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Scope of Study: This report is an attempt by the author to check some of the literature to see if ability grouping actually creates undersirable aspects for the slow learner. The author is interested in the slow learner since he is working with them in the classroom. Three aspects are considered in this report. These aspects are: (1) Will ability grouping insure higher academic achievement for the slow learner? (2) Can good social relationships exist between the slow learner and his peers in a school utilizing ability grouping? and (3) Can the slow learner develop desirable personal attitudes in a class in which he is grouped for instructional purposed on the basis of ability?

Findings and Conclusions: In the case of ability grouping insuring academic achievement, there is too little evidence to support this view. Undoubtedly something will be proven in the future.

On the surface, the literature seems to agree that very little adverse effect is caused by ability grouping on the pupils' social relationships. Even though they are grouped on ability in school, this has very little or no effect on how children choose their social friends.

Ability grouping does have a harmful effect on the slow learner in his quest to develop a desirable personal attitude. The slow learner often feels that he is inferior because he is set apart from the other students and therefore, he cannot develop a desirable sense of personal worth.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL

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DOES ABILITY GROUPING CREATE CERTAIN UNDESIRABLE ASPECTS
FOR THE SLOW LEARNER?

By

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DOES ABILITY GROUPING CREATE CERTAIN UNDESIRABLE ASPECTS
FOR THE SLOW LEARNER?

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PREFACE

This report has been prepared as a result of an interest which was generated while teaching the slow learners at Tulsa Central High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Many school systems utilize the ability grouping as an instructional method and I was curious to know if this ability grouping actually created undesirable aspects for the slow learner. It is the aim of this report to present some of the published work that has been done on ability grouping and to see how the slow learners are affected by it.

The general public receives much information concerning the need to provide better classrooms, better laboratory facilities and better teachers for the brighter students so we can develop scientists, physicists and engineers for this, The Space Age. Eventhough much is published regarding the slow learner, little is presented to the general public. The general public must be made aware of undesirable aspects as well as desirable ones, if they exist for the slow learner. This slow learner will be a part of the general public someday and therefore he must be given as much education as he is capable of receiving so that he will not be a burden on the community where he lives.

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. L. Herbert Bruneau, Associate Director of Academic Year Institute, for his constructive criticism so graciously given during the preparation of this report.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The United States has been aptly described as "the great experiment." It is a nation very largely made by conscious human contrivance. The building of it during the past century and a half has been in accordance with plans originally devised for universal human betterment" (King, 1958).

In order to provide this human betterment, many issues have been debated and many have been abandoned. An issue which has been debated for years concerns the pedagogical soundness of grouping pupils for instructional purposes on the basis of ability. By the early thirties most large schools tended to use some sort of ability grouping and studies conducted at that time were not very convincing as to the value of ability grouping. Educators favoring ability grouping claimed that slower students prevented the faster ones from moving ahead at their optimum rate. This is still the cry of many of the educators. On the other hand, educators that were critical of ability grouping claimed that slower students benefited from the stimulation of the faster students. Parents of the slower students felt that their children received inferior teaching because many of the teachers did not want to teach the slow learner. Charges were prevalent that the American school was attempting to create an "intellectual elite", that ability grouping was undemocratic, and that the education of the gifted or the above average student was receiving too much emphasis at the expense of the slower student.

In the late thirties a new wave of education theory arose to proclaim that such practices as ability grouping were "unsound" and "undemocratic". "Learn by doing" and "develop the whole child" became the slogans of the proponents of this new educational theory. Grouping of the student for instructional purposes on the basis of ability all but dropped from the American school. Even though this was occurring, on the athletic field the students were segregated on the basis of ability. Those that could perform, did; and those that could not, did not.

