

NONGRADING, "THE DOOR TO INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION":  
FAVORED OR UNFAVORED

by

LUTHER VAUGHN MYERS

B. A., Louisiana State University, 1969

---

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1976

Approved by:

  
Major Professor

LD  
2668  
R4  
1976  
M94  
C.2  
Document

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. THE PROBLEM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT.....	1
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	1
DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED.....	3
SAMPLE.....	4
PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA.....	5
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	6
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	7
THE IMPORTANCE OF NONGRADING AND INDIVIDUALIZED	
INSTRUCTION.....	9
APPROACH CRITERIA FOR NONGRADING PRACTICES.....	13
3. THE ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED.....	15
4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	27
APPENDIX.....	29

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Distributions According to School Levels.....	16
2. Teachers and Principals Who Were Directly and Indirectly Involved in the Nongraded Program.....	16
3. Distribution According to School Level, Age, and Sex.....	18
4. Participants' Responses.....	19
5. Individualized Instruction.....	21
6. Questionnaire Results.....	23

## Chapter 1

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

The practice of grading and its importance in the school curriculum has been of great concern. Questions have been raised such as, "Is it the most effective way of providing for individualized instruction in order to meet the needs of individual students?" and "Some methods of grouping are presently being used, but could they be improved if we incorporate the nongraded plan?"

Although the term nongraded school has only recently come into common usage, most of the practices which were suggested as ways and means toward implementing the plan are not new. Some of them have been advocated for more than one hundred years. Many plans have been suggested to break the lockstep pattern of the graded school and to provide more adequately for individual differences. Today variations of these plans are employed in many schools. There are some schools that supposedly are "nongraded" still operating as if they are "graded." The levels are employed in the same way as grades because the teachers and principals do not understand, and do not accept or believe, that children ought to be promoted according to their abilities to grasp material. Many do not have the materials necessary for progress in these schools. Furthermore, some teachers still believe in retention as a device that dictates the best means for the slow learner.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It was the purpose of this study (1) to show the level of acceptance of the nongraded program by those who may or may not be presently engaged in a nongraded school system, (2) to show the differences, if any, in acceptance among professionals of different ages and different employment levels, and (3) to show the opinions of the sample on retention and acceleration.

In order to give direction to the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Are there more principals and teachers who are familiar with the nongraded program than those who are unfamiliar?
2. Do principals and teachers indirectly engaged in the nongraded program favor it comparably to those who are directly involved?
3. Do principals and teachers who are more than forty years of age favor the program?
4. Do principals and teachers who are less than forty years of age favor the program?
5. Do elementary principals and teachers favor nongrading?
6. Do high school principals favor nongrading?
7. What is the prevailing opinion of the sample?
8. What is the prevailing opinion of participants on individualized instruction in the nongraded school and the graded school?
9. What is the prevailing opinion on retention and acceleration?

With answers to the foregoing questions, the writer believed that he could point out some reasons for successful or unsuccessful implementation of nongraded programs in public schools because of personal feelings which favor or do not favor the programs.

#### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In order to clarify the meanings of certain terms and expressions used in this study, the following explanatory statements and definitions are submitted.

Nongrading. Nongrading is a plan of vertical organization of a school by which pupils are allowed to progress through school at their own rates. Each pupil covers as much of an appropriate curriculum as he can during the year. At the beginning of the next term, he continues to work where he left off and again progresses at his own speed. No grade label is attached to the work at any point; there no promotions and no retentions. A slow learner may take four years to cover the work the average pupil does in three, but he does not repeat work as he would in the graded program.

The nongraded program is not divided into grades per se, and it is not presented so that students at any grade level are limited to just the work designated for that grade. There is no such thing as "second grade work" or "fourth grade work" which makes up a uniform program of instruction that all of the students must accomplish in one year. Instead, an attempt is made to help each child work at the level where

he is in a subject, and progress in the best way that he can.<sup>1</sup>

Grading. Grading is an organizational plan whereby the school is divided into levels that are called grades. The work that is to be accomplished is clearly designated. It consists of specific skills, topics, and textbooks to be covered. Each person in the room is expected to do the work designated for the grade he is in, in a period of one year. If he does not complete the work designated, he may be retained for another whole year to repeat the work that was previously studied.

Individualized Instruction. Many and varied are the definitions of individualized instruction, but for the purpose of this report it was interpreted as a means for providing for the individual needs of students, which is a necessary and effective component of the nongraded approach.

#### SAMPLE

This research was done in area public schools in northern Louisiana. Various high schools and elementary schools from the parishes of Lincoln, Union, Bienville, Ouachita, and Webster were used. The schools surveyed had enrollments of from two hundred to eleven hundred students. Most of them were operating on the graded plan with racially mixed faculty and students.

