

A seemingly endless stream of pundits and policy makers call for the reformation of the America's public schools. Citing studies demonstrating the failure of a large number of students to perform well on tests, school critics assert that good schooling depends on good teaching. Thus, a variety of professional development programs have been developed to increase teachers' effectiveness. Similar criticisms of teachers were common in the Progressive Era. One attempt to address the problem was the reading circle, first introduced in Ohio in 1882 and spreading to over thirty-five states. The present study focuses on reading circles in Colorado from 1890 to 1936. The circles' organization, book selections, teachers' participation, and evidence of successful completion of the program will be examined. Also included are reasons the movement lasted nearly half a century and then fell into disuse.

—Eds.

## **What Books Were the Teachers Reading? Teachers' Reading Circles in Colorado, 1890-1936**

*Yiwen Bi and Lynn M. Burlbaw*

*Texas A & M University*

At the end of the nineteenth century, U.S. states either sponsored or conducted teachers' reading circles as opportunities and/or requirements for teacher professional development. Typically, participants were assigned books to read, attended book discussions with colleagues and, occasionally, received credits toward the renewal of teacher certificates. In most of the states, teacher participation in reading circles was not required, but the circles provided cooperative learning experiences in which teachers read about and discussed new

educational issues and connected with ideas beyond their often isolated communities.<sup>1</sup>

Many history-of-education textbooks contain a limited amount of information on the development of teacher preparation and programs, usually in relation to Horace Mann and the rise of normal schools. However, none of these texts provide information on teachers' reading circles as a means of improving teachers' professional knowledge or skills.<sup>2</sup> Their importance was recognized at the 1885 National Education Association meeting, when reading circles for promoting teacher professional development and cultural learning were considered a movement worthy of universal attention.<sup>3</sup> That attention is no longer the case, for current professional development programs seldom provide opportunities for teachers to gather regularly to read and discuss books.

Given the historical and educational significance of teachers' reading circles and the fact that few studies have focused on the specific books read by teachers in these circles, the purpose of the present study is to examine books that Colorado teachers read in the circles from 1890 to 1936. The authors of the present study first introduce the teachers' reading circles and those in Colorado: their organization, teachers' participation, book selections, and reading circle certificates. Then the authors list and analyze each book adopted in the circles from 1890 to 1936, categorize the books, and compare the categories by decade. The book publication years are also compared to their reading-circle adoption years, along with the tenures of superintendents of public instruction. Finally, the authors discuss how Colorado teachers reading these books were likely to have met the objectives of teachers' reading circles.

## **Teachers' Reading Circles**

Ohio introduced the first official teachers' reading circle program in 1882, and other states followed quickly.<sup>4</sup> The movement in Indiana also began early with a more systematic and structured plan than that of Ohio.<sup>5</sup> Toward the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, up to thirty-seven states

established their own reading circles.<sup>6</sup> No national institution administered these programs, but the idea and organization among the states were similar. For example, in the northeastern states, the circles served multiple needs, such as teachers' continuing education and recertification. In other regions, state teachers' associations initiated the teachers' reading circles.<sup>7</sup> In some states, management of reading circles was assigned to one board or committee; and teachers' participation and work varied. In others, "regular class work was conducted at the township and county teachers' meetings."<sup>8</sup> And in still others, teachers "arranged themselves in small groups and met periodically to discuss what they read."<sup>9</sup>

Superintendents of public instruction and reading circle committees annually selected books for the programs. These books were intended to prepare teachers for in-depth comprehension of the curriculum and culture in which that they were teaching. Topics of the books included teaching and learning, school administration, sociology, psychology, literature, health, and other subjects.

Several researchers have reported the benefits of teachers' reading circles. Lewis Jones asserted that the circles aroused teachers' interest in literature and good reading and increased their enthusiasm and power.<sup>10</sup> Eric Lupfer confirmed the positive role that Progressive Era teachers' reading circles played in training and professionalizing American educators.<sup>11</sup> Of the studies that explored teachers' reading circles across states in terms of the improvement of teachers' professional service and attitude, Jesse Johnson's dissertation is the most comprehensive.<sup>12</sup> He found that in some southwestern states, where small populations of teachers lived in large rural areas, administering reading circles was especially challenging. Still, these circles provided teachers with a thought-provoking form of continuing education.

The reading circles movement declined in the twentieth century as schools and colleges of education cultivated teachers through professional academic programs. For example, the second normal school in Colorado (today Western State College) opened in Gunnison in 1911.<sup>13</sup> In 1925, 41 percent of Colorado teachers were county certified,<sup>14</sup> which indicated that all these teachers completed college hours of professional study, college hours being one of the requirements to obtain

the county teacher certificate. By 1937, information on Colorado teachers' reading circles was no longer listed in the *Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction*.

## **Colorado Teachers' Reading Circles**

Colorado, a southwestern state, had small populations separated by vast rural space. The state was progressive in politics, with women receiving state-level voting rights in 1894, and in education, where school leaders were involved in applying progressive principles to the schools.<sup>15</sup>

In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Colorado schools experienced a large growth in the number of students enrolled, the number of new school districts, the number of new school houses, and the values of school property.<sup>16</sup> However, the schools in country areas seemed to be a relatively neglected field of study.<sup>17</sup> Christopher Sargent, a specialist in rural education, wrote a book on Colorado village schools based on his eight-year (1906-1913) survey of 1,725 school districts. Over the eight years, on average, the student enrollment was 64,385; but only 22 percent (14,559) of the students graduated from the eighth grade.<sup>18</sup>

One of the reasons why teachers' reading circles were especially useful to country school teachers is illustrated by a reading circle book. McNeil and Lynch's *Introductory Lessons in English Literature* was selected as a reading-circle book for teachers in 1901-1902.<sup>19</sup> The book trained teachers both for class work and in individual culture by some improved methods of literature study. The country schools at that time were weak along this line. The new methods departed from the old-fashioned reading class whose principal function was to teach word decoding. The reading circle committees believed country school teachers deserved the opportunity to explore teaching the truly great in literature, and McNeil and Lynch's book and the reading circles played a role in providing the opportunity.<sup>20</sup>

In 1890, the *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Colorado* reported the introduction of the state teachers' reading circle program.

The superintendent in each county was in charge of managing the local reading circle program; and an advisory board, which consisted of the state superintendent of public instruction and other educators, assisted in making annual decisions on the book selections.<sup>21</sup> There was no enrollment fee for teachers, but they did have to purchase the recommended books. Each county was allowed to devise its own reading circle plan. For example, in Saguache and Philips counties, the teachers met monthly at the superintendents' offices, while in El Paso County, teachers met bi-monthly in villages.<sup>22</sup> The isolation of some country schools to an extent limited the congregation of teachers who, therefore, often read the books individually. Many superintendents (such as in the counties of Washington, El Paso, and Custer), contributed, directed, and supervised their reading circles regularly and in person.<sup>23</sup>

### **Teacher Participation**

Helen Grenfell, state superintendent of public instruction, in her 1902 *Biennial Report*, encouraged more teacher involvement in reading circles.

