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ABSTRACT

This paper identifies obstacles to physical and intellectual access and effective use of books and media by South African children and suggests some possible solutions. It also includes a description of a study of the attitudes of first-year student teachers at colleges of education and universities in the Transvaal towards school libraries. The paper includes nine graphs depicting the findings. Obstacles to access identified in South Africa are similar to those in other developing countries and include: socio-economic problems, illiteracy, lack of reading tradition, insufficient library facilities or information technology for the majority of the population, few books published locally by black writers in indigenous languages, and few qualified media teachers. Resources found in South Africa include many well-stocked media centers, some centralized and regional media collections, training courses for media teachers, and programs to encourage reading undertaken by READ Educational Trust (an independent organization) in many of the disadvantaged schools. Ways to make books and media accessible to all children include the redistribution or sharing of resources, community libraries, and cooperation in the development of a national policy for school libraries. Once problems of access are solved, effective use can follow. An example of black traditional literature is appended. (Contains 41 references.)
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BOOKS AND MEDIA FOR ALL SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

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It is necessary for children to be able to use books and other media effectively now and in the future. However, before children can learn to be effective users of books and media they have to have access to these items, and in many developing countries this is not the case. In this paper an attempt will be made to determine what obstacles there are to all South African children having access to books and other media, and whether these obstacles can be overcome.

For the purposes of this paper a distinction will be made between problems of physical access and problems of intellectual access to books and other media. This is an artificial categorisation as these problems influence each other. Some problems of physical access that have been identified in South Africa as well as in other African countries are mentioned here.

- * Poor socio-economic conditions for most of the population. Tawete (1991:123) points out that poverty is prevalent in most African countries. In South Africa the greatest proportion of the population is poor.
- * Books and periodicals, many of which are imported, are expensive and the exchange rate is unfavourable. This means that fewer items can be purchased for both homes and

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libraries. Banjo (1991:108) and Lotho (1991:142) have pointed out that the high prices of books are beyond the purchasing power of the average Zambian and Nigerian respectively and one could say that this is also true for the average South African.

- * The rapid population growth means large numbers of new schools have to be built each year. Priorities are the provision of sufficient classrooms, furniture, equipment and also the training of staff for the additional schools. Mabomba (1991:11) has also mentioned this problem with regard to other countries in the Southern African region and it is certainly true with regard to the fast growing population in South Africa, where approximately 200 new schools are needed annually.
- * The majority of the primary schools in South Africa do not have school libraries, only boxes of books in classrooms. Bristow (1990) carried out research in Venda, which is one of the so-called "independent" states, and which is a typically underdeveloped rural area. She found that there was a viable school library in only 11 of the 155 secondary schools, and none at all in the 400 primary schools.
- * Where school libraries do exist in secondary schools for black pupils, these usually have small collections with approximately two books per pupil. There is also a lack of audiovisual media and a lack of information technology. Another horrifying fact that emerged from Bristow's (1991:8) investigation in Venda was that a total of only R20 000 (or £4 000) was made available for the purchase of library

materials in all of those 555 schools that year (this amounts to R36 or approximately £7 per school) (1990:8).

- * Many areas, especially rural areas, lack even public library facilities. For example, two townships outside Pretoria, Mabopane and Ga-Rankuwa, with estimated populations of 96 000 and 86 000 respectively have no public libraries to serve them. In the province of Natal there are 9 public libraries in townships, while there are 400 in areas previously reserved for white people only.
- * There is a multiplicity of languages in the country, but there are still relatively few books published locally and of these very few are in indigenous languages. There are also relatively few African writers. Mabomba (1991:11), Mchombu (1991:29) and Tawete (1988:330) all refer to similar situations existing in other African countries. The problem of course is that school children and literate people must read books in languages which are not in their mother tongue.

Not only do all these problems regarding the physical access to books exist, but there are also numerous problems associated with intellectual access to books and other media.

- * Approximately three quarters of the population in South Africa is either completely illiterate or functionally illiterate. Most of the population has no tradition of reading, as its cultural tradition has been oral rather than print. Again this is a problem that South Africa shares with most other African countries. Mchombu (1991:29) states

that "illiteracy rates are too high to enable people, especially in rural areas and urban shanty townships, to appreciate use of libraries". While Lotho (1991:143) points out that the traditional social structure does not encourage reading. The main reasons for this are the oral tradition, little privacy and quiet in homes, the absence of electricity and the fact that children are expected to help with many of the chores. It is also "considered serious anti-social behaviour to be found reading".

- * For the majority of children there is a lack of cognitive stimulation in early childhood, because often parents have little time to spend with their children or do not understand the value of language stimulation by means of discussion and story-telling. Many parents are also illiterate. Lotho (1991:144), writing about the situation in Nigeria, also mentions the lack of cognitive development necessary for reading during child-rearing because of the lack of toys and books in homes and lack of public libraries. These factors may also contribute to the 25% drop out rate for black children in South Africa in their first year at primary school (Olën 1991).
- * Pupils are not always encouraged by their teachers to read books even when there are classroom collections or school libraries, as the teachers themselves do not always understand the value of additional reading. There has been a long history of the authoritarian teacher and pupils doing rote learning. Thus it is often only those children who come from homes where the parents are literate who will

actually read the books. Tawete (1988:333) says that there "is the disbelief on the part of educationists that libraries have a value". He points out that the educational system encourages use of textbooks only and also emphasises the problem of teachers who have little or no background of library use and who thus cannot appreciate that the school library should be at the heart of teaching and learning in the school (1991:127,129). To the extent that the matric examination can be passed by means of rote learning from set textbooks, this also holds true in South Africa.

- * There are few qualified school librarians. Osei-Bonsu (1990:102) mentions that the secondary school libraries in Ghana are staffed by untrained personnel. The situation with regard to many of the schools for black pupils in South Africa is similar.
- * Many teachers in the schools do not have adequate qualifications and are not information literate. According to Kakoma (1991:7-8) the teacher training curriculum in Zambia emphasises teacher-based education rather than resource-based education. This means that teachers lack the knowledge and training to start or manage school libraries. Teachers are also not given training in integrating the school library into the curriculum.

If there were sufficient good pre-schools some of these problems, such as the lack of early cognitive stimulation and introduction to print materials could be addressed, but in fact pre-schools

are few and far between. Because of the widespread poverty and the annual need for large numbers of additional primary schools, it does not seem likely that there will be a significant growth in pre-schools in the immediate future.

For the solution of some of the other problems the need for more research is required. For example, research is needed to determine the accessibility of the contents of books. When an author writes he postulates an audience. He has to know the tradition in which he is working. He can then create fictional roles that the reader is willing and eager to play. It is not an impossibility if both the reader and writer are familiar with the literary tradition in which they work. There are major differences between the story structures used in a literate and oral culture and the story structures of one culture may not be accessible to another culture. In South Africa publishing is highly Eurocentric. It is largely controlled by white people's interests and money. Although there have been attempts in the recent past to publish books which are accessible and relevant to black readers this has been limited to looking at aspects such as a controlled vocabulary, situating books in South Africa and providing a background and characters with which black children can identify. But no thought has been given to story structure which may be a bigger handicap to accessibility than the colour of the main character. Black traditional literature is structured orally and if children are exposed to stories at home these will be structured in this manner. Major characteristics of oral stories are:

- a lack of causality
- no clear hero
- no clear ending
- a spiral structure rather than a linear structure as used in western literate tradition
- no clear characterization
- the event happens to a person who has no control over it and can do little to affect the chain of events.

