

GROUPED AND NON-GROUPED ACHIEVEMENT  
IN SEVENTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

by

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B.S., The Kansas State Teachers College, 1966

9984

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 66502

1972

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1972  
S297  
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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Junction City Junior High counseling department without whose records on testing this study would not have been possible. Thanks, also, to my faculty examining committee who helped with the style and form of the paper. The committee included Herbert E. Kaiser, J. Harvey Littrell, and Roy C. Langford. Special thanks to Herbert E. Kaiser who helped with the computer work and statistics.

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## Chapter 1

### BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY ON ACHIEVEMENT GROUPING

#### GENERAL STATEMENTS

Mention grouping of school children for academic learning in the "democratic" American society and immediately you receive a negative reaction from many people. The grouping of pupils, however, can be for helping the pupil in a positive way. If a student is two or three grades below his grade level in achievement according to nationalized achievement tests, something should be done to try to help the child progress and, if possible, raise his achievement rate.

Once the low achieving pupil leaves the self-contained elementary classroom in many public schools, he is in for more achievement trouble. A teacher teaching five one hour classes a day with an average of thirty children in each class has difficulty reaching the low achiever. If the low achiever is reached, the teacher may have difficulty keeping the remainder of the class members interested and progressing at their individual achievement rates. In a seventh grade class, for example, if pupils are assigned to classes at random there is a good chance that the achievement grade level scores could range from high tenth grade to low fourth grade. The teacher of such a class, undoubtedly, would have a difficult time in helping each student progress at his achievement level in a class period of one hour or less a day.

Most of the low achievement students are poor readers, therefore, in classes of social studies a teacher encounters a reading problem among the

students. To gain information for social studies, it is very important that the student can read.. and comprehend the text being used. Many of the lower achieving students can not read nor comprehend the texts written for their grade level as usually they are written two or three grade levels above their actual reading level.

The lower achieving student is usually more dependent on the teacher for motivation. He requires more of the teacher's time, and without help he quickly loses interest. He loses, his fellow students lose, and the teacher fails to reach the pupils from the stand point of motivation and achievement.

If the low achievers are homogeneously grouped in the subjects in which they are low in achievement, the text they are required to study can be on a lower reading level and yet contain the same subject material as their grade level. For example, if a student is in a seventh grade social studies class but reads on a fourth or fifth grade level, a social studies text could be selected that his group could read. The teacher should use a simpler vocabulary in presenting the lesson, cover the text material more slowly, and try to help the individual student raise his achievement level.

The classes of homogeneously grouped pupils should be smaller in size allowing the teacher greater freedom of individualization. Instead of having a class of thirty or more students, the teacher should have a class of twenty low achieving students, or perhaps even less than twenty.

#### PROBLEM

It is hypothesized that pupils of low achievement when placed in homogeneous groups according to achievement grade level will improve at a greater rate in seventh grade social studies than students of the same mental ability