

1966

Slow Learners in High School English

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SLOW LEARNERS IN HIGH SCHOOL

ENGLISH

(TITLE)

BY

Gwendolyn Jordan

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Masters of Science in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

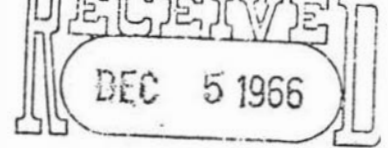
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the help and cooperation of the following individuals, the completion of this paper would have been impossible. I would like to acknowledge Mr. Charles Dungy, a student at Eastern Illinois University, for his assistance in putting my survey material into chart form. My sincere appreciation goes to the administrators and teachers of Thornton Township High School and Charleston High School for their cooperation in allowing me to make my survey. I would like to thank Dr. Crane of the education department at Eastern Illinois University for his assistance in solving the many problems I encountered. Dr. Overton, my advisor, has been irreplaceable in his assistance to me while preparing this paper. Those persons who helped me and I have not mentioned by name have my sincere gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This paper was originally to be only about the attitudes of slow learners in high school toward various subjects in English. After making the first survey, the writer realized that there was a reason for the slowness of these students. The writer felt that there was more involved than an I.Q. score, or grades in English.

Watching these students complete the questionnaire prepared made one realize that their attitudes toward these subjects in English would be influenced by their emotional characteristics and their reading ability. The writer realized that many of these students could not read well enough to comprehend exactly what the directions on the questionnaire meant. They could not read well enough to understand what some of the subject matter was. In observing their behavior, it seemed that these students were "emotionally maladjusted". The writer feels that it could be reasonably surmised that many of these students were suffering from the after effects of earlier emotional disturbances associated with school. These students failed initially to learn to read with their class group and were

handicapped both by their retardation in reading and by the carry-over of feelings and attitudes of failure and discouragement.

The purpose of this paper is to try to enlighten teachers and other individuals about the different problems and aspects of the slow learner. Previous studies have shown that persistent difficulty in reading disturbs the personal, social, emotional, and scholastic adjustment of the pupils. Therefore, the ineffectual reading hampers the effective use of their own capabilities. These victims are then classified as slow learners.

PROCEDURES

First the writer made out a questionnaire containing most of the subjects that were thought to be covered in high school English. The writer got permission from the school administrator and the chairman of the English Department at Thornton Township High School to administer the questionnaire. After the questionnaire was administered, the findings were put in chart form.

When the writer realized that there was more involved with the slow learning English students than intellectual dullness, the writer began to look up material on the emotional problems of slow learners.

As a result the writer went out to Charleston High School and looked at the Science Research Associates High School Placement Test reading scores of those students

in slow English classes. Then the writer compared the reading score with the semester average in English to substantiate the conjecture about the influence of reading ability on achievement in English.

LIMITATIONS

This paper is limited in its scope because opinions and conclusions are reinforced by a small number. The writer made out the questionnaire to elicit the attitudes of the slow learners toward subjects in English, she did not realize that these slow students had not been exposed to English of this level. They had had a diluted form of English. Therefore, the questionnaire was invalid to a certain extent. On the other hand, it did support the writers conjecture that the reading ability of these students had a direct influence on their grades in English.

The time this questionnaire was given may have some influence upon the validity of the results. The questionnaire was given to these students on June ninth which was the last day of school. The writer regretfully feels that the students were not in the most conducive mood to fill out a questionnaire about subjects in English.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

DEFINITIONS

Since this paper deals mainly with the slow learner, some definitions of slow-learningness are needed.

"If a youngster's slowness or backwardness, in school or out, is due to lack of skill or technique or to some sensory defect or other remedial fault, he may catch up, with skillful instruction and guidance. But if his slowness is due to lack of native capacity, he will, in most instances, not catch up."

"...the term 'slow learner' should be interpreted consistently to mean slow in learning intellectual things. Slow learners are not equally slow in all kinds of activities or abnormal in all their characteristics."

"Some attributes of the slow learner are self-distrust, physical timidity, dependence and deference."¹

These definitions of slow learningness and attributes of the slow learner are not finite. These are conclusions

¹W. B. Featherstone, Teaching The Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, 1951), pp. 2-3.

reached through surveys. As each individual is different, each slow learner has different attributes.

The term slow learner has been loosely applied to all grades of children with low intelligence. The slow learner tests slightly below average in learning ability, but he should not be considered mentally handicapped. From the point of view of educational organization, the term slow learner has been applied to the child who seems to have some difficulty in adjusting to the curriculum of the academic schools because of slightly inferior intelligence or academic learning ability. He will require some modification of school offerings in the regular classroom for maximum growth and development.²

The retarded child lacks incidental learning experiences, whereas, the slow learners do not lack these experiences. The main differences between a slow learner and an average-ability student are the kinds of learning sets, expectancies, attitudes, and capacities for generalization.

These differences are not inherent or immutable. Repeated failure of the slow learner produces anxiety which impairs learning. Consequently, failure in learning tends to reduce aspiration.

One author states the following:

The slow learning pupil learns in the same way, fundamentally, that other pupils learn. He learns from and by

²Samuel A. Kirk, Educating the Retarded Child (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.,) p. 12.