The sampling was done through school principals who worked with

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard I. Miller, The Nongraded School (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), p. 157.

representative members of their faculties in order to give a fair representation of answers. The answers were provided by male and female teachers and principals, young and old, and were thought to be reflective of the feelings of all persons in their immediate areas, including the students and parents.

Responses were received from twenty-two elementary principals and teachers and from twenty high school principals and teachers for a total of forty-two participants.

#### PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA

The questionnaire was used as the data-gathering technique which allowed the researcher the most flexibility in sampling opinions. Information received was based on the participants' general feelings about the nongraded program. The questionnaire consisted of objective and closed type questions. A total of one hundred questionnaires was sent, but only forty-two were returned.

The questionnaires were numbered from one to forty-two and tabulated according to ages--over forty (40+) and under forty (40-). The sex of each participant was determined, and the level of school each represented (elementary or high school) was indicated. For each of the twenty questions, a response was indicated in the proper column by the letter "Y" if the response was "yes", and "N" if the response was "no." If there was no response, the letter "O" was used. Questions numbered four, five, six, seven, nine, sixteen, and seventeen were objective type questions and were answered by placing in the proper column the letter corresponding to the response selected by the participant, such as A, B, C, D, etc.



Totals of the "yes" and "no" responses were then added to show the number of responses. The "yes" answers were reported as favorable answers, and the "no" answers were reported as unfavorable answers in relation to the problem of nongrading.

The comments on retention and acceleration were then considered as supporting or not supporting individualization of efforts in the nongraded schools.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There was a total of one hundred questionnaires sent out to area high schools and elementary schools in northern Louisiana. The participants were asked to return the questionnaires at their earliest convenience, but only forty-two were returned and those after much persuasion.

The writer observed that only a few principals and teachers had first-hand experience working in a nongraded school. Many of them had been exposed to the concept by other means such as research, seminars, conferences, and through other schools, but only a few had been directly involved in the program. There was also a small number of participants who were not familiar with the program at all.

An effort has been made in Chapter I to establish some basic meanings for the study by briefly describing the problem and its significance in the field of education. Further effort has been made to establish the position of the writer by formulating a hypothesis to be supported. These efforts were provided for by the use of a questionnaire as a means for gathering data in support of the hypothesis. The limitations of the study have been explained.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written about the nongraded program and its effectiveness in the individualization of instruction in the public schools. It was the view of the writer that many educators have favorable attitudes about working in a nongraded school--elementary or secondary, that individualized instruction is a favorite technique, and that many educators are willing to change over from the graded plan to the nongraded plan. There is much concern in general for more information about the nongraded plan.

In support of the above hypotheses, Wheat states:

There is much concern for basic information which would foster more interest in the nongraded movement. Since the turn of the century, there has been increased interest in an attempt to individualize instruction.<sup>2</sup>

In a research supplement, Morris, Proger, and Morrell made a study of "Pupil Achievement in a Nongraded Plan" using a suburban school in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, which converted from a graded plan to a nongraded primary plan. They made use of central groups which were assigned to classes on the basis of age in the first grade. Instructional materials generally involved grade level and below grade level reading books. A three-group reading plan was used, but grade levels were not used. During the second and third years, the

---

<sup>2</sup>Leonard B. Wheat, "The Flexible Progress Group System," Elementary School Journal, 38:175-83 (November, 1937), and "Flexible Primary School," The Nation's Schools, 22:26-28 (October, 1938).

students were assigned to rapid, average, or below average classes. In grades four and five, a similar procedure was used for both groups. Teachers were not restricted to grade level materials for these two subjects. The assumptions tested in the study were that the absence of grade barriers through nongrading at Stage I would improve the achievement level of students; that the initial experimental gains would increase in early school years; and that girls, who purportedly were more academically inclined, would profit more than boys from the program.<sup>3</sup>

The results were satisfying with the use of a scatter diagram for both stages of the study. The assumptions of homogeneity of within groups--class regression coefficients was also satisfied in the same manner. Both groups in this study had a mean IQ of approximately 115.<sup>4</sup>

Frank A. Dagne gave a report on the progress of the Shelley Mathanson School (K-6) that started its program in 1966 with eight hundred students enrolled. He said that the school was architecturally constructed to implement the plan.<sup>5</sup> As he referred to a "team-teaching plan," he said:

The teachers need not worry about encroaching upon the domain of the next highest grade. They are free to select from a wide range of books in the library materials center without concern for their grade level. The teacher can become creative and challenge

---

<sup>3</sup>Vernon R. Morris, Baton B. Proger, and James E. Morrell, "Pupil Achievement in a Nongraded Primary Plan After Three and Five Years of Instruction," Educational Leadership, 4:5 (March, 1971), pp. 621-623.

<sup>4</sup>Morris, Proger, and Morrell.

