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Gender Differences in Attitudes Toward the Language Arts: Why Do They Persist?

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Of all the academic subjects students study, the ones that are most often sex-typed as feminine are reading, grammar, and spelling, the "language arts." Not only do girls generally do better than boys in these subjects, they also seem to prefer them more than boys do. These differences persist from the early years of school through college, where women major in languages and literature more often than men.

While a fair amount of attention has focussed on sex differences in attitudes toward mathematics, relatively little has concerned differences in attitudes toward the language arts. This paper attempts to remedy this situation by looking at sex differences in attitudes toward the language arts in a group of students from the fourth grade to ninth grade and variables that might help account for these differences. I end the paper by discussing the implications of the findings, both for scholars interested in understanding more about gender differences in attitudes toward the language arts and for teachers and other practitioners who work with students.

Related Literature

Gender differences in attitudes toward language arts seem to be apparent from the early years of school. Girls are more likely than boys to say that they like reading,

spelling, writing and related areas (Collis and Ollila, 1986, Daly, 1979; Daly and Wilson, 1983; Price and Graves, 1980). They also tend to do better in these areas than boys do. In the later years of school women are more likely than men to choose elective courses related to language and to major in literature and languages in college. Only at the most advanced level of training, the PhD, do males begin to approach females in their representation in the field (Stockard, 1980a, and Stockard, 1985).

Most explanations of these gender differences focus on sex-typing or sex stereotypes in the larger society. In the United States and Canada, although not necessarily in all European countries, literature, languages, reading, and even school in general, are characterized as feminine. The stereotypical "true man" avoids association with these subjects for fear of being typed as a "sissy" or "unmanly." The fact that the only aspect of this area where men predominate involves the highest academic degrees is the exception that "proves the case." In this stereotyped view, the language arts are "women's work" unless they are at the most reified and complex level required at the highest realms of academia. (See Stockard, 1980b, 1985.)

I know of no studies that have directly examined other variables that can help explain gender differences in attitudes toward language arts. A number of studies, however, have identified variables that can explain

students' motivation to learn and their attitudes toward school in general. These include 1) students' "academic self concept," their perception of their own academic capabilities; 2) students' "educational support system," their perceptions of the educational expectations others hold for them and the support provided by their school and teachers; 3) students' family environment and the extent to which it supports a commitment to learning and school; and 4) students' interests and leisure activities.

As would be intuitively expected, the literature suggests that students who believe that they are good students and students who actually expect that they will complete higher levels of education are more likely than others to have positive attitudes toward school. In addition, students who value high grades and want to have a good report card are more likely to behave in the prescribed manner in school and have more favorable attitudes toward school (e.g. Bridge, et al, 1979).

The type of educational support system in which students find themselves is also important. In general, students who perceive that others, such as their friends, teachers, and parents, believe that they will go on to further schooling, are likely themselves to aspire to higher levels (see Bridge, et al, 1979; Levin, 1971). The literature also suggests that students will have higher aspirations and achievement, as well as positive feelings

toward school, when they are in environments which are more orderly and calm and with teachers who are perceived as understanding and sympathetic, but with high expectations (Rutter, et al, 1979; Brookover, et al, 1979). Some literature also suggests that students who are in schools with peers from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to have higher levels of achievement and aspirations (Meyer, 1970; Nelson, 1972; Alwin and Otto, 1977).

Much literature documents the important influence of families on students' attitudes toward schools and their future plans. In general, students from more stable and supportive homes, those which are more oriented toward the importance of education for their children, are likely to have positive attitudes toward school and higher aspirations (Bridge, et al, 1979).

Finally, students' own interests are important. Those who believe that school subjects are related to their own future occupational or educational plans and those who voluntarily spend more time on school or academic related activities are generally more likely to have higher aspirations and better attitudes toward school (see Bridge, et al, 1979).

Based on the literature reviewed above it could be expected that students with a more positive academic self concept, with a more supportive educational system and family life, and with more academically oriented leisure

activities and interests would have more positive attitudes toward the language arts. It would also be expected that students who planned on taking language oriented coursework in the future would be more likely to have positive attitudes toward the language arts.

The literature gives little guidance as to expectations regarding gender differences in attitudes. Based on the literature regarding sex differences in educational roles, it would be expected that females would have more positive attitudes toward the language arts and school in general, although there is little indication that they would view themselves as better students, have higher educational expectations, or perceive that others had higher expectations for them. It is also unlikely that they would have different family support systems, although they probably would have different leisure activities and future interests in the language arts (see Stockard, 1980a; 1985).

