

# **The Development and Description of an Inventory to Measure the Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students**

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## **Abstract**

This article details the development of an inventory that identifies and measures reading preferences of sixth- through ninth-grade Mexican immigrant students. The inventory of reading preferences employs a unique methodology which utilizes open-ended, rating type questionnaires and annotated titles for 22 reading preference categories in combination with two statistical techniques (Q-quotient and reading preference factor) all developed by the researcher to accurately measure reading preferences. Reliability coefficients ranged from .90 to .96, far exceeding the typical range of .60 to .80 for similar inventories. Three panels of experts, one including children in validating the inventory, identified 36 annotated titles representing the dominant culture (Section A), and 37 annotated titles representing one of four predominant cultures in the Southwest: Mexican, African American, Native American, and Anglo American (Section B) from a pool of 120 annotated titles. This inventory was used to investigate seven primary and four secondary research questions. Summary results are provided. Other uses of the inventory are suggested.

## **Introduction**

Careful consideration should be given to the reading interests and preferences of children for whom reading material is being selected. If reading is the basis for scholastic learning, then reading interest is also important in the learning process. In order to maintain and expand their reading interests, children need to be introduced to varied materials of literary excellence. The starting point is to take children where they are in terms of their reading abilities, present needs, and interests and provide them with increasingly challenging reading materials which are relevant to their individual preferences and group interests.

Reading preferences and interests have been identified by educators as crucial factors in teaching and learning. A study by True (1889) is cited in the literature as being the first published report on reading interests. Since then reading interests have been the topic of widespread research resulting in hundreds of studies which have documented the changing patterns over the years (Norvell, 1950, 1958; Smith & Eno, 1961).

## **Background**

Although the Mexican American population has been studied extensively, very few researchers have studied and reported on their reading interests and preferences (Barchas, 1971; Peterson, 1982). Even fewer studies have focused on Mexican immigrants. In most instances, teachers are erroneously assuming that the reading interests of Mexican immigrants are the same as those of White middle-class children or their Hispanic/Mexican American counterparts. Consequently, they are building reading programs with the premise that no real differences exist.

Given the fact that research regarding the reading interests of immigrants in the United States is virtually nonexistent, to what extent a curriculum offers materials that reflect the reading preferences of Mexican immigrant students is not known. In order to implement effective reading programs, future curricula must reflect the reading preferences and interests of students. Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences for Mexican Immigrant Students provides a mechanism whereby reading preferences are measured through a questionnaire, thereby providing curriculum developers and teachers with valuable tools to effectively address Mexican immigrant students' reading preferences to best meet their educational needs.

## **Participants**

Participants for this study consisted of 405 Mexican immigrant students, ages 11 to 18, enrolled in grades 6–9, inclusive in a public school district in southern New Mexico. All of the participants have resided in the United States less than five years.

Mexican immigrant students were chosen to be participants in this study in large part because of a study conducted by Castro & Ingle (1993), which projected that by the end of the 20th century the largest ethnic group in the United States will be of Hispanic origin, with the majority coming from Mexico due to their troubled economic and social conditions and rapidly expanding labor force.

## **Purpose**

Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences was designed to assist teachers in identifying Mexican immigrant students' reading preferences to serve as a tool for future reading and learning purposes. It is essential to note that, for purposes of clarification, reading preferences were measured using annotated titles, which are used as a proxy for measuring genres or topics. Throughout this study "reading preferences" may be used interchangeably with literary topics or reading topic preferences. Consequently, students will inherently benefit from this inventory by formally identifying their reading preferences. As a result of teachers using this instrument and making relevant reading materials of interest available, students may renew their interest in school thereby reducing absenteeism and the possibility of dropping out of school. Schools have the responsibility and should make it a priority to identify and meet present reading needs and interests of individual students in all ethnic groups.

Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students was developed as a result of a dissertation study in the Division of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, College of Education, at the University of New Mexico (Quintana, 1997). The purpose of this dissertation study was to develop and implement a reliable and valid instrument to identify and measure the reading preferences of sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade Mexican immigrant students. This study further examined the influence of gender, grade level, age, and ethnicity on reading preferences.

## **Research Tools**

### **Development of Reading Preference Inventory**

In designing the format of the inventory, key choices were made—primarily choices between measuring reading "preference" versus "interests" and choices among the various methodologies utilized in the development of previous reading preference inventories.

The use of the term "preference" rather than "interest" was chosen as the measurement mode. This decision was based on the definition by Getzel (1966):

The difference between a preference and an interest is that a preference is relatively passive, while the interest is inevitably dynamic. A preference is a readiness to receive one object, as against another; it does not induce us to seek out the object. In contrast, the basic nature of an interest is that it does induce us to seek out particular objects and activities. (Getzel, 1966, p. 7)

After a thorough perusal of all possible methodologies and careful consideration of the pros and cons of each, it was decided that the use of fictitious annotated titles would best serve the purpose of this inventory. Fictitious annotated titles are topics of genre using brief story scenarios to describe characteristics of a mutually exclusive genre designed to assess reading preferences. A major advantage of using fictitious annotated titles is that they control variability of responses to items better than when actual books and book descriptions are used (Monson & Sabesta, 1991). Factors contributing to response variability are previous experiences with the text, size, and illustration preferences, and other physical features.

Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students consisted of two sections. Section A focused on fictitious annotated titles dealing with the dominant Anglo culture, the culture in which the targeted population was taught. It addressed specifically the following question: What are the expressed reading preferences of Mexican Immigrant students?

Section B of the inventory focused on fictitious annotated titles dealing with Mexican, African American, and Native American ethnic cultures, as well as Anglos due to their predominance in the Southwest. This section addressed the following question: To what extent do Mexican immigrant children show preference to reading content relating to their own ethnic group and other ethnic groups?

### *Description of the Inventory of Reading Preferences*

Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences in its final form consisted of two major sections. Section A, which represented the dominant culture, consisted of 36 fictitious annotated titles within 16 reading preference categories. History was the only category represented by four fictitious annotated titles. Each of the following categories were represented by three fictitious annotated titles: animals, adventure, mystery, sports, poetry, humor, and *cuentos* (traditional tales). Terror, science, and romance were represented by two fictitious annotated titles. The remaining five categories—contemporary realism, fairy tales, historical fiction, how-to, and science fiction—were represented by one fictitious annotated title.

Section B, representing the Mexican, African American, Native American, and Anglo American cultures, consisted of 37 fictitious annotated titles within six preference categories: biography, history, historical fiction, poetry, traditional tales, and spirituality. For each of the ethnic cultures there were either none, one, or two fictitious annotated titles for each of the six preference categories.

Appendix 1 presents five of the 36 annotated titles in Section A (dominant culture) of Quintana's inventory. The fictitious titles consist of annotations representing the following reading preference categories respectively: contemporary realism, romance, science fiction, how-to topics, and humor.

Appendix 2 presents four of the 37 fictitious annotated titles in the multicultural component, Section B, of the inventory. The categories represented consist of spirituality, history, poetry, and contemporary realism, respectively.

The annotations in both sections were randomly assigned to position on the inventory of reading preferences within their respective section, with only one condition: No two fictitious annotated titles representing the same reading preference category would be consecutively positioned in the inventory. Furthermore, no more than five annotated titles were positioned on a given page in order to improve the readability of each item.

Included in the beginning of the inventory were items designed to collect demographic information from the participants. Specifically, the items collected information regarding the participants' gender, grade level, age, longevity in the United States, their national origin as well as that of their parents, reading language preferences, and types of preferred reading materials. The inventory used in the main study, including instructions, consisted of 19 pages.

