

APPROVAL AND DISAPPROVAL OF GRADES
BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Education
Indiana State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

.....
.....
.....

by
Paul Oliver Hockenbeamer
August 1950

The thesis of Paul Oliver Hockenbeamer,
Contribution of the Graduate School, Indiana State
Teachers College, Number 691, under the title - -

APPROVAL AND DISAPPROVAL OF GRADES

BY COLLEGE STUDENTS

is hereby approved as counting toward the completion of
the Master's degree in the amount of 8 hours' credit.

Committee on thesis:

Charles Hardaway

[Signature]

Clis A. Jamison, Chairman

Representative of English Department:

George E. Smock

Date of Acceptance August 16, 1950

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED . .	1
The problem	1
Statement of the problem	1
Importance of the study	1
Organization of the thesis	2
Source of data	2
Definitions of terms used	2
Fair grades	3
Unfair grades	3
Too high grades	3
Too low grades	3
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	4
Previous studies on this subject	4
Related studies on this subject	4
III. TABULATION OF DATA AND TREATMENT OF RESULTS .	10
The questionnaire	10
Opinions of the students	10
The difference of opinions between the men and the women	11
The difference of opinions between veterans and non-veterans	15

CHAPTER	PAGE
Opinions of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students	15
Percentages of the letter grades	18
Attitudes toward grades according to subject .	21
Reasons for grades being too high	23
Reasons for grades being too low	23
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	26
Summary	26
Conclusions	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31
APPENDIX A. The Questionnaire	33
APPENDIX B. Chart on Subject Matter	34

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Composite Distribution of Opinions of Students Toward Their Grades According to Their Classification	12
II. Total Number of Students and the Percentages of Students who Considered Their Grades Fair, Unfair, Too High, Too Low, and Miscellaneous	13
III. Number and Percentages of Males and Females Whose Grades were Believed Fair, Unfair, Too High, Too Low, and Miscellaneous	14
IV. Numbers and Percentages of Veterans and Non-Veterans Who Considered Their Grades Fair, Unfair, Too High, Too Low, and Miscellaneous	16
V. Numbers and Percentages of Students Who Consider Their Grades Fair, Unfair, Too High, Too Low, and Miscellaneous	19
VI. Number and Percentages of "A", "B", "C", "D", and "F", Grades that are Fair, Unfair, Too High, and Too Low	20
VII. Rank Order of Subjects According to Students Estimate of Fairness and Unfairness of Grade	22

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this thesis was to study the attitudes of college students toward the grades they receive (1) by obtaining the information as to whether they approve of grades received as being fair, or disapprove of them as being merely unfair, or too high, or too low, (2) to discover the differences, if any, in the attitudes toward grades of men, women, veterans, non-veterans, freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduates, (3) and to determine the reasons why the students considered that the grades were fair, unfair, too high, or too low.

Importance of the study. Instructors use two methods to grade their students, the subjective and the objective. Of these two methods, the latter is probably the fairer since it attempts to measure the actual accomplishment of the student. In order to improve the teacher's system of grading or to make it more objective it is important to know what the subjective elements are which enter into the grading system. Many of these subjective elements probably enter into the grading procedure without the teacher being

aware of their existence; however, in many cases the student may be aware of these factors, even though the teacher is not. By studying the reasons that students give concerning the unfairness of their grades, it may be possible to improve the grading system by eliminating these factors.

Organization of the thesis. The thesis is organized into four chapters: (1) Chapter one is the introductory chapter containing a statement on the problem, the importance of the study, the organization of the thesis, the source of data, and definition of terms. (2) Chapter two reviews previous studies on this subject and related subjects. (3) Chapter three presents the tabulation of data and treatment of results. (4) Chapter four contains the summary and conclusions.

Source of data. The data were obtained by questionnaire from students in attendance at Indiana State Teachers College during the 1947-1948 school year. About one-half of the data were obtained from students enrolled in classes in education. The remainder were obtained from students purely at random with hopes of obtaining an adequate representation of grades from every department.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Basis of terms. The terms used were based upon the opinions of students in marking their questionnaires.