... While the membership is voluntary, it should include all the teachers in the State. None can afford to miss the practical benefits which it [the program] offers, or remain aloof from an organization which places the members in touch with one another and in line with the advanced educational movements of the day.<sup>24</sup>

All teachers, in both cities and counties, were strongly advised to engage in the program and grow with other colleagues. It was believed that reading together and discussing the books would inspire and motivate the teachers. Educational leaders thought that cooperative learning and communication were essential to teachers' professional development and that objective could hardly be met when an individual teacher worked by himself/herself.

Five years later, in her *Biennial Report* of 1908, Katherine Craig stated that in 1907, nearly one thousand reading circle certificates had been issued to the teachers who had completed the program.<sup>25</sup> Tables 1 and 2, taken from the *Biennial Report* in 1934, list the number of reading circle certificates earned by teachers according to

grade (Table 1) and county (Table 2) in the previous biennium.<sup>26</sup> In 1932 alone, for example, more than fifteen thousand reading circle certificates were earned by teachers in the elementary grades. Table 1 lists the number of reading circle certificates awarded to teachers who taught a single elementary grade. However, many teachers taught multiple grades in country schools. The table does not specify how many teachers who taught multiple grades received certificates.

Table 2 shows that from 1931 to 1933, most counties had an increase in the number of teachers receiving the reading circle certificate. Several of the counties (e.g., Douglas) in rural areas had a goodly number of teachers who completed the reading circle work and received certificates. For example, in Cheyenne, the teachers who finished the reading circle program increased 58 percent from 1931 to 1933; in Eagle, 365 percent; and in Phillips, 182 percent.

In 1930, out of all 3,305 schools in Colorado, 2,073 were rural schools.<sup>27</sup> The authors of the present article found 21 counties where more than 75 percent of the schools were rural. Therefore, these counties could be considered largely rural. Table 3 summarizes the information. In the 21 largely rural counties, 11 added up to 33 percent of all the issued reading circle certificates in the entire state in 1933.<sup>28</sup> This information is presented in Table 4.

## **Book Selections**

As previously stated, the general principle underlying the annual selection of books for the teachers to read was to “. . . unite the progressive spirit of the teachers, assist in formulating higher ideals among the teaching corps, and lend its advantage in practical ways for the general improvement of educational work.”<sup>29</sup> The books were selected and intended to activate teachers’ commitment and continual learning, to open their minds, and to offer ideas for their class work and student development.

In the early years of Colorado teachers’ reading circles, two books were selected and assigned each year. In the later years, the number of books assigned

and suggested for reading rose. Beginning in 1923, four books or more were recommended for each year's reading circle.

## **Analyses of Books**

The data in the present study were extracted from the *Biennial Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado* between 1891 and 1936. The *Biennial Reports* listed the book titles, and some *Biennial Reports* briefly introduced books' contents and the benefits of reading the selected books for the teachers' professional preparation. Some *Biennial Reports* also included the books' prices and publisher information. To facilitate an analysis of the books, comprehensive information about the books used in the circles between 1891 and 1936 (see Table 5 for a complete listing), was obtained from the WorldCat.org database. The information recorded for each book included author biography, book content, publication information, and descriptors.

Based on the list of reading circle books (Table 5), the frequency of each author's appearance was calculated. Some frequently suggested authors included Emerson E. White (selected four times), George E. Johnson (three), David P. Page (two), Hubert M. Skinner (two), Charles A. McMurry (two), and Burke A. Hinsdale (two).

The most frequently chosen author, Emerson E. White, was the president of Purdue University; his four books spanned much of the period of the Colorado reading circles (1892 to 1912). George E. Johnson was a prolific and popular pedagogical author. David P. Page was an author of popular nineteenth-century American education textbooks. Hubert M. Skinner was well known as a historian who wrote about the development of Porter County in Indiana. Charles A. McMurry was an educator, professor, and principal disseminator of Herbartian pedagogical ideas. Burke A. Hinsdale was the president of Hiram College and an author of numerous books on history and education.

All the reading circle books were categorized to establish the core knowledge that Colorado teachers were expected to acquire from reading them. These

categories were created based on the examination of the topics of the books, their WorldCat descriptors, and their contents. The two authors of the present article discussed how the books fit into the categories, sorted them, and reached agreement on cases where different opinions on the categorization existed or when a book overlapped two categories. The categories and their percentages are shown in Figure 1.

The following four categories account for a large portion (48 books or 70 percent of the total) of all the reading circle books: pedagogy, learning in content areas, school management and discipline, and literature. These categories are compared by decade in Figure 2. As information about the reading circle books after 1920 was incompletely recorded in the *Biennial Reports*, the years from 1921 to 1936 were treated as a single period. The comparison was undertaken to determine if books in certain categories were read more often in particular decades. The result is that the number of books on learning in various content areas was consistent over time, while the number of books on literature experienced a peak in the period of 1901 to 1910.

The authors of the present study find the low number of books on psychology interesting. Psychology in the past decades has been an emphasis along with general pedagogical theory, learning, and assessment; but its status in education and human development during the reading circle years seem to have been low during the reading circle years. Only three books in the area of fundamental psychology were included. Instead, the circles required more books on learning in content areas, and even in literature, than in psychology. Two other areas might also be underrepresented: rural education and health education. Throughout the period (1890-1936), Colorado was largely a rural state, so the inclusion of only four books on rural education seems remarkable. On every county teacher certification test, there was a subtest with at least ten items addressing issues of health, sanitation, and hygiene; yet the circles required only two books on the subject. Table 6 presents a list of book titles in each of the categories exhibited in Figure 1.

The books selected in a year of reading circle participation were not limited as to when the books were published. On the assumption that newer books were



more likely to provide teachers with current knowledge and trends in education, the authors of the present study analyzed the relationship between the books' publication years and when they were selected for reading circles. Four groups were established:

- books published more than ten years before their appearance as reading circle selections,
- books published between six and ten years prior to adoption in the circles,
- books published between three and five years prior to the adoption, and
- books published within the previous three years.

The results are summarized by decade in Figure 3. Again, the years from 1921 to 1936 were treated as a single period. Figure 3 shows that, with the exception of the 1910 to 1919 period, in the other decades more than 70 percent of the books were very contemporary to their use. The exceptional decade could possibly be explained by the effect of the First World War on availability of funds for book purchase, the availability of paper and funds to print books, and the extended use of books for more than one reading period.

The information in Figure 3 is also organized by superintendent in Figure 4. There were thirteen superintendents of public instruction in Colorado between 1891 and 1936. In some years, the information on the books or the superintendents was not available in the *Biennial Reports*, so they are excluded from Figure 4. For example, during 1914 to 1920, information on books is missing; and from 1925 to 1927, information on superintendents is missing and therefore does not appear in Figure 4. Finally, ten superintendents remained: Katherine Craig served two terms, 1905-1909 and 1921-1923; Mary Bradford served four terms, 1914-1920 and 1923-1925. Although the number of books required in the reading circles was different by decade and even by superintendent, Figure 4 reveals that most superintendents preferred current books to classics. The books published within three years prior to adoption for the reading circles, with the exception of those selected during the

tenure of the first superintendent, accounted for at least fifty percent of the related books.

