate of TV viewing was 3 TV programs a day; responses ranged from 0-9 programs a day.

^d The average rate of book reading was 5 books a week; responses ranged from 1-16 books a week.

Computer use. Every child but one had access to a computer at home; five children—Jonah, Acton, Erin, Stella, and Maya—had access to their own computers. The children used the computers on average four days a week. Five children—Sangita, Demario,

Jonah, Bryce, and Josef—used the computers more often; only three children—Susanna, Bobby, and Mitchell—used them less often.

Movie viewing. The children viewed an average of two movies a week. Five children—Sangita, Eva, Keisha, Acton, and Jeanette—viewed movies more frequently; only one child—Mitchell—viewed movies less frequently.

Television viewing. On average, the children viewed three television programs a day. Four children—Sangita, Eva, Hugo, and Lily—viewed more television shows; four children—Maya, Susanna, Bobby, and Mitchell—viewed fewer television shows.

Book reading. The children read an average of five books a week. Four children—Sangita, Acton, Susanna, and Mitchell—read ten or more books a week, while eight children—Demario, Bryce, Josef, Eva, Lily, Hannah, Stella, and Joel—read only one or two. However, because a lengthy chapter book and a short picture book were counted equally in this tally, these data do not address the actual amount of time the children spent reading.

Concluding remarks. The data are not adequate for making detailed comparisons between children's book reading and their uses of other forms of media, and they do not suggest any overall pattern. Some children—Sangita and Eva—were particularly heavy consumers of all kinds of media. Other children indicated spending more time using one kind of media than others: for instance, Mitchell and Susanna strongly preferred reading to other forms of media, while Bryce focused his attentions on computers. These data suggest that media use is highly individual.

Although some research has found evidence that children's use of media, especially television, supplants reading (Beentjes & Van der Voort, 1988; National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2001), this study reinforced the findings of other research that found so no such connection (Flood & Lapp, 1995; S. B. Neuman, 1988). Most children whose rates of book reading were below average were average in their use of other forms of media. The children who had the lowest reading attitudes—Bobby and Bryce—were not particularly heavy users of the other forms of media. While Bryce did use a computer more than the other children in the study, Bobby used the computer and watched television less than most other children. The lack of distinct trends in media use among these children reflects other reports on children's habits of media use.

4.1.2 *Background interviews*

The background interviews conducted at the conclusion of the initial meetings provided insight into the gratifications children seek from reading as well as into their conceptions of their personal book-selection processes.

4.1.2.1 Reading motivations

As part of the background interview, children were asked about their motivations for reading (see *Appendix I: Background Interview Questions*). They offered a variety of gratifications that they seek from the reading experience, with some of them mentioning multiple gratifications (*Table 4-5*).

Boredom alleviation. The most frequently mentioned reason children gave for reading was to alleviate boredom. For instance, Stella said she chose to read “when I’m bored or something.” Some children spoke of reading as passing or filling the time. Jonah explained, “I just like [reading] because ... it makes the time go by quick. When you’re doing things, like, waiting in line, I sometimes whip ... out a book.” Some children also described reading as an alternative when a more favored leisure activity was not possible or became less desirable. Hugo said, “Like, I’m bored ... when my friend can’t play, sometimes I read.” Similarly, Sangita explained, “Sometimes if I’m bored ... of watching the same TV shows, or I don’t want to go on the computer, then I’ll read.”

Learning. Many children also spoke of the opportunities reading provides to learn. Eva said that she reads “to learn more stuff or to answer some questions that I have.” Some children emphasized the potential to learn in reading nonfiction. Lily said, “If I’m reading true stories, I can learn a bit more.” Jeanette also spoke of what she could learn

Table 4-5. Frequency of reading gratifications mentioned during background interviews.

Reading gratification	# of participants
Boredom alleviation	11
Learning	8
Stimulation	7
Participation	7
Enjoyment	7
Imposition	5
Mood improvement	4
Family bonding	4
Curiosity	2

from fiction: “Cause ... sometimes I learn from [reading]. You just get a little information on ... how some other people’s lives might be and how life could be.” Maya’s appreciation of reading’s potential for learning was more general: “Reading makes you smarter.”

Stimulation. Children often spoke of the stimulating properties of reading. Lily remarked, “Telling stories, it gets me inside, excited!” Demario contrasted the stimulation he found in reading to the dulling effects of television: “When I watch TV, I get too tired, so I feel like reading a book.” Similarly, Erin said, “What I like about reading is that you can ... imagine stuff. Not like in a TV where they show you what they think is happening.” In fact, the stimulative properties of imagination were particularly powerful motivation for some children. Josef observed, “[Reading] just makes me ... imagine more and that keeps my brain awake and that keeps my whole body awake.”

Participation. Several children commented on the participatory nature of reading. Susanna remarked, “I can know what’s happening in the story and it’s fun to know what the story’s about.” Sangita emphasized the unfolding nature of reading, remarking, “I like reading because you can figure out ... what’s gonna happen.”

Enjoyment. Several children also mentioned the simple enjoyment they get from reading. Jeanette remarked, “I enjoy reading.” Hugo, Maya, and Susanna said they read “because it’s fun.” Hannah elaborated, “[Reading]’s fun, it’s like you’re going on an adventure.”

Imposition. Some children spoke of external motivations to read. Jason explained his mother's emphasis on reading: "My mom kind of begged... for it, that we read." Other children had pressures from school. Erin explained, "If it's for a book report, then I have to [read]." Josef elaborated, "Sometimes I have to [read]... On summer reading, I have to read a half an hour every day and I have to have a reading log when I'm in school."

Other reading gratifications. Children sometimes spoke of reading's potential to improve moods. Jeanette said, "[When I have a] bad mood, it gives me time to relax and take my mind off of it." Lily was more specific, explaining, "If my brother gets me really angry and I ... go upstairs because I get so mad ... I like to read, it helps me calm down a bit." Children also spoke of the opportunities for family bonding that reading provides. Several children spoke of reading with their parents. Joel said, "Sometimes my mom reads to me." Conversely, Eva said, "I read to my mom." Demario also spoke of sharing time reading with a sibling: "I read to my baby brother." Two children spoke simply of reading to satisfy their curiosity. Susanna said, "You might see a book and want to know what's happening in it. You can just read the book."

Concluding remarks. Although the children identified a range of gratifications that motivate their reading, not all the children in this study were avid readers. Two emphasized the difficulty they experience in reading. Jason explained:

I'm not so great at [reading]. And I don't want to waste my time 'cause I like to do other stuff instead of just sit down and do some reading 'cause that's not even exercising.

Bobby also said he did not like to read, "Because I'm not a very good reader. It's hard."

For some children, difficulty represents a powerful deterrent to reading.

Although some children spoke of reading being imposed on them by parents or by school and of the difficulty they experience in reading, generally, the children emphasized the positive experiences reading provides. Not surprisingly, the gratifications children described are affective—stimulation, enjoyment, and mood improvement—as previous studies on book selection (Pejtersen, 1986; Ross, 1999) and reading (Greaney & Neuman, 1983; S. B. Neuman, 1980) have also found. Other gratifications mentioned relate to cognitive experiences: boredom alleviation, learning, and curiosity. These kinds of gratifications were previously uncovered by researchers taking a uses-and-gratifications approach to understanding children’s reading (Greaney & Neuman, 1983; S. B. Neuman, 1980). The gratifications children mentioned are also social, as in participation and family bonding, two important gratifications frequently identified by researchers into people’s use of other forms of media (Katz et al., 1974). Finally, in the case of Josef speaking of keeping his “whole body awake,” reading might also provide children with a gratifying physical experience.

4.1.2.2 Avowed book-selection factors

As part of the background interview, children were asked to describe how they ordinarily choose books (see *Appendix I: Background Interview Questions*). They mentioned a variety of factors they considered in book selection. Combining these data with the data from the multi-stage interviews yielded a total of 77 book-selection factors organized into 13 facets. (See *Appendix M: Coding scheme* and *Appendix N: Code definitions* for a complete overview of the book-selection factors and facets.)

Prior to an in-depth discussion of the specific factors children mentioned during the library visits (*actual* book-selection factors), this section presents an overview of the book-selection factors children mentioned during the background interviews (*avowed* book-selection factors), offering insight into how they conceive of book selection outside of the library (*Table 4-6*).

Table 4-6. Frequency of facets of book-selection factors mentioned during background interviews.

Facet	# of participants	# of mentions
Contents	19	45
Surface features	17	23
Gestalt judgment	16	31
Basic metadata	15	38
Reading experience	12	20
Familiarity	6	13
Difficulty	5	9
Format-genre	4	5
Social ties	3	3
Uncertainty	3	3
Pragmatic considerations	2	2
Novelty	1	3
Imposition	1	1

During the background interviews, the children converged on factors in five facets: contents, surface features, gestalt judgment, basic metadata, and reading experience. More than half the children mentioned factors in each of these facets.

Contents. Nearly all the children referred to the contents of books when they were making selections. Twelve spoke about the illustrations in books as a factor in their selection. Hannah described her use of illustrations: “I ... take a picture walk through the book and see what the pages look like.” Eight children also spoke about the plots or storylines of books. Some spoke about the general content of what books. Sangita said, “Sometimes I skip through it... I wanna see what happens and stuff like that.” Other children were more specific. Hugo said, “I look [at] the problems they have and ... how they solve it.”

Surface features. Most of the children described their use of surface features when selecting books. By far the most prominent among these was the front cover, mentioned by sixteen children. Lily described the usefulness of the front cover generally: “Sometimes if you look at the front cover page, if it’s like a drawing, you can sort of tell ... by the details in the picture.” Some children spoke about the appeal of some book covers. Bryce said, “If it looks good on the front, I read it.” Others spoke about what was not appealing. Jeanette said, “Some people’s covers are just plain [and] don’t say anything.”

Gestalt judgment. Most of the children also commented on their overall impressions of books, making gestalt judgments about their selections. Nine described a process of determining their overall liking for books. Jonah said, “I just take the ones that I like and leave all the ones I don’t like.” Similarly, seven children spoke about identifying books that are interesting. Erin said, “And I usually pick out books, like, that are interesting to me.”

Basic metadata. Three-fourths of the children referred to the basic metadata—title, author, or summary—of books they selected. Thirteen children spoke of reading the summaries of the books. Some children spoke about the influence of the book summary in their selection. Jeanette said, “If there’s a description on the back, I mean, if there’s someone who wrote something about the book, then ... depending on what the words said, I’ll look in the book.” Lily also described the importance of the summary: “[I look at] the outside back of it, to summarize it.”

Reading experience. Just more than half the children referred to the reading experience of books they selected, mentioning several kinds of experiences. Some children, like Jeanette, focused on looking for “an exciting part, I mean, a part that will get you ... on the edge of your seat.” Maya explained, “I look at them and I see ... which ones are funny.” Mitchell spoke of how he chose books when he was in the mood for horror: “Usually [I choose] the one with the cover that looks most ... scary.” Hannah spoke of evaluating books for all three of these reading experiences: “I ... see ... if they look exciting or funny or kinda scary.”

Concluding remarks. Children mentioned many more factors in other facets when describing how they select books, but they were not as prominent as those described above. Children often referred to multiple factors during selection. Some children spoke of starting with the front cover but not relying on it alone. Josef said, “If from the outside I still don’t know what the book is about, I read a little bit and look at the pictures.” Similarly, Keisha explained, “I look at the front and I see ... what looks cool... If the front is just cool and not what I’m gonna read isn’t, ... then I’ll look at the other ... books.” Lily felt the summary was more important than the cover: “You can’t ... judge that much by the cover, like, you say, ‘Don’t judge a book by the cover.’ Look at the back of it, then you can judge it.” Mitchell expressed similar reluctance about relying on the summary without reading some text inside the book: “I’m looking at, like, who the characters are, what’s ... going on [because] sometimes backs of the books don’t actually do a good job of telling you about the story.” As a prelude to their actual book-selection practices during the library visits, the children’s avowed book-selection factors—both

aggregated and individually—emphasize the complex and multifaceted nature of the book-selection process.

4.2 *Library visits*

The vast majority of the data collected in this study came from the observations and interviews conducted during the library visits. First, trace measures, such as the start and end times of book selection and the titles of books selected by each child are reported in order to provide an overview of the library visits. Next, the observations are discussed to reveal a number of actions that children performed, providing insight into the behavioral process of book selection. Third, the multi-stage interviews—the richest source of data—are presented to offer insight into the factors that influenced children’s selection of books, describing the cognitive process of book selection. Finally, the closing interviews are described to identify the sources of children’s book selection knowledge.

4.2.1 *Trace measures: Overview of library visits*

During the observations, start and end times were recorded, permitting the calculation of time spent selecting books. As part of the multi-stage interviews, the titles of books that each child selected at each library visit were carefully noted. From the list of titles, the number of books selected by the children was tallied and the books were categorized according to their placement in the library—as picture books, juvenile fiction, and juvenile nonfiction. Taken together, these data offer an overview of the library visits.

4.2.1.1 *Time spent selecting books*

On average, children spent fifteen minutes selecting books per library visit (*Table 4-7*). The time spent selecting books at each library visit ranged from one to 65 minutes.

Table 4-7. Comparison of time (in minutes) spent selecting books during library visits, by participant.

Name	Grade	Gender	Library Visit #1	Library Visit #2	Library Visit #3	Average
Mitchell	3	M	50	23	48	40.3
Susanna	2	F	65	30	2	32.3
Stella	3	F	27	20	21	22.7
Eva	3	F	48	5	4	19.0
Jonah	3	M	15	26	16	19.0
Lily	3	F	17	19	19	18.3
Bryce	3	M	18	21	10	16.3
Maya	2	F	26	9	6	13.7
Jeanette	3	F	20	15	5	13.3
Demario	2	M	17	15	4	12.0
Erin	3	F	14	18	4	12.0
Hannah	2	F	17	3	15	11.7
Bobby	2	M	17	2	16	11.7
Jason	2	M	16	10	8	11.3
Joel	3	M	20	9	3	10.7
Acton	2	M	17	8	6	10.3
Keisha	2	F	10	1	16	9.0
Josef	3	M	14	8	5	9.0
Hugo	2	M	8	3	7	6.0
Sangita	2	F	10	1	1	4.0
Average			22.3	12.3	10.8	15.1

There were no notable differences in these data between the boys and girls, who spent an average of 14.7 and 15.6 minutes, respectively, selecting books (*Table 4-8*). The children who had completed third grade spent approximately 50% longer selecting

Table 4-8. Average time (in minutes) spent selecting books during library visits, by gender and grade level.

Group	Average
Total	15.1
Female	15.6
Male	14.7
2nd graders	12.2
3rd graders	18.1

books than the children who had completed second grade, with an average selection time of approximately 18 minutes, compared to the younger children's average of approximately 12 minutes.

4.2.1.2 *Number of books selected*

The average number of books selected overall by the children per library visit was six (Table 4-9); the number of books selected at each library visit ranged from one to twenty.

Table 4-9. Comparison of the number of books selected during library visits, by participant.

Name	Grade	Gender	Library visit #1	Library visit #2	Library visit #3	Average
Acton	2	M	20	15	11	15.3
Erin	3	F	14	12	10	12.0
Mitchell	3	M	11	8	11	10.0
Josef	3	M	3	11	14	9.3
Lily	3	F	9	10	6	8.3
Stella	3	F	13	5	6	8.0
Jonah	3	M	5	7	10	7.3
Hugo	2	M	6	5	7	6.0
Demario	2	M	5	7	4	5.3
Susanna	2	F	8	4	2	4.7
Maya	2	F	4	3	6	4.3
Jason	2	M	6	4	3	4.3
Sangita	2	F	5	4	3	4.0
Eva	3	F	6	4	2	4.0
Jeanette	3	F	4	4	4	4.0
Bobby	2	M	6	4	1	3.7
Joel	3	M	4	4	3	3.7
Hannah	2	F	1	2	7	3.3
Keisha	2	F	2	1	3	2.0
Bryce	3	M	2	1	1	1.3
Average			6.7	5.8	5.7	6.1

There was only a minor difference in the number of books selected by girls and boys: they selected 5.5 and 6.7 books on average, respectively (*Table 4-10*). There was a similarly minor difference between the children who had completed second grade and those who had completed third grade, who selected on average 5.3 and 6.8 books, respectively.

Table 4-10. Average number of books selected during library visits, by gender and grade level.

Group	Average
Total	6.1
Female	5.5
Male	6.7
2nd graders	5.3
3rd graders	6.8

4.2.1.3 *Kinds of books selected*

Across the 60 library visits, the children selected a total of 363 books, including titles shelved in the juvenile fiction, juvenile nonfiction, and picture-book areas of the library. They selected fiction books overwhelmingly: fiction comprised 69% of the total books selected, nonfiction books comprised just 23%, and picture books comprised only 8% (*Table 4-11*).

Table 4-11. Comparison of the types of books selected during library visits, by participant.

Name	Grade	Gender	Fiction books selected	Nonfiction books selected	Picture books selected
Acton	2	M	38	0	8
Josef	3	M	28	0	0
Erin	3	F	22	14	0
Lily	3	F	22	3	0
Stella	3	F	20	0	4
Jonah	3	M	19	3	0
Mitchell	3	M	17	13	0
Maya	2	F	13	0	0
Jason	2	M	12	1	0
Sangita	2	F	12	0	0
Eva	3	F	12	0	0
Jeanette	3	F	12	0	0
Hugo	2	M	7	7	4
Bobby	2	M	5	6	0
Demario	2	M	4	12	0
Susanna	2	F	4	1	9
Joel	3	M	3	8	0
Keisha	2	F	1	3	2
Bryce	3	M	1	2	1
Hannah	2	F	0	10	0
Total			252 (69%)	83 (23%)	28 (8%)

Most children selected a combination of fiction and either nonfiction or picture books.

Some children—Josef, Maya, Sangita, Eva, and Jeanette—selected exclusively fiction books; one child—Hannah—selected exclusively nonfiction.

While individual children had clear preferences for one kind of book over another, there were no substantial differences among the children by gender (*Table 4-12*). However, the children who had

Table 4-12. Comparison of the types of books selected during library visits, by gender and grade level.

Group	Fiction books selected	Nonfiction books selected	Picture books selected
Total	69%	23%	8%
Female	72%	19%	9%
Male	67%	26%	7%
2nd graders	60%	25%	15%
3rd graders	77%	21%	3%

completed third grade selected a greater proportion of juvenile fiction books and a much smaller proportion of picture books (77% versus 3%) compared to the children who had completed second grade (60% versus 15%) (*Table 4-12*).

4.2.2 Observations: Book-selection actions

The observations undertaken during the children's library visits revealed a variety of actions surrounding the behavioral aspect of book selection. Individual actions were clustered to form seven facets (*Table 4-13*). (See

Table 4-13. Frequency of facets of book-selection actions performed during library visits.

Facet	# of participants	# of instances
Shelf interaction	20	328
External examination	20	196
Internal examination	20	192
Forethought	17	50
Parental involvement	16	80
Library resources	14	30
Book sorting	6	8

Appendix M: Coding scheme and *Appendix N: Code definitions* for a complete overview of the book-selection actions and facets.) The central actions in book selection involve interacting with the books—first on the shelves and then through close examination externally and internally. Every child performed actions in these facets. It is also important to note that book selection was not a solo activity: most children interacted

with their parents or with library resources at some point. A closer look at each of these facets of book-selection actions in turn reveals additional insights into the practices involved in children’s book selection.

4.2.2.1 *Shelf-interaction facet*

The children performed several distinct actions when it came to interacting with books on the shelves (*Table 4-14*). By far the most common action in the shelf-interaction facet was “half pulling”—removing a book partway from a shelf,

Table 4-14. Frequency of actions from the shelf-interaction facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Half pull	19	113
Finger books	18	61
Grab impulsively	17	53
Access display book	14	40
Observe from distance	13	38
Rummage through books	8	16
Series walk	5	7
Shelf-interaction facet total	20	328

generally to get a better view of the front cover. Nearly all the children performed this action on multiple occasions. Most of the children also frequently fingered books as they browsed the shelves, drawing their hands along the spines of the books as they walked up and down the shelves or handling individual books as they went. Many children approached the shelves and grabbed books impulsively, with little or no examination. Nearly three-fourths were attracted to books on display on top of the shelves or to unshelved books lying out on tables or in open areas at the ends of the shelves. More than half the children also spent time perusing the shelves, standing back and observing the books from a distance. A few children quickly interacted with several books in turn

in a particular section on the shelf, rummaging through them roughly or sequentially accessing each book in a series.

4.2.2.2 *External-examination facet*

A further level of interaction with books during selection involves removing books completely from the shelves to examine them more closely. The children examined books in

Table 4-15. Frequency of actions from the external-examination facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Examine front cover	20	114
Read back cover	16	47
Read title	11	23
Compare books	8	12
External-examination facet total	20	196

several specific ways without opening them (*Table 4-15*). All the children were observed examining the front covers of books, usually on multiple occasions. More than three-fourths were observed reading the back covers of books they removed from the shelves. Just over half were observed reading the titles out loud from the covers or spines. A few were observed holding two or more books side by side to make comparisons.

4.2.2.3 *Internal-examination facet*

After removing books from the shelves, another level of interaction involves opening the books to examine their contents (*Table 4-16*). Children's most common action in the internal-examination facet involved

Table 4-16. Frequency of actions from the internal-examination facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Leaf through pages	19	90
Fan pages	12	35
Read closely	11	34
Look inside	11	22
Examine front matter	3	6
Look at pictures	2	3
Count chapters	1	2
Internal-examination facet total	20	192

leafing through the pages to preview the contents. Other actions performed by more than half the children included fanning through the pages quickly, reading portions of the book closely, or generally looking inside the book less methodically. Most of the actions identified in the internal-examination facet are quite general because it was not always possible during the observation period to determine the aspects of the books' contents to which children attended. On a few occasions, however, children were observed examining specific aspects of books, including front matter, pictures, and number of chapters.

4.2.2.4 *Forethought facet*

The children performed two main actions that indicated their forethought or planning process in selecting books (*Table 4-17*): three-fourths of them set out

Table 4-17. Frequency of actions from the forethought facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Seek known item	14	40
Consider quota	5	10
Forethought facet total	17	50

after known items, such as particular titles or series, and one-fourth referred to a quota or limit on their selections that was either self-imposed or instituted by their parents.

4.2.2.5 *Parental-involvement facet*

Most of the parents were involved in their children's book selection in some fashion. Several distinct actions in the parental-involvement facet

Table 4-18. Frequency of actions from the parental-involvement facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Co-browsing	15	37
Proxy selection	13	37
Selection guidance	3	4
Permission granting	1	2
Parental-involvement facet total	16	80

emerged, representing different levels of parental interactions with their children (*Table 4-18*). Three-fourths of the children and their parents co-browsed for books, looking at the shelves together and discussing their selections. Nearly as many parents made proxy selections, independently selecting books on behalf of their children. On a few occasions, parents offered other kinds of selection guidance to their children and granted permission to select particular books.

4.2.2.6 *Library-resources facet*

Although libraries provide a number of resources to support the selection of books, the children were not nearly as active in using library resources

Table 4-19. Frequency of actions from the library-resources facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Consult librarian	14	25
Access library catalog	2	3
Refer to shelf labels	2	2
Library-resources facet total	14	30

as they were in other actions (*Table 4-19*). Nearly three-fourths consulted a librarian for assistance in selecting books. Children who approached the librarian generally sought help locating known items. Only two children used other access tools—the library catalog and shelf labels—available in the library.

4.2.2.7 *Book-sorting facet*

Some children gathered groups of books and did final reviews of their selections. More

Table 4-20. Frequency of actions from the book-sorting facet performed during library visits.

Action	# of participants	# of instances
Sort	6	8

than one-fourth sorted through their preliminary selections to produce final collections of books to borrow (*Table 4-20*). Children who performed this action generally sat at tables

to review their selections, sorting them into “yes,” “no,” and “maybe” piles before making final decisions.

4.2.2.8 *Concluding remarks*

The actions children performed during book selection comprise an overview of the behavioral component of book selection. As is described in many traditional models of information behavior, children in this study progressed through a series of steps or stages as they interacted with books. Most information-behavior models consider people’s interactions with surrogate records in an information system and describe abstract behaviors—such as *initiation* and *exploration* (Kuhlthau, 1991) or *starting* and *browsing* (Ellis, 1989). In contrast, the children’s actions identified in this study are distinctly physical due to the public-library setting that allowed them to handle actual books. As a result, their book selection was clearly highly tactile and involved a great deal of visual stimulation.

The children performed dozens of distinct actions when selecting books at the library, including interactions with the books as well as with the library space and the people within it. They exhibited varying degrees of interactions with books. At the shelves, they might observe books from a distance; they might finger books as they browsed along the shelves; they might pause and rummage through books; or they might partially pull a book from the shelf to get a closer look at its cover. In many cases, children’s attention was grabbed by books on display or by discarded books lying face up at the end of a shelf or on a table. At the next stage in their book selection, children exhibited different degrees of interest in the books they removed from the shelves. They might examine the

outside more closely—viewing the front cover, reading the title, or reading the summary on the back cover.

Children rarely performed actions in the forethought facet, acting like students in other studies who did little or no planning of their searches (Marchionini, 1989; Schacter, Chung, & Dorr, 1998; Shenton & Dixon, 2003a; Solomon, 1993). Three common actions were performed by nearly every child in this study: half-pulling books to get a better glimpse of the covers, closely examining the front covers of books, and leafing through the pages to preview the contents. Such actions map neatly to the steps of book selection identified by Reutzel and Gali (1997): pull from shelf, look at cover, and open book. Most children also performed other actions, including fingering books as they walked up and down the shelves and grabbing books impulsively. Children seemed to navigate the space based solely on their previous experience, rarely attending to signage or shelf labels or using the catalog. A sizable portion of the children interacted with the librarians or their parents to identify books they were seeking and to receive other kinds of guidance on book selection.