[See Appendix 1 for an example of an oral story which has been transcribed and translated.] As a result black children may find literate stories in books intellectually less accessible. Research in this field is presently being carried out by Machet.

Another important factor is the value structures reflected in books. Selectors are often unaware of the values reflected in books because these so closely reflect their own world view. In research carried out by Machet (1992) it was shown that different cultures have different value structures and this can effect the accessibility and interpretation of books. Havard-Williams (1992) has suggested that librarians should encourage many more Africans to write books for children which use material drawn from their own culture. Desktop publishing might be used to make these stories widely available so that early reading could be promoted.

In spite of the above-mentioned problems with regard to resources and school libraries, it appears that many African writers on librarianship are in agreement with their western counterparts

who advocate the importance of good school libraries if the quality of education is to improve. To quote Tawete (1988:332)

"With the support and encouragement from the teaching staff and librarian, students can be led to find the library not only a source of information and knowledge but also as a stimulus to thought and experience".

Osei-Bonsu (1990:102) believes that the value of good school libraries lies in their stimulation of students' intellectual curiosity.

Despite this widespread belief in the contribution which school libraries can make to improving the quality of education one has to ask whether existing school libraries/media centres are fully-utilised? If in fact they are under-utilised, are they worth all the effort and expense required for their establishment and maintenance? Mchombu (1991:26; 1991:184) states that there is plenty of data which "provides consistent evidence of the extremely low use and impact of library services in Africa". Fayose (1991:15) points out that libraries in schools are never used by teachers and also says that resources are badly organised. Bristow (1991:8), as was previously mentioned, found that only 11 of the 155 secondary schools in Venda had viable school libraries. But even these school libraries/media centres are not properly utilised as the following facts indicate:

- in half of them the bookstock is not efficiently organised
- only one school gives regular media guidance to pupils
- only a third of the teachers in charge of the media centre have any sort of relevant training
- the average number of fiction books is 1130
- the average number of non-fiction books is 770

- only one school subscribes to a newspaper
- only 31% of teachers often use the media centre for preparation
- only 13% of teachers often take pupils to the media centre
- only 18% of teachers often send pupils to the media centre
- only 7% of teachers are often involved in the selection of media.

However, even where there are good school libraries or media centres with adequate resources and a trained school librarian or media teacher in schools, these also often appear to be under-utilised by teachers and pupils. This fact emerges when reading some of the literature on school libraries published in countries such as England. For example, Daniels (1983:57-58) carried out a survey in six schools and found that resources are under-used, "their existence and potential not being appreciated by staff or pupils". Valentine and Nelson (1988:53,55-56) also found that subject teachers, including many with university degrees, were neither very regular nor very effective school library users. Many subject teachers are also not comfortable using media in their lessons; they prefer the textbook and lecture method of teaching. Many do not understand the necessity of keeping up to date and do not read much themselves. Beswick (1986:158) states that the real problem is to influence what teachers do and feel they should do. It therefore appears that the major obstacle to the effective utilisation of a school library, both in developed and in developing countries, is probably those teachers who do not promote the use of information in a variety of media and the

use of the school library in their subject teaching.

Articles by, amongst others, Bernhard (1988; 1989), Fayose (1991), Hall (1986), Jones (1989), Kakoma (1991), Kruger (1990), Marland (1986; 1987), Mbambo (1990) and Squirrel (1989) all deal with aspects of this problem and many suggest a similar solution: that in order for the school library not to remain an under-used resource, it will be necessary to ensure that the use of the media in the school library and an understanding of the role of the school librarian become part of initial teacher training. Until this happens "the full potential of both library and librarian will not be realised in secondary education" (Jones 1989:9).

One can thus accept the fact that there is a great need to educate the teachers regarding the multi-faceted role of the school library. McCrank (1991:41) says that "the real target of information literacy campaigns needs to be professional educators and academicians". Caywood (1991:52) also thinks there is a need "to address the place of information literacy in teacher education". What is needed are teachers who are convinced of the value of using information in their subjects and who have themselves learnt how to continue learning. Teachers who are information literate will be able to incorporate amongst others study skills, media literacy, numeracy, graphic skills, computer literacy, problem-solving, cultural, political and economic literacy in their school subjects. They will be able to motivate pupils to use media, and so achieve worthwhile teaching/learning

experiences for their pupils.

Mbambo (1990:11) believes that in order for teachers to change their attitude and appreciate the role of the school library they must learn this in their teacher training. In fact Stewart (1990:9) goes so far as to suggest that colleges of education should give every interested teacher the opportunity of attending a year's course in school librarianship. Fayose (1991:16) believes that courses should be included which will introduce students to the basics of school librarianship including a knowledge of books, bibliographic sources and the use of libraries. He suggests that if such training is offered to all students of education they will be able to encourage the children under their care to use books and libraries (1991:22).

The situation would appear to be similar in South Africa where the media centre is too often seen by subject teachers to be an addition to, and not an integral part of, their teaching practice and of the educational aim of the school:

- few subject syllabi supply specific guidelines with regard to curricular media use
- subject inspectors generally do not promote curricular media use sufficiently in subject teaching
- curricular media use is not promoted sufficiently in teacher training (Overduin & De Wit 1986:806-807).

In 1990 the researcher carried out a survey of 603 first-year student teachers at colleges of education and universities in the

Transvaal, South Africa, to obtain some idea of the use these students had made of the school library during their final year at school, and also to determine whether they had positive or negative perceptions of the school library. These students had all attended schools with a media centre, that is a library which includes a variety of both print and non-print media, and which was staffed by either a full-time or part-time media teacher. They had all received media user education for at least four years during their primary school education and for the first two years of their secondary school education.

Time does not permit a detailed discussion of the survey, but some of the results which are relevant to this paper are highlighted. While the students were in their final school year, 311 or 51,6% of them visited the media centre only once or twice during the year, or never visited it at all (see Fig.1). The activities of those who made use of the media centre, chiefly comprised consulting ready reference works or using the media centre as a place to study. Although more than half the students read six or more books during the year, most of these books had apparently not been obtained from the media centre (see Fig.2). The majority of the students, that is 420 or 69,7%, had been taken by one or more of their subject teachers to the media centre (see Fig.3). It is clear from the pie chart in Fig.4 that most of the students were taught by subject teachers who had used audiovisual media in their classrooms. In fact 175 or 29% of the students reported that more than three of their subject teachers had used audiovisual media in the classroom. The graph in Fig.5

indicates that most of the students were told by their subject teachers to make use of the media centre, although in many cases these suggestions could have been made more frequently. From the above information it does appear as if the subject teachers are not as much to blame for the under-utilisation of media centres as the literature would have us believe. If one compares the number of times some students visited the media centre with the number of times they were taken to the media centre by their subject teachers, it appears as if many of the students never made any voluntary use of the media centre.