Fair grades. If one or more grades were marked as fair, in the student's opinion, the grade or grades were classified as fair.

Unfair grades. If one or more grades were marked as unfair, but the student did not indicate whether he felt it was too high or too low, the grade or grades were classified as unfair.

Too high grades. If one or more grades were indicated as too high or unfair and too high, the grade or grades were classified as too high.

Too low grades. If one or more grades were indicated as too low or both unfair and too low, the grade or grades were classified as too low.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written on grades from the elementary school to the college level, but very little has been written on the opinions of students concerning their grades. A brief summary of the studies on the problems closely related to the one at hand which were available will be given.

Previous studies on this subject. Reinhardt¹ made a similar study in 1937. She found that eighty per cent of the students thought their grades satisfactory, five per cent considered them to be too high, and fifteen per cent thought them too low. She also found that a greater per cent of "A", "B", and "C" students thought their grades satisfactory than did those receiving "D" and "F". She also found differences in the attitudes of the men and women toward their grades.

¹Emma Reinhardt, "Opinions of a Group of College Students Concerning Their Marks", School and Society, 46:447-48, October, 1937.

Related studies on this subject. Woods² in a study of 818 college students' ability to evaluate their grades found that fifty-eight per cent of the students agreed with the teachers' marks, whereas thirty-eight per cent disagreed by one grade and three per cent by two letter grades. He found that the poorer students tended to underestimate their work; in other words, they were unable to evaluate correctly according to the teachers' marks. He felt that college students can not be expected to correctly evaluate their own grades.

Wiley and Sheridan³ in a study of college grades showed that the quality of students varied widely between the classes of one faculty member to those of another; thus it was unfair to expect faculty members to adhere to a single grade curve. They also discovered some faculty members with above average students graded below the college average and vice versa. They concluded that many times the teachers did not depart from the curve as much as the quality of the students required. This study might indicate

²Roy C. Woods, "Ability of College Students to Evaluate," Peabody Journal of Education, 13:192-4, January, 1936.

³L. E. Wiley, and Harold J. Sheridan, "Study of College Grades," Journal of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars, 17:28-34, October, 1941.

that there were reasons for students feeling that their grades were unfair.

Swenson⁴ in studying high school boys and girls found that girls were favored by teachers in grades, the girls receiving a higher per cent of "A's" and "B's" than the boys. He felt that such a policy was "inconsistent with good mental hygiene"⁵ and with a democratic process of education. Such findings might lead to valid reasons for dissatisfaction on the part of the students.

Rosenquist⁶ also found that marks in a four credit course in Freshman college biology ranged two points higher for girls than for boys. He found also that the students who liked the course made better grades, while those who had difficulty with it made the poorest grades. Previous work with the subject had no bearing on the grades.

Rundquist⁷ in his study of high school marks refers to the lack of consistent meaning of marks. He also found that girls received higher marks than boys.

⁴Clifford C. Swenson, "Girls are Teacher's Pets," Clearing House, 17:537-40, May, 1943.

⁵Ibid., p. 540.

⁶C. E. Rosenquist, "Some Factors Influencing Final Marks in an Introductory Course in College Biology," School Science and Mathematics, 44:560-4, June, 1944.

⁷Edward A. Rundquist, "Sex, Intelligence and School Marks," School and Society, 53:452-6, April, 1941.

Clark⁸ in studying the ability of ninety-one college students to grade themselves in college mathematics and chemistry found that there was a high correlation between the instructor's grades and the students' estimate. Seventy-two and one half per cent received the same letter grade they themselves thought they had earned, while 15.4 per cent received higher and 12.1 per cent lower grades than they had expected. Clark concluded that students had the essential power of self-evaluation to a high degree.