4.2.3 Multi-stage interviews: Book-selection factors

The analysis of the observational data from the study focused on the actions children performed while selecting books—the behavioral process of book selection—while the analysis of the interview data focused on the factors influencing their book selection and engagement—the cognitive process of book selection. The background interviews and the multi-stage interviews revealed 77

such factors, which were clustered to form 13 facets. Across the multi-stage interviews, factors in the top facets—contents, reading experience, gestalt judgment, surface features, and familiarity—were mentioned by nearly all the children on multiple occasions (*Table 4-21*). Factors from other facets were also mentioned by many of the children, but not nearly as frequently.

Table 4-21. Frequency of facets of book-selection factors mentioned during library visits.

Facet	# of participants	# of instances
Contents	20	364
Reading experience	20	211
Gestalt judgment	20	137
Surface features	20	92
Familiarity	19	256
Social ties	17	62
Basic metadata	17	58
Difficulty	17	48
Novelty	15	53
Format-genre	14	59
Pragmatic considerations	14	40
Uncertainty	13	57
Imposition	11	32

Each facet is addressed in turn in the sections that follow, in order of prominence. The frequency with which each factor was mentioned is reported in tabular format for each facet; the most frequently mentioned factors in each facet are described in detail and illustrated by quotes from the children.

4.2.3.1 Contents facet

Across the process of book selection, the contents facet emerged as the most prominent in this study. All the children mentioned a variety of aspects of books' contents when discussing their selections, and they mentioned these aspects on multiple occasions (*Table 4-22*). There was a strong convergence

Table 4-22. Frequency of factors from the contents facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Topic-theme	18	156
Illustrations	17	25
Plot-story	16	139
Narrative style	5	11
Characters	4	5
Language	3	7
Gender	3	6
Level of violence	3	5
Setting	3	5
Table of contents	2	2
Front matter	2	2
Back matter	1	1
Contents facet total	20	364

on three specific factors: topic-theme, illustrations, and plot-story.

Topic-theme. The most frequently mentioned factor in the contents facet was the topic or theme of a book, mentioned by nearly all the children. For instance, Demario chose a nonfiction book because of its topic: "I chose that one because I love ... baseball." Jonah similarly chose a work of historical fiction because, "I wanted to know about Dr. [Martin Luther] King." Jeanette spoke of choosing a fiction book because of its theme: "I really like dragons. It's like my favorite creatures [sic]."

Illustrations. Nearly as many children mentioned that a book's illustrations were a factor in book selection. Joel appreciated the content of the illustrations in a book he chose: "It showed a couple of pictures inside of a train."

Plot-story. More than three-fourths of the children focused on the plot or story of their selections. Jeanette described her impression of the book based on a plot element: “It sounds pretty adventurous, like, they’re in a hot air balloon.” Similarly, Stella speculated on a book’s overall storyline: “It’s Amelia again and it’s probably about her probably pretending that she takes command, like, on a spaceship or wherever she wants.”

Other factors in the contents facet. Although there was little convergence, children mentioned a wide variety of other factors related to books’ contents. Some factors—characters and setting—are connected broadly to books’ contents. Stella described her affinity for a book’s main character: “I really like Ramona, she’s ... a fun, energetic girl.” Erin focused in on a book’s setting: “I like this one because you don’t see too many ... history mysteries. You usually see ones in the present.” Some factors focus on books’ language and style. Bobby liked a book because of its narrative style: “It was just that [it] rhymes, that made it a lot easier.” Mitchell focused on the language of a book’s contents: “I like reading stuff in Spanish, so, I really liked it.” Some factors relate to individual values. Joel rejected a book because of gender: “‘Cause it [was] all about girls and stuff.” Mitchell responded negatively to a book because of its level of violence: “It looked like maybe someone was killing another person.” Finally, several factors relate to specific parts of books. Although he struggled with terminology, Jonah described how he used the table of contents in making one of his selections: “I looked at the, um, I looked at this [i.e., the table of contents]... There’s about ten books [i.e., chapters] in it.” Jeanette chose a book based on its front matter: “I read the beginning. I read, um, the [prologue].”

Similarly, Erin responded to a book’s back matter: “They have all kinds of cool stuff in the back. Like the advertisements, ‘King Arthur’s Olde Armor Shoppe. Tom Thumb Thumbscrews. Jack’s Wagon Garage. Smilin’ Hal’s Off-campus Eatery.’”

4.2.3.2 *Reading-experience facet*

The children mentioned a variety of reading experiences when discussing their selections, making this the second most prominent facet overall (*Table 4-23*). Although the children converged on only a few factors in the reading-experience facet, they offered a broad array of factors that influenced their selections.

Table 4-23. Frequency of factors from the reading-experience facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Funny-silly	15	64
Exciting-adventure	12	41
Informative	10	27
Scary	9	14
Boring	8	17
Interactive	7	15
Fun	7	6
Creepy-freaky	5	16
Suspenseful	2	5
Sad	2	3
Gross	1	2
Realistic	1	1
Reading-experience facet total	20	211

Funny-silly. The most frequently mentioned factor in the reading-experience facet was funny-silly, mentioned by three-fourths of the children. Stella anticipated the experience of reading a book from its summary: “I read the back and ... it’s really funny.” Lily judged the experience of a book based on its title: “*Mr. Hynde Is Out of His Mind*—‘out of his mind’—which sort of sounded funny.”

Exciting-adventure. More than half the children focused on books that are exciting or full of adventure. Jonah chose a book because, “It had a lot more action and a lot more

adventure.” This factor also influenced children negatively. Stella rejected a book because, “I didn’t think it was exactly that exciting.”

Informative. Half the children referred to a book’s potential to be informative. Demario chose a book on bowling because “I never got a strike in bowling and I wanna learn how to get a strike.” Stella chose a book about Washington, DC, to read ahead for school: “In the fourth grade we’re gonna learn a lot about the history of Maryland and Washington, DC, and so I wanted to get this book and ... sort of get ready for fourth grade.”

Other factors in the reading-experience facet. Children mentioned a variety of other kinds reading experiences, although there was little convergence. While they most often focused on funny or exciting reading experiences, the children were not always so light-hearted. Sangita spoke of enjoying a book’s scary experience: “I liked it ... because it was kinda scary.” In a closely related remark, Demario spoke of a creepy experience provided by a book he selected: “I like books that are, like, scary and creepy.” Children also spoke of books that involved them in pleasant activities. Jeanette liked the interactive nature of one of her selections: “I like to solve the mysteries.” Lily appreciated the fun of one of her selections: “It was really fun to read.” Sometimes books did not provide a positive reading experience at all. Eva described the boring experience of one book she selected: “It got me bored and sleepy.” Other factors—suspenseful, sad, gross, and realistic—were mentioned by only one or two children on just a few occasions.

4.2.3.3 Gestalt-judgment facet

All the children explained their selections in terms of their general impressions of the books, mentioning factors in the gestalt-judgment facet (Table 4-24).

Liking. Most frequently, children described their liking for

books. Eva said, “I read through it a little bit and I liked it.” Children sometimes expressed their general dislike of books as well. Hannah said, “I didn’t really want it because, maybe it was just ... I didn’t like it.”

Good. Children also described their selections as good. Maya said, “I thought, like, maybe this one would be sort of good.” Children also rejected books because they did not look good. Hannah said, “It just didn’t look very good.”

Interesting. More than half the children described books as interesting. Sangita explained, “I like these books because these ... sounded interesting.” Josef spoke of some books negatively: “They didn’t sound interesting and, well, they didn’t hook me on.”

Other factors in the gestalt-judgment facet. Although children converged on only a few overall factors in the gestalt-judgment facet, they characterized their overall impressions of the suitability of their selections in a variety of ways. Jeanette said she chose one book because “I thought that ... it looked kinda cool.” Other factors in the

Table 4-24. Frequency of factors from the gestalt-judgment facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Liking	17	27
Good	16	35
Interesting	13	27
Cool-awesome	9	30
Weird	3	3
Stupid-dumb-dorky	3	3
Gestalt-judgment facet total	20	125

gestalt-judgment facet tended toward the negative. Acton rejected one book “because it look [sic] a little bit weird looking.” Joel also rejected several books because “They looked kind of dumb.”

4.2.3.4 *Surface-features facet*

All the children referred to some aspect of books’ surface features when describing their selections, mentioning several distinct factors in the surface-features factors (*Table 4-25*).

Table 4-25. Frequency of factors from the surface-features facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Front cover	18	59
Appearance-physicality	12	26
Tagline	3	5
Award	2	2
Surface-features facet total	20	92

Front cover. Nearly all of them mentioned the book’s front cover as an important factor—either positively or negatively. On the one hand, Stella was attracted to a book based on its front cover: “Because ... it looks good from the cover and ... I like it just because it looks really funny on the cover.” On the other hand, Hannah rejected books based on their front covers: “They just kinda looked boring on the cover.” The front cover was by far the most prominent factor mentioned in the surface-features facet.

Appearance-physicality. More than half the children also referred to books’ overall appearance or to specific physical characteristics. Bryce focused on one book’s overall facets as well as its thickness: “It’s bigger. Both ways.” Maya also spoke of the unique typography in a particular book: “In the book, it had [the word] cold [written] like that—it’s ... blue and it has ... ice on it.”

Other factors in the surface-features facet. A few children also referred to other aspects of books' surface features. Stella referred to the tagline on the front cover of one of her selections: "I just think it looks funny: 'The most stubborn goat in town.' So I wanted to read it." Susanna referred to a book's award: "I saw this ... [Christopher Award] medal."

4.2.3.5 *Familiarity facet*

All but one child mentioned factors related to familiarity when discussing book selections (*Table 4-26*). Although a variety of factors formed this facet, the children converged on just a few. The series factor was by far the most prominent, mentioned by nearly all the children on multiple occasions. Previous experience and series number were also prominent factors in this facet.

Table 4-26. Frequency of factors from the familiarity facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Series	17	124
Previous experience	17	55
Series number	15	41
Media connection	9	13
Book connection	5	9
Reputation	5	6
Known title	3	3
Re-read	2	5
Familiarity facet total	19	256

Series. Children often mentioned the titles of familiar series when making selections. Lily shared her enthusiasm about a favorite series: "I love *Encyclopedia Brown*! I'm crazy about their books." Mitchell spoke of another favored series more generically: "I chose these because they're part of the long series that I really, really like."

Previous experience. Children also frequently mentioned previous experience with specific books as a factor influencing selection. Children spoke of encountering books in

a variety of contexts. Bobby described seeing a book when his family went on vacation: “I’ve had my eyes on that book, like, since I went to Bethany Beach.” Acton spoke of seeing a book for sale at a department store: “I saw some of these at Target.” Maya described a previous experience with a book in school: “My teacher read this whole thing and then, like, I read it, but I didn’t get to finish all of it.” Previous experience with specific books also influenced children negatively. Jason said, “We read it in our read aloud in school—so I didn’t chose [sic] it.” Keisha said, “Because I already read, well, I’d already seen them and I was, like, ‘Maybe I should get this,’ but then, I was, like, ‘No, no I don’t want to.’”

Series number. Children often focused on particular items in series in selection. Erin chose a book because it was early in the series: “[It’s the] smallest in the series. It’s only number two!” Lily focused on getting the next book in the series she was reading: “‘Cause they were the low, the closest to the ones that I’ve read so far.”

Other factors in the familiarity facet. Children mentioned several other factors related to familiarity. A few children made intertextual connections to other media and to other books. Eva chose a book based on her previous experience with a television series: “I watched *The Saddle Club* on TV and I want to ... read the books.” Mitchell focused on a connection to another book title: “It had ... swords and it looked like there would be a lot of dueling like *The Three Musketeers*.”

4.2.3.6 *Social-ties facet*

Nearly all the children mentioned factors in the social-ties facet during book selection. This facet consists of only three factors; there was some

Table 4-27. Frequency of factors from the social-ties facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Personal connection	13	43
Bonding	7	12
Recommendation	7	7
Social-ties facet total	17	62

convergence on the top one, personal connection (*Table 4-27*).

Personal connection. The most frequently mentioned factor in the social-ties facet was related to personal connections. Some children found connections based on identity. Erin chose a book about Ireland, remarking, “I come from Ireland. Most of my family does, and I don’t know too much about Ireland.” Acton chose a book from the *Third Grade Detectives* series “Because I’m in second grade and I’m out of school and I’m about to go to the third grade.” Other connections were somewhat more abstract. Hugo chose a book about tigers “because in the ... Chinese calendar ... I’m a tiger.” Children sometimes chose to fulfill personal needs. Lily chose a book to take with her on a family vacation: “It’s about fun things ... to do ... when you’re in the car, which is really gonna be good [when] we go [to] Myrtle Beach—that’s the most boring of most boring car rides.”

Other factors in the social-ties facet. About a third of the children referred to a desire for bonding or sharing as a factor influencing selection. Keisha described her interest in reading a book with a friend who had accompanied her to the library: “I asked [my friend] if she wanted to learn about magic and she said yes and so we both took that one.”

Mitchell spoke of sharing a book with his father: “My dad and I go through books like this and read.” About a third of the children also referred to recommendations as part of book selection. Erin focused on a recommendation from a peer: “I liked it because ... my friend ... read it and she said it was really good.” Joel had received a recommendation from his mother: “My mom said it was a really good book.”

4.2.3.7 *Basic-metadata facet*

Traditional shelving practices in libraries emphasize the authors and titles of works. Library catalogs also often offer summary information. Together, these

Table 4-28. Frequency of factors from the basic-metadata facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Title	13	33
Summary-blurb	8	19
Author	7	6
Basic-metadata facet total	17	58

factors form the basic metadata facet, which was mentioned by most of the children (Table 4-28).

Title. More than three-fourths of the children mentioned the title of the book as a factor in their selections. Title was mentioned almost twice as often as the other observed basic metadata factors. Jeanette spoke of one selection: “It was actually ... the title [that] attracted me.” Keisha explained her thought process more specifically: “I just wanted to work with paper, so *Paper Folding Fun*, ‘paper’ and ‘fun’ make me, like, take it out.”

Other factors in the basic-metadata facet. About a third of the children mentioned the book summary or jacket blurb, generally located on the back cover or the inside jacket, as important in influencing their decisions. Jeanette described her use of the summary: “I read this inside cover, and it sounded like she learned a lot of values from

this dragon ... that she befriends.” About a third of the children also mentioned the author as a factor influencing their selections. Lily spoke of her fondness for a particular author in one selection: “I love Shel [Silverstein]! ... I just love poetry, so, poetry and Shel—good match!”

4.2.3.8 *Difficulty facet*

Nearly all the children mentioned factors in the difficulty facet during book selection (*Table 4-29*). There is some variety in the kinds of factors they mentioned and little convergence

Table 4-29. Frequency of factors from the difficulty facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Reading level	9	22
Age appropriateness	9	8
Length	8	10
Text size-density	6	6
Understandability	2	2
Difficulty facet total	17	48

on any one factor. None of the factors was mentioned with high frequency.

Reading level. Nearly half the children referred to reading level in their selections. Jeanette described finding a book that matched her needs: “I read a little bit of this one and I discovered it doesn’t have big words that I don’t know what it means. It keeps it quite [simple].” In contrast, other children rejected books that were not suitable matches. On the one hand, Demario said, “I didn’t pick it ‘cause it seemed sort of difficult.” On the other hand, Mitchell said, “I think it’s a little bit too easy for me.”

Age appropriateness. The same number of children mentioned age appropriateness in their selections, often rejecting books based on this factor. Mitchell said, “Some of them ... might be, like, a little too adult comics, which aren’t that funny. And they’re sort of,

like, teenager-like comics.” Children also rejected books that they perceived were for a younger audience. Josef said, “It’s for smaller kids, like five and unders.”

Other factors in the difficulty facet. Other factors, like length and text size or text density, were also mentioned with some frequency. These factors were generally used to reject books. Hugo spoke of length: “Some of them ... were, like, a little too long.” Hannah spoke of rejected books on the basis of text density: “Because they had so many words.” On occasion, children also referred to the general understandability of their selections. Susanna referred to the confusing nature of a book’s illustrations: “The drawings were kind of complicated, and I really could not follow along.”

4.2.3.9 *Novelty facet*

Although the novelty facet was not as prominent as the familiarity facet in their book selections, three-fourths of the children referred to factors in this facet as part of the process (*Table*

Table 4-30. Frequency of factors from the novelty facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Never read	9	28
Variety	9	15
New	4	7
Random	2	2
Unusualness	1	1
Novelty facet total	15	53

4-30). There was some variety in the kinds of factors in the novelty facet mentioned but little convergence on any one. None of the factors was mentioned with high frequency.

Never read. Nearly half the children mentioned that they chose books they had “never read.” Sangita explained, “I chose this one because I’ve never read it.” Jonah said, “I seen [sic] about every other one, but not this one yet.”

Variety. The same number of children mentioned a desire for variety in selection. Bryce explained that he chose a book as a change of pace: “Because I wanted to get something different.” Jeanette explained that she avoided a particular series because of a desire for variety: “‘Cause I’d read *Encyclopedia Brown* two times and I was just like, ‘I need a new one!’”

Other factors in the novelty facet. A few children referred to other factors related to novelty. Lily spoke about finding new books: “I scored two new ones... I love new books!” In fact, Lily described a particular randomization strategy she used to locate novel selections: “I told mommy to tell me when to stop and ... I was doing this [waving arm] and I stopped on a new section that I’ve never been before.” Bryce also spoke of choosing a book that stood out from the others on the shelves by virtue of its unusualness: “Not a lot of the books over there were just plain white.”

4.2.3.10 *Format-genre facet*

Compared to the other facets, the children mentioned book formats and genres infrequently when discussing their selections (*Table 4-31*). Only one factor in the format-genre facet—mystery—was mentioned by a sizable proportion of them.

Table 4-31. Frequency of factors from the format-genre facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Mystery	11	33
Chapter book	6	7
Audiobook	5	7
Comics-graphic novel	2	7
Nonfiction	2	2
Fiction	1	2
Fantasy	1	1
Format-genre facet total	14	59

Mystery. Slightly more than half the children mentioned the mystery genre during book selection. Sangita said, “Some of these are like mystery stories. I wanted to find out what will happen.”

Other factors in the format-genre facet. Although they were not mentioned widely, children did refer to several other formats or genres, especially when they described the kinds of books they intended to seek during the pre-selection interview. Just more than one-fourth of the children mentioned that the chapter-book format was a factor in book selection. One-fourth of the children mentioned audiobooks. Other factors in the format-genre facet—comics, nonfiction, fiction, and fantasy—were mentioned by only one or two children.

4.2.3.11 *Pragmatic-considerations facet*

Nearly three-fourths of the children referred to pragmatic considerations in book selection. Factors in the pragmatic-considerations facet were not mentioned with great frequency, but there was some convergence on the “limit” factor (*Table 4-32*).

Table 4-32. Frequency of factors from the pragmatic-considerations facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Limit	12	22
Delayed gratification	4	6
Multiple copies	2	5
Prioritize	2	3
Monitoring	2	2
Availability	2	2
Pragmatic-considerations facet total	14	40

Limit. More than half the children mentioned a self-imposed limit as a factor in their book selection. Children often rejected books because they did not have time to read them before the next library visit. Jeanette said, “I just limited myself and so the book I

thought I wouldn't get to read, I'd just put it back.” Similarly, Demario focused on the length of some of his selections, explaining, “I picked so much books and I had two Cam Jam’s [i.e., books from the *Cam Jansen* series] and they were both chapters—I didn’t think I’d be able to finish both of them at the same time.”

Other factors in the pragmatic-consideration facet. In a similar vein, a few children spoke of delaying gratification and prioritizing. Sangita referred to both factors: “They sounded good, but I didn’t take them because these sounded more interesting and I knew that we were coming back next week.” Two children also spoke of using monitoring strategies. Jeanette said, “I saw the *Anne of Avonlea* and *Anne of Green Gable* [books], so I was like, ‘Oh, I see that now. They have that.’”

4.2.3.12 *Uncertainty facet*

More than half the children were uncertain, or open to influence, when making

Table 4-33. Frequency of factors from the uncertainty facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Uncertainty	13	57

selections (*Table 4-33*). Lily explained, “Usually, I don’t have anything planned. I just go where the wind blows me to.” Similarly, Sangita said, “I don’t know, really, when I come to the library what I’m gonna pick.” Erin expressed uncertainty about what she was seeking: “I don’t really know! Usually I just choose them randomly out of interest.”

Children who were uncertain in their reasons for selection sometimes struggled to explain what influenced their decisions. Sometimes they were unsure of what led them to select and engage with books. Bobby said, “I don’t know what I liked about it.” Some

children were equally unsure about why they rejected books. Jason said, “I just didn’t want to take it.”

4.2.3.13 *Imposition facet*

Just more than half the children referred to imposition in book selection. There was some variety in the kinds of factors that emerged in the imposition facet, with little convergence on any

Table 4-34. Frequency of factors from the imposition facet mentioned during library visits.

Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Proxy	7	13
Summer reading program	4	6
Obligation	4	3
School reading list	2	9
Book club	1	1
Imposition facet overall	11	32

one factor (*Table 4-34*). None of the factors in the imposition facet was mentioned with high frequency.

Proxy. About one-third of the children spoke of their parents’ making proxy selections on their behalves; this factor was consistent with the parental-involvement actions described above. Josef referred to his mother’s responsibility for one of his selections: “I didn’t choose it. She chose it.” Stella described her mother’s influence: “My mom just wanted me to read this.”

Other factors in the imposition facet. Children mentioned four other factors in the imposition facet, citing additional external sources that influenced their selections. Jonah explained that he chose a book because of the public library system’s summer-reading program: “I just picked out one book [because of the] ‘Clue into Reading’ thing.” Jeanette referred to the obligation she felt to select a book her mother had recommended: “My mom ... showed me the series, so I guess I had to pick out one.” Lily chose a book

from a reading list provided by her school: “I picked it because it’s required.” Lily’s membership in a book club also influenced her selection of another book: “[It’s for] this book club ... that I’m doing.”

4.2.3.14 Concluding remarks

Dozens of factors influencing children’s book selection and engagement emerged during the interviews at the library visits. Taken together, these factors comprise an overview of the cognitive component of book selection. As in many traditional models of relevance assessment, children in this study considered a wide range of factors as they selected books. Some factors—especially those from the contents, reading experience, and familiarity facets—indicated a deep attention to or engagement with particular books. Children cited the topics, themes, plots, and storylines of books they selected; they described the anticipated experience of reading the books, often relying on previous experiences with books. Other factors—especially those from the gestalt-judgment, surface-features, and format-genre facets—were more superficial: “I just like the books”; “They just kinda looked boring on the cover”; “I’m in the mood for ... chapter books.”

The factors from the social-ties and imposition facets also demonstrate that book selection operates within a social context. Children made selections based on personal connections or recommendations as a way to bond with others. Even in the context of recreational reading during the summer, the children also had selections imposed upon them by family members and school, much like the concept of the “imposed query” children often face in information seeking (Gross, 1995, 1999, 2000). Finally, factors from the pragmatic-considerations facet indicate that library visits do not take place in

isolation and that children’s book selection takes place within an overall context and that certain factors can carry over from previous visits or to subsequent visits. Children prioritized their selections, delaying gratification and monitoring books that they planned to select on their next visits.

4.3 *Closing interviews: Sources of book-selection knowledge*

As part of a closing interview, the children were asked to describe how they learned how to choose books (*Appendix J: Library-Visit Interview Questions*). Although the children had well-developed, often quite sophisticated book-selection practices, there was little variety in the sources of book-selection knowledge they identified (*Table 4-35*).

Table 4-35. Frequency of sources of book-selection knowledge mentioned during the closing interviews.

Knowledge source	# of participants
Self-taught	8
Observing others	6
School	6
Family members	5
Instinct	4
Uncertain	4

Self-taught. About one-third of the children spoke of being self-taught in the ways of book selection. Acton said, “I teached [sic] myself.” Hugo explained, “I just ... kinda figured out how to, by myself.” Stella reflected, “I sort of just learned it.”

Observing others. Several children also spoke of learning through observing others. Maya speculated, “Maybe I saw someone do it before.” Bobby said, “I just saw other people doing it and just kind of started out kinda like them.” Similarly, Sangita explained, “I just ... saw other people doing it and I caught up with that.” Bryce had a more specific recollection:

Coming here with my daycare, because we just go to the library and then I saw my teacher-lady picking out books. She just, like, looked at the title and then she pulled the book out and then she read it.

School. Several children pointed to school as a source of their book-selection knowledge. Demario spoke specifically of the mechanics of book selection: “I know how to pick out books because [at] school they teached [sic] us how to ... leave, like, spaces between them.” Josef spoke about being taught the conventions of the library:

The librarian [sic] at my school, when we have library... She taught us when there’s... letters like these, up here [on the spine of the book], it means it’s fantasy. And if there’s numbers there, it means it’s ... real.

Other children mentioned that teachers and school librarians had emphasized parts of the book. Erin explained, “One day our teacher taught us the proper way to know whether to choose a book or not... She said you have to look at the title and read the back.” Keisha said:

My librarian at my school ... told me ... how to pick out wisely. She said ... read the title or read the back of the book, [or since] this one doesn’t have anything, read the first page, or the first sentence, or the first paragraph.

Jason had a similar experience but particularly focused on assessing the difficulty of his selections:

My teachers [said] look at the front page and see if you might like it or ... just read a little and see if it’s ... what you want or if it’s too hard... Sometimes I pick hard books; sometimes we have a little break book, [or] a just right book.

Lily acknowledged that the instruction she received in book selection was limited to locating known items: “In library class [the librarian] told me ... how to find [a book], but ... only for specifics.”

Family members. A few children referred to getting guidance on book selection from family members. Jason said, “[My mom] kinda helps.” Sangita said, “My mom taught me it.” Bobby remarked, “Probably my mom helped me somewhere along the line.” Jeanette, the youngest child in a large family children, referred to her siblings as well: “I just watched my sisters ... and I ask my mom sometimes.”