## **Discussion**

After describing and analyzing the books, the authors of the present article discuss whether the reading circle books met the objectives of the program.

Researcher Jesse Johnson identified four objectives:

- to improve the knowledge of teachers in terms of pedagogy and professionalism,
- to provide teachers with ethical and moral training,
- to keep teachers current on educational trends, and
- to supplement the inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers and quickly prepare inexperienced applicants for the classroom.<sup>30</sup>

The sections of state teachers' reading circle in the *Biennial Reports* did not list official goals of the program in a bylaw. The general mission or objective mentioned in the *Biennial Reports* was to supply books to feed educators, to arouse their spirit of teaching, and to bring their vocation to a higher standard.<sup>31</sup> Each county superintendent was supposed to provide their own intelligent leadership and management. Therefore, the objectives summarized by Jesse Johnson in his thorough exploration of teachers' reading circle programs were adopted in the present study.

In regard to the first objective, the purpose of Colorado teachers' reading circles was to provide teachers with learning opportunities to read and discuss books on a variety of educational topics. Besides the books on general pedagogy, other categories such as school management and discipline, psychology, learning in content areas, assessment, rural schools, and moral education could also be considered aspects of teacher professionalism. These books presented educational knowledge and skills believed to cultivate professional teachers. Therefore, the authors of the present study conclude that selected books in these categories (68

percent of the total number of books), were intended to improve teachers' pedagogy and professionalism.

With regard to the second objective, books on ethical and moral training are not a large component compared to books in other categories. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a variety of books believed to promote moral education were released. The authors of these books explored principles of moral education and types of moral practices in daily schooling. After examining all the books that comprised knowledge and practice of moral and ethical training, the authors of the present article conclude that the two books in Colorado teachers' reading circles did provide knowledge believed to promote ethical and moral development.

In regards to the third objective, most of the books were current as shown by Figures 3 and 4. Colorado teachers read current books that reflected the latest education trends. Although classic theoretical books also played an important role in teacher education, Colorado reading circle selections included newly published books for teachers in both urban and large rural areas.

Concerning the fourth objective, the authors in the present study did not investigate the practical effect of the Colorado teachers' reading circles on teacher qualifications and training. The limited evidence that exists is the presence of questions taken from reading circle book content on county certification tests.<sup>32</sup> A possible research strategy is to seek and investigate the teachers' perceptions of the program, such as their opinions on how much the program benefited their career preparation and improved their classroom practice. Although some researchers (i.e., Lewis Jones, Eric Lupfer, and Jesse Johnson) claimed the value of the movement for teacher professional development, the practical significance of such a historical innovation needs further research.

To sum up, by analyzing the specific books that Colorado teachers read in the reading circles from 1890 to 1936, the authors of the present study conclude the circles met at least the first three of the objectives stated by Jesse Johnson. The findings from the analyses of the books echo the historical and educational significance of Colorado teachers' reading circles, and draw more attention to

further study of teachers' reading circles in other states very different from Colorado and the specific books those teachers read.

The present study focused on the specific books in Colorado teachers' reading circles from 1890 to 1936. The teachers' reading circle was an important historical innovation and a form of teachers' continuing education. The books summarized and analyzed were placed into various categories in which general teaching philosophy, learning in different content areas, school management and discipline, and literature were found to be popular across the decades. The majority of books selected in the reading circles were current, and most superintendents preferred assigning recently published books over classic ones. The authors of the present article conclude that reading the books could have improved the knowledge and professionalism of teachers and kept them aware of the latest educational trends.

Table 1. Number of Reading Circle Certificates Awarded to Teachers in Elementary Grades.

	1931	1932	1933
First grade	432	1,090	1,166
Second grade	481	1,602	1,599
Third grade	761	1,559	1,704
Fourth grade	812	1,715	1,906
Fifth grade	710	1,937	1,865
Sixth grade	816	2,095	2,018
Seventh grade	1,094	2,319	2,006
Eighth grade	1,540	2,945	2,216
Totals	6,646	15,262	14,480

Source: Inez Lewis, *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1933-1934* (Denver, CO: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1935), 154.

Table 2. Number of Reading Circle Certificates Awarded by County.

County	1931 Number	1932 Number	1933 Number	1931 Rank	1932 Rank	1933 Rank
Larimer (6)	362	1,090	2,103	5	2	1
Yuma (19)		1,885	1,913		1	2
Weld (3)	322	829	1,179	7	3	3
Arapahoe (10)	209	815	788	11	4	4
Otero (9)	299	647	720	9	8	5
Cheyenne (46)	356	571	563	6	10	6
Douglas (47)	412	708	554	4	6	7
Eagle (44)	115	371	535	24	14	8
Morgan (15)	537	627	524	2	9	9
Delta (18)		458	462		12	10
Phillips (37)	154	318	435	16	18	11
Rio Blanco (49)			435			12
Pueblo (2)			406			13
Kit Carson (26)	101	362	319	25	15	14
Huerfano (16)	120	335	317	22	17	15
Jefferson (11)	318	318	317	8	19	16
Adams (12)	194	681	316	12	7	17
Logan (13)	144	343	305	19	16	18
El Paso (4)			290			19
Grand (53)			271			20

Note: The number after the county name indicates ranking, according to population size as counted in the 1930 U.S. Census, the most populous county being numbered 1. The columns of ranks show the counties' positions in the state of Colorado based on the number of reading circle certificates awarded.

Source: Inez Lewis, *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1933-1934* (Denver, CO: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1935), 154.

Table 3. Largely Rural Counties of Colorado in 1930.

County	Number of Rural Schools	Total Number of Schools	Rural School Percentage
Adams	62	76	82%
Archuleta	22	29	76%
Baca	73	94	78%
Bent	35	45	78%
Chaffee	25	31	81%
Cheyenne	26	33	79%
Custer	20	24	83%
Dolores	14	18	78%
Eagle	39	47	83%
Elbert	78	89	88%
Garfield	44	59	75%
Jackson	9	11	82%
Kit Carson	74	98	76%
Lake	12	15	80%
Lincoln	62	83	75%
Moffat	62	67	93%
Rio Blanco	31	33	94%
Routt	47	63	75%
San Miguel	21	27	78%
Washington	104	122	85%
Yuma	122	140	87%

Source: Katherine Craig, *Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1929-1930* (Denver, CO: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1931), 121.

Table 4. Number and Percentage of Reading Circle Certificates in Largely Rural Counties in 1933.

Largely Rural County	Number of Reading Circle Certificates	Percentage in the Entire State
Adams	316	2.1%
Chaffee	58	0.4%
Cheyenne	563	3.8%
Eagle	535	3.6%
Jackson	110	0.7%
Kit Carson	319	2.2%
Lincoln	235	1.6%
Moffat	208	1.4%
Rio Blanco	435	3.0%
Washington	118	0.8%
Yuma	1,913	13%
Total	4,810	33%

Source: Inez Lewis, *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1933-1934* (Denver, CO: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1935), 155.

Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
1891-1892	<i>Theory and Practice of Teaching, or, the Motives and Methods of Good School Keeping</i> (1885) <i>Lights of Two Centuries</i> (1887)	David Perkins Page Edward Everett Hale	Teaching Biography; Artists; Authors–Biography; Inventors
1892-1893	<i>Elements of Pedagogy</i> (1886)  <i>The Schoolmaster in Literature</i> (1892)	Emerson Elbridge White Hubert Marshall Skinner	Teaching; Educational Psychology; <i>Enseignement</i> (Education); <i>Psychopedagogie</i> (Educational Psychology) Teachers in Literature
1893-1894	<i>School Management: A Practical Treatise for Teachers and All Other Persons Interested in the Right Training of the Young</i> (1893)  <i>Readings in Folk-Lore: Short Studies in the Mythology of America, Great Britain, the Norse Countries, Germany, India, Syria, Egypt, and Persia</i> (1893)	Emerson Elbridge White Hubert Marshall Skinner	School Management and Organization English Poetry; Folklore
1894-1895	<i>School Interests and Duties</i> (1894)  <i>Pedagogical Pebbles</i> (1895)	Robert M. King; David Perkins Page James N. Patrick	School Management and Organization Teaching
1895-1896	<i>Psychology in Education</i> (1895) <i>An Introduction to the Study of American Literature</i> (1896)	Ruric Neval Roark Brander Matthews	Educational Psychology American literature–History and Criticism; American Authors; <i>Literatur</i> (Literature); USA; American Literature
1896-1897	None listed	None listed	None listed



Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936 continued.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
1897-1898	<i>Walks and Talks in the Geological</i>	Alexander	Geology
	<i>Field</i> (1886)	Winchell	
	<i>The Psychology of Childhood</i> (1895)	Frederick Tracy	Psychology
1898-1899	<i>The Method of the Recitation</i> (1898)	Charles Alexander McMurry; Frank Morton McMurry	Teaching
	<i>Insect Life: An Introduction to Nature- Study and a Guide for Teachers, Students, and Others Interested in Out-of-Door Life</i> (1897)	John Henry Comstock; Anna Botsford Comstock	Entomology; Laboratory Manuals; Nature Study
	<i>Teaching the Language Arts: Speech, Reading, Composition</i> (1896)	Burke Aaron Hinsdale	English Language--Study and Teaching
1899-1900	<i>The Beginners of a Nation: A History of the Source and Rise of the Earliest English settlements in America, with Special Reference to the Life and Character of the People</i> (1896)	Edward Eggleston	United States—History— Colonial Period, ca. 1600- 1775; United States
1900-1901	<i>Nature Study in Elementary Schools: First Reader</i> (1899)	Lucy Langdon Williams Wilson	Natural Study--Juvenile Literature; Readers--Natural History
	<i>Side Lights on American History</i> (1899)	Henry William Elson	United States--History; United States—Politics and Government
1901-1902	<i>The Art of Study: A Manual for Teachers and Students of the Science and the Art of Teaching</i> (1900)	Burke Aaron Hinsdale	Study skills; Attention; Teaching; Psychology of Learning
	<i>Introductory Lessons in English Literature for High Schools and Academies</i> (1901)	Israel C. McNeill; Samuel Adams Lynch	English Literature

Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936 continued.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
1902-1903	<i>Nature Study and Life</i> (1902)	Clifton Fremont	Nature study; <i>Ciencias</i>
		Hodge	<i>Naturales</i> (Natural Science)
1903-1904	<i>The Classic Myths in English Literature</i> (1893)	Charles Mills	Mythology; English Literature
		Gayley	
1903-1904	<i>Elements of General Method Based on the Principles of Herbart</i> (1903)	Charles Alexander McMurry	Education; Teaching; Johann Friedrich Herbart, 1776-1841
	<i>Jean Mitchell's School: A Story</i> (1902)	Angelina W. Wray	Rural Schools; Education
1904-1905	<i>The Art of Teaching</i> (1901)	Emerson Elbridge White	Pedagogy
	<i>Geographic Influences in American History</i> (1903)	Albert Perry Brigham	Physical Geography--United States; Human Geography—United States; United States—History
1905-1906	<i>School Sanitation and Decoration</i> (1890)	Severance Burrage	School Management and Discipline
	<i>The Louisiana Purchase, and the Exploration, Early History and Building of the West</i> (1903)	Ripley Hitchcock	Louisiana Purchase
1906-1907	<i>How To Tell Stories to Children and Some Stories To Tell</i> (1907)	Sara Cone Bryant	Storytelling
	<i>The Essays of Elia</i> (1906)	Charles Lamb	English Literature
1907-1908	<i>Essentials of Teaching Reading</i> (1906)	Eugene B. Sherman;	Reading (Elementary)
		Albert A. Reed	
1907-1908	<i>The Tempest</i> (1907)	William Shakespeare	English literature
	<i>Among Country Schools</i> (1906)	Olly Jasper Kern	Rural Schools—United States
1908-1909	<i>Moral Training in the Public Schools</i> (1908)	Don Ensminger	Moral Education
		Mowry	
1908-1909	<i>Education by Plays and Games</i> (1907)	George Ellsworth Johnson	Play; Games; Creative Activities and Seatwork

Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936 continued.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
	<i>A Short History of American Literature: Designed Primarily for Use in Schools and Colleges</i> (1900)	Walter Cochrane Bronson	American Literature–History and Criticism
	<i>The American Indian as a Product of Environment with Special Reference to the Pueblos</i> (1907)	Arthur John Fynn	Pueblo Indians; Indians
1909-1910	<i>The Last of the Mohicans, or, a Narrative of 1757</i> (1910)	James Fenimore Cooper	Mohegan Indians–Fiction; Frontier and Pioneer Life–Fiction; Bumpo Natty–Fiction; United States–History–French and Indian War, 1755-1763
	<i>A Child's History of England</i> (1880)	Charles Dickens	English Literature
	<i>Dumb Animals and How To Treat Them: A Textbook for Use in the Public Schools</i> (1909)	Edwin Kirby Whitehead	Animal Welfare
1910-1911	<i>Classroom Management: Its Principles and Technique</i> (1907)	William Chandler Bagley	School Management and Organization; Classroom Management
	<i>Six Centuries of English Poetry: From Tennyson to Chaucer</i> (1895)	James Baldwin	English Poetry
	<i>Civics and Health</i> (1909)	William Harvey Allen	Hygiene; Public Health
1911-1912	<i>A Short Introduction to the Literature of The Bible</i> (1901)	Richard Green Moulton	Hebrew Literature–History and Criticism; Bible–Language, Style; Bible–Criticism, Interpretation
	<i>Sociology and Modern Social Problems</i> (1910)	Charles Abram Ellwood	Sociology; Social Problems