In a later study made in collaboration with C. H. Rice,⁹ Clark obtained similar results. This study used 557 students who received grades from nine professors of science. They found 61.4 per cent received the same letter grade they themselves thought they had earned, while 15.4 per cent received higher and 23.2 per cent received lower grades. Clark found that he had graded students slightly higher than the students expected while the science teachers on the average graded the students lower.

⁸Paul E. Clark, "Can College Students Grade Themselves?," School and Society, 47:614-16, May, 1938.

⁹Paul E. Clark and C. Hale Rice, "A Comparison of Grades in College Science With the Students' Own Estimates," School and Society, 50:447-8, September, 1939.

Schnieb¹⁰ in studying the reliability of the judgment of 551 college students in the four year period from 1937-1941 in relation to their scholastic achievement based on semester grades found that there was little difference in reliability with respect to age. She found women to be more reliable in their judgment than were men. She found senior college students made more reliable judgments than did junior college students. She suggested that teachers' college students be given greater opportunity to acquire skill in "making accurate judgment of quality of work."¹¹

Lawson,¹² in discussing the problems of adequate evaluation of students' achievements, based her study upon the published reports of thirty-three studies that appeared in the general educational literature from 1930 through 1939. She says: "Grading is one of the most effective potential factors in education, not from the fact-finding standpoint,

¹⁰Anna A. Schnieb, "Reliability of Judgments Made by Teachers College Students with Reference to Their Scholastic Achievements," Elementary School Journal, 43: 298-303, January, 1943.

¹¹Ibid., p. 303.

¹²Edna E. Lawson, "The Problem of Adequate Evaluation of the College Student's Achievement," Educational Administration and Supervision, 26:493-507, October, 1940.

but from the standpoint of the development of attitudes of self-confidence."¹³ Lawson believes that the following conclusions are applicable from high school through the university.

(1) Faculties must formulate a philosophy of marks, including the meaning of marks.

(2) Faculty members must set up clear-cut standards for each course that are easily comprehensible to the student.

(3) Faculty members must work for improvement of design in examinations and for objectivity in their scoring of examination papers.

(4) Some objective method of determining the passing score must be devised.

(5) Faculty members should state explicitly to students the proportional weight accorded each element in the final mark.

(6) A flexible curve, based upon the curve of probability, should be used as a guide in the assignment of marks.

(7) A faculty (or administrator) should determine the limits of variation in the proportion of students that should receive the various marks.

(8) Faculties should look for reasons, including the degree of efficiency in teaching, when actual distribution of marks differs from the expected distribution.

(9) The students' marks should be a sincere and fair evolution of what he has accomplished in the course.¹⁴

¹³Ibid., p. 495.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 506.

CHAPTER III

TABULATION OF DATA AND TREATMENT OF RESULTS

The questionnaire. Questionnaires were handed to 559 students of Indiana State Teachers College. In the questionnaires they were asked to express their opinions on their grades received for the fall quarter (a total of 2162 grades were considered). The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first asked for preliminary information regarding sex, veteran or non-veteran status, and classification. The second asked for more specific information. The students were asked to list the courses taken during the fall quarter, 1947, and the final grade received in each course. They were asked to place a check mark for each grade in one of four columns which were headed "fair", "unfair", "too high", and "too low". The students were also asked to explain why they thought their grades were "unfair", "too low". A copy of the questionnaire may be found in the appendix.

Opinions of the students. The students who answered the questionnaire had taken from one to seven courses. The student's opinion toward his grades was classed as "fair" if all the grades received during the quarter were fair. If one or more grades were marked as "unfair", but the student did

not indicate whether he felt they were too high or too low, his opinion was classed as "unfair". If one or more opinions were indicated as too high or both unfair and too high, his opinion was classed as "too high". If one grade or more were indicated as too low or both too low and unfair, it was classified as "too low". If one or more were classed as "too low" and one or more as "too high", his opinion was classified under miscellaneous. Table I shows the numerical and percentage distribution of opinions of the students toward their grades according to their classification as to sex, veteran or non-veteran, and class in school. Table II, page thirteen, shows that of the 559 students questioned, forty-eight per cent considered that their grades were fair, eight per cent that they were unfair, six per cent that they were too high, thirty-one per cent that they were too low, and seven per cent fell into the miscellaneous group.