Instinct. Several children considered book selection an instinctual process. Joel claimed, “I just knew.” Jeanette credited “instinct, I guess.” Lily remarked, “Some came naturally.”

Uncertain. Finally, a few children were unable to identify sources for their book-selection knowledge. Acton considered his book-selection strategies second nature, remarking, “I didn’t even know I even know it!” Eva and Maya simply responded, “I don’t know.” Sangita said, “I don’t really know how, I think I was like 3, 4, or 5 when I did it. I have no clue!”

Concluding remarks. The children identified only a few sources of their book-selection knowledge. In general, they did not have a great deal to say on the subject. Often, the language children used to describe how they learned to choose books was speculative (e.g., “*Maybe* I saw someone do it before”; “*Probably* my mom helped me”; “Instinct, *I guess*” [emphasis added]). In only a few instances were children able to identify specific sources for their book-selection knowledge and to describe specific points they had learned. Overall, the children seemed to have developed their practices of book selection habits independently.

4.4 *Book-selection patterns*

The data above were reported in the aggregate. To provide additional insights into the process of children's book selection, the data are next segmented to suggest additional patterns. This section identifies differences in book-selection factors across the stages of the process; differences in both book-selection actions and factors among the children by gender and age; and individual differences among participants.

4.4.1 *Differences in book-selection factors*

This section compares (a) the prominence of factors at different points in the book-selection process and (b) the differences in factors that resulted in positive and negative decisions about books. First, the section compares the avowed factors—those mentioned during the background interviews—and the actual factors—those mentioned during the library visits. Next, the section compares the factors mentioned during the library visits at each of the selection stages. Finally, the section describes the differences that led students to select or reject books and to like or dislike them.

4.4.1.1 *Avowed and actual book-selection factors*

During the background interviews, children were asked to describe how they ordinarily select books. Their answers resulted in a list of avowed factors influencing book selection, which were clustered into facets as described above (see *Table 4-6*). From the post-selection interviews throughout the library visits, another list of factors—those actually mentioned—was assembled. Comparing the number of children who mentioned factors in each facet during the background interviews with the number who mentioned factors in each facet during the post-selection interviews provides the

opportunity to explore the differences in the ways in which children conceive of their own book-selection processes compared with their actual book-selection processes (*Table 4-36*).

Table 4-36. Comparison of facets of book-selection factors mentioned during the background interviews and the post-selection interviews.

Facet	Background interviews			Post-selection interviews		
	# of participants	# of mentions	% of total mentions	# of participants	# of mentions	% of total mentions
Reading experience	12	20	10.2%	20	105	10.9%
Surface features	17	23	11.7%	20	90	9.3%
Contents	19	45	23.0%	19	218	22.6%
Familiarity	6	13	6.6%	19	162	16.8%
Gestalt judgment	16	31	15.8%	19	107	11.1%
Social ties	3	3	1.5%	17	51	5.3%
Basic metadata	15	38	19.4%	16	55	5.7%
Novelty	1	3	1.5%	14	48	5.0%
Pragmatic considerations	2	2	1.0%	14	37	3.8%
Difficulty	5	9	4.6%	12	29	3.0%
Imposition	1	1	0.5%	10	23	2.4%
Uncertainty	3	3	1.5%	9	24	2.5%
Format-genre	4	5	2.6%	8	16	1.7%
Total	20	196	100%	20	965	100%

In the background interviews, the children identified factors in the key facets that in fact influenced their book selection: the top five facets that emerged from the background interviews—contents, surface features, gestalt judgment, basic metadata, and reading experience—were among the top facets that emerged from the post-selection interviews. The picture of book selection that emerges from the background interviews portrays a process in which children review the basic metadata and surface features of books to make gestalt judgments about contents and reading experiences provided by books. Overall, this picture represents a fairly accurate portrayal of what actually occurred.

Looking more closely at the prominence of the facets from the two interviews reveals several differences. When describing their book-selection practices in the background interviews, the children overemphasized the extent to which they referred to the basic metadata of books. They mentioned factors in the basic metadata facet as a much higher proportion of the total mentions of factors when describing their book-selection practices in these interviews than in the post-selection interviews. The children also underestimated the extent to which they actually relied upon familiarity in selecting books, mentioning factors in this facet at a much lower rate in the background interviews than in the post-selection interviews.

In general, the children overlooked many factors they used in selecting books at the library. In particular, several children did not seem to recognize that they focused on reading experience. Although all the children mentioned factors in the reading-experience facet during the library visits, nearly half had not mentioned reading-experience factors in the background interview. Children also overlooked the importance of all the facets that related to contextual aspects of book selection. Across the board, relatively few children mentioned factors in the familiarity, social-ties, novelty, pragmatic-considerations, and imposition facets. These were mentioned by only a few children in the background interviews, although they were mentioned by at least half of them in the post-selection interviews. Except for the top five facets, the other facets were scarcely acknowledged. In the end, the comparison of the avowed factors mentioned in the background interviews with those factors actually mentioned in the post-selection

interviews suggests that children possess only partial awareness of their own selection habits.

4.4.1.2 Book-selection factors by stage

Across the process of book selection, different factors were prominent at different stages of the library visits (*Table 4-37*).

Table 4-37. Comparison of facets of book-selection factors mentioned during the pre-selection, post-selection, and book-return interviews.

Facet	Pre-selection interviews		Post-selection interviews		Book-return interviews	
	# of participants	# of mentions	# of participants	# of mentions	# of participants	# of mentions
Surface features	0	0	20	90	2	2
Reading experience	4	10	20	105	18	96
Gestalt judgment	6	8	19	107	15	22
Contents	6	16	19	218	18	130
Familiarity	18	77	19	162	8	17
Social ties	0	0	17	51	7	11
Basic metadata	2	3	16	55	0	0
Novelty	4	4	14	48	1	1
Pragmatic considerations	0	0	14	37	2	3
Difficulty	1	1	12	29	11	18
Imposition	2	3	10	23	5	6
Uncertainty	11	22	9	24	7	11
Format-genre	15	31	8	16	4	12
Total	20	175 (12%)	20	965 (66%)	20	329 (22%)

Children mentioned by far the most factors, across the widest variety of facets, during the post-selection stage. Children mentioned the fewest factors across the fewest of the facets during the pre-selection stage.

Pre-selection stage. Children did not mention many factors during the pre-selection stage, especially when compared with what happened in the later stages in the process.

Children converged on factors in three facets at this stage—familiarity, format-genre, and

uncertainty. Nearly all the children spoke of familiar materials and often mentioned known items, such as particular series or even particular books within a series. When describing the books for which he was in the mood, Mitchell said, “I’m going to maybe look around for stuff like *Animorphs*.” When discussing the books in which he was interested, Bobby said, “If there’s a four[th book in the *Akiko* series], and if there’s a fifth one, we might get it.” Three-quarters of the children also spoke about particular formats or genres in the broadest terms. Erin said, “I’m in the mood for ... maybe a few fiction books.” Demario said, “I’m in the mood for ... chapter books.” Jonah explained that he was in the mood for “[a] couple graphic novels and ... [I’ll] probably get some mystery books, too.” At this stage, more than half the children expressed some uncertainty, acknowledging that they did not have anything in particular in mind and just expected to browse. As Erin set out on book selection she explained, “I don’t really know [what I’m looking for]! Usually I just choose randomly out of interest.” Lily was particularly eloquent in describing the uncertain nature of book selection at this stage: “Usually, I don’t have anything planned. I just go to where the wind blows me to.” In general, the children tended not to go into great detail at this stage and often seemed not to have put much thought into what they would seek at the library.

Post-selection stage. Many more factors were named during the post-selection interviews than during pre-selection, and there was a great deal of convergence overall. Factors in the top five facets—reading experience, surface features, contents, familiarity,

and gestalt judgment—were mentioned repeatedly by almost all the children in the study. Factors from these facets were often mentioned in conjunction with one another, which did not happen in the pre-selection and book-return stages. For instance, when Susanna explained why she chose a particular book, she referred to factors from both the contents and reading-experience facets by mentioning a book’s topic and informative nature: “Because I like crabs and I wanna learn about them more.” Stella used the surface features, reading from the book’s tagline to anticipate the reading experience of one of her selections: “I just think it looks funny: ‘The most stubborn goat in town.’” Eva referred to surface features and made a gestalt judgment when explaining her book choices: “Most of them were just ... if the cover was interesting.” Lily, too, used the front cover, in this case to speculate about a book’s contents: “I’m guessing Mr. Hynde was the music teacher, by the cover.” Factors from other facets were mentioned by many of the children in the study, but not as frequently as factors in the top five facets. In general, the top three facets give a sense of the typical process of selection: books’ surface features provide valuable information to help children anticipate both the contents and the reading experience.

Book-return stage. As in the post-selection stage, children mentioned many factors during the book-return interviews. At this stage, there was a strong convergence on factors in the top two facets—contents and reading experience. Not surprisingly, factors in the contents facet were central in influencing children’s engagement with the books they selected. Mitchell succinctly described the role of contents in his enjoyment of one

of the books he chose: “I really liked it because it has a lot of history and ... it shows you ... interesting facts about the Chinese.” Erin explained, “I liked it because it kinda tells you what colonial life would be like.” During the book-return interviews, children often spoke at length about the contents of books, recounting specific plot points and episodes in books to illustrate why they liked their selections. Children also frequently spoke about the reading experience of their selections. Lily described one of her selections as “funny, weird, and crazy.” Sangita said, “I liked it because ... it was kinda scary and funny.” When describing his penchant for series such as *Ripley’s Believe It or Not!* and *Guinness Book of World Records*, Bobby explained, “I like world records and stuff, ‘cause they’re so creepy.”

Although factors from the gestalt-judgment facet were not mentioned as frequently as those from the contents and reading-experience facets, children frequently offered gestalt judgments of the books they were returning. Stella liked one of the books she read, remarking, “I thought that it was a good book.” Similarly, Bobby liked one of his choices because “It ... just had kinda cool stories.” Interestingly, the difficulty facet, while not prominent overall in book selection, was among one of the top facets during this stage. For instance, Stella explained that she did not like one of her selections because she had decided it was not age appropriate: “I think it’s more for, like, an older kid to read, ‘cause I didn’t exactly understand what the book was exactly about.” Susanna also responded

negatively to a book on the basis of its understandability: “The drawings were kind of complicated, and I really could not follow along.”

In general, though, the contents and the reading experience are the central facets in children’s engagement with books, mentioned by considerably more children and at much greater frequency than any of the other facets at this stage. In comparison, few factors were mentioned from those facets associated with the books themselves—such as metadata and format-genre—and facets associated with the context of book selection—such as social ties and pragmatic considerations.

Concluding remarks. Across all three stages, the contents and reading-experience facets were the most prominent. However, factors from these facets were scarcely mentioned during the pre-selection stage. Although format-genre was one of the most prominent facets in the pre-selection stage, it was mentioned infrequently during the later stages and was, in fact, the least prominent facet at the post-selection stage. These findings suggest that different kinds of factors influence book selection at different stages of the process. While there is some continuity across the factors that influenced children’s selection of books during the post-selection stage and children’s engagement during the book-return stage, there is little relationship between the factors children mentioned during the pre-selection stage and those they mentioned in the later stages. These findings further suggest that the children lacked full awareness of their own processes of book selection.

4.4.1.3 Positive and negative book-selection factors

Some factors tended to influence children positively and others negatively, leading children either to select or to reject books in the book-selection stage or either to like or to dislike books in the book-return stage.

Post-selection stage. During the post-selection interview, children were asked to review each of the books they selected and to describe what influenced their selection decisions. Children were also asked why they did not choose the other books they had examined during selection. In general, children mentioned a wider variety of factors when describing the books they had selected (i.e., “positive factors”) than when describing the books they had rejected (i.e., “negative factors”) (*Table 4-38*). They mentioned three times as many positive factors as negative factors.

Table 4-38. Comparison of positive and negative facets of book-selection factors mentioned during the post-selection interviews.

Facet	Positive		Negative	
	# of participants	# of mentions	# of participants	# of mentions
Surface features	20	85	5	5
Reading experience	20	79	12	26
Contents	19	183	16	35
Gestalt judgment	18	73	13	34
Familiarity	17	123	15	39
Social ties	17	47	4	4
Basic metadata	16	52	3	3
Novelty	11	34	8	14
Imposition	10	20	2	3
Format-genre	8	15	1	1
Uncertainty	7	13	7	11
Difficulty	5	10	11	19
Pragmatic considerations	5	8	13	29
Total	20	742 (77%)	20	223 (23%)

Of the top facets overall in the post-selection stage, the contents, familiarity, gestalt-judgment, and reading-experience facets were mentioned most frequently in terms of both positive and negative factors. Other prominent facets overall—surface features, basic metadata, and social ties—scarcely had any negative factors mentioned. Two facets as a whole were strongly negative: children were likely to reject books on the basis of difficulty and pragmatic considerations.

The top negative factors in the post-selection stage cut across several facets: familiarity, pragmatic considerations, contents, novelty, and difficulty (*Table 4-39*).

Table 4-39. Top negative book-selection factors mentioned during the post-selection interviews.

Facet > Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Familiarity > Previous-experience	11	26
Pragmatic considerations > Limit	9	16
Contents > Topic-theme	9	14
Novelty > Variety	8	12
Difficulty > Reading level	6	9

The largest number of children spoke of their previous experiences with the books they elected to leave behind on the shelves, sometimes in pursuit of greater variety. Jeanette’s reason for not selecting one book touches on both factors: “‘Cause I’d read *Encyclopedia Brown* two times and I was just like, ‘I need a new one!’” Nearly half the children left behind books because of limits on their time. Maya explained, “I wasn’t sure I could read all of them.” Nearly half also rejected books on the basis of topic or theme, as Josef said: “I’ve read enough about dragon slayers.” Bryce rejected a book on the topic of whales because his interests were narrower: “I wanna get orcas.” Finally, several children rejected books because they were not at the right reading level. Hugo said,

“Some were just ... too hard.” Susanna said, “It was too easy, I could read every word in just a second.”

Book-return stage. As part of the book-return interview, children were asked to rate how much they liked each of their selections. In general, the children mentioned a wider variety of factors across facets in the post-selection stage related to the books they liked than to those they disliked (*Table 4-40*).

Table 4-40. Comparison of positive and negative facets of book-selection factors mentioned during the book-return interviews.

Facet	Positive		Negative	
	# of participants	# of mentions	# of participants	# of mentions
Contents	18	111	8	19
Reading experience	16	71	11	25
Gestalt judgment	11	15	5	7
Familiarity	8	12	3	5
Social ties	7	11	0	0
Uncertainty	7	9	2	2
Format-genre	4	12	0	0
Difficulty	2	2	11	16
Imposition	2	2	3	4
Pragmatic considerations	1	1	1	2
Basic metadata	0	0	0	0
Surface features	0	0	2	2
Novelty	0	0	1	1
Total	20	246 (75%)	16	83 (25%)

The top facets overall in the book-return stage—contents and reading experience—influenced children’s engagement both positively and negatively. The three most frequently mentioned negative factors overall occurred in these facets (*Table 4-41*).

Table 4-41. Top negative book-selection factors mentioned during the book-return interviews.

Facet > Factor	# of participants	# of mentions
Reading experience > Exciting-adventure	6	12
Reading experience > Boring	6	9
Contents > Plot-story	5	10
Difficulty > Reading level	5	7
Difficulty > Age appropriate	4	4

Children most frequently reported disliking books because they lacked excitement and adventure or because they were boring. When describing why she disliked a particular book, Jeanette touched on these factors: “It was very boring ... ‘cause they weren’t telling you about the adventures ... they were just talking, kind of.” The difficulty facet was again more strongly negative in influencing children’s engagement with particular books. Children more often mentioned factors from this facet—reading level and age appropriate—when they said they disliked books than when they said they liked books. In several cases, children mentioned these factors in combination. Other children found the reading experience of some books unsatisfying because of the difficulty. Joel considered a book boring because of its age inappropriateness: “It looked boring and stuff and it kinda looks for grown-ups.” Bobby similarly disliked a book because of its reading level: “The ones for my reading level are boring like this one.”

Concluding remarks. Very few studies of relevance have distinguished between positive and negative judgments in document selection (Cool, Belkin, Kantor, & Frieder, 1993; Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2002; Spink, Greisdorf, & Bateman, 1998). Only one study has specifically examined differences in criteria that positively or negatively affect selection decisions, finding that most criteria were mentioned both positively and

negatively and that, overall, people mentioned many more criteria in positive decisions than negative decisions (Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2002). The findings of this study are consistent with this stream of research.

Indeed, the children in this study mentioned many more positive than negative factors when describing the factors that influenced their selection and engagement with books. This finding might indicate an overall level of satisfaction with their selections, but the way in which the data were collected during the post-selection interviews likely influenced their rates of response. During that stage, children mentioned positive factors while referring directly to the books they had selected and had in front of them during the interviews. In contrast, to describe negative factors, the children had to recall their thought processes to explain why had not chosen books that remained on the shelves. Children sometimes struggled to remember the books they had examined only minutes before. Nevertheless, children's reasons for rejecting books cut across several facets—familiarity, pragmatic considerations, contents, novelty, and difficulty.

Children's emphasis on positive factors during the book-return stages also invites multiple interpretations. The higher frequency of positive factors mentioned might suggest that the children were generally satisfied with the books. It might also suggest that the children had more to say about the selections they liked than about the ones they did not. In the end, the instances in which children expressed dissatisfaction with the books they borrowed were most frequently tied to reading experience, contents, and difficulty.

4.4.2 Demographic differences in book-selection practices

While the children showed marked similarities in the overall process of book selection, they exhibited some subtle differences by grade level and by gender in their specific book-selection practices. This section highlights differences in the both the actions performed and the factors mentioned between children who had completed second grade and those who had completed third grade and between girls and boys.

4.4.2.1 Grade-level differences

Although they differed by only one year in school, the children exhibited some subtle grade-level differences in both book-selection actions and book-selection factors.

Book-selection actions. The children who had completed third grade performed slightly more instances of book-selection actions than the children who had completed second grade (*Table 4-42*).

Table 4-42. Comparison of facets of book-selection actions, by grade level.

Facet	2nd graders		3rd graders	
	# of participants	# of instances	# of participants	# of instances
Shelf interaction	10	138	10	190
External examination	10	83	10	113
Internal examination	10	86	10	106
Parental involvement	8	36	8	44
Forethought	9	16	8	34
Library resources	6	11	8	19
Book sorting	4	5	2	3
Total	10	375 (42%)	10	509 (58%)

Specific differences emerged in only two facets. The children who had completed third grade performed twice as many actions in the forethought facet as the children who had

completed second grade. The older children also performed nearly twice as many actions in the library-resources facet as the younger children.

Book-selection factors. Across the book-selection facets, the children who had completed third grade mentioned slightly more factors than the children who had completed second grade (*Table 4-43*).

Table 4-43. Comparison of facets of book-selection factors, by grade level.

Facet	2nd graders		3rd graders	
	# of participants	# of mentions	# of participants	# of mentions
Contents	10	162	10	247
Reading experience	10	104	10	127
Familiarity	9	144	10	125
Gestalt judgment	10	59	10	109
Surface features	10	42	10	73
Format-genre	6	23	10	41
Basic metadata	8	33	9	63
Social ties	8	31	9	34
Difficulty	9	34	8	23
Pragmatic considerations	7	19	8	23
Novelty	8	33	7	23
Uncertainty	6	37	7	23
Imposition	5	10	6	23
Total	10	731 (44%)	10	934 (56%)

There was remarkable uniformity in the number of children in each of the grade levels who mentioned factors in each of the facets, with one exception that emerged in the format-genre facet: only about half of the children who had completed second grade mentioned factors in the format-genre facet, while all children who had completed third grade did. The older children mentioned factors in the format-genre facet twice as often as the younger children and also mentioned factors in several other facets substantially more frequently than did the younger children. They mentioned factors in the basic-

metadata, gestalt-judgment, and imposition facets twice as frequently as did the younger children. Counter to this overall pattern, the children who had completed second grade mentioned factors in the difficulty and uncertainty facets somewhat more frequently than did their older counterparts.

Concluding remarks. Previous research has found differences in the kinds of books that are popular with children at different ages (Boraks et al., 1997; Fisher, 1988) and differences in the ways that children of different ages respond to books (Applebee, 1978; Beach & Wendler, 1987; Galda, 1990; Hickman, 1981; Lehr, 1988). One study has identified age-related differences related to the factors that influence children's selection of books in a digital library (Reuter, in press). The children in this study similarly exhibited differences by grade level in their book-selection practices.

In this study, the children who had completed third grade exhibited greater forethought than their younger counterparts, suggesting greater awareness and purposefulness in their book selection. The older children also performed a greater number of book-selection actions overall than did their younger counterparts, likely in connection to the finding noted above that they spent more time selecting books. The greater use of library resources by the older children suggests that they are more ready to take advantage of the assistance available to them in the form of the librarian or the library catalog. The older children's more frequent mentions of factors in the format-genre facet further suggest a greater awareness of terminology used in libraries and elsewhere to describe books. Taken together, these findings suggest a greater level of

library socialization among the older children, reinforcing the findings of previous research (L. Z. Cooper, 2004).

In contrast, the children who had completed second grade were less verbose overall and seemed to be less assured of their book-selection practices, as indicated by the greater number of mentions of uncertainty factors. The younger children might be more attuned to the difficulty of their selections than the older children, suggesting that they were less assured of their reading abilities. Children at this age are transitioning between easy picture books and more challenging chapter books. While the children in this study selected both genres, the children who had completed second grade selected a greater number of picture books. Previous research has found that children's tastes are more erratic when they are younger and that reading interests do not become stable until the high school years (Purves & Beach, 1972). The differences in this study between the children at different grade levels might reflect that move toward greater stability in book-selection practices among older children.

4.4.2.2 Gender differences

The differences in book-selection practices between boys and girls were still more subtle than those by grade level.

Book-selection actions. The boys and girls in this study performed a similar number of actions overall (*Table 4-44*).

Table 4-44. Comparison of facets of book-selection actions, by gender.

Facet	Boys		Girls	
	# of participants	# of instances	# of participants	# of instances
Shelf interaction	10	172	10	156
Internal examination	10	111	10	81
External examination	10	86	10	110
Parental involvement	9	52	7	28
Forethought	9	19	8	31
Library resources	8	16	6	14
Book sorting	2	2	4	6
Total	10	458 (51%)	10	426 (49%)

Differences by gender were not as prominent as the differences by age, although the boys performed nearly twice as many instances of actions in the parental-involvement facet as the girls and the girls performed nearly twice as many instances of actions in the forethought facet as the boys. Boys performed a greater number of actions in the internal-examination facet overall—leafing through pages, fanning pages, and looking inside books more often than did the girls. Within the internal-examination facet, more than twice as many girls as boys read closely.

Book-selection factors. The boys and girls in this study mentioned a similar number of book-selection factors overall (*Table 4-45*).

Table 4-45. Comparison of facets of book-selection factors, by gender.

Facet	Boys		Girls	
	# of participants	# of mentions	# of participants	# of mentions
Contents	10	207	10	202
Reading experience	10	106	10	125
Gestalt judgment	10	69	10	99
Basic metadata	7	24	10	72
Surface features	10	55	10	60
Difficulty	7	21	10	36
Familiarity	10	144	9	125
Social ties	8	31	9	34
Format-genre	8	34	8	30
Pragmatic considerations	7	16	8	26
Novelty	9	33	6	23
Uncertainty	7	38	6	22
Imposition	7	15	4	18
Total	10	793	10	872
		(48%)		(52%)

The number of boys and girls who mentioned factors in each of the facets was similar for all but four facets. More girls mentioned factors in both the basic-metadata and difficulty facets, while more boys mentioned factors in both the novelty and the imposition facets. Girls mentioned substantially more factors in the basic-metadata facet and slightly more factors in the gestalt-judgment and reading-experience facets than boys. Boys mentioned somewhat more factors in the familiarity and uncertainty facets than girls.

Concluding remarks. Previous research has found differences in the kinds of books that are popular with boys and girls (Childress, 1985; Harkrader & Moore, 1997; Reuter & Druin, 2004; Simpson, 1996), though no prior studies have looked for differences by gender in the process of book selection. This study identified only a few differences in the actions boys and girls performed during book selection and the factors that influenced their book selection and engagement.

The greater number of instances of actions in the forethought facet among the girls suggests that they were somewhat more deliberate than the boys as they approached book selection. At the same time, the boys mentioned factors in the uncertainty facet more frequently than girls, suggesting an overall lack of awareness of their own book-selection practices. Although boys performed a greater number of actions in the internal-examination facet, they were not as focused on reading books closely as girls when making selections and examined the books they were considering somewhat more superficially. The fewer instances of actions in the parental-involvement facet and the fewer number of girls who mentioned factors in the imposition facet suggest that girls were also somewhat more independent in book selection than the boys. As noted above, the boys in this study did exhibit somewhat lower reading attitudes than the girls. Therefore, the parents of these boys might have involved themselves more fully with their sons' book selection in order to support them in book selection and to assist them in finding books they like. Taken together, these differences suggest that girls might be more facile and self-sufficient in book selection than boys.

4.4.3 *Individual differences in book selection*

Although the children shared a number of commonalities and areas of convergence in their book-selection practices, they also exhibited some distinct individual differences. This section identifies two areas—reading preferences and book-selection strategies—in which individual differences in book selection were most evident.

4.4.3.1 Reading preferences

The children shared a number of book-selection practices, especially at the facet level; they sometimes exhibited strong individual differences, particularly at the factor level. For instance, all children referred to the reading experiences of the books they selected, but they looked for different kinds of experiences—such as funny, exciting, or scary. Throughout the study, evidence emerged that particular reading preferences influenced the book-selection practices of many children. The habits of four particular children illustrate a number of differences.