Methodology

The data used in this paper come from a longitudinal study of students in a western Oregon school district. The community is heavily dependent on the lumber industry, largely working class, and almost entirely white. Students in one grade cohort completed questionnaires which asked about their attitudes toward school and their plans for the future when they were in the fourth, eighth, and ninth

grades (elementary, middle school and high school). All of the questionnaires were completed in class. The students were assured that their teachers would not see their answers. Because parental permission was needed for students to participate, not all students completed the questionnaires. However, those in the sample appear to be quite similar to those within the grade as a whole. Five hundred seventy nine fourth grade students (288 females and 291 males), 343 eighth grade students (170 females and 173 males) and 284 ninth grade students (159 females and 125 males) have data on all the variables used in the study.

Results

I first look at gender differences in attitudes toward the language arts over the years of school. I then examine how variables related to each of the areas outlined above are correlated with students' attitudes toward the language arts. Finally, I use multivariate statistical techniques to help determine the extent to which these variables can account for differences in males' and females' attitudes. Because it is recognized that many readers of this volume may not be familiar with these statistical techniques the discussion of the results is as non-technical as possible and the statistical figures are explained in non-technical language.

Characteristics of the Male and Female Students

Table One shows the average scores of males and females in each grade level on the variables used to measure the concepts discussed above. The figures in the table are either the simple arithmentic average (the mean) score which the students have on a given scale or the percentage of males and females in a grade level who have a given attribute. The standard deviation of scale scores is also given. This is a measure of dispersion, which indicates how variable the subjects are on a measure. A higher standard deviation indicates greater dispersion or variability among the students on that measure.

For each measure in each grade level I used a t-test to examine the extent to which sex differences in scores could be expected to occur by chance. The astericks in the table indicate measures on which the two sex groups can be said to differ significantly. The chance of being wrong in claiming such differences is only as large as the probability indicated.

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Table One About Here

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Attitudes Toward the Language Arts -- In each of the years studied the students were asked to rate how they felt about their school subjects. Specifically, they were asked

how much they "liked" language arts, how "important" they thought the subject was, whether or not they did their "best work" in that subject, and how "hard" or "easy" the subject was for them. In general, both boys and girls who liked language arts also tended to believe that it was important, that it was relatively easy, and to report that they more often did their "best work" in the area. For these reasons the students' answers to these questions were combined into a single scale. Scores on this scale could range from 4 to20, with a higher score indicating that students had more positive attitudes.

In each of the years both boys and girls reported positive attitudes, but the females had significantly more positive attitudes than the males. The differences were larger in middle school and high school than in elementary school, primarily because the boys' attitudes became more negative over time. Inspection of the individual items which make up these scales showed that there were no significant sex differences in any of the three years in the students' ratings of the importance of the language arts. Sex differences in the ratings of the subject's difficulty were significant only in the eighth and ninth grades. Sex differences appeared consistently over the years, however, in the students' ratings of how much they liked language arts and whether or not they did their "best work" in the subject. Thus while both males and females believe that the

language arts are important, females are much more likely to say that they like the subject, that they do their best work in it, and that it is easy.

Academic Self-Concept -- Three general measures of the students' academic self-concept were used. The first taps the students' self-view of their academic capabilities, asking them to rate the quality of school work that they do. The questions used in the fourth grade differed slightly from those used in the eighth and ninth grades with the scale scores ranging from 2 to 8 for the fourth graders and from 5 to 40 for the eighth and ninth graders. [1] The students were also asked how important they thought it was to get good grades with scale scores ranging from 2 to 8. [2] Finally, the students were asked about their educational aspirations. In fourth grade the students were simply asked, "Do you think you actually will go to college someday?", with possible responses of no, maybe, and yes. In the eighth and ninth grades the students were asked, "How far do you think you really will go in school?", with responses ranging over a 6 point scale. With each of these measures a higher score indicates that a student had a higher academic self-concept.

Male and female students had equally high educational expectations in all the years studied, with the average student expecting to have some college education. Although

boys were more likely than girls to believe that they were better students than their peers in the fourth grade, the girls had slightly higher scores on this scale in the eighth and ninth grade (although the differences were insignificant). In both the fourth and the ninth grades females were significantly more likely than the males to say that getting good grades was important to them.