<sup>5</sup>Frank A. Dagne, "A Nongraded School," Educational Leadership, 25:2 (November, 1967), p. 122.

all pupils regardless of the child's developmental level. The typical A, B, C, and D report cards were even replaced by the student's progress report.<sup>6</sup>

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF NONGRADING IN INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

In discussing individualized instruction, Henderson gave two broad perceptions. He approached the idea by giving as examples two great teachers--Socrates and Jesus Christ--and stating that both were individualized teachers.

Henderson also believes that each individual should have an opportunity to learn what is appropriate for him at a pace suitable to his ability and interest. He stated that (1) our educational system should provide these opportunities through individualized instruction, and (2) that the theory of individualized instruction can be achieved by humanizing teachers, improving their expertise, and providing a flexible and reasonable climate in which they can inspire personal learning in a social context, taking into consideration the context, method, and pace appropriate for their individual students.<sup>7</sup>

Frazier says in effect that for half a century we have been committed to the idea of individualized instruction as the answer to the problem of how to teach everybody what everybody needs to know. Yet only now have we been able to put together the elements that will enable us to act on our conviction with the prospect of success. He mentioned elements such as goals, nature of the learner, content analysis,

---

<sup>6</sup>Dagne, p. 123

<sup>7</sup>George L. Henderson, "Individualized Instruction," Educational Leadership, 35:7, April, 1968.

materials, methodology, evaluation, and organization, all of which would contribute to the success of the nongraded approach in the schools.<sup>8</sup> Frazier's final comment was that:

What we are faced with, at the prospect of success in individualizing instruction, is the necessity of redeveloping the curriculum. What is involved in this task: The first thing is to clarify the differences between the lesser and the larger learnings in terms of the elements already defined.<sup>9</sup>

Howard, dealing with the nongraded approach, discussed the effectiveness of individualization by the elementary school. Effective instrumentation, particularly in reading, has been achieved by the classroom teacher using grouping as a means for individualization. Over the years the elementary teacher, faced with the job of effectively individualizing instruction, has used his or her ingenuity and come up with many types of plans for curriculum change. The nongraded approach has been the weapon for many of these plans and an effective one. But the classroom teacher needs help to improve instruction in all areas of learning. School administrators must begin to apply the same type of discerning analysis to the organization of the school as a whole as the classroom teacher has done to the organization of the classroom.<sup>10</sup>

According to Smith, the concept of meeting individual needs is not new:

This concept has been with us since the days of Comenius in the early sixteen hundreds when he urged that...education at each stage

---

<sup>8</sup>Alexander Frazier, "Individualized Instruction," Educational Leadership, 35:616, April, 1968.

<sup>9</sup>Frazier, p. 619.

<sup>10</sup>Eugene R. Howard, Roger W. Bardwell, and Calvin E. Gross, The Nongraded Elementary School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company), 1967.

should be adapted to the age and capacities of the child.<sup>11</sup>

Hover stated that:

A highly effective but still controversial approach to the problem is some form of subgrouping within the classroom. Elementary teachers have long recognized the value of three or more groups. Despite a recent trend toward homogeneously grouped classes, the need for some instructional differentiation still exists. The desirability of individualizing instruction according to the nongraded approach is not questioned by many as the means for appraising individual differences.<sup>12</sup>

In dealing directly with the problem, Flanagan said that a major failure of many of our schools in America is that we are teaching our children the wrong thing and that the present instructional program (graded plan) is not enabling students to achieve the levels that are essential for effective participation in America.<sup>13</sup>

Even with the move toward individualized instruction in some instances, it is a new word used to justify practices already in operation. There are those who may tutor an individual student and consider this individualized instruction. Lindberg and Moffitt said that some teachers pass out special learning materials and let children proceed at their own rates to fill in blanks or look up works.<sup>14</sup> For them, this is individualized instruction. Lindberg and Moffitt further

---

<sup>11</sup>Nela B. Smith, "Individualized Instruction: Concepts Old and New," Education, 81:527, May, 1961.

<sup>12</sup>Kenneth H. Hover, "A Plan for Grouping in the Secondary School Curriculum," Education, 88:208, February-March, 1968.

<sup>13</sup>John C. Flanagan, "Individualizing Education," Education, 90:191-193, February-March, 1970.

<sup>14</sup>Lucille Lindberg and Mary W. Moffitt, "What Is Individualizing Instruction," Individualizing Education, Association for Childhood Education (1964), p. 11.

stated that some are grouped according to their ability to recite material assigned to them.<sup>15</sup>

Richard I. Miller reported that the nongraded movement is one of the most topical and important instructional concerns in American education today, and a continued acceleration of interest in it can be expected for at least the remainder of the 1970's. Not only is it one of the most topical and important instructional concerns in American education, but it also rates as one of the most misunderstood and confused developments, due largely to its innate complexity and to a human effort for oversimplification.<sup>16</sup>

Herd made some effort to support the practices of individualized instruction with several descriptive statements. It is, he said:

1. A process of custom-tailoring instruction so that it fits a particular learner.
2. A means by which a student can proceed at a pace commensurate with his ability.
3. An opportunity for one-to-one relationships to be established between students and teachers.