<i>What To Do at Recess</i> (1910)	George Ellsworth Johnson	Games; Schools–Exercises and Recreations
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Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936 continued.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
1912-1913	<i>School Management and Moral Training: A Practical Treatise for Teachers and All Other Persons Interested in the Right Training of the Young</i> (1906)	Emerson Elbridge White	School Management and Organization
	<i>Fundamentals of Agriculture</i> (1911)	James Edward Halligan	Agriculture
	<i>Social Education</i> (1908)	Colin Alexander Scott	Education
1913-1921	None Listed	None listed	None listed
1921-1922	<i>The Essentials of Good Teaching</i> (1920)	Edwin Arthur Turner; Lotus Delta Coffman	Teaching; <i>Didaktik</i> (Didactic); <i>Unterricht</i> (Lessons)
	<i>The Teaching of Geography</i> (1921)	Mendel E. Branom	Pedagogy
	<i>Americans All</i> (1922)	Katherine Woods	United States–Civilization–1918- 1945; United States–Race Relations; Racism–United States
1922-1923	<i>Literature of The World: An Introductory Study</i> (1922)	William L. Richardson; Jesse M. Owen	Literature–History and Criticism
	<i>Problems in American Democracy</i> (1922)	Thames Williamson	Social Problems; United States–Politics and Government; United States–Economic Conditions; United States–Social Conditions
	<i>Class-Room Method and Management</i>	George Herbert	Teaching

(1917)

Betts

Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936 continued.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
	<i>Silent and Oral Reading: A Practical Handbook of Methods Based on the Most Recent Scientific Investigations (1922)</i>	Clarence Robert Stone	Oral Reading; Silent Reading
1923-1925	<i>Successful Teaching in Rural Schools (1922)</i>	Marvin Summers Pittman	Rural Schools; <i>Ecoles Rurales</i> (Rural Schools)
	<i>Types of Elementary Teaching and Learning (1923)</i>	Samuel Chester Parker	Education–Elementary; Teaching–Elementary schools
	<i>Moral Education in School and Home (1918)</i>	James O. Engleman	Moral Education
	<i>Lincoln (1922)</i>	Nathaniel W. Stephenson	Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865
	<i>Adolescence and High School Problems (1922)</i>	Ralph W. Pringle	Adolescence; Secondary Education
1925-1926	<i>The Teaching of Reading: A Textbook of Principles and Methods (1923)</i>	Harry Grove Wheat	Reading
	<i>Progressive Methods of Teaching (1924)</i>	Martin James Stormzand	Education; Teaching
	<i>Constructive School Discipline (1924)</i>	Walter Robinson Smith	School Discipline
	<i>Companionable Books (1922)</i>	Henry Van Dyke; Margaret Armstrong	Literature–History and Criticism; English Literature–History and Criticism
1926-1927*	<i>Self-Help Methods of Teaching English: A Guide and Ally for Teachers of Elementary English (1925)</i>	Julia Helen Wohlfarth	English Language–Study and Teaching
	<i>Starting-Points in Social Science (1925)</i>	Albert Galloway Keller	Social Sciences

Table 5. Colorado Teachers' Reading Circle Books from 1890 to 1936 continued.

Reading Circle Yrs.	Books and Publication Years	Authors	Descriptors
	<i>After Testing What? The Practical Use of Test Results in One School System</i> (1926)	Hobart Munson Corning	Grading and Marking (Students); Educational Tests and Measurement; Public Schools–Colorado–Trinidad; Intelligence Tests; Psychological Tests
	<i>Health Education in Rural Schools</i> (1919)	James Mace Andress	Hygiene–Education; Health Education; Rural Schools; Rural Health; School Health Services

Note: The last year that *Biennial Reports* reported information on Colorado teachers' reading circles was 1936. For this reason, the authors of the present study chose it as the ending year instead of 1927, which was the last year when the specific books were listed in the *Biennial Reports*.

Table 6. Book Titles in the Categories

Teaching/Teachers/ Pedagogy	<i>Theory and Practice of Teaching, or, the Motives and Methods of Good School Keeping</i> <i>Elements of Pedagogy</i> <i>The Schoolmaster in Literature</i> <i>Pedagogical Pebbles</i> <i>Art of Study: A Manual for Teachers and Students of the Science and the Art of Teaching</i> <i>The Art of Teaching</i> <i>Education by Plays and Games</i> <i>The Essentials of Good Teaching</i> <i>Types of Elementary Teaching and Learning</i> <i>Progressive Methods of Teaching</i>
School Management and Discipline	<i>School Interests and Duties</i> <i>Classroom Management: Its Principles and Techniques</i> <i>School Management and Moral Training: A Practical Treatise for Teachers and all Other Persons Interested in the Right Training of the Young</i> <i>Class-Room Method and Management</i> <i>Constructive School Discipline</i> <i>School Management</i>
Biography and Ethnography	<i>Lights of Two Centuries</i>  <i>American Indian as a Product of Environment with Special Reference to the Pueblo</i>  <i>Lincoln</i>
Psychology	<i>Psychology in Education</i> <i>The Psychology of Childhood</i> <i>Elements of General Method Based on the Principles of Herbart</i>

Table 6. Book Titles in the Categories continued.

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Learning in Different Content Areas	<i>Insect Life: An Introduction to Nature-Study and a Guide for Teachers, Students, and Others Interested in Out-Of-Door Life</i> <i>Walks and Talks in the Geological Field</i> <i>Teaching the Language Arts: Speech, Reading, Composition</i> <i>Nature Study in Elementary Schools: First Reader</i> <i>Side Lights on American History</i> <i>Nature Study and Life</i> <i>Geographic Influences in American History</i> <i>How to Tell Stories to Children and Some Stories To Tell</i> <i>Essentials of Teaching Reading</i> <i>Dumb Animals and How to Treat Them</i> <i>Sociology and Modern Social Problems</i> <i>Fundamentals of Agriculture</i> <i>Social Education</i> <i>The Teaching of Geography</i> <i>Problems in American Democracy</i> <i>Silent and Oral Reading: A Practical Handbook of Methods Based on the Most Recent Scientific Investigations</i> <i>Teaching of Reading: A Textbook of Principles and Methods</i> <i>Self-Help Methods of Teaching English: A Guide and Ally for Teachers of Elementary English</i> <i>Starting-Points in Social Science</i>
Literature	<i>Readings in Folk-Lore</i> <i>An Introduction to the Study of American Literature</i> <i>Introductory Lessons in English Literature for High Schools and Academies</i> <i>Classic Myths in English Literature</i> <i>The Essays of Elia</i> <i>The Tempest</i>



Table 6. Book Titles in the Categories continued.