With regard to their perception of the media centre most of the students found the media user education useful (see Fig.6). The majority also found the atmosphere in the primary school media centre friendly (see Fig.7). Although the atmosphere in the secondary school media centre was less friendly, it is evident from Fig.8 that most of the students still perceived it in a positive light.

That more students had positive than negative perceptions was also indicated by the two open questions in the questionnaire. Students were asked to describe any experiences they had had in the media centre which had had either a positive or negative influence on their feelings. While 87 students did not describe any positive experience there were 215 who had had no negative experience worth relating. There were more students who had had positive experiences than those who had had negative experiences. There were 209 students who stated that the most positive aspect

was the projects, and resources used for the projects, that they had done in the media centre. The second largest category of positive experiences were those of students who had liked going to the media centre because it provided a quiet place to study. Thirdly students had liked the media teacher and fourthly they had enjoyed the audiovisual media available. The majority of the negative experiences which students had had were linked to the behaviour or personality of the media teacher (133 students had bad things to say about the media teacher as opposed to 120 positive comments on the media teacher). Other negative experiences were boring lessons, no bestsellers, inadequate and out of date resources, broken audiovisual equipment and the rules and regulations, such as no talking and no eating as well as fines for overdue books. A number of these student teachers stated that the media centre was a place where the "nerds" congregated. Perhaps as Heeks (1989:58) has suggested it is time to polish up on some of the traditional elements such as accommodation, organisation and stock. I would add to this the behaviour and attitude of the media teacher in many of the secondary schools which is also obviously in need of some polishing.

In spite of more students having positive than negative perceptions of the media centre, it was found that only about 22,4% of the group surveyed perceived media centres as contributing to their examination success (see Fig.9), while just one third of the group believed media centres had contributed to their personal development (see Fig.10).

If we return to the quote given earlier from Tawete (1988:332) regarding the value of a school library

"With the support and encouragement from the teaching staff and librarian, students can be led to find the library not only a source of information and knowledge but also as a stimulus to thought and experience"

we have to conclude that even when pupils have had the advantage of attending a school with a media centre and a media teacher, two thirds of them complete their schooling without perceiving that the school media centre can contribute to their information, knowledge or personal development.

This perception may be a result of different factors. It may be that the value of the media centre is not publicised sufficiently. Gawith (1990:21) has suggested that "we need to reshape our promotion orientation to the language and concepts of marketing". It is, however, more likely that school pupils, especially in secondary schools, are chiefly concerned with passing their final examination and are only prepared to use the media centre when their school work requires them to consult a ready reference work or as a quiet place to study. Does this not mean that we should investigate alternative models for school libraries, especially in secondary schools and especially in developing countries?

Are there any positive factors which could contribute to children in South Africa having access to books and other media?

In fact there are a number of well-stocked and equipped media centres in the country. There are also centralised or regional

media collections and services, such as the National Film Library and the Transvaal Education Media Service. There are a number of qualified media teachers in the country because training is available at some of the Colleges of Education and at the University of South Africa. The latter is a distance education institution and courses are taken by correspondence. Qualified teachers may enrol for a Diploma in Specialised Education (Media Centre Science).

READ Educational Trust, an independent, professional, non-profit, non-racial organisation funded by the private sector, has focussed on primary schools, mainly those attended by black pupils, in order to promote reading, language competence and learning skills. Book and story festivals, exhibitions and competitions have been held to motivate pupils. READ has also undertaken activities such as: book selection, development of innovative materials for use by teachers, training courses for teachers, staff development in colleges and special projects for adults.

In order to ensure equal access to books and other media for all the children of South Africa and also to address the imbalances of the past, a national policy for the new South Africa in this regard could be useful. Mchombu (1991:34-35) and Menou (1991) are amongst those who have suggested that it is important to establish national information policies. Although a national information policy may be a somewhat ambitious undertaking it

should at least be possible to develop a policy for school libraries.

READ held several Library Policy Workshops in 1991, after they had appointed a consultant on policy and a researcher to work on a framework for policy options for a national Library Policy for School and Community Libraries. The workshops were attended by representatives of interest groups and by experts in the field. More recently, in 1992, READ has joined in the research and discussions being undertaken by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) which also has a sub-group investigating a library policy for a post-apartheid South Africa. Library policy has been included in the policy investigation on support services in education, which also include vocational guidance, health services and specialised education.

Aspects which are being investigated are

- * philosophy of librarianship and information work
- * governance
- * distribution of library services
- * selection and censorship
- * training of librarians and information workers
- * resource sharing and networking.

An additional group will also be formed in order to indicate what the alternative options will cost. This aspect is important, because different scenarios could contain interesting suggestions. For example, Verbeek (1992) submitted a scenario to NEPI which posits a new library and information infrastructure

for South Africa. One wonders, however, what it would cost to implement and who will pay for it? Thus the financial feasibility of the various alternatives must be determined.

It seems that some matters on which consensus are likely to be reached are that there should be greater utilisation of existing facilities and resources, with more cooperation between school and public libraries. The joint school/community library, as found in parts of Australia and elsewhere, could also offer an alternative solution, especially in rural areas and for secondary schools. Dwyer (1989:169) found that these libraries "are generally more suited to secondary than to primary schools".

There appears to be a general acceptance that the problems which are being faced in the field of print and audiovisual media provision are so many and complex that they will be very difficult to solve. We do not want existing school libraries disappearing, or collections becoming out-dated because no new materials are ever added to them, as has happened elsewhere in Africa (Kakoma 1991:3; Mukuvi 1990:46; Ojiambo 1988:148; Osei-Bonsu 1990:88,95-96; Tawete 1991:126). All who are concerned with the necessity of children having access to books and other media must cooperate to find solutions so that we can build and improve on what is available. Moulder (1991:9) has suggested that school and public libraries could establish interest groups to encourage pupils to become regular library users. Such groups are more likely to be successful if many members of the community are involved, not just teachers and librarians.

Librarians and educationalists need to devise ways to share resources, such as having mobile libraries for rural areas or regional centres with one set of expensive audiovisual media which can be rotated to schools for use by classroom teachers. However, there is little point in having books and media available in all the schools if the majority of the teachers do not know how to use these materials effectively. As Mchombu (1991:34) points out relevant training, whether it is initial library training or part of continuing education should be doing at least two things: "first suffusing the entire programme with a consciousness of the African information environment as the foundation on which present libraries are created. Second, develop an in depth knowledge of specialization to include repackaging of information, indigenous knowledge resources, and development librarianship".

