20 Content Analysis

What Is Content Analysis?

Some Applications

Categorization in Content Analysis

Steps Involved in Content Analysis

Determine Objectives
Define Terms
Specify the Unit of Analysis
Locate Relevant Data
Develop a Rationale
Develop a Sampling Plan
Formulate Coding Categories
Check Reliability and Validity
Analyze Data

An Illustration of Content Analysis

Using the Computer in Content Analysis

Advantages of Content Analysis

Disadvantages of Content Analysis

An Example of a Content Analysis Study

Analysis of the Study

Purpose/Justification
Definitions
Prior Research
Hypotheses
Sample
Instrumentation
Internal Validity
Results/Interpretation

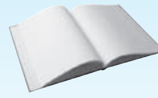
OBJECTIVES **Studying this chapter should enable you to:**

- Explain what a content analysis is.
- Explain the purpose of content analysis.
- Name three or four ways content analysis can be used in educational research.
- Explain why a researcher might want to do a content analysis.
- Summarize an example of content analysis.
- Describe the steps involved in doing a content analysis.
- Describe the kinds of sampling that can be done in content analysis.
- Describe the two ways to code descriptive information into categories.
- Describe two advantages and two disadvantages of content analysis research.
- Recognize an example of content analysis research when you come across it in the educational literature.

INTERACTIVE AND APPLIED LEARNING After, or while, reading this chapter:

Go to the Online Learning Center at www.mhhe.com/fraenkel8e to:

- Learn More About Content Analysis



Go to your online Student Mastery Activities book to do the following activities:

- Activity 20.1: Content Analysis Research Questions
- Activity 20.2: Content Analysis Categories
- Activity 20.3: Advantages vs. Disadvantages of Content Analysis
- Activity 20.4: Do a Content Analysis

Darrah Hallowitz, a middle school English teacher, is becoming more and more concerned about the ways that women are presented in the literature anthologies she has been assigned to use in her courses. She worries that her students are getting a limited view of the roles that women can play in today's world. After school one day, she asks Roberta, another English teacher, what she thinks. "Well," says Roberta, "Funny you should ask me that. Because I have been kind of worried about the same thing. Why don't we check this out?"

How could they "check this out"? What is called for here is content analysis. Darrah and Roberta need to take a careful look at the ways women are portrayed in the various anthologies they are using. They might find that such studies have been done, or they might do one themselves. That is what this chapter is about.

As we mentioned in Chapter 19, the third method that qualitative researchers use to collect and analyze data is what is customarily referred to as *content analysis,* of which the analysis of documents is a major part.

What Is Content Analysis?

Much of human activity is not directly observable or measurable, nor is it always possible to get information from people who might know of such activity from firsthand experience. **Content analysis** is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications.* It is just what its name implies: the analysis of the usually, but not necessarily, written contents of a communication. Textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles, cookbooks, songs, political speeches, advertisements, pictures—in fact, the contents of virtually any type of communication—can be analyzed. A person's or group's conscious and unconscious beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas often are revealed in their communications.

In today's world, there is a tremendously large number of communications of one sort or another (newspaper editorials, graffiti, musical compositions, magazine articles, advertisements, films, electronic media, etc.). Analysis of such communications can tell us a great deal about how human beings live. To analyze these messages, a researcher needs to organize a large amount of material. How can this be done? By developing appropriate categories, ratings, or scores that the researcher can use for subsequent comparison in order to illuminate what he or she is investigating. This is what content analysis is all about.

By using this technique, a researcher can study (indirectly) anything from trends in child-rearing practices (by comparing them over time or by comparing differences in such practices among various groups of people), to types of heroes people prefer, to the extent of violence on television. Through an analysis of literature, popular magazines, songs, comic strips, cartoons, and movies, the different ways in which sex, crime, religion, education, ethnicity, affection and love, or violence and hatred have been presented at different times can be revealed.

*Many things produced by human beings (e.g., pottery, weapons, songs) were not originally intended as communications but subsequently have been viewed as such. For example, the pottery of the Mayans tells us much about their culture.

He or she can also note the rise and fall of fads. From such data, researchers can make comparisons about the attitudes and beliefs of various groups of people separated by time, geographic locale, culture, or country.

Content analysis as a methodology is often used in conjunction with other methods, in particular historical and ethnographic research. It can be used in any context in which the researcher desires a means of systematizing and (often) quantifying data. It is extremely valuable in analyzing observation and interview data.

Let us consider an example. In a series of studies during the 1960s and 1970s, Gerbner and his colleagues did a content analysis of the amount of violence on television.[1] They selected for their study all of the dramatic television programs that were broadcast during a single week in the fall of each year (in order to make comparisons from year to year) and looked for incidents that involved violence.

They videotaped each program and then developed a number of measures used by trained coders to analyze each of the programs. *Prevalence,* for example, referred to the percentage of programs that included one or more incidents of violence; *rate* referred to the number of violent incidents occurring in each program; and *role* referred to the individuals who were involved in the violent incidents. (The individuals who committed the violent act or acts were categorized as "violents," while the individuals against whom the violence was committed were categorized as "victims.")[2]

Gerbner and his associates used these data to report two scores: a *program score,* based on prevalence and rate; and a *character score,* based on role. They then calculated a *violence index* for each program, which was determined by the sum of these two scores. Figure 20.1 shows one of the graphs they presented to describe the violence index for different types of programs between 1967 and 1977. It suggests that violence was higher in children's programs than in other types of programs and that there was little change during the 10-year period.

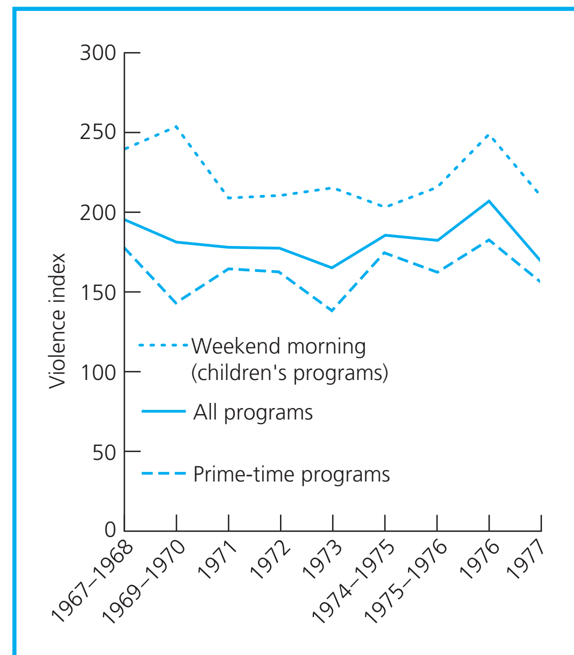


Figure 20.1 *TV Violence and Public Viewing Patterns*

Some Applications

Content analysis is a method that has wide applicability in educational research. For example, it can be used to:

- Describe trends in schooling over time (e.g., the back-to-basics movement) by examining professional and/or general publications.
- Understand organizational patterns (e.g., by examining charts, outlines, etc., prepared by school administrators).
- Show how different schools handle the same phenomena differently (e.g., curricular patterns, school governance).
- Infer attitudes, values, and cultural patterns in different countries (e.g., through an examination of what sorts of courses and activities are—or are not—sponsored and endorsed).
- Compare the myths that people hold about schools with what actually occurs within them (e.g., by comparing the results of polls taken of the general public with literature written by teachers and others working in the schools).
- Gain a sense of how teachers feel about their work (e.g., by examining what they have written about their jobs).
- Gain some idea of how schools are perceived (e.g., by viewing films and television programs depicting same).

Content analysis can also be used to supplement other, more direct methods of research. Attitudes toward women who are working in so-called men's occupations, for example, can be investigated in a variety of ways: questionnaires; in-depth interviews; participant observations; and/or content analysis of social networking sites, magazine articles, television programs, newspapers, films, and autobiographies that touch on the subject.

Lastly, content analysis can be used to give researchers insights into problems or hypotheses that they can then test by more direct methods. A researcher might analyze the content of a student newspaper, for example, to obtain information for devising questionnaires or formulating questions for subsequent in-depth interviews with members of the student body at a particular high school.

Following are the titles of some content analysis studies that have been conducted by educational researchers:

- "Exploring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Topics in Foundations of Education Textbooks"[3]
- "An Analysis of Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework Syllabi."[4]
- "Using Alcohol to Sell Cigarettes to Young Adults: A Content Analysis of Cigarette Advertisements."[5]
- "Perceptions of Collaboration: A Content Analysis of Student Journals."[6]
- "Role of Gender in Reviewers' Appraisals of Quality in Political Science Books."[7]
- "A Content Analysis of School Anti-bullying Policies."[8]
- "Teaching Mathematics for Understanding: An Analysis of Lessons Submitted by Teachers Seeking NBPTS Certification"[9]

Categorization in Content Analysis

All procedures that are called *content analysis* have certain characteristics in common. These procedures also vary in some respects, depending on the purpose of the analysis and the type of communication being analyzed.

All must at some point convert (i.e., *code*) descriptive information into *categories.* There are two ways that this might be done:

1. The researcher determines the categories before any analysis begins. These categories are based on previous knowledge, theory, and/or experience. For example, later in this chapter, we use predetermined categories to describe and evaluate a series of journal articles pertaining to social studies education (see page 487).
2. The researcher becomes very familiar with the descriptive information collected and allows the categories to emerge as the analysis continues (see Figure 20.3 on page 484).

