

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO COPY

In presenting this professional paper in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this professional paper for scholarly purposes may be granted by my major professor, or, in his absence, by the Director of Libraries. It is understood that any copying or publication of this professional paper for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature

Daniel John Fenster

Date

August 2, 1971

THE EFFECTS OF MOVING ON READING ACHIEVEMENT OF
STUDENTS IN THE SMALL SCHOOL

by

DANIEL JOHN FERRITER

A professional paper submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

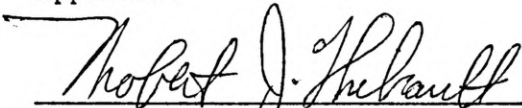
of

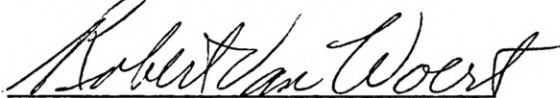
MASTER OF EDUCATION

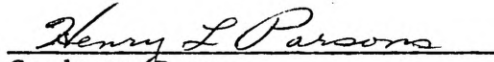
with concentration in

Administration

Approved:


Head, Major Department


Chairman, Examining Committee


Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

August, 1971

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
ABSTRACT	v
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.	1
The Students	2
The Problem.	2
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	3
3. METHODS OF RESEARCH.	9
Students in the Study.	9
Collection of Data	9
4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY	11
5. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND SUMMARY.	16
Recommendations.	17
A Final Comment.	17
 APPENDIX	 19
LITERATURE CITED	21

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Mean I.Q.'s of Fifteen West Yellowstone Seventh Graders by Number of Schools Attended	12
2. Mean Raw Scores, Stanines, and Grade Equivalents in Paragraph Meaning of Fifteen West Yellowstone Seven Graders by Number of Schools Attended	12
3. Mean I.Q.'s of Sixteen West Yellowstone Eighth Graders by Number of Schools Attended	13
4. Mean Raw Scores, Stanines, and Grade Equivalents in Paragraph Meaning of Sixteen West Yellowstone Eighth Graders by Number of Schools Attended	13
5. Mean I.Q.'s of Fourteen West Yellowstone Ninth Graders by Number of Schools Attended	14
6. Mean Raw Scores, Stanines, and Grade Equivalents in Paragraph Meaning of Fourteen West Yellowstone Ninth Graders by Number of Schools Attended	14

ABSTRACT

The essential experimental procedures included a student questionnaire for pertinent information. Intelligence Quotient scores and paragraph meaning scores were used as data to determine whether moving has an adverse effect on a child's reading achievement.

The West Yellowstone seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students were placed into four groups: those who attended one school; those who attended two schools; those who attended three schools; and those who attended four or more schools. Mobility does not seem to be a factor in a child's reading proficiency, as determined by this study.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The reason for this study is to investigate the effect of mobility on a child's reading achievement.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

The West Yellowstone School District is located in West Yellowstone, Montana, the southern most district in Galatin County. The district covers a large geographical area, but the majority of the students (98.3 percent) live within the city limits of the small tourist, lumbering town. The one-mile square community, intermittently dotted with pine, is at an elevation of 6,660 feet which provides for a cool summer and a snow filled winter.

The community of 756 permanent residents is not only climatically suited for tourists, but also serves as the western entrance to the nation's oldest and largest natural park, Yellowstone National Park. Great fishing and hunting attract tourists in the spring and fall. The long winters and great quantities of snow justifies West Yellowstone's claim to be the Snowmobile Capital of the World.

Because of the open and closed style of business, waiting for a new season, the people who work in the tourist industry in West Yellowstone are transient.

Lumbering, the other major industry in West Yellowstone, is also an open and closed affair. The winter snows force the closure of the logging roads and make conditions at the stud mill such that it is impossible to carry on work. Therefore, many workers leave for the winter, some return in the spring, others are replaced by "new-comers".

The Students

The children, in most cases, move with their mobile parents. This results in a lot of new faces not only when school commences, but throughout the year. Superintendent Lester O. Brewer, in a study of mobility of student population in April, 1970, claimed that 40 percent of the students who enrolled for fall classes the previous year were new to the district. This figure seems to be a fair one in view of the nature of the community.

The Problem

The writer was interested in finding out if mobility had an adverse effect on a child's reading achievement in the small school.