By the late 1950's there developed a trend away from the educational theories of the 1930's and the question of the soundness of ability grouping once again emerged. Furthermore, ability grouping in the 1950's and now seem to be meeting with less resistance than at any previous time in the history of the American school. This might be due to improved public relations programs; or it could be that people are just beginning to realize that ability grouping has always existed in the secondary school, especially in certain co-curricular functions such as athletics, music, debate and dramatics. Perhaps a better explanation of this change of attitude, however, is America's recent knowledge of the advancement of science and technology in Russia, together with the sudden realization that the school must give scope to ability, if America is to survive as a free nation. At any rate, there is once again a definite trend toward ability grouping which will likely have a far-reaching effect on the schools of America.

With the emergence of the trend again toward ability grouping arise many of the same charges that were made by its opponents of the early thirties. Science and technology demands that the school provide

the necessary educational background for the training of more engineers, scientists, physicists, etc. America demands that the ones produced be the greatest scientist, physicist, etc. that it is humanly possible to produce. It does appear that these great demands will favor the education of the gifted and the above average student, perhaps at the expense of the average, or below average student. As American educational philosophy stresses the importance of the school's responsibility in providing each individual with as much education as he is capable of learning, the school must also look at the possibilities of certain undesirable aspects which ability grouping might create for the slow learner.

Before ability grouping is universally adopted by the American schools there is a need to seek answers to the following questions: Will ability grouping actually insure higher achievement for the slow learner? Can good pupil social relationships exist between the slow learner and his peers in a school utilizing ability grouping? Can the slow learner develop desirable personal attitudes, including an adequate sense of personal worth, in a class in which he is grouped for instructional purposes on the basis of ability?

DEFINITIONS

A slow learner is characterized by I. Q's. ranging between seventy-five and ninety. This group constitutes about fifteen to eighteen per cent of the total school enrollment.

Ability grouping is an attempt to divide the students into classes or within a given class according to their I.Q's and their ability to attain.

An elite is a group of people who are given special recognition,

special privileges and special rewards.

A student is assumed to be snobbish when he expects to be more favorably accepted than he is willing to accept others.

Self-concept is defined as the attitudes and feelings that a person has regarding himself.

CHAPTER II

WILL ABILITY GROUPING ACTUALLY INSURE HIGHER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE SLOW LEARNER?

With the speed at which science and technology are changing the pattern of living in America, it is obvious that the school cannot wait until a thorough research has been made on this question. America's need for more scientists, physicists, engineers, etc. is critical. The school must adopt the best known plan that is conducive to producing greater and more scientists, engineers, etc. At the same time the school must not adopt an attitude, such as advocated by a certain admiral and others, of "educate the best and shoot the rest." The school must not neglect the slow learner. It must not label him as uneducable and thus leave him ill-equipped to take his place in society. If learning goals are adjusted to the slow learning pupils' educational status and these goals are geared to his rate of learning, the slow learner's progress usually will be steady.

The question, thus, becomes: Can the American schools universally adopt ability grouping and still provide an atmosphere that will enable the slow learner to attain greater academic achievement? Too often little consideration is given to the slow learner in forming ability grouped classes. Often schools group classes without giving due consideration to the pupils that make up the slow-learning group or to the special qualifications necessary to teach slow learners.

"Low groups sometimes become repositories for the "misfit"; places

where the delinquent, the emotionally disturbed, and the unduly shy are sent, along with the slow learner." (Goodlad, 1960) In larger schools it is possible to have several students in one or more of these categories grouped in the same class. The classroom then becomes not a place for learning, but rather a battleground for the struggle between teacher and "misfit" to maintain order. The slow learner with his difficulty in learning is further handicapped by being deprived of instructional time while the teacher is trying to handle discipline problems.

Often some of the students of the low group are individuals in need of psychiatric care. In schools equipped for taking care of this kind of problem these individuals are quickly identified and special precautions can be taken, but in smaller schools where sufficient funds are not available to hire a psychiatrist, very trying experiences are in store for the teacher. Of course it is necessary to educate these students, too, but grouping such students in the same class could create an insurmountable problem for the teacher, especially if he is inexperienced.