The difference of opinions between the men and women.

A greater percentage of women than men considered that their grades were fair, although there was only the small difference of three per cent. Table III shows that fifty per cent of the women considered that their grades were fair compared to forty-seven per cent of the men; nine per cent of the women compared to eight per cent of the men considered their grades unfair; eight per cent of the women compared to five per cent

TABLE I

COMPOSITE DISTRIBUTION OF OPINIONS OF STUDENTS TOWARD
THEIR GRADES ACCORDING TO THEIR CLASSIFICATION

	*Fr	So	Jr	Sr	Gr	Total	Per cent of total groups
Male							
Veterans							52
Fair	14	27	43	43	10	136	
Unfair	2	7	11	7	0	27	
Too High	3	5	4	3	0	15	
Too Low	12	19	27	33	0	91	
Misc.	1	4	7	10	0	22	
Male Non-							
Veterans							13
Fair	15	10	3	3	3	34	
Unfair	2	1	0	0	0	3	
Too High	1	0	1	0	0	2	
Too Low	14	6	4	4	1	29	
Misc.	4	1	0	1	0	6	
Female							
Veterans							5
Fair	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Unfair	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Too High	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Too Low	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Misc.	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Female Non-							
Veterans							34
Fair	30	18	13	22	12	95	
Unfair	4	6	3	3	2	18	
Too High	4	4	4	3	1	16	
Too Low	18	14	4	9	6	51	
Misc.	1	5	3	0	2	11	
Total	126	127	129	140	37	559	
Per cent of total groups	225	225	23	25	7		99.5

*Fr-Freshmen, So-Sophomores, Jr-Juniors, Sr-Seniors
Gr-Graduates.

TABLE II

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND THE PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO
CONSIDERED THEIR GRADES FAIR, UNFAIR, TOO HIGH,
TOO LOW, AND MISCELLANEOUS

Classification	Fair	Unfair	Too High	Too Low	Misc.	Total
Male Veterans	136	27	15	91	22	291
Male Non-Veterans	34	3	2	29	6	74
Female Veterans	1	0	0	1	1	3
Female Non-Veterans	95	18	16	51	11	191
Total	266	48	33	172	40	559
Per Cent	48	8	06	31	07	100

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF MALES AND FEMALES WHOSE GRADES WERE BELIEVED FAIR, UNFAIR, TOO HIGH, TOO LOW AND MISCELLANEOUS

	MALES		FEMALES	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Fair	170	47	96	50
Unfair	30	08	18	09
Too High	17	05	16	08
Too Low	120	32	52	27
Miscellaneous	28	08	12	06
Total	365	100	194	100

of the men thought them too high; while only twenty-seven per cent of the women compared to thirty-two per cent of the men thought them too low. Of the women, six per cent fell into the miscellaneous group while eight per cent of the men were placed in that category.

The differences of opinions between veterans and non-veterans. In obtaining the opinions of the veterans and non-veterans both men and women were included, although there were only three women veterans. A greater percentage of non-veterans than veterans considered their grades fair. The difference of opinion in this group, like the difference between men and women, is small. Table IV shows that forty-nine per cent of the non-veterans thought their grades fair compared with forty-seven per cent of the veterans, thus only two per cent more of the non-veterans than veterans thought their grades fair. Nine per cent of the veterans and eight per cent of non-veterans classed their grades as unfair without giving further comment. However, seven per cent of the non-veterans thought their grades too high while only five per cent of the veterans were of that opinion. Thirty-one per cent of the veterans thought their grades were too low while thirty per cent of the veterans thought their grades too low. In the miscellaneous group were classified eight per cent veterans and six per cent non-veterans.