Educational Support -- Several measures of the students' perceived educational support system were used. In the fourth grade the students were simply asked if anyone had ever told them that they "should go to college," with answers of yes and no coded. In the eighth and ninth grades the students were asked how far in school their "best friend," the teacher they liked "best," and their "parents" believed they would go in school. These three perceived expectations were highly associated with each other, so the responses were combined into a single scale, ranging from 3 to 21, with a higher score indicating higher perceived expectations.

The males and females perceived equally high educational expectations from others, although these perceived expectations tended to be somewhat lower in the higher grades. (Three-quarters of the students in fourth grade reported someone had encouraged them to attend college, while the average student in middle school and high

school reported that their friends, parents, and teachers expected them to attend at least some college.

For the fourth grade information was available about the school in which the students were enrolled. About two-thirds of the schools were eligible for special federal money (Title I funds) because they served so many low income children. Whether or not the school was a Title I school is used in our analysis to indicate the differences in the socio-economic background of the students enrolled. Boys and girls were equally distributed among the lower income schools.

In the eighth and ninth grades the students were asked a series of questions about their teachers. Answers to these questions were combined into a scale measuring the extent to which the students perceived their teachers as understanding, expecting them to do their best, friendly, and willing to help students. Scores ranged from 0 to 4 and a higher score indicating a more positive view of teachers in the school. The students were also asked to indicate whether or not they thought that a number of behaviors were "problems" in their school. [3] Answers to these questions were combined into a scale with scores ranging from 0 to 9, and a higher score indicating that students perceived there were more problems within their school. The average student tended to have relatively positive attitudes toward the teachers and school. In both high school and middle school,

however, the females were significantly more likely than the males to report that their teachers were understanding, but that there were more "problems" in their school.

Family Support -- Three different measures were used to indicate the family support available to the students. They were asked how many schools they had attended since starting first grade. This measure was available for all three grade levels and varied from a low of 1, indicating that the student had been in a very stable situation (one elementary, one middle, and one high school), to a high of nine, indicating that the student had been in 9 or more schools since beginning first grade. Males and females attended a similar number of schools over the years, with the average student having moved one or two times during their school career.

The students were also asked who they lived with. This variable was available for only the fourth and eighth grades and was coded as a dichotomy with a higher score indicating that the students lived with both their mother and father and a lower score indicating that they had some other type of living situation. In both the elementary and middle school slightly less than two-thirds of the students lived with both their mothers and fathers.

Finally, students in the eighth and ninth grades were asked about the "rules" that their parents had for them at

home.[4] The responses to these questions were combined into a scale ranging from 0 to 8, with a higher score indicating that they lived in a home with more rules. The students reported relatively few rules, on the average, although the females reported significantly more family rules than the males in both grades.

Interests and Leisure Activities -- Finally, the students were asked about their leisure activities and interests. In the fourth grade they were asked how often they watched tv and how often they read books for fun. In the eighth and ninth grades they were asked how often they watched tv, listened to the radio, and listened to tapes both on school days and non-school days. They were also asked how much time they spent doing homework and reading for fun on these days. Responses were combined into scales, with higher scores indicating more time spent in a given activity.[5] Students in the eighth and ninth grades were also asked about courses they would like to take in the future and specifically if they planned to take clerical or foreign language courses.

More sex differences appeared in the area of leisure activities and interests than in any other area. By the ninth grade the females reported spending significantly more time with the media (tv, radio, and tapes) than the males did. In both the eighth and ninth grades they reported

spending more time on homework, and more often planned to take both clerical and foreign language courses. The females reported spending more of their leisure time reading in all three grades, with this difference reaching statistical significance in fourth and eighth grades and coming close to standard levels of significance (p=.08) in the ninth grade.

Summary -- In general, these results suggest that females were more likely than males to have positive attitudes toward the language arts, to believe that grades are important, that their teachers are understanding, that there are more "problems" in their schools, to report family "rules" regarding their behavior, and to engage in leisure activities and have interests that are related to the language arts,. There were no sex differences in the students' view of themselves as students, in their educational expectations, in their perceptions of others' expectations for them, in the number of schools they have attended or the type of family in which they live.

Associations between Attitude Related Variables

Tables two, three, and four give the correlation coefficients between the variables for each of the grades. Pearson product moment correlations are used. These coefficients are simply indexes ranging from -1.00 to +1.00, where an absolute value of 1.00 indicates a "perfect"

one-to-one association and a value of 0 indicates no association between two variables. Coefficients for the males are given above the main diagonal and those for the females are below the diagonal.