In South Africa, just as in other parts of Africa, it will be necessary to study the local conditions and environment. The many problems outlined earlier in the paper such as poverty, illiteracy and the oral tradition must constantly be borne in mind. In all likelihood it will be necessary to develop innovative methods of training. One suggestion is that there must be greater diversification in the training courses offered. A greater variety of short, but intensive and specialised courses, should be held. It will also be necessary to develop innovative training materials which will address the particular circumstances of this area. The audiovisual materials which have

already been developed by READ are examples of what can be done in this field.

In conclusion we can say that physical access to books and other media is seen as only half of the solution to the problem in a developing country. What is more important, and what must receive urgent attention in any national policy for school libraries and media centres, is the large scale education of all segments of the population. Education is needed for the parents and other caregivers of small children on the important role which language and also reading play in their development and education. Subject teachers need education, both during their initial training and by means of in-service training, on the use and value of books and other media for information and knowledge in the teaching/learning situation in their classes. Media teachers also require adequate education and training.

It is only by educating and involving all members of the community in library utilisation that we will have libraries that are fully-utilised. Only then will all the children have both physical and intellectual access to books and other media in South Africa in the 21st century.

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F.11

Number of times pupils visited media centre in matric year

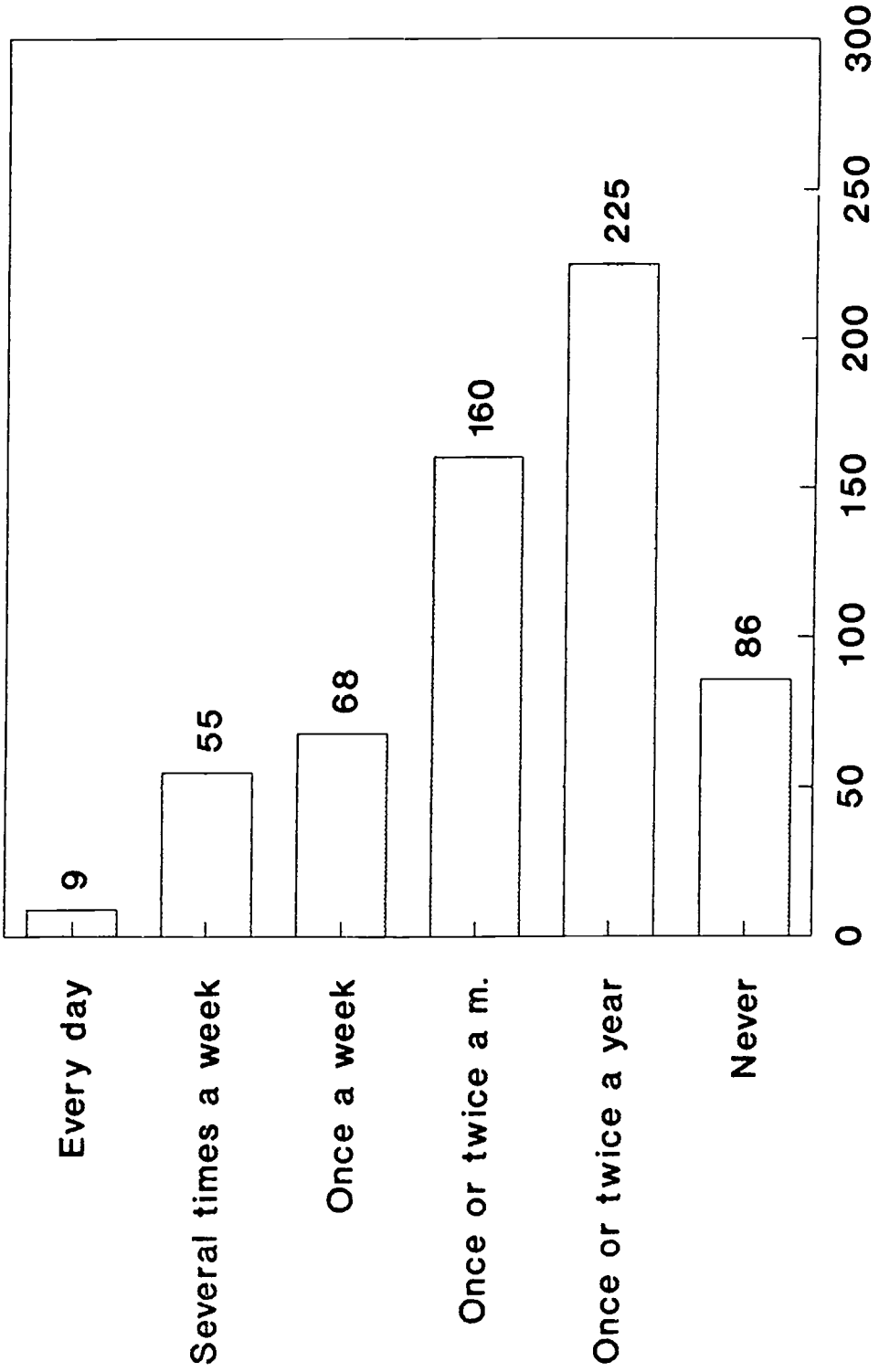


Fig 2

Number of books pupils read in matric year

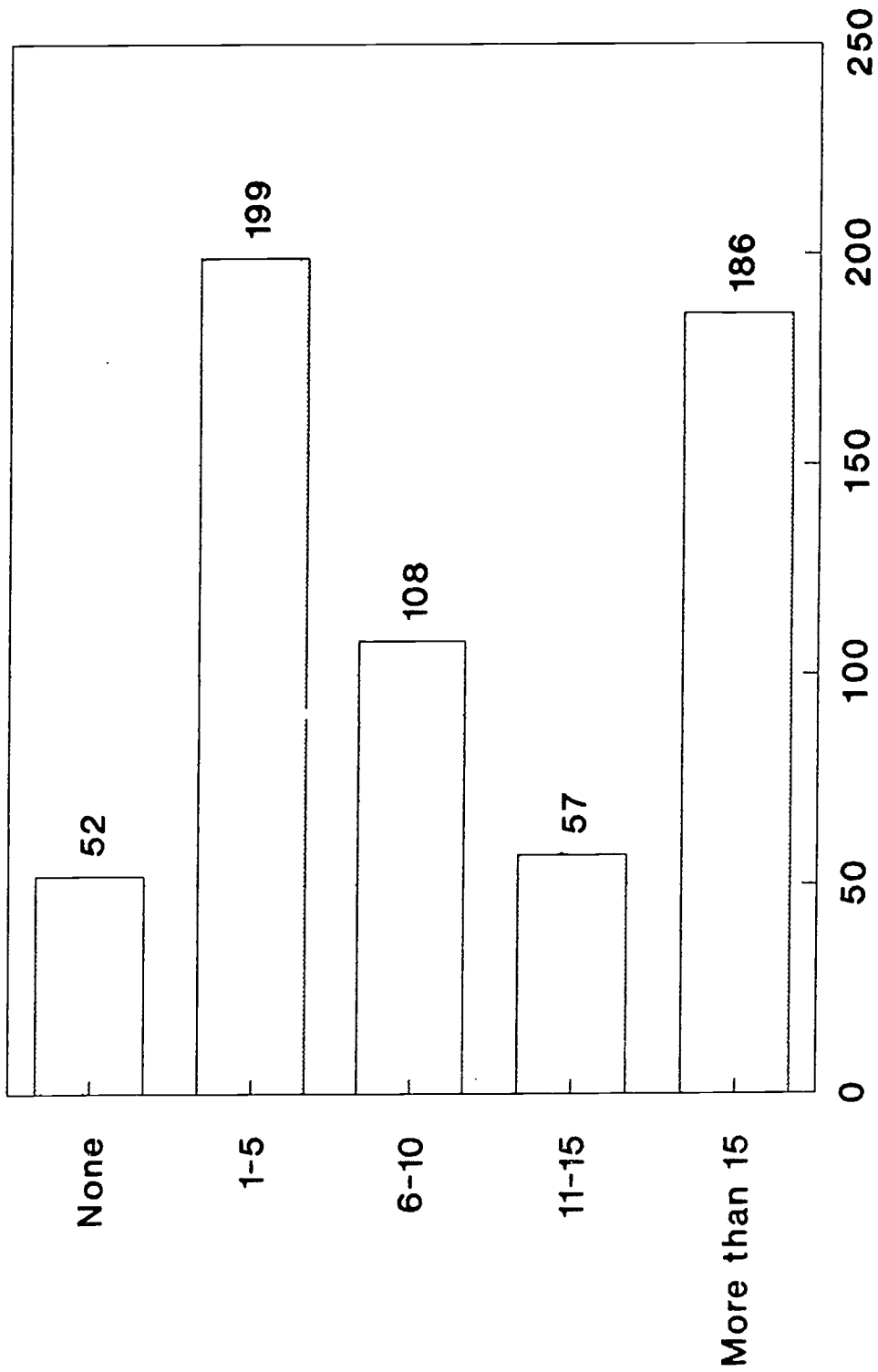
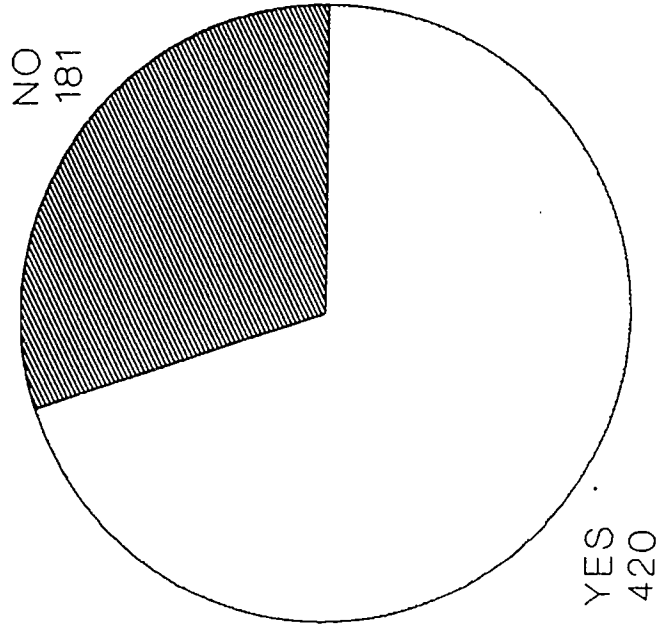