TABLE IV

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF VETERANS AND NON-VETERANS WHO
CONSIDERED THEIR GRADES FAIR, UNFAIR, TOO HIGH,
TOO LOW, AND MISCELLANEOUS

	VETERANS		NON-VETERANS	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Fair	137	47	129	49
Unfair	27	09	21	08
Too High	15	05	18	07
Too Low	92	31	80	30
Miscellaneous	23	08	17	06
Total	294	100	265	100

Opinions of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors and graduate students. In comparing the opinions of the students in the different classes, Table V shows that a larger per cent of graduate students more than any other group considered their grades to be fair. This possibly may result from the fact graduate students are required to hold a higher scholastic standing than the other groups. They usually get higher grades and are therefore probably more inclined to consider them fair. Freshmen and seniors were next in order as to fairness in grades while sophomores were in last position. A greater per cent of sophomores and juniors than any other groups considered their grades unfair. The graduate students had the lowest percentage in the unfair group. In the too high group there was little difference; however, more sophomores and juniors than any others thought their grades too high. Graduate students again ranked the lowest in this respect. In the too low group the freshmen had the highest percentage, the seniors second, the sophomores third, the juniors fourth, and the graduate students were fifth. In the miscellaneous group there was little difference although juniors ranked first, sophomores and seniors second, the freshmen and graduate students third. There seemed to be no order to the way in which the classes ranked in each category; however, the

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO CONSIDER
THEIR GRADES FAIR, UNFAIR, TOO HIGH, TOO LOW
AND MISCELLANEOUS

Class	FAIR		UNFAIR		TOO HIGH		TOO LOW		MISC.		TOTAL
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	Per Cent
Freshmen	60	48	8	06	8	06	44	35	6	05	100
Sophomores	55	43	14	11	9	07	39	31	10	08	100
Juniors	59	45	14	11	9	07	36	28	11	09	100
Seniors	67	48	10	07	6	04	46	33	11	08	100
Graduates	25	68	2	05	1	03	7	19	2	05	100
Total Number	266		48		33		172		40		559
Per cent	48		08		06		31		07		100

graduate students ranked at the top of the fair list and at the bottom of all other lists. It was found that forty-eight per cent of the students thought all their grades were fair, while eight per cent classed their grades as unfair, six per cent as too high, thirty-one per cent as too low.

Percentages of the letter grades. In studying the relationships between the grades received and the student's opinion, it was found, in general, that students who received high grades thought them more fair than the low grades. In the "fair" group "A" is the highest and "F" the lowest as shown by Table VI. The percentages are in the following order: "A," ninety-three per cent; "B," eighty-nine per cent; "C," seventy-two per cent; "D," forty-eight per cent; and "F," thirty-three per cent. In the "unfair" group "A" is the lowest and "F" the highest. The percentages are in the following order: "A," zero; "B," two per cent; "C," five per cent; "D," thirteen per cent; and "F," twenty-four per cent. In the "too high" group again has "A" the highest. The percentages are as follows: "A," seven per cent; "B," three per cent; "C," two per cent; "D," two per cent and "F," zero. The "too low" group has "F" the highest. The percentages are as follows for the "too low" group: "A,"

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF "A", "B", "C", "D", AND "F"
GRADES THAT ARE FAIR, UNFAIR, TOO HIGH, AND TOO LOW

Letter Grades	FAIR		UNFAIR		TOO HIGH		TOO LOW		TOTAL	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
"A"	274	93	000	000	29	07	000	000	403	100
"B"	720	89	16	02	27	03	46	06	809	100
"C"	576	72	42	05	13	02	165	21	796	100
"D"	60	48	16	13	3	02	46	37	125	100
"F"	7	33	5	24	000	00	9	43	21	100
Total	1745	81	79	04	72	03	266	12	2162	100

zero; "B," six per cent; "C," twenty-one per cent; "D," thirty-seven per cent; "F," forty-three per cent. Only eight students received credit instead of a letter grade and they were all fair; with the small number to draw from, an accurate estimation cannot be made. For the "fair" and "too high" grades the "A" group had the highest percentage. The letter grades gradually decreased in the percentage to the lowest, which is "F". In the "unfair" and "too low" group the highest percentages were for grades of "F"; whereupon the percentage for grades decreased to the lowest, which is represented by a grade of "A". It was found that of the total 2162 grades the students considered eighty-one per cent as fair. Of the remaining nineteen per cent twelve per cent were considered too low and three per cent as too high. Ninety-six per cent of the "A", "B", and "C" grades were regarded as fair and only four per cent of the "D" and "F" grades were considered too low and three per cent as too high. Ninety-six per cent of the "A", "B", and "C" grades were regarded as fair and only four per cent of the "D" and "F" grades were considered fair.