Individualized instruction is not:

1. Turning students loose to learn by themselves in isolation.
2. Plugging students into a piece of instructional media.
3. An end in itself, but rather a means of learning how to learn.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup>Lindberg and Moffitt, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>Richard I. Miller, The Nongraded School: Analysis and Study (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 96.

<sup>17</sup>Arthur A. Herd, "Successful Practices in Individualized Instruction," The Educational Digest (March, 1972), p. 37.

## APPROACH CRITERIA FOR NONGRADING PRACTICES

John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson conducted studies in regard to various criteria for nongrading practices and also contributed many publications dealing with the subject. Their scholarly book on nongraded practices, The Nongraded Elementary School, has enjoyed a wide readership. It presents a convincing rationale for this type of program, and it contains a comprehensive bibliography which is available to persons who desire to do further research.<sup>18</sup>

Some approaches for the nongraded school were outlined by Tewksbury. He stated that in assessing individuality in a learning situation, each child should be helped to work at his own level. Children should not be designated as failures because they cannot do work at a certain pace or level; instead the program should provide for the wide range of differences that exist between children. They should develop more self-reliance. These, along with many other practices, will help to provide for maximum self-appraisal.<sup>19</sup>

In Chapter 2 an attempt has been made to report on basic literature and research information with relevance to the study. Since nongrading and individualized instruction are important tools for learning, as indicated in this paper, literature on both was reviewed with reference to their places in the school system.

There was an effort made to (1) cite examples of schools using

---

<sup>18</sup> John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson, The Nongraded Elementary School (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1963).

<sup>19</sup> John L. Tewksbury, Nongrading in the Elementary School (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1967) pp. 23-25.



the nongraded plan such as the Shelley Mathanson School in Ohio, (2) state the importance of nongrading in individualized instruction, and (3) suggest an approach criterion for nongrading practices. Various authors such as Morris, Proger, Morrell, and Dagne gave examples of schools using this approach along with suggestions for implementation. Henderson, Frazier, Smith, Hover, Flanagan, Miller, and Herd made attempts to stress the importance of nongrading in individualized instruction. Goodlad, Anderson, and Tewksbury summed up the problem by giving approach criteria for nongrading practices.

## Chapter 3

### THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter an attempt is made by the writer to analyze the data collected to support or refute the hypothesis. Several tables have been used to show, in terms of percentages, the number of participants who were in favor and the number who were not in favor of the nongraded program.

The questionnaire (see appendix) which was used to secure all of the data reported in this chapter consisted of twenty questions in closed form and of the multiple choice type. Of the one hundred questionnaires sent out to area schools, only forty-two were returned. Twenty of these forty-two were submitted by teachers and principals who were working or had worked in secondary schools, and twenty-two were submitted by those who were working in elementary schools.

Table 1 shows the number of elementary and high school educators who were familiar with the nongraded plan. Interestingly, more elementary school principals were familiar with the nongraded program than high school personnel.

#### Question Number One

Are more principals and teachers familiar with the nongraded plan than are unfamiliar?

According to the data in Table 1, there are more participants familiar with the nongraded program. A total of thirty-three

**THIS BOOK  
CONTAINS  
NUMEROUS PAGES  
WITH DIAGRAMS  
THAT ARE CROOKED  
COMPARED TO THE  
REST OF THE  
INFORMATION ON  
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS  
RECEIVED FROM  
CUSTOMER.**

participants was familiar with the program compared with nine participants who were unfamiliar.

Table 1  
Distributions According to School Levels

	Familiar	Not Familiar	Total
Elementary	19	3	22
High School	14	6	20
Total	33	9	42

Table 2 shows the number of elementary and high school educators who were familiar with the nongraded program by indirect involvement compared to those familiar by direct involvement.

Table 2  
Teachers and Principals Who Were Directly and Indirectly  
Involved in the Nongraded Program

	Indirectly Involved	Favored	Directly Involved	Favored
Elementary	12	12	7	7
High School	19	14	4	4
Total	31	26	11	11

A greater number of participants were familiar with the nongraded program by indirect involvement than by direct involvement.

#### Question Number Two

Do principals and teachers indirectly involved in the program regard it as favorably as those who were directly involved?

The answer to this question is "yes." However, there was very little difference in the comparison. According to Table 2, the twelve elementary teachers who were familiar with the program by indirect involvement favored it, and the seven who were directly involved also favored the program. Among high school participants, fourteen of the nineteen who were familiar with the program by indirect involvement favored it, compared with four educators directly involved who favored the program. Twenty-six of thirty-one indirectly involved participants favored nongrading, compared to eleven participants directly involved who favored the program.

A picture of the composition of the sample is provided by Table 3 which shows the reactions of participants according to school level, sex, and age groups. Inspection of the table reveals that more participants rated the nongraded program excellent than gave it any other rating.