Steps Involved in Content Analysis

DETERMINE OBJECTIVES

Decide on the specific objectives you want to achieve. There are several reasons why a researcher might want to do a content analysis.

- *To obtain descriptive information about a topic.* Content analysis is a very useful way to obtain information that describes an issue or topic. For example, a content analysis of child-rearing practices in different countries could provide descriptive information that might lead to a consideration of different approaches within a particular society. Similarly, a content analysis of the ways various historical events are described in the history textbooks of different countries might shed some light on why people have different views of history (e.g., Adolf Hitler's role in World War II).
- *To formulate themes (i.e., major ideas) that help to organize and make sense out of large amounts of descriptive information.* **Themes** are typically groupings of codes that emerge either during or after the process of developing codes. An example is shown on page 484.
- *To check other research findings.* Content analysis is helpful in validating the findings of a study or studies using other research methodologies. Statements of textbook publishers concerning what they believe is included in their company's high school biology textbooks (obtained through interviews), for example, could be checked by doing a content analysis of such textbooks. Interviews with college professors as to what they say they teach could be verified by doing a content analysis of their syllabi.
- *To obtain information useful in dealing with educational problems.* Content analysis can help teachers plan activities to help students learn. A content analysis of student compositions, for example, might help teachers pinpoint grammatical or stylistic errors. A content analysis of math assignments might reveal deficiencies in the ways students attempt to solve word problems. While such analyses are similar to grading practices, they differ in that they provide more specific information, such as the relative frequency of different kinds of mistakes.
- *To test hypotheses.* Content analysis can also be used to investigate possible relationships or to test ideas.

MORE ABOUT RESEARCH

Important Findings in Content Analysis Research

One of the classic examples of content analysis was done more than 50 years ago by Whiting and Child.* Their method was to have at least two judges assign ratings on 17 characteristics of child rearing and on the presence or absence of 20 different explanations of illness for 75 "primitive societies" in addition to the United States. Examples of characteristics are: dependence socialization anxiety, age at weaning, and age at toilet training. Ratings were based on ethnographic material on each society (see Chapter 21), available at the Yale Institute of Human Relations, which varied from one printed page to several hundred pages.

Psychoanalytical theory provided the basis for a series of correlational hypotheses. Among the researchers' conclusions was that explanations of illness are related to both early deprivation and severity of training (e.g., societies that weaned earliest were more likely to explain illness as due to eating, drinking, or verbally instigated spells). Another finding was that the U.S. (middle-class) sample was, by comparison, quite severe in its child-rearing practices, beginning both weaning and toilet training earlier than other societies and accompanying both with exceptionally harsh penalties.

*M. W. Whiting and I. L. Child (1953). *Child training and personality.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

For example, a researcher might hypothesize that social studies textbooks have changed in the degree to which they emphasize the role of minority individuals in the history of our country. A content analysis of a sample of texts published over the last 20 years would reveal if this is the case.

DEFINE TERMS

As in all research, investigators and/or readers are sure to incur considerable frustration unless important terms, such as *violence, minority individuals,* and *back-to-basics,* are clearly defined, either beforehand or as the study progresses.

SPECIFY THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

What, exactly, is to be analyzed? Words? Sentences? Phrases? Paintings? The units to be used for conducting and reporting the analysis should be specified before the researcher begins the analysis.

LOCATE RELEVANT DATA

Once the researcher is clear about the objectives and units of analysis, he or she must locate the data (e.g., textbooks, magazines, songs, course outlines, lesson plans) that will be analyzed and that are relevant to the objectives. The relationship between the content to be analyzed and the objectives of the study should be clear. One way to help ensure clarity is to have a specific research question (and possibly a hypothesis) in mind beforehand and then to select a body of material in which the question or hypothesis can be investigated.

DEVELOP A RATIONALE

The researcher needs a conceptual link to explain how the data are related to the objectives. The choice of content should be clear, even to a disinterested observer. Often, the link between question and content is quite obvious. A logical way to study bias in advertisements, for example, is to study the contents of newspaper and magazine advertisements. At other times, the link is not so obvious, however, and needs to be explained. Thus, a researcher who is interested in changes in attitudes toward a particular group (e.g., police officers) over time might decide to look at how they were portrayed in short stories appearing in magazines published at different times. The researcher must assume that changes in how police officers were portrayed in these stories indicate a change in attitudes toward them.

Many content analyses use available material. But it is also common for a researcher to generate his or her own data. Thus, open-ended questionnaires might be administered to a group of students in order to determine how they feel about a newly introduced curriculum, and then the researcher would analyze their responses. Or a series of open-ended interviews might be held with a group of students to assess their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's counseling program, and these interviews would be coded and analyzed.

DEVELOP A SAMPLING PLAN

Once these steps have been accomplished, the researcher develops a sampling plan. Novels, for example, may be sampled at one or any number of levels, such as words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, or authors. Television programs can be sampled by type, channel, sponsor, producer, or time of day shown. Any form of communication may be sampled at any conceptual level that is appropriate.

One of the *purposive sampling designs* described in Chapter 18 is most commonly used. For example, a researcher might decide to obtain transcribed interviews from several students because all of them are exceptionally talented musicians. Or a researcher might select from among the minutes of school board meetings only those in which specific curriculum changes were recommended.

The sampling techniques discussed in Chapter 6 can also be used in content analysis. For example, a researcher might decide to select a **random sample** of chemistry textbooks, curriculum guides, laws pertaining to education that were passed in the state of California, lesson plans prepared by history teachers in a low-performing high school, or an elementary principal's daily bulletins. Another possibility would be to number all the songs recorded by the Benny Goodman big band and then select a random sample of 50 to analyze.

Stratified sampling also can be used in content analysis. A researcher interested in school board policies in a particular state, for example, might begin by grouping school districts by geographic area and size and then use random or systematic sampling to select particular districts. Stratification ensures that the sample is representative of the state in terms of district size and location. A statement of policies would then be obtained from each district in the sample for analysis.

Cluster sampling can also be used. In the example just described, if the unit of analysis were the minutes of board meetings rather than formal policy statements, the minutes of all meetings during an academic year could be analyzed. Each randomly selected district would thus provide a cluster of meeting minutes. If minutes of only one or two meetings were randomly selected from each district, however, this would be an example of two-stage random sampling (see page 97).

There are, of course, less desirable ways to select a sample of content to be analyzed. One could easily select a convenience sample of content that would make the analysis virtually meaningless. An example would be assessing the attitudes of American citizens toward free trade by studying articles published only in the *National Review* or *The Progressive.* An improvement over convenience sampling would be, as mentioned earlier, purposive sampling. Rather than relying on simply their own or their colleagues' judgments as to what might be appropriate material for analysis, researchers should, when possible, rely on evidence that the materials they select are, in fact, representative. Thus, deciding to analyze letters to the editor in *Time* magazine in order to study public attitudes regarding political issues might be justified by previous research showing that the letters in *Time* agreed with polling data, election results, and so on.

FORMULATE CODING CATEGORIES*

After the researcher has defined as precisely as possible what aspects of the content are to be investigated, he or she needs to formulate categories that are relevant to the investigation (Figure 20.2). The categories should be so explicit that another researcher could use them to examine the same material and obtain substantially the same results—that is, find the same frequencies in each category.

Suppose a researcher is interested in the accuracy of the images or concepts presented in high school English texts. She wonders whether the written or visual content in these books is biased in any way, and if it is, how. She decides to do a content analysis to obtain some answers to these questions.

She must first plan how to select and order the content that is available for analysis—in this case, the textbooks. She must develop pertinent categories that will allow her to identify that which she thinks is important.

Let us imagine that the researcher decides to look, in particular, at how women are presented in these texts. She would first select the sample of textbooks to be analyzed—that is, which texts she will read (in this case, perhaps, all of the textbooks used at a certain grade level in a particular school district). She could then formulate categories. How are women described? What traits do they possess? What are their physical, emotional, and social characteristics? These questions suggest categories for analysis that can, in turn, be broken down into even smaller **coding** units such as those shown in Table 20.1.

Another researcher might be interested in investigating whether different attitudes toward intimate human

*An exception to this step occurs when the researcher counts instances of a particular characteristic (e.g., of violence, as in the Gerbner study) or uses a rating system (as was done in the Whiting & Child study).

Figure 20.2 *What Categories Should I Use?*

TABLE 20.1 *Coding Categories for Women in Social Studies Textbooks*

Physical Characteristics	Emotional Characteristics	Social Characteristics
Color of hair	Warm	Race
Color of eyes	Aloof	Religion
Height	Stable, secure	Occupation
Weight	Anxious, insecure	Income
Age	Hostile	Housing
Hairstyle	Enthusiastic	Age
etc.	etc.	etc.

relationships are implied in the mass media of the United States, England, France, and Sweden. Films would be an excellent and accessible source for this analysis, although the categories and coding units within each category would be much more difficult to formulate. For instance, three general categories could be formed using Horney's typology of relationships: "going toward," "going away from," and "going against."[10] This would be an example of categories formulated ahead of time. The researcher would then look for instances of these concepts expressed in the films. Other units of behavior, such as hitting someone, expressing a sarcastic remark, kissing or hugging, and refusing a request, are illustrations of other categories that might emerge from familiarity with the data.