Symonds (1959) says that "individual differences in learning require attention to the problem of how pupils shall be brought together in groups. Evidence has been presented to show that attempts to classify homogeneously on any one basis created problems with other factors, and in any compromise plan pupils in the class will vary almost as much in any one skill or subject as they would if there had been no attempt to make a group or grade stand for some level of progress. One is forced to reach the conclusion that, whatever the system of classification and promotion of pupils, the major responsibility

for adapting instructions to individual differences rests with the classroom teacher."

Mitchell (1959) says that "few teachers seem willing to accept the job of teaching the slow group, and when they do, it is occasionally with reluctance." He also says that "too few teachers are receiving special college training for teaching children with pronounced problems." Too often, the inexperienced teacher is the one who draws the low groups.

Most school systems operate on a seniority system and the older and more experienced teacher has his choice in the selection of his classes. West (1961) in his study of grouping of slow learners in Dade County, Florida reported that the "teachers in the triple-track schools were in favor of organization, but the majority were overwhelmingly opposed to teaching a low group." I have found that too often teachers want someone else to teach the slow learners. In Tulsa, the students are grouped according to their ability and many of the teachers try to avoid being assigned one of the slow groups. Will a teacher that is opposed to teaching a low group do an adequate enough job to insure that the slow learner achieves as high academically as he is capable?

Mitchell (1959) further states that the teacher of the slow division should have an abundance of "patience, of love and have an understanding of mental health, and once a teacher is selected and proves successful he should continue to teach in the slow division." Will a teacher who is opposed to teaching a slow group do as successful a job as he is capable, when doing so means being retained in a job that he dislikes? Mitchell does say that the "specially trained teachers seem to get great satisfaction in assisting children to overcome handicaps, and that a teacher's philosophy, personality and training are important elements

in this area of education." If teaching a slow group requires a special kind of teacher with special training, can the school find enough of this kind of teachers to insure that the slow learner is not penalized by a teachers indifference? I am fully aware that most teachers would try not to show any indifference while in the classroom but this is no guarantee that sometime the indifference might show to the students. I also feel that to allow a teacher to remain with the slow group for an indefinite time would be harmful for the teacher because all of us need the stimulation that the bright student provides.

Opponents of ability grouping who believe that slower students can benefit from the stimulation of the faster students would be supported in their belief by Massoglia (1962). She grouped her students heterogeneously and utilized the very bright in assisting her in teaching the other students. She believes that peers have a tremendous influence over each other, and she capitalized on this idea in using the whole class in helping a non-English speaking child in the first grade to learn to read. Helping this student enabled each child to build up his own self-esteem by giving him a feeling of importance. The slow learners were motivated to improve the over-all quality of their work so that they, too, could help; they were able to establish themselves through efforts to help this student. Will the slow learner be deprived of valuable stimulation, such as this, if the ability grouping is used?

French (1960) found evidence in his studies of records of Navy Service Schools and the James Monroe School in New York City which seemed to indicate that ability grouping by itself does not increase the effectiveness of learning. Evidence did show that bright students did do better in ability groups than did slow students. In other words, ability

grouping was helpful to the bright students, but harmful to the slow students. The results of this study seems to support the belief of some parents that claim ability grouping is unfair and undemocratic.

Wilhelms (1959) claims that "the mass of data from hundreds of studies on ability grouping reveal that the expected gains in subject-matter did not occur. Learning remained about the same as it would have been in unsectioned groups. Grouping by itself yeilds no particular advantage in the learning of subject-matter." He also maintains that the range of individual differences was usually cut only by one-fifth. Does this relatively small gain in reduction in range of differences justify ability grouping? Wilhelms further contends that the school should not limit the basis for grouping to just ability, but it should use interest, friendship and congeniality.

Rudd (1958) in his study of streaming in British schools failed to find evidence that significant differences in attainment resulted due to the organization based on streaming. In fact he did find evidence that samples of classroom behavior revealed that in the groups organized into streams fewer social contributions to lessons were made by the pupils, and there was more aggressive behavior and less attention to work, especially in the lower group. Obviously, these findings tend to support those who claim that ability grouping creates additional discipline problems for the teacher.