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Tables Two, Three and Four About Here

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The results indicate that both males and females with more favorable attitudes toward the language arts also tend to have more positive academic self concepts. In all three grade levels both males and females with more favorable attitudes toward the language arts also tend to believe that they are better students, to believe that grades are important, and (except for ninth grade males) to expect to attain higher levels of education.

The variables measuring educational support are related only to the attitudes of the eighth and ninth graders, with both males and females with more favorable language arts attitudes perceiving that others expect them to attain higher levels of education and females, but not males, in these grades who have more favorable attitudes also believing that their teachers are more supportive.

The variables related to family support are generally unassociated with attitudes, apart from a tendency for boys who have attended fewer different schools (fourth and ninth

grades only) and girls from families with both the mother and father present (in the eighth grade only) to have more positive attitudes.

The variables related to interests and activities had a number of associations with language arts attitudes. Except for boys in the eighth and ninth grade, students who reported spending more leisure time reading reported more favorable attitudes. In both the eighth and ninth grades students who reported spending more time on homework reported more favorable attitudes, as did ninth grade boys who spent less time with the media. Eighth grade boys who were interested in clerical courses and ninth grade girls interested in foreign language courses also tended to report more favorable attitudes.

The correlations among the variables I am using to explain language arts related attitudes tend to correspond to what the literature would lead one to expect. Although the patterns do not appear with all of the groups, students who score high on one academic-oriented measure tend to score high on others. Thus, students who see themselves as better students generally also believe that grades are more important, have higher educational expectations, believe that others expect them to go to college, more often plan to take a foreign language, and spend more of their leisure time reading for fun and and less of it involved with the media.

Accounting for Gender Differences in Attitudes

The results described above suggest that males and females differ significantly on a number of measures related to their academic self concept, educational support system, family support, and leisure activities and interests and that many of these variables are also associated with students' attitudes toward the language arts. It is now possible to ask if variations in these variables can account for gender differences in language arts attitudes. In other words, if males and females had equally high academic self concepts, equal views of their educational support system and families, and similar activities and interests, would the observed gender differences in language arts related attitudes disappear?

The statistical technique of multiple regression can be used to answer this question. This procedure is a very versatile one that is used to examine the relationship of a set of independent variables (here the variables related to academic self concept, educational support, family support, and activities and interests) and a dependent variable (language arts attitudes). The procedure uses the correlation coefficients shown in Tables 2 through 4 to develop estimates of the "effect" each of the independent variables would have on the dependent variable if all of the other variables were held constant. This effect is shown through a "regression coefficient," which indicates the

extent to which we would expect the dependent variable to change if an independent variable were to change one unit.

Table Five gives the results of the regression of language arts attitudes on each of the independent variables including gender for each grade level. The numbers given in the main body of the table are unstandardized regression coefficients, indicating the "effect" that each independent variable has on the dependent variable when the remaining variables are "held constant" or are "equal." For instance, the number .27, associated with the measure of the students' perceptions of the kind of student they are, indicates that a student with a score on this scale that is one point higher than that of someone else would, if all other variables listed were equal, have a score on the language arts variable that was .27 higher than the other student. The astericks associated with the coefficients indicate which ones are statistically significant, that is, which ones would not be expected to be zero if we were to do the study again (at the probability level indicated). The constant term at the bottom of the columns indicates the score students would be expected to have on the attitude scale if scores on all of the other variables were equal to zero.

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Table Five About Here

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The results in Table 5 indicate that the a consistent and important influence on students' language arts attitudes is their academic self concept. Students' views of the kind of student they are and the importance they attach to grades are the most important of these variables. Students' interests and activities also have independent and important influences on language arts attitudes in all three years, with the amount of time spent reading influencing attitudes in both the fourth and ninth grades, the amount of time spent doing homework being important in the ninth grade, and wanting to take foreign languages being an important influence in the eighth grade. The amount of perceived educational support affects attitudes only in the ninth grade with a significant influence of the students' perceived educational expectations of others. Family support also has little influence on the attitudes with the only influence coming from family rules in the eighth grade, with fewer rules being related to more positive attitudes.

In all three years, despite the influence of all the other variables, gender differences remain. This is indicated by the very large and very significant coefficients associated with gender.[6] That is, when boys and girls have equal academic self concepts, educational support, family support, and interests and leisure

activities, females still have much more positive attitudes toward the language arts than males. These differences are smallest in the fourth grade and largest in the eighth grade.