Jeanette. While more than half the children spoke of books that were exciting or full of adventure, Jeanette had a particular preoccupation with what she frequently referred to as “adventurous” books. Of the 41 mentions of the exciting-adventure factor across the study, Jeanette’s 17 mentions constitute nearly half. During the background interview, when she was asked to identify her favorite kinds of books, she said, “I ... like to read adventure books.” At each of the three library visits thereafter, she spoke of adventure across the stages of book selection. At one library visit, during the pre-selection interview, she said that she was in the mood for “just adventure and more adventure.” When she described her reasons for selecting books in post-selection interviews, she said repeatedly that she selected books that “sounded very adventurous.” At the conclusion of one post-selection interview, she reflected on her selection process: “Some of them are just, like, ... that’s not very adventurous. Even though they say it is, it doesn’t sound very appealing at all... I chose these ones that actually did sound very, very adventurous.”

Jeanette's interest in adventure also influenced her engagement with her selections during the book-return interview. She explained that she liked one book because "It was so adventurous! They were always going somewhere and finding something out or doing something." She explained that she disliked another book because "It was very boring... 'cause they weren't telling you about the adventures... They were just talking, kind of." For Jeanette, a preference for "adventurous" books clearly played a key role in book selection.

Hannah. Hannah expressed a strong preference for what she referred to as "freaky" books. During the background interview she summarized her usual strategy: "I look for freaky books." Her mother helped clarify Hannah's preference: "She means ... books about things that are gross or things that are a little scary." Hannah agreed with her mother's assessment: "Yeah ... I like reading books about scary monsters... and the human body." Indeed, across the three library visits, she selected eight books on mummies and took obvious delight in poring over their macabre and grotesque photos. Hannah mentioned the creepy-freaky factor at each of the three library visits. Her nine mentions constituted more than half of the total sixteen mentions of the creepy-freaky factor across the study.

During the pre-selection interview at the second library visit, Hannah said she was in the mood for "more, more freaky!" When explaining the reasons she selected one book, she said, "It was freaky, like I like." She explained that she spotted it on the shelf because "I just kinda saw that it was freaky." When she returned her books, her satisfaction was governed by their overall "freakiness." Hannah evaluated one of her

selections by saying, “I really liked it... It was freaky.” For Hannah, clearly, a “freaky” reading experience was the primary factor across the stages of book selection.

Sangita. More than half the children mentioned the mystery genre, though Sangita had a particularly strong preference for it. Her ten mentions constitute nearly one-third of the 33 mentions overall. During the background interview, she identified mysteries as her favorite kind of book: “I like mystery a lot because I like to find out what’s happening.” On her first library visit, she explained that she intended to look for “mystery stories.” At one of the later library visits, she planned to look for “some more mystery stories.” During the post-selection interview at one library visit, she explained that she chose one book because, “I like *Nancy Drew* books because they’re ... mystery books.” When she returned to the library and discussed the books she was returning, she described one book as “a nice mystery story.” Of another book, she said, “I liked it because ... it was kinda scary and it was a mystery.” A preference for books from the mystery genre drove Sangita’s book-selection practices throughout the study.

Jonah. Only two children referred to comics or graphic novels during the study. Jonah’s mentions of the comics-graphic novel factor constituted five of its total of seven mentions. During the background interview, when he described his typical book-selection practices, Jonah explained, “The first, automatic move is that I turn to the chapter books... Then, I mostly go to the middle section, ... looking for graphic novels.” Indeed, on the first and second library visits, Jonah spoke of looking for “[a] couple graphic novels.” On the third library visit, he said he intended to look for comics. He was observed at each of the three library visits browsing the graphic novel section. Of

the 22 books Jonah selected during this study, ten were graphic novels or comics. During the book-return interviews, Jonah explained that he liked one of his selections because “It was a graphic novel.” He explained why he liked another book: “This one was really nice because it was comics fused with facts.” Like the other children, Jonah’s clear preferences—in his case, for graphic novels and comics—shaped his book-selection practices at the library.

Concluding remarks. Although the analysis above shows strong convergences among the children on certain factors and across certain facets, individual children’s particular preferences for certain kinds of books had an overwhelming influence on how they selected and engaged with books. Preferences emerged related to particular formats or genres—in the case of Sangita’s interest in mysteries and Jonah’s interest in graphic novels—as well as to particular reading experiences—as in Jeanette’s interest in adventure books and Hannah’s interest in freaky books.

4.4.3.2 Book-selection strategies

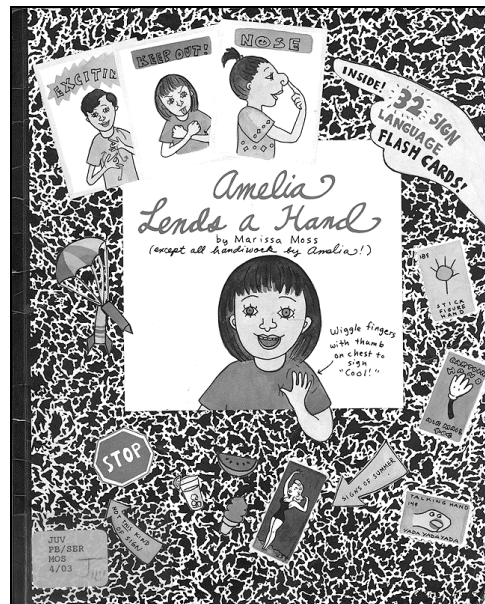
The multiple library visits and series of interviews permitted tracing the selection of a book through its subsequent return for some of the children. As a result, it was possible to identify instances of successful book selection—when a child liked a book selected—and unsuccessful book selection—when a child did not like a selection. One of the major differences was the strategies children used to select books, in particular the level of care exhibited during book selection.

Lily. When Lily browsed the library for books, she was highly active. She squatted down to view books on the bottom shelves and crawled along the floor. She danced up

and down the aisles and spun in circles asking her mother to tell her when to stop so she could “pick randomly” to discover new books. She sought known items among the shelves and scavenged among books that had been discarded throughout the library. She browsed the shelves side-by-side with her mother and sought assistance from the librarians.

Throughout this process, Lily was very attentive to her book selection. She considered a wide variety of factors and used them in tandem for individual selections. On her first visit to the library, she selected *Amelia Lends a Hand*, part of the *American Girl* series presented in the style of a hand-written journal (Figure 4-1).

Figure 4-1. *Amelia Lends a Hand* book cover and summary.



Amelia Lends a Hand by Marissa Moss

From the back cover:

The minute Amelia sees her new neighbor shooting off rockets in the backyard, she *knows* she wants to be friends. Things get trickier when she learns her friend-to-be is deaf. How can she get to know him? Can they get over their differences? Find out in *Amelia Lends a Hand*!

Lily explained why she chose the book:

I like books that are wrote [sic] in either journals or letters. They're some of my favorites... I like taking out books and looking at the covers... The covers tell a lot... It tells a little bit about how exciting probably it's gonna

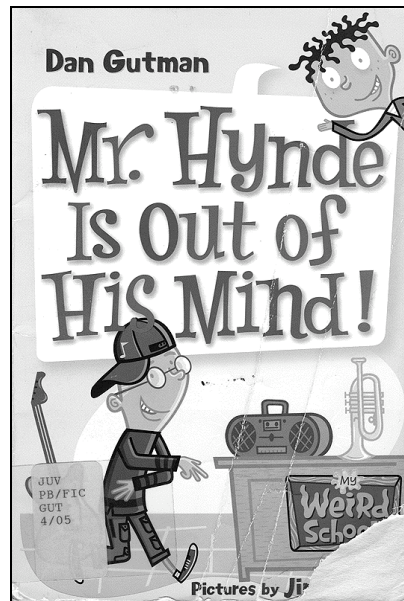
be about... *Lends a Hand* seems like she was really nice and lended [sic] a hand to someone.

She focused on the book cover and the title to give her a sense of the reading experience (“exciting”) as well as the book’s theme (“she was really nice and lended [sic] a hand to someone”). She also focused on the book’s narrative style (books written in “journals or letters”).

When she returned *Amelia Lends a Hand* at her next library visit, Lily said she liked it: “‘Cause it teaches you a lesson and, like I said, I really like journals and it was really fun to read. All the *Amelia* books, to me teach a lesson, and are really exciting, and are really good.” The aspects she mentioned when selecting the book—the theme, the narrative style, and the reading experience—were the same that led to her engagement with the book.

On her second library visit she selected a book from the *My Weird School* series by Dan Gutman (*Figure 4-2*): “*Mr. Hynde Is Out of His Mind!*—‘out of his mind’—which sort of sounded funny. And I’m guessing Mr. Hynde was the music teacher, by the cover.” She used a sophisticated strategy, again referring to the book’s title and front cover to make judgments about the book’s contents (“Mr. Hynde was the music teacher”) and reading experience (“sounded funny”).

Figure 4-2. *Mr. Hynde Is Out of His Mind!* book cover and summary.



Mr. Hynde Is Out of His Mind! by Dan Gutman

From the back cover:

Something weird is going on! Music class is awesome! The teacher, Mr. Hynde, raps, break-dances, and plays bongo drums on the principal's bald head. But he goes too far when he tries to make A.J. kiss Andrea in the school play. YUCK! Will A.J. survive?

On her subsequent visit to the library, Lily rated the book highly, clearly delighted with her selection: “I loved it! I like [the] *My Weird School* [series]—they’re cool. [It was] funny, weird, and crazy. I can’t wait to read more books!” The care Lily had taken in her book selection paid off by providing her with a satisfying reading experience and an introduction to a new favored series.

Joel. In contrast to Lily, Joel was somewhat aimless as he browsed the library. He wandered up and down the aisles, pausing to gape at the books on the shelves. He frequently pulled books from the shelves almost absent mindedly, paying little attention to his selections. He occasionally pulled books, opened them on the shelf, and leaned in to view them more closely, resting his elbows on the shelf.

Throughout this process, Joel's selection habits were uneven. On his second library visit, Joel selected *Boat* by DK Publishing (Figure 4-3), explaining his selection perfunctorily: "I like to look inside boats and stuff and ... it's, just, I like boat books."

Figure 4-3. *Boat* book cover and summary.



Boat by Eric Kentley

From the back cover:

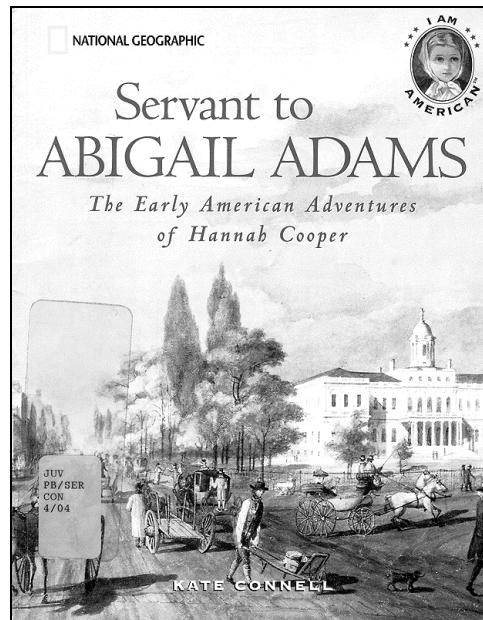
Here is a spectacular and informative look at the fascinating story of boats and ships. Stunning real-life photographs of reed and skin boats, birch-bark canoes, and hand-carved outriggers, as well as mighty steamships, modern ocean liners, and sailing dinghies offer a unique "eyewitness" view of boats and ships from around the world.

On the subsequent library visit, he said that he liked *Boat* "because it had all these cool things about boats and it told me a lot of things." Although Joel's attention to the book was somewhat superficial, in this case his selection was successful. During his library visits, he selected five other books published by Dorling Kindersley on topics such as trains, submarines, and ships. Joel's preferences tended toward books of this kind, and he was satisfied with his selections when he stuck to this kind of fare.

When he stepped outside his comfort zone, however, his lack of attention in selection was less successful. Also on his second library visit, Joel selected *Servant to Abigail Adams: The Early Colonial Adventures of Hannah Cooper* (Figure 4-4), remarking, "I

don't know. It just looked like a good book. Because ... the title sounds like it's a good book."

Figure 4-4. *Servant to Abigail Adams* book cover and summary.



Servant to Abigail Adams: The Early Colonial Adventures of Hannah Cooper by Kate Connell

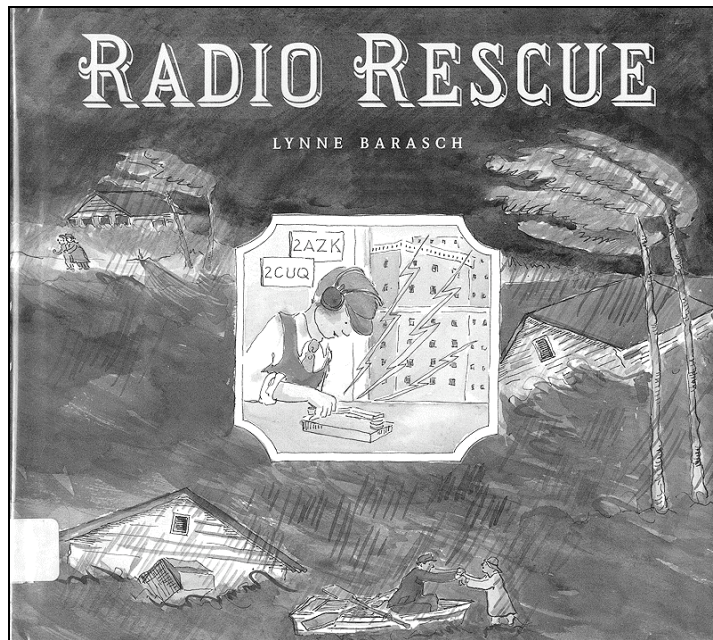
From the back cover:

THE YEAR IS 1800, and 13-year-old Hannah Cooper is working as a servant for Abigail Adams, the wife of our second President, John Adams. President Adams is running for re-election against his archrival Thomas Jefferson; the plaster is still wet on the walls of the brand-new White House; and Hannah worries about her ailing father and corresponds with her printer brother, Daniel. In this deft combination of rich factual background and fictional story, Kate Connell brings to life the debates and challenges that faced our nation in the early years of the republic.

When he returned the book at the subsequent library visit, he said that he had disliked the book because "[It was] kinda girly. It was kinda boring." Although the title contains two female names and the front flap summary clearly indicates that the main character is a teenage girl, Joel had not been attentive to these details.

Similarly, another book Joel selected during his second library visit was *Radio Rescue* (Figure 4-5). He chose the book, he said, because, "I wanna see how they rescue people."

Figure 4-5. *Radio Rescue* book cover and summary.



Radio Rescue by Lynne Barasch

From the front flap:

In the 1920s a long distance call can take hours. An overseas call is not possible at all. But there is a new invention, called wireless radio, that permits instant communication over long distances.

An excited young boy—a licensed amateur radio operator—puts on his earphones and slowly turns a dial on his radio receiver, waiting to hear some electronic sounds—dots and dashes in Morse code—that make up a message. He then taps out his reply.

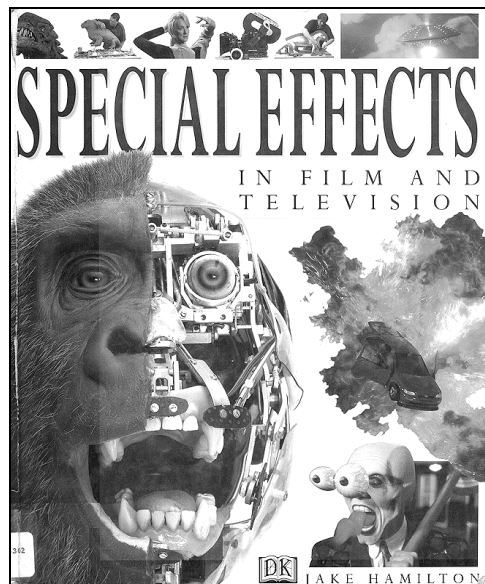
In this book, Lynne Barasch tells the story of one boy and how he became an amateur radio just for fun, but also got use his skill for something more important.

When he returned that book, he said he had disliked it because “It was not that really good or anything... It wasn’t about building radios, or inside the radios... I just thought it wouldn’t be this boring.” Again, the book offered evidence that could have helped Joel determine whether the book was about rescuing or about radios, but he was not attentive enough.

Hannah. Like Joel, Hannah often wandered aimlessly up and down the aisles of the library. She grabbed books indiscriminately, focusing especially on the ends of the shelves where other children had discarded books. On several occasions, she ponderously leafed through every page of a book, only to reject it. She was also indecisive, saying that she had finished selecting books only to change her mind and set out for still more books.

Throughout this process, Hannah was not always careful in her book selections. This fan of “freaky” books had chosen *Special Effects in Film and Television* by Jake Hamilton on her first visit to the library because “It was freaky, like I like.” She explained that she spotted the cover and “just kinda saw that it was freaky.” Indeed, the cover showcases an animatronic gorilla with its skin removed, a fiery explosion, a green-faced man with a dropped jaw and eyes popping out, and more (*Figure 4-6*).

Figure 4-6. *Special Effects in Film and Television* book cover and summary.



Special Effects in Film and Television
by Jake Hamilton

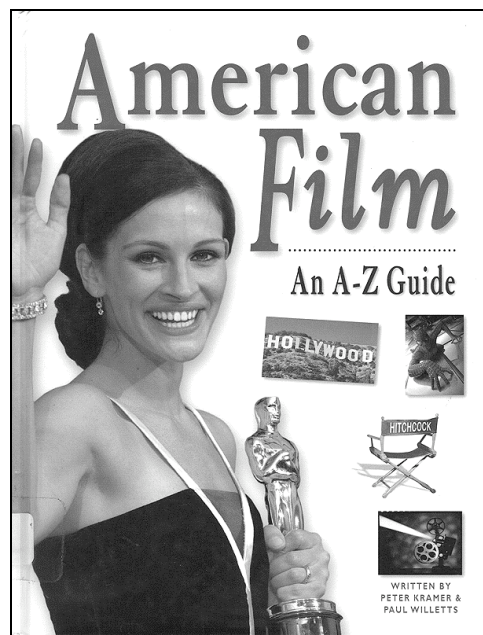
From the back cover:

TRAVEL underwater with the cameraman on a Bond set; WATCH a makeup artist create an alien; FIND OUT how to stage a snowstorm in a studio; DISCOVER how model spaceships are built and filmed; and LOOK under the skin of an animatronic ape. Learn about all this and much, much more as experts take you behind the scenes to show how they achieve film and television special effects.

Upon returning the book at the subsequent visit, Hannah said, “I really liked it... It was freaky.” She eagerly shared “the freakiest part that they had,” which portrayed an alien bleeding green blood.

At the second visit to the library, Hannah revisited the shelves containing books on film and television, choosing *American Film: An A-Z Guide* because, “It was freaky! ... It says ‘American Film,’ so I thought it might be good... I just saw a freaky part in it when I started looking at it.” In contrast to her previous selection, this book’s cover portrays the actress Julia Roberts holding an Oscar, with additional images such as the Hollywood sign and a director’s chair. Neither the cover, the title, nor the summary gives any indication that the book is “freaky” in nature (*Figure 4-7*).

Figure 4-7. *American Film* book cover and summary.



American Film: An A-Z Guide by Peter Kramer and Paul T. Willetts

From the back cover:

American films have entertained and enlightened audiences for more than 100 years. Whether they were in the form of coin-operated nickelodeons, silent films, epic extravaganzas, or special effects blockbusters, motion pictures from America have captivated audiences worldwide.

American Film: An A-Z Guide presents an up-to-date history of many aspects of American film, such as acting, directing, editing, and distribution. As readers turn the pages of this book, the magic of American filmmaking will come alive.

When Hannah returned *American Film* at the subsequent library visit, she indicated that she had disliked the book because she found it “boring.” She explained that it contained

very little freaky material “except for only one part of it, which made me get it.” Like Joel, Hannah’s lack of attention to elements like the cover art, title, and book summary resulted in a less-than-satisfying book selection.

Concluding remarks. The differences these children exhibited in book-selection strategies reinforced Timion’s (1992) finding that children have unique styles when selecting books. In these instances, the kind of strategies children used influenced children’s overall satisfaction with the books they selected. Children like Lily were more attentive to subtle cues in titles and surface features and thus able to assess the suitability of their selections for their own tastes. Children like Joel and Hannah were less attentive when making selections, which sometimes led to less satisfaction, especially when they stepped outside their comfort zones. In general, the books that engaged children were a better match to factors that influenced them to select the books in the first place. This is not to say that the children would have been more satisfied if they had systematically matched their selection factors to their engagement factors, only that the children who were better at anticipating just what would satisfy them made more effective selections.

4.4.4 *Library obstacles*

This study has shown that children’s process of book selection is exceedingly complicated and multifaceted. In the closing interviews the children acknowledged that they had received little preparation to undertake such a difficult task. Indeed, several children faced challenges selecting books they enjoyed. Although they did not leave the library empty-handed, the children did face obstacles related to the complex terrain of the library that might hamper their overall effectiveness at book selection

4.4.4.1 Book-related terminology

In this study, children were frequently unable to articulate aspects of book selection, struggling particularly with book-related terminology. Jonah stumbled when describing his perusal of the chapters listed in a table of contents: “I looked at the, um, I looked at this [i.e., the table of contents]... There’s about ten books [i.e., chapters] in it.” In fact, children rarely mentioned elements of books such as the table of contents or items in the front or back matter. Mitchell, too, had difficulty trying to describe his use of book summaries: “Sometimes I’ll look at the backs where it ... has the thing that tells, sort of like an outline.” In fact, there was a disconnect when it came to summaries in the actions performed and the number of mentions of the factor. Although sixteen children were observed reading the back covers of books during the library visits, in the background interview only thirteen children mentioned using book summaries; just eight mentioned summaries in the post-selection interviews, suggesting a disconnect between what the children in this study did and what they could articulate. Children’s difficulty with vocabulary demonstrates the complexity inherent in books, which consist of countless elements with often-perplexing names.

4.4.4.2 Library resources

Aside from asking the librarians for assistance, the children in this study did not take advantage of the resources provided by the library, rarely referring to shelf labels or using the library catalog. Furthermore, the children referred only infrequently to factors related to the primary access points by which the library arranges materials: author and title. However, many comments from the children indicate that they were aware of the various

systems libraries use to organize and classify books. For instance, Hannah referred to traditional modes of shelf arrangements when explaining how she typically chooses books in the library:

I would go into ... one of the sections... It would ... have, like, labels so you could pick out the book that you're looking for... It's either the author or the ... title of the story, but I think it's mostly the author.

Josef offered further detail on how to interpret spine labels: "When there's letters like these, up here [on the spine], it means it's fantasy... And if there's numbers there, it means it's ... real."

4.4.4.3 Concluding remarks

The children very rarely used or referred to library resources when selecting books. Previous research has found that children often struggle to use the very resources libraries put in place to aid people in finding books, particularly library catalogs (Eaton, 1989, 1991; Edmonds et al., 1990; Lavery, 2002; P. A. Moore & St. George, 1991; Solomon, 1997). A number of studies have also shown that young people fail to understand the terminology commonly used in libraries, such as subject headings and metadata (Abbas, 2005; Eaton, 1989; P. Moore, 1995; Poston-Anderson & Edwards, 1993; Solomon, 1994). Because they did not use the library catalog, the children in this study never had occasion to refer to either subject headings or metadata, but they frequently struggled to use terminology associated with books. The fact that the children occasionally mentioned such things indicates their awareness of the systems in place in libraries and familiarity with the elements of books, while the nature of their statements suggests that their understanding is incomplete and evolving. This finding emphasizes the complexity

of books as artifacts as well as the mysteriousness of library practices to children. In light of their awareness of the resources in the library, children's failure to take advantage of them suggests that they deem them unhelpful for book selection.

4.5 *Summary of findings*

The findings above identify numerous distinct actions performed by children as they selected books and dozens of factors that differed in prominence during the course of book selection. This section offers a summary of the study's overall findings by revisiting some of the issues raised in the foreshadowing questions presented above and concludes with an overall picture of the process of book selection.

4.5.1 *Reading gratifications*

The conceptual framework for the study presented gratification as both the activating mechanism and the outcome of book selection, i.e., gratification sought and gratification obtained. In the background interview, when directly asked to reflect on why they read, the children described a number of gratifications related to reading—largely focused on affective, cognitive, and social experiences provided by books. However, during the interviews at the library visits, children did not spontaneously mention such gratifications in the same terms.

Nevertheless, some of the factors children mentioned during the library visits—especially those in the reading-experience and social-ties facets—are closely related to some of the gratifications they described during the initial meeting. For instance, factors such as “exciting-adventure,” “informative,” and “bonding” correspond to gratifications such as “stimulation,” “learning,” and “family bonding.” Although the children rarely

mentioned such factors during the pre-selection interviews, in the later stages of the process they frequently mentioned factors related to the reading experience provided by books and the ways in which books reinforce social ties. In this study, children did not seem to approach book selection with explicit reading gratifications in mind; instead, gratification was an implicit part of the children's book-selection practices.

This finding resonates with previous research claiming that “students do not often read materials centering on their essential needs” (Purves & Beach, 1972, p. 101). According to a review of several research studies, Purves and Beach (1972) claim that elementary-age children focus on the entertainment value of books rather than pursuing broader intellectual, emotional, and social needs. Indeed, during book selection, children in this study focused on concrete factors—such as “topic-theme,” “illustrations,” and “plot-story”—and the immediate reading experiences—such as “funny-silly” or “exciting-adventure”—provided by books rather than the broad, abstract gratifications that reading provides.

4.5.2 *Book-selection actions and factors*

The actions children performed while selecting books form a systematic model of book selection, closely resembling the process outlined by previous researchers (Reutzel & Gali, 1997). The facets of actions children performed followed a narrowing pattern, with evermore close inspections of books. Children often benefited from adult intervention in the form of parental involvement as well as interactions with the librarians, reinforcing the findings of previous research (Yankelovich, 2006). Aside from

approaching the librarians for assistance, the children did not take advantage of library resources.

The factors identified in this study reinforced the findings of a number of previous research studies that have identified a similarly wide range of factors that influence young people's selection of books (*Table 4-46*).