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	<p><i>A Short History of American Literature: Designed Primarily for Use in Schools and Colleges</i></p> <p><i>The Last of the Mohicans, or, a Narrative of 1757</i></p> <p><i>A Child's History of England</i></p> <p><i>Six Centuries of English Poetry: From Tennyson to Chaucer</i></p> <p><i>A Short Introduction to Literature of the Bible</i></p> <p><i>Literature of the World: An Introductory Study</i></p> <p><i>Companionable Books</i></p>
School Health and Hygiene	<p><i>School Sanitation and Decoration</i></p> <p><i>Civics and Health</i></p>
General Learning and Assessment	<p><i>After Testing What? The Practical Use of Test Results in One School System</i></p> <p><i>What To Do at Recess</i></p> <p><i>The Method of Recitation</i></p>
Moral Education	<p><i>Moral Training in the Public Schools</i></p> <p><i>Moral Education in School and Home</i></p>
Rural Schools	<p><i>Jean Mitchell's School: A Story</i></p> <p><i>Among Country Schools</i></p> <p><i>Successful Teaching in Rural Schools</i></p> <p><i>Health Education in Rural Schools</i></p>
Others	<p><i>The Beginners of a Nation: A History of the Source and Rise of the Earliest English Settlements in America, with Special Reference to the Life and Character of the People</i></p> <p><i>The Louisiana Purchase, and Exploration, Early History and Building of the West</i></p> <p><i>Americans All</i></p> <p><i>Adolescence and High School Problems</i></p>

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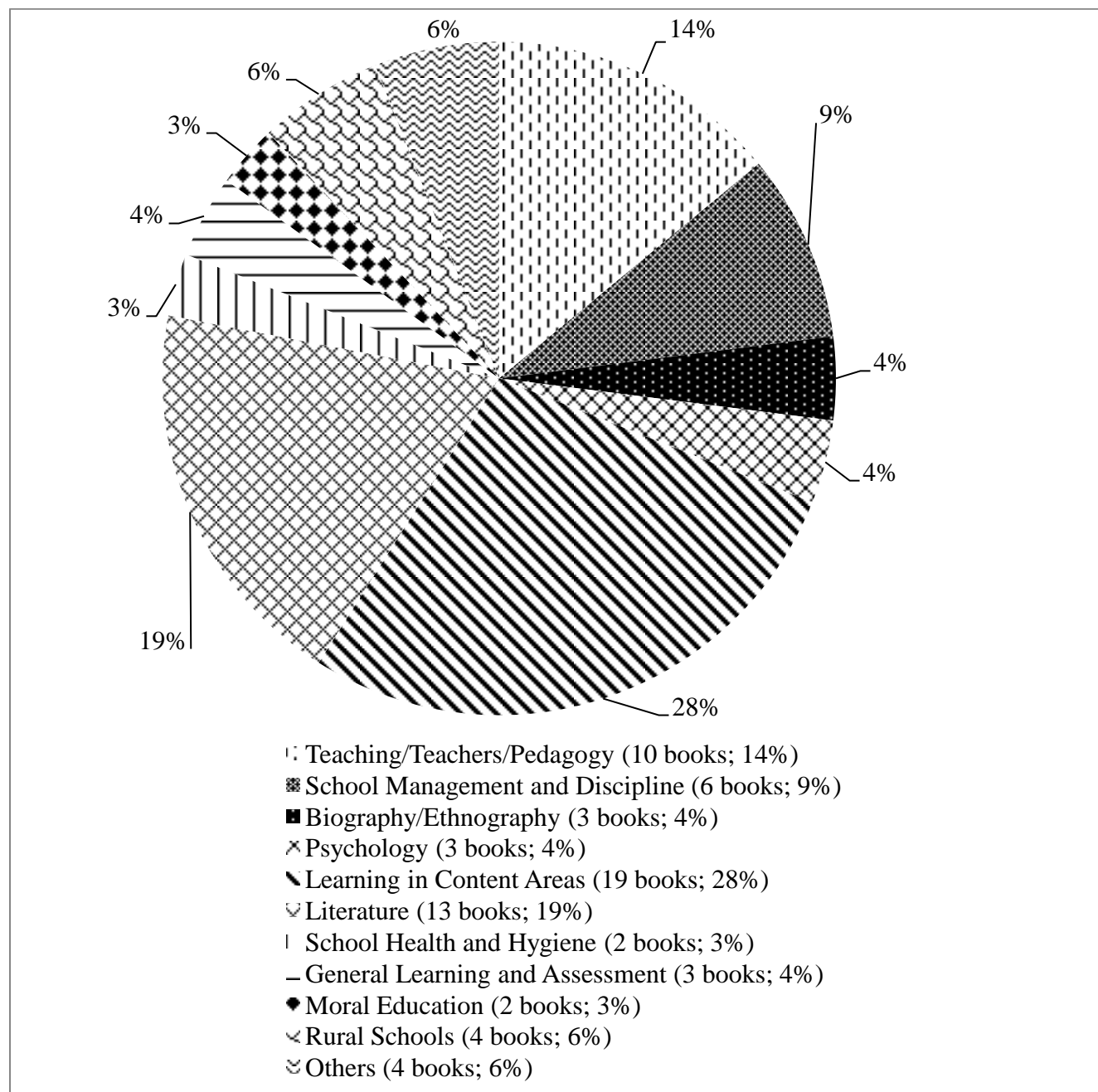


Figure 1. The Categories and Percentages of All the Books.