### **Administration of the Inventory of Reading Preferences**

In order to increase the reliability of the inventory, instructions for its administration were included in the inventory. The items and responses were printed below each fictitious annotated title from left to right and were labeled: (a) "would not like to read," (b) "would like to read somewhat," and (c) "would like to read very much." Participants were asked to consider each of the choices as possible responses to their reading the book described in the form of a fictitious annotated title. Two sample annotations were included in the instructions and were used to acquaint participants with the format and response modes of the inventory. All 73 annotations were read to the participants rather than having them read the annotations themselves to avoid the biasing effect of differential reading levels, thereby affecting comprehension and liking of stories.

Participants were given no time limit to complete the inventory; however, in all settings each group took approximately one hour to complete. When possible, similar testing conditions were established. Upon completion of Section B, the inventories were collected and participants were thanked for their participation.

#### *Identification of reading preferences categories*

Primary reading preference categories were identified primarily through a two-part questionnaire developed and administered to targeted Mexican immigrant students. Part one of the questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question which allowed for individual student written responses to the statement: "List the types of books you most like to read."

Part Two was administered after Part One was completed. It instructed participants to respond to the following two questions: (a) Based on your reading experiences, what types of books would you like to read? (b) If you could read any of the books published, which types of books would you like to read? Respondents were asked to rank their top five choices for each of the two questions from the 22 reading preference categories listed along with definitions.

In order to determine which reading categories of those identified by Mexican immigrant students were to be included in the inventory of reading preferences, it was paramount that a calculation procedure be developed for the various modes used to determine reading categories identified in Questionnaire 1. None of the standard statistical techniques in existence could be used as a calculation procedure to determine which reading categories to include in the inventory. As a result, the researcher developed a measurement technique called the Q-quotient to determine which categories to include in the inventory. An equation to calculate the Q-quotient was developed and tested for accuracy. Appropriate weights were assigned to the three questions in Questionnaire 1 on the basis of the question's ability to measure reading preference categories. The Q-quotient equation was calculated for each category to determine which categories to include in the inventory of reading preferences.

Respondents identified *cuentos* (a story or tale) as a reading preference in Questionnaire 1 even though it was not a listed choice. As a result, *cuentos* were included in the inventory in the form of fictitious annotated titles under Section A. Perhaps the best known of all Hispanic folk tales is *La Llorona*, the weeping woman (Day, 1997; Hayes, 1987).

### Development of the Annotated Titles

The primary categories were represented by five fictitious annotated titles. Secondary categories were represented by four, and tertiary categories by three, while the remaining six categories were represented by two fictitious annotated titles.

In addition, eight fictitious annotated titles for each of the six categories were included in Section B of the inventory, the multicultural component. Two fictitious annotated titles per category were written representing each of the following ethnic groups: Mexican, African American, Native American, and Anglo American.

A total of 120 fictitious annotated titles were initially written and submitted for review to any one or combination of the following three panels of experts: item selection panel, criteria panel, and cultural panel.

The purpose of the item selection panel of experts was to select those annotations which best fit each of the specific categories. The panel consisted of two professors in reading education, one doctoral candidate with a background in children's literature, and seven children representing grades

6–9 of the targeted students. The adult members of the panel read the annotations in Section A of the inventory of reading preferences and selected those elements that best represented the reading preference categories included in the inventory. The children in this panel identified the annotations they would like to read and deleted the one annotation per category they would “least” like to read.

Panel members also provided comments and suggestions regarding ease of readability, content, and reading level for the annotations selected per category. In addition, the panel members read the annotations developed for Section B of the inventory and made comments and suggestions for further improvement. All panel members, including children, were instrumental in deciding which of the annotations were selected for inclusion in the inventory.

Based on the recommendations of the item selection panel of experts, 28 fictitious annotated titles were eliminated, and the remaining 92 were then submitted to the criteria panel of experts for further, more specific analysis.

The purpose of the criteria panel of experts was to evaluate each annotation based on six pre-determined criteria. This panel consisted of one professor with expertise in children’s literature, one children’s public librarian and professional storyteller, and one graduate student with background in children’s literature.