Table 4-46. Comparison of facets of book-selection factors identified by this study with those identified by previous research studies on book selection.

Facet	Robinson et al. (1997) <i>preK - K</i>	Carter (1988) <i>1st-4th graders</i>	Timion (1992) <i>2nd graders</i>	Reutzel & Gali (1997) <i>1st, 3rd, & 5th graders</i>	Reuter (in press) <i>1st-5th graders</i>	Campbell et al. (1988) <i>2nd-5th graders</i>	Lewis (1989) <i>4th graders</i>	Kragler & Nolley (1996) <i>4th graders</i>	Pejtersen (1989) <i>ages 7-14</i>	Fleener (1997) <i>5th-6th graders</i>	Wendelin & Zinck (1983) <i>5th-8th graders</i>	Moss & Hendershot (2002) <i>8th graders</i>	Swartz et al. (2000) <i>6th-8th graders</i>	Carter & Harris (1982) <i>7th-8th graders</i>	Rinehart et al. (1998) <i>8th graders</i>	Samuels (1989) <i>7th-12th graders</i>	Spiller (1980) <i>ages 13-05+</i>	Ross (1999) <i>ages 16-80</i>
Contents		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•
Social ties		•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Basic metadata		•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•		•		•	•
Difficulty	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•				•	
Surface features		•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•
Format-genre	•	•		•	•		•			•		•		•	•	•	•	
Familiarity	•	•		•	•	•						•	•		•			•
Gestalt judgment			•	•	•	•		•										
Reading experience					•				•					•		•		•
Pragmatic considerations				•						•								•
Novelty					•													•
Imposition		•																
Uncertainty																		

Comparing the factors identified in this study to the factors identified by more than a dozen previous studies suggests that the findings presented here are more comprehensive than those of any previous research. Indeed, this study has shown the prominence of

factors that relate to reading experience, novelty, and imposition, which had not been previously identified widely in the literature. This study has also captured the uncertainty that children sometimes feel during book selection, which has not been addressed in other research.

A few factors identified in previous research were not identified by this study. One factor relates to the format-genre facet. Two previous studies found that elementary-age children preferred paperback books over those with hard covers (Campbell et al., 1988; Wendelin & Zinck, 1983), and one study found that some adults preferred hard-cover books over paperbacks (Spiller, 1980). In this study, children never mentioned this aspect of format-genre. Another study found that shelf height—whether a book is shelved at eye level, below eye level, or above eye level—influenced children’s selections (Reutzel & Gali, 1997). Similarly, shelf height did not emerge as a factor in children’s book selection in this study. One study with adults found that the publisher sometimes influenced people’s selections (Spiller, 1980), but this factor was never mentioned by the children in this study.

4.5.2.1 Patterns across the children

While the children in this study formed a diverse group in terms of demographic background, reading attitudes, and media usage, there was a great deal of convergence in the actions children performed and the factors they mentioned across the process of book selection. In general, when the children embarked on the book-selection process at the library, they were vague in their intentions, expressing their interests in broad terms; naming titles of familiar series; mentioning formats (e.g., “chapter books”) or genres

(e.g., “mysteries”); or indicating their uncertainty as openness to discovery. The ensuing book selection was, thus, an unfolding process, much like that described by the “anomalous state of knowledge” concept in traditional information-seeking contexts (Belkin, 1980).

As they encountered and examined books, the children’s actions progressed through several steps—from shelf interaction, to external examination, to internal examination. When describing what influenced their selections, the children referred to factors in the basic-metadata and surface-features facets, such as titles and front covers, to make determinations about the contents and reading experience of their selections, often remarking on their familiarity or making gestalt judgments. Finally, the contents and reading experience influenced the children’s overall engagement and satisfaction with their selections. Cutting across this process, difficulty often influenced children negatively. While selecting books, children regularly rejected books they found either too difficult or too simple. Difficulty was also a prime reason children were dissatisfied with their selections.

4.5.2.2 Contextual conditions

The children’s interactions with books were set against a rich context. Children evaluated their selections in terms of their own prior reading habits, sometimes seeking familiar books and other times inclined for more novel material. Their selections were also influenced by the social context, directed externally to satisfy others’ impositions or directed internally to reinforce their own social ties. Book selection was frequently a shared endeavor, with most children observed interacting with their parents and

approaching librarians to ask for assistance during selection. The process of book selection was also ongoing from one library visit to another, as indicated by children's mention of factors related to pragmatic considerations. Children's selection of books in the library was inseparable from these contexts.

4.5.2.3 Personal characteristics

While there were convergences in the overall process of book selection, personal characteristics—such as grade level, gender, and individual differences—influenced a number of divergences in children's book-selection practices. Perhaps the most prominent differences occurred across individuals. Children differed in their reading preferences, favoring different kinds of books and thus relying on different specific factors in book selection. Children also differed in the strategies they used when selecting books—from attentive and exhaustive to impulsive and cursory—and, as a result, differed in their overall effectiveness at selecting books they would ultimately enjoy.

Personal differences related to grade level and gender were also present but less prominent. Even though the children in this study are close in age, the period from the primary grades to the intermediate grades is one of rapid transition. The children who had completed second grade and those who had completed third grade exhibited differences in the kinds of books they selected. The older children also exhibited greater facility with the overall process of book selection than their younger counterparts, perhaps reflecting their greater library socialization and the development of their reading

preferences. The girls were similarly more adept and also more independent than the boys in book selection.

4.5.3 *Process of book selection*

The actions children performed and the factors they considered during book selection are consistent with what Dervin and Nilan (1986) characterized as “external behaviors” and “internal cognitions.” This distinction also corresponds with research on information behavior, which naturally focuses on behavioral aspects of people’s interactions with information, and research on relevance assessment, which typically explores the cognitive aspects of such interactions. The conceptual framework for this study blended these perspectives in order to build a more holistic understanding of information behavior than is typically achieved with either approach on its own. This study collected both observation and interview data during children’s library visits as a way to gain insights into both the behavioral and the cognitive components of book selection.

In this study, these behavioral and cognitive processes were closely intertwined in children’s processes of book selection. Specific actions might lead to the consideration of certain factors, while particular factors of interest might drive the actions children performed. For instance, a child might examine a book’s cover (action) and consider whether the book will be funny (factor). Conversely, a child might wonder about the reading level of the book (factor) and choose to leaf through its pages (action).

In many cases, the specific actions captured in the field notes and specific factors mentioned in the interviews overlapped. For instance, children were observed examining the front covers of books and, in the post-selection interviews, mentioned selecting books

on the basis of the cover illustration. Children were observed opening books and reading closely and later acknowledged selecting books because of the plot or storyline. The study's approach to collecting both observation and interview data in order to explore both the behavioral and cognitive aspects of book selection contributed to this holistic understanding of the book-selection process.

In addition to these areas of overlap, children mentioned a wide range of factors that cannot be tied to specific actions. Examples include factors in the familiarity and novelty facets. At the same time, children were observed interacting with books in ways that they did not acknowledge in regard to the factors they mentioned. For instance, more children were observed reading the back covers of books than mentioned doing so afterwards. The post-selection interviews required children to recall what factors influenced their decisions after they had completed selection. Ultimately, the behavioral process—the actions observed—and the cognitive process—the factors mentioned—cannot be aligned perfectly through the data collected in this study.

In the end, the rich picture of the children's processes of book selection that emerges from this study reinforces the work of others in LIS who have examined book selection for recreational reading. The children in this study often perceived book selection as an instinctive activity (Spiller, 1980), though they generally had well-developed strategies for selecting books (Ross, 1999). Like readers in other studies, the children were motivated by personal reasons, such as mood and emotional experience, when selecting books (Pejtersen, 1986; Ross, 1999; Spiller, 1980). As they selected books, they attended closely to physical features and focused on the reading experience (Pejtersen, 1986).

This study helps clarify the overall of process of book selection, in which children perform a range of actions as they simultaneously consider a variety of factors as they interact with books in the library. Children's book-selection practices are set against the gratifications that they seek from reading, which in turn exist within a larger, rich context of reading habits.

Chapter 5: Implications and future research

Implications of this research include ways in which existing information-behavior models can be extended to accommodate recreational contexts, contributing to the development of a tentative model of children's book selection for recreational reading which incorporates both behavioral and cognitive aspects of the book-selection process. The findings reported here also suggest specific ways in which children can become effective at book selection as part of becoming motivated, skilled readers. Finally, the findings suggest how children's book selection can be supported through library services and systems. This chapter concludes the dissertation with a discussion of future research areas to continue the growth of understanding of children's processes of book selection and to develop an expanded understanding of human information behavior in recreational contexts.

5.1 Extending models of information behavior

As noted above, the LIS field has limited much of its research to professional and academic settings (Julien et al., 2005). This study has devoted attention to information behavior in a recreational context with the aim of contributing to the development of a more general understanding of information behavior, one that accounts for the full range of human information behaviors. The findings of this study have particular implications for broadening the concept of the information need, expanding the notion of relevance assessment, and exploring information behavior in recreational contexts.

5.1.1 *Information needs*

The concept of the information need is central to most models of information behavior and has generated a great deal of theoretical discussion in the LIS literature (Belkin, 1980; Dervin & Nilan, 1986; A. Green, 1990; Taylor, 1962; Walter, 1994). While some models of information behavior acknowledge the dynamic, fluid nature of information needs (Bates, 1989; T. D. Wilson, 1997), such needs are traditionally discussed only in relation to question negotiation and query formulation and how librarians and information systems can best meet people's needs. This focus on formal contexts of information behavior has led to a narrow conception of information needs as only instrumental and distinct from wants (A. Green, 1990). As a result, "problems have a monopoly position in explaining information needs" (Bosman & Renckstorf, 1996, p. 52). The conceptual framework for this study expanded the traditional notion of the information need by conceiving of it as a kind of gratification, thus capturing the less utilitarian and more affective nature of humans' information needs as part of book selection.

While the children in this study indeed described a number of gratifications that they obtain from reading, they did not identify particular gratifications that they sought to fulfill as they embarked on book selection. In fact, children's selection of books for recreational reading did not resemble typical problem-centered information-seeking models (Bates, 1989; Dervin, 1992; Kuhlthau, 1991; Taylor, 1991; T. D. Wilson, 1981, 1997)—primarily because, as Toms (1998) has observed of people's newspaper browsing behavior, "There was no 'need,' no anomalous state of knowledge and no knowledge gap

evident” (p. 202). In terms of Taylor’s (1962) levels of needs, the children in this study never arrived at “formalized needs” or perhaps even at “conscious needs.” However, the relationship between the gratifications that children said they obtained from reading and the factors that influenced their selection of and engagement with books suggests that their selection of books was, in fact, driven by gratifications. In this study, the “needs” that children sought to fulfill through recreational reading were constant and became evident through their interactions with books throughout the selection process. Taylor’s concept of the “visceral need”—the actual, unexpressed need for information—might be the most appropriate way to conceive of the mechanism that activates children’s book selection for recreational reading.

In summary, this study has reinforced the arguments of others who have described the problematic nature of identifying information needs, which are often inseparable from other kinds of needs (Bosman & Renckstorf, 1996; T. D. Wilson, 1981). Indeed, the children in this study all described fulfilling some kind of broad need for reading but did not cite specific needs that motivated their selection of books. As researchers in LIS explore information behavior in a variety of contexts—professional, academic, and everyday life as well as recreational—information-behavior models must be adapted to incorporate more inclusive notions of what motivates people to undertake information behavior.

5.1.2 *Relevance assessment*

In the past two decades, studies of relevance have identified dozens of criteria that influence people’s selection of documents. Some of the factors identified in this study

have appeared in previous studies of relevance, most notably “topicality” and “accessibility” (Barry & Schamber, 1998; Hirsh, 1999; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999). Other previously identified relevance criteria seemed to appear here but took on a somewhat different character. For instance, criteria such as “clarity” (Barry & Schamber, 1998) and “user’s education” (Park, 1993) would seem to bear some relation to factors in the “difficulty” facet mentioned by the children in this study. However, many relevance criteria identified by previous studies did not appear in this study. Such standard criteria as “credibility” and “accuracy,” for example, do not have obvious, widespread application in a recreational context (Barry & Schamber, 1998; Hirsh, 1999; Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999).

This study has also introduced many new factors related specifically to the selection of books for recreational reading. In most relevance studies, users interact with surrogate records in library catalogs and databases—which generally present only basic metadata, abstracts, and subject headings. Because children in this study accessed actual books in the public library, the availability of full text might have introduced many new factors that influence selection—such as “front cover,” “plot-story,” and “narrative style.” While there was a great deal of convergence on the kinds of factors that influenced children’s selection of books, the recreational context seemed to result in an individualistic selection process and to encompass a wide variety of subjective factors—such as “adventurous,” “freaky,” “interesting,” or “cool.” Such factors are related to previously identified criteria such as “affectiveness” (Barry & Schamber, 1998) and “interesting” (Hirsh, 1999) but were much more prominent in this study than in previous studies of relevance.

The biggest contribution this study makes to the relevance literature is the emphasis on aesthetic factors of information, namely the experiential aspects of reading, which were central in these children's book selection but not previously identified in the relevance literature. According to reader-response theorist Rosenblatt (1994), when it comes to reading itself, the "play of attention back and forth between the efferent and the aesthetic is undoubtedly much more characteristic of our daily lives than is usually acknowledged" (p. 37). For example, a scholar might relish the artfulness in an argument, while a casual reader might gain a solution to a problem from a novel read in leisure. Green (1997) similarly suggested that aesthetic relevance is not opposed to, but rather complementary to, traditional relevance by observing that the best writings offer a blend of factual knowledge and enjoyable experience.

Although LIS research in professional and academic contexts has not looked for aesthetic factors in relevance assessment, research in other areas suggests that such factors might be present nevertheless. As one example, researchers in communications and visual design have found that people consistently ascribe specific personality attributes to different typefaces (Brumberger, 2003) and interpret messages differently depending on typeface (Bartram, 1982; Rowe, 1982). One recent study found that the attributes people associate with typefaces can be conferred on the creator of the messages: when people read email dealing with workplace issues, they judged the personality and the credibility of the sender differently based solely on the font used to display the message (Shaikh, Fox, & Chaparro, 2007). The results of this research

suggest that aesthetic response, or the experience of reading, might play a role even in professional contexts.

Other scholars have begun to explore the role of aesthetics in people's interactions with information in other settings, including computer modeling (Liu, 2006) and instructional design (Parrish, 2006) but offer only preliminary insights. Although attention to the aesthetic component of relevance assessment is likewise still nascent, this study offers a framework for expanding the concept of relevance to build our understanding of the process of document selection in a variety of contexts. By examining the full range of factors—both traditional and aesthetic—at work in relevance assessment, LIS research can produce richer, more meaningful accounts of people's interactions with information in different contexts than currently appear in the literature.

5.1.3 *Recreational contexts*

Surveys of public-library use indicate that the vast majority of people view the library as a source of entertainment for the purposes of borrowing books, exploring hobbies, and generally pursuing enjoyment (Vavrek, 2000). Yet LIS research has rarely examined information behavior in recreational contexts, instead focusing on information behavior in problem-centered contexts. However, as Case (2007) has observed, “[L]ife is not entirely about uncertainty, gaps, or discontinuities” (p. 328). While LIS literature has focused overwhelmingly on filling information needs through active, directed information seeking in professional and academic contexts, such behavior constitutes only a tiny proportion of all information behavior (Bates, 2002). Although the literature has tended to emphasize cognitive aspects of information behavior, affective factors are

present in several theories and models of information seeking—including Kuhlthau's (1991) information search process and T. D. Wilson's (1981, 1997) interdisciplinary model. Affective aspects of people's interactions with information have also been detected in several relevance studies, including Wang's (Wang & Soergel, 1998; Wang & White, 1999) and Barry and Schamber's (1998). More LIS studies focused on contexts of information behavior in which such factors might be deliberately uncovered and explored could expand the field's understanding of this phenomenon.

Young people's interactions with information present an interesting case for exploring information behavior across contexts. The LIS community has focused on the Web largely as an information resource, but early surveys of Web users showed that entertainment was the number-one use of the Web for young people (GVU Center, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b). One study has posited that the Web represents a functional alternative to television: among undergraduates, aside from required academic activities, entertainment was the strongest motive in Web searches (Ferguson & Perse, 2000). Indeed, in a comparison of young people's perceptions of the Internet and the CD-ROM as information resources, one teenager noted that he considered the Internet a leisure resource (Shenton & Dixon, 2003a). Young people might approach the Web—and perhaps other information resources—with a recreational outlook.

Other LIS researchers have noted that young people are partial to materials that engage their interest when completing research assignments in school (Bowler et al., 2001; Hirsh, 1999; Small & Ferreira, 1994). In particular, Hirsh (1999) found that interest, both personal and from peers, was one of the relevance criteria mentioned most

often by fifth graders completing a research assignment in school. Case (2007) has posited that interest and engagement might have an even wider influence on information behavior: “[P]erhaps the ‘most authoritative source’ is not what many people prefer when seeking information; maybe they would rather have the most entertaining one” (p. 115).

If researchers are to develop a full understanding of human information behavior, they must study people interacting with information in a wide variety of contexts. Further exploration of information behavior in recreational contexts will challenge researchers to examine the process of information behavior in its entirety and to recognize the full range of factors that influence people’s interactions with information.

5.2 Tentative model of children’s book selection

This study has taken a holistic approach, bringing together LIS research on information behavior and relevance assessment and drawing upon reader-response and uses-and-gratifications theories to build a comprehensive understanding of children’s book selection. Grounded in the range of findings presented above, a tentative model of children’s book selection is presented in Figure 5-1.

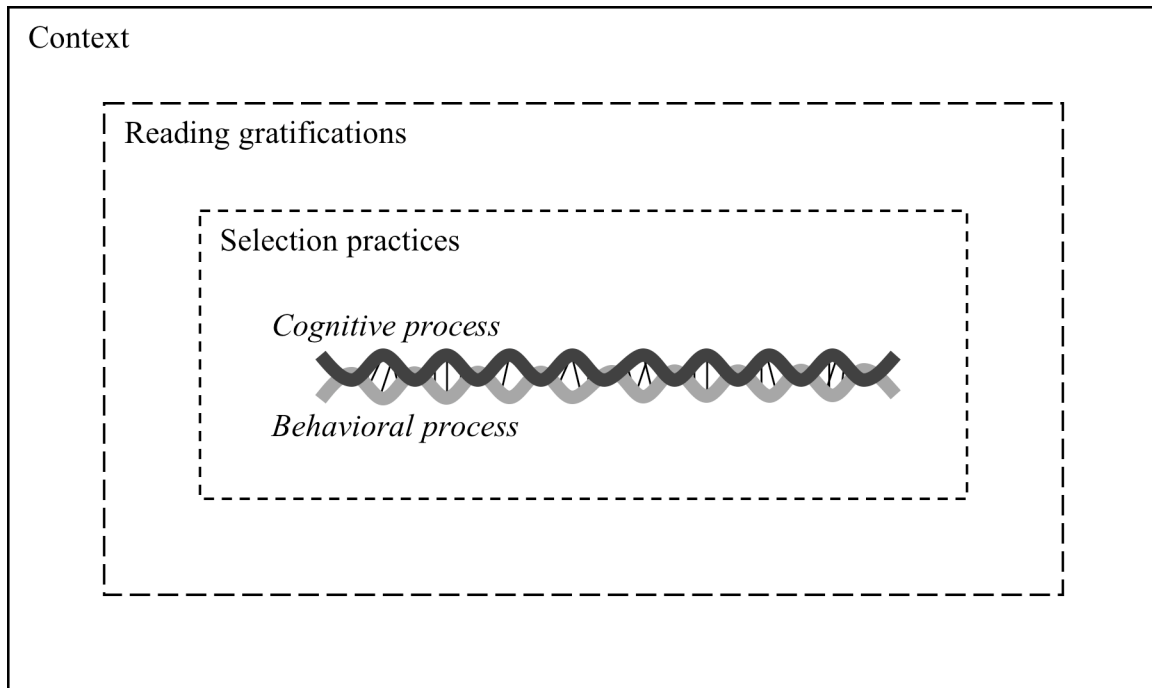


Figure 5-1. Tentative model of children's book selection.

As in Bates's (1989) berrypicking model and T. D. Wilson's (1997) interdisciplinary model of information behavior, this model situates children's *book-selection practices* within a *context*. The children's household environments, reading attitudes, media use, and reading preferences comprise the context in which book selection operates. Many of the book-selection factors children mentioned—especially those in the familiarity, novelty, social-ties, imposition, and pragmatic-considerations facets—also exist within the context: children's previous encounters with books and their interactions with their friends and parents as well as with librarians and the library space influence their book-selection practices.

The context furthermore incorporates *reading gratifications*. Book-selection practices are set within a general understanding of reading gratifications rather than (a)

being activated by any particular gratification sought or (b) resulting in any particular gratification obtained. As the dotted lines indicate, aspects of the context permeate reading gratifications, which in turn permeate book-selection practices. The practices themselves consist of two interlinked processes, one *cognitive* and the other *behavioral*, representing interactions that resemble the processes of relevance assessment and information behavior, respectively.

A portion of the chain illustrates book-selection practices in more detail, showing that the cognitive and behavioral processes are connected by specific actions performed and factors mentioned (*Figure 5-2*).

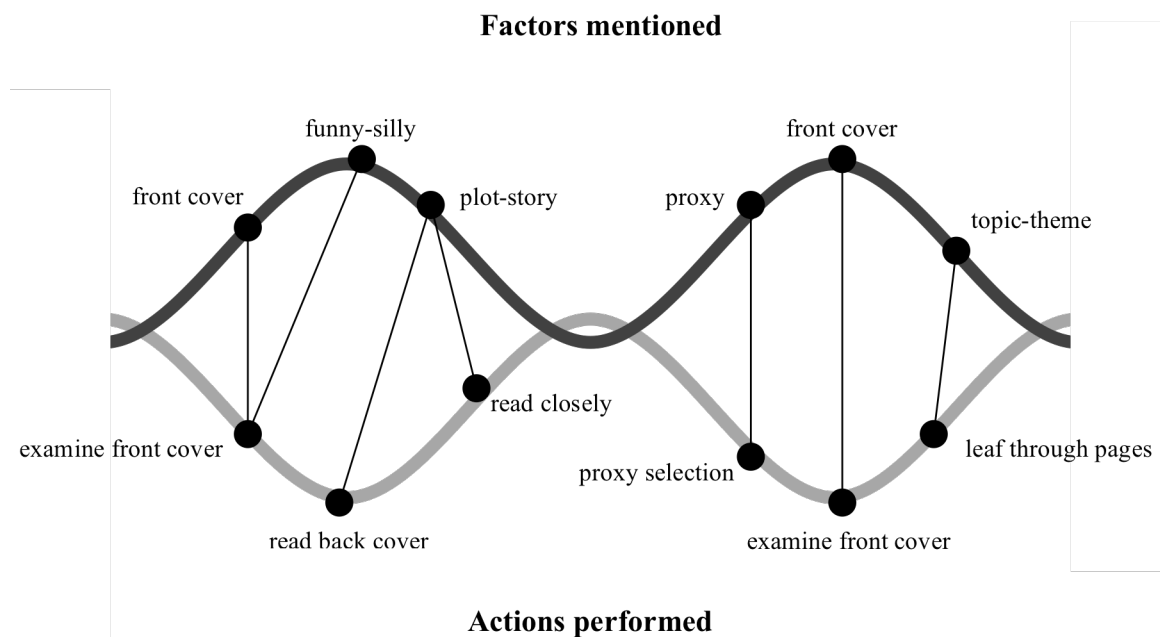


Figure 5-2. Detail from tentative model of children's book selection: Book-selection practices.

This illustration shows a proposed relationship between some of the most frequently performed actions and some of the most commonly mentioned factors. While some actions are directly related to factors—as with “examine front cover” and “front cover” or

“proxy selection” and “proxy”—the relationship is less direct between most factors and actions. Individual actions can relate to more than one factor, as in examining the front cover to determine whether the illustration itself is funny or silly. Conversely, multiple actions can relate to a single factor—as with reading a book’s back cover and reading the pages closely to assess its plot or story. Each link in the chain represents a separate set of practices related to individual books. As shown here, some actions performed and factors mentioned can recur, while others can differ from book to book.

Because children mentioned the factors that influenced their selections retrospectively, the actions observed do not always coincide with the factors mentioned. As a result, this aspect of the model is currently hypothetical. Future research is needed to explore the relationship between the behavioral and cognitive processes of book selection. Think-aloud protocols might be used to align children’s behaviors and thought processes more comprehensively.

5.3 *Encouraging effective book selection*

According to educators, there are manifold benefits to children who find books they like. Children who select their own books show greater interest in reading (Campbell et al., 1988; Timion, 1992). In turn, children are often able to read beyond their supposed reading levels when their interest levels are high (B. Carter, 2000; Hunt, 1996/1997; Krashen, 2004). Furthermore, children who are engaged readers and who “internalize a variety of personal goals for literacy activity” (Guthrie, 1996) show greater gains in literacy development than children who read only to complete classroom assignments. These findings suggest that effective book-selection strategies hold promise for

encouraging reading engagement and literacy development. Both library instruction and parental involvement offer potential for encouraging effective book selection.

5.3.1 *Library instruction*

Previous research has reported that children say that not being able to find books they like is the biggest barrier to reading (Timion, 1992; Yankelovich, 2006) and that they wish teachers knew more about their interests and hobbies so they could better help them choose books they would enjoy (Roettger, 1980). Yet the children in this study said they had received little or no instruction in school or elsewhere in the selection of books for recreational reading. Those who mentioned receiving instruction of any kind focused on the mechanics of book selection, such as how to re-shelve books or how to locate known items. The dearth of library instruction related to recreational reading presents enormous opportunity for instructing children in ways to select books they will enjoy.