The R^2 value given at the bottom of Table 5 indicates the amount of "variation" in lanaguage arts attitudes that can be explained by the various independent variables. This measure can vary from zero to one, with a score of zero indicating that the independent variables have no impact, and a score of 1.0 indicating perfecc explanation. The results given in Table 5 indicate that only about 7% of the variation in language arts attitudes can be explained in the fourth grade, but 21% can be explained in the eighth and 15% in the ninth grade. In each of these years the amount of variation explained is significantly greater than what would be expected by chance. More variation seems to be explained in the eighth grade than in other years because of the effect of the students' attitudes toward grades and their desire to take foreign languages.

The analysis based on Table 5 has not taken into account the possibility that the various independent variables may affect language arts attitudes differently for males and females. In other words, if one were to look at a regression analysis for males separately from one for females, one might find different results.

Table 6 examines the data separately for females and males, showing the extent to which each of the hypothesized independent variables affects the attitudes of members of each sex group. Results with the fourth grade data are very similar for the males and females, with slightly more variation explained for the males because boys, but not girls, who have attended fewer schools have more favorable attitudes. Results with the eighth grade data are quite different for boys and girls. Although slightly more variation in girls' attitudes is explained than in boys' attitudes, only having a more positive view of themselves as a student significantly influences girls' more positive attitudes. For boys, viewing grades as more important, having fewer rules at home, spending more time with homework, and wanting to take a foreign language all influence more favorable attitudes. Results for the females' and males' data for the ninth grade are again different, with more variation explained for the females than the males. The females' more favorable attitudes are significantly associated with perceiving that others have higher educational expectations and with spending more leisure time reading for fun. Males' more favorable attitudes are significantly associated with spending more time on homework.

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Table Six About Here

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To examine the extent to which gender differences in attitudes toward the language arts remain after taking into account the different patterns of influence apparent for males and females, one can substitute average scores into the regression equations given in Table Six. In using this procedure one assumes that males and females have equal scores on each of the independent variables (the averages are simply used for convenience) and then asks what score on the language arts scale would males and females be expected to receive.

The results of this procedure confirm the findings reported in Table 5. The predicted scores on the language arts attitude scale for females and males in the fourth grade are 14.7 and 13.9 respectively, in the eighth grade, 14.9 and 13.3, and in the ninth grade, 14.6 and 13.7. Thus, in each grade level, even when the unique effect of the explanatory variables in each sex group is taken account, gender differences in language attitudes remain. These are largest in eighth grade, when the predicted scores for females are the highest and those for males are the lowest.

Discussion

The general picture that one can obtain from these results is that there are indeed differences in the ways males and females view language arts. These differences seem to persist throughout elementary, middle school and high school. They cannot be explained away by differences in males' and females' academic self concepts, their views about school, their educational and family support, or their interests and activities.

I suggest that these differences exist and persist because of the cultural definitions attached to the language arts in our society. Reading, writing, spelling, literature, and foreign languages are stereotyped as feminine in nature, areas in which women are expected to specialize and do well. Because these are seen as areas appropriate for females, males tend to dislike them and to avoid doing their best work in them. As they get older they avoid taking the subject and entering jobs which involve extensive use of language.

What are the implications of these findings? First, it should be noted that research in this area is sparse. Perhaps because it is an area in which females tend to do better than males, few researchers have tried to account for the sex differences. More research needs to be conducted, to attempt to find other variables that can help explain these sex differences. Direct attempts to measure students' views of the sex-typing of the subject would be especially

helpful. Also of interest would be studies that extend from grade school years through the years when young people make occupational choices.

These findings also have implications for teachers, those who work directly with students. They confirm teachers' views that boys tend to dislike this area more than girls. Boys with talent in the language arts may avoid it unnecessarily, for fear of social stigma. It may be harder for teachers to encourage boys to do their best work in the area. Teachers may want to consider ways of counteracting boys' negative views of the language arts.

Some authors, in commenting on boys' avoidance of academic areas, have suggested that we need to attempt to "masculinize" school, to make it more attractive to males (e.g. Sexton, 1969). They would suggest that the most effective way to deal with boys' avoidance of the language arts is by redefining the area as one which would be more attractive to males, by using different kinds of assignments, teaching methods, etc.