The panel members evaluated each of the 92 annotated titles using the following criteria: (a) homogeneity in readability, (b) annotations written approximately at the fourth grade level, (c) representation of only one category per annotation, (d) absence of words identifying the gender of the character(s) (not applicable to the multicultural component), (e) absence of words identifying age of the character(s) (not applicable to the multicultural component), and (f) appropriateness of content for the category represented. In addition, the panel members made suggestions and recommendations for future improvement and refinement of the annotations, in terms of ease of readability and content, as they relate to the students’ maturational appropriateness.

The 48 annotated titles which comprised the multicultural component of the inventory were submitted to the six-member cultural panel of experts. The Mexican and Anglo American cultures were represented by two members each, and the Native American and African American cultures were represented by one member each. The purpose of this panel was to evaluate the authenticity and appropriateness of the fictitious annotated titles regarding their respective cultures. In addition, panel members provided suggestions and recommendations for further improvement and refinement regarding their own cultural annotated titles.

As the result of the collective efforts of the three panels of experts, a total of 44 items for Section A and 48 items for Section B were identified for inclusion in Quintana’s Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students.

Instructions for the administration of the inventory of reading preferences and items soliciting demographic information were written and submitted along with the 92 fictitious annotated titles for translation into Spanish. A translator from the same region as the targeted students was selected to translate in order to ensure that participants understood the inventory of reading preferences in Spanish despite their level of English proficiency. To ascertain that the original meaning was preserved during translation, the Spanish version was submitted to another qualified translator for translation back to English. The translation back to English was almost identical to the original English version regarding wording, but identical in terms of meaning.

## **Method**

The inventory used in the pilot test consisted of two major sections. Section A, representing the dominant culture, consisted of 44 fictitious titles and annotations within 17 categories. Section B, representing the Mexican, African American, Native American, and Anglo American cultures, consisted of 48 fictitious titles and annotations within six preference categories. For each of the ethnic cultures, there were two fictitious annotated titles for each reading preference category.

The 44 items in Section A and the 48 items in Section B were randomly assigned to position on the inventory of reading preference within their respective section.

The inventory of reading preferences was administered to randomly selected clusters (by classroom) of targeted students in a southern New Mexico public school district. A total of 123 Mexican immigrant students enrolled in grades 6–9 participated in pilot testing the inventory.

Statistical procedures using means and standard deviations were calculated for all 92 items in Sections A and B of the inventory. As a result of these statistical procedures, a total of 19 items were eliminated from the inventory (eight from Section A and eleven from Section B). Consequently, a total of 73 items were included in the final draft of the inventory of reading preferences (36 items in Section A and 37 items in Section B).

### **Test For Reliability in Pilot Study Inventory**

In order to test for internal consistency of the 92 items in the pilot test inventory and the 73 items in the main inventory, two estimates of reliability were computed—split-half and Cronbach's alpha.

For purposes of developing this inventory, reliability is defined as the level of internal consistency or stability of the measuring device (inventory of reading preferences) over time. Reliability is determined by its consistency and the degree to which the inventory measures the reading preferences it is supposed to measure consistently each time and consistently for each person. A number of ways are available to measure these two types of reliability.



Split-half reliability is the most widely used method of estimating internal consistency. After a measurement instrument is administered to an appropriate sample it is split into two sub-tests. Scores from the two sub-tests are computed for each individual and then correlated.

Cronbach's alpha is another method for estimating homogeneity or internal consistency of scores obtained by a single administration of a test. Cronbach's alpha is the only available computer calculated reliability estimate for tests whose items are not scored dichotomously and is frequently used on attitude and rating scales and other instruments where interest is measured in gradations of response (Worthen, Borg, & White, 1993).

### Test for Validity in Pilot Study

In the development of this inventory the question dealing with the validity of Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences asks, "Will this measurement instrument accomplish the purpose for which it was intended?" Content and construct validities were used to validate the inventory.