Fig 2

Subject teachers accompanying class to media centre



Subject teachers' classroom use of audiovisual media

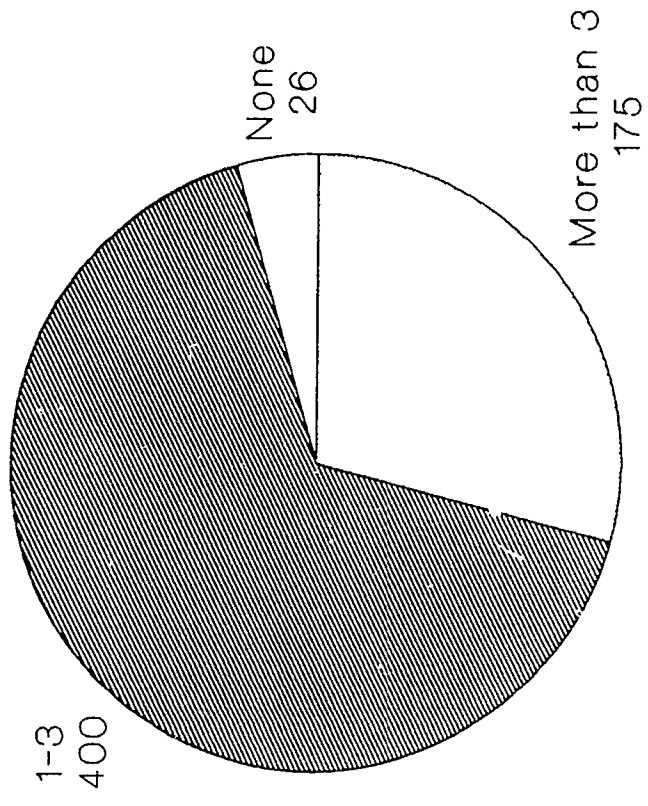


Fig 5