I would suggest that these techniques miss the basic problem. The issue is not as much boys not liking language arts, as boys avoiding areas of school that they perceive as being feminine. It reflects a much larger social problem within society of males avoiding and degrading areas which they believe are "feminine." This behavior pattern undoubtedly originates in the family, but is reinforced

within peer groups, especially the peer groups found within schools (see Stockard and Johnson, 1979, 1980c).

I believe that the most effective way of dealing with males' avoidance of the language arts, in the long run, would involve dealing with this basic tendency of males to avoid areas and activities that are defined as feminine (see Stockard, 1986). Rafaela Best (1982) in a fascinating book called We've All Got Scars, documents her own attempts to deal with this problem in an elementary school. Through extensive, long-term interactions with students, she tried to counter the tendencies of young boys to degrade the activities of girls and to enforce rigid sex segregation of activities. Her efforts can provide a model of ways teachers can begin to counter students' tendencies to strongly sex-type areas and males' avoidance of feminine areas.

I realize that any alteration in the tendency for males to avoid areas defined as more appropriate for females will take a long time. Thus, I also suggest that females' greater interest in language arts should become a point of pride and importance. Much has been made of females' supposed "problems" with mathematics, but little has been made of their success in the language arts. This no doubt reflects the fact that in the adult occupational world, jobs which require mathematical skills (e.g. engineers, accountants) are usually more highly rewarded than those

which require literary skills (e.g. English teacher, librarian). Not surprisingly, these jobs are also highly sex-typed. I can think of few objective reasons why mathematical skills should be more important to society than language related skills. In fact, one could argue that the ability to communicate well and effectively might be more important in producing a peaceful global community. I would suggest that we simply accept that females have more favorable attitudes toward the language arts. A fruitful political agenda for those interested in social change might involve seeking greater recognition and rewards for people with skills in the language arts as well as working to allow both males and females the opportunity to realize their capabilities in the area.

Footnotes

1. Three examples of the questions used in the scales are:
a. Think of your friends. Do you think you can do school workbetter, the same, or poorer than your friends?
b. Forget how your teachers mark your work. How good do you think your work is?
c. What kind of grades do you think you really can get if you try?

2. The two questions used in the scale were "How important to you are the grades you get in school?" and "How do you feel if you don't do as well in school as you know you can?"

3. Students were asked to "check what you think are problems in your school," from the following list: students being absent from school, students skipping class, students fighting with each other, robbery or theft, destroying or hurting school property, students smoking, students using drugs, students using alcohol, and students talking back to teachers or other adults.

4. The students were asked to "check eachitem for which your parents have definite rules." The list included "time for being in on Friday or Saturday nights, amount of dating, against going steady, time spent watching TV, time spent on homework, against going around with certain girls, against

going around with certain boys, and eating dinner with the family."

5. The students were asked to estimate "how much time" they spent "on a typical school night" and "on a typical non-school day" doing the following things: watching TV, listening to the radio, listening to cassettes/tapes, doing homework, and reading books or magazines for fun." Responses ranged on a five-point scale from no time to more than 2 hours.

6. The coefficient is negative because female is coded one and male is coded two for the analysis.

Table One
Scores of Males and Females on Variables.
Fourth, Eighth, and Ninth Grade[a]

	Fourth Grade		Eighth Grade		Ninth Grade	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
I. Academic Self Concept						
- Kind of Student	5.7 (1.5)	6.2** (1.6)	29.5 (3.7)	29.4 (3.6)	30.1 (3.6)	29.8 (3.4)
- Importance of grades	7.0 (1.2)	6.7** (1.3)	7.1 (1.0)	7.0 (1.1)	7.3 (0.9)	7.1* (1.0)
- Educational expectations	2.4 (0.7)	2.4 (0.7)	4.6 (1.7)	4.7 (1.6)	4.8 (1.5)	4.7 (1.6)
II. Educational Support						
- Perceived expectations of others[b]	75%	74%	16.9 (4.4)	16.8 (4.3)	14.6 (4.2)	13.9 (4.3)
- Teachers understanding	-	-	2.2 (1.2)	1.8** (1.2)	2.2 (1.2)	1.7*** (1.2)
- Problems in school	-	-	4.2 (2.2)	3.6* (2.2)	5.3 (2.3)	4.7* (2.6)
- School type[c]	32%	37%	-	-	-	-
III. Family Support						
- Number schools attended	2.2 (1.5)	2.3 (1.5)	2.4 (1.7)	2.7 (1.9)	2.3 (1.6)	2.5 (1.9)
- Family type[d]	62%	64%	57%	59%	-	-
- Family rules	-	-	2.4 (1.7)	2.1* (1.8)	3.1 (5.3)	2.3* (1.8)