Content validity is the extent to which the elements in an instrument adequately represent the domain of content the test is designed to measure (Worthen, et al., 1993). In determining content validity, a typical procedure is to have a panel of independent experts (other than the item writers) judge whether or not the items adequately sample the domain of interest (Crocker & Algina, 1986).

Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences represents the entire content domain to be measured. All of the reading preference test items that were rated are part of the inventory. Content validity of the inventory was determined by three independent panels of experts. These independent panels established content validity of this instrument as discussed earlier. Therefore, the inventory of reading preferences is valid with respect to representation of content.

Construct validity is the degree to which a particular test can be shown to measure a theoretical construct about human behavior. The underlying hypothetical construct being measured in this inventory is "reading preferences" of Mexican immigrant students. Since there were no other reliable and valid inventories known to the researcher to use as a guide in the development of this inventory, students were asked to directly identify their reading preferences by use of an open-ended question in the initial developmental phase of the inventory. Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences has construct validity as verified by the fact that five of the reading categories identified by the participants in Questionnaire 1 are the categories with the top eight reading preference factors.

The majority of the testing instruments used with students whose first language is not English is usually administered in their second language (English). As a result, incomplete comprehension of the text occurs and a greater degree of error is introduced. This type of error was avoided by writing

the inventory in the participants' native language. The participants involved in the development of this inventory were identified by the school administrators as students involved in the Emergency Immigrant Program. This program is designed for students who have limited English skills and are dominant Spanish language speakers. Thereby error was not introduced by language. Every attempt was made to minimize threats to validity regarding the development and administration of the inventory.

### **Sample**

The population included in the development of this inventory consisted of all Mexican immigrant students enrolled in grades 6–9 inclusive in a public school district in southern New Mexico. Three separate samples from the same population were required to facilitate the development of the inventory of reading preferences. Specifically, the first sample consisted of 105 Mexican immigrant students whose sole purpose was to participate in the identification of reading preference categories. The second sample consisted of 123 Mexican immigrant students who participated in the pilot study in order to conduct an item-analysis and test for internal consistency of the inventory through measures of reliability. The third sample consisted of 405 Mexican immigrant students who participated in the main study as participants indicating their reading preferences.

### **Scoring Procedures**

Zimet (1966) recommended that a comprehensible, usable reference point that would increase the comparability of reading preference results be established if research was to contribute to the improvement of reading materials. A statistical technique to accurately measure a reference point had not been developed or was unknown to the researcher. As a result, the researcher developed a measurement technique called the "reading preference factor" to measure reading preferences, differences regarding reading preferences among groups based on related demographic variables, and reference point used for comparison purposes. This technique allowed for the comparison of individual scores, class cluster scores, and large group (district wide) scores to be compared on the same level. In order to determine which of the reading categories included in the inventory were preferred by Mexican immigrant students, it was necessary to develop a calculation procedure (reading preference factor) which utilized frequencies, response mode values, and weight factors that incorporated the three response modes used to determine the reading preferences of Mexican immigrant students.

An equation to calculate the reading preference factors for each reading preference category was developed and utilized in order to incorporate the responses made by the participants on each of the 73 items in the inventory of

reading preferences. Frequencies for the response modes were tabulated for each item per category. Appropriate weights were assigned to the three response modes in the inventory based on the degree of “like” in the response. The following values and weight factors were assigned to each response mode:

Response Mode	Value	Weight Factors
Would like to read very much	3	2
Would like to read somewhat	2	1
Would not like to read	1	-1

The maximum reading preference factor for any reading category was “6” while the minimum factor was “-1.”

The reading preference factor was calculated for each reading preference category in order to accurately measure the degree of preference for that given reading category. Preferences between selected independent variables regarding reading categories were compared as part of the study.