Another way to analyze the content of mass media is to use "space" or "time" categories. For example, in the past few years, how many inches of newsprint have been devoted to student demonstrations on campuses? How many minutes have television news programs devoted to urban riots? How much time has been used for programs that deal with violent topics compared to nonviolent topics?

The process of developing categories that emerge from the data is often complex. An example of coding an interview is shown in Figure 20.3. It is a transcript of an interview with a teacher regarding curriculum change. In this example, both the category codes and the initial themes are identified in the text and annotated in the margins, along with reminders to the researcher.

Manifest Versus Latent Content. In doing a content analysis, a researcher can code either or both the manifest and the latent content of a communication. How do they differ? The **manifest content** of a

Codes	Transcript	Themes
	Interviewer: Lucy, what do you perceive as strengths of Greenfield as a community and how that relates to schools?	
Close-knit community	**Lucy:** Well, I think Greenfield is a fairly close-knit community. I think people are interested in what goes on. . . . We like to keep track of what our kids are doing, and feel a connection to them because of that. The downside of that	
Health of community, or community values	perhaps is that kids can feel that we are looking TOO close. . . . you said the health of the community itself is reflected in schools. . . . I think . . . this is a pretty conservative community overall, and look to make sure that what is being talked about in the schools really carries out the community's values. . . . (And I think there might be a tendency to hold back a little bit too much because of that idealization of "you know, we learned the basics, the reading, the writing, and the arith-	Sense of community
Change is threatening	metic"). So you know, any change is threatening. . . Sometimes that can get in the way of trying to do different things.	
	Interviewer: In terms of looking at leadership strengths in the community, where does Greenfield set in a continuum with planning process, . . . forward thinking, visionary people. . . .	Potential theme: Leaders
Visionary skills of talented people	**Lucy:** I think there are people that have wonderful visionary skills. I would say that the community as a whole . . . would not reflect that . . . I think we have some incredibly talented people who become frustrated when they try to implement what they see as their . . .[11]	

Figure 20.3 *An Example of Coding an Interview*

communication refers to the obvious, surface content—the words, pictures, images, and so on that are directly accessible to the naked eye or ear. No inferences as to underlying meaning are necessary. To determine, for example, whether a course of study encourages the development of critical thinking skills, a researcher might simply count the number of times the word *thinking* appears in the course objectives listed in the course outline.

The **latent content** of a document, on the other hand, refers to the meaning underlying what is said or shown. To get at the underlying meaning of a course outline, for example, a researcher might read through the entire outline or a sample of pages, particularly those describing the classroom activities and homework assignments to which students will be exposed. The researcher would then make an overall assessment as to the degree to which the course is likely to develop critical thinking. Although the researcher's assessment would surely be influenced by the appearance of the word *thinking* in the document, it would not depend totally on the frequency with which the word (or its synonyms) appeared.

There seems little question that both methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Coding the manifest content of a document has the advantage of ease of coding and *reliability*—another researcher is likely to arrive at the same number of words or phrases counted. It also lets the reader of the report know exactly how the term *thinking* was measured. On the other hand, it would be somewhat suspect in terms of *validity*. Just counting the number of times the word *thinking* appears in the outline for a course would not indicate all the ways in which this skill is to be developed, nor would it necessarily indicate "critical" thinking.

Coding the latent content of a document has the advantage of getting at the underlying meaning of what is written or shown, but it comes at some cost in reliability. It is likely that two researchers would assess differently the degree to which a particular course outline would develop critical thinking. An activity or assignment judged by one researcher as especially likely to encourage critical thinking might be seen by a second researcher as ineffective. A commonly

used criterion is 80 percent agreement. But even if a single researcher does all the coding, there is no guarantee that he or she will remain constant in the judgments made or standards used. Furthermore, the reader would probably be uncertain as to exactly how the overall judgment was made.

The best solution, therefore, is to use both methods whenever possible. A given passage or excerpt should receive close to the same description if a researcher's coding of the manifest and latent contents is reasonably reliable and valid. However, if a researcher's (or two or more researchers') assessments, using the two methods, are not fairly close (it is unlikely that there would ever be perfect agreement), the results should probably be discarded and perhaps the overall intent of the analysis reconsidered.

CHECK RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Although it is seldom done, we believe that some of the procedures for checking **reliability** and **validity** (see Chapter 8) could at least in some instances be applied to content analysis. In addition to assessing the agreement between two or more categorizers, it would be useful to know how the categorizations by the same researcher agree over a meaningful time period (test-retest method). Furthermore, a kind of equivalent-forms reliability could be done by selecting a second sample of materials or dividing the original sample in half. One would expect, for example, that the data obtained from one sample of editorials would agree with those obtained from a second sample. Another possibility would be to divide each unit of analysis in the sample in half for comparison. Thus, if the unit of analysis is a novel, the number of derogatory statements about foreigners in odd-numbered chapters should agree fairly well with the number in even-numbered chapters.

With respect to validity, we think it should often be possible not only to check manifest against latent content but also to compare either or both with results from different instruments. For example, the relative frequency of derogatory and positive statements about foreigners found in editorials would be expected to correspond with that found in letters to the editor, if both reflected popular opinion.

ANALYZE DATA

Counting is an important characteristic of some content analysis. Each time a unit in a pertinent category is found, it is "counted." Thus, the end product of the coding process must be numbers. It is obvious that counting the frequency of certain words, phrases, symbols, pictures, or other manifest content requires the use of numbers. But even coding the latent content of a document requires the researcher to represent those coding decisions with numbers in each category.

It is also important to record the *base,* or reference point, for the counting. It would not be very informative, for example, merely to state that a newspaper editorial contained 15 anti-Semitic statements without knowing the overall length of the editorial. Knowing the number of speeches a senator makes in which she argues for balancing the budget doesn't tell us very much about how fiscally conservative she is if we don't know how many speeches she has made on economic topics since the counting began.

Let us suppose that we want to do a content analysis of the editorial policies of newspapers in various parts of the United States. Table 20.2 illustrates a portion of a tally sheet that might be used to code such editorials. The first column lists the newspapers by number (each newspaper could be assigned a number to facilitate analysis). The second and third columns list location and circulation, respectively. The fourth column lists the number of editorials coded for each paper. The fifth column shows the subjective assessment by the researcher of each newspaper's editorial policy (these might later be compared with the objective measures obtained). The sixth and seventh columns record the number of certain types of editorials.

The last step, then, is to analyze the data that have been tabulated. As in other methods of research, the descriptive statistical procedures discussed in Chapter 10 are useful to summarize the data and assist the researcher in interpreting what they reveal.

A common way to interpret content analysis data is through the use of frequencies (i.e., the number of specific incidents found in the data) and the percentage and/or proportion of particular occurrences to total occurrences. You will note that we use these statistics in the analysis of social studies research articles that follows (see Tables 20.3, 20.4, and 20.5). In content analysis studies designed to explore relationships, a crossbreak table (see Chapter 10) or chi-square analysis (see Chapter 11) is often used because both are appropriate to the analysis of categorical data.*

Other researchers prefer to use codes and themes as aids in organizing content and arriving at a narrative description of findings.

*In studies in which ratings or scores are used, averages, correlation coefficients, and frequency polygons are appropriate.

TABLE 20.2 *Sample Tally Sheet (Newspaper Editorials)*

Newspaper ID Number	Location	Circulation	Number of Editorials Coded	Subjective Evaluation[a]	Number of Pro-Abortion Editorials	Number of Anti-Abortion Editorials
101	A	3,000,000	29	3	0	1
102	B	675,000	21	3	1	1
103	C	425,000	33	4	2	0
104	D	1,000,000	40	1	0	8
105	E	550,000	34	5	7	0

[a]Categories within the subjective evaluation: 1 = very conservative; 2 = somewhat conservative; 3 = middle-of-the-road; 4 = moderately liberal; 5 = very liberal.

An Illustration of Content Analysis

In 1988, we did a content analysis of all the research studies published in *Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)* between the years 1979 and 1986.[12] *TRSE* is a journal devoted to the publication of social studies research. We read 46 studies contained in those issues. The following presents a breakdown by type of study reviewed.

Type of Studies Reviewed	
True experiments	7 (15%)
Quasi-experiments	7 (15%)
Correlational studies	9 (19%)
Questionnaire-type surveys	9 (19%)
Interview-type surveys	6 (13%)
Ethnographies	9 (19%)
	n = 47[a] (100%)

[a]This totals 47 rather than 46 because the researchers in one study used two methodologies.

Both of us read every study that was published during this period that fell into one of these categories. We analyzed the studies using a coding sheet that we jointly prepared. To test our agreement concerning the meaning of the various categories, we each initially read a sample of (the same) six studies, and then met to compare our analyses. We found that we were in substantial agreement concerning what the categories meant, although it soon became apparent that we needed some additional subcategories as well as some totally new categories. Figure 20.4 presents the final set of categories.

We then reread the initial six studies using the revised set of categories, as well as the remaining 40 studies. We again met to compare our assessments. Although we had a number of disagreements, the great majority were simple oversights by one or the other of us and were easily resolved.* Tables 20.3 through 20.5 present some of the findings of our research.