In the same way that students receive instruction on the research process with models such as the Big 6 (Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 1990), school library media curricula should include instruction in the process of book selection for recreational reading. Such a process might focus on the strategies exhibited by the children in this study. For instance, the cross-case comparisons above contrast the well-developed, highly sophisticated and generally successful book-selection strategies used by some children with the more aimless and somewhat more hit-or-miss strategies used by others. The former strategies could be used as a preliminary model for instruction to enhance the practices of children using the latter strategies.

In particular, library instruction related to book-selection strategies must address the highly complex, multifaceted nature of book selection. When children encounter books, there are countless factors that come into play. In the book-selection environment of the public library—where children typically select books after browsing the shelves and interacting with the sizes, shapes, and other physical features of books—no standard surrogate such as a record in a library catalog or an online database can capture all the relevant information. Additionally, no single, simple strategy stands out for guaranteeing successful book selection. For instance, although many children emphasized the importance of reading book summaries in their background interviews, some books do not have summaries. In some cases, enticing front covers that do not accurately represent books' contents lure children into making unwise selections. Thus, in order to select books effectively, children require a host of skills and knowledge, including conceptual understanding of the elements of books, visual literacy skills to interpret rich information embedded in book covers, basic literacy skills to appreciate the content of the books, familiarity with library conventions and resources, and knowledge of their own preferences and interests. Moreover, children must understand when and how to deploy their various strategies—alone or in combination—to be effective book selectors. Library instruction should focus on providing children with all these elements to ensure that they have a variety of book-selection strategies at their disposal.

5.3.2 *Parental involvement*

A great deal of literature has shown that parental involvement in children's reading fosters both engagement and achievement (L. Baker, 1999; L. Baker et al., 1996;

National Center for Education Statistics, 1999, 2001). Across the board, the parents in this study were highly involved in their children's reading habits—reading to them, being read to by them, and discussing their reading. In fact, one of the gratifications children mentioned in relation to reading was bonding with their families. Parents in this study were also highly involved in their children's selection of books. Most children enjoyed some level of parental involvement in the process of book selection, receiving assistance more frequently from their parents than from librarians. When it came to the origins of their book-selection knowledge, several children spoke of learning to select books from their parents.

All in all, children in this study were quite effective at navigating the complex terrain of the library to select books for recreational reading, despite some differences in their book-selection strategies and a few obstacles that some of them faced. The high levels of parental involvement might well have played a role in facilitating children's book selection. Indeed, the parents in this study often demonstrated a keen awareness of their children's interests and preferences, steering them toward particular books and away from others. During interviews, a few parents occasionally even stepped in to help clarify their children's answers. Parents are certainly in a position to understand children's recreational reading interests in ways that educators and librarians are not. In concert with the library instruction described above, parents can help children focus on particular aspects of books during the selection process. Outside that process, parents can encourage children to talk about their selections to develop self-awareness of their reading preferences. While this study did not specifically look at the role that parents

play in children's selection of books, future research might examine how parents can support children in selecting books effectively.

5.4 *Improving library services and systems*

Although the children in this study were aware of the presence of library resources like shelf labels and the library catalog, they rarely availed themselves of such tools when selecting books. The findings of this study offer a variety of implications for improving library services to meet the needs of children selecting books, particularly in regard to readers' advisory and shelf arrangement. Finally, because information systems can provide inventive, new kinds of access, the findings have further implications for the design of digital libraries to support children's book selection.

5.4.1 *Readers' advisory*

Readers' advisory—one of the cornerstones of librarianship—is particularly important in children's services as librarians strive to promote reading and encourage the development of avid readers (Sullivan, 2005). While the children in this study approached librarians on occasion for assistance in locating known items, they never sought advice on what books to select. The children might not have been aware of the availability of readers' advisory.

The unspecified nature of the need that children seek to fill through book selection for recreational reading has important implications for conducting the readers' advisory interview. In particular, helping children choose books they want to read means understanding why they read and what reading provides for them. Clearly, the readers' advisory interview should ask children what they want with such questions as "What are

you in the mood for?” or “What have you recently read and enjoyed?” Perhaps more importantly, librarians conducting such interviews should also ask, “Why do you read?” or “What do you like about reading?” Children’s answers to these questions are likely to provide librarians with important insights into children’s reading interests and preferences. Using this information, children’s librarians can join educators and parents in helping children develop self-knowledge about their own reading practices.

5.4.2 *Shelf arrangement*

The children in this study rarely focused on the elements that libraries typically use as primary access points in shelving fiction books: author and title. Based on this study, librarians might consider other subdivisions—such as topic or theme—that better reflect the interests of some children and make selection easier for them. Indeed, many public librarians advocate dividing fiction collections by reader interest to facilitate browsing (S. L. Baker, 1996; Cannell & McCluskey, 1996; Harrell, 1996; Sullivan, 2005). The Hyattsville Branch shelves some materials separately from the general juvenile fiction collection, arranging books by popular genre and series. The types of books featured in the summer reading program—mysteries and poetry—are also shelved separately during the summer months. Children in this study frequently sought books from familiar series and on occasion selected books from those related to the summer reading program.

Children demonstrated elaborate interactions with books on shelves—half-pulling books and rummaging through books—to examine those elements normally obscured in shelf arrangements that were used most often in making selections—especially front covers. Many children were also attracted to books in special displays or books that other

children had discarded around the children's room. This study and many others have found that book covers are central to young people's book selection (Campbell et al., 1988; M. A. Carter, 1988; Fleener et al., 1997; Kragler & Nolley, 1996; Moss & Hendershot, 2002; Reuter, in press; Reutzel & Gali, 1997; Rinehart et al., 1998; Swartz & Hendricks, 2000; Wendelin & Zinck, 1983). To facilitate effective selection of books, librarians should attempt to display more books with their covers visible to attract children's attention and to aid them in selection.

5.4.3 *Digital libraries*

Without the physical constraints of traditional libraries, digital libraries are in a unique position to support children's book-selection practices in new ways. For instance, space limitations in most libraries make it impractical to display many books face-out. In the digital environment, however, all books can be "shelved" face-out all the time simply by displaying book covers in search results.

Digital libraries can offer other ways to preserve the visual and physical properties of books so important to children's selection practices. Typical library catalogs offer only textual surrogates with limited information, such as title, author, abstract, and subject headings. Rosenblatt (1994) has observed that—while a summary, paraphrase, or surrogate of a text might be as useful as the original text in the context of efferent reading—only the original text can provide the full experience the reader seeks through aesthetic reading. Indeed, all the children in this study examined books internally as part of their selection processes. Despite the availability of full text in many digital libraries, such systems often do not do a good job of permitting users to interact with and preview

content. Content previews commonly used in video abstracting—such as storyboards or video skims (Christel, Hauptmann, Warmack, & Crosby, 1999; Christel & Warmack, 2001; Lienhart, Pfeiffer, & Effelsberg, 1997; Smeaton, 2004)—might offer children at-a-glance access to books' contents during selection in the digital environment, standing in for the range of internal-examination actions performed in this study. For instance, a book's front cover and several of its pages could be assembled as frames in a brief animation that would act as visual abstract, permitting children to judge such factors as text density and presence of illustrations as if they were actually leafing through the pages of the book.

Digital libraries can also develop innovative mechanisms to support unique strategies and a variety of preferences. Alternative categorizations are possible in a digital library, with the capability for books to be “shelved” in many places at once. The book-selection facets identified in this study offer new possibilities for indexing and, in turn, accessing books. The reading-experience facet presents a particularly interesting challenge because the individual factors mentioned—“funny,” “exciting,” “scary,” “boring,” and so on—are subjective. Through social indexing—also known as social bookmarking, collaborative tagging, and folksonomic classification (Golder & Huberman, 2006; Guy & Tonkin, 2006; Hammond, Hannay, Lund, & Scott, 2005)—a digital library can permit children to characterize the reading experiences of books they read and subsequently offer those characterizations as access points for other children using the digital library.

Although very little relevance research has distinguished between positive and negative criteria (Cool et al., 1993; Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2002; Spink et al.,

1998), the distinction might be quite useful for developing information systems for children. The positive and negative factors identified in this study could be used in coordinated fashion in a digital library to permit children to browse the collection by the common positive facets—contents and reading experience—and then filter results by the common negative facets—difficulty and pragmatic considerations—to aid them in narrowing their options.

5.5 *Future research*

Researchers have sometimes avoided research on book selection with young children because of the challenges in working with a population with emerging reading skills and limited ability to articulate (Campbell et al., 1988; Robinson et al., 1997). When it comes to book selection, elementary-school children, particularly those in the primary grades, are an understudied and thus poorly understood population. The dearth of research on the youngest children has sometimes resulted in uninformed characterizations of young children's behavior. For instance, Lewis (1989) supposed that children younger than fourth grade "approach books at random" (p. 153). Although children's book-selection practices might seem unsystematic or random at a distance, this study's close attention to children's book-selection practices in the form of observations and interviews has provided insight into children's nuanced intentions in book selection. All the children spoke readily about their book-selection practices—indicating that, in all cases, their selection of books was highly motivated.

This study has uncovered a rich set of findings related to children's selection of books. Much more research is needed with young children in order to understand their

book-selection practices. As a first step, future work on book selection should validate the findings and tentative model presented here. Because this study worked with primary-age children, factors related to developmental levels—such as the emphasis on the difficulty facet in book selection or the trouble with book-related terminology and library concepts—might be especially prominent with this population. Continued work with different populations, such as older children, would contribute to the development of a generalized model of the process of book selection and provide further insight into the influence of developmental factors on the process of book selection.

As an initial foray into children's processes of book selection, this study looked at children's selection of books as a process incorporating both information behavior and relevance assessment. Future work might focus more narrowly on specific aspects of children's information behavior—particularly on information needs and what motivates children's selection of books and other recreational reading materials—tying results closely to the uses-and-gratifications literature.

Similarly, future work might use a traditional reader-response approach to look at aspects of relevance assessment—specifically at the relationship between the factors that influence children's engagement with books they select and their responses to literature—focusing closely on how children respond to books in a recreational context. Such work might take a collaborative approach with researchers in literacy education to explore ways in which book selection and literacy development interrelate. Because several research studies have reported that children say they struggle to find books they like (Timion, 1992; Yankelovich, 2006), future work might focus specifically on the

factors that influence children to reject books. Exploring negative relevance factors might provide new insights into how children do—or do not—engage with books.

Finally, this study was undertaken to extend models of information behavior into a recreational context. The LIS field has limited much of its research to professional and academic settings, and much more work is necessary to expand current understandings of information behavior across contexts. This analysis has identified both similarities and differences between children's book selection in a recreational context and more typical information-behavior and relevance-assessment research. Future LIS research should endeavor to use what is known about information behavior in academic and professional contexts to understand information behavior in recreational contexts. In turn, with more attention to recreational contexts, researchers might use what they learn to expand our understanding of human information behavior as a whole. Future research will need to turn to fields that have focused specifically on the role of a wide range of factors in human behavior, such as communications and education. In particular, uses-and-gratification theory and reader-response theory offer enormous potential as frameworks for helping the LIS field extend and recast traditional notions and constructs to address the full range of human information behavior.

Appendix A: Recruitment flier

Attention parents & guardians!

- Do you have a child completing **2nd** or **3rd grade**?
- Do you regularly visit the **Hyattsville** or **New Carrollton** branches of the public library?
- Do you want to encourage your child to **read more** and **become a better reader**?
- Sign up for a **research study** on how children choose books at the library!



What is involved in the study?

- Schedule **three visits** to the public library over the **summer**, at times that are convenient for you.
- A researcher will **interview** your child about choosing books and **observe** your child selecting books.
- A researcher will interview you and ask you to keep **brief notes** about your child's reading habits.



What are the benefits of participating?

- If you and your child complete the study, you will be given **\$50** in coupons and/or gift cards. Your child will also select three **free books** as a thank you gift!
- By learning how your child chooses books, you can encourage your child to **read more** and **become a better reader**!



How do I sign up?

- Complete the attached information form, return it to the children's desk at the Hyattsville or New Carrollton library, and the researcher will follow up with you.
- Or, contact the researcher directly to sign up:

Kara Reuter

College of Information Studies
University of Maryland

cell: **301-332-5950**

office: 301-405-2038

email: **kreuter@umd.edu**

This research project is supported in part by generous donations from:
Maryland Book Exchange • Karen MacPherson • Pat & Dan Reuter • Politics & Prose Bookstore

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, College of Information Studies. I have worked with children and libraries for more than 7 years. I am conducting a research project to understand how children choose books at the public library.

I would like to **talk with your child** about how he or she chooses books and then **observe your child** choosing books at the library. I would give you a notebook to **keep brief notes** about your child's reading habits outside of the library. I would also ask you some questions about how you and your child use the library. With your permission, I would also tape record our conversations.

If you are selected to participate in my study, we will **schedule three visits to the library** during the **summer** months (June–August), at times convenient to your family. The total time for your participation will be about 3-6 hours, spread out over the three visits.

After you and your child complete your third library visit, I will give your family **\$50** in coupons and/or gift cards to thank you for your help. Your child will also get to choose three **free books** as a thank you gift. In addition, by understanding how your child chooses books, you can help your child choose books that he or she likes. Research shows that when children read books that they like, they **read more**, and they **become better readers**.

If you would like to sign up, please fill out the attached information form, return it to the children's desk at the Hyattsville or New Carrollton library, and I will follow up with you. Or, you may contact me directly by phone or email to sign up. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you for your interest. I look forward to working with you and your child!

Kara Reuter

College of Information Studies
University of Maryland
4105 Hornbake Library Building
College Park, MD 20742

cell: 301-332-5950
office: 301-405-2038
home: 301-935-0037
email: kreuter@umd.edu

To sign up for the research study on how children choose books, please fill out the following form. Return it to the children's desk at the Hyattsville or New Carrollton libraries. Or, call Kara Reuter directly at 301-332-5950 to sign up.

About your child

Child's name _____ ☐ Female
☐ Male _____ Date of birth _____

Primary language _____ Other language(s) (if any) _____

Education

School your child attends _____ ☐ 2nd grade
☐ 3rd grade

Average grades in school

☐ Mostly A's ☐ Mostly B's ☐ Mostly C's ☐ Mostly D's
☐ A's and B's ☐ B's and C's ☐ C's and D's ☐ D's and F's

Library use

Which branches of the public library do members of your family visit? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ Hyattsville ☐ New Carrollton ☐ Other: _____

How often do members of your family visit the public library?

☐ Every day ☐ Once a week ☐ Once a month
☐ A few times a week ☐ A few times a month ☐ A few times a year

Parent/guardian

Parent/guardian's name _____ ☐ Female
☐ Male _____ Relationship to child _____

Primary language _____ Other language(s) (if any) _____

Occupation _____ Hours worked per week _____

Highest level of education completed

☐ Some high school ☐ Associates degree ☐ Graduate degree
☐ High school diploma ☐ Bachelors degree ☐ Other: _____
☐ Some college ☐ Some graduate school _____

Household

Location (City or neighborhood) _____ # of adults in household _____ # of children in household _____ Language(s) spoken at home _____

Contact information

Daytime phone _____ Evening phone _____ Email address _____

Thank you for your interest! I will follow up with you as soon as possible.

Appendix B: Recruitment email

Date: Wed, 17 May 2006 13:56:43 -0400
From: Kara Reuter <kreuter@umd.edu>
Subject: Children & Libraries Research Study

Greetings:

- Do you have a child completing ***2nd*** or ***3rd grade***?
- Do you regularly attend the ***Hyattsville*** or ***New Carrollton*** branches of the PG County library?
- Do you want to encourage your child to ***read more*** and become a ***better reader***?

If you (or someone you know!) fits this description, maybe you would be interested in participating in my research study on how children choose books at the public library.

I'm asking families to schedule three library visits over the summer (June-August), where I will interview children about choosing books and observe them while they're making their selections. I'll also ask parents/guardians to keep brief notes in a reading diary. In return, I'm offering \$50 in gift certificates to each family and three free books to each child.

If you're interested in signing up, please contact me off list. If you have questions, I'd be happy to give you more details. Please also feel free to pass along my email to others you know who might be interested.


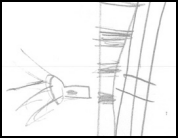

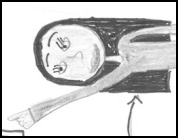
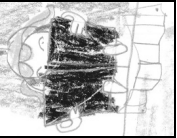
Thanks so much and have a great summer!

Kara Reuter


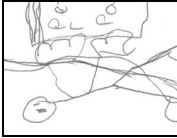
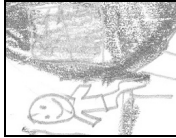
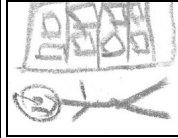
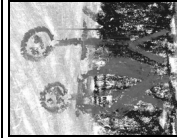
Doctoral Candidate
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University of Maryland
4105 Hornbake Library Building
College Park, MD 20742
tel: 301.405.2038
fax: 301.314.9145
web: <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~kreuter>
email: kreuter@umd.edu

Appendix C: Participants


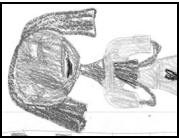
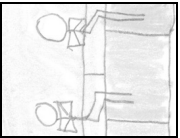
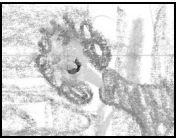
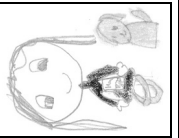
Second-grade girls

Child	Self-portrait	Gender	Age	Grade completed	Achievement level	Type of school	Parental educational level	Home language(s)
Hannah		F	7 years, 8 months	2	high	public	Mother: college degree Father: graduate degree	English
Keisha		F	8 years, 2 months	2	high	public	Mother: some grad school Father: graduate degree	English
Maya		F	7 years 7 months	2	high	public	Mother: college degree Father: some grad school	English, Spanish
Sangita		F	8 years 1 month	2	high	public	Mother: college degree Father: graduate degree	English, Tamil, Hindi
Susanna		F	7 years 11 months	2	high	public	Mother: college degree Father: some college	English, Spanish

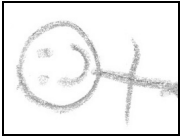
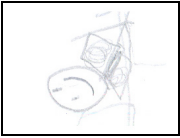

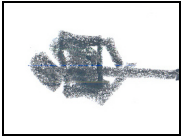
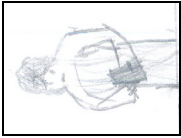
Second-grade boys

Child	Self-portrait	Gender	Age	Grade completed	Achievement level	Type of school	Parental educational level	Home language(s)
Acton		M	7 years 5 months	2	high	public	Mother: some college	English
Bobby		M	8 years	2	average	public	Mother: graduate degree Father: some college	English
Demario		M	8 years	2	high	public	Mother: graduate degree Father: high school	English, Spanish
Hugo		M	8 years 5 months	2	high	public	Mother: high school Father: some high school	English, Spanish
Jason		M	8 years	2	low	private	Mother: some grad school Mother: some grad school	English

Third-grade girls

Child	Self-portrait	Gender	Age	Grade completed	Achievement level	Type of school	Parental educational level	Home language(s)
Erin		F	8 years 9 months	3	high	public	Mother: college degree Father: college degree	English
Eva		F	9 years	3	high	public	Mother: college degree	English
Jeanette		F	9 years 6 months	3	high	private	Mother: college degree Father: graduate degree	English
Lily		F	9 years 1 month	3	high	private	Mother: graduate degree Step-father: some college	English
Stella		F	7 years 11 months	3	high	public	Mother: graduate degree Father: graduate degree	English

Third-grade boys

Child	Self-portrait	Gender	Age	Grade completed	Achievement level	Type of school	Parental educational level	Home language(s)
Bryce		M	8 years 8 months	3	high	public	Mother: graduate degree	English
Joel		M	9 years 1 month	3	average	private	Mother: college degree Father: graduate degree	English
Jonah		M	8 years 5 months	3	high	home	Mother: some college Father: high school	English, Hebrew
Josef		M	8 years 10 months	3	high	private	Mother: some grad school Father: graduate degree	English, German
Mitchell		M	8 years 10 months	3	high	private	Mother: college degree Father: some grad school	English

Appendix D: Initial-Meeting Checklist

- ☐ Study Overview
- ☐ Permission Forms
- ☐ Information Form
- ☐ Reading Habits Questionnaire
- ☐ Garfield Questionnaire
- ☐ My Favorite Things Questionnaire
- ☐ Discuss Reading Diary
- ☐ Discuss & Schedule Library Visits
- ☐ Interview

Appendix E: Reading-Attitude Questionnaire

Reading Attitude Questionnaire

Children Selecting Books in a Library

Circle the drawing of Garfield that matches the way you feel about reading in each question.

1. How do you feel about spending free time reading?



2. How do you feel about reading during summer?



3. How do you feel about going to the public library?



4. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?



5. How do you feel about starting a new book?



6. How do you feel about reading your school books?



7. How do you feel about the stories you read in school?



8. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?



9. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?



10. How do you feel about taking a reading test?



Appendix F: Media-Use Questionnaire

Media Use Questionnaire

Children Selecting Books in a Library

My Favorite Things

By:

Your Name

My favorite subject in school is:

_____.

My least favorite subject in school is:

_____.

When I have free time, my three favorite things to do are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I read _____ book(s) each week.

The best book I ever read was _____

_____.

My other three favorite books are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I use a computer _____ day(s) each week.

My three favorite things to do on the computer are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I see _____ movie(s) each week.

My three favorite movies are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I watch _____ TV show(s) each day.

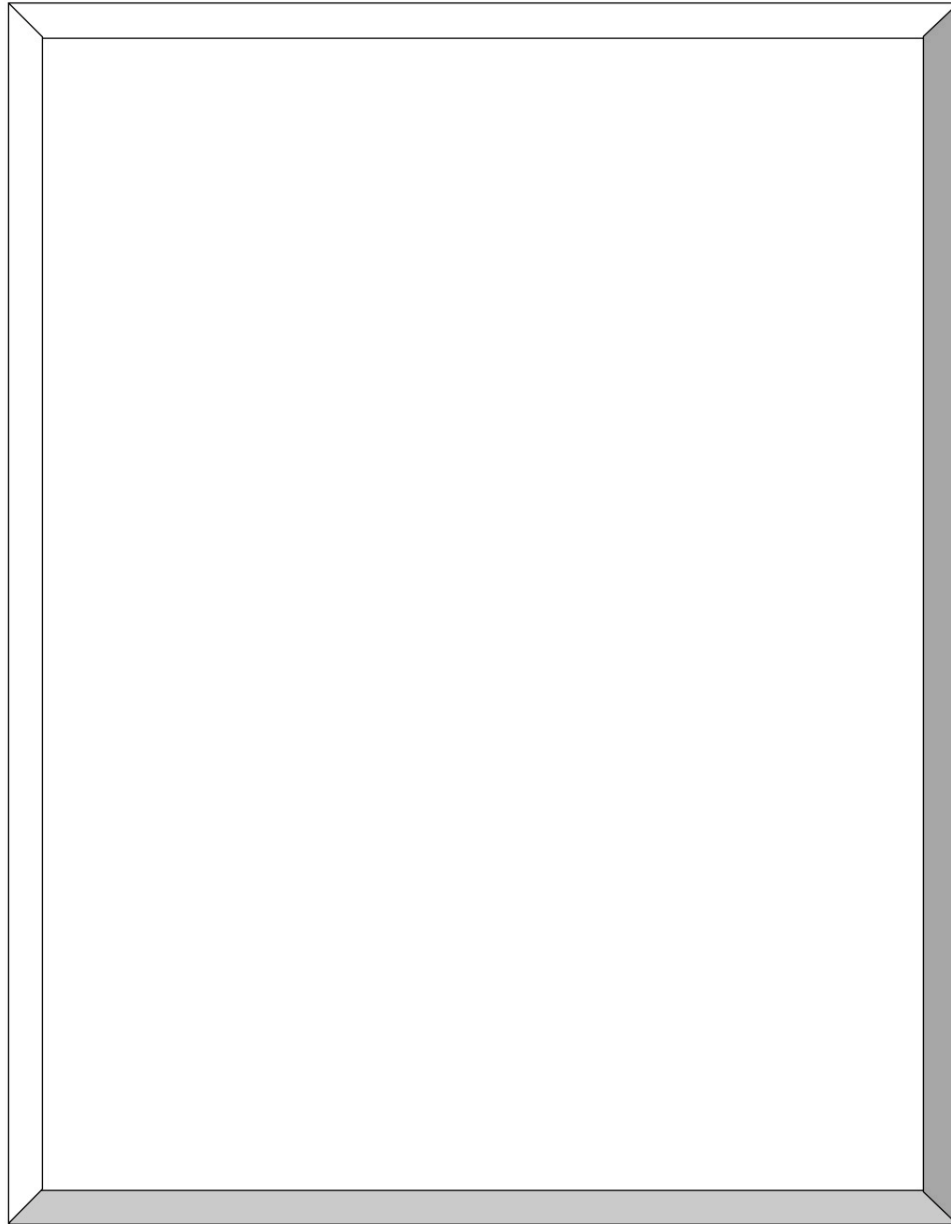
My three favorite TV shows are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Here is a drawing of me reading a book in my favorite place:



Appendix G: Reading-Habits Questionnaire

Reading Habits Questionnaire

Children Selecting Books in a Library

Please check the items that apply to your child's reading habits and your household:

- ☐ My child reads books.
- ☐ My child reads other print materials (*comic books, magazines, newspapers, etc.*).
- ☐ My child reads on the computer (*e-books, Web sites, CD-ROM's, etc.*).
- ☐ We have books at home.
- ☐ We have other reading materials at home (*comic books, magazines, newspapers, etc.*).
- ☐ We have a computer at home.
- ☐ My child has his/her own books at home.
- ☐ My child has his/her own other reading materials at home (*comic books, magazines, newspapers, etc.*).
- ☐ My child has his/her own computer at home.

Please indicate how often you and your child participate in the following reading activities:

Every day	One or more times a week	One or more times a month	One or more times a year	Never	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I read to my child.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My child reads to me.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My child reads on his/her own.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My child reads for fun.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My child talks with me about what he/she reads.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My child brings home books from the public library.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My child brings home books from the school library.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We buy books for my child from the bookstore.