## Results

The main study involved the administration of the revised 73-item Inventory of Reading Preferences to 405, sixth through ninth grade, Mexican immigrant students in a public school district in southern New Mexico. All participants were required to be “recent” (within five years) immigrants. In order to obtain a sample size of a minimum of 400 Mexican immigrant students in grades 6–9 inclusive, it was necessary to pool five elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools.

Participants were somewhat evenly distributed regarding their length of residency in the United States over a 1–5 year period and with regards to gender. Approximately 84.7% of the participants were born in Mexico as were 98% of their mothers and 95% of their fathers. Results of this study are in agreement with Barchas (1971) in that 70.9% of Mexican immigrant students preferred the Spanish language for reading while 20.5% preferred English.

### **Test for Reliability**

To test for internal consistency, two methods of reliability were used: split-half and Cronbach’s alpha. Due to the split-half method resulting in a reliability of each half of the test rather than the reliability of the test as a whole, the Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula was used to statistically correct the underestimated reliability. Table 1 presents the reliability coefficients for Sections A and B for the pilot study and main study from Quintana’s Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students.

In comparing the magnitude of the two coefficients in Sections A and B of the 92-item inventory used in the pilot study with the coefficient in Sections A and B of the 73-item inventory used in the main study, a decrease in reliability coefficients occurred in all instances. This suggests that the reliability of the pilot inventory is more reliable than the 73-item inventory. This is partially due to the reduction of items from 92 to 73. Length of test influences the reliability coefficients. Specifically, longer tests, given everything else equal, are more reliable than shorter tests (Worthen, et al., 1993).

Table 1

*Reliability Tests for Sections A and B of Inventory with Corresponding Coefficients for the Pilot Test and Main Study*

Reliability Test	Inventory Section	Pilot Test Coefficient	Main Test Coefficient
Cronbach's Alpha	A (Dominant Culture)	.9314	.9049
Cronbach's Alpha	B (Multi-culture)	.9592	.9433
Split-Half	A (Dominant Culture)	.9488	.9337
Split-Half	B (Multi-culture)	.9687	.9559

“Generally in all areas that are more difficult to measure, reliability coefficients typically range from .60 to .80” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 360). Therefore, the coefficient alphas for Section A (.90, .93) and B (.94, .95) of Quintana’s Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students were considered significant. The inventory of reading preferences has substantial reliability to measure the reading preferences of Mexican immigrant students.

### **Analysis of Research Questions Studied with the Inventory of Reading Preferences**

The following research questions were addressed with Quintana’s Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students with corresponding result summaries:

1. What are the expressed reading preferences of Mexican immigrant students?

Mexican immigrant students prefer topics with “excitement.” Their most preferred reading categories are terror, mystery, and adventure.

2. To what extent do Mexican immigrant students show preference toward reading content relating to their own ethnic group?

Mexican immigrant students expressed preferences in fictitious annotated titles relating to their own ethnic group and are in agreement with the findings of Barchas (1971), Peterson (1982), Wolfson, Manning, and Manning (1984). For each of the six reading preference categories in Section B, Mexican immigrants selected annotated titles reflecting their own culture as their most preferred reading over other ethnic cultures.

3. To what extent do Mexican immigrant students show preference toward reading content relating to other ethnic groups?

Mexican immigrant students were less interested in annotated titles pertaining to other ethnic groups, namely, Native American, African American, and Anglo American which confirm findings by Barchas (1971), Peterson (1982), Wolfson, Manning, and Manning (1984). It seems evident that ethnicity (ethnic identification) may be a more significant determinant of reading preferences than was once believed (Barchas, 1971).

4. To what extent do differences exist in their preferences toward reading content between male and female Mexican immigrant students?

Mexican immigrant students differed in reading preferences between male and female students. The top five reading preference categories for female students were romance, terror, fairy tales, mystery, and adventure. On the other hand, males preferred to read about science fiction, animals, how-to topics, sports, and history.

5. To what extent do differences exist in their reading preferences toward content among sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade Mexican immigrant students?