He imitates, he proposes and plans, he thinks and reasons, he experiments, he generalizes, and he draws upon his past experience and 'transfers' it, or 'reconstructs' it, to meet new situations. But he does not think and reason as well, he is less imaginative, less able to foresee the consequences of either an overt or an implicit course of action and is inclined to reach conclusions without adequately considering alternatives and without the benefit of much reflection. He is more likely to act upon impulse and to accept fairly workable solutions or approximate results than to exercise in advance or to be severely critical of the adequacy of his behavior for the situation in hand. At the same time, he is often more insistent on knowing what the purpose of an activity suggested or required by someone else's purposes or ideas or someone else's assertion that a particular course of action would be desirable; he insists on quick results and is impatient and inclined to lose interest in the face of deferred or intangible returns."³

³Feathersone, pp. 7-8.

EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLOW LEARNER

It is important for teachers of slow learning English students to be aware of the emotional needs of these students. These students have essentially the same needs as the students in the average English classes, but they need more attention because they have failed in progressing at the normal pace in their language ability. Like the average students, these students have a need for security, for giving and receiving affection, for acceptance by other children, for recognition and self-esteem, for independence and responsibility, for new experience and activity.⁴ One of the best places to start satisfying the needs of these students is in the English class. "English is essentially a social study. In its fundamental aspects it is based upon social interactions and social adjustments."⁵

Those persons who do not have a command of the language are isolated from society. It is the duty of the teacher to eliminate the ineffective habits of these slow learners and to instill in them those habits which are needed for increased competence in their language skills.

Before the teacher begins to reteach skills that were never used effectively, she must be sure that the basic needs of these students are satisfied. These students who already

⁴A. E. Tansley, The Education of Slow Learning Children (London: R. Gulliford, 1960), pp. 47-48.

⁵Glenn Myers Blair, Ph.D., Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 14.

feel rejected usually do not act positively when their basic needs are not satisfied. Because of their incapacity for intelligent, effectual communication, they revert to immaturity, regression, compensatory activity, withdrawal and fantasy.⁶

It is essential that the teacher get at the root of the problems of these students who have difficulty with English. It has been found that many students build up a habit of failure in this subject. They have unwholesome attitudes about anything related to the subject. The teacher must try to reach the student on his own terms. The teacher has to make the student feel that being able to use the English language effectively is of prime importance to him as an individual. "Language is man's greatest invention, without it he would cease to be human. To deny any student the best possible instruction both as to its nature and its use, to be satisfied with minimum attainment in this most basic of subjects, is to limit his intellectual attainment and to restrict his social usefulness."⁷

The slower students should have special attention. They should be in classes with their peers. They do not feel rejected around their peers; whereas, they are looked down upon by students who are superior to them. It is of tremendous importance that these slower students are able

⁶Tansley, 51.

⁷James D. Doerner, The Case for Basic Education (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959), p. 85.

to feel some self gratification. If they work with students in the range of their mental capacity and have their curriculum adjusted to their capacities, they are able to find rewards in their progress, regardless of how slight it is.

Under the system of school progress by grade, retarded children are frequently subjected to tasks which they cannot possibly understand or perform, and frequently they are permitted to go from grade to grade without achieving anything of satisfaction to themselves or to their teachers. To escape the feeling of inadequacy and blame-worthiness, many become truant or engage in mischief. Studies of undesirable behavior among pupils show that there is a tendency for disciplinary problems to be concentrated among retarded pupils who are not given the special educational help they need.⁸

Most of these slow learners in English are socially maladjusted. They have been denied access to experiences to facilitate their learning ability. These children cannot read and adjust to school behavior because they have not been exposed to literature and other subjects that are oriented toward school. Therefore, it is important that special attention should be given to these deprived students. The teachers should not look only at the results of the behavior of these students. They should make themselves aware of the processes which caused this behavior.

⁸L. A. Magnifico, Education for the Exceptional Child (New York: Longmans, Glenn and Company, 1958), p. 17.

A socially maladjusted person is one who has failed to come to terms with his environment. As far as the individual himself is concerned the problem is not an intellectual but an emotional one. Generally speaking--and especially in the case of the delinquent--that emotional disturbance appears to stem from environmental causes. However, the individual's maladjustment is caused not by the environmental forces themselves working directly upon him, but by his emotional interpretation of those environmental forces. The socially maladjusted child is extremely difficult to categorize, because he may represent one or a combination of a number of different and sometimes over-lapping types of personality disturbances. It is possible to give a very general over-all picture of the gifted or retarded child, but not of the disturbed child. The maladjusted child may be compared to a machine that does not function properly. He may be such a complex and highpowered mechanism that it may not be apparent to the untrained observer that he is working at only a fraction of his total maximum output. Unless he is actively delinquent or has some outstanding eccentricity (or is notably psychotic), he is often hard to identify in the average classroom. Yet potentially his talents, like those of the gifted child, are being sadly wasted if nothing is being done to help him. As the National Education Association bulletin has pointed out, 'Ability embodied in a disorganized personality tends to be either undeveloped or paralyzed at the very threshold of production.'⁹

⁹ Magnifico, pp. 238-241.

The slow learner has many personal problems that should be considered. Many times the student has lived under unwholesome family and neighborhood conditions. There are emotional problems when the slow learner has brighter brothers and sisters. The slow learner is then neglected at home as well as an isolate at school.