Comments about the items above:

What authors, books, or kinds of books does your child like?

What are your concerns about your child's reading?

What are your child's interests or hobbies?

Why do you and your child go to the library?

Appendix H: Information Form

Information Form (Part 2)

Children Selecting Books in a Library

Children in household

Name	Date of birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child
Name	Date of birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child
Name	Date of birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child
Name	Date of birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child

Adults in household

Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child
Primary language	Other language(s) (if any)	
Occupation	Hours worked per week	
Highest level of education completed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Some high school	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree
<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Some college	<input type="checkbox"/> Some graduate school	
Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child
Primary language	Other language(s) (if any)	
Occupation	Hours worked per week	
Highest level of education completed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Some high school	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree
<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Some college	<input type="checkbox"/> Some graduate school	
Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	Relationship to child
Primary language	Other language(s) (if any)	
Occupation	Hours worked per week	
Highest level of education completed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Some high school	<input type="checkbox"/> Associates degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree
<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Some college	<input type="checkbox"/> Some graduate school	

Availability

Which days of the week do you prefer to schedule our library visits?

☐ Weekdays

 ☐ Weekends

 ☐ No preference

Specific days? _____

 Specific days? _____

Which times of day do you prefer to schedule our library visits?

☐ Morning

 ☐ Afternoon

 ☐ Evening

 ☐ No preference
Are there any dates this summer that you and/or your child will be completely unavailable to schedule library visits? *(Due to travel, summer camps, etc.)*
☐ No
☐ Yes *Please provide dates:* _____
Free gift!I am most interested in gift card(s) from the following bookstore(s): *(Mark your Top 3.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Maryland Book Exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> Amazon.com
<input type="checkbox"/> College Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Barnes & Noble
<input type="checkbox"/> Vertigo Books	<input type="checkbox"/> Books-A-Million
<input type="checkbox"/> College Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Borders
<input type="checkbox"/> Karibu Books	<input type="checkbox"/> Waldenbooks
<input type="checkbox"/> Hyattsville, Bowie, & other locations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Politics & Prose	
<input type="checkbox"/> Washington DC	

I am most interested in gift card(s) from the following business(es): *(Mark your Top 3.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Burger King	<input type="checkbox"/> Applebee's	<input type="checkbox"/> IKEA
<input type="checkbox"/> McDonald's	<input type="checkbox"/> Bennigan's	<input type="checkbox"/> Target
<input type="checkbox"/> Wendy's	<input type="checkbox"/> Chevy's	<input type="checkbox"/> KB Toys
<input type="checkbox"/> Domino's Pizza	<input type="checkbox"/> Franklin's	<input type="checkbox"/> Radio Shack
<input type="checkbox"/> Papa John's Pizza	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Diner	<input type="checkbox"/> Toys "R" Us
<input type="checkbox"/> Pizza Hut	<input type="checkbox"/> Baskin-Robbins	<input type="checkbox"/> Other(s): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Chipotle	<input type="checkbox"/> Cold Stone Creamery	
<input type="checkbox"/> Subway	<input type="checkbox"/> TCBY	

Contact details

Address _____ Apt/Unit Number _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP code _____

Home phone _____ Work phone _____ Cell phone _____

Other phone number _____ Other phone number _____ Email address _____

Appendix I: Background Interview Questions

Reading habits

- How often do you read?
- When do you usually read?
- Where do you usually read?

Gratifications

- Why do you like to read?
- What puts you in the mood to read?
- How do you feel after you read a book?

Preferences

- What kinds of books or stories do you like best?
- What kinds of books or stories do you dislike?

Selection practices

- How do you usually choose a book?
- What is important to you when choosing a book?
- What kinds of things do you look for when choosing a book?
- What is the most important thing about choosing a book?

Appendix J: Library-Visit Interview Questions

Pre-selection

- What are you in the mood for today? What do you feel like reading?
- What kind(s) of books do you want to get?

Post-selection

- What do you like about this one? What made you choose this book? (Repeat for each book.)
- Why didn't you choose some of the other books you looked at?

Book return

- How much did you like this book? (Repeat for each book.)
- High-rated: What made you like this book? (Repeat for each book.)
- Low-rated: Why didn't you like this book? (Repeat for each book.)

Closing

- How do you know how to choose books?
- Where did you learn? Who taught you?

Appendix K: Reading Diary

Reading Diary

Children Selecting Books in a Library
Research Study - Summer 2006

Reading Diary Instructions

1. Please fill out the Diary Entry Form describing your child's reading habits and library use.
2. Use the blank pages to write brief notes when your child talks about books or other reading materials, mentions anything he or she experienced at the library, or talks about anything else related to visiting the library and reading books.

Record as much detail as you can, such as titles of books, names of authors, or word-for-word reporting of statements your child makes.
3. Make entries at least *once or twice a week*.
4. Please bring the completed diary to our scheduled library visits so we can use it to guide our interviews.
5. If you have any questions at any time, please call me! I will also check in with you once each week.

Kara Reuter
Doctoral Candidate
College of Information Studies
University of Maryland

cell: 301-332-5950
home: 301-935-0037
office: 301-405-2038
email: kreuter@umd.edu

Diary Entry Form

Date _____ Initials _____

Since my last diary entry,

- ☐ I read to my child.
- ☐ My child read to me.
- ☐ My child read on his/her own.
- ☐ My child read for fun.
- ☐ My child talked to me about something he/she read.
- ☐ My child brought home books from the public library.
- ☐ My child brought home books from the school library.
- ☐ We bought books for my child from the bookstore.

What kinds of books has your child been reading?

What other kinds of books has your child mentioned?

What other kinds of materials has your child been reading?

Has anything changed with your child's reading habits?

What other activities has your child been involved with?

Please make notes on anything your child talked about relating to reading books or other materials or visiting the library. Record as much detail as you can, such as titles of books, names of authors, dates, or word-for-word reporting of statements your child made.

Appendix L: IRB Application Approval



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 1, 2006

2100 Lee Building
College Park, Maryland 20742-5121
301.405.4212 TEL 301.314.1475 FAX
irb@deans.umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

MEMORANDUM

Application Approval Notification

To: Dr. M. Delia Neuman
Ms. Kara Reuter
College of Information Studies

From: Roslyn Edson, M.S., CIP *RES*
IRB Manager
University of Maryland, College Park

Re: IRB Number 06-0196
Project Title: "Children Selecting Books in a Library: Extending a
Model of Information Behavior to a Recreational Setting"

Approval Date: April 28, 2006

Expiration Date: April 28, 2007

Type of Application: New Project

Type of Research: Nonexempt

**Type of Review
For Application:** Expedited

The University of Maryland, College Park Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved your IRB application. The research was approved in accordance with 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, and the University's IRB policies and procedures. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Recruitment/Consent: For research requiring written informed consent, the IRB-approved and stamped informed consent document is enclosed. The IRB approval expiration date has been stamped on the informed consent document. Please keep copies of the consent forms used for this research for three years after the completion of the research.

Continuing Review: If you intend to continue to collect data from human subjects or to analyze private, identifiable data collected from human subjects, after the expiration date for this approval (indicated above), you must submit a renewal application to the IRB Office at least 30 days before the approval expiration date.

Modifications: Any changes to the approved protocol must be approved by the IRB before the change is implemented, except when a change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. If you would like to modify the approved protocol, please submit an addendum request to the IRB Office. The instructions for submitting a request are posted on the IRB web site

at: http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/irb_Addendum%20Protocol.htm.

(continued)

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks: You must promptly report any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others to the IRB Manager at 301-405-0678 or redson@umresearch.umd.edu.

Student Researchers: Unless otherwise requested, this IRB approval document was sent to the Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should pass on the approval document or a copy to the student researchers. This IRB approval document may be a requirement for student researchers applying for graduation. The IRB may not be able to provide copies of the approval documents if several years have passed since the date of the original approval.

Additional Information: Please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 if you have any IRB-related questions or concerns.



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 26, 2006

2100 Lee Building
College Park, Maryland 20742-5121
301.405.4212 TEL 301.314.1475 FAX
irb@deans.umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

MEMORANDUM

Addendum Approval Notification

To: Dr. M. Delia Neuman
Ms. Kara Reuter
College of Information Studies

From: Roslyn Edson, M.S., CIP, *ROE*
IRB Manager
University of Maryland, College Park

Re: **IRB NUMBER:** 06-0196
PROJECT TITLE: "Children Selecting Books in a Library:
Extending a Model of Information Behavior to a Recreational
Setting"

**Approval Date Of
Addendum:** May 25, 2006

**Expiration Date of
IRB Project Approval:** April 28, 2007

Application Type: Addendum/Modification; *Approval of request, submitted to the IRB
Office on 15 May 2006, to revise the permission letters to reflect
changes concerning the gifts that participants will receive and the
estimated time commitment.*

**Type of Review of
Addendum:** Expedited

Type of Research: Non-exempt

The University of Maryland, College Park Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office approved your IRB application. The research was approved in accordance with the University's IRB policies and procedures and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Recruitment/Consent: For research requiring written informed consent, the IRB-approved and stamped informed consent document is enclosed. The IRB approval expiration date has been stamped on the informed consent document. Please keep copies of the consent forms used for this research for three years after the completion of the research.

Continuing Review: If you want to continue to collect data from human subjects or to analyze private, identifiable data collected from human subjects, after the expiration date for this approval (indicated above), you must submit a renewal application to the IRB Office at least 30 days before the approval expiration date.

(Continued)

Modifications: Any changes to the approved protocol must be approved by the IRB before the change is implemented, except when a change is necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the subjects. If you would like to modify an approved protocol, please submit an addendum request to the IRB Office. The instructions for submitting an addendum are posted at: http://www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB/irb_Addendum%20Protocol.htm

Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks: You must promptly report any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others to the IRB Manager at 301-405-0678 or redson@umresearch.umd.edu.

Student Researchers: Unless otherwise requested, this IRB approval document was sent to the Principal Investigator (PI). The PI should pass on the approval document or a copy to the student researchers. This IRB approval document may be a requirement for student researchers applying for graduation. The IRB may not be able to provide copies of the approval documents if several years have passed since the date of the original approval.

Additional Information: Please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 if you have any IRB-related questions or concerns.

Appendix M: Coding scheme

A complete overview of the coding scheme, including both book-selection actions and book-selection factors is presented here. Actions and factors are organized into facets and ordered by frequency within each facet.

Book-selection actions, organized into facets

<i>Shelf interaction</i>	half pull	<i>Forethought</i>	seek known item
	finger books		consider quota
	grab impulsively	<i>Parental involvement</i>	co-browsing
	access display book		proxy selection
	observe from distance		selection guidance
	rummage through books		permission granting
<i>External examination</i>	series walk	<i>Library resources</i>	consult librarian
	examine front cover		access library catalog
	read back cover		refer to shelf labels
	read title	<i>Book sorting</i>	
<i>Internal examination</i>	compare books		
	leaf through pages		
	fan pages		
	read closely		
	look inside		
	examine front matter		
	look at pictures		
	count chapters		
	half pull		

Book-selection factors, organized into facets

<i>Contents</i>	topic-theme	<i>Surface features</i>	front cover	<i>Novelty</i>	never read
	illustrations		appearance-physicality		variety
	plot-story		tagline		new
	narrative style		award		random
	characters				unusualness
	language		series		
	gender		previous experience		mystery
	level of violence		series number		chapter book
	setting		media connection		audiobook
	table of contents		book connection		comics-graphic novel
<i>Reading experience</i>	front matter	<i>Familiarity</i>	reputation	<i>Format-genre</i>	nonfiction
	back matter		known title		fiction
			re-read		fantasy
	funny-silly				
	exciting-adventure		personal connection		
	informative		recommendation		
	scary		bonding		limit
	boring				delayed gratification
	interactive		title		multiple copies
	fun		summary		prioritize
<i>Gestalt judgment</i>	creepy-freaky	<i>Basic metadata</i>	author	<i>Pragmatic considerations</i>	monitoring
	suspenseful				availability
	sad				
	gross		reading level		proxy
	realistic		age appropriateness		summer reading program
			length		obligation
	liking		text size-density		school reading list
	good		understandability		book club
	interesting				
	cool-awesome				
	weird				
	stupid-dumb-dorky				
<i>Uncertainty</i>		<i>Social ties</i>		<i>Imposition</i>	

Appendix N: Code definitions

Book-selection actions

Book-selection actions are presented by facet according to prominence. Within each facet, the actions are also organized by prominence, with the most widely and frequently performed actions listed first. Each facet and action includes a brief definition.

<i>Facet</i> action	Definition
<i>Shelf interaction</i>	<i>Actions that involve a child interacting with books as they remain on the library shelves.</i>
half pull	Partial removal of a book from the shelf preserving its location among the other books, generally to examine the cover.
finger books	Physical contact with books that involves simple touching or other minimal handling.
grab impulsively	Sudden removal of a book from the shelf with no preliminary examination or consideration.
access display book	Interaction with a book on display or lying out apart from the other books on the shelves.
observe from distance	Consideration of books in a particular area of the shelf at a distance, with no physical interaction.
rummage through books	Hasty, somewhat rough examination of several books in turn.
series walk	Interaction with a collection of books in a single series, characterized by sequential examination of books one by one.
<i>External examination</i>	<i>Actions that involve a child fully removing a book from the shelf to refer to the outside.</i>
examine front cover	Close examination of a book's front cover.
read back cover	Lengthy, close examination of a book's back cover.
read title	Reading aloud of a book's title.
compare books	Holding more than one book side by side, as if to decide between them.
<i>Internal examination</i>	<i>Actions that involve a child opening a book to refer to the inside.</i>
leaf through pages	Slowly turning a book's pages and examining its contents in an orderly, deliberate fashion.
fan pages	Rapid perusal of a book's pages without stopping to examine its contents, using the thumb as if to fan pages.
read closely	Lengthy, close examination of a book's contents (for text-heavy books).

<i>Facet</i> action	Definition
look inside	Opening a book and stopping in one or two spots to examine its contents.
examine front matter	Lengthy examination of a book's contents, limited to the first few pages.
look at pictures	Lengthy, close examination of a book's contents (for heavily illustrated books).
count chapters	Examination of a book to determine the number of chapters it contains.
<i>Forethought</i>	<i>Actions that indicate forethought or planning in the process of selecting books.</i>
seek known item	Expression of intention to seek a particular title or series.
consider quota	Acknowledgment of a pre-determined quota issued by a parent on the number of books the child is permitted to borrow.
<i>Parental involvement</i>	<i>Actions that demonstrate the involvement the parent in the selection process.</i>
co-browsing	Parent and child cooperatively browse and/or discuss books.
proxy selection	Parent selects book for child independently without the input of the child.
selection guidance	Parent provides guidance on selection to child.
permission granting	Child seeks permission of parent to select book.
<i>Library resources</i>	<i>Actions in which the child uses access tools offered by the library.</i>
consult librarian	Contact with a librarian for assistance in selecting books.
access library catalog	Use of the computer to access the library's OPAC to search for particular books.
refer to shelf labels	Use of labels on the shelf indicating author last name (in fiction) or Dewey Decimal Number (in nonfiction).
<i>Book sorting</i>	Interaction with a collection of books selected in order to make final decisions about which books to borrow, often involving sorting books into "yes" and "no" piles.

Book-selection factors

Book-selection factors are presented by facet according to prominence. Within each facet, the factors are also organized by prominence, with the most widely and frequently mentioned factors listed first. Each facet and factor includes a brief definition; example quotes from participants are also given to further illustrate each factor.

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
<i>Contents</i>	<i>Factors related to the content matter of a book.</i>	
topic-theme	Reference to a book's broad topic (in nonfiction) or theme (in fiction).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I like drawing. I was looking for what kind of stuff you could draw." [Bryce] ▪ "I'm in the mood for ... some ... riddle books." [Demario] ▪ "You know, like, fashion and from the pictures in the background, it looked interesting. And I like music and, so, I picked it." [Eva] ▪ "It has mummies." [Hannah] ▪ "I really like dragons. It's like my favorite creatures." [Jeanette] ▪ "It had cool things about boats." [Joel] ▪ "I like ... books about Britain and England." [Mitchell] ▪ "I'm always asking my mom, 'Can I get a cooking book? Can I get a cooking book?'" [Stella] ▪ "Because I like crabs and I wanna learn about them more." [Susanna]
illustrations	Reference to a book's illustrations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I do like this book ... because it's like a little 3D in the front." [Acton] ▪ "I liked how they drew it." [Bryce] ▪ "Because ... I love Amelia and it shows ... pictures of ... superstitions and everything." [Stella] ▪ "It showed a couple of pictures inside of a train." [Joel]
plot-story	Reference to a book's plot or story (in fiction).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "It was just a good story." [Jason] ▪ "[I liked] that it taught her a lesson." [Eva] ▪ "It was about this girl, she looks like she's spoiled and ... she has a grandma and that's all I read." [Keisha] ▪ "It sort of inspired me a bit. It ... was about a guy who really cared about something and it was like shooting for your star." [Lily] ▪ "It's Amelia again and it's probably about her ... pretending that she takes command, like, on a spaceship or wherever she wants." [Stella]

Facet factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
narrative style	Reference to a book's narrative style.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "It was just that [the] rhymes ... made it a lot easier, so I could ... get past it faster." [Bobby] ▪ "[I was looking to] see if the book makes sense and has a flow." [Jeanette] ▪ "One reason I chose it ... I like books that are wrote in either journals or letters—they're some of my favorites." [Lily]
characters	Reference to character(s) within a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "He looks like a misfit." [Jonah] ▪ "I wanted to see ... what the teachers were, 'cause these are teachers and people who work at the school." [Lily] ▪ "I'm looking at, like, who the characters are." [Mitchell] ▪ "I really like Ramona, she's ... a fun, energetic girl." [Stella]
language	Reference to the language of a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "But it shows you the Chinese as well. It's really awesome!" [Mitchell] ▪ "I like reading stuff in Spanish, so, I really liked it." [Mitchell]
gender	Reference to a book's perceived gendered content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "It's more about the girl. I want something only more with a boy in it." [Jason] ▪ "'Cause it wasn't so much all about girls and stuff." [Joel] ▪ "These were the only ones left, except the girl ones." [Jonah]
level of violence	Reference to a book's level of violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "It was kind of violent inside." [Erin] ▪ "It looked like maybe someone was killing another person." [Mitchell]
setting	Reference to a book's setting, either place or time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Because this one's in the winter time." [Acton] ▪ "I like this one because you don't see too many ... history mysteries, you usually see ones in the present." [Erin] ▪ "I liked it because it kinda tells you what colonial life would be like." [Erin]
table of contents	Reference to a book's table of contents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I would ... go to the section where it has ... the names of the chapters and what page they're on and I would look at the chapters and see which name that I like and then I would pick it out." [Hannah] ▪ "And then ... I read the chapters, you know, like the sections that teach you the different things you learn about how to make." [Keisha]
front matter	Reference to a book's front matter, often including table of contents or title page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I read the beginning. I read, um, the [prologue]." [Jeanette] ▪ "I read ... the first page ... but it's not a chapter ... it's not, like, the first page, it's ... the first page that has writing on it." [Stella]

Facet factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
back matter	Reference to a book's back matter, including information about the author and other content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "They have all kinds of cool stuff in the back. Like the advertisements, 'King Arthur's Olde Armor Shoppe. Tom Thumb Thumbscrews. Jack's Wagon Garage. Smilin' Hal's Off-campus Eatery.'" [Erin] ▪ "I'm seeing the back page, if it tells a bit about the author." [Lily] ▪ "Sometimes I read the end section" [Stella]
Reading experience	<i>Factors that characterize the anticipated or actual reading experience provided by a book.</i>	
funny-silly	Characterization of a book as funny or silly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I've read Garfield comics before and they're really silly." [Mitchell] ▪ "It's really funny... It's ... about this man and ... he goes on all these funny little adventures." [Mitchell] ▪ "I thought it would be good, maybe a little funny." [Maya] ▪ "I liked it because ... it was kinda scary and funny." [Sangita] ▪ "I read the back and it, it's really funny." [Stella]
exciting-adventure	Characterization of a book as exciting or full of adventure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "This one was more exciting." [Hannah] ▪ "It sounds very adventurous and I like adventure." [Jeanette] ▪ "It had a lot more action and a lot more adventure." [Jonah] ▪ "There was not very much adventure, there was a little bit, there was some adventure, but not very much." [Josef] ▪ "I didn't think it was exactly that exciting." [Stella]
informative	Characterization of a book as informative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I never got a strike in bowling and I wanna learn how to get a strike." [Demario] ▪ "We also are learning [in camp] about the land and physical habitat and stuff like that so these are gonna help us too." [Erin] ▪ "It was great. I learned a lot." [Hugo] ▪ "In the fourth grade we're gonna learn a lot about the history of Maryland and Washington DC and so I wanted to get this book and ... sort of get ready for fourth grade." [Stella] ▪ "Because I like crabs and I wanna learn about them more." [Susanna]
scary	Characterization of a book as scary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I like reading books about scary monsters." [Hannah] ▪ "I was in the mood for a scary book." [Keisha] ▪ "I hate scary books." [Lily] ▪ "I like scary things." [Maya] ▪ "I liked it ... because it was kinda scary." [Sangita]

Facet factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
boring	Characterization of a book as boring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The ones for my reading level are boring like this one.” [Bobby] ▪ “I didn’t choose it ‘cause, um, I thought they’d be boring.” [Demario] ▪ “It got me bored and sleepy.” [Eva] ▪ “It was very boring ... ‘cause they weren’t telling you about the adventures ... they were just talking, kind of.” [Jeanette] ▪ “It looked boring and stuff and it kinda looks for grown-ups.” [Joel]
interactive	Appreciation of a book’s interactive experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “You get to, like, pick your own page.” [Acton] ▪ “They have like flip-o-ramas in every chapter.” [Hugo] ▪ “Encyclopedia Brown ... gave you a riddle and you had to figure out what the clue was and then you would have to solve the riddle, ‘cause at the end they would always ask you a question, so it would say, like, what was the clue. And you would have to answer what the clue was and then when you turned to the back, you could see what the answer is.” [Jeanette] ▪ “I’ve looked at this one before. I like that ... you can make goo.” [Keisha]
fun	Characterization of a book as fun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It didn’t look fun.” [Demario] ▪ “I choose this one because ... it might be more funner than the other books.” [Hugo] ▪ “It was really fun to read.” [Lily]
creepy-freaky	Characterization of a book as creepy or freaky.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I like world records and stuff ‘cause they’re so creepy.” [Bobby] ▪ “I like books that are, like, scary and creepy.” [Demario] ▪ “I just kinda saw that it was freaky.” [Hannah] ▪ “I was in the mood for a scary book. I don’t think this one will be very scary, but I think it’ll be kinda weird.” [Keisha]
suspenseful	Characterization of a book as suspenseful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Well, I really, really, really, really, really like it because it was a lot of suspense in it, like, ‘Oh my gosh!’” [Erin] ▪ “Well, I really, really, really, really, really like it because it was a lot of suspense in it.” [Erin]
sad	Characterization of a book as sad.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s sort of sad at the end.” [Mitchell] ▪ “And this one [<i>When a Pet Dies</i> by Fred Rogers] I didn’t even want to get, ‘cause I didn’t even want to know what would happen when my, when my doggie died.” [Susanna]
gross	Characterization of a book as gross.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The one I was looking at was gross, it was the insides of your body... Probably when I was looking at it, I would lose my appetite.” [Joel]