Attitudes toward grades according to subject. The subjects were listed and arranged according to percentage basis. It was assumed that all grades marked too high or

too low but not as unfair were, however, unfair. Therefore to consolidate the data and make them more meaningful these three columns were combined in Table VII. Library science, mathematics, home economics, and supervised teaching were the top four on the "fair" list and the bottom four on the "unfair" list. However, the frequency of library science was too small for the data to be significant. Special education, physical education for women, speech, and art were the lowest four on the "fair" list and the top four on the "unfair" list. The frequencies in art and physical education for women, especially for the latter, were too small for the data to be significant.

Reasons for grades being too high. The most common reason given for the grade being too high was that the student's knowledge of the subject did not rate or deserve an "A", "B", or "C". The second reason for grades being too high was that the grade was too high for the work or effort put in on the subject. Many who answered the questionnaire did not take their remarks seriously, and they probably did not give valid reasons. The two following remarks are typical of those students gave for grades being too high: (1) "I think I should have received a "B" in this course. My knowledge of English does not rate an "A." (2) "I did not quite make the grade. (in my opinion)."

TABLE VII

RANK ORDER OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO STUDENTS
ESTIMATE OF FAIRNESS AND UNFAIRNESS OF GRADE

Subjects	FAIR		UNFAIR		Rank as to Fairness
	No of cases	Per cent	No of cases	Per cent	
Library Science	4	100	0	0	1
Mathematics	119	88	17	12	2
Home Economics	33	85	6	15	3
Supervised Teaching	40	85	7	15	3
Foreign Languages	63	84	12	16	4
Music	100	84	19	16	4
Social Studies	260	84	19	16	4
Philosophy	32	82	7	18	5
English	126	81	30	19	6
Science	240	80	61	20	7
Commerce	144	80	36	20	7
Education	293	79	79	21	8
Physical Education M	75	79	20	21	8
Industrial Arts	57	78	17	22	9
Speech	105	75	36	25	10
Art	41	74	14	26	11
Physical Education W	10	67	5	33	12
Special Education	3	60	2	40	13

Reasons for grades being too low. There are three classes under which the reasons for grades being too low may be classified. (1) Students blamed the instructor and his method of instruction. Under this heading the accusation of partiality was the most numerous; nineteen students felt that the instructor was partial to a few students in a class, partial to the majors in his department, and partial to boys over girls. A typical remark under this classification was, "...Athletes are given favor; participation in sports added to grade." The second reason for grades being too low under this section as given by twenty-seven students was the method used in teaching by the instructor. A typical remark, "Didn't like the course, the course wasn't presented so that I could understand it; technical terms that will not help me in the future." (2) The grades were based on tests and final examinations and other outside work. Under this classification fifty-two students received high grades through a semester and ended up with a lower grade. In seven cases they asserted that the grades depended on the final examination entirely. There were fifteen complaints of invalid examinations. There were eight complaints of grades being made out without any basis of grading, and along with these were eight remarks made that instructors did not

know how to grade. (3) In this last group were classed the thirteen students who blamed themselves with such typical remarks as, "My own fault." "I should have studied harder." "I didn't study long enough." There was a small miscellaneous group in which students complained that previous experience was not taken into consideration. A typical remark was, "I was in first term shorthand class where there were students who already had some in high school, and we went so fast that it was impossible for me to keep up."

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. In attempting to summarize the vast amount of data used in this study, the following results can probably be regarded as the most important.