There are many causes for this educational backwardness of these slow learners. It is generally believed that all the culturally deprived are not interested in education. This is not a major cause of their backwardness. These conclusions are drawn because the culturally deprived child is usually discontented in the school and his parents have little education. But it has been found that when members of the underprivileged group were asked, "What do you miss most in life that you would like your children to have?" the results were fifty percent of white lower socio-economic group and seventy percent of the Negro group said "education." It was also found that over fifty-five percent of the children who had learned to read before coming to school came from lower socio-economic homes.

The apparent disinterest of some lower economic groups in education is not due to their dislike of education. Education has a different meaning to the culturally deprived. These people usually have no interest in knowledge for its own sake. Education is not seen as an opportunity for the development of self-expression, self-realization, and growth. Education, to these culturally deprived individuals, is a means to better themselves socially and economically. The deprived person usually does not think he has a good chance of getting much education causing his educational aspiration to remain more at the wish or fantasy level. These people fear that they may be ostracized from familial, community, and peer group ties because of their education. It is important that the deprived belong somewhere. When they associate with the middle class they are isolates. Therefore, they have to remain close to their own associates.¹⁰

Many tests have shown that social class has a definite impact on educational achievement. Backwardness in school is only a symptom of some of the evils of the lower social classes. These children receive less instructional time than other students because teachers usually feel that they

¹⁰Frank Rieseman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 10-44.

have to "police" rather than "teach" the class. Our middle class society tries to motivate achievement by promising future occupational rewards. Many of these slower children from lower socio-economic classes devalue academic achievement because they see no relationship between their attainment and the realities of their future.

The entire culture of the underprivileged is quite different from that of the middle class. It has been found that the underprivileged is traditional and patriarchal except for Negro sub-cultures. The Negro is known to be matriarchal, superstitious and somewhat religious. These people are usually ineffective readers and are poorly informed in most areas. They are quite suspicious and distrust a lot of talk and new fangled ideas.

These people are not individualistic, introspective, self-oriented or concerned with self-expression. But they are definite and have intense convictions about morality, punishment, custom, diet, and traditional education. They do not blame themselves for their position in life. They hold the world responsible for their misfortune. Instead of seeing other classes as individuals striving for survival, they see them as enemies trying to keep them from having anything. This is not to say that these people enjoy their position in life. They too desire a better standard of living, but they are not attracted to the middle-class

styles of life, with its accompanying concern for status, prestige, and individualistic methods of betterment. These people set great store by their family and personal comforts.

Since these people are not class conscious or interested in politics, they place much emphasis on masculinity. They like noise and excitement. They are pragmatic and anti-intellectual. Lastly, they feel that talk, reading, and intellectualism in general are unmasculine.¹¹

ATTITUDES OF THE TEACHER OF THE SLOW LEARNING STUDENT

In view of the emotional characteristics and learning traits of slow learners, there should be a special teaching climate for special students.

Basically, the teacher of the slow learner must be patient and sympathetic. She must not only sympathize, but empathize too. She must not only feel for them, she must feel with them. She should go out of her way to know each student personally. She should be familiar with their backgrounds as far as previous schooling and emotional problems are concerned. She should have many interests and much imagination and ingenuity. Her main task is to capture and retain the interest of these students long enough to teach them. If the students can follow their interests, they will feel some sense of achievement or satisfaction which

¹¹Frank Rieseman, pp. 26-30.

is all important in motivating slow learners.

According to one author the philosophy of the classroom should follow this pattern:

1. Provide opportunities for the class to succeed in areas where they can compete with other pupils of the same grade.
2. Provide opportunities for the individual pupils to develop a feeling of success.
3. Show an interest in knowing the pupils.

Do Not

1. Show impatience if the children find they do not grasp an idea or are not interested.
2. Use erudite vocabulary-utilize the idioms of the adolescents in discussions with the class.
3. Continue on a topic if the class is losing interest after you have exhausted all your means of reaching them.
4. Teach phases of work above their level.
5. Use books that are obviously for the lower grades.¹²

The entire atmosphere of the classroom is a prime factor in the success of teaching a slow learner. The teacher must show these students that she respects and accepts them. The classroom should be the one place where these students are able to express themselves without apprehension. The students should be able to participate without fear of failure

¹²Lillian C. Howitt, Creative Techniques For Teaching The Slow Learner (New York: Practical Press, Inc., 1964), pp. 10-13.

or criticism.

Since progress is one of the main motivating forces, these students should be allowed to help set their own goals. After adequate goals are set, they should be shown frequently and graphically how much progress they are making. The teacher should make sure that the students have set short-term, easily accessible goals. Because they have a short span of attention, interest is scarce and precious.

The personality of the teacher is quite important in capturing the attention and cooperation of the students. If the teacher is enthusiastic about the subject matter and sympathetic with the students, she will contribute much to promoting improvement in their skills. Slow learners respond to a disciplined, well-organized routine. The teacher should start a specific program and with competency she will elicit favorable reactions from these students.

Not only must the teacher project an enthusiastic and sympathetic attitude, she must feel within herself that she sincerely wants to help these students. The academic competency of a teacher is of little importance if she has negative attitudes within toward these slow students.

Many teachers feel frustrated in a situation where however hard they work there is likely little to show for it. . . Perhaps the commonest attitude of teachers to backward

children is simply fear-fear for their survival as teachers. This is an exceedingly intractable problem, particularly as the qualities required for holding the attention of lower stream classes seem only likely to come with experience . . . One is faced with the dilemma of either inveigling an experienced teacher into leading a hand whose set attitudes and methods may be to some extent inimical to success, or recruit-a young teacher who, however enthusiastic and energetic, lacks experience and may quickly become irrevocably disillusioned."¹³

The author of the previous quote gives some positive attitudes that help in teaching backward children.

First, the teacher must be prepared to abrogate any status for himself simply by virtue of being something called a teacher. The teacher must have the built-in conviction that the backward child is not responsible for his intellectual or emotional deprivation. The teacher must be incapable of being shocked by anything the child is or does; not that he must never be angry, but his anger must never arise from hurt susceptibilities. A sense of humour is, of course, essential for any teacher, but the teacher of backward children needs more than the ability to see and take a joke; he needs a sense of humour based on both a firm sense of proportion and a clear scale of values. A proper understanding of the essentially conditioned and relative nature of all teaching, of all education and of life itself will enable the teacher to avoid a crushing sense of responsibility and feelings of anxiety and guilt at failure. Aboverall, the teacher of backward children must have faith. This will enable him to have compassion in the face of the utmost provocation, to keep trying when his best efforts fail, and to retain respect for the children who hate.¹⁴

¹³"Attitudes for Teachers Teaching Backward Children," Time Educational Supplement, February 19, 1965, p. 525.

¹⁴Ibid.

These teachers should have full cooperation of the administrator. The administrator who takes no interest in the slow students is detrimental to the entire program. He should understand and accept the pupils as an integral part of the school organization. The administrator must make certain that the slower students are participating units of the school system. One of the main responsibilities of the administrator is designing an appropriate method for assigning pupils to the specific classes. Not only is it important that similar I.Q.'s are grouped together, but students with similar backgrounds, and behavior characteristics have fewer adjustment problems.

CURRICULUM

The slow learner's needs are the same as other individuals, but the means by which he needs can be met are different. Each school system tries to meet the needs of youth through its curriculum. The students have need as motives. This is the need to be free from, or to resolve satisfactorily, the stresses and strains of living that arise inevitably. They have needs as means. They must have means of fulfilling life's purposes or working out one's developmental tasks. The school through its curriculum tries to satisfy the needs as qualities of experience essential for good mental hygiene. The entire curriculum

is intended to fulfill the needs as over-all general attributes of behavior.¹⁵ In teaching slow learners:

1. Goals and objectives must be realistically adapted to the needs and resources of ordinary people in ordinary circumstances.
2. Activities must be made concrete by being based largely on tangible features of the environment, and through the use of much first-hand and pictorial experience.
3. Activities must be relatively simple in organization, clear-cut as to purpose and plan, and must provide for generous use of demonstrations and practical applications.
4. Generous and frequent provision must be made for drill and practice in skills and habits.
5. Frequent evaluations must be made of progress.¹⁶

Therefore, the educators have to adjust the curriculum affecting their subject matter to the correction of the problems of the disadvantaged. These students should not use the same textbooks, and they should be taught from the standpoint of interest rather than subject matter only.

In order for the curriculum of the slow learners to be of use, the common causes of illiteracy should be known. In addition to the emotional disturbances mentioned previously

¹⁵William B. Featherstone, A Functional Curriculum for Youth (New York: American Book Company, 1950), pp. 87-88

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 99-100.

are:

1. Dialect and Foreign Background
2. Anomalous inflections
3. Anomalous and unphonetic spelling
4. Weak forms of pronunciation
5. Slovenly speech
6. Poor sense of discrimination
7. An English Conscience
8. Some sort of Logic¹⁷

All these things in some part must be considered before any definite goal can be set in the curriculum.

Good English usage comes only through a consciousness of error, a desire to improve, and the opportunity for practice. The student who suffers from cultural deprivation has little motivation in the home for the use of language development. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school to provide the proper emotional stimulation for these students through the curriculum.

According to one school system, there are definite goals for the student in basic or slow English. These goals are divided into four sections. First there is listening:

1. To develop habits of good listening
2. To receive directions
3. To understand explanations of processes

¹⁷English Journal, XXII, 1943. pp. 551-556.

4. To participate in discussions
5. To increase span of attention

Speaking:

1. To pronounce and use everyday words correctly
2. To increase functional vocabulary
3. To communicate clearly and effectively
4. To ask and answer questions
5. To participate in class discussions
6. To state directions and explain processes
7. To relate incidents and stories
8. To present reports
9. To converse in social situations

Reading:

1. To amplify sight vocabulary
2. To develop word attack skills
3. To select the main idea
4. To find details related to the main idea
5. To organize ideas or facts obtained through reading
6. To derive simple generalizations and conclusions
7. To read aloud effectively
8. To use aids to comprehension such as maps, graphs, and charts.

Writing:

1. To write legibly
2. To compose elementary sentences
3. To construct simple paragraphs developing topic sentences
4. To use the dictionary to verify spelling
5. To utilize the simple rules of capitalization and punctuation
6. To take notes
7. To formulate directions and instructions
8. To report information
9. To relate incidents and stories
10. To practice composition of social letters¹⁸

These subjects have been broken down into definite goals. If each goal is fulfilled, the students will have a clearer insight of language arts. When this course is completed, these students will still be below average, but they will have a working concept of the language arts. The language arts curriculum for these students is more practical than aesthetic. These students may never enjoy language arts, but they will be able to utilize their skill.