In contrast to the above studies there are many that seem to favor the position of those favoring ability grouping.

West (1961) concluded from his studies of Dade County, Florida schools that "evidence seems to support the hypothesis that scholastic achievement of pupils assigned to classes for slow learners in the

triple-track school was more advanced than the achievement of slow-learning pupils in other schools."

King (1960) conducted a comparison of schools using ability grouping against one that did not in the area of reading achievement. He grouped the students into three groups -- high, middle, and low -- in each of the two schools. Using the Mental Age Grade Placement (MAGP) score as the criterion for determining increase in reading achievement, he found that in the ability grouped school there was an increase from .03 MAGP underachievement to .32 MAGP over-achievement for the high group; an increase from .11 MAGP under-achievement to .23 MAGP for the middle group; an increase of .41 MAGP under-achievement to .34 MAGP under-achievement for the low group. All scores seem to support the theory that reading achievement is greater in ability grouped schools; however, the gain of the pupils in the low group was small in comparison to the other two groups. This study was conducted over just one year. Although this study does seem to favor ability grouping, it also supports the claim by many that ability grouping favors the brighter student.

Reeve (1956) in his study of ability grouping in mathematics concluded that each child's ability should be developed to the fullest. He feels that it is impossible to do this in our present schools, especially in the over-crowded situation that now exists. He denies that separate grouping harms the slow learner. By his own personal experiences with ability grouping, he found that all groups -- slow, bright, and average -- benefit by being separated.

Hoover (1955) feels that grouping students enabled his superior biology students to be motivated to do more advanced work. He contends

that two harmful practices are eliminated by ability grouping: trying to teach the slower students and judging them on a competitive basis regardless of ability to do school work. He also denies that ability grouping hinders the slow learner, but his study does seem to support the theory that ability grouping favors the brighter students.

In spite of the many studies that have been made in the area of grouping for instructional purposes on the basis of ability, there is not conclusive evidence that high academic achievement is attained in schools using ability grouping by any student -- gifted, average or slow-learning. Additional research is necessary before the school can universally adopt ability grouping as a means of insuring higher academic achievement for the slow learner.

CHAPTER III

CAN GOOD PUPIL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS EXIST BETWEEN THE SLOW LEARNER AND HIS PEERS IN A SCHOOL UTILIZING ABILITY GROUPING?

With the trend again favoring ability grouping, it is necessary for the school to again re-evaluate its purpose. Fair (1957) says that "the function of education is to help the youth of America become effective members of society -- a heterogeneous society." What deteriorational effect will occur in this society if the school uses practices that promotes poor pupil social relationship? Does ability grouping tend to promote or inhibit good pupil social relationships?

The slow learner will become a member of this society. How he feels about other members of this society and how they feel about him will contribute to the strength of this society. If the slow learner feels that the school is only concerned with the education of the brighter student, what effect will this have on his desire to learn?

The old charges by the opponents of ability grouping again arises: The American school is trying to create an "intellectual elite." Ability grouping creates a "snobbish" class. Ability grouping is undemocratic.

In answer to these charges the school must look to research to see if it is possible for good pupil social relationships to exist between the slow learner and his peers in a school that is utilizing ability grouping. The school must seek answers to the following questions: Are slower students noting that they are slower and less

advanced? What is their attitudes toward the brighter students? Is the school building a caste level in conjunction with ability grouping?

Clemens and Muehl (1957) found incidents in a reading class that was grouped on the basis of ability to read that the student of the high groups desired to limit their class to only "students having enough sense to read."

"Recently one of the authors was working conscientiously to challenge the top reading group of her class. She took this group to a separate room to give them a time test to ascertain reading speed. Each of the six youngsters far exceeded the standard for the grade. As a result, all the children showed great eagerness to increase still further their reading speed and ability to retain facts. They asked to have similar experiences more often. "How wonderful!" said the teacher.

Then a discussion over another part of the day's work began. When the dismissal bell rang, there were both surprise and consternation that they must leave so soon. As the children gathered their materials, John asked, "Why can't we have a class by ourselves? We have so much fun without those others!"

Before the teacher could recover from those others, Tommy added, "Yeah, how come some kids don't have as much sense as others?"

Surely, statements such as this do not contribute to good pupil social relationships.

When the emphasis of education was on "develop the whole child" in the 1930's there was a strong tendency for children to desire to be associated with the average group. Even children who were capable of very high academic achievement were apt to withhold their efforts to avoid the stigma of being classified as "eggheads". With the stress again on producing more and better engineers, scientists, physicists, etc., this practice has waned somewhat, especially in the case of the brighter students. If ability grouping focuses attention on the fact

that some students are not capable of meeting the higher academic requirements, how will the slow learner react toward the brighter student? His inabilities excludes him from their group. Although favoring ability grouping, Magnifico (1958) discovered that "the dull child often developed a general feeling of hostility toward all gifted due to his inability to compete intellectually."

Although many charges are made by those opposed to ability grouping concerning the ill-effects it would have on pupil social relationships, very few researchers support them in their charges. It is possible that not too much emphasis has been placed on this aspect in the past.

Hoover (1955) by the use of an anonymous questionnaire found little or no evidence that any stigma was attached to being in a particular group in classes that were grouped for learning in a class of biology students.

Goldworth (1959) conducted a study of the effects of an elementary school fast-learner program on children's social relationships. She used the Columbia Classroom Social Distance Scale and three sociometric tests as pre-measures and post-measures.

Each pupil was to rate each of his classmates on a five-point scale:

1. "I would like to have him as one of my best friends."
2. "I would like him in my group but not as a close friend."
3. "I would like him to be with me but not for a long time."
4. "I don't mind his being in our room but I want nothing to do with him."
5. "I wish he were not in our room."

This test was designed so that only five variables were used:

- (1) change in children's acceptance of each other as friends, (2) change in children's acceptance of fast learners as friends, (3) change

in fast-learner's acceptance of classmates as friends, (4) change in the degree of cohesion within regular classroom groups, and (5) change in the degree of fast-learners group preferences within regular classroom groups. The results of this study indicated that for regular classroom groups, the fast-learner programs; (a) had a limited effect on the number of classmates which children accepted as best friends, and (b) had no effect on fast-learner' acceptance of classmates as best friends, on group cohesion, or on sub-group preference. She concluded that, despite the occurrence of some negative changes, these children's social relationships remained relatively stable. Although this study was made with reference to the fast learner, there are implications that students do not place as much importance on group standing when they choose their best friends as some claim. Often times the importance of group standing results not of the students own choosing but because of the importance placed on it by his parents. We live in a rapid moving world and parents tend to become "social climbers", and this importance of social status is passed on to their children resulting in an emphasis on group standing.

In regard to the charge that the American school is trying to develop an "intellectual elite", Woodring (1959) maintains, as a result of reviewing the evidence of many research studies in this area, the belief that the American school is developing an "intellectual elite" shows a limited understanding of American culture. He says that if an elite ever exists in the United States, it will be an elite of movie stars, rock and roll artists and of football players. It will not be an Intellectual One. Traditionally American society has been reluctant to reward its members for academic achievement. Some students

of political science maintain that one of the contributing factors in the defeat of the democratic nominee in the presidential elections of 1952 and 1956 was due to his avowed intellectual ability. While this might support the view that many in the United States feel that the creation of an "intellectual elite" would be undesirable, it in no way indicates that one of the school's purposes of using ability grouping is to develop the same.

Holmes and Harvey (1956) with the use of sociograms in their studies found evidence that method of grouping did not appear to be a crucial factor in the selection (or non-selection) of friends or co-workers.