TABLE 20.3 *Clarity of Studies*

Category	Number
A. Focus clear?	46 (100%)
B. Variables clear?	
(1) Initially	31 (67%)
(2) Eventually	7 (15%)
(3) Never	8 (17%)
C. Is treatment in intervention studies made explicit?	
(1) Yes	12 (26%)
(2) No	2 (4%)
(3) NA (no treatment)	32 (70%)
D. Is there a hypothesis?	
(1) No	18 (39%)
(2) Explicitly stated	13 (28%)
(3) Clearly implied	15 (33%)

TABLE 20.4 *Type of Sample*

Category	Number
Random selection	2 (4%)
Representation based on argument	6 (13%)
Convenience	29 (62%)
Volunteer	4 (9%)
Can't tell	6 (13%)

Note: One study used more than one type of sample. Percentages are based on $n = 46$.

*It would have been desirable to compare our analysis with the findings of a second team as a further check on reliability, but this was not feasible.

1. **Type of Research**
   - A. Experimental
     - (1) Pre
     - (2) True
     - (3) Quasi
   - B. Correlational
   - C. Survey
   - D. Interview
   - E. Causal-comparative
   - F. Ethnographic
2. **Justification**
   - A. No mention of justification
   - B. Explicit argument made with regard to worth of study
   - C. Worth of study is implied
   - D. Any ethical considerations overlooked?
3. **Clarity**
   - A. Focus clear? (yes or no)
   - B. Variables clear?
     - (1) Initially
     - (2) Eventually
     - (3) Never
   - C. Is treatment in intervention studies made explicit? (yes, no, or n.a.)
   - D. Is there a hypothesis?
     - (1) No
     - (2) Yes: explicitly stated
     - (3) Yes: clearly implied
4. **Are Key Terms Defined?**
   - A. No
   - B. Operationally
   - C. Constitutively
   - D. Clear in context of study
5. **Sample**
   - A. Type
     - (1) Random selection
     - (2) Representation based on argument
     - (3) Convenience
     - (4) Volunteer
     - (5) Can't tell
   - B. Was sample adequately described? (1 = high; 5 = low)
   - C. Size of sample (*n*)
6. **Internal Validity**
   - A. Possible alternative explanations for outcomes obtained
     - (1) History
     - (2) Maturation
     - (3) Mortality
     - (4) Selection bias/subject characteristics
     - (5) Pretest effect
     - (6) Regression effect
     - (7) Instrumentation
     - (8) Attitude of subjects
   - B. Threats discussed and clarified? (yes or no)
   - C. Was it clear that the treatment received an adequate trial (in intervention studies)? (yes or no)
   - D. Was length of time of treatment sufficient? (yes or no)
7. **Instrumentation**
   - A. Reliability
     - (1) Empirical check made? (yes or no)
     - (2) If yes, was reliability adequate for study?
   - B. Validity
     - (1) Empirical check made? (yes or no)
     - (2) If yes, type:
       - (a) Content
       - (b) Concurrent
       - (c) Construct
8. **External Validity**
   - A. Discussion of population generalizability
     - (1) Appropriate
       - (a) Explicit reference to defensible target population
       - (b) Appropriate caution expressed
     - (2) Inappropriate
       - (a) No mention of generalizability
       - (b) Explicit reference to indefensible target population
   - B. Discussion of ecological generalizability
     - (1) Appropriate
       - (a) Explicit reference to defensible settings (subject matter, materials, physical conditions, personnel, etc.)
       - (b) Appropriate caution expressed
     - (2) Inappropriate
       - (a) No mention of generalizability
       - (b) Explicit reference to indefensible settings
9. **Were Results and Interpretations Kept Distinct?** (yes or no)
10. **Data Analysis**
    - A. Descriptive statistics? (yes or no)
      - (1) Correct technique? (yes or no)
      - (2) Correct interpretation? (yes or no)
    - B. Inferential statistics? (yes or no)
      - (1) Correct technique? (yes or no)
      - (2) Correct interpretation? (yes or no)
11. **Do Data Justify Conclusions?** (yes or no)
12. **Were Outcomes of Study Educationally Significant?** (yes or no)
13. **Relevance of Citations**

Figure 20.4 *Categories Used to Evaluate Social Studies Research*

TABLE 20.5 *Threats to Internal Validity*

Possible Alternative Explanations for Outcomes Obtained	Number
1. History	4 (9%)
2. Maturation	0 (0%)
3. Mortality	10 (22%)
4. Selection bias/subject characteristics	15 (33%)
5. Pretest effect	2 (4%)
6. Regression effect	0 (0%)
7. Instrumentation	21 (46%)
8. Attitude of subjects	7 (15%)

		Threats Discussed and Clarified?	
Type	**Number of Articles**	**Identified by Reviewers**	**Discussed by Authors**
True experiments	7	3 (43%)	2 (29%)
Quasi-experiments	7	7 (100%)	4 (57%)
Correlational studies	9	5 (56%)	3 (33%)
Questionnaire surveys	9	3 (33%)	0 (0%)
Interview-type surveys	6	9 (67%)	1 (17%)
Causal-comparative	0	—	—
Ethnographies	9	9 (100%)	0 (0%)

These tables indicate that the intent of the studies was clear; that the variables were generally clear (82 percent); that the treatment in intervention studies was clear in almost all cases; and that most studies were hypothesis testing, although the latter was not always made clear. Only 17 percent of the studies could claim representative samples, and most of these required argumentation. Mortality, subject characteristics, and instrumentation threats existed in a substantial proportion of the studies. These were acknowledged and discussed by the authors in 9 of the 15 experimental or correlational studies, but rarely by the authors of any of the other types.

Using the Computer in Content Analysis

In recent years, computers have been used to offset much of the labor involved in analyzing documents. Computer programs have for some time been a boon to quantitative research, allowing researchers to calculate quite rapidly very complex statistics. Programs to assist qualitative researchers in their analysis, however, now also exist. Many simple word-processing programs can be used for some kinds of data analysis. The "find" command, for example, can locate various passages in a document that contain key words or phrases. Thus, a researcher might ask the computer to search for all passages that contain the words *creative, nonconformist,* or *punishment,* or phrases such as *corporal punishment* or *artistic creativity.*

Notable examples of qualitative computer programs that are currently available include ATLAS.ti, QSR NUD*IST, Nvivo, and HyperResearch. These programs will identify words, phrases, or sentences, tabulate their occurrence, print and graph the tabulations, and sort and regroup words, phrases, or sentences according to how they fit a particular set of categories. Computers, of course, presume that the information of interest is in written form. Optical scanners are available that make it possible for computers to "read" documents and store

the contents digitally, thus eliminating the need for data entry by hand. Should you have to do some qualitative data analysis, a few of these programs are worth taking some time to examine.

Advantages of Content Analysis

As we mentioned earlier, much of what we know is obtained, not through direct interaction with others, but through books, newspapers, and other products of human beings. A major advantage of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive. A researcher can "observe" without being observed, since the contents being analyzed are not influenced by the researcher's presence. Information that might be difficult, or even impossible, to obtain through direct observation or other means can be gained unobtrusively through analysis of textbooks and other communications, without the author or publisher being aware that it is being examined. Another advantage of content analysis is that, as we have illustrated, it is extremely useful as a means of analyzing interview and observational data.

A third advantage of content analysis is that the researcher can delve into records and documents to get some feel for the social life of an earlier time. He or she is not limited by time and space to the study of present events.

A fourth advantage accrues from the fact that the logistics of content analysis are often relatively simple and economical—with regard to both time and resources—as compared to other research methods. This is particularly true if the information is readily accessible, as in newspapers, reports, books, periodicals, and the like.

Lastly, because the data are readily available and almost always can be returned to if necessary or desired, content analysis permits replication of a study by other researchers. Even live television programs can be recorded for repeated analysis at later times.

Disadvantages of Content Analysis

A major disadvantage of content analysis is that it is usually limited to recorded information. The researcher may, of course, arrange the recordings to suit the purposes of the study, as in the use of open-ended questionnaires or projective techniques (see pages 130–131). However, one would not be likely to use such recordings to study proficiency in calculus, Spanish vocabulary, the frequency of hostile acts, or similar variables, because they require demonstrated behaviors or skills.

The other main disadvantage is in establishing validity. Assuming that different analysts can achieve acceptable agreement in categorizing, the question remains as to the true meaning of the categories themselves. Recall the earlier discussion of this problem under the heading "Manifest Versus Latent Content." A comparison of the results of these two methods provides some evidence of criterion-related validity, although the two measurements obviously are not completely independent. As with any measurement, additional evidence of a criterion or construct nature is important. In the absence of such evidence, the argument for content validity rests on the persuasiveness of the logic connecting each category to its intended meaning. For example, our interpretation of the data on social studies research assumes that what was clear or unclear to us would also be clear or unclear to other researchers or readers. Similarly, it assumes that most, if not all, researchers would agree as to whether definitions and particular threats to internal validity were present in a given article. While we think these are reasonable assumptions, that does not make them so.

With respect to the use of content analysis in historical research, the researcher normally has records only of what has survived or what someone thought was of sufficient importance to write down. Because each generation has a somewhat different perspective on its life and times, what was considered important at a particular time in the past may be viewed as trivial today. Conversely, what is considered important today might not even be available from the past.