(1) Of the 559 students, forty-eight per cent of them considered that their grades were fair, thirty-one per cent that they were too low, six per cent that they were too high, eight per cent that they were merely unfair, while seven per cent were unfair and were classed as miscellaneous.

(2) Among the women fifty per cent considered that their grades were fair as to forty-seven per cent of the men.

(3) Among all the students studied forty-nine per cent of the non-veterans and forty-seven per cent of the veterans considered their grades fair.

(4) More graduate students considered their grades to be fair than did any group of undergraduates.

(5) The number of students who considered their grades fair was higher among the "A", "B", and "C" students than among those who had received "D" and "F".

(6) Library science, mathematics, home economics and supervised teaching seemed to be the most fairly graded subjects. Special education, physical education for women,

speech, art, and industrial arts seemed to be the most unfair with respect to grade.

(7) The most common reason given for grades being too high was that the student has not put forth enough effort on the subject, while the most common reasons given for considering grades being too low were the methods of the teacher and self-blame.

Conclusions. Of the total of 2162 grades obtained by 559 students forty-eight per cent of the students considered that all of their grades were fair, but eighty-one per cent of all the grades received by all students were thought fair. This would indicate that on the whole the grades received by students were fair. It also would indicate that students are able to make some valid distinctions between fair and unfair grades. It shows that students do not merely indiscriminately consider all their grades to be unfair.

It was found that more students who received satisfactory grades were "A", "B", and "C" and the unsatisfactory grades were "D" and "F". The feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of those receiving "D" and "F" grades might partially be explained by psychological resentment of the fact that their efforts has been in vain and that their work was not acceptable.

In other studies on similar problems previously referred to, Rosenquist,¹ Rundquist,² and Swenson,³ found that women consistently were favored with higher grades, Reinhardt⁴ found that more women than men regarded their grades as fair. She also found that students were more satisfied with higher grades than with lower. In this study it was also found that more women than men regarded their grades as fair. Since it is probably true, in the light of these other studies, that women more often received higher grades, the fact that women are more often satisfied than men with their grades is consistent with the results of this study which show that students with high grades are more satisfied than students with low grades.

Graduate students considered their grades to be more fair than did undergraduates. However, graduate students, on the average, receive much higher grades than do undergraduates. Again this satisfaction agrees with the results in respect to grades. This also agrees with Schnieb's⁵

¹Rosenquist, op. cit., pp. 560-564.

²Rundquist, op. cit., pp. 452-456.

³Swenson, op. cit., pp. 537-540.

⁴Reinhardt, op. cit., pp. 447-448.

⁵Schnieb, op. cit., pp. 298-303.

findings that the levels of school was related to ability to make adequate judgment with respect to grades.

In her study Schnieb⁶ found that the reliability of judgment of grades did not vary with age. In this study it was found that the veterans disapproved of their grades more often than did the non-veterans. The veterans were older, on the average, than the non-veterans. Therefore, there is a disagreement between the results of this study and those of Schnieb. Since the veterans were probably older on the average than the non-veterans, it would seem that contrary to Schnieb's study, age may affect reliability of judgment. Otherwise one must conclude that some undiscovered factor either influenced the grades of veterans or their attitude toward their grades.

The study shows, on the whole, that students are able to evaluate their grades, since they agree with the instructors in a high percentage of the grades. Clark⁷ also found agreement between students estimates and grades. In this study more than half of the students, however, felt that at least one grade was unfair. Since they had such a high agreement with the instructor, however, their judgment must have some validity.

⁶Schnieb, loc. cit.

⁷Clark, op. cit., pp. 614-624.

The reasons the students considered their grades unfair indicated that a more consistent and a clearer policy of grading is needed. They indicate that grading is not as objective, in their opinions, as it should be and that it does not measure actual achievement. Perhaps further work along the lines suggested by Lawson⁸ is necessary in order for students to understand their grading system. There seems to be two possible reasons why grades were considered unfair: