

THE PROGRESS OF EARLY ADMISSION STUDENTS
IN SOUTHWESTERN MONTANA SCHOOLS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The Progress of Early Admission Students in Southwestern Montana Schools

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Statement of the Problem:

The problem in this investigation involved examining the progress of 15 school children who had been admitted to the first grade earlier than the usual chronological age for school entrance. This investigation also included a review of literature concerning concepts of readiness and methods of identifying and aiding students of above average ability.

Procedure:

A questionnaire was sent to the parents of each student included in this study. They were asked to evaluate and state opinions about their child's educational progress. The following additional information about each subject was also procured: grades received for each year of school completed in academic subjects such as reading-English, spelling, social studies, math and science; a rating by the teacher who taught the student for the most academic subjects in 1963-1964.

Tables were constructed to present parent's opinions, chronological and mental age of each student involved in this study, academic grades for each year in school, and subjective ratings of class standing for each student by the teacher who had the student for the most academic subjects.

Summary and Conclusion:

The results of the investigation are as follows:

1. The students involved in this investigation were not more than three months younger than the required chronological age for entering the first grade.
2. The parents were satisfied with their child's academic progress. All parents independently agreed that they would enter their child early again under the same circumstances.
3. Academic grades indicated that the students were doing slightly above average school work. The mode for grades earned in school was B.
4. Teachers rated 14 of the 15 students involved in this study above the mean of their class in academic performance. The one not rated above the mean was not recommended for early entrance by the Testing and Counseling Service but did enter early.
5. This study tends to point out a need for re-evaluation of school entrance requirements when based solely on chronological age.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In American education today, there has been increasing attention toward individual differences among children. This has been due mostly to a combination of ideology and the reality of social need. "The ideology is the American dedication to the unique value of the individual and to the desirability of developing his abilities, whatever they are, along socially valuable lines."¹ Realistically, American education has come to recognize the fact that even though education has been improving the United States still fails to develop a great deal of its talent.

"If talent is to be systematically discovered and developed, society as a whole has certain responsibilities."² The ideal of equal opportunity does not mean identical opportunity, but means that everyone should have that opportunity to develop whatever abilities they have. This also implies that opportunity should be supplied in line with ability, that high ability should go along with greater opportunity. These are the two basic responsibilities that have to be recognized if American education is to develop a greater percentage of its talent.

In order to provide a better opportunity for the development of talent, schools have come to recognize individual differences among school children. This has come about largely through the development of intelligent tests useful for identification of children plus improved methods of studying growth,

¹De Haan, R., and Havinghurst, Educating Gifted Children, University of Chicago Press, Copyright, 1961, pp. 103.

²Ibid., p. 3.

physical, mental, and social, which permitted a better study of school children.

If individual differences exist in school children to the extent we assume they exist, it should be safe to assume that they exist to some extent before children enter school. Hence, if we are to provide for individual differences after a child enters school, it would seem logical to recognize these differences as a child approaches school age, and to formulate as elastic system of school administration based on individual differences that are readily measurable and which do not, in the main, depend upon environment and training.

Research has indicated that a study done by Morphett and Washburn has been used to justify present admission practices. They found that a mental age of 6-3 (six years-three months) was necessary to read well, and one of 6-6 would even be better.³ It should be pointed out that the findings were in terms of mental age and not chronological age which is used by most school systems as the criteria for admission. While an average child will have a closely corresponding chronological and mental age, a fixed date may be greatly detrimental to a child who is not average, thus creating many problems for the child during his school life.

A fixed age of entering school has the advantage of being easily understood by the parents, but a current problem for the administration is to know what to do for a child who may be just below the required legal age adopted by the school district. Parents have trouble seeing the justice of compelling

³Morphett and Washburne, "When Should a Child Begin to Read," Elementary School Journal, 1931, Vol. 31, p. 496.

a child to wait for a year when he is just below the required entrance age by a few months or a few days.

Worcester's reports (1956) on Nebraska schools revealed extraordinary success in a carefully planned early admission program in a state having a general state wide cut off date for admission to school. Through the use of psychological tests, interviews with the parents, and indications of social and physical maturity, children who have been admitted early to kindergarten and first grade have done just as well as their classmates in academic subjects and social adjustment for the schools studied in Worcester's research.⁴

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this investigation was to determine the progress of early admission students in various schools throughout Southwestern Montana. Specifically, this investigation was a follow-up study of school children whose chronological age was below the required chronological age for school entrance, but were admitted as a result of their indications of readiness for school on psychological tests of intelligence, maturity and social adjustment.