Finally, sometimes there is a temptation among researchers to consider that the interpretations gleaned from a particular content analysis indicate the *causes* of a phenomenon rather than being a reflection of it. For example, portrayal of violence in the media may be considered a cause of today's violence in the streets, but a more reasonable conclusion may be that violence in both the media and in the streets reflect the attitudes of people. Certainly much work has to be done to determine the relationship between the media and human behavior. Again,

some people think that reading pornographic books and magazines causes moral decay among those who read such materials. Pornography probably does affect some individuals, and it is likely that it affects different people in different ways. It is also quite likely that it does not affect other individuals at all, but exactly how people are affected, and why or why not, is unclear.

An Example of a Content Analysis Study

In the remainder of this chapter, we present a published example of content analysis, followed by a critique of its strengths and weaknesses. As we did in our critiques of other types of research studies, we use concepts introduced in earlier parts of the book in our analysis.

RESEARCH REPORT

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The "Nuts and Dolts" of Teacher Images in Children's Picture Storybooks: A Content Analysis

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Rationale or Conclusion?

Evidence or opinion?

Purpose?

Statement not consistent with results

Children's picture storybooks are rife with contradictory representations of teachers and school. Some of those images are fairly accurate. Some of those images are quite disparate from reality. These representations become subsumed into the collective consciousness of a society and shape expectations and behaviors of both students and teachers. Teachers cannot effectuate positive change in their profession unless and until they are aware of the internal and external influences that define and shape the educational institution. This ethnographic content analysis examines 62 titles and 96 images of teachers to probe the power of stereotypes/clichés. The authors found the following: The teacher in children's picture storybooks is overwhelmingly portrayed as a white, non-Hispanic, woman. The teacher in picture storybooks who is sensitive, competent, and able to manage a classroom effectively is a minority. The negative images outnumbered the positive images. The teacher in children's picture storybooks is static, unchanging, and flat. The teacher is polarized and does not inspire in his or her students the pursuit of critical inquiry.

A recent children's book shares the story of a teacher. Miss Malarkey, home with the flu, narrates her concern about how her elementary students will behave with and be treated by the potential substitutes available to the school. Among the substitutes represented are Mrs. Boba, a 20-something woman who is too busy painting her

toenails to attend to Miss Malarkey's students. Mr. Doberman is a drill sergeant of a man who snarls at the children: "So ya think it's time for recess, HUH?" Mr. Lemonjello, drawn as a small, bald, nervous man, is taunted by the students with the class iguana and is subsequently covered in paint at art time (*Miss Malarkey Won't Be in Today,* Finchler, 1998).

In this text, which is representative of many that have been published with teachers as central characters, teachers are portrayed as insensitive; misguided, victimizing, or incompetent. We perceive these invalidating images as worthy of detailed analysis, based on a hypothesis that a propensity of images painting teachers in an unflattering light may have broader consequences on cultural perceptions of teachers and schooling. Our ethnographic content analysis herein examines 96 images of teachers as they are found in 62 picture storybooks from 1965 to present. It is our perspective that these images in part shape and define the idea of "Teacher" in the collective consciousness of a society.

Evidence or opinion

Not research hypothesis in this study

Sample

Those of us in teacher education realize our students come to us with previously constructed images of the profession. What is the origin of those images? When and how are these images formed and elaborated upon? It appears that the popular culture has done much to form or modify those images. Weber and Mitchell (1995) suggest that these multiple, often ambiguous, images are ". . . integral to the form and substance of our self-identities as teachers" (p. 32). They suggest that ". . . by studying images and probing their influence, teachers could play a more conscious and effective role in shaping their own and society's perceptions of teachers and their work" (p. 32). We have supported this "probing of images" by analyzing children's picture storybooks, examining their meanings and metaphors where they intersect with teachers and schooling. It is our intention that by sharing what we have learned about the medium's responses to the profession, we will better serve teachers in playing that "conscious role" in defining their work.

Rationale

We submit that children's picture storybooks are not benign. Although the illustrations of teachers are often cartoon-like and at first glance fairly innocent, when taken as a whole they have power not just in teaching children and their parents about the culture of schooling, but in shaping it, as well. This is of concern particularly when the majority of the images of teachers are negative, mixed, or neutral as we have found in our research and will report herein. Gavriel Salomon, well known for his research in symbolic representations and their impact on children's learning and thinking, has this to say about the power of media:

Rationale/theory

> *Media's symbolic forms of representation are clearly not neutral or indifferent packages that have no effect on the represented information. Being part and parcel of the information itself, they influence the meanings one arrives at, the mental capacities that are called for,* and the ways one comes to view the world. *Perhaps more important, the culture that creates the media and develops their symbolic forms of representation also* opens the door for those forms to act on the minds of the young *in both more and less desirable ways. [italics added] (1997, p. 13)*

Rationale

We see Salomon's work here as foundational to our own in this way: if those images children and parents see of "teacher" are generally negative, then they will create a "world view" of "teacher" based upon stereotype. The many negative images of teachers in children's picture storybooks may be the message to readers that teachers are, at best, kind but uninspiring, and at worst, roadblocks to be torn down in order that children may move forward successfully.

Need definition of "images"

WHY STUDY IMAGES OF TEACHERS FROM POPULAR CULTURE?

Background

As we were preparing to teach a graduate class entitled "Portrayal of Teachers in Children's Literature and in Film," we began gathering a text set of picture storybooks that focused on teachers, teaching, and the school environment. We quickly became aware of the propensity of negative images of teachers, from witch to dragon, drill sergeant to milquetoast, incompetent fool to insensitive clod. We realized early in the graduate course that many teachers had not had the opportunity to critically examine images of their own profession in the popular media. They were unaware of the negative portrayals in existing texts, particularly in children's literature. Teachers may not have considered that the negative images of the teacher "may give the public further justification for a lack of support of education" (Crume, 1989, p. 36).

Research or opinion?

Children's literature is rife with contradictory representations of teachers and school. Some of those images are fairly accurate and some of those images are quite disparate from reality (Farber, Provenso, & Holm, 1994; Joseph & Burnaford, 1994; Knowles, Cole, & Presswood, 1994; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). These representations become subsumed into the collective consciousness of a society and shape expectations and behaviors of both students and teachers. They become a part of the images that children construct when they are invited to "draw a teacher" or "play school," and indeed the images that teachers draw of themselves. Consider, for example, the three-year old boy with no prior schooling experience, who, in playing school, puts the dolls in straight rows, selects a domineering personality for a female teacher, and assigns homework (Weber & Mitchell, 1995).

Rationale

Purpose?

This exploration into teacher images is a critical one at multiple levels of teacher education. Pre-service teachers need to analyze via media images their personal motivations and expectations of the teaching profession and enter into teaching with clear understandings of how the broad culture perceives their work. In-service teachers need to heighten their awareness of how children, parents, and community members perceive them. These perceptions may be in part media-induced and not based on the complex reality of a particular teacher. If information is indeed power, then perhaps those of us in the profession can better understand that popular images contribute to the public's frequent suspicion of our efficacy, and this heightened awareness can support us in addressing the negative images head on.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Prior research

How do we as teachers, prospective teachers, and teacher educators come to so fully subscribe to the images we have both experienced and imagined? Have those images formed long before adulthood, perhaps even before the child enters school? Weber and Mitchell (1994) contend, "Even before children begin school, they have already been exposed to a myriad of images of teachers, classrooms and schools which have made strong and lasting impressions on them" (p. 2). Some of those images and attitudes form from direct experience with teachers. Barone, Meyerson, and Mallette (1995) explain, "When adults respond to the question of which person had the greatest impact on their lives, other than their immediate family, teachers are frequently mentioned" (p. 257). Those early images are not necessarily positive, often convey traditional teaching styles, and are marked with commonalities across the United States (Joseph & Burnaford, 1994; Weber & Mitchell, 1995).

In addition to the years of "on-the-job" experience with teaching and teachers that one acquires as a student sitting and observing "on the other side of the desk,' a person has also acquired images and stereotypes of teaching and teachers from the

person's experiences with literature and media. Lortie calls this "the apprenticeship-of-observation" (1975, p. 67). These forms of print media (literature) and visual media are part of "popular culture," which is inclusive of film, television, magazines, newspapers, music, video, books, cartoons, etc. In the past decade the literature on popular culture has grown dramatically as an increasing number of educators, social scientists, and other critical thinkers have begun to study the field (Daspit & Weaver, 1999; Giroux, 1994; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & Simon, 1989; McLaren, 1994; Trifonas, 2000; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). Weber and Mitchell (1994) explain, "So pervasive are teachers in popular culture that if you simply ask, as we have, schoolchildren and adults to name teachers they remember, not from school but from popular culture, a cast of fictionalized characters emerges that takes on larger than life proportions" (p. 14). These authors challenge us to examine how it is that children—even young children—would hold such strong images and that there be such similarity among the images they hold.

What are the results?

Prior research

Studies of children's literature have previously examined issues of stereotyping (race, gender, ethnicity, age) as well as moral and ethical issues within stories (Dougherty & Engel, 1987; Hurley & Chadwick, 1998; Lamme, 1996). Recently Barone, Meyerson, and Mallette (1995) examined the images of teachers in children's literature. They found a startling paradox: "On one hand, teachers are valued as contributing members of society; on the other hand, teachers are frequently portrayed in the media and literature as inept and not very bright" (p. 257).