Number of times subject teachers suggested pupils use media centre

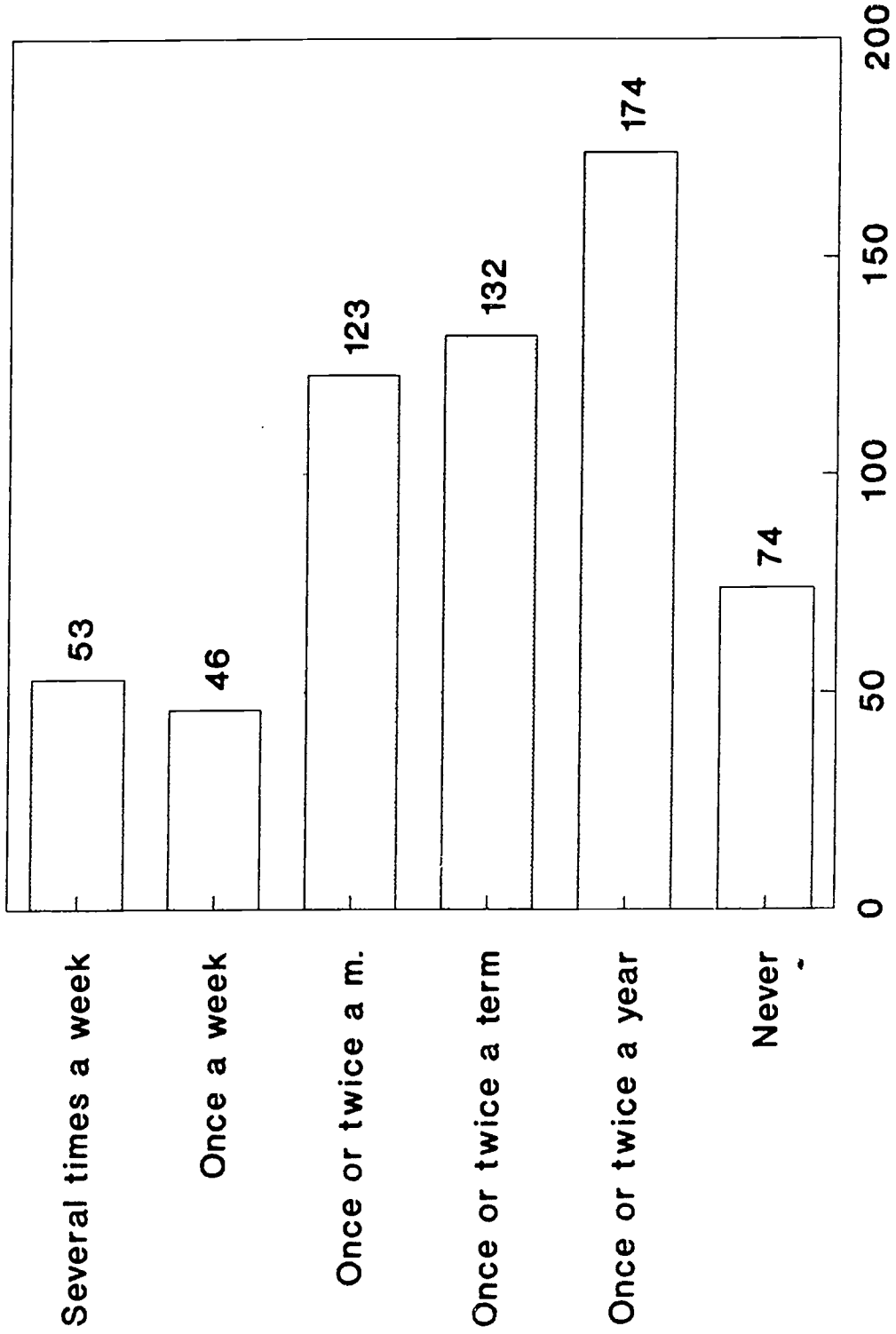


Figure 6

Usefulness of user guidance periods

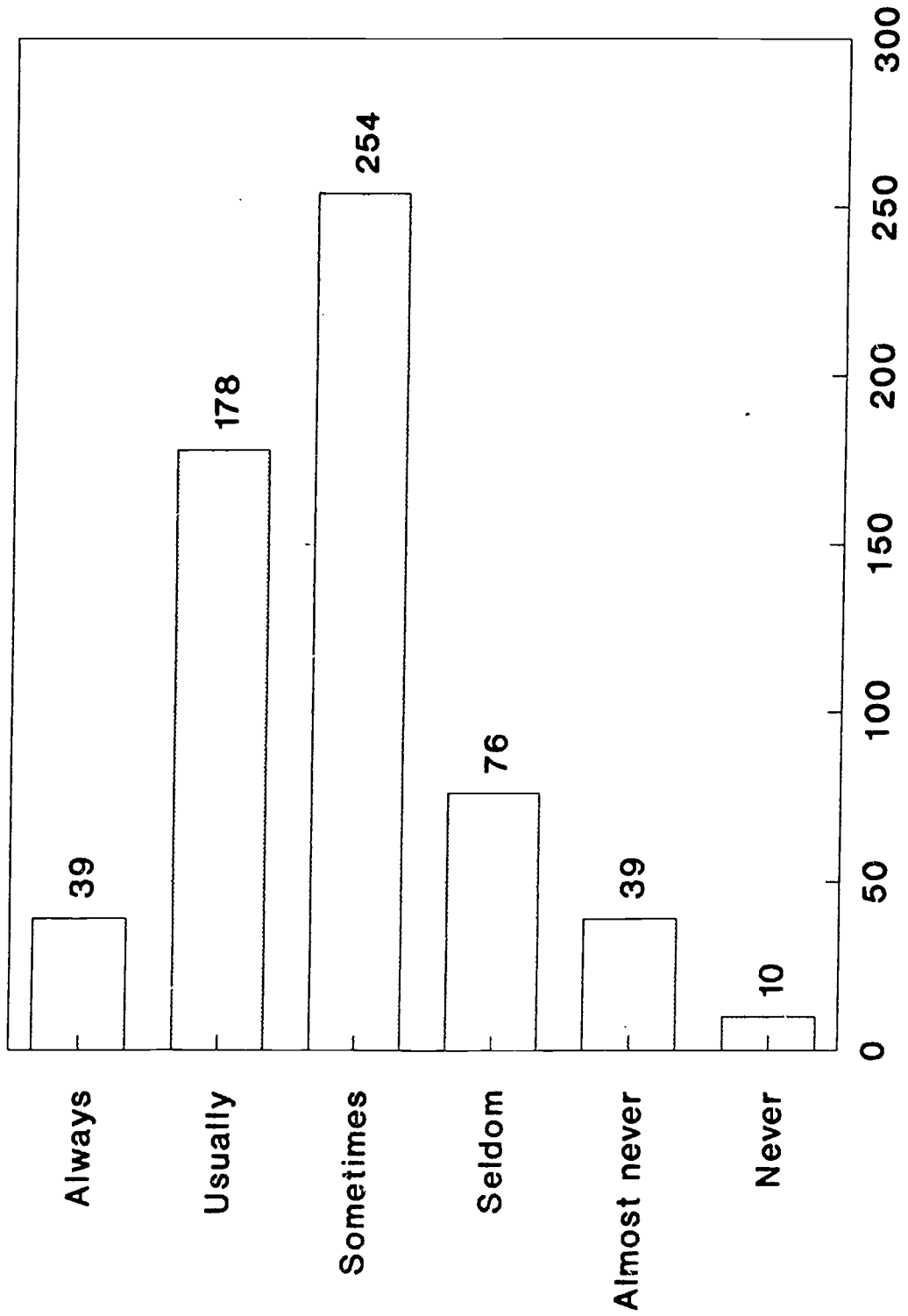


Fig 7
**Friendly atmosphere in the primary
school media centre**

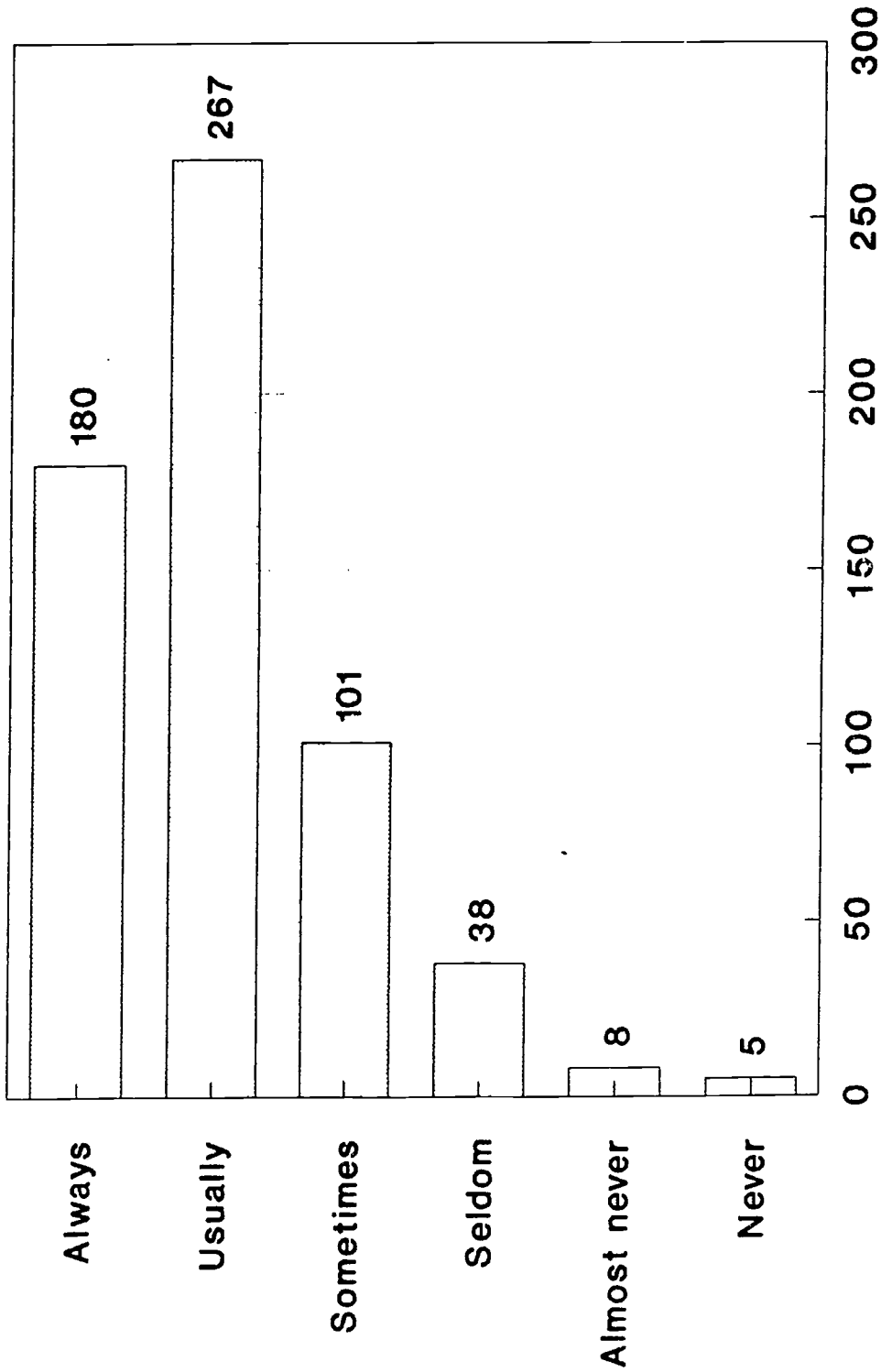
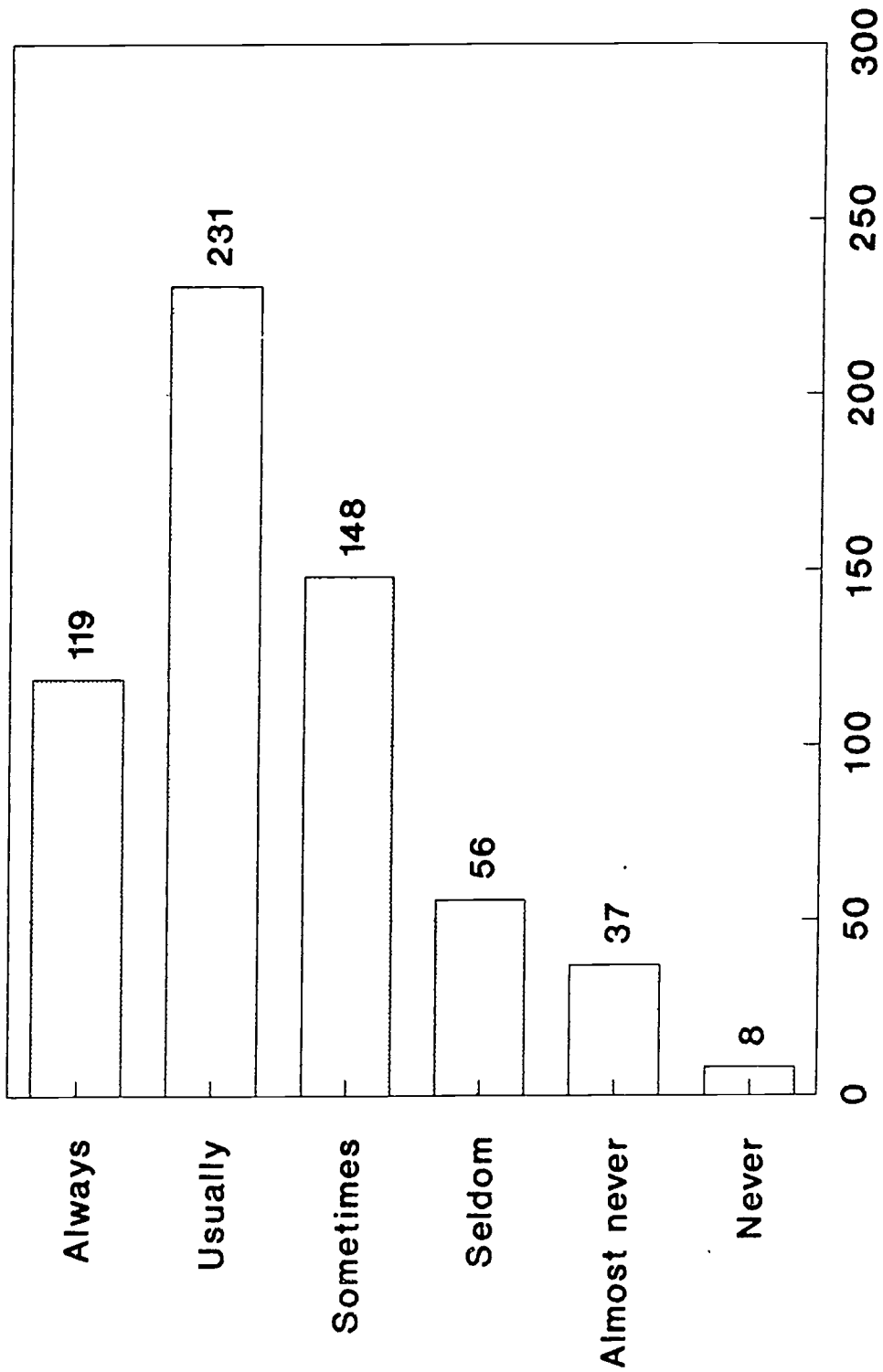