Table 3  
Distribution According to School Level, Age, and Sex

Participants	No.	Ratings of Participants				
		Superior	Excellent	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Elementary	22	2	10	6	0	4
High School	20	1	7	6	1	5
Over 40 Men	9	0	3	2	0	4
Over 40 Women	10	0	4	3	0	3
Under 40 Men	6	1	4	1	0	0
Under 40 Women	17	2	6	6	1	2
Total		6	34	24	2	18

The data presented in Table 3 supply the answer to several of the questions posed in this study.

#### Question Number Three

Do principals and teachers who are more than forty years of age favor the nongraded program?

In the sample there was a total of nineteen men and women over forty years of age. Seven rated the program as excellent, five gave it a fair rating, and seven had no opinion. Thus, the answer to question three is "yes", inasmuch as there are twelve principals and teachers over forty who rate the program as excellent and fair and only seven who had no opinion, with no poor ratings at all.

#### Question Number Four

Do principals and teachers under forty years of age favor the program?

The answer is "yes." In Table 3 there are twenty-three principals and teachers under forty; three rated the program superior, ten rated it excellent, seven rated it fair, and one rated it poor. Two had no opinion. In the superior, excellent, and fair blocks, twenty of twenty-three participants gave a high rating.

#### Question Number Five

Do elementary principals and teachers favor the program?

The answer is "yes." Out of twenty-two elementary principals and teachers, eighteen gave a fair rating and above while four had no opinion.

#### Question Number Six

Do high school principals and teachers favor the program?

Yes. In Table 3, of a total of twenty high school participants, fourteen gave a rating of fair or above.

Table 4 presents data relative to participants' opinions about retention and acceleration.

Table 4  
Participants' Responses

	Retention			Acceleration		
	Yes	No	No Response	Yes	No	No Response
Elementary	7	10	5	11	5	6
High School	6	6	8	11	2	7
Total	13	16	13	22	7	13

Question Number Seven

What is the prevailing opinion of this sample in regard to retention and acceleration as practices to be used by teachers and principals?

Table 4 shows the number of participants in favor of retention and acceleration and those who were not in favor.

According to the data in Table 4, elementary teachers and principals did not favor retention over acceleration as a practice to be used in the nongraded schools, but as a practice which is in the best interest of the rapid learner. Among high school participants, there were six favoring retention and six who did not favor it. Many of the participants who were not in favor of retention believed, according to their comments, that individual differences dictate whether a student should be retained or promoted. Some of the participants viewed retention as an obstacle to learning, but most of them agreed that acceleration is a good practice. They believe that the rapid learner should be accelerated as soon as he has mastered what is required. Perhaps the best answer for this question can be found by referring to a statement made by Herd--that the nongraded program at its best allows the student to proceed at a pace commensurate with his ability.

In Table 5 an attempt was made to show the number of participants who favored individualized instruction as a means for instruction in the nongraded school and the graded school.



Table 5  
Individualized Instruction

	Nongraded School		Graded School	
	Participants Favored	Participants Did Not Favor	Participants Favored	Participants Did Not Favor
Elementary	20	2	15	7
High School	20	0	17	3
Total	40	2	32	10

#### Question Number Eight

What is the prevailing opinion of participants on individualized instruction in the nongraded school and the graded school?

According to Table 5, there were twenty elementary teachers who favored individualized instruction in the nongraded school as compared to fifteen in the graded school. There were twenty high school teachers who favored individualized instruction in the nongraded school as compared to seventeen in the graded school.

Forty of the forty-two participants, high school and elementary, who responded to the question favored individualized instruction in the nongraded school. Thirty-one of the forty-one participants favored individualized instruction in the graded school. Thus there were more participants who favored individualized instruction as an instructional technique in the nongraded school than favored its use in the graded school.

Question Number Nine

What is the prevailing opinion of the sample about the nongraded school?

This question was answered with a complete tabulation of the questionnaire. An attempt to show the total number of "yes" answers in the questionnaire was made in Table 6. To present this picture, each question was represented in the tabulation. Certain inferences were drawn from the "yes" responses on the questionnaire: (1) If a participant answered most of the questions with a "yes" response, he had a very favorable attitude toward the nongraded program, (2) he would rather teach in a nongraded school, and (3) he thought that the nongraded program was highly effective for student appraisal.

To further illustrate this example, all "yes" answers were added and totaled at the bottom of each column in Table 6. The same was done for "no" answers and for those who did not respond. Each question was totaled separately and a sum of the totals was taken. The number of "yes" answers (291) was compared with the total of "no" answers (119) and no responses (136). Since the "yes" answers were supporting answers, it was concluded that the prevailing opinion of the sample was highly favorable to the nongraded approach.

