

**THIS BOOK
CONTAINS
NUMEROUS
PAGES WITH
THE ORIGINAL
PRINTING ON
THE PAGE BEING
CROOKED.**

**THIS IS THE
BEST IMAGE
AVAILABLE.**

THE EFFECTS OF A PASS-FAIL GRADING SYSTEM ON THE ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL BIOLOGY STUDENTS

by 7214

HARRY E. MCDONALD III

B.S., Kansas State University, 1969

A MASTER' REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1971

For approval by:


Dr. A.J. Moore

2668
R4
1971
M29
C.2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY	1
Introduction	1
Statement of Purpose and Limitations of the Study	2
Definitions of Terms	2
II. A REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE	4
Grades Provide Needed Information: Pro and Con	5
Grades Reinforce Learning: Pro and Con	6
Student Achievement: Pass-Fail vs. Grading	7
Grades Are Inaccurate	8
Reasons For Pass-Fail	9
Student Attitudes Towards Pass-Fail	10
Administrative Attitudes Towards Pass-Fail	11
Summary	12
III. PROCEDURES	14
IV. RESULTS	17
V. DISCUSSION	21
BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
APPENDIX A	29
APPENDIX B	36

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2-1	FREQUENCY OF REPORTING SYSTEMS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS	4
4-1	ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE INVOLVING IQ AND CRITERION SCORES	18
4-2	ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE INVOLVING PRETEST AND CRITERION SCORES	18
4-3	MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND RELIABILITY OF THE CRITERION	19
4-4	SUMMARY OF THE OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE ON PASS-FAIL GRADING	19

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

The most common grading system in high schools in the United States today is the letter graded system. Grades provide information to the student and about the student. They are one of the most efficient methods of evaluation of student achievement by employers and educators. Many also feel that grades are invaluable as a motivating device (Kingston and Wash, 21).

Some educators, however, criticize our grading practices. Their arguments are summarized by Crooks (6) when he questions "... the reliability of marks, their purposes, the methods of their presentation and even their necessity." One proposed solution to the problem of grading is a pass-fail system. It is hoped this system will reduce many of the inequities of grading. However, one important question raised about a pass-fail system is whether students will achieve as well as when they had the motivation of grades. Some information about this is available at the elementary and university levels, but almost none is available at the high school level. Care must be exercised in applying research at the elementary and university levels to the high school situation, and yet high schools need some basis for making curricular decisions in this area. It was in this area that this study was conducted.