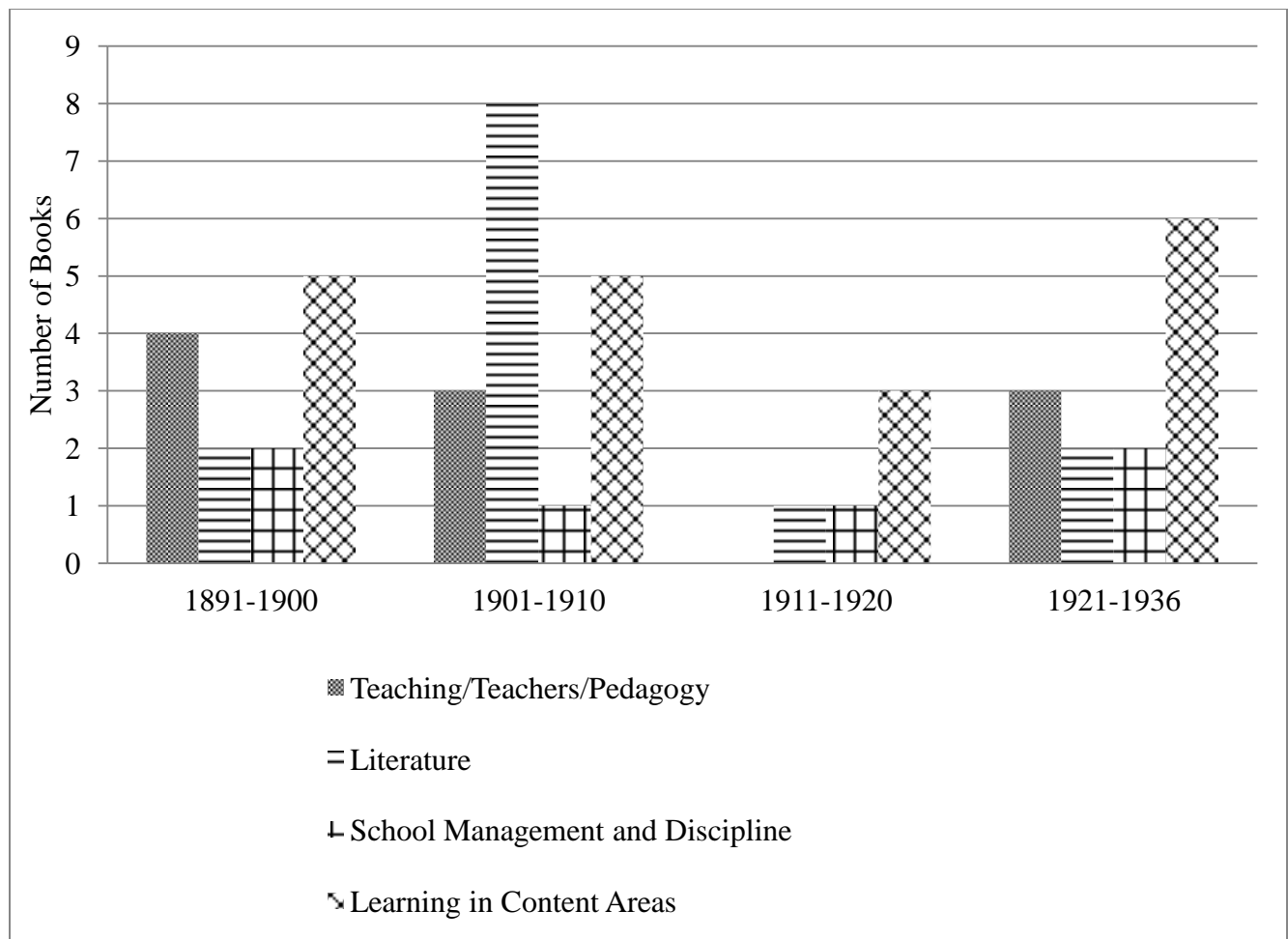


Figure 2. Four Categories of Books by Decade.

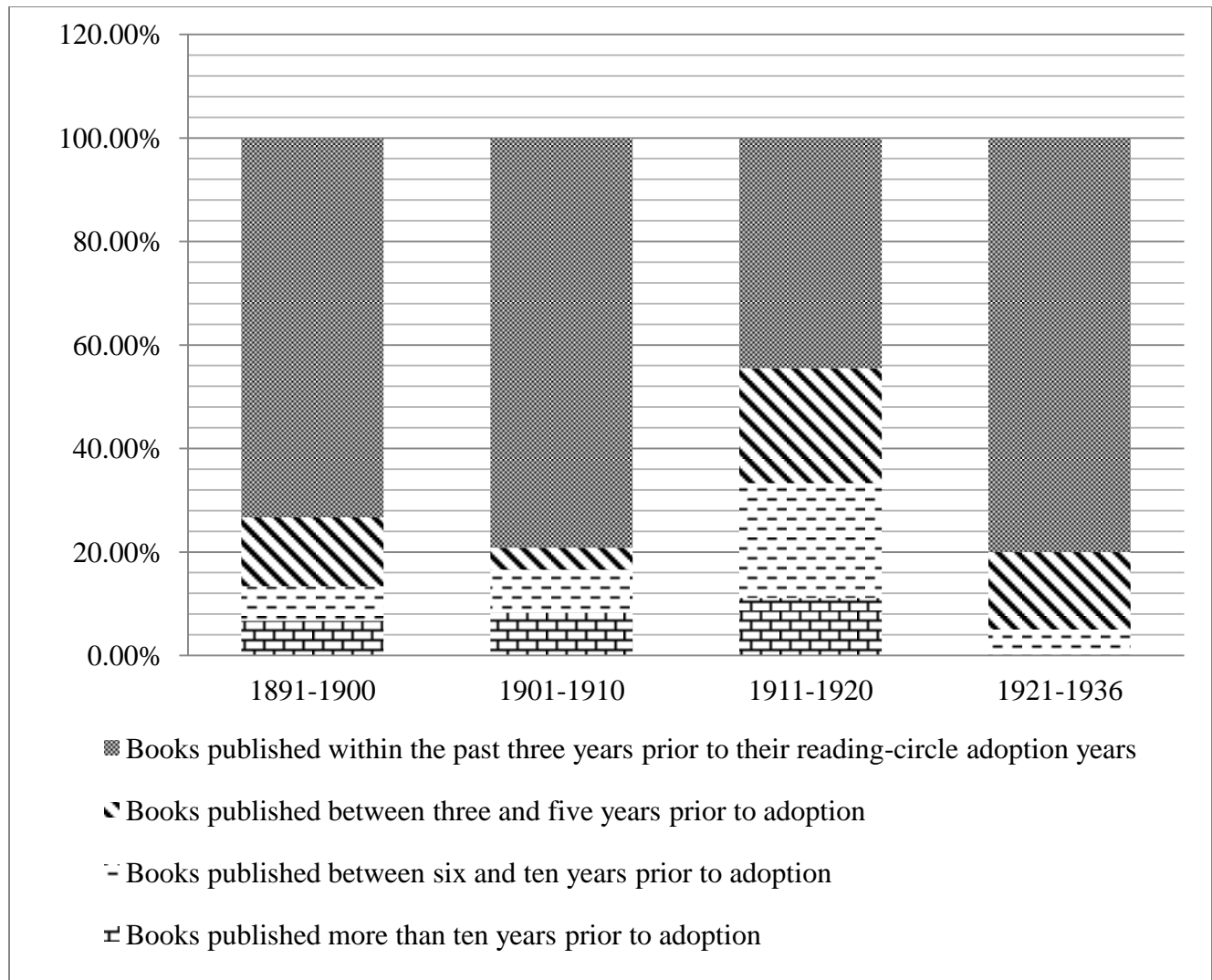


Figure 3. Book Publication Years Compared to Their Reading-Circle Adoption Years by Decade.