Table 6  
Questionnaire Results

Partici- pant	Age	Sex	Level	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
1	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	A	N	A	B	N	C	N	O	O
2	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	A	Y	A	B	N	A	N	Y	Y
3	40+	M	H. S.	Y	N	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4	40+	M	H. S.	Y	N	O	O	O	O	O	C	Y	N	N
5	40+	F	H. S.	Y	N	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
6	40+	M	H. S.	Y	O	O	N	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7	40+	M	H. S.	Y	O	O	O	O	B	O	O	O	O	O
8	40-	F	H. S.	N	Y	A	N	C	A	N	A	Y	O	O
9	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	B	N	D	B	N	B	N	N	Y
10	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	A	Y	A	B	Y	B	Y	O	N
11	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	A	N	A	O	O	O	O	O	O
12	40-	F	H. S.	Y	N	A	O	A	B	N	C	Y	N	O
13	40-	M	H. S.	Y	N	A	Y	B	B	O	C	N	Y	Y
14	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	A	N	B	A	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
15	40+	F	H. S.	Y	N	A	Y	B	B	Y	C	Y	Y	Y
16	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	B	Y	B	B	N	A	Y	N	Y
17	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	C	Y	B	A	N	C	Y	N	Y
18	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	A	Y	B	A	N	A	Y	Y	Y
19	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	C	Y	B	A	Y	C	Y	Y	Y
20	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	A	N	A	B	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
21	40+	F	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	B	A	N	A	Y	N	Y
22	40+	F	Elem.	N	Y	B	Y	B	A	N	C	Y	Y	Y
23	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	C	Y	B	B	N	A	Y	Y	Y
24	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	B	A	N	C	Y	N	Y
25	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	B	A	Y	A	Y	N	N
26	40-	F	Elem.	N	Y	B	Y	B	A	Y	A	Y	O	Y
27	40-	F	Elem.	N	Y	B	Y	B	B	N	C	Y	N	O
28	40-	F	Elem.	N	Y	D	Y	B	B	N	O	Y	N	N
29	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	B	B	B	N	A	Y	Y
30	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	O	B	Y	A	Y	O	O
31	40+	F	Elem.	N	Y	D	O	O	O	N	A	O	Y	N
32	40+	F	Elem.	Y	N	O	O	O	B	O	D	O	O	O
33	40-	F	Elem.	Y	O	O	O	O	B	Y	A	Y	N	O
34	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	B	Y	C	A	Y	O	Y	N	Y
35	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	C	A	N	C	Y	Y	Y
36	40-	F	Elem.	N	Y	D	N	A	D	Y	B	Y	N	N
37	40-	F	Elem.	N	Y	D	N	A	B	Y	A	Y	N	O
38	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	B	N	A	B	Y	A	N	Y	Y
39	40+	F	Elem.	Y	Y	C	O	A	A	O	C	Y	N	Y
40	40+	F	Elem.	N	Y	C	N	A	B	N	D	Y	N	N
41	40+	F	Elem.	N	Y	D	O	A	A	Y	C	Y	O	O
42	40+	F	Elem.	Y	Y	A	Y	B	B	N	B	Y	N	Y
Total "yes"				32	33		21			14		30	13	21
Total "no"				10	7		11			19		5	18	7
					2		10			9			11	14

Table 6 (continued)

Partici- pant	Age	Sex	Level	Questions								Total Yes	Total No
				#13	#14	#15	#16	#17	#18	#19	#20		
1	40-	F	H. S.	N	N	Y	A	Elem.	O	N	O	3	6
2	40+	M	H. S.	Y	N	N	A	Elem.	O	Y	Y	8	4
3	40+	M	H. S.	Y	O	Y	O	O	O	O	O	3	1
4	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	Y	O	O	O	O	O	5	3
5	40+	F	H. S.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	1	1
6	40+	M	H. S.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	2	1
7	40+	M	H. S.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	1	0
8	40-	F	H. S.	O	O	O	A	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	5	2
9	40-	F	H. S.	N	Y	Y	D	Elem.	N	N	N	5	8
10	40-	F	H. S.	O	Y	N	A	Elem.	Y	N	Y	8	3
11	40-	F	H. S.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	2	1
12	40-	F	H. S.	N	N	N	A	Elem.	O	O	O	2	6
13	40-	M	H. S.	Y	Y	O	C	Elem.	O	O	Y	7	2
14	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	Y	B	Prim.	Y	Y	Y	12	1
15	40+	F	H. S.	N	Y	N	A	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	10	3
16	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	N	A	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	10	3
17	40+	M	H. S.	Y	Y	Y	D	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	11	3
18	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	Y	A	Elem.	N	Y	N	10	3
19	40-	F	H. S.	Y	Y	Y	B	Prim.	Y	Y	Y	13	0
20	40+	M	H. S.	O	Y	Y	D	H. S.	O	N	N	8	2
21	40+	F	Elem.	Y	Y	N	A	Prim.	Y	Y	Y	10	3
22	40+	F	Elem.	Y	N	Y	B	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	10	3
23	40-	M	Elem.	Y	N	N	D	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	10	3
24	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	A	Prim.	Y	Y	Y	11	2
25	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	A	H. S.	Y	Y	Y	11	2
26	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	D	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	11	1
27	40-	F	Elem.	O	Y	Y	O	O	O	O	O	5	3
28	40-	F	Elem.	O	Y	Y	D	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	8	4
29	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	N	A	H. S.	O	Y	Y	10	2
30	40-	F	Elem.	Y	O	O	B	Prim.	O	Y	Y	8	0
31	40+	F	Elem.	O	Y	O	A	Prim.	O	O	O	3	3
32	40+	F	Elem.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	1	1
33	40-	F	Elem.	O	Y	O	A	O	O	O	N	4	2
34	40-	M	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	D	Prim.	Y	Y	Y	12	1
35	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	N	A	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	11	2
36	40-	F	Elem.	N	Y	Y	B	Elem.	N	Y	O	6	6
37	40-	F	Elem.	Y	Y	Y	D	Prim.	Y	Y	N	8	4
38	40-	M	Elem.	Y	N	N	A	Prim.	N	O	N	6	6
39	40+	F	Elem.	O	Y	N	A	Elem.	O	O	Y	6	2
40	40+	F	Elem.	Y	N	Y	D	Prim.	O	O	N	4	7
41	40+	F	Elem.	O	Y	O	A	O	O	O	O	4	1
42	40+	F	Elem.	O	N	N	B	Elem.	Y	Y	N	7	5
Total "yes"				22	26	19			18	21	21		
Total "no"				5	8	12			4	5	8		
				15	8	11			20	16	13		