Prior research

Barone, et al. (1995) found two types of teachers portrayed: traditional, non-child centered, and non-traditional, more child-centered. The more prevalent type, the traditional teacher, was not usually liked nor respected by the students in the stories. The non-traditional teacher was seldom portrayed, but when the portrayal was presented, the teacher was shown to be valued and well liked. They contend that the reality of teaching is far too complex to fall into two such simple categories; that the act of teaching is complex. They point out that" . . . the authors of children's books often negate this complexity of teaching and learning, and classify teachers as those who care about students and those who are rigid or less sensitive to students' needs" (p. 260). Their study led to several disturbing conclusions: (a) The ubiquitous portrayal of traditional teachers as mean and strict make schools and schooling appear to be a dreadful experience. (b) The portrayal of teachers is frequently one in which the teacher is shown as having less intelligence than the students have. (c) Teachers are portrayed as having little or no confidence in their students and their abilities. Weber and Mitchell (1995) assert that "the stereotypes that are prevalent in the popular culture and experience of childhood play a formative role in the evolution of a teacher's identity and are part of the enculturation of teachers into their profession" (p. 27). Joseph and Burnaford (1994) address the numerous examples of caricatures or stereotypes as being somewhat different, but ". . . all are negative and all reduce the teacher to an object of scorn, disrespect, and sometimes fear" (p. 15).

Research conclusion?

Research results

Based on research?

Research findings?

WHAT RESEARCH FRAMEWORK GUIDED OUR STUDY?

To answer our questions concerning the elements of the children's texts, we required a methodological framework from which we could examine the "character" of the texts. We found that framework in accessing research theories from anthropology and literary criticism which suggested an appropriate approach to content analysis.

Submitting that all research directly or indirectly involves participant observation, David Altheide (1987) finds an ethnographic approach applicable to content analyses, in that the writings or electronic texts are ultimately products of social interaction. Ethnographic content analysis (ECA) requires a reflexive and highly interactive relationship

Justification of method

between researcher and data with the objective of interpreting and verifying the communication of meaning. The meaning in the text message is assumed to be reflected in the multiple elements of form, content, context, and other nuances. The movement between researcher and data throughout the process of concept development, sampling, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation is systematic but not rigid, initially structured but receptive to emerging categories and concepts.

See text, p. 480

As we proceeded through the multiple readings of the picture storybooks, we attempted to foreground three main concepts: (a) To attempt to discover "meaning" is an attempt to include the multiple elements which make up the whole: appearance, language, subject taught, gender issues, racial/ethnic diversity, and other nuances as they became apparent; (b) The multiple readings of the selected sample of children's literature to understand, and to interpret the structures of the texts are not to conform the texts to our analytic notions but to inform them; and (c) In the intimacy of our relationship with the data we are acting on them and changing them, just as the data are changing us and the way we perceive past and present texts. As we encountered new texts, we attempted to consistently return to previous texts and to be receptive to new or revised interpretations that were revealed.

WHAT WAS OUR RESEARCH METHODOLOGY?

Sample

How is this known?

We used Follett Library Resources' database to find titles addressing "teachers" and "schools." This resulted in a list of 62 titles and 96 teacher images published from 1965 to present (Appendix A). No chapter books or *Magic Schoolbus* series books were reviewed, as they did not qualify under the definition of "picture storybook" (Huck, 1997, p. 198). We specifically did not attend to publication dates or "in print/out of print" status, as many of these texts appear on school and public library shelves decades after they have gone out of print. Our approach provided us with the majority of children's picture storybooks available for purchase in the United States or available through public libraries.

Same as Image?

To better guide our examinations about the images of teachers, ensure that we reviewed the titles consistently, and in order to record the details of the texts we reviewed, we noted details of each teacher representation in aspects of Appearance, Language, Subject, Approach, and Effectiveness. The specific details we were seeking under each category for each teacher represented in the sample literature are further described below:

Good definitions

Appearance: observable race, gender, approximate age, name, clothing, hairstyle, weight (thin, average, plump)

Language: representative utterances by the teacher represented in the book or as reported by the narrator of the book

Subject: the school subject(s) that the teacher was represented as teaching: reading/language arts, math, geography, history, etc.

Approach: any indicators of a teaching philosophy, including whether children were seated in rows, were working together in learning centers, were reciting memorized material, whether the teacher was shown lecturing, etc.

Effectiveness: indicators included narrator's point of view, images or language about children's learning from that teacher; images or language about children's emotional response to the teacher etc.

We also attempted to note the absence of data as well as the presence of data. For example, we noted the occurrences of a teacher remaining nameless through the book,

of a teacher not being represented as teaching any curriculum, or of a teacher failing to inspire any critical thinking in her students.

We entered data in the foregoing categories about each teacher representation onto forms, which we then reviewed in order to group the individually represented teachers into four more specific categories: positive representations, negative representations, mixed review, and neutral. A teacher fitting into the category of "positive teacher" was represented as being sensitive to children's emotional needs, supportive of meaningful learning, compassionate, warm, approachable, able to exercise classroom management skills without resorting to punitive measures or yelling, and was respectful and protective of children. A teacher would be classified as a "negative teacher" if he or she were represented as dictatorial, using harsh language, unable to manage classroom behavior, distant or removed, inattentive, unable to create a learning environment, allowing teasing or taunting among students, or unempathetic to students' diverse backgrounds. A teacher was categorized as "mixed review" if they possessed characteristics that were both positive and negative: for example, if a teacher were otherwise represented as caring and effective in the classroom, but did nothing to halt the teasing of a child. The fourth category for consideration was that of "neutral," in which a teacher was represented in the illustration of a text, but had neither a positive nor a negative effect on the children.

Good definitions

A doctoral student focusing on reading in the elementary school and who is well-versed in children's literature served as an inter-rater for this part of the analysis. After having conferred on the characteristics of each category, she read each text independently of the researchers and categorized each teacher as "positive," negative," "mixed review," and "neutral." We achieved 100% agreement in the category of "positive representations of teachers" and 93% agreement regarding the "negative" images. We had 75% agreement on the "neutral" images and 100% agreement on the category of "mixed" images (two images). Upon further discussion of our qualifications for "neutral," we were able to agree on all 14 images as having neither a positive nor negative impact on the children as represented in the text.

Good reliability check

Who is "we"?

WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS?

Our findings regarding the preponderance of the images are detailed in the following paragraphs.

The teacher in children's picture storybooks is overwhelmingly portrayed as a white, non-Hispanic woman. There were only eight representations of African-American teachers, and only three of them were the protagonists of the books: *The Best Teacher in the World* (Chardiet & Maccarone, 1990); *Show and Tell* (Munsch,1991); and *Will I Have a Friend?* (Cohen, 1967). Two Asians, no Native Americans, and no other persons of color are shown in the 96 teacher images, making the total number of culturally diverse images represented at only 11% of the total.

Good detail

The teacher in picture storybooks who is sensitive, competent, and able to manage a classroom effectively is a minority. The teacher who met the standards we described for a "positive teacher," which include an ability to construct meaningful learning environments, compassion, respect, and management skills for a group of children, exists in only 42% of the teacher images in our sample. This means only 40 images out of a total 96 images were demonstrative of teacher efficacy. Some examples of the "positive teacher" are found in Mr. Slingerland in *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (Henkes, 1996), Mr. Falker in *Thank You, Mr. Falker* (Polacco, 1998), and Arizona Hughes in *My Great-aunt Arizona* (Houston, 1992).

But 42% in each

The negative images outnumbered the positive images. Teachers who were dictatorial, used harsh language with children, were distant or removed, or allowed teasing among students comprised 42% of the total number of 96 teacher representations. Examples of the "negative teacher" are found in the nameless teacher in *John Patrick Norman McHennessy—The Boy Who Was Always Late* (Burningham, 1987), Miss Tyler in *Today Was a Terrible Day* (Giff, 1980), and Miss Landers in *The Art Lesson* (dePaola, 1989). There were only two teachers in the sample who received a "mixed review," which was by definition a generally positive teacher with some negative strategies, approaches, or statements (Mrs. Chud in *Chrysanthemum* [Henkes, 1991] and Mrs. Page in *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster* [Frasier, 2000]). Fourteen teacher images, or 15% of the total number, were represented as "neutral," meaning that the teacher in the text had neither a positive nor a negative impact on the students. The nameless teachers in *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* (de Paola, 1979) and *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman, 1991) are representative of "neutral" teacher images.

The teacher in children's picture storybooks is static, unchanging, and flat. An unexpected finding in this content analysis was that teachers in picture storybooks are never shown as learners themselves, never portrayed as moving from less effective to more effective. Like the nameless teacher in Miriam Cohen's "Welcome to First Grade!" series, if she is a paragon of kindness and patience, she will remain so unfailingly from the beginning of the text to its conclusion. If he is an incompetent novice, like Mr. Lemonjello in *Miss Malarkey Won't Be in Today* (Finchler, 1998), he will not be shown reflecting, learning, and reinventing himself into an informed and effective educator by book's end. Perhaps the evolution from mediocrity to effectiveness holds little in the way of entertainment value, but it could hold great value in the demonstration that teachers are complex human beings with a significant capacity for growth. The potential to paint realistic portraits of teachers is present, but we see little evidence of the medium's desire to construct such an image.