Silverstein (1962) in a study of 350 fifth grade pupils in thirteen classes in eleven schools in the boroughs of the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens in New York City with the use of the Ohio Social Acceptance Scale, Advanced Series, failed to find evidence that the intellectually gifted are more "snobbish" than are the other students in grouped classes.

"To the extent that a positive discrepancy between how a pupil is viewed and how he views others is an indication of snobbery, the intellectually gifted children in regular classes were found to be no more snobbish than the other children in those classes. Thus, it may be normal for all children to be somewhat snobbish."

As this was a study of the gifted and no research was made on how the lower group reacted toward the gifted, it would be difficult to determine from these results of how these findings affected social relationships, but wouldn't it be just as reasonable to assume that "lack of snobbishness" in the gifted could be reflected in the low group as a sign of good social relationships, as it would to maintain that ability grouping creates a "snobbish" class?

Although there is disagreement among the researchers as to whether or not ability grouping contributes to good pupil social relationships, there is not enough conclusive evidence to support the belief that good pupil social relationships cannot exist between the slow learner and his peers in a school that is using ability grouping.

CHAPTER IV

CAN THE SLOW LEARNER DEVELOP DESIRABLE PERSONAL ATTITUDES IN A CLASS IN WHICH HE IS GROUPED FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES ON THE BASIS OF ABILITY?

It is this writer's belief that if a person is told and remained year in and year out that he is not capable of acceptable academic work, he will soon arrive at a point where he no longer tries to achieve. For many, school becomes a place of boredom, a place where he is forced to go by a law that he no longer respects. This feeling grows until he loses respect for all laws that try to force him to act in a manner that is against his will. School becomes a challenge to him to test his defiance of these laws. The school must guard against any practice that would push a youngster into this category.

Utley (1961) lists some of the characteristics of the slow learner as: "he has little interest in abstractions; memorization is a difficult and arduous task; in problem solving he must be able to see the connection between the problem and the world in which he lives; he thinks slowly; he generalizes with great difficulty; he is capable of memorizing very little of the material necessary for passing the course." With all these handicaps will being associated with a group that consists of only other slow learners allow him to develop a sense of personal worth?

It makes very little difference how a low group is labelled by the teachers. Even the first grade student soon learns that a "Redbird" is smarter than a "Bluebird" or the "Aces" are brighter than the "Duces". He lives with the knowledge that he is different from the brighter students. This follows him throughout his school years, and eventually

some of the members of the low group seek means of recognition other than academic achievement. Some can gain this recognition through extracurricular activities, but others may turn to means that result in discipline problems for the teacher. Of course the realization that one is academically inclined also exists in heterogeneous groups, too. Is this realization magnified by ability grouping?

West (1961) found in his study of grouping slow learners in Dade County, Florida that the majority of teachers did not wish to teach the slow group. In spite of the fact that these students are grouped because they are not highly capable of learning, many would be able to sense the teacher's rejection of them. As suggested earlier, it would take a specially trained teacher or one with great sympathy and understanding to convince all of these students that they were not inferior in intelligence. I have found in working with teachers that many do not want to teach the slow learner. Each teacher, I believe, feels that he is better qualified to teach the brighter students. Perhaps when working with the brighter student we can see more learning and thus attribute the learning to our teaching ability and boost our ego. Often times teachers become aware of only the bright student and thus lose sight of the basic principle of our society, Education For All.

Cutler (1962) maintains that "learning is an ego function, and its impairment or breakdown can be a sensitive indicator of more extensive maladjustment, anxiety, fear or achieving, fear of failure, unhappiness or depression, dammed-back motivation, negativism, or personality disorganization can impair learning." All these are related in some way to how the student feels about himself. If he fails to understand and feels that the teacher rejects him or that he is in a class

of "dumbbells", what effect will this have on his incentive to learn? Fink (1962) found in his study of a rural high school in the Central Valley of California that how ninth grade students felt about themselves was correlated to their classification as under-achievers or over-achievers. Self concepts were measured by instruments generally used by school psychologists in clinical situations. At this time no school data was available. The results of the evaluation of self-concepts were compared to each student's classification of an under-achiever or an over-achiever. Classification as an under-achiever or an over-achiever was based on the students grade point. He concluded that the results of this study confirmed his hypothesis that a relationship does exist between adequacy of self-concept and level of academic achievement.