## Chapter 4

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the use of nongrading in area public schools as the door to individualized instruction was favored or unfavored among public school principals and teachers according to their age, sex, teaching level, familiarity, and opinions on retention and acceleration.

In Chapter 1, effort was made to present the problem and purpose of the study followed by nine questions to be answered by the study. An effort was also made to define certain terms that would be used in the study. The sample was described, and the procedures for collecting data were reported.

Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature on the importance of nongrading and individualized instruction based on articles and books by various authors. Comments by several authors including Henderson, Frazier, Howard, Smith, Hover, Flanagan, Miller, and Herd on techniques and developments for both nongrading and individualized instruction were presented.

Other literature was reviewed to show an approach criterion for the nongraded school and individualized instruction.

In Chapter 3, an effort was made by the writer to compile data that supported or refuted the hypothesis. This was done by using the questionnaire and presenting the data in simple statistical form.

Answers to the nine questions posed in the problem represent the

major findings of the study. According to these findings, (1) principals and teachers who are more than forty years of age favor the nongraded program, (2) principals and teachers less than forty years of age favor the program, (3) elementary principals and teachers favor the program, (4) high school principals and teachers favor the program, (5) there were more principals and teachers familiar with the nongraded plan than unfamiliar, (6) principals and teachers indirectly engaged in the program favor it comparably to those who were directly engaged in it, (7) the prevailing opinion of principals and teachers on acceleration in the nongraded school is favorable and on retention not favorable, and (8) the idea of individualized instruction is favored as a device to be used in the nongraded schools.

The prevailing opinion of the sample is that more of those who participated in this study favor the nongraded program in public schools than do not favor it, and the majority endorse individualized instruction by the program.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Books

- Goodlad, John I. and Robert H. Anderson. The Nongraded Elementary School. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1963.
- Howard, Eugene R., Roger W. Bardwell and Calvin E. Gross. How to Organize a Nongraded School. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966.
- Miller, Richard I. The Nongraded School Analysis and Study. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967.
- Tewksbury, John L. Nongrading in the Elementary School. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1967.

### B. PERIODICALS

- Dagne, Frank A. "A Nongraded School," Educational Leadership (November, 1967), p. 122.
- Flanagan, John C. "Individualizing Education," Education (February-March, 1970), pp. 191-193.
- Frazier, Alexander. "Individualized Instruction," Educational Leadership (April, 1968), p. 616.
- Henderson, George L. "Individualized Instruction," Educational Leadership (April, 1968), pp. 35-37.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Individualized Instruction: Sweet in Theory, Sour in Practice," The Educational Digest (March, 1972).
- Herd, Arthur A. "Successful Practices in Individualized Instruction," The Educational Digest (March, 1972), p. 37.
- Hover, Kenneth H. "A Plan for Grouping in the Secondary Classroom," Education (February-March, 1968), p. 208.
- Lindberg, Lucille, and Mary W. Moffitt, "What is Individualizing Instruction," Individualizing Education, Association for Childhood Education (1964), p. 11.
- Morris, Vernon R., Baton B. Proger, and James E. Morrell. "Pupil Achievement in a Nongraded Primary Plan After Three and Five Years of Instruction," Educational Leadership (March, 1971), pp. 621-623.