Reading variables were measured by pupil's achievement in paragraph meaning on the Stanford Achievement Test. Mobility variables included the number of schools attended by each child.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Calvo claimed, " . . . the mobile child as one who moved every four years or more. And that the child who moves is ill affected in many ways, such as social acceptance, loss of education benefits, especially in math and science."¹

Bergel concluded, "Tentatively intelligence and ability are a selective force in rural-urban systems, but to an unknown degree and we have no reason to believe that only mediocrities remain on farms."² This statement adds to the confusion of whether moving is a deterrent to achievement and "who" moves. Klineburg's study claims that there is no significant difference in intelligence between migrator and non-migrator.³ Klineburg and Bergel clearly argued that people of all levels of intelligence move. Therefore, if movers are not achieving, it probably is because of social forces at work in and out of school. The "newcomer" has to prove himself, and he is not used to the new environment--it is foreign, he is foreign.

¹Robert C. Calvo, "Helping the Mobile Child in School", Phi Delta Kappan (April, 1969), p. 487.

²Ernest Egon Bergel, Urban Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), p. 231.

³Otto Klineburg, "The Intelligence of Migrants", American Sociological Review III (April, 1938), p. 220.

The American school appears to facilitate more than impede social acceptance. In his study of high school seniors in Los Angeles, Turner maintained, "The school plays a part in relation to the residential segregation of the community. However, the school is a more heterogeneous universe than the immediate neighborhood of each individual."⁴

To blame the low achievement of a student on his moving seems to be the easiest and simplest explanation. Low achievement of any sort is affected by social forces, and by the psychological reasons given to us. For example, Wellington said:

Underachievers are ambivalent and confused between what others want for them in comparison to what they want for themselves. Underachievers have low concern for others, and they seek immediate pleasure for themselves.⁵

For what reasons do children and their parents move?

"Crisis flight is the pattern of travel, where 'motioners' and geographical fleeing have become a chronologically episodic way of coping is characteristic of a way of life or life style."⁶

⁴Ralph H. Turner, The Social Context of Ambition (San Francisco: Chandler Co., 1964), p. 224.

⁵Burleigh Wellington, The Underachievers: Challenges and Guidelines (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965), p. 68.

⁶Catherine C. Hiatt, "Geographical Flight and Its Relationship to Crisis Theory", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 40 (January, 1970), p. 53.

The preceding statement by Hiatt warrants further study of crisis flight. How many and to what degree are mobile students affected by "crisis flight" is arbitrary.

A new student is more than a new student, and why he is new to a school is important. Through discussions with other educators during the past few years, the writer believed that the mobile students were the lowest in I.Q. scores and achievement. Bogue showed just the opposite in his book, "The Population of the United States", pointing out that rates of migration are higher among those with above average educational attainment. The westward migration of the population is important in the development of the nation. Bogue emphasized this point when he stated:

Internal migration is fundamental to the maintenance of a particular population balance. If internal migration were suddenly to cease, population would begin to pile up in areas of high fertility (which all too often are areas of low economic opportunity).⁷

In the article, The Effect of Moving on Reading Achievement, Snipes maintained that there is a positive relationship between the number of moves and reading vocabulary and comprehension achievement.⁸ That is, the more the students move, the higher their achievement on the average after a random sample. But what of mobility and reading

⁷ Donald J. Bogue, The Population of the United States (Glen-coe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959), p. 218.

⁸ Walter T. Snipes, "The Effect of Moving on Reading Achievement", Reading Teacher, 20 (December, 1960), p. 242.

achievement itself? Bollenbacher found in her 1960 study of public school children in Cincinnati that, "Reading achievement is not negatively affected by movement from school to school."⁹

In a study of children of enlisted Air Force personnel at the Mad River School District in Dayton, Ohio, Cramer and Dorsey stated, "Mobility may contribute to reading proficiency; the scores of these children were slightly, though not significantly, higher than the scores of their less mobile classmates."¹⁰

Two Board of Education members in New York City, Frankel and Forlano, maintained that transient children in the culturally and economically deprived schools scored significantly lower on the Otis Alpha Test of Mental Ability than their non-transient counterparts in the third grade. In the sixth grade, the transients scored even lower. Frankel and Forlano stated that, "It appears likely that these transients, unable to overcome their early school deficiency, fall farther and farther behind their classmates as they progress up the educational ladder."¹¹ Frankel's and Forlano's study was conducted on elementary students in eighteen New York City schools. These schools in 1962 were

⁹Joan Bollenbacher, "A Study of the Effect of Mobility on Reading Achievement," Reading Teacher, 15 (March, 1962), p. 358.