"In a recent study of the characteristics of 100 very poor readers in the secondary school, lack of interest in or indifference to reading was demonstrated by most of them.

¹⁸Benjamin C. Willis, General Superintendent of Schools, "Basic English In The Secondary School," (Chicago Public Schools, 1964).

Over forty percent showed an active dislike for reading. A similar percent displayed minor emotional problems and home conflicts.

Lack of interest in, dislike for, or indifference toward reading are conspicuous characteristics of poor readers. Other defects complicate every case, but seriously retarded readers usually display one or more of these attitudes. Attention to attitude, therefore, is a significant need.¹⁹

The teacher whose activities are sanctioned by the group will find her work more effective. The teacher should employ interest inventories and other techniques to find out the interests of each student. This will provide a basis for the selection of subject matter. If the subject matter is in the line of the students' interest.

"A strong incentive will be provided for the rapid acquisition of effective reading habits and for the establishment of permanent interest in reading as a voluntary pursuit."²⁰

"In every other subject area too the efficiency of instruction will be heightened by the development of an educational program which recognizes the significance of each child's attitudes and of his basic need for success, shared experience, and sympathetic guidance according to his unique nature."²¹

¹⁹Paul A. Witty, "The Role of Attitudes In Children's Failures and Successes," National Educational Association Journal, XXXVII (October, 1948), p. 422.

²⁰Ibid., p. 423.

²¹Ibid.

All the language arts are related skills because they all employ common word symbols. "In linguistic development the sequential order is first, listening with understanding; then, speaking; next, learning to read, and, finally, to write the word symbols that represent spoken speech sounds."²² In earlier grades the comprehension of the spoken language exceeds comprehension of the reading material. Normally reading catches up around grade VI.

"Language, or English, and reading are related in two ways: first, comprehension and speech are the foundation for learning to read printed word symbols; second, reading facilitates improvement in oral and written language."²³ This interrelationship shows that a pupil can usually advance no faster in reading than his language development permits. Poor readers are usually poor in every phase of language arts. The language these poor readers try to read from books is foreign to them in relation to the language they speak and hear at home. Whereas, children from cultured homes usually learn to read easily because this language is already familiar to them.

Reading enriches language in several ways. "Through reading, children grow in linguistic awareness; for the reader is brought into contact with meanings of terms that

²²Gertrude Hildreth, "Interrelationships Among The Language Arts," Elementary School Journal, XLVIII (June, 1948), p. 538.

²³Ibid.

are new to him, the reading context given practice in using correct sentences, and the child in the course of reading, learns about the different kinds of words used in sentences. Reading enriches the language that the child uses in speaking. Oral reading furnishes a basis for discussion. Reading stimulates a wish to write something in good form and also creates occasions for writing. . .²⁴

²⁴ Ibid., p. 539.

CHAPTER III

CHARTS OF QUESTIONNAIRES

AND RESULTS

TABLE 1
PUPILS PLANS ABOUT FINISHING
HIGH SCHOOL AND GOING TO
COLLEGE

Males					
	Number Tested	Plans to Finish	Does Not to Finish	Plan Going to College	Did not Respond
Freshmen	26	19	1	4	2
Sophomores	7	6	1	..	..
Juniors	8	..	6	1	1
Seniors	3	..	1	1	1
Totals	44	25	9	6	4

Females					
	Number Tested	Plans to Finish	Does Not to Finish	Plan Going to College	Did not Respond
Freshmen	22	13	1	8	..
Sophomores	12	11	..	1	..
Juniors	8	8	..	..	..
Seniors	..	..	..	..	..
Totals	42	32	1	9	..

KEY

The different subjects in English are classified under one of five headings. The headings are Grammar, Library, Literature, Speaking and Listening, and Composition.

The results of the answers on the questionnaire were divided according to sex and school classification. The letter L stands for like, the letter D stands for dislike, the letter I stands for indifferent, and the letter U stands for unknown. This is when the student has never been exposed to the particular subject.

Table 2
PUPIL ATTITUDES TOWARD SUBJECTS IN ENGLISH

	Male Freshmen			
Grammar	L	D	I	U
1. Spelling Rules	16	6	4	..
2. Adjectives and Adverbs	15	7	4	..
3. Helping Verbs and Verb Phrases	12	9	5	..
4. The Subject and Predicate	14	4	8	..
5. The Subject and Object Complements	9	9	7	1
6. Prepositional Phrases	10	2	11	3
7. Phrases Containing Verbals	5	8	13	..
8. Subordinate Clauses Not Begun by a Joining Word	6	6	8	6
9. The Agreement of Subject and Verb	17	4	5	..
10. The Correct Use of Pronouns	17	3	5	..
11. Using the Dictionary to Verify Spelling	17	4	5	..
Library	L	D	I	U
12. The Names and Uses of Diacritical Marks	14	4	1	7
13. To Use the Card Catalogue	14	2	8	2
14. The Parts of a Book	14	4	5	3
15. The Dewey Decimal System	9	4	5	8
16. The Location of Books in the Library	16	2	3	5