Before adopting ability grouping the school should look to the research to see what evidence has been found on the effects of ability grouping on self-concepts of the slow learner.

Mann (1960) in her study of the effect of ability grouping on self-concept revealed that "the low group of 102 fifth-grade pupils had a definite negative self-concept. When asked why they were grouped in the low group, most attributed it to "dumbness". Mitchell (1959) heartily disagrees with these students. He maintains that many students grouped in the low divisions may have more native ability than some of those placed in the average or higher achievement classes. Their poor achievement can be attributed to the fact that they have avoided difficult mental plowing. He infers that being grouped in a group kills the student's incentive to achieve academically. Could an inadequately sense of personal worth developed as a result of being

grouped as a slow learner actually prevent a student from progressing through school as easily as he would have otherwise been capable?

Rudd (1958) says in his study of psychological effects of streaming on the pupil's self-estimates revealed an extensive, but probably temporary, deterioration in personality following re-grouping, when the student was moved from a higher group into a lower group. This would seem to support the hypothesis that being grouped as a slow learner does, in fact, tend to develop a negative self-concept.

Classroom organization must afford every child the chance to feel satisfaction in himself and at the same time it is encouraging him to broaden his horizons and add to his talents. Can realization of this goal be best achieved with ability grouping?

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

America has enjoyed a feeling of scientific and technological superiority for a number of years. Suddenly it has awakened to the fact that its position in this capacity is seriously being challenged by the Soviet Union. It is a natural human trait to try to place the blame for this predicament on someone or on some system. Many are quick to blame the schools. Experts in many fields, other than education, are eager to let the school shoulder the blame. They are also more than ready to suggest remedies that will better the school situation. Many administrators of schools are frantically trying to satisfy their demands and follow their suggestions. Of course these people are justified in wanting America to have the best educational system in the world, how else can America remain free, if this is not so? But, before the school adopts any "sure-fire" method to correct the situation, it must evaluate that method and be reasonably sure that it will accomplish what it is supposed to accomplish.

Ability grouping is not new. It was all but abandoned in the late 1930's because too many educators and administrators felt that it produced too many undesirable aspects. Now as then, America needs to be aware of the educative requirements of all its youth, not just the gifted.

The desirability of grouping for higher academic achievement seems to hinge on the bias of the particular researcher making the study. There is not sufficient evidence at this time to support the view that

ability grouping insures higher academic achievement for any group of students, and this is especially true in the case of the slow learner. Undoubtedly some kind of grouping will have to be utilized to push the gifted to their optimum level of learning, but lack of evidence of its effectiveness necessitates that factors be considered other than just I.Q. and past achievement.

Too little research has been made on the effects of ability grouping on pupil social relationships. On the surface, it appears that ability grouping would have very little adverse effect on how students feel toward members of the different groups. It is suggested that, perhaps, adults tend to over-emphasize the importance that students place on grouping when they choose their best friends. There is insufficient evidence to support the claim that ability grouping by itself would deny any student the opportunity of finding his place in society.

In the case of effect of ability grouping on the self-concept of the student, especially in regards to the slow learner, too little concern has been exhibited in the many researches of ability grouping. More studies should be made on ability grouping with this aspect in mind. However, evidence of studies made so far indicate that grouping by ability does seem to retard the slow learner in his quest of acquiring a desirable personal attitude, including an adequate sense of personal worth.

The findings of this paper leave most all of its questions unanswered. This is not meant to imply that there are no answers, but that more research must be done in this area and better techniques of research must be developed before definite answers can be given to

questions such as these. In the meantime, the school must use every idea conceivable that will support its philosophy of education, and at the same time insure that America turns out the most highly educated people in the world.

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Master of Science

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