The teacher in children's picture books is polarized. Other researchers have also noted our concerns that we as teachers represented in picture storybooks are "healers or wounders . . . sensitive or callous, imaginative or repressive" (Joseph & Burnaford, 1994, p. 12). Only 15% of the teachers presented in our sample are neutral images, neither positively nor negatively impacting the children in the fictional classroom, and only two images out of the 96 examined qualified as a "mixed review" of mostly positive characteristics with some negative aspects of educational practice. Therefore, approximately 84% of the teachers represented in our sample are either very good or horrid. The teacher paragon in picture books "generally is a woman who never demonstrates the features of commonplace motherhood—impatience, frustration, or possibly interests in the world other than children themselves—demonstrates to children that the teacher is a wonderfully benign creature" (Joseph & Burnaford, 1994, p. 11). Ms. Darcy in *The Best Teacher in the Whole World* (Chardiet & Maccarone, 1990), and Mrs. Beejorgenhoosen in *Rachel Parker, Kindergarten Show-off* (Martin, 1992) fit neatly into the mold of "paragon." They are not represented exhibiting any less-than-perfect, but realistic, characteristics of exhaustion, short-temperedness, or lapses in good judgment.

Disagrees with descriptions that follow

Supported in this study?

But only 2 out of 96

Several texts offer "over the top" representations of bad teachers. The often-reviewed *Black Lagoon* series depicts the teachers in children's imaginations as fire-breathing dragons or huge, green gorillas. The well-known *Miss Nelson* series (Allard) has created substitute teacher Viola Swamp in the likeness of a witch, complete with incredible bulk, large features, warts, and a perpetual bad hair day. The teachers in *The Big Box* (Morrison, 1999) put a child who "just can't handle her freedom" in a big, brown box. Other books offer slightly more subtle; but still alarming, representations of negative

Good examples

teaching practice. Consider Miss Tyler, the heavy-lidded, unsmiling teacher in *Today Was a Terrible Day* (Giff, 1980), who humiliates Ronald five times in the course of the story; or Mrs. Bell, who in *Double Trouble in Walla Walla* (Clements, 1997), takes a child to the principal for her unique language style. Even worse is the nameless teacher who repeatedly (and falsely) accuses a student of lying and threatens to strike him with a stick (*John Patrick Norman McHennessey—The Boy Who Was Always Late,* Burningham, 1987). In less drastic representations but still of concern to those of us who believe that literature informs expectations about reality, teachers are represented as failing to protect children from their peers' taunts. Teachers are shown doing nothing to stop the teasing of children in *Chrysanthemum* (Henkes, 1991), *The Brand New Kid* (Couric, 2000), *Today Was a Terrible Day* (Giff, 1980), and *Miss Alaineus: A Vocabulary Disaster* (Frasier, 2000). If children are learning about teachers and school from the children's books read to them, we propose that there is cause for concern about the unrealistic expectations children could develop from such polarized and unrealistic images.

But horrid? See prior comment.

The teacher in children's picture books does not inspire in his or her students the pursuit of critical inquiry. The overwhelming majority of texts which represent teachers in a positive light—and these number in our sample only 42% of the total number of school-related children's literature—show them as kind caregivers who dry tears (Miss Hart in *Ruby the Copycat,* Rathmann, 1991), resolve jealousy between children (Mrs. Beejorgenhoosen in *Rachel Parker, Kindergarten Show-off,* Martin, 1992), restore self-esteem (Mrs. Twinkle in *Chrysanthemum,* Henkes, 1991), teach right from wrong (Ms. Darcy in *The Best Teacher in the Whole World,* Chardiet & Maccarone, 1990). However, few teachers are represented as having a substantial impact on a child's learning. Joseph and Burnaford (1994) found that teachers are not seen "leading students toward intellectual pursuits—toward analyzing and challenging existing conditions of community and society. . . . The 'successful' teacher [in children's literature] . . . does not awaken students' intelligence. Such teachers value order; order is what they strive for, what they are paid for" (p. 16).

Good examples

Our analysis confirms their findings. Examples are common in which teachers actually provide roadblocks to children's success. Tommy in *The Art Lesson* (dePaola, 1989) must wage battle to use his own crayons, use more than just one sheet of paper, and to create art based on his own vision and not the tired model of the art teacher. Miss Kincaid in *The Brand New Kid* (Couric, 2000) actually establishes the opportunity for children to tease the new boy who is an immigrant: "We have a new student . . . His name is a different one, Lazlo S. Gasky." Young Lazlo's mother must help him find his way into the culture of the school and community. In *David Goes to School* (Shannon, 1999), young David is met with negatively framed demands from his nameless and faceless teacher: "No, David!", "You're tardy!", "Keep your hands to yourself!", "Shhhhh!", and "You're staying after school!"

Only six books in our sample represent teachers as intellectually inspiring. Mr. Isobe in *Crow Boy* (Yashima, 1967) is represented as child-centered and appreciative of Chibi's knowledge of agriculture and botany, who values his drawings and stays after school to talk with young Chibi. He is represented as the catalyst for the crow imitations at the school talent show which gain Chibi recognition and a newfound respect among his peers. In *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (Henkes, 1996) Mr. Slingerland is such an effective teacher that he inspires Lilly to want to be a teacher (when she isn't wanting to be "a dancer or a surgeon or an ambulance driver or a diva . . ."). Mr. Cohen in *Creativity* (Steptoe, 1997) uses the arrival of a new immigrant in his class to teach about the history of immigration in this country and to deliver a message about tolerance and shared histories. Mrs. Hughes in *My Great-aunt Arizona* (Houston, 1992) teaches generations of children about "words and numbers and the faraway places they would visit someday."

Six out of 62

Are there differences across time (1965–2005)?

The nameless teacher in *When Will I Read?* (Cohen, 1977) helps young Jim come to the realization that he is a reader, and Mr. Falker in *Thank You, Mr. Falker* (Polacco, 1998), helps fifth-grader Trisha learn to read in three months and cries over her achievement when she reads her first book independently. Although these are excellent examples of how teachers can be represented as dedicated supporters of learning, only six texts out of the 62 in our sample construct images of teacher as an educated professional.

DISCUSSION

Other researchers have found bias, prejudice, and stereotypical presentations of characters in children's books, and our study specifically about images of teachers does not dispute those findings (Barone, Meyerson, & Mallette, 1995; Hurley & Chadwick, 1998; Hurst, 1981). From our extensive 62-book sample of picture storybooks widely available to children, parents, and teachers, we have found a parade of teachers who discourage creativity, ignore teasing, and even threaten to hit children with sticks. We have also found teachers in children's literature who, in great devotion to the human good and the educative process, save children: from boredom, from illiteracy, and from the devastating effects of social isolation. Our deep concern is that the books in which the teacher is demonstrated as intelligent and inspiring (six in our 62 book sample) are dwarfed by the number of books in which the image of Teacher is one of daft incompetence, unreasonable anger, or rigid conformity.

We do not find images of teachers as transformative intellectuals, as educators who "go beyond concern with forms of empowerment that promote individual achievement and traditional forms of academic success" (Giroux, 1989, p. 138). Instead, we find representations of teachers whose negatively metaphoric/derogatory surnames indicate the level of respect for the profession: Mr. Quackerbottom, Mrs. Nutty, Ima Berpur, Miss Bonkers, and Miss Malarkey.

Referring back to the graduate class we taught on representations of teachers in popular culture, we perceived a naiveté in these teachers as to the power of the media, to the power of stereotypes to shape the teaching profession, and the power that teachers have to combat the negative images. An overwhelming majority of our graduate students valued the traditional teacher who maintained order, was nurturing and caring, and whose focus was on the emotional well-being of the child. They failed to notice that it was an extremely rare image in picture storybooks that showed a teacher as an intellectually inspiring force

Evidence would help here

Teachers cannot effectuate positive change in their profession unless and until they are aware of the internal and external influences that define and shape the educational institution. We want to encourage reflection and conversation about schooling and teaching, careful evaluation of extant images in popular culture in order to develop meaningful dialogue about the accuracy of those images, and to encourage teachers to examine their own memories of teachers and how they form current perceptions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our explorations into the representations of teachers in picture storybooks have led to other and further questions regarding images that cultures create of their education professionals.

There is much information to be gleaned from a careful study of the portrayals of school administrators in picture storybooks. How are teachers and administrators represented in basal literature? How often do basal publishers select literature or write

their own literature that has school as a setting, and what is the ratio of positive representations to negative ones? Do children's authors in other cultures and countries create similar negative images of educators with the same frequency and ire as they do in the U.S.? How are teachers and administrators portrayed in literature for older children, as in beginning and intermediate chapter books, or young adult novels? How have the images of teachers and administrators evolved over time in our culture? Was there a time in our history that teachers were consistently portrayed in a positive light, and was there perhaps a national event or series of events which caused the images to take on more negative characteristics?