The reading preference factors declined substantially from sixth to seventh grade and again from seventh to eighth grade in thirteen of the sixteen categories. The reading preference factors plunged to their lowest in eighth grade before increasing.

6. To what extent do differences exist in their reading preferences toward reading content among selected age groups of Mexican immigrant students?

The reading preference category most preferred by all age groups was "adventure." In addition, 11-year-olds had the highest reading preference factors in all 16 categories.

7. To what extent do differences exist in reading preferences between selected periods of longevity in the United States of Mexican immigrant students?

Results indicated that longevity was not a major determinant of reading preferences of Mexican immigrant students. However, significance was found in eight out of 36 annotated titles. The top three reading preference categories for those students with residencies of one year or less were terror, mystery, and adventure, respectively, as compared to fairy tales, mystery, and humor for those students with residencies of five years.

In addition to the primary research questions studied with the reading preference Inventory, the following four secondary questions regarding multicultural content questions were of particular interest to the researcher and meritorious of analysis:

8. To what extent do differences exist in reading preferences between male and female Mexican immigrant students when reading preference categories are based on selected ethnic cultures?

Results revealed that when reading content provided opportunity for minority group identification both male and female were more alike than different in their reading preferences.

9. To what extent do differences exist in reading preferences among sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth-grade Mexican immigrant students when reading preference categories are based on selected ethnic cultures?

In both sections A and B of the inventory, grade level had the highest numbers of annotated titles with significant differences. These findings provide a strong argument that reading preferences gradually change for Mexican immigrant students as they progress from one grade to the next. Specifically, reading preference factors declined substantially from Grade 6 (4.3) to Grade 7 (3.2) and declined again in Grade 8 (2.9) before increasing slightly in Grade 9 (3.2). A possible explanation for the downward trend in reading preference factors is the change in teaching learning environments from elementary school to middle or junior high.

10. To what extent do differences exist in reading preference among selected age levels of Mexican immigrant students when reading preference categories are based on selected ethnic cultures?

Given the opportunity for ethnic identification, age was not a major determinant. This result reaffirms that ethnicity is a factor in determining reading preferences. When reading content provided an opportunity for ethnic identification, Mexican immigrants' reading preferences are more alike than different.

11. To what extent do differences exist in reading preferences between selected periods of longevity in the United States of Mexican immigrant students when reading preference categories are based on selected ethnic cultures?

Results indicated that longevity, as determined by the number of years living in the United States, is not a factor influencing reading preferences when reading preference categories are based on selected ethnic cultures.

### Other Uses of the Inventory of Reading Preferences

School districts with high concentrations of Mexican immigrant students should seriously consider administering Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students to said students in order to identify their reading preferences and make such reading content available to them to enhance and ensure their academic survival in our educational system. This

inventory should be used to assist teachers in identifying Mexican immigrant students' reading preferences for future reading and learning purposes.

The methods and procedures used in the design and development of Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences may be utilized in the development of similar inventories to measure reading preferences of the dominant culture students as well as other ethnic minority groups.

This inventory may also be utilized with similar targeted students in other locations in the United States to determine if locale has an impact on reading preferences. This inventory is ideal for use in longitudinal studies to assess changes in students' reading preferences during the acculturation process. Also, this inventory may be utilized to compare reading preferences between students from Mexico with students from other Latin countries to determine if differences exist between students whose native language is Spanish, as well as compare reading preferences between students in Mexico and Mexican immigrant students residing in the United States. Another potential use of this inventory is to determine if reading materials available in the classroom and library have an impact on students' reading preferences.

Quintana's Inventory of Reading Preferences of Mexican Immigrant Students may be used as a model to design a similar reading preference inventory expanding on Section B, the multicultural component, to permit extensive comparisons among Mexican immigrant students, African American, Native American, and Anglo American students' reading preferences residing in the Southwest since these are the predominant groups in this area.