Table Two
Correlations Among Variables, both Males and Females,
Fourth Grade[a]

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Kind of Student (self perception)	-	.01	.29	.10	.08	-.03	.05	.03	.12	.20
2.	Importance of grades	.14	-	.19	.03	.01	.07	.03	-.03	.04	.14
3.	Educational expectations	.11	.20	-	.19	.13	-.03	.10	.04	.09	.13
4.	Perceived expectations of others	.05	.11	.34	-	-.05	-.04	-.05	.09	.06	-.01
5.	School type	.02	.00	-.01	.01	-	-.01	.07	.02	.07	.04
6.	Number Schools attended	-.05	.08	-.02	.02	-.19	-	-.29	.01	-.08	-.13
7.	Family type	.04	.03	-.08	-.08	-.08	-.22	-	.05	.06	.07
8.	TV (media) time	-.00	-.02	-.14	-.09	.00	.13	-.04	-	-.11	.00
9.	Fun reading time	.08	.19	.16	.00	.03	.05	.02	-.11	-	.14
10.	Language Arts	.14	.17	.14	.08	-.01	.02	-.06	-.07	.15	-

a. All measures are Pearson product moment correlations. Coefficients above the diagonal are for males; those below the diagonal are for females.

Table Three
Correlations Among Variables, both Males and Females
Eighth Grade[a]

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.	Kind of Student (self perception)	-	.44	.61	.61	.03	.14	-.06	.11	.15	-.21	.25	.11	.30	.03	.24
2.	Importance of grades	.42	-	.27	.38	-.08	.06	.02	-.03	.25	-.10	.37	.06	.25	.10	.38
3.	Educational expectations	.58	.26	-	.79	-.06	-.02	-.08	.16	.18	-.16	.11	-.02	.32	.05	.14
4.	Perceived expectations of others	.68	.22	.80	-	.04	.09	-.16	.16	.15	-.23	.25	.00	.31	.06	.19
5.	Teachers understanding	.19	.21	.10	.17	-	.15	.05	-.11	-.07	.11	.19	.13	.04	-.16	.03
6.	Problems in school	-.04	-.01	-.17	-.10	-.06	-	-.01	.04	.03	.06	.12	.14	.00	.03	.02
7.	Number schools attended	-.04	-.02	-.12	-.16	-.16	.05	-	-.32	.07	.24	.01	.17	-.03	.07	.00
8.	Family type	.22	.18	.26	.22	.01	-.06	-.44	-	.08	-.09	-.02	-.06	.06	.05	.05
9.	Family rules	.10	.09	-.04	-.01	.09	.23	.02	-.06	-	-.15	.31	.14	.10	.21	-.02
10.	TV (media) time	-.26	-.13	-.20	-.27	-.17	-.02	.21	-.16	-.05	-	-.02	.06	-.13	.05	-.09
11.	Homework time	.31	.29	.16	.19	.12	.02	-.04	.01	.13	-.13	-	.33	.16	.20	.21
12.	Fun reading time	.33	.22	.26	.23	.18	.05	.06	-.02	.21	-.11	.20	-	.07	-.06	.03
13.	Take Clerical courses	.04	.17	.06	.02	.01	-.02	.00	.08	.12	.11	.15	.03	-	.04	.24
14.	Take foreign Lanugages	.34	-.07	.29	.32	.07	.12	-.05	.24	.09	-.04	.04	.11	-.07	-	-.07
15.	Language Arts attitudes	.45	.19	.25	.31	.15	-.06	-.01	.16	.00	-.04	.18	.22	.00	.20	-

a All measures are Pearson product moment correlations. Coefficients above the diagonal are for males; those below the diagonal are for females.

