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A STUDY OF A CLASS OF TWENTY FAILING  
STUDENTS AT IOWA STATE COLLEGE

J. E. EVANS

During the winter quarter of 1930 fifty men engineering students from the freshman class of 1929 were registered in a class in which methods of study were discussed. This class met twice a week during the term.

At the close of the fall term these students had attracted the attention of the scholarship committee because of poor work. All students in the group had failed or conditioned part of their work. If the scholarship committee had followed its regular procedure these students would have been eliminated from the college because of poor academic work.

The special class was conducted by members of the psychology department. This discussion is based on one group in which there were twenty students.

This class discussed such topics as "Conditions Favorable for Good Study," "Formation of Study Habits," "Effective Methods of Reading," "Training One's Self to Read Effectively," "Effective Methods to Use in the Class Room," "Aids in Handling the Class Room Situation," "Preparing for Examinations," "Developing Successful Attitudes." Kornhauser: "How to Study" was placed in the hands of each student mainly because the book is simple and inexpensive.

In addition to the class work with the students more than one hour was spent in conference with each student. This conference was used to get the academic background and to study some of the individual difficulties of the student.

Each of the students had a councilor who had scheduled conferences to talk over the difficulties of the courses and to suggest methods to follow to remove these difficulties. The student and councilor met about six times during the term, and oftener if necessary.

At the end of the winter term four of these students were dropped by the scholarship committee because of poor scholarship, and three had left of their own volition.

An analysis of the information available regarding these stu-

dents indicates a certain trend at least, although the information does not prove conclusively any point.

In the following table a comparison is made between the scores of the members of this special class, and the scores of all the freshmen who took the Intelligence tests in the fall of 1929.

	SPECIAL CLASS		CLASS OF 1929	
	MED. SCORE	A. D.	MED. SCORE	A. D.
Intelligence .....	100	18.9	114	26
Reading .....	18.5	5.1	17	
Mathematics .....	8.5	4.1	11	
Word Relationship.....	18.6	3.1	18	
No. Sequence.....	10.3	2.1	10	
Memory .....	18.0	7.0	18	
Artif. Language.....	16.5	6.2	20	
Equat. Completion.....	17.5	6.2	19	
Engineering Information.....	47.5	8.5	53.5	
National Intelligence Test.....	166.5	9.6		
Scott Mental Alertness.....	65.0	1.6	71	
General Reading.....	22.4	3.5		
Fall Average.....	71.3	4.0	77.8 (men)	
Winter Average.....	77.3	2.7	79.3 (men)	
H. S. Average.....	83.3	25.6		
N. P. and Con's.....	43 Con's. 13 N. P.			
Laird Introvert C2.....	50.0	25.3		

It should be noted that most of the scores are well within the range of the average deviation. While the median scores for the members of the special class are below the median scores for the entire class of 1929 this is not true of the scores on the reading, and word relationship part of the intelligence test. Later it should be noted that among the "conditions" and "not passes" which the class received only one "condition" and two "not passes" were received in English.

From statistics available on the engineering freshmen of 1927 another comparison may be made with this class as given below:

	SPECIAL CLASS	ENGINEERING FRESHMAN OF 1927
H. S. Average.....	83.3	87.2
H. S. Average of Engr. who were eliminated by the scholarship committee.....		82.8
H. S. Average of Engr. Fr. who passed all courses		90.2

For the entire class of 1927 the average grade for the year was 85.9%. For the special class the average for the fall and winter terms was 74%. Only four of the students in the class, however, were in the lowest quartile in intelligence.

Only 6% of the engineering freshmen of 1927 made grades be-

low 84% and of these only 1.5% were below 80%. All of the twenty students in the special class were below 80% in the fall term, and fourteen of them were below 80% in the winter term.

During the fall term not one of the twenty students made a general average above 75%. In the winter term thirteen made an average above 75%. Five of the six students with the highest intelligence rating made the highest averages for the class with an average of 82.4. The fifteen other students made a general average of 73%.

The entire class made 43 conditions, and 13 "not passes" during the winter term. These were distributed mainly as follows:

	Con's	N. P.'s
Chemistry .....	13	3
Engineering .....	12	4
Mathematics .....	12	2
Military .....	4	0
English .....	1	2

The National Intelligence Test was used to determine if the group had been accurately tested by the Iowa State College Intelligence Test. When the results of this test were compared with the results obtained on the Iowa State College Intelligence Test some change was noted. The average change of position was 2.5 places. The two highest men remained highest, and the three lowest remained lowest on both tests.

The results of the National Intelligence Test is given below:

SCORE OF CLASS	FOR AGE 15	PERCANTILE RANKING
186	"	
184	"	1.00
177	"	.96
174	"	.94
171	"	.91
167	"	.89
166	"	.87
158	"	.77
158	"	.77
154	"	.70
152	"	.67
150	"	.63
147	"	.59
129	"	.31

Measured by the Laird Personal Inventory, C2, the group was decidedly introvertive, with a median of 50, A. D. 25.3.

From the interview it was revealed that the high school training had been faulty in several respects. It seems that much of the essential drill work in such subjects as mathematics had been omitted or escaped by many members of this class. The class as a

group felt they had gotten through high school easily, or that the teaching had been very poor.

At least five of the class had selected the wrong school in which to obtain the work in which they were vitally interested. Two others should have changed the course which they were taking, and classified in another department.

As a group these students are below those who have succeeded in college. The high school must take some blame for failure to train students more thoroughly. The class was willing to work and did spend more time than necessary to get the work, but the work lacked system and the methods of study and work were poor and inadequate.

With proper methods of work such students, especially the upper seventy-five percent, may do college work if given ample time in which to do it. To allow this necessary time and to take the steps needed to develop the proper methods of work would seem a waste of energy and money. However, it would be an interesting experiment to determine the cost and the amount of "cuddling" necessary for a group of one hundred such students to graduate from college.