CONCLUSION

Before we began this study we came across a book entitled *Through the Cracks* (Sollman, Emmons, & Paolini, 1994), which we decided not to include in our literature sample as we perceive this text to be more for teachers and teacher educators than children. The text now takes on new importance in light of our findings. It chronicles change on one school campus through the eyes of an elementary-age student, Stella. Early in the story Stella and some of her peers begin to physically shrink and literally fall through the cracks of the classroom floor because of boredom—boredom with both the content and delivery of the school curriculum. The teachers initially are illustrated as lecturing to daydreaming children, running off dittos, and grading papers during class time; one image even shows a teacher sharply reprimanding a child for painting her pig blue instead of the pink anticipated in the teacher's lesson plan. The children have become lost in a kind of academic purgatory under the floorboards. Here they remain until substantial changes are made on their campus. The children at first watch, then come up through the floor to become involved in, a curriculum that has become relevant, child-centered, and integrative of the arts. Teachers are then represented as supporting children's learning through highly integrated explorations of Egypt, the American Revolution, geometry, life in a pond. Their images are shown guiding the children in recreating historical and social events; supporting student inquiry; exploring painting, building, drawing, dancing, and playing music as a way of knowing; cooking; becoming involved in community clean-up projects; interviewing experts; conducting science experiments; and more.

Linda Lamme (1996) concludes that ". . . children's literature is a resource with ample moral and ethical activity, that, when shared sensitively with children, can enhance their moral development and accomplish the lofty goals to which educators in a democracy aspire" (p. 412). Our point in sharing the contents of *Through the Cracks* is this: the picture storybook format has the potential to share with readers the reality of an effective and creative teacher. As opposed to an object of ridicule or scathing humor, a teacher can be represented as an intellectual who inspires children to stretch, grow, and explore previously unknown worlds and communicate that new knowledge through multiple communicative systems. The picture storybook has the potential to encourage a child to anticipate the valuable discoveries that are possible in the school setting; it can also demonstrate to parents how school ought to be and how teachers support children in cognitive and psychosocial ways. Children's literature can also provide positive enculturation for pre-service teachers and validation for in-service teachers of the possibilities inherent in their social contributions. Positive representations of teachers have the potential to empower all the partners in the academic community: the children, their parents, teachers and administrators, and the community at large.

This is not a conclusion from this study

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Analysis of the Study

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION

We do not find a clear statement of purpose. The abstract suggests that it is "to probe the power of stereotypes/clichés," but we do not see that the study does this. It appears to us that the purpose is "to provide further evidence on the way in which teachers are portrayed in children's picture storybooks." An extensive justification for the study is given, including personal experience, theoretical ideas of education writers, and previous studies of children's literature. Although we would prefer clearer distinctions among these, we think the study is adequately justified in terms of importance to children's education and public perception of teachers. We would like to see more on the contribution of this particular study. A justification for the methodology is given.

DEFINITIONS

Clear definitions are provided for the major categories of the content analysis and for the details of teacher representation that were focused on by the reviewers. The term "image" should have been defined because it is prominent throughout and has several possible meanings. Apparently, it refers not to visual images but rather to "portrayals" or "representations" in both pictures and words.

PRIOR RESEARCH

Numerous references are given, often with the implication that they are research studies but sometimes insufficient detail is provided to enable the reader to determine whether the "conclusions" cited are based on a study or on opinion (examples include the references on children's literature and on "popular culture"). One study (Bonnie et al.) is discussed in some detail, but methodology and grade level are unclear.

HYPOTHESES

No hypotheses are stated. The implied hypothesis appears to be that "teacher images in storybooks are generally unrealistic and negative."

SAMPLE

The sample was obtained by locating all picture storybooks addressing "teachers and schools" between 1965 and (presumably) 2005 as identified from a database. The sample consisted of 96 teacher images from 62 books. The authors state that this provided the majority of children's storybooks available in the United States for purchase or available in libraries—presumably the target population. We are unclear as to the basis for this statement. The intended age/grade range for these books is not given, but examples suggest it is "primary" grades.

INSTRUMENTATION

The method of deriving categories is well described. Reliability was asessed through inter-rater agreement; although it is unclear exactly who the "we" refers to (there were presumably three categorizers). The level of agreement is generally good—100% and 93% for the major categories. As is typical of such studies, validity is

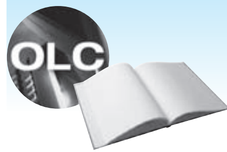
not discussed. The definitions of major categories seem straightforward, and this is supported by rater agreement. Good examples are given that also support validity. The very small number (two) of "mixed" images is not consistent with our experience with real teachers but supports the author's "hypothesis."

INTERNAL VALIDITY

Because this study does not explicitly focus on relationships, internal validity is not a major issue. However, the definitions of major categories (positive, negative, mixed, and neutral) imply high correlations among the variables (as portrayed) in each category. The small number of "mixed" images provides evidence that this is the case. More serious is the authors' failure to address the effect of possible changes over time—from 1965 to 2005. The question of whether their results are accurate for recent storybooks could have been studied, for example, by dividing images into three time periods.

RESULTS/INTERPRETATION

Results are presented as percentages in each of the four categories. Extensive examples are given that greatly help clarify the findings. In general, we find the interpretation to be consistent with the results. There are, however, important exceptions. Most serious is the statement that there were more negative than positive images. This is not consistent with the data on pages 495–496; both categories contained 42%—unless there is a typographical error. We also question the assertion that 84% of the teachers represented were either very good or horrid. Only two are cited as "paragons," and among the negative teachers, a number are described as "less drastic" but "still of concern." We also think the authors have sometimes overstated their case. For example, the statement that "we do not find images of teachers as transformative intellectuals . . . ." seems inconsistent with the finding that six books did contain such images. We also note that tha author's "conclusion" is not the customary conclusion based on the study but rather an extension into implications from a much broader context.



Go back to the **INTERACTIVE AND APPLIED LEARNING** feature at the beginning of the chapter for a listing of interactive and applied activities. Go to the **Online Learning Center** at **www.mhhe.com/fraenkel8e** to take quizzes, practice with key terms, and review chapter content.

Main Points

WHAT IS CONTENT ANALYSIS?

- Content analysis is an analysis of the contents of a communication.
- Content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way by analyzing communications.

APPLICATIONS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Content analysis has wide applicability in educational research.
- Content analysis can give researchers insights into problems that they can test by more direct methods.
- There are several reasons to do a content analysis: to obtain descriptive information of one kind or another; to analyze observational and interview data; to test hypotheses; to check other research findings; and/or to obtain information useful in dealing with educational problems.

CATEGORIZATION IN CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Predetermined categories are sometimes used to code data.
- Sometimes coding is done by using categories that emerge as data is reviewed.

STEPS INVOLVED IN CONTENT ANALYSIS

- In doing a content analysis, researchers should always develop a rationale (a conceptual link) to explain how the data to be collected are related to their objectives.
- Important terms should at some point be defined.
- All of the sampling methods used in other kinds of educational research can be applied to content analysis. Purposive sampling, however, is the most commonly used.
- The unit of analysis—what specifically is to be analyzed—should be specified before the researcher begins an analysis.
- After precisely defining what aspects of the content are to be analyzed, the researcher needs to formulate coding categories.

CODING CATEGORIES

- Developing emergent coding categories requires a high level of familiarity with the content of a communication.
- In doing a content analysis, a researcher can code either the manifest or the latent content of a communication, and sometimes both.
- The manifest content of a communication refers to the specific, clear, surface contents: the words, pictures, images, and such that are easily categorized.
- The latent content of a document refers to the meaning underlying what is contained in a communication.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY AS APPLIED TO CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Reliability in content analysis is commonly checked by comparing the results of two independent scorers (categorizers).
- Validity can be checked by comparing data obtained from manifest content to that obtained from latent content.

DATA ANALYSIS

- A common way to interpret content analysis data is by using frequencies (i.e., the number of specific incidents found in the data) and proportion of particular occurrences to total occurrences.
- Another method is to use coding to develop themes to facilitate synthesis.
- Computer analysis is extremely useful in coding data once categories have been determined. It can also be useful at times in developing such categories.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Two major advantages of content analysis are that it is unobtrusive and it is comparatively easy to do.
- The major disadvantages of content analysis are that it is limited to the analysis of communications and it is difficult to establish validity.

Key Terms

cluster sampling 482
coding 482
content analysis 478
latent content 484
manifest content 483
random sample 482
reliability 485
stratified sampling 482
theme 480
validity 485

For Discussion

1. When, if ever, might it be more appropriate to do a content analysis than to use some other kind of methodology?
2. When would it be inappropriate to use content analysis?
3. Give an example of some categories a researcher might use to analyze data in each of the following content analyses:
   a. To investigate the amount and types of humor on television
   b. To investigate the kinds of "romantic love" represented in popular songs
   c. To investigate the social implications of impressionistic paintings
   d. To investigate whether civil or criminal law makes the most distinctions between men and women
   e. To describe the assumptions made in elementary school science programs
4. Which do you think would be more difficult to code, the manifest or the latent content of a movie? Why?
5. "*Never* code only the latent content of a document without also coding at least some of the manifest content." Would you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
6. In terms of difficulty, how would you compare a content analysis approach to the study of social bias on television with a survey approach? in terms of useful information?
7. Would it be possible to do a content analysis of Hollywood movies? If so, what might be some categories you would use?
8. Can you think of some things produced by humans that were not originally intended as communications but now are considered to be? Suggest some examples.
9. Content analysis is sometimes said to be extremely valuable in analyzing observational and interview data. If true, how so?
10. The choice of categories in a content analysis study is crucial. Would you agree? If so, explain why.

Notes

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