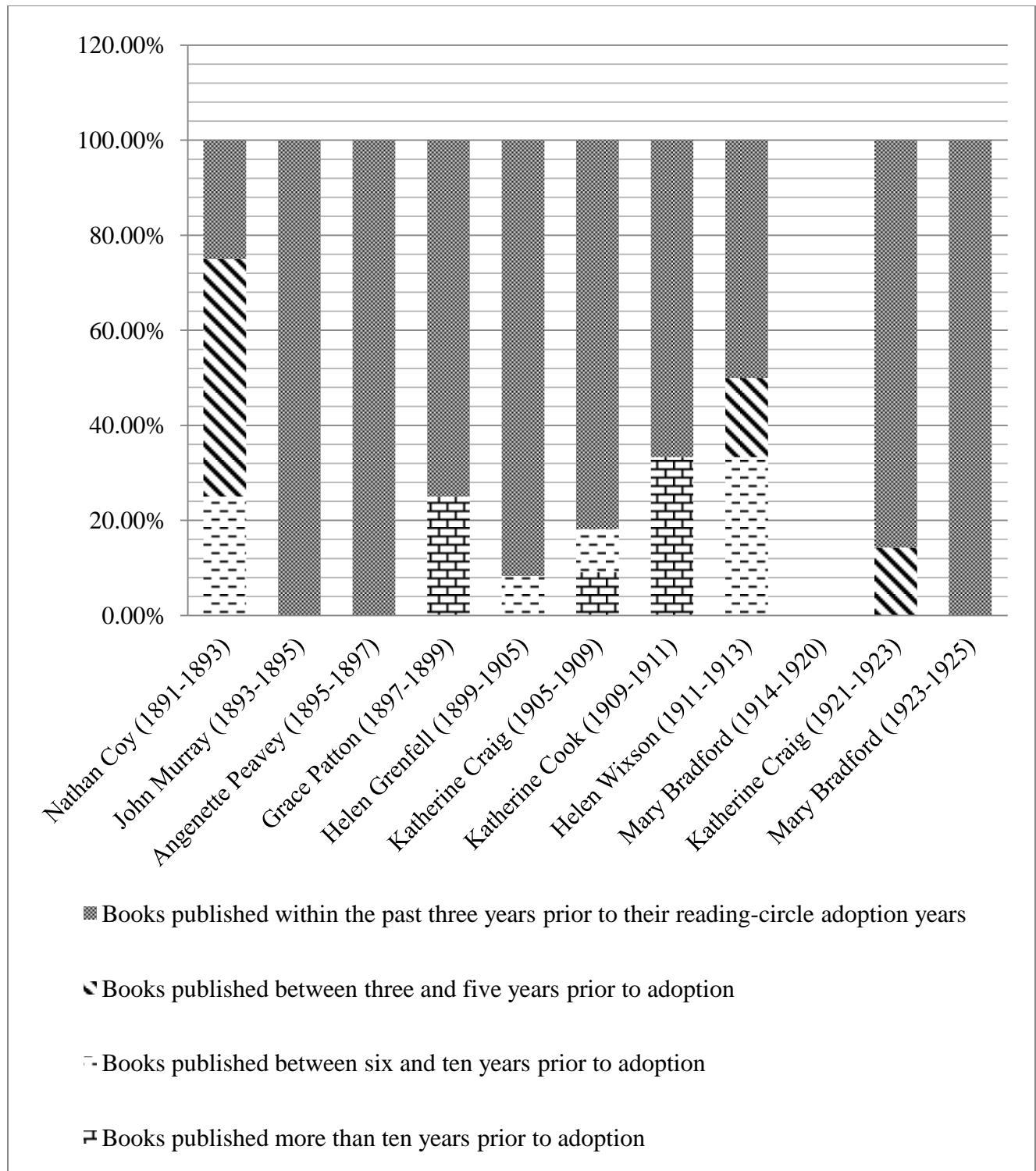


Figure 4. The Book Publication Years Compared to Their Reading-Circle Adoption Years by Superintendent.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Marguerite Schormann, "A Study of the Reading Circle Movement in the Changing Educational Scene," (Ed. D. thesis, Indiana University, 1964), 111.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Altenbaugh, *The American People and Their Education: A Social History* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2003); John Pulliam and James Van Patten, *History of Education in America* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2003); William Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to 'No Child Left Behind'* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2005); Joel Spring, *The American School*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2008); Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner, *Curriculum Development: Theory into Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1980); Joseph Watras, *The Foundations of Educational Curriculum and Diversity, 1565 to the Present* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002); Joseph Watras, *A History of American Education* (Boston: Pearson Education, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> "Resolutions," *Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association* 24 (1885): 21, quoted in Schormann, "A Study of the Reading Circle," 90.

<sup>4</sup> Mindy Spearman, "The Reading Circle Movement in Texas," *American Educational History Journal* 34 (2007): 25.

<sup>5</sup> Hubert Skinner, "Growth and Benefits of Reading Circles," in *Circular of Information of the Bureau of Education No. 1*, ed. United States Bureau of Education (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 152-160.

<sup>6</sup> To summarize and compare the organizations and administration of the circles across states, Ruediger provided information about organizers, management, official connections, and credits for the work in thirty states. William Ruediger, "Teachers' Reading Circles," in *Agencies for the Improvement of Teachers in Service*, ed. William Ruediger (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 92-109.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-97.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Lewis Jones, "The Instruction and Improvement of Teachers Now at Work in the Schools," *Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association* 34 (1895): 183-185.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Lupfer, "Reading Nature Writing: Houghton Mifflin Company, the Ohio Teachers' Reading Circle, and *In American Fields and Forests* (1909)," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 13 (2002): 41.

<sup>12</sup> Jesse Johnson, "The History of the Reading Circle Movement and an Evaluation of its Contribution to the Training of Teachers" (doctoral diss., Yale University, 1933).

<sup>13</sup> Robert Capraro, Lynn Burlbaw and Linda Zientek, "Content and Pedagogical Knowledge in Colorado: Teachers' Mathematics Exams at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," *Curriculum History* (2009): 160.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Bradford, *Twenty-Fifth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Official Biennium Ending November 30, 1926* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1927), 58.

<sup>15</sup> See Heather K. Caldwell, "Mary Carroll Craig Bradford: Providing Opportunities to Colorado's Women and Children through Suffrage and Education" (Ph. D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Nathan Coy, *Eighth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado* (Denver, CO: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1892), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Gilbert Sargent, *Rural School Improvement in Colorado* (Fort Collins, CO: Colorado Agricultural College, 1918), 41.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Gilbert Sargent, *The Rural and Village Schools of Colorado* (Fort Collins, CO: Colorado Agricultural College, 1914), 35.

<sup>19</sup> Helen Grenfell, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado* (Denver, CO: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1902), 61.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> W. T. Eddingfield served as the first secretary and manager of the Colorado teachers' reading circle program. Ellen Lombard, "Teachers' and Pupils' Reading Circles Sponsored or Conducted by State Department of Education," *Home Education Circle* 7 (1925): 3.

<sup>22</sup> John Murray, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado* (Denver, CO: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1895), 48-49.

<sup>23</sup> Grace Patton, *Eleventh Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado* (Denver, CO: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1898), 25-26.

<sup>24</sup> Helen Grenfell, *Thirteenth Biennial Report*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Katherine Craig, *Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1907-1908* (Denver, CO: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1908), 129.

<sup>26</sup> Inez Lewis, *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1933-1934* (Denver, CO: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1935), 154.

<sup>27</sup> Katherine Craig, *Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Colorado for the Years 1929-1930* (Denver, CO: Bradford-Robinson Ptg. Co., 1931), 121.

<sup>28</sup> Inez Lewis, *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report*, 155.

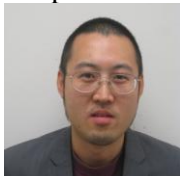
<sup>29</sup> Katherine Craig, *Reports*, 129.

<sup>30</sup> Jesse Johnson, "Reading Circle Movement," 20-25.

<sup>31</sup> Nathan Coy, *Eighth Biennial Report*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Capraro, Lynn M. Burlbaw and Linda Zeintek, op. cit., 158-174; Deena Harper, Larry Kelly and Lynn M. Burlbaw, "An Analysis of the Colorado's Teachers' Science Exams from the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," Annual Meeting of Organization of Educational Historians," Chicago, IL, October 7-8, 2011.

Yiwen Bi is a doctoral student in teaching, learning and culture at Texas A&M University. Correspondence concerning this article can be sent to his email at [byw.texasam@neo.tamu.edu/](mailto:byw.texasam@neo.tamu.edu/).



Lynn M. Burlbaw, professor of education, history, and social studies at Texas A&M University, is interested in the preparation of teachers and education of children at the turn of the twentieth century in Texas and Colorado. Burlbaw publishes in *The Social Studies*, *Social Education*, *American Educational History Journal*, and the *East Texas Historical Journal*. He frequently writes with his doctoral students. Contact him at [burlbaw@neo.tamu.edu](mailto:burlbaw@neo.tamu.edu).