Facet factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
realistic	Characterization of a book as realistic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s very exciting, but it’s very ... how should I say this ... realistic at the same time.” [Jeanette]
Gestalt judgment <i>Factors that indicate a judgment of the overall character or impression of a book.</i>		
liking	Indication of overall liking for a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I just like the books.” [Acton] ▪ “Cause the other ones I didn’t like a lot.” [Bryce] ▪ “I read through it a little bit and I liked it.” [Eva] ▪ “I didn’t really want it because, maybe it was just ... I didn’t like it.” [Hannah] ▪ “I wasn’t sure that I liked those books that much.” [Maya]
good	General characterization of a book as good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I just read it and it was good.” [Bryce] ▪ “It just didn’t look very good.” [Harper] ▪ “This is pretty much the only one I saw ... that looked good.” [Jonah] ▪ “All the Amelia books to me teach a lesson and are really exciting and are really good.” [Lily] ▪ “I thought, like, maybe this one would be sort of good.” [Maya] ▪ “I thought that it was a good book.” [Stella]
interesting	General characterization of a book as interesting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I usually pick out books, like, that are interesting to me.” [Erin] ▪ “Most of them were just ... if the cover was interesting.” [Eva] ▪ “When I saw the pictures ... it looked interesting.” [Hugo] ▪ “They didn’t sound interesting and, well, they didn’t hook me on.” [Josef] ▪ “I want ... more interesting books than something I would already have at home.” [Lily] ▪ “I like these books because these, like, sounded interesting.” [Sangita]
cool-awesome	General characterization of a book as cool or awesome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It ... just had kinda cool stories.” [Bobby] ▪ “It just looks cool and stuff.” [Joel] ▪ “I look at what looks cool and if ... the front is just cool and ... what I’m gonna read ... doesn’t seem cool to me, then I’ll look at the other ... books.” [Keisha] ▪ “It’s really awesome!” [Mitchell] ▪ “It just looks like it’s really cool because, like, it shows a black horse riding in the night and that’s cool.” [Stella]
weird	General characterization of a book as weird.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Because it look a little bit weird looking.” [Acton] ▪ “It’s kind of strange.” [Bobby]
stupid-dumb-dorky	General characterization of a book as worthless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “They were stupid.” [Bryce] ▪ “I didn’t like the water monster and all those, and all that dorky things.” [Jonah] ▪ “They looked kind of dumb.” [Joel]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
<i>Surface features</i>	<i>Factors related to the external, surface features of books.</i>	
front cover	Reference to an illustration or other characteristic of the front cover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Most of them were just ... if the cover was interesting.” [Eva] ▪ “They just kinda looked boring on the cover.” [Hannah] ▪ “I get ... a group ... and then ... I look at the front and I see ... what looks cool.” [Keisha] ▪ “Sometimes if you look at the front cover, if it’s like a drawing, you can sort of tell [what the book is about] by the details in the picture.” [Lily] ▪ “I thought ... the front cover ... the picture looked like I might like it.” [Maya] ▪ “Because ... it looks good from the cover.” [Stella]
appearance-physicality	Reference to the overall appearance or physical features of a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “This one stands out. It’s bigger.” [Bryce] ▪ “Only it’s just white.” [Bryce] ▪ “Really my eye sort of came across when I saw this spine.” [Lily] ▪ “In the books it had [the word] cold [written] like that; it’s ... blue and it has ... ice on it.” [Maya] ▪ “I like how the title is written in different fonts and different kinds of letters.” [Stella]
tagline	Reference to a tagline appearing on a book’s cover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “‘Have you read your Underpants today?’ See, it says on the back.” [Acton] ▪ “I just think it looks funny: ‘The most stubborn goat in town.’ So I wanted to read it.” [Stella]
award	Reference to the award seal appearing on a book’s cover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “My mom pointed out this [Newbery Honor Medal].” [Jason] ▪ “I saw this ... [Christopher Award] medal.” [Susanna]
<i>Familiarity</i>	<i>Factors that indicate familiarity with a book.</i>	
series	Reference to a particular series.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “This one is a Great Illustrated Classic.” [Jeanette] ▪ “If I find another book that I like, like another Third Grade Detectives, that I didn’t read yet.” [Josef] ▪ “I chose these because they’re part of the long series that I really, really like.” [Mitchell] ▪ “I’ve read other books in the Geronimo Stilton series.” [Maya] ▪ “I like Nancy Drew books.” [Sangita]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
previous experience	Indication of a previous direct experience with a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I saw some of these at Target.” [Acton] ▪ “I’ve had my eyes on that book, like, since I went to Bethany Beach.” [Bobby] ▪ “We read it in our read aloud in school, so I didn’t chose [sic] it.” [Jason] ▪ “I actually already started reading these books when I was in school and I found it for ... a free time book.” [Jeanette] ▪ “Because I already read, well, I’d already seen them and I was, like, ‘Maybe I should get this,’ but then, I was, like, ‘No, no I don’t want to.’” [Keisha] ▪ “My friend let me borrow it and ... I hadn’t finished it when I was borrowing it.” [Mitchell]
series number	Reference to a particular item within a series.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “And if there’s a four [in the Akiko series], and if there’s a fifth one, we might get it.” [Bobby] ▪ “[It’s the] smallest in the series. It’s only number two!” [Erin] ▪ “I’m looking for special edition four and #28.” [Josef] ▪ “That’s the only one in the order that I’ve read that I haven’t read.” [Keisha]
media connection	Reference to a television show, movie, or other form of media in connection with a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Well, I watched the Saddle Club on TV and I want ... to read the books and I noticed some were different people. These are the people on TV and she’s from another.” [Eva] ▪ “I saw the movie and I liked it a little because I already saw it, so it wasn’t that really funny.” [Sangita] ▪ “I looked at some ... of the That’s So Raven books, but they didn’t look that good, ‘cause I don’t really like reading books that are based on TV shows. I like just reading books that are, like, they’re sort of made up, not exactly based on TV shows.” [Stella]
book connection	Reference to another book in connection with a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s about, it’s kinda like Harry Potter, but they’re younger and it’s not as long.” [Erin] ▪ “It’s just like Robin Hood and I’ve read Robin Hood and I thought that was a very good book and so I decided, ‘Well, I’ll, I’ll give this one a try then, too.’” [Jeanette] ▪ “It had, like, swords and it looked like there would be a lot of dueling like the Three Musketeers.” [Mitchell]
reputation	Indication of a prior awareness of a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I also saw this book in the catalog and ... a little description about it and I thought it would be interesting.” [Erin] ▪ “This one... I’ve been hearing about it, about ten times a day.” [Jonah] ▪ “I’ve heard about this one and I wanted to see it.” [Maya]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
known title	Reference to a particular title.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “[I’m looking for <i>Night of the</i>] <i>Ninjas</i>, if they have <i>Ninjas</i>.” [Keisha] ▪ “I have to have that one, [<i>Donavan’s Word Jar</i>].” [Lily] ▪ “[I’m looking for] <i>Flyte</i> [from the] Septimus Heap [series].” [Mitchell]
re-read	Indication of an interest in re-reading a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I read some of these, but I like to read again.” [Acton] ▪ “I forget, I think [I read it], but it was really good, so I wanna read it again.” [Bryce] ▪ “I took a book like this out of the library, this exact book out of the library last year, but I never got to do anything in there. I saw it and I thought I would like to try it again.” [Erin]
<i>Social ties</i> <i>Factors surrounding the social aspects of a book.</i>		
personal connection	Indication of a personal connection to a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I chose that one because ... I play baseball.” [Demario] ▪ “I come from Ireland, most of my family does, and I don’t know too much about Ireland.” [Erin] ▪ “I liked ... the tigers, because in the ... Chinese calendar ... I’m a tiger.” [Hugo] ▪ “It’s about fun things to do when you’re in the car, [for when] we go ... to Myrtle Beach—that’s the most boring of boring car rides.” [Lily] ▪ “I wanted to get this ‘cause ... I like going to Florida and everything and I wanted to learn more about it. Maybe this summer I might go in August with my grandma and my mom and my sister.” [Stella] ▪ “They were about acting and I want to be an actor when I grow up.” [Susanna]
recommendation	Reference to a recommendation of a book from friends or family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I liked it because ... my friend ... read it and she said it was really good.” [Erin] ▪ “My mom said it was a really good book.” [Joel] ▪ “My friend told me there was like a series of the books, so I wondered ... if there were any books like ... that.” [Sangita]
bonding	Indication of an interest in a book to build connections with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I picked it because I like monkeys and I hope I can scare my baby brother with them.” [Demario] ▪ “I got these two for ... my sister.” [Hugo] ▪ “I asked [my friend] if she wanted to learn about magic and she said yes and so we both took that one.” [Keisha] ▪ “Because my dad and I go through books like this and read.” [Mitchell]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
Basic metadata	<i>Factors surrounding the basic metadata identifying and describing books, commonly found in catalog records.</i>	
title	Reference to a book's title.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I thought that one would be interesting 'cause it's called <i>The Magic City</i>." [Erin] ▪ "I just like the name of the ... story." [Eva] ▪ "It was actually ... the title [that] attracted me." [Jeanette] ▪ "I just wanted to work with paper, so <i>Paper Folding Fun</i>, 'paper' and 'fun' make me, like, take it out." [Keisha] ▪ "<i>Mr. Hynde Is Out of His Mind</i>—'out of his mind'—which sort of sounded funny." [Lily]
summary-blurb	Reference to the back-of-the-book summary or the jacket blurb.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I read this inside cover and it sounded like she learned a lot of values from this dragon she meets, that she befriends." [Jeanette] ▪ "The back cover ... shows kind of a little bit of information that you might not see on the table of contents." [Keisha] ▪ "Sometimes I'll look at the backs where it ... has the thing that tells, sort of like an outline." [Mitchell] ▪ "I read the back and ... it's really funny, 'cause ... they have this huge fight and they get into a lot of trouble." [Stella] ▪ "This one I read a little bit at the back and I decided, okay, I'll take it." [Sangita]
author	Reference to the author's name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I love Shel! I tried reading his books, never could finish them, and, I just love poetry, so, poetry and Shel—good match!" [Lily] ▪ "Well, um, Dr. Seuss, like, probably my favorite author." [Hugo]
Difficulty	<i>Factors that characterize the perceived or actual difficulty of a book.</i>	
reading level	Reference to a book's reading level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I didn't pick it 'cause it seemed sort of difficult." [Demario] ▪ "Some were just ... too hard." [Hugo] ▪ "I read a little bit of this one and I discovered it doesn't have big words that I don't know what it means. It keeps it quite [simple]." [Jeanette] ▪ "Because they were for beginner readers and, like, just, um, 'The bear went up. The bear went down.' [snore sound] I'd fall asleep from those." [Josef] ▪ "I think it's a little bit too easy for me." [Mitchell] ▪ "It was too easy. I could read every word in just a second." [Susanna]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
age appropriateness	Reference to the age group for which a book is intended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s for smaller kids, like five and unders.” [Josef] ▪ “They’re not as adult-like and so they make more sense to kids.” [Jeanette] ▪ “Some of them ... might be, like, ... a little too adult comics, which aren’t that funny. And they’re sort of ... teenager-like comics.” [Mitchell] ▪ “I think it’s more for like an older kid to read, ‘cause I didn’t exactly understand what the book was exactly about.” [Stella] ▪ “Because it was ... for a baby.” [Susanna]
length	Reference to the number of pages or length of a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Some of them has ... 100 [jokes] and I can’t really read that many.” [Demario] ▪ “Some of them ... were, like, a little too long.” [Hugo] ▪ “I picked it because it’s required and really short.” [Lily] ▪ “It has to have ... as many pages that I can read.” [Maya]
text size-density	Reference to the size of the text or the amount of text on a book’s pages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Because they had so many words.” [Hannah] ▪ “I saw the ... tiny words and I can’t ... really see them.” [Hugo] ▪ “The words were kinda too small.” [Jason] ▪ “I read a few pages and it’s nice and big print, as you can see.” [Jeanette] ▪ “I didn’t like it... It has really little words.” [Keisha]
understandability	Reference to the ability to understand a book’s content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I didn’t understand the first part, because, usually when I read for delight, I read so quickly, really, I don’t understand, but I still enjoy. I had to read it over and I finally understand and I really like it.” [Lily] ▪ “The drawings were kind of complicated and I really could not follow along.” [Susanna]
<i>Novelty</i>	<i>Factors that indicate novelty of a book.</i>	
never read	Indication of no prior experience with a book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I haven’t had some of these books.” [Acton] ▪ “I seen about every other one, but not this one yet.” [Jonah] ▪ “I chose this one because I’ve never read it.” [Sangita]
variety	Indication of an interest in a variety or a change of pace in selected materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Because I wanted to get something different.” [Bryce] ▪ “‘Cause I’d read Encyclopedia Brown two times and I was just like, ‘I need a new one!’” [Jeanette] ▪ “There are lots of other books that I wanna explore.” [Lily]
new	Reference to a newly published book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I seen about every other one, but not this one yet.” [Jonah] ▪ “I scored two new ones. I love new books!” [Lily]

Facet factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
random	Indication of a book selected using a randomizing strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I told mommy to tell me when to stop and ... I was doing this [waving arm] and I stopped on a new section that I’ve never been before.” [Lily] ▪ “I just took two off the shelf just by chance.” [Mitchell]
unusualness	Indication that a book stands out from others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Not a lot of the books over there were just plain white.” [Bryce]
Format-genre	<i>Factors that characterize the overall format or genre of books, using commonly accepted and understood terminology.</i>	
mystery	Reference to the mystery genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I’ve been in the mood for mysteries.” [Erin] ▪ “I might get ... two more mysteries.” [Jeanette] ▪ “[I’ll] probably get some mystery books, too.” [Jonah] ▪ “I actually like Cam Jansen, ‘cause I like mysteries.” [Lily] ▪ “Some of these are like mystery stories I wanted to find out what will happen.” [Sangita]
chapter book	Reference to the chapter book format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “It’s a chapter [book] and ... I like chapter books.” [Acton] ▪ “I’m in the mood for ... chapter books.” [Demario]
audiobook	Reference to the audiobook format.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I was going to get some books on tape, too.” [Jonah] ▪ “I think maybe books on tape.” [Mitchell]
comics-graphic novel	Reference to the comic or graphic novel genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “This one was really nice because it was comics fused with facts.” [Jonah] ▪ “It was a graphic novel.” [Jonah] ▪ “[I’ll] probably get some ... graphic novels.” [Jonah] ▪ “I think I’d like to look for comics. I just think I feel like comics today.” [Mitchell]
nonfiction	Reference to the nonfiction genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I might go back and look at some nonfiction books.” [Stella]
fiction	Reference to the fiction genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I’m in [the mood] for ... a whole bunch of fiction books!” [Erin]
fantasy	Reference to the fantasy genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “From just the ... title of the series ... your brain knows it’s just fantasy right away.” [Erin]
Pragmatic considerations	<i>Factors describing pragmatic considerations, especially issues related to the process of using the library.</i>	
limit	Acknowledgment of a self-imposed limit on the number of books selected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I just didn’t have time for it.” [Acton] ▪ “I picked so much books and I had two Cam Jam’s and they were both chapters, I didn’t think I’d be able to finish both of them at the same time.” [Demario] ▪ “I just limited myself and so the book I thought I wouldn’t get to read, I’d just put it back.” [Jeanette] ▪ “I wasn’t sure I could read all of them.” [Maya] ▪ “I thought four books would be enough.” [Sangita]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
delayed gratification	Indication of an interest in a book for a later visit to the library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I can probably get it out next time, if I want, if I still wanted to read it.” [Jeanette] ▪ “I had too many books, I thought I shouldn’t get both of these, maybe for a different time.” [Maya] ▪ “They sounded good, but I didn’t take them because these sounded more interesting and I knew that we were coming back next week, so I picked only a few books out.” [Sangita] ▪ “Some of them ... they looked really good, but I didn’t really wanna get ‘em today. I might get ‘em a different day.” [Stella]
multiple copies	Indication of a deliberate choice to select a book with multiple copies on the shelf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “There were also a few of these, so I wouldn’t be taking just the only one.” [Jeanette] ▪ “They had doubles of all of these. Just because ... I usually like to make sure that other people can read them as well.” [Mitchell]
prioritize	Acknowledgment of a hierarchy of interests that permits prioritization of selection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I had specific ones that I probably wanted more.” [Lily] ▪ “I liked it, but I saw ... some other books that I wanted.” [Stella]
monitoring	Acknowledgment of a strategy monitoring the library’s collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Last time I went here ... I was looking at these books, but I didn’t check one out for some strange reason.” [Erin] ▪ “I saw the Anne of Avonlea and Anne of Green Gables, so I was like, ‘Oh, I see that now. They have that.’” [Jeanette]
availability	Reference to a book’s availability on the shelves of the library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “The ones that I haven’t read were checked out.” [Josef]
<i>Uncertainty</i>	A vague or open response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I don’t know what I liked about it.” [Bobby] ▪ “I don’t really know! Usually I just choose them randomly out of interest.” [Erin] ▪ “I just didn’t want to take it.” [Jason] ▪ “I don’t know, it was just, it didn’t sound good.” [Joel] ▪ “Usually, I don’t have anything planned. I just go where the wind blows me to.” [Lily] ▪ “I don’t know, really, when I come to the library what I’m gonna pick.” [Sangita]
<i>Imposition</i>	<i>Factors that are externally imposed.</i>	
proxy	Indication that a book was chosen on behalf of the child without any input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “She kinda picked it.” [Jason] ▪ “My mom chose it for me, actually.” [Jonah] ▪ “I didn’t choose it, she chose it.” [Josef] ▪ “My mom just wanted me to read this.” [Stella]

<i>Facet</i> factor	Definition	Example quote(s)
summer reading program	Indication that a book was chosen to fulfill requirements of the library's summer reading program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "I had to pick a book for my summer reading." [Demario] ▪ "I just picked out one book [because of the] Clue into Reading thing." [Jonah] ▪ "Because of the mystery thing, I wanna find that for the [summer] reading thing." [Lily] ▪ "Because they're mystery books and ... my summer reading thing is about mysteries." [Susanna]
obligation	Indication that a book was chosen out of some obligation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "My mom ... showed me the series, so I guess I had to pick out one." [Jeanette] ▪ "My mom said to." [Susanna]
school reading list	Indication that a book was chosen from a required school reading list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "These are two of the books I have to read for summer reading [from school]." [Josef] ▪ "I picked it because it's required [at school]." [Lily]
book club	Indication that a book was chosen as part of participation in a book club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "[It's for] this book club ... that I'm doing." [Lily]

Appendix O: Member Check Reports



WHEN I COME TO THE LIBRARY, I DON'T USUALLY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I WANT.



BUT, BEFORE I START, I USUALLY THINK ABOUT WHAT KINDS OF BOOKS I MIGHT WANT TO LOOK FOR AND HOW MANY I HAVE TIME TO READ.

I'M PRETTY CAREFUL WHEN I CHOOSE BOOKS. THERE ARE A BUNCH OF THINGS I THINK ABOUT.



FIRST, I SPEND A LOT OF TIME JUST LOOKING AT ALL THE BOOKS ON THE SHELVES...

NEXT, IF I SEE A BOOK I LIKE, I TAKE IT DOWN TO SEE THE TITLE AND READ THE BACK...

AND SOMETIMES I MIGHT LOOK INSIDE THE BOOK AND READ A LITTLE BIT OF IT.

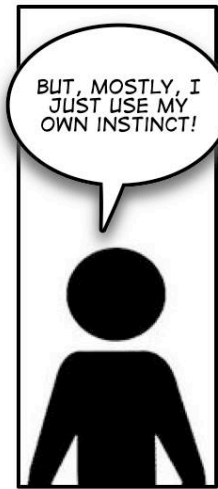
USUALLY, AT THE LIBRARY I CHOOSE BOOKS BY MYSELF.



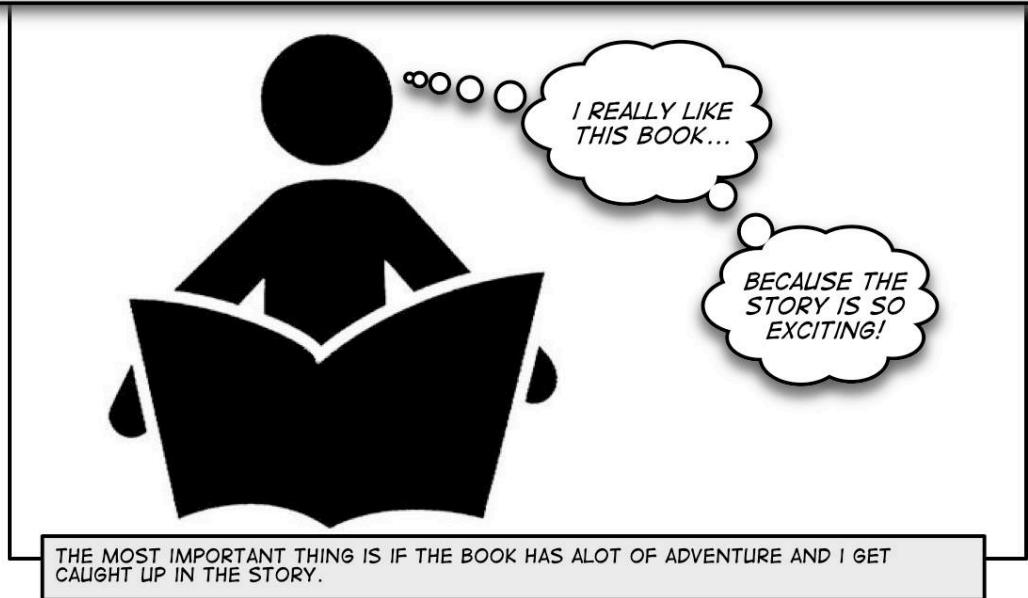
BUT, SOMETIMES MY MOM CHOOSES BOOKS FOR ME...



AND SOMETIMES I ASK THE LIBRARIAN FOR HELP FINDING A BOOK I WANT.

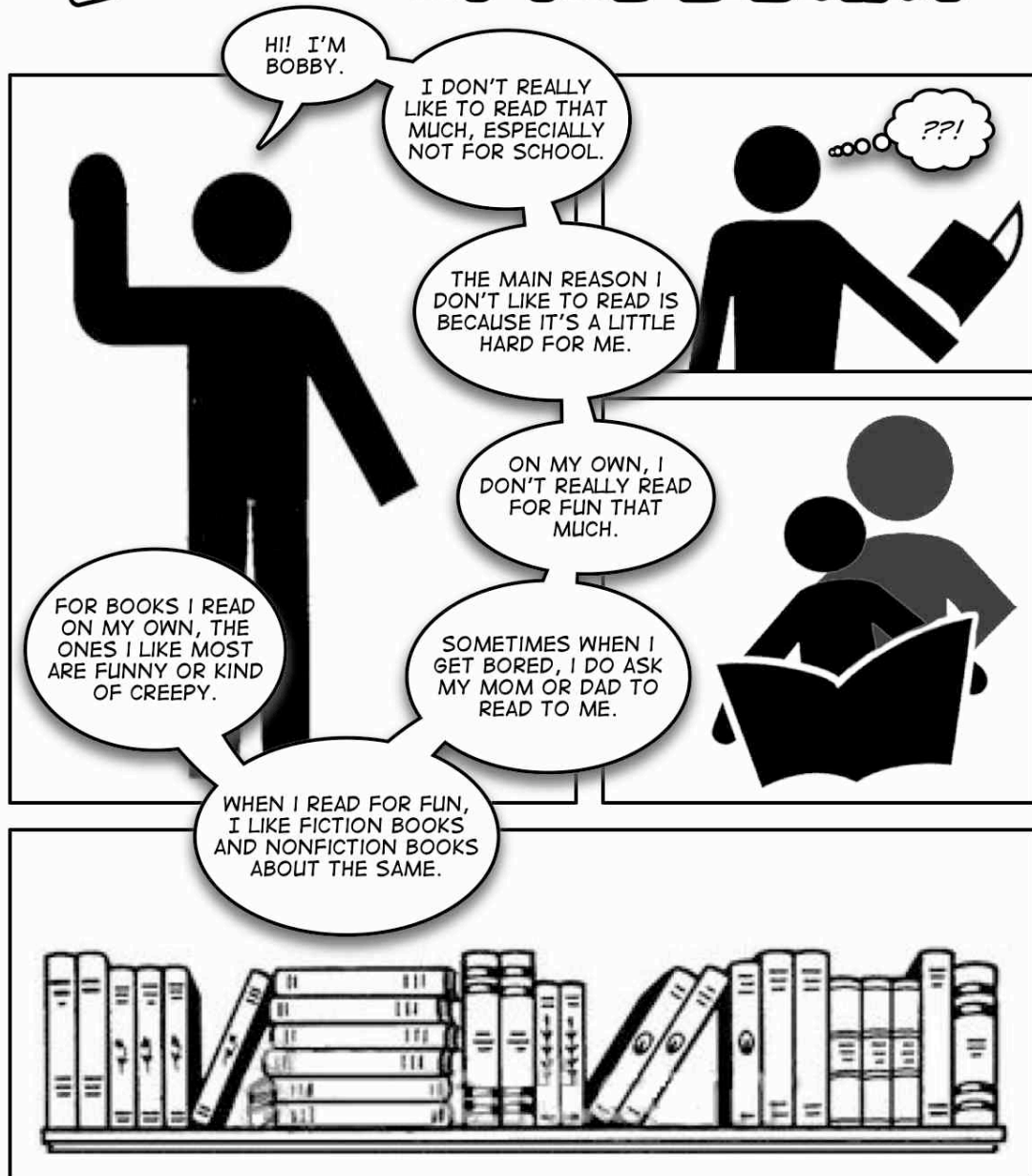


I'M GOOD AT PICKING OUT BOOKS - I ALMOST ALWAYS LIKE THE BOOKS I GET AT THE LIBRARY.

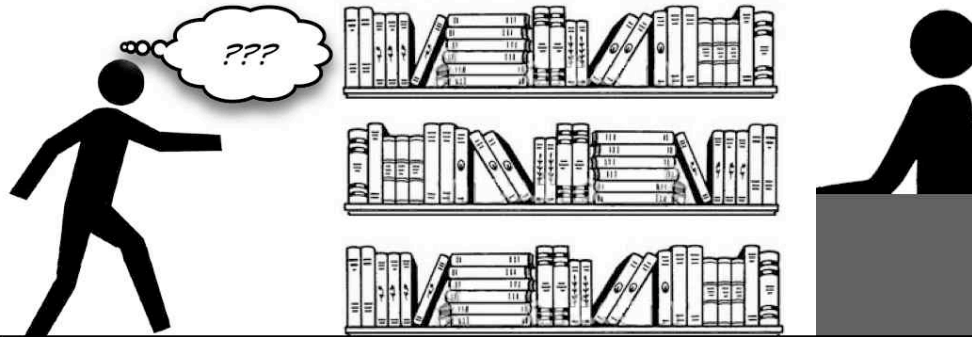


BOBBY

SELECTING BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY



WHEN I COME TO THE LIBRARY, I DON'T USUALLY KNOW WHAT BOOKS I WANT.



I USUALLY JUST LOOK FOR MY FAVORITE KINDS OF BOOKS.

I DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHY I CHOOSE BOOKS, BUT I MIGHT THINK ABOUT A FEW THINGS.



I USUALLY GO TO THE SAME SPOT IN THE LIBRARY WHERE MY FAVORITE BOOKS ARE...

AND IF I SEE A BOOK I LIKE, I TAKE IT DOWN TO LOOK AT THE FRONT COVER...

AND SOMETIMES I LOOK THROUGH THE PAGES TO LOOK AT THE PICTURES.

USUALLY, I GET A LOT OF HELP PICKING OUT BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY.



MY MOM ALWAYS CHOOSES A BUNCH OF BOOKS FOR ME...



AND SOMETIMES I ASK THE LIBRARIAN FOR HELP FINDING A BOOK I WANT.

PICKING OUT BOOKS I LIKE AT THE LIBRARY CAN BE HARD FOR ME SOMETIMES.



SOMETIMES I LIKE THE BOOKS I GET FROM THE LIBRARY...



AND SOMETIMES I DON'T.



MOSTLY I JUST SAW OTHER PEOPLE DOING IT.



AND I SAW MY MOM PICK OUT BOOKS. SHE HELPED ME ALOT.



THAT'S PRETTY MUCH HOW I SELECT BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY.

THE END!

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