## **Conclusion**

Everyone concerned with students' development and improvement of reading experiences and with providing appropriate relevant materials should be aware of reading preferences. Knowledge of individuals and groups of individuals' reading preferences should be an ongoing process and conducted on a continuous basis by local schools, school districts, and on a statewide basis.

All children have a need to see their lives reflected in books and in other school material (Lambert, 1994). Kruse and Horning (1991) firmly believe that students achieve greater success and a positive self esteem when they see themselves reflected in school curricula. They learn to identify and appreciate their own cultural heritage. This is especially true for Mexican immigrant students struggling to achieve academic success in the United States: "Without their home culture, they lack a bridge to reach the new language and culture of American schools and society" (Trueba, Rodriguez, Zou, & Cintron, 1993, p. 141).

Once reading preferences of students are determined, it is paramount that school officials and society make every effort to incorporate such reading preferences in their curricula and in every aspect of the learning process. This

will not only maintain high reading interests by students, but will ultimately lead to the overall success in academic and working environments to enhance and ensure students' academic survival in our educational system. Quintana's Inventory provides a viable and reliable methodology or vehicle to assure that students' reading preferences are accurately measured in order to provide students the maximum educational benefits given their reading preferences.

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## Appendix 1

### 18. *El Despertad*

Se llevaron a un joven al hospital en una coma sin esperanzas de que sobreviviera. Conozca las luchas diarias y los retos que enfrentan a este joven cuando lucha para vivir y manejar con la realidad al despertad veinte años después.

No me gustaría leerlo    me gustaría tanto leerlo    me gustaría mucho leerlo

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### 19. *Amor Prohibido*

Una pareja se envuelve en un romance. Aunque se les haya prohibido la relación, esta pareja continua sus reuniones. Siga los acontecimientos que promueven aceptar esta relación.

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### 20. *El Niño Perdido*

Un niño va por el camino cuando se siente sobrellevar por un poder espantoso. El niño para y ve hacia el cielo de la noche. Este libro se pone más misterioso cuando la comunidad empieza a buscar al niño perdido.

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### 21. *Ilusiones Celestiales*

Descubra “la vista profunda” con esta colección de imagines creadas con la computadora que forman una illusion 3-dimensiones sin utilizar lentes especiales. Siga las direcciones para tomar un viaje de 3-dimensiones al espacio. “Es la última frontera.”

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### 22. *Una Poca Diversión*

Este libro agradable está lleno de juegos, rompecabezas, y juegos de palabras desarrollado por los estudiantes de mentes creativas de todos los Estados Unidos. Póngale retos a su imaginación y pruebe sus destrezas aun divirtiéndose con los juegos y rompecabezas.

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## Appendix 2

### 54. *Bajo Las Alas del Espíritu*

Imagínese la valentía de los primeros Bautistas quienes arriesgaron la vida en defensa de sus creencias. Unos de sus mayores logros fue agregarle la primer enmienda a la Constitución que es la garantiza a todos la libertad en seguir sus creencias religiosas.

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### 55. *Unos de los Presidentes Mexicanos*

Francisco Madero quiso conseguir más democracia para México. Consecuentemente, Madero logró ser presidente de México, terminando más de 30 años bajo el imperio de Díaz. Investigue la serie de acontecimientos llegando hasta su asesinato.

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### 56. *Justicia para Todos*

Explore que quiere decir “Poder Negro” a través de la poesía. Esta colección contiene obras por Afro-Americanos quienes han laborado con dignidad y orgullo para hacer que la justicia sea una realidad para todos.

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### 57. *¿Un País de Oportunidad?*

Viva las esperanzas y el miedo de una familia mexicana que arriesgaron su vida para cruzar la frontera ilegalmente en busca del Sueño Americano. Imagínese los tiempos duros, los horrores, y exasperaciones que se encontraron al enfrentarse con la realidad de empezar una vida nueva nueva en los Estados Unidos.

No me gustaría leerlo    me gustaría tanto leerlo    me gustaría mucho leerlo

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