Table Four
Correlations Among Variables, both Males and Females, Ninth Grade[a]

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	Kind of Student (self perception)	-	.44	.62	.59	.06	.16	-.17	.05	-.27	.18	.07	.46	.12	.26
2.	Importance of grades	.47	-	.36	.42	.08	.18	-.17	.19	-.06	.31	.07	.16	.05	.25
3.	Educational expectations	.67	.34	-	.75	.16	.08	-.06	.16	-.11	.18	.11	.43	.14	.08
4.	Perceived expectations of others	.67	.32	.84	-	.14	.12	-.16	.06	-.18	.16	-.03	.42	.18	.14
5.	Teachers understanding	.22	.20	.14	.22	-	.06	-.12	-.02	.00	.07	.16	.04	-.02	-.09
6.	Problems in school	.16	.11	.03	.03	.16	-	-.07	.23	.01	.18	.00	.18	.12	.11
7.	Number schools attended	-.03	.08	-.10	-.09	-.05	-.09	-	-.03	.08	-.16	.19	-.12	-.09	-.13
8.	Family rules	.14	.19	.10	.07	.21	.09	.07	-	-.05	.16	-.04	.13	.03	.16
9.	TV (media) time	25	-.15	-.16	-.16	-.05	.09	.14	-.05	-	-.09	.12	-.14	-.05	-.20
10.	Homework time	.26	.40	.15	.11	.23	.02	-.03	.16	-.17	-	.10	.06	.03	.25
11.	Fun reading time	.24	.14	.18	. 20	.17	-.10	.06	.19	-.01	.17	-	.05	-.07	.00
12.	Take Clerical courses	.07	-.01	-.05	-.03	-.03	.00	-.09	.08	-.01	.08	-.06	-	.20	-.01
13.	Take foreign languages	.32	.26	.36	.35	.14	.01	-.05	.17	-.11	.10	.11	.07	-	.10
14.	Language Arts Attitudes	.27	.19	.24	.31	.12	.02	.02	.05	.01	.19	.29	.07	.02	-

a All measures are Pearson product moment correlations. Coefficients above the diagonal are for males; those below the diagonal are for females.

Table Five
Regression of Attitude toward Language on Variables,
Fourth, Eighth, and Ninth Grades All Students

	Fourth Grade	Eighth Grade	Ninth Grade
I. Gender	-.79****	-1.32***	-1.01***
II. Academic Self Concept			
- Kind of Student	.27****	.14***	.12**
- Importance of grades	.29***	.42***	.18
- Educational expectations	.31	-.13	-.27
III. Educational Support			
- Perceived expectations of others	-.05	.04	.14**
- Teachers understanding	-	.06	-.16
- Problems in school	-	-.05	.02
- School type	-.02		-
IV. Family Support			
- Number schools attended	-.12	.05	-.04
- Family type	-.15	.35	
- Family rules		-.14*	.09
V. Interests and Leisure Activites			
- TV (media) time	-.02	.01	.00
- Homework time	-	.11	.19**
- Fun reading time	.25**	.04	.16**
- Take Clerical courses	-	-.38	.18
- Take foreign languages	-	.70**	-.44
Constant	11.17****	7.56****	8.33****
R^2	.07****	.21****	.15****
n	579	333	284

*p<.10
**p<.05
***p<.01
****p<.001

Table Six
Regression of Attitudes Toward Languages Arts on Variables for both Males and Females, Fourth, Eighth and Ninth Grade

	Fourth Grade		Eighth Grade		Ninth Grade	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
I. Academic Self Concept						
- Kind of Student	.22*	.33***	.25****	.03	.04	.16
- Importance of grades	.29*	.30**	-.03	.74****	.20	.29
- Educational expectations	.31	.21	-.14	.03	-.12	-.30
II. Educational Support						
- Perceived expectations of others	.18	-.33	.04	-.03	.21**	.03
- Teachers understanding	-	-	.15	.03	.01	-.26
- Problems in school	-	-	-.05	-.01	.02	.01
- School type	-.05	.07	-	-	-	-
III. Family Support						
- Number schools attended	.02	-.25**	.06	.08	.04	-.09
- Family type	-.36	.03	.56	.44	-	-
- Family rules	-	-	-.08	-.24**	-.04	.19
IV. Interests and Leisure Activities						
- TV (media) time	-.07	.02	.05	-.03	.04	-.08
- Homework time	-	-	.07	.20*	.16	.21*
- Fun reading time	.24*	.25*	.11	-.04	.27***	.04
- Take Clerical courses	-	-	-.20	-1.28	.55	-.01
- Take foreign languages	-	-	.23	.72*	-1.09	.18
Constant	10.86****	9.30****	4.54**	6.83****	6.86***	8.09***
R^2	.04**	.06****	.17****	.14****	.13**	.09**
n	288	291	170	173	159	125

*p<.10
**p<.05
***p<.01
****p<.001

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