Smith, Nela Banton. "Individualized Instruction: Concept Old and New," Education (May, 1961), p. 527.

Wheat, Leonard B. "The Flexible Progress Group System," Elementary School Journal (November, 1937), pp. 175-183.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Flexible Primary School," The Nation's Schools (October, 1938), pp. 26-28.



## APPENDIX

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Enrollment \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age Level: Over Forty \_\_\_\_\_ Under Forty \_\_\_\_\_

1. Circle the grade level you are presently working in:

A. 1-8

B. 1-12

C. 9-12

D. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Is your present program operating on the graded plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Nongraded? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you familiar with the nongraded plan? \_\_\_\_\_

4. In what ways are you familiar with the nongraded plan?

\_\_\_ A. In another school

\_\_\_ B. Through individualized instruction

\_\_\_ C. Through research

\_\_\_ D. Direct involvement

5. Did you approve of the program at the time of your exposure to

it? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How do you rate the program?

\_\_\_ A. Fair

\_\_\_ C. Superior

\_\_\_ B. Excellent

\_\_\_ D. Poor

7. What would you say that some of the advantages of the nongraded plan are?

- ☐ A. Good for team teaching
- ☐ B. Good for meeting the needs of individual students
- ☐ C. Good for those who love to teach
- ☐ D. Good for students only

8. Do you think that individualized instruction can be more adequately appraised in the nongraded school? \_\_\_\_\_ Graded school? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What were some of the reactions of others concerning the nongraded school?

- ☐ A. Willing to work in it
- ☐ B. Not willing to work in it
- ☐ C. Neutral
- ☐ D. Doubtful

10. Do you think parents approve of the nongraded program? \_\_\_\_\_

11. In your opinion, is retention a device that should be used with greater frequency in order to maintain minimum educational standards?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Is acceleration a device that dictates to the best interest of the rapid learner? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Individual and small group instruction requires extensive planning. On the basis of results observed and as a matter of opinion, are you prepared to say that efforts expended will produce desirable educational results? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Is the matter of range in the physical and mental maturity of young children a major problem? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you think that facilitating the nongraded school is a problem? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Check the response below that best describes your attitude toward a problem with the nongraded school.

- \_\_\_ A. Grouping (Ability)  
\_\_\_ B. Staffing  
\_\_\_ C. Curriculum Development  
\_\_\_ D. Materials

17. Do you feel that the nongraded approach might be more effective in the elementary school? \_\_\_\_\_ Primary? \_\_\_\_\_ High School? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do most school administrators you know express a willingness to work in a nongraded school? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Are you willing to change over to the nongraded plan? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Do you feel that the plan may eventually be used for all schools?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NONGRADING, "THE DOOR TO INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION":  
FAVORED OR UNFAVORED

by

LUTHER VAUGHN MYERS

B. A., Louisiana State University, 1969

---

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1976

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which nongrading in area public schools, as the door to individualized instruction, was favored or unfavored among public school principals and teachers according to their age, sex, teaching level, familiarity, and opinions on retention and acceleration.

In order to give direction to the study, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Are there more principals and teachers who are familiar with the nongraded program than those who are unfamiliar?

2. Do principals and teachers indirectly involved in the non-graded program favor it comparably to those who are directly involved?

3. Do principals and teachers who are more than forty years of age favor the program?

4. Do principals and teachers who are less than forty years of age favor the program?

5. Do elementary principals and teachers favor nongrading?

6. Do high school principals and teachers favor nongrading?

7. What is the prevailing opinion about retention and acceleration?

8. What is the prevailing opinion of participants on individualizing instruction in the nongraded school and the graded school?

9. What is the prevailing opinion of the sample?

Area public schools in northern Louisiana were used in the sample. The survey included five parishes: Bienville, Webster, Union, Ouachita, and Lincoln. Questionnaires were sent to area high school and elementary school principals in the five parishes to be distributed to five members

of their faculties who could answer a majority of the questions. Teachers and principals were asked to answer the questions to the best of their abilities.

The findings were as follow:

1. There were more principals and teachers familiar with the nongraded program than those who were not familiar.
2. Those principals and teachers who were indirectly involved in the program favored it comparably to those directly involved.
3. There were more principals and teachers over forty years of age who favored the nongraded program.
4. There were more principals and teachers under forty years of age who favored the nongraded program.
5. There were more elementary principals and teachers who favored the program.
6. There were more high school principals and teachers who favored the program.
7. There were more principals and teachers who favored acceleration as a device for the rapid learner in the nongraded school than those who favored retention of the slow learner.
8. There were more principals and teachers who favored individualized instruction as an instrument for learning in the non-graded school than those who favor it in the graded school.
9. The prevailing opinion of the sample was that more principals and teachers favored the nongraded school and its practices than the graded school, and that individualized instruction in both schools was favored.



The conclusions were that more principals and teachers in this study favor the nongraded program in public schools, and that the majority endorsed individualized instruction by the program.