Male Sophomores				Male Juniors				Male Seniors			
L	D	I	U	L	D	I	U	L	D	I	U
..	5	2	..	2	4	1	1	1	..	2	..
3	1	3	..	2	5	1	..	1	..	2	..
3	2	2	..	2	3	3	..	1	..	2	..
2	2	2	1	3	3	2	..	3	..	..	..
..	5	1	1	4	3	1	..	3	..	..	..
1	3	2	1	2	4	1	1	2	..	1	..
1	3	2	1	2	4	1	1	..	..	1	2
2	3	1	1	3	4	1	..	..	..	3	..
2	3	2	..	2	3	3	..	2	..	..	1
2	2	3	..	2	3	3	..	2	..	..	1
2	4	..	1	4	2	2	..	1	..	..	2
1	1	3	2	3	3	1	1	..	2	..	1
1	3	2	1	1	4	2	1	..	3	..	..
5	1	1	..	2	4	1	1	..	3	..	..
..	3	2	2	1	4	1	2	..	2	..	1
3	2	1	1	4	3	1	..	1	1	..	1

		Male Freshmen			
Literature		L	D	I	U
17.	Biographies	13	7	4	2
18.	Short Stories	20	3	1	2
19.	Informal Essays	6	13	1	6
20.	Autobiographies	12	9	2	3
21.	Material Written by James Thurber	2	10	8	6
22.	Material Written by William Shakespeare	12	7	4	3
23.	Material Written by Mark Twain	16	5	4	1
24.	Poetry by Robert Frost	7	9	5	5
25.	Poetry by T. S. Eliot	1	10	7	8
26.	Poetry by Emily Dickenson	2	8	6	10
27.	Poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks	1	8	8	9
28.	Poetry by Carl Sandburg	6	6	5	9
29.	Tragedies	5	6	6	9
30.	Comedies	18	2	4	2
31.	Poetry About Attitudes Toward Life	9	6	6	5
32.	Poetry About Attitudes Toward Death	4	11	5	6
33.	Poetry About the Philosophy of Love	11	7	3	5
34.	Reading Poetry Aloud	9	9	7	1
35.	Reading Short Stories Aloud	12	6	5	3
36.	Reading Silently	21	2	1	2
37.	Selecting the Main Idea in Your Reading	12	4	6	4
38.	Selecting Incidents related to the Main Idea	11	7	4	4

Male Sophomores				Male Juniors				Male Seniors			
L	D	I	U	L	D	I	U	L	D	I	U
5	1	1	..	3	1	3	1	1	3	1	..
5	1	1	..	6	1	..	1	2	..	1	..
2	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	..	..	1	2
4	..	..	3	6	1	..	1	1	..	1	1
2	1	1	3	1	2	..	5	..	..	..	3
5	1	1	..	3	1	2	2	..	..	..	3
4	..	..	3	5	..	1	2	..	1	2	..
2	2	1	2	4	..	..	4	..	1	1	1
..	1	..	6	..	..	..	8	..	..	1	2
4	..	1	2	1	..	..	7	..	..	1	2
..	3	..	4	..	5	..	2	..	1	..	2
5	1	..	1	4	3	..	1	3	..	..	..
4	2	..	1	5	1	..	2	..	1	..	2
2	3	1	1	1	3	..	4	..	2	..	1
2	1	2	1	1	2	..	5	..	..	..	3
3	3	..	1	4	1	..	3	1	..	2	..
4	1	1	1	6	1	..	1	1	..	2	..
6	1	..	..	7	1	..	..	3	..	..	..
3	1	1	2	4	2	..	2	..	..	1	2
4	..	..	3	4	2	..	2	..	1	..	2
1	3	1	2	..	6	1	1	1	2	1	..
..	4	3	..	..	3	2	3	..	3	..	..

Male Freshmen					
Speaking and Listening		L	D	I	U
39.	Taking Notes on the Teacher's Lecture	13	3	6	4
40.	Taking Notes on a Speech by a Classmate	7	11	6	2
41.	Oral Reports From Newspapers	11	9	4	2
42.	Using Magazine Articles for Oral Discussion	12	10	3	1
43.	Using Records as Aids in Diction	10	3	9	4
44.	Relating Incidents and Stories	9	8	4	5
45.	Stating Directions and Explaining Processes	6	5	7	8
46.	Asking and Answering Questions	12	5	3	6
Composition					
47.	An Essay of Opinion on a Subject Given by the Teacher	10	7	3	6
48.	A Factual Paragraph on a Subject Given by the Teacher	6	6	5	9
49.	Friendly Letters	17	1	5	3
50.	Business Letters	16	4	3	3
51.	Letters of Application	10	4	2	10
52.	A Narrative Story	9	7	6	5
53.	A Research Paper	6	8	5	7
54.	Describing People	10	4	7	5
55.	Describing Places	13	4	3	6
56.	Elementary Sentences	3	8	7	8
57.	Simple Paragraphs Developing Topic Sentences	6	4	6	10

Male Sophomores				Male Juniors				Male Seniors			
L	D	I	U	L	D	I	U	L	D	I	U
6	1	..	..	5	..	1	2	1	1	1	..
4	2	..	1	2	3	1	2	..	1	1	1
4	..	2	1	4	1	..	3	..	2	..	1
2	3	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	..	..	2
2	3	..	2	1	3	1	3	..	1	..	2
3	1	..	3	4	1	..	3	..	..	1	2
1	3	1	2	3	1	..	4	..	..	..	3
6	..	..	1	3	..	1	4	..	1	..	2
3	3	1	..	2	1	..	5	..	1	..	2
1	1	2	3	1	..	1	5	..	..	1	2
7	..	..	..	5	..	1	2	2	..	..	1
5	1	1	..	4	..	1	3	..	1	1	1
3	..	2	2	2	..	..	6	1	..	1	1
2	1	1	3	2	1	..	5	..	.	1	2
3	2	..	2	3	..	..	5	..	..	2	1
4	..	..	3	2	..	1	5	2	..	..	1
4	..	1	2	4	..	1	3	1	..	..	1
2	1	1	3	3	1	2	2	1	..	1	1
3	2	2	..	3	1	..	4	..	..	1	2
4	1	2	..	2	5	..	1	2	..	1	..
2	..	1	4	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	..

RESULTS

Only the responses of the male students are included as data in the paper because of the similarity between male and female responses. The writer feels that there is no need to duplicate responses.

The students react favorably to most of the topics on the questionnaire. The writer feels that the responses of these students should not be taken as the whole truth because it is known that slow English students are not even familiar with many of the topics on the questionnaire. The responses on the questionnaire, though not valid in the way the writer had planned to substantiate her beliefs, show that these students are slow in English because of emotional strain the reading incapability.

These slow students find reading a source of frustration because they are not ready to read when they enter school. Therefore, they tend to like subjects which require less reading.

In the first category, Grammar, on the Pupil Attitude Chart, there are more students who like Grammar than those who dislike it. In the section about Library work, more students like work pertaining to the library than not.

The writer believes that the students prefer grammar and library work because there is less reading involved. These students learn to memorize and answer factual questions

at a higher level than they can attain on questions requiring insight and thought.

The student responses on the literature section of the questionnaire are about equal in likes and dislikes. But as the writer mentions in the opening paragraph, these students are not even familiar with some of the topics they respond to.

On the section of the questionnaire on speaking and listening, in seven out of eight topics, the students respond favorably. The writer believes that the students prefer these areas too because they require little reading.

The students also respond to the questionnaire as if they like composition work. The writer feels that these students like to express their feelings either by speaking or writing. Those who are handicapped in their speech find composition work their only outlet regardless of how incorrect the mechanics of the paper are.

On the Pupil Attitude Chart, the majority of the male freshmen like Grammar too because it is known as the most difficult part of English. There are sixteen out of twenty-six male freshmen who like spelling rules. They can say they like this without flinching because they do know what spelling rules are. Whereas, they don't know what phrases containing verbals are. Therefore, only five out of twenty-six like verbals while half of them are indifferent about verbals. Seventeen out of twenty-six

students like using the dictionary; while only six out of twenty-six like subordinate clauses not begun by a joining word. In this case eight out of twenty-six are indifferent to the subject.

In the library section of the Pupil Attitude Chart, fourteen out of twenty-six students like studying the names and uses of diacritical marks. Fourteen out of twenty-six students like to use the card catalogue and to study the parts of a book. Only nine students like the Dewey Decimal System, and eight students admitted that the Dewey Decimal System was unknown to them.

In the first three items on the literature section of the Pupil Attitude Chart, thirteen out of twenty-six students like biographies. Twenty out of twenty-six like short stories, but only six like informational essays while thirteen dislike them. Only two out of twenty-six students like the works of James Thurber, while twelve out of twenty-six prefer Shakespeare.

Most of the students know Mark Twain from elementary school and television. Sixteen out of twenty-six like Mark Twain, and the total of likes for Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Emily Dickenson, Gwendolyn Brooks and Carl Sandburg is only seventeen.

Only five out of twenty-six students like tragedies, and eighteen out of twenty-six like comedies. Eleven of the students dislike poetry about attitudes toward death,

and eleven of the students like poetry about attitudes toward love.

Combining the number of students who like to read poetry and short stories aloud, the total is twenty-one. The total is also twenty-one for students who like to read silently.

TABLE 3

S R A HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT TEST

Identification Number	Intelligence		Reading		Language Arts		Composite		Semester English Grade
	G. E.	PCTLE	G. E.	PCTLE	G.E.	PCTLE	G.E.	PCTLE	
1	9.1	29	7.7	32	6.5	14	3.7	50	D
2	8.8	23	6.5	15	7.2	24	6.4	12	D-
3	9.0	27	7.1	22	6.1	12	7.0	20	D
4	10.5	62	5.8	10	9.2	55	6.9	20	C
5	9.1	29	5.7	09	8.7	48	6.5	13	D
6	9.9	48	7.4	26	5.8	10	6.4	12	C
7	10.1	52	6.3	13	5.5	07	7.1	21	D
8	9.2	31	7.7	32	7.7	31	5.6	04	F
9	9.0	45	5.6	08	6.4	14	7.3	25	D
10	9.6	40	5.7	09	5.6	08	7.5	28	D
11	6.9	03	4.9	05	3.7	01	---	---	D-
12	9.6	40	8.4	43	9.2	55	9.0	56	C
13	8.7	21	7.4	26	6.8	18	6.5	13	D
14	8.7	21	6.8	18	6.1	12	---	---	F
15	11.1	75	8.2	40	8.7	48	10.3	72	C
16	8.6	19	5.5	07	6.0	11	---	---	D
17	9.2	31	8.2	40	6.4	14	7.4	27	D
18	9.0	27	5.5	07	5.7	09	---	---	D
19	10.6	65	8.9	51.	6.4	14	6.6	14	D
20	9.6	40	6.3	13	6.4	14	---	---	-