¹⁰Ward Cramer and Suzanne Dorsey, "Are Movers Losers?," The Elementary School Journal, 70:7 (April, 1970), p. 390.

¹¹Edward Frankel and George Forlano, "Mobility As a Factor in the Performance of Urban Disadvantaged Pupils on Tests of Mental Ability," The Journal of Educational Research (April, 1967), p. 357.

made up of the following pupil ethnic groups: 32 percent Puerto Rican, 55 percent Negro, and 13 percent others. These schools were located in the most economically depressed areas of the city. The highest transiency rate was found in these schools. Frankel and Forlano concluded, "that possibly non-transiency reflects higher socio-economic status, more stable family organization among these pupils than is found among transients."¹² Mobile students may be of two basic types, those who are moving because of upward mobile reasons, or those who are moving from one slum to another searching for work, security, etc. The students in the second group, as well as their parents, will be going through some economic and emotional crises.

In 1966, at Denver, Colorado, Harry R. Moore stated that, "It appears that a wide range of moving from one school district to another is followed by no consistent difference in high school performance, save a slight tendency among the highly mobile to become less involved in school activities."¹³ This study was conducted on 2,566 seniors in the seven largest high schools in Denver. Comparing Moore's study with Frankel's and Forlano's, the different characteristics of the populations tells the story. The New York elementary students were culturally, economically, and perhaps racially deprived. Many of them would

¹²Ibid., p. 356.

¹³Harry R. Moore, "Geographic Mobility and Performance in High School," Journal of Secondary Education (November, 1966), p. 331.

never become seniors, as in Moore's Denver group.

What about mobile children of different ages? Moore claimed that mobile high school students in Denver were performing at the same levels as their non-mobile peers. Helen Huus conducted a study of children in grades three to eight. The study was done in 1942 on 272 children in the war "boom town" of Seneca, Illinois. Huus discovered, "That migrant third and fourth graders earned slightly higher general achievement test scores than did their non-migrant peers, but the opposite was found in grades five through eight."¹⁴ Looking at Moore's and Huus' study, one might conclude that mobile students in the middle grades do poorer than non-mobile students, while the younger and older mobile students do as well. Again, it probably depends on the population the study is conducted on. In view of the ideas fostered by these authors, the writer believes that if social or psychological factors are not an impairment, then the mobile child can benefit from his moves in his educational attainment.

¹⁴Helen Huus, "Factors Associated with the Reading Achievement of Children from a Migratory Population," Elementary School Journal (December, 1944), p. 208.

Chapter 3

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Students in the Study

The study utilized all students in the junior high school, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders, at West Yellowstone, Montana. The study included fifteen seventh graders, sixteen eighth graders, and fourteen ninth graders, making a total of forty-five students in the study.

Collection of Data

Data on the forty-five students were obtained through a student questionnaire given to the student. (This questionnaire was verified by checking the permanent record of each student.) This form asked the student's name, age, sex, and number of schools attended. (See Appendix, page 20) Form A, Intermediate level of the Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability was administered to determine the intelligence level for each student. Paragraph meaning was measured by Form Y, Advanced Battery of the Stanford Achievement Test. The paragraph meaning portion of the Stanford Achievement Test contains: main ideas, important details, organization and sequence, and balanced subject matter content. The paragraph meaning part of the test provides a functional measure of the pupil's ability to comprehend connected discourse involving levels of comprehension varying from extremely simple

recognition to the making of inferences from what is stated in several related sentences.

Chapter 4

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Pupils were divided into groups according to the number of schools attended. There were four groups: students who attended one school, students who attended two schools, students who attended three schools, and students who attended four or more schools. For each group, mean intelligent quotients were computed as shown for grade seven on Table 1, page 12, for grade eight on Table 3, page 13, and for grade nine on Table 5, page 14. An I.Q. of 90-110 is considered normal on the Otis scale.

The mean scores on paragraph meaning for grade seven is shown on Table 2, page 12, for grade eight on Table 4, page 13, and for grade nine on Table 6, page 14. One must take into consideration that there were only fifteen seventh graders, sixteen eighth graders, and fourteen ninth graders in the study.

Tables 1 and 2 show that seventh grade students who attended three schools had the lowest mean I.Q. and the lowest mean score in paragraph meaning. Students attending one or two schools had the highest mean I.Q. and highest mean score in paragraph meaning. Students who attended four or more schools had the second from the lowest mean I.Q. and same ranking in paragraph meaning.

Table 1

Mean I.Q.'s of Fifteen West Yellowstone Seventh
Graders by Number of Schools Attended

Grade	Group	Number of schools attended	Number of pupils	Mean I.Q.
Seven	I	one	1	124.0
	II	two	2	118.5
	III	three	8	97.7
	IV	four or more	4	102.2

Table 2

Mean Raw Scores, Stanines, and Grade Equivalents in
Paragraph Meaning of Fifteen West Yellowstone
Seventh Graders by Number of Schools Attended

Grade	Number of schools attended	Number of pupils	Mean raw score	Mean stanine	Mean grade equiva- lent
Seven	One	1	36	6	8.6
	Two	2	41	7	10.5
	Three	8	29	4	6.9
	Four or more	4	31	5	7.3

Table 3

Mean I.Q.'s of Sixteen West Yellowstone Eighth
Graders by Number of Schools Attended

Grade	Group	Number of schools attended	Number of pupils	Mean I.Q.
Eight	I	one	6	107.8
	II	two	1	106.0
	III	three	7	103.4
	IV	four or more	2	111.0

Table 4

Mean Raw Scores, Stanines, and Grade Equivalents in
Paragraph Meaning of Sixteen West Yellowstone
Eighth Graders by Number of Schools Attended

Grade	Number of schools attended	Number of pupils	Mean raw score	Mean stanine	Mean grade equiva- lent
Eight	One	6	41	6	10.2
	Two	1	41	6	10.4
	Three	7	38	5	9.3
	Four of more	2	39	6	9.9

Table 5

Mean I.Q.'s of Fourteen West Yellowstone Ninth
Graders by Number of Schools Attended

Grade	Group	Number of schools attended	Number of pupils	Mean I.Q.
Nine	I	one	3	101.0
	II	two	1	103.0
	III	three	4	94.0
	IV	four or more	6	105.0

Table 6

Mean Raw Scores, Stanines, and Grade Equivalents in
Paragraph Meaning of Fourteen West Yellowstone
Ninth Graders by Number of Schools Attended

Grade	Number of schools attended	Number of pupils	Mean raw score	Mean stanine	Mean grade equiva- lent
Nine	One	3	36	5	8.8
	Two	1	32	4	7.4
	Three	4	34	4	8.1
	Four or more	6	41	6	10.3

Tables 3 and 4 show that eighth grade students who attended three schools had the lowest mean I.Q. and the lowest mean score in paragraph meaning. Students who attended one or two schools had the highest mean score in paragraph meaning and ranked closely behind the students who attended four or more schools in mean I.Q. Students who attended four or more schools ranked third in mean score in paragraph meaning. Students who attended one school ranked second in mean I.Q. and students who attended two schools were third in mean I.Q.

Tables 5 and 6 show that ninth grade students who attended three schools had the lowest mean I.Q. and the second from the lowest mean score in paragraph meaning. Students who attended two schools had the lowest mean score in paragraph meaning and ranked second in mean I.Q. The students who attended four or more schools had the highest mean I.Q. and the highest mean score in paragraph meaning. Students who attended one school were ranked second in mean score in paragraph meaning. These same students were ranked third in mean I.Q.

Chapter 5

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND SUMMARY

In comparing the groups mean scores as shown in Table 2, Table 4, and Table 6, the writer tried to apply appropriate tests of significance; but because of the small number in the study, any tests of significance were precarious. While trying to apply the mean differences to these tests, the procedure of these tests of significance were learned; these would be very helpful if a similar study was done on a larger scale. Also, in considering a comparison of group mean achievement scores, corrections of age and intelligence quotient in each category has to be considered. The technique that was learned for this correction procedure could be applied to a study on a larger scale.

Students who attended three schools had the lowest scores on the paragraph meaning portion of the Stanford Achievement Test; they had the lowest mean intelligence quotient. There was no significant difference within the rest of the groups. However, the limited number in this study makes any valid conclusion questionable.

The essential purpose of the study was to investigate the opinion that mobility has an adverse effect on a child's reading achievement. The results for the groups investigated show no adverse effect, except those that attended three schools were somewhat lower. Mobility, therefore, does not seem to be a factor in a child's reading proficiency.

Recommendations

The majority of the present faculty at West Yellowstone School District believe that mobility is a deterrent to achievement. The writer recommends that such beliefs should be examined by a valid statistical study not on unfounded theories formed over a cup of coffee. And, if a mobile child is behind in achievement or is not able to reach a certain level of achievement, then the teachers should be aware of the psychological and social changes that a child new to a school encounters. For a teacher to say that a student is not achieving at his level because he is a new student is shallow; rather, the teacher should realize that the school is new or different to the child, and that it may be part of the reason why he is not achieving.

A Final Comment

If the family that is moving does not allow the move to become a social or psychological barrier, the move should have no great negative effect on the children's performance in school. Moore explained it when he said:

Undoubtedly some children are hurt by being moved around and others are helped. Both the recent literature and the present study suggest that the two groups cancel each other out when only frequency, distance, and pattern of moves are the independent variables. Possibly certain personality types are more or less affected by moving than others.¹

¹Harry R. Moore, "Geographic Mobility and Performance in High School," Journal of Secondary Education (November, 1966), p. 352.

Mobile students may be hurt because of lack of security and familiarity with playmates, but they have an advantage of greater exposure to the environment through personal contact.

The family that has a positive purpose in moving can make the move a beneficial experience for all members of the family. In "Mobility and Achievement", Morris, Pestaner, and Nelson summed it up when they said:

The upwardly mobile family, having itself learned or acquired the necessary functional value system, will transmit it to its children. The children then would have fewer problems in adapting to a new social and educational mileau than those families which maintain their horizontal positions in society.²

As the writer becomes more involved in education, he realizes the importance of the educator to understand the individual differences of his pupils. The teacher should know the background of his student; if he is a mobile student he should know the reasons behind his mobility. To know the individual differences and similarities of his pupils places an extra strain on the teacher and the school personnel. The teacher must know who he is teaching before he can know what to teach him and at what pace.

²John L. Morris, Marianna Pestaner, and Albert Nelson, "Mobility and Achievement," The Journal of Experimental Education, 35:4 (Summer, 1967), p. 74.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

STUDENT INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____

Age _____

Sex _____

Number of schools attended beginning with first grade. (Include different schools in same district) _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide statistical data concerning the mobility of students and its relationship to achievement in school.

Thank you,

Daniel J. Ferriter

LITERATURE CITED

LITERATURE CITED

- Bergel, Egon Ernest. Urban Sociology. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955.
- Bogue, Donald J. The Population of the United States. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1959.
- Bollenbacher, Joan. "A Study of the Effect of Mobility on Reading Achievement," Reading Teacher, 15. (March, 1962), p. 356-60.
- Calvo, Robert C. "Helping the Mobile Child in School," Phi Delta Kappan (April, 1969), p. 487.
- Cramer, Ward and Suzanne Dorsey. "Are Movers Losers?," The Elementary School Journal, 70:7 (April, 1970), p. 387-390.
- Frankel, Edward and George Forlano. "Mobility as a Factor in the Performance of Urban Disadvantaged Pupils on Tests of Mental Ability," The Journal of Educational Research, 60:7 (April, 1967), p. 355-358.
- Hiatt, Catherine C. "Geographical Flight and Its Relationship to Crisis Theory," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 40 (January, 1970), p. 53-57.
- Huus, Helen. "Factors Associated with the Reading Achievement of Children from a Migratory Population," Elementary School Journal (December, 1944), p. 203-212.
- Klineburg, Otto. "The Intelligence of Migrants," American Sociological Review, 3 (April, 1938), p. 218-24.
- Moore, Harry R. "Geographic Mobility and Performance in High School," Journal of Secondary Education, 41:7 (November, 1966), pp. 325-332.
- Morris, John L., Marianna Pestaner, and Albert Nelson. "Mobility and Achievement," The Journal of Experimental Education, 35:4 (Summer, 1967), pp. 74-80.
- Snipes, Walter T. "The Effect of Moving on Reading Achievement," Reading Teacher, 20 (December, 1966), pp. 242-246.
- Turner, Ralph H. The Social Context of Ambition. San Francisco: Chandler Co., 1964.

Wellington, C. Burleigh. The Underachievers; Challenges and Guidelines.
Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965.