Development of a productive thinking approach for effectively teaching slow learners in the intermediate grades
by Timothy Edward Sullivan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Montana State University
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Abstract:
This study was concerned with the development of a Productive Thinking Approach for teaching slow learners in the intermediate grades.

Although the slow learner problem appeared to be common to many school districts, what constituted a sound slow learner curriculum flexible enough to meet local needs had not yet been completely established. Based on the need for further study, the approach was considered to be adaptable and flexible enough to meet local needs. The writer advocated the specific steps for program development and demonstrated that the approach could be utilized by both teachers in their in-service planning sessions and with slow student in unit planning. The approach was not suggested as a cure-all for the problems often encountered in all school districts. It was intended to provide a set of procedures' that would give the individual teacher or the particular school district a sense of direction and purpose in working to develop a program for slow learners.

The writer indicated a preference for the approach after conducting the research procedures of: (1) clarification of the concept "slow learner;" (2) documentary research; (3) a developed questionnaire; and (4) personal interviews and observations. The research provided information for implementing the approach and developing a class activities manual.

The writer considered the term "slow learner," the intelligence quotient, intellectual abilities, and the various divisions of the intellect before concluding that the five-phased Productive Thinking Approach was one appropriate approach for slow learner education.

The major recommendations made as the result of this study were the following: (1) Some uniformity should be formulated as to what students were classified as "slow learners" in Montana. (2) The Productive Thinking Approach should be advocated as one strategy of remediation for classes of children or for tutoring. (3) A period of time for the approach to be piloted in a number of select classes should be allowed. (4) The approach advocated could not only meet the needs of individual districts but could serve as a tool for teacher planning and continued on-going training programs. (5) Involved educators familiar with the approach could increase their own ability to produce original and quality ideas as leads to solutions for problems, in addition to enhancing and encouraging student productivity,.