Fig 8

Friendly atmosphere in the secondary school media centre



Contribution of media centre use to pupils' exam success

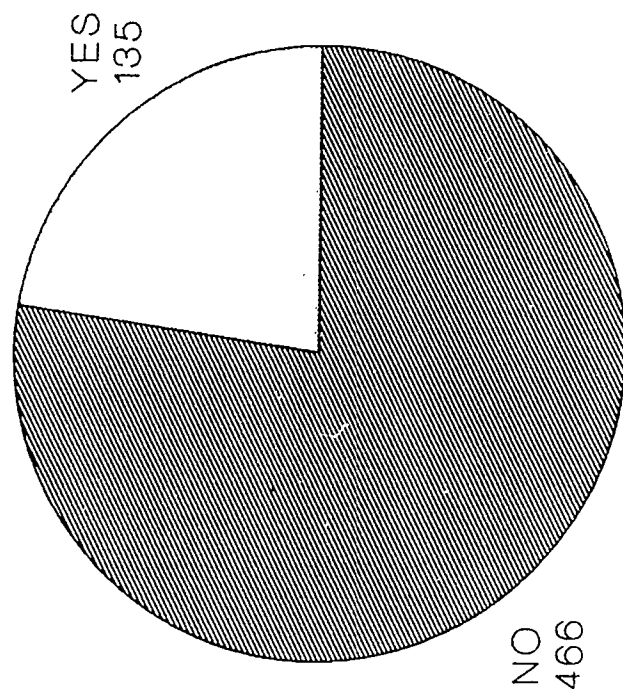
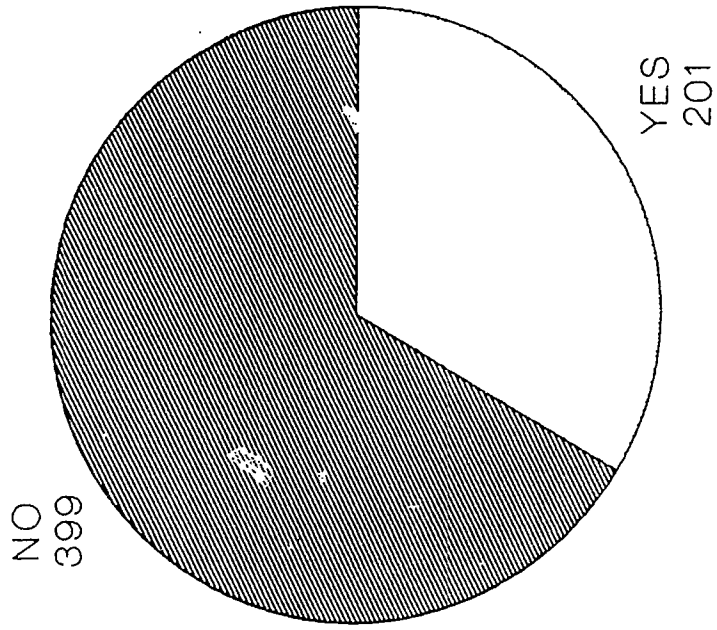


Fig 10

Contribution of media centre use to pupils' personal development



The dishonest visitors *

I want to tell a story!

Tell it!

I want to tell a story!

Tell it!

Now, a certain man who had a wife

Had to set out on a journey with their son.

They faced a long journey

He then set out on that journey with his son.

And so they left.

Their destination was far off.

They trudged on until sunset.

Now, when the sun had set, they looked for a place to sleep.

They came across a certain village

And asked for a place to sleep.

They were well received.

They were shown great hospitality.

The villagers gave them food to eat

And prepared a place for them to sleep.

There was a hut used as a kitchen.

This hut was neatly kept;

Its floor was freshly smeared with cow-dung.

In this kitchen

A supply of fire-wood was always kept

And water also.

Everything necessary was stored there.

Cooking pots were also kept there.

The kitchen was neat in every respect.

Fowls too were kept in that hut.

That is where the visitors were expected to sleep.

There was a hen in that hut

Which had laid some eggs

And was sitting on them.

When the visitors had put down their belongings.

They passed the time for a short while with their hosts.

Then they became tired

And said: "We would like to go to sleep."

"Indeed it is very proper", their hosts replied,

And showed them the place to sleep.

They gave them a lamp

So that they could see while they prepared to sleep.

They also gave them matches in case the lamp went out.

Then they left them, and they went to sleep.

Yet these visitors were thieves

And they had in mind that hen

Which was sitting on its eggs.

Now, in the middle of the night

They took the fire-wood

And made fire in the hut.
They then took a cooking pot
And poured water into it
And boiled it.
They got hold of that hen
And killed it.
They used the boiling water to remove the feathers from the fowl.
They dressed it properly
And put it into the cooking pot.
The pot boiled.
Time went on and day was beginning to dawn.
They also took the eggs and put them into the pot.
Now, early in the morning,
The fowl was not yet quite cooked.
The head of the family woke up
And opened the door of his hut.
Now, when he had opened the door,
He went to the open courtyard
Where they make fire.
He lit his fire
And warmed himself at it.
Now, when they noticed that the head of the family was up,
The father of the boy went out
And left his child looking after the pot.
Now, he went out
To keep the head of the family busy outside.
They whiled away the time by talking.
"How did you sleep, visitors?"
"Oh, we slept well!
There was no trouble.
It is just that the young man is still asleep
Because he was very tired."
"Oh yes, it is quite understandable."
The talk continued in that strain.
Now, when the hen was cooked,
The dawn had come
And they could see the way.
When the chicken was well-cooked
The boy thought of how he could tell his father that the chicken
was ready.
He then went out of the hut
And stood at the door
Saying: "You, father,
What will it help us to stay here any longer?
Now, it is far to at-the-chicken-is-cooked, the place where we are
going. When, then, shall we arrive there?"
His father replied: "What has gone into your head boy?
Are you mad, what has possessed you?"

Do you think that at drink-the-gravy-and-take-the-fowl-and-put-it-
into-the-provision-basket is as far as where we are going to at
the-fowl-is-cooked?
Why, it is near here!"

The boy got the message that his father wanted him to drink the
gravy and then take the fowl and put it into the provision basket.
So he went back into the hut and drank the gravy.
He finished it,
Then took the fowl and the eggs
And put them into the basket.
He then came out of the hut and said: "Well, father,
everything is ready.
I have packed all our belongings!"
"That is good, my son, that is what I wished.
Let us now go!"
They went into the hut and got their belongings
And then set out on their journey.
They went on for a long time.
Then the housewife of the village where they had spent the night
Decided to go into the kitchen
To arrange the hut since the visitors had slept there.
When she entered
She was met by the smell of a cooked chicken.
"Now, what has happened?
The cooking pot is greasy
And it is also obvious that a fire was made here!"
Uttering a cry of surprise, she said: "Oh, no!
Alas! The hen is no longer here.
The eggs also are gone!
How did this happen?
I am sure this is the work of our visitors. They are thieves!"
This means that
Those who give others a helping hand,
Will themselves be left in the lurch.

This is the end of the tale