(Continued)

Identification Number	Intelligence		Reading		Language Arts		Composite		Semester English Grade
	G. E.	PCTLE	G. E.	PCTLE	G.E.	PCTLE	G.E.	PCTLE	
21	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.5	03	D
22	7.9	09	5.0	10	7.1	22	8.1	39	D
23	9.8	45	7.1	22	7.1	22	6.6	14	D
24	9.2	31	4.9	05	6.4	14	7.4	27	D
25	9.8	45	6.8	18	7.2	24	7.5	28	F
26	9.7	43	7.5	28	6.4	14	6.5	13	C
27	9.8	45	6.5	15	5.7	09	---	---	F
28	9.9	48	5.4	07	5.6	08	5.7	04	D
29							7.5	28	F
30	9.6	40	5.1	06	4.2	03	6.8	19	F
31	9.4	35	5.5	07	6.0	11	6.9	20	C
32	10.3	57	7.5	28	6.9	18	8.8	53	D
33	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	F
34	9.8	45	7.5	28	7.7	31	7.9	37	D
35	9.8	45	5.7	09	9.2	55	8.5	44	D
36	9.8	23	5.7	09	7.9	34	8.2	40	D
37	9.3	33	6.0	11	5.7	09	6.6	14	D
38	8.4	16	6.0	11	5.1	06	---	---	C
39	9.4	35	8.9	51	7.1	22	10.3	72	D
40	9.8	45	6.8	18	6.8	18	7.0	20	D

RESULTS

This table shows that there are consistencies between the reading scores and achievement in English.

Out of the forty students the writer reviews, not one scored according to ninth grade standards on the Science Research Associates High School Placement Test on the reading section. Out of the forty students the writer tests, not one receives a grade above C as the semester grade in English. For these students, a grade of C would be equivalent to a D in an average class.

There are five students out of forty scoring in the next level below the standard on the reading test. Out of these five students who have the highest scores on the reading section of the test, not one receives F or a failing grade. There are two students receiving the semester English grade of C and three receiving D as the semester grade in English.

The average intelligence score is 9.3 for the twenty students.

The average Language Arts score is 6.7.

The average reading score is also 6.7

The average semester grade is D.

There is a definite correlation between reading score, Language Arts scores, and the semester average in English.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The writer believes that these slower students crave knowledge and want to appear knowledgeable to others. These students want to appear as if they understand the more difficult work. There is evidence of this when the student say they like the works of Shakespeare better than the works of Thurber. Most of them would probably like materials written by Thurber if they were familiar with them. Whereas, if they were familiar with the works of Shakespeare, they would probably not appeal to them. The students probably prefer Shakespeare's works on the questionnaire because they can't read the name. Shakespeare probably sounds more impressive to them than James Thurber. Also, before these students will admit that they do not know something, they will claim indifference.

The writer feels that the students are not aware of poetry on attitudes toward death and love. The students simply do not like death, but they like love. Therefore their responses on the questionnaire are based on personal feelings about death and love.

The writer also feels that the students prefer to read silently rather than aloud because of embarrassment about their inability to read.

Those students receiving F and the semester grade in English did not score the lowest on the reading section of the test. Therefore, the writer cannot conclude or assume that the reading score is always indicative of a student's potential in achieving in high school English.

These students who do not have a good foundation in reading cannot be expected to acquire the essential knowledge of language arts which includes --speech, reading, oral and written communication.

According to Table II, those students who scored low on the reading ability test also got a low grade for the semester average. These students would profit more if they were grouped together and taught on the academic level where they are able to comprehend and show some progress in achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If this study is made again, the writer suggests that the questionnaire and the Scholastic Research Associates reading scores be taken from the same group of students.

The writer also suggests that a questionnaire geared more to the level of slow students be given. The writer also feels that it would be beneficial to make a close study of the emotional characteristics of these students.

The writer would like to recommend that all English teachers of slow students take an active part in learning about each student as a unique individual. Teachers should make an effort to know the family and home background of each student. Some of these students cannot help but be handicapped in English because of their home environment. If the faults influencing the student at home are known by the teacher, she can combat the problem more effectively. The teachers of these slow students should try to help the students by starting at the root of the problem. The cause of the disability must be determined first. The two main groups of slow learners are those who are culturally deprived and those who are psychologically handicapped.

The curriculum is quite important when the culturally deprived child is involved. It is said that the curriculum is geared toward the needs of the middle class only. If this is true, the children who are from lower socio-economic backgrounds are not familiar with the grammar or literature of the regular English curriculum.

The writer believes that the students would be more eager to learn and overcome their reading handicap if they were not forced to read material simply because it is in the course of study. If these English classes are taught in a student centered method, the students would be more interested.

Many of these culturally deprived students are curious and ask questions. Some of them are natural talkers and like to relate experiences. If every student is made to feel that his contribution to class discussion is appreciated, he will be interested in offering something worthwhile to the class.

If the students' discussions can lead naturally and smoothly into some related reading material, they would have more enthusiasm for what they are reading. Enthusiasm from the students and patience from the teacher are the right combination to help slow learners in English.

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