Answers to the following questions were deemed necessary for determining the progress of the students enrolled early:

1. What were the final grades earned at the end of each year of completed school?
2. What grades were received in academic subjects such as reading, English, social studies, arithmetic, science?

⁴Worcester, D. A., The Education of Children of Above Average Mentality, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Copyright, 1956, pp. 16-22.

3. How does the present teacher rank them in relation to their classmates?
4. What are the opinions of the parents of these students to questions such as:
 - a. What advantages do you think your child has received as a result of his early entrance to school?
 - b. What special reasons prompted you to want your child to enter school early?
 - c. Has your child had any unusual problems because of his early entrance into school?

The problem in this investigation also involved examining the following:

1. Reading readiness and teacher responsibility to the teaching of reading.
2. Methods of identifying children of above average mentality.
3. Methods of aiding mentally advanced children.
4. Characteristics and traits of mentally advanced children.

Procedure

In order to examine the records of each student, a letter was sent to their parents asking for permission to use their child's school record. A questionnaire was also included along with the letter to obtain information concerning the parents opinions of how well their child is doing in school. This questionnaire was further validated by a follow-up interview of five parents picked at random.

Permission to use the individual records of each student was obtained by a telephone call to the superintendent of the school the student is attending.

In order not to use the names of the students involved in the study, it was necessary to code the names by assigning each student a number.

After the information was gathered, treatment of the data was done on a percentage basis with charts illustrating the mental and chronological age of each student, academic grades received, and teachers ratings of early admission students in relation to their classmates. A list of responses to the questionnaire was also presented showing specific reasons for early entrance into school, any unusual problems indicated, and any advantages of early admission indicated by the parents.

Limitations

Since early admission is not practiced in very many Montana schools, this investigation was limited to schools in Southwestern Montana that have been admitting students early. The scarcity of schools admitting students early also limits the number of students to fifteen.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature was used as a means of reviewing present methods of selecting and identifying students of above average ability. Literature was also presented concerning readiness for school, reading readiness, methods of aiding the above average student, and characteristics common to children of above average mentality.

The first phase of the review--readiness for school and reading readiness is presented in the following section.

Readiness for School and Reading Readiness

The following chart will present some facts about differences in children. So far as intelligence is concerned, we are likely to find in any classroom children like the following.¹

CA	IQ	MA
5-0	70	3-6
5-0	80	4-0
5-0	90	4-6
5-0	100	5-0
5-0	110	5-6
5-0	120	6-0
5-0	130	6-6

This illustrates that we have children who are different from each other mentally by two or three years. Teaching children with this range of I.Q. presents many different problems for the teacher. Many teachers feel that a child with an I.Q. of 70 should not be accepted in regular classes, but the same teachers are not willing to consider a special class for children

¹Worcester, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

having above average I.Q.'s. They forget that an I.Q. of 130 is just as far from normal as 70.²

Many people contend that children of the same physical development should be kept together. They maintain that children who are four years eight or nine months old are not close enough to the same physical development as children who are three months to a year older. According to the Baldwin-Wood tables, average boys vary from 37 to 47 inches in height and from 39 to 49 pounds in weight.³

Another argument for keeping children together is the contention that they should be with their social group, but research has shown that five year-olds have variations in social age from four to seven years with a positive correlation between social age and mental age.⁴

Terman and others⁵ have found that above average children have a tendency to be a little taller and healthier and somewhat better adjusted socially than the average children. This would indicate that to admit children somewhat younger but average would tend to make them even more alike socially and mentally than when just a date of chronological age is used as the only criteria for school entrance.

This indicates that there is not one criteria by which to group children of the same age except by sex.

²Ibid., p. 9.

³Ibid., p. 9.

⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁵Terman and Oden, The Gifted Child Grows Up, Stanford University Press, Stanford, Copyright, 1956, pp. 20-29.

Ruth Andrus⁶ maintains it is not the age at which children enter school but what happens to them after they get there that determines how well they get along.

For generations going to school and learning to read have been synonymous, but learning to read is not the sole purpose of education, although learning to read is a very important tool in obtaining information. There has always been more faith put in books as the source of authoritarian information so the written word and the ability to read it have been considered the cornerstone of education for generations. That the written word is determined by experience is a fact many people are beginning to realize, but it is a difficult problem to change old beliefs and practices even though research in growth and learning can be verbalized with ease.⁷

Although the readiness concept applies to all learning and at all levels, it should be considered with special goals. Readiness cannot be regarded as a generalized entity possessed completely by some and not by others; each individual possesses readiness for learning of some kind. Certain factors determining readiness for learning, health, physical fitness, psychological development, social adjustment, adequate command of fundamental skills, all indicate that readiness refers to the developmental condition of the individual.⁸

⁶Andrus, Ruth, "When Should Children Go to School," Childhood Education, September, 1949, p. 3.

⁷Ibid., p. 305.

⁸Schindler, A., "Readiness for Learning," Childhood Education, March, 1948, p. 301-305.

Concepts of readiness have been oversimplified and overworked to explain a number of knotty problems related to social adjustment or the lack of it on the part of certain children. Immaturity conceived as a sort of generalized trait is often described as the root of most young children's failure to do well in school. Readiness is supposed to come when a child spends another year at home. True, another year at home helps the babyish child who is not ready for the complexities of school life, but many other problems besides lack of development enter into the readiness background and some of these may be affected adversely by the process of waiting another year before beginning school. It is well known that irregular patterns of growth and development account for much of the heterogeneity in children in the first grade. Heterogeneity cannot be changed by the passage of time.⁹

Whether a child of any age likes or dislikes school has much to do with his success in learning all along the line. Teachers of primary grades will do well to remember that the attitudes toward school activities which are accumulating every day in every boy and girl have much to do with the psychological context they carry with them in subsequent learning tasks. You cannot make a child learn until he is ready to learn any more than you can make a green apple ripen before it is matured. Wouldn't it pay to determine each child's natural rate of growth and just do the thing necessary to keep him growing?¹⁰

Studies of relation between time of beginning systematic instruction and subsequent achievement in reading show that typical children are better

⁹Smith, J., "The Success of Some Young Children in the Lincoln Nebraska Schools," (Unpublished Master's Thesis,) University of Nebraska, 1956, pp. 6-10.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 10.

off if they do not begin to read until they have a mental age of six years three months, and a mental age of six years six months is even more likely to insure success for the average child. Younger children of above average intelligence have also shown to be a safe risk.¹¹

Methods of Selecting the Above Average Student

A review of literature revealed different methods of selecting children of above average ability, but all follow two broad criteria:

Testing, and observation by qualified personnel who have been trained to recognize children of above average ability.

Bristow and others¹² listed the following six factors as the most important for the identification of the above average student:

1. Mental tests: While intelligence tests will not pick out all mentally gifted children in a group, it is probably the most effective method available for selecting children.
2. Aptitude tests: These tests are valuable in identifying students who possess some special ability which is not so readily identified by general intelligence tests. Their ability may be in some area such as art, music, drama, mechanics, language ability, etc.
3. Reports of parents: The possibility of bias in parental reports is very great still the intimate knowledge which they have accumulated over the years is a valuable asset in identifying above average children. Early indications of above average intelligence noted by parents are quick understanding, insatiable curiosity, extensive information, retentive memory, large vocabulary, unusual interest in such things as number relations, atlases and encyclopedias. Early walking and talking plus reading ability during the pre-school period were also factors that served as means of calling attention to the possibility of above average ability.

¹¹Worcester, op. cit., p. 6.

¹²Bristow, W. H., and others, Witty, The Gifted Child, D. C. Heath and Company, Copyright 1951, pp. 10-19.

4. Reports of teachers and other professional workers: Research has shown that teachers often fail to identify above average students because they have evaluated them in terms of school achievement rather than potential. Teachers also under estimate the student's ability because they forget that the student may be somewhat younger than his classmates. Furthermore, not all teachers have the adequate background in child development to judge the student's potential ability. Many other people who come in contact with the above average student may also help in identification. These may be social workers, recreation leaders, physicians, nurses, and other community workers.
5. Age-grade status of the above average: Terman and Oden¹³ stated that "If you are allowed only one method of choosing the highest I.Q. in a classroom your choice of getting the right one is better if you merely look in the class register and take the youngest student." This may have been acceptable at the beginning of Terman's investigation but more recently current practices have been to group students according to their chronological age and provide opportunities for the above average within the group rather than accelerate him in school.
6. School accomplishment and Achievement tests: Terman and Oden¹⁴ report that teachers marks are often inaccurate when compared to achievement tests; that in every school grades there were above average children whose achievement in one or more subjects was rated as average or below average for the grade but whose achievement test scores showed them to be as much as two years above their grade norm in some subjects.

These six factors can be included within the two broad categories, tests, and observation by competent personnel, as the basic means of identifying the above average child.

Other writers, De Haan and Havinghurst¹⁵ hold that identification consists primarily of the use of standardized tests and through observation by

¹³Terman and Oden, The Gifted Child Grows Up, Stanford University Press, Stanford, Copyright, 1946, p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁵De Haan and Havinghurst, Educating the Gifted Children, University of Chicago Press, Copyright, 1961, pp. 45-47.

qualified personnel. They pointed out that many types of standardized tests have been used in an identification program. Some of these are:

1. General Intelligence Tests: They are primarily tests of verbal and reasoning ability and are usually described as tests of academic ability. They generally yield an overall I.Q.
2. Differential Aptitude Tests: This test measures the general intellectual level and also differentiates various factors that account for intellectual ability. It brings out certain mental abilities and for this reason is preferred to general intelligence tests.
3. Individual Intelligence Tests: These tests are generally considered to be more reliable than a group test when administered by qualified personnel. They are often used to examine borderline cases and determine the extent of mental ability.
4. Tests of specific aptitude: These are tests designed to measure specific abilities such as, mechanical ability, motor aptitudes, etc.
5. Interest Inventories: Vocational interest inventories may be used to aid the student in choosing a vocation or to make him aware of the numerous vocations available.
6. Achievement tests: Achievement tests are commonly used for areas of academic learning such as spelling, arithmetic, language, and science. They are important in discovering strengths and weaknesses along with insight into study habits.
7. Personality Tests: These tests can be valuable for the guidance and counseling department plus aiding the identification of average children.

Characteristics

The characteristics of the above average student as determined by Terman and Oden¹⁶ were as follows:

1. The typical above average child is superior to the average child not only in intelligence, but also in versatility,

¹⁶Terman, L. M., and Oden, "The Gifted Child Grows Up," Stanford University Press, Stanford, Copyright, 1956, pp. 20-29.

play adjustment, social adjustment and physique.

2. The above average student not only asks more questions than the average, but he asks more intelligent ones and asks them more insistently.
3. The above average child has more hobbies that have a definite educational value.
4. The typical above average student likes to read books preferred by older students.
5. Because school work is easy for the above average student, he will easily develop poor study habits if not provided with plenty to do.
6. The greatest advantage the above average student has over the average student is in reading, language usage, and the arts. The superiority is less noticeable in arithmetic computation, spelling, and factual information about history and civics.
7. The interests of the above average student are many and spontaneous. Their interest maturity is two to three years beyond their age.

Terman¹⁷ has pointed out that there are five major issues in the education of students of above average ability today. These are:

1. Democracy and the I.Q.: This issue involves the controversy over typical opportunities. For some people equal opportunity for all means the same opportunity for all to learn. To others it means all students should have the equal opportunity to develop to the limit of their abilities, and it should be realized that not all students can profit equally from the same learning experiences. Therefore, for all students to have equal opportunity to develop to the limit of their abilities, different learning experiences must be provided.
2. The Educational Lockstep: Advocators of this system maintain that the above average student should be kept with other students his own age for the sake of normal social adjustment.
3. Early identification of the above average student: This seems to be one of the most neglected areas of education although there are adequate tests available to make such

¹⁷Terman, L., and Oden, "Major Issues in the Education of Gifted Children," French, Educating the Gifted, Henry Holt and Co., New York, Copyright, 1956, pp. 148-152.

3. The accelerated student will have the advantage of a closer directed and supervised program that will help him to develop his abilities to a degree.
4. Acceleration eliminates the problem of skipping material in the curriculum.
5. Teachers are more aware of the needs of bright children by recognizing them at the beginning of the school year.
6. Acceleration causes the school system to become more sensitive to the problems of the student of above average ability.

Rapid progress can be helped by the following provisions:²⁰

1. If enough students are qualified to make a group, regular work can be accomplished at a much faster rate.
2. Students can advance as they gain competency.
3. In the regular classroom, teachers can help the faster students by providing supplementary material which will allow him to move forward at a faster pace.
4. By carrying extra credit, a student has the opportunity of gaining a broader educational background.

Acceleration provides the student with a chance to move ahead at approximately his own pace, not being pushed or held back, and allowed to cover all the necessary subject matter. Progress doesn't have to be at a uniform rate throughout his time in school, but could be rapid when studying familiar subjects or material learned from other sources. Progress could be adapted to his particular school situation regardless of the size of the system. Time gained from such a program may be put in a manner most suited to the individual's needs.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 33-34.

Shannon also pointed out that if the above average student, who has been accelerated, did just as good or a little better work as the group he was accelerated to, this in itself would be enough evidence to recommend acceleration.

Odell²³ emphasized the necessity of systematic evaluation of the student to prevent the possibility of social maladjustment because of an unbalance of maturity in ratio to his intellectual capacity.

Enrichment. According to De Haan,²⁴ "classroom enrichment refers to the arrangement where-by the teachers differentiates the curriculum and teaching methods in accordance with the individual differences among the pupils so they have the maximum opportunity to develop their abilities." The students are given an opportunity to do extra work, but this work should not be confused with busy-work. In order to be enriching, extra work the student involves himself in, has to be carried out in such a way that the activities take on a meaningful relationship in the developing child.

Worcester²⁵ stated that enrichment--"as a way of giving better educational opportunities to the mentally advanced child implies either the time, interest, or the ability to understand." Worcester²⁶ also stated that enrichment should be available to the above average child throughout his learning experience. He also stressed the importance of caution in the elementary grades to make sure that enrichment is within the understanding of the student.

²³Odell, H. A., "What Provisions for the Education of the Gifted," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, April, 1957, pp. 47.

²⁴De Haan, R., Accelerated Learning Programs, The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., Washington, D. C., Copyright, 1956, p. 39.

²⁵Worcester, op. cit., p. 39.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 41-43.

French²⁷ mentioned that many educators felt it was best to provide enrichment for the above average students in the regular classroom rather than accelerate them or group them. He stated that a good teacher should be allowed the following enrichment activities:

1. Each student should be allowed to develop to the limit of his ability.
2. Students of different ability should be allowed to associate with each other to help each other learn.
3. The presence of the above average student serves to stimulate the average student.
4. The school situation should reflect life as it really is.

A review of literature pointed out that one of the major disadvantages of enrichment was the lack of time a teacher had to provide the above average student with enrichment. If misused, enrichment can be a waste of time and punishment for the above average student, but with proper use a student can have the opportunity to proceed at his own speed and level.

Enrichment can be provided in many ways. It can include extra work in the classroom and the library by a student interested in a certain project. Enrichment can also mean extra-curricular activities which are meaningful to the individual.

Grouping. "Grouping refers to the administrative arrangement of organizing students into instructional units for purposes of accelerating and enriching the learning experience of the above average student."²⁸ Ability grouping was designed to place students of similar ability or intellect

²⁷French, J., Educating the Gifted, Henry Holt and Co., New York, Copyright, 1959, p. 553.

²⁸De Haan, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

together in the classroom to facilitate their instruction. It was also designed to compensate for the weakness and ineffectiveness of the regimentation commonly found in the graded system.

Abraham²⁹ stated that people who favor grouping reason as follows:

"With the increase of size of classes there is also an increase in the range of ability present in the students so in order to provide a proper education for all grouping is necessary. Here are some of the arguments usually made in favor of grouping.

1. A student in a class of his own mental level will be motivated to work closer to his ability because the competition is present to stimulate him. The teacher will also have the time and qualifications to work with them.
2. In the class of his own mental ability he will learn to be a follower as well as a leader instead of his usually being a leader where other students are behind him mentally.
3. He will be less conceited and smug because he doesn't always stand out as being at the top of the class.
4. More opportunity can be given to creative and critical thinking and less time spent upon unnecessary drill in adapting to special needs and abilities of a selected group.
5. By being with children of his own ability he will recognize his own limitations more clearly and see himself more realistically. This will reduce the chance of developing lazy habits which create a tendency to slide along in school work.
6. He will also be better adjusted socially and emotionally because he isn't so different from the rest of the group.

Abraham³⁰ also presented some arguments against grouping:

²⁹Abraham, W., Common Sense About Gifted Children, Harper and Brothers, New York, Copyright, 1958, pp. 69-72.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 73-74.

1. School children are well aware of the practice of grouping as to the ability resulting in a feeling of arrogance and superiority by those of greater ability.
2. He will not have the practice of getting along with all kinds of people.
3. Leadership in regular classrooms will be lost if the bright ones are separated.
4. Selection for this special treatment is not good enough to say this one goes here and this one goes there. We should be more concerned about the friendships already formed than to take the student away from a group they have been a part of.
5. If we take away the best ones, who will want to teach what is left. Many teachers resent remaining with the rest which will result in poorer teaching practices.

The pros and cons presented by grouping show that both sides have good arguments to support their beliefs so it appears that only through further research will the controversy be settled.

Summary

Research has indicated that it is not the age at which a child enters school that determines how well he will do, but it is what happens to him after he enters that counts. Their success will depend upon the attitude they carry with them from each learning experience to the next so it is important that the teacher create a proper atmosphere for the student in each learning situation.

Many ways are available to provide for individual differences after a child enters school, but before any provision for individual differences can be made it is necessary to identify the children that show above average potential for school work. The two most broad criteria for identifying children with above average ability is by testing and by the observations of qualified personnel who have been trained to recognize children of above

average ability.

The most noticeable advantages to be found in the above average student are his ability in reading, language usage, and the arts while in arithmetic computation, spelling and factual information about history and civics superiority is not as noticeable.

Acceleration as a means of early entrance is one method of providing for individual differences in children. It is especially helpful for those children who show above average ability but are slightly younger than the required chronological age for school entrance. It provides the student with an opportunity to be with children of their own mental ability. Acceleration also allows the student to finish earlier and enter into an occupational choice of their own choosing at an earlier age.

Enrichment and grouping were also mentioned as methods of aiding the student of above average ability. Enrichment refers to a method of providing the student with extra material which will have a meaningful relationship to his development. Ability grouping is a method of placing students of similar ability together in the classroom to facilitate their instruction.

CHAPTER III

EVALUATION OF ACCUMULATED DATA

The third chapter of this investigation will be concerned with a presentation and evaluation of information gathered from questionnaires, permanent records, and teachers ratings.

Twenty questionnaires were sent to the parents of the students involved in this study. Out of this number there were sixteen replies, three returned with the address unknown, and no reply from one. To establish better reliability of responses to the questionnaire, a follow-up interview with five of the parents was completed. Responses to the follow-up interview were the same as previously stated on the original questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain specific reasons as to why the child was entered into school early, find out if the child had any unusual problems because of his early entrance to school, and determine what advantages the parents believed their child has received because of his early entrance.

The responses to the questionnaire will be presented on the following page. The questions will be presented on the left hand side of the page with the responses in the middle followed by the number of responses to each question. Question one through three were answered yes or no, and the last two questions required listing specific reasons.

An evaluation of questions two and three seem to indicate that the parents are satisfied with their child's progress in school as a result of his entering earlier than the usual chronological age for beginning school.

Parents indicated readiness for school the most times as a specific reason for want to enter their child in school early. Another reason that appeared to prompt some of the parents to enter their child in school early

TABLE I. RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ASKED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

Questions	Responses	Frequency
1. Did your child attend kindergarten?	No	16
2. Has your child had any unusual problems because of his early school entrance?	No	16
3. If you had the decision to enter your child early again would you do it?	Yes	16
4. Specific reasons for entering school early.	Large for his age	8
	Readiness for school	10
	Maturity and eagerness to learn	6
	Near required school age	1
	Younger when he graduates from school	1
	Same grade with friends	5
5. Advantages of early entrance into school.	Size isn't so noticeable	2
	In a class with children closer his age	1

was size.

The following table will present the mental and chronological age of each student involved in this investigation as measured by the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale. Since the names of the students were not to be used in the investigation, numbers 1-15 will represent the fifteen students to be evaluated.

The table on the preceding page is a record of the mental and chronological age of each student at the time he or she was tested. It does not

TABLE II. MENTAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL AGE FOR EACH STUDENT AS MEASURED BY THE STANFORD BINET INTELLIGENCE SCALE.

Student	Mental Age	Chronological Age
1	6-2	5-9
2	6-4	5-10
3	6-1	5-10
4	6-4	5-10
5	6-2	5-8
6	7-2	5-9
7	6-4	5-10
8	6-6	5-8
9	7-1	5-9
10	6-8	5-10
11	6-4	5-10
12	6-6	5-5
13	6-6	5-8
14	6-4	5-10
15	6-2	5-10

show their mental and chronological age at the time they would have started school, but none of them would have been more than three months younger than the chronological age for starting school. The youngest chronological age indicated by the table was 5-5. This particular student was tested during the first part of May so his chronological age would have been close to 5-9 at the time school started.

Evaluation of Student Progress and Teacher's Ratings

On the following two pages will be presented the progress of each student as indicated by their academic grades in the following subjects: Reading, English, Spelling, Social Studies, Math, and Science. The numbers 1-15 each represent a student and will run vertically with the right hand side of the page. Year, stands for each year of school completed or nearly completed, and is represented by numbers 1-6. Student's 14 and 15 are in high school so their grades for years 7-12 will be shown at the bottom of the chart. The academic grades for each student are represented by the letters A, B, C, D, F, S, and I. S, stands for satisfactory and I for incomplete. The other letters should be self explanatory. Grades received in Reading-English, Spelling, and Social Studies will be presented on the following page.

Without counting the S or I grades there was a total of 201 grades recorded. Out of this total 17.4% were A's, (35), 54% were B's (109), 27.6% were C's (55), and 1% D's (2). This would indicate that the students as a group were doing slightly above average work in their academic subjects for the number of years they have been in school.

One student (7) was retained in the first grade because of immaturity and a poor academic record for the year. At the time he was tested, his immaturity was pointed out to his parents, and it was recommended that if his immaturity did not improve shortly after he started the first grade it would be best to take him out of school until the next year.

The purpose of the teacher's rating was to gain some insight into the present standing of each student in relation to his classmates. Each teacher was first asked how many students there were in the class, and then asked to the student indicated as to where he would stand in relation to the top of the

TABLE III. ACADEMIC GRADES RECEIVED BY EACH STUDENT IN READING-ENGLISH, SPELLING, AND SOCIAL STUDIES.

Subject Year in School	Reading-English						Spelling						Social Studies					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Students																		
1	S	S	C	C			S	S	B	B			S	S	B	B		
2	S	B	C	A	A		S	S	S	A	A		S	S	S	B	B	
3	S	B	B	A	C		S	S	S	B	B		S	S	S	B	B	
4	S	S	B	B	B	C	S	S	A	A	B	A	S	S	S	B	B	B
5	S	B	A	B	B		S	S	A	A	A		S	S	B	B	B	
6	S	B	B				S	A	A				S	S	C			
7	I	S					I	S					I	S				
8	S						S						S					
9	S	B	B				S	A	B				S	B	A			
10	S	S	S	B	A		S	S	S	B	A		S	S	S	C	B	
11	S	B	C	C			S	B	A	A			S	S	C	C		
12	S	C	B	B			S	B	A	B			S	S	A	B		
13	S	B	A				S	B	B				S	S	C			
14	No Grades available 1 - 6																	
15	S	B	B	B	A	B	S	A	A	B	A	A	S	S	B	C	C	B
Year in school	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12
14	C	C	B	C	B	C	A	A					C	B	B	B	B	B
15	C	B	C	B	B	C	B	A					C	B		B	B	B

On the following page is continuation of this table showing the academic grades of each student in Math and Science.

TABLE III. CONTINUED, GRADES RECEIVED IN MATH AND SCIENCE.

Subject Year in School	Math						Science					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
Students												
1	S	S	C	C			S	S	S	C		
2	S	S	D	B	B		S	S	S	B	B	
3	S	S	B	A	B		S	S	S	B	C	
4	S	S	C	C	C	C	S	S	S	C	D	C
5	S	S	B	B	B		S	S	S	B	C	
6	S	B	B				S	C	B			
7	I	S					I	S				
8	S						S					
9	S	B	B				S	B	B			
10	S	S	S	C	B		S	S	S	C	C	
11	S	C	C	C			S	C	B	B		
12	S	B	B	B			S	B	B	C		
13	S	S	B				S	S	B			
14	No grades available 1 - 6											
15	S	C	B	C	C	B	S	B	B	C	B	B
Year in school												
	7	8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11	12
14	A	B	B	A	B			C	B	A	B	
15	B	C	C	B	C		C	C	B	C		

class.

TABLE IV. TEACHER RATINGS AND THE PERCENTILE RANK OF EACH STUDENT INVOLVED IN THIS INVESTIGATION.

Student	Number of Students	Rank	Percentile
1	30	13	56.7
2	27	10	63.9
3	27	11	59.3
4	18	7	61.1
5	26	4	84.6
6	30	10	66.6
7	17	12	29.4
8	18	8	55.6
9	27	10	62.9
10	No Rank		
11	28	13	53.6
12	29	10	65.5
13	25	12	52
14	30	10	66.6
15	30	13	57.7

An evaluation of table IV indicates that there were six students between the 50th and 60th percentile, six students between the 61st and the 70th percentile, one student above the 80th percentile, one student below the 30th percentile, and one student with no rank. Out of the fourteen students ranked by the teachers, thirteen of them were rated above the 50th percentile or middle of the class.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem in this investigation was to examine the progress of 15 students who entered school earlier than the required chronological age for school entrance. These students indicated readiness for school as a result of their performance on individual mental measurement tests, and were recommended for entrance to the first grade. At the present time most of these students are in elementary school ranging from grades one through six. Out of 15 students there are two who are seniors in high school this year. Primary source material for examining student progress was obtained from questionnaires, permanent records, and teachers ratings.

Questionnaires were sent to the parents of each student for the purpose of gaining an insight into how well the parents thought their child was doing in school. The responses to the questionnaire indicated that the parents were satisfied with their child's progress in school.

Academic grades were gathered from permanent records and presented to indicate student progress. Grades were recorded for each year of school the child has completed. The grades indicate that the students as a group are doing slightly above average work.

Teacher's ratings were utilized to determine the present standing of each child in relation to his classmates. The percentile rank of each student was computed, and it was found that the teachers rated most of the students between the 50th and 60th percentile.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were made regarding the progress of early admission students:

1. None of the students attended kindergarten.
2. The parents indicated no unusual problems because of their child's early age when he started school.
3. Specific reasons for early admission mentioned the most frequently were: readiness for school, size, maturity, and eagerness to learn.
4. The main advantages of early admission were: size would not be so noticeable, in the same grade with friends, and classmates are closer to the same age.
5. The students were approximately three months earlier than the required chronological age for beginning school.
6. More B grades were received than any other grade.
7. There were only two grades lower than C.
8. Total grades received indicated a slightly above average academic standing for the whole group.
9. Teachers ranked most of the students between the 50th and the 70th percentile in relation to their classmates.
10. Only one student was rated lower than the 50th percentile by the teachers.

Recommendations

At the present time most of the students are still in the elementary school so a complete picture of their progress is lacking. Therefore, it is recommended that another study of these children be made at a later date when they are in high school.

It is also recommended that the schools presently admitting students early to school continue to do so if individual measurement indicates a readiness for school.

On the basis of the progress indicated by the students involved in this investigation, it is also recommended that school administrators give some consideration to the possibilities of early admission as a means of providing for individual differences among students. It is well known that the present policy of a strict chronological age requirement for school entrance is not meeting the needs of all the school children.

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APPENDIX

April 9, 1964

Dear Parent:

As part of my requirements for a Master's degree in Education, I am writing a research paper concerning early admission into school. This paper is a follow-up study of students in southwestern Montana schools who have been admitted to the first grade earlier than the required admissions age. It has been brought to my attention by Mr. M. E. Brookhart, Head, Testing and Counseling Service, Montana State College, that your child was tested by his department in relation to the possibility of early school admittance. I am writing for permission to use your child's school records as part of my study. All information used in the research concerning your child will be strictly confidential and no student names or name of school will be used.

My main concern in this study is to determine how well students who have been admitted early have done in comparison with their classmates whose ages were within the required entrance age. Grades received at the end of each completed school year will be the main criteria for this comparison.

Enclosed you will also find a questionnaire and return envelope. I would appreciate it greatly if you would fill out the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. The questions concern your opinions of how well your child is doing in school and the advantages you think your child has received as a result of early admission.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Edwin Ellingson

Approved by:

M. E. Brookhart, Head
Testing & Counseling Service

APPENDIX B

A Copy of the Questionnaire Sent to the Parents

Please sign your name in the space provided it is permissible to use your child's school records.

Signature _____

Please answer the following questions also:

____ Yes

Did your child attend kindergarten?

____ No

____ Yes

Has your child had any unusual problems because of his early entrance into school? If yes explain briefly.

____ No

____ Yes

If you had the decision to enter your child early again would you do it?

____ No

List some specific reasons that prompted you to enter your child early.

What are some of the advantages you believe your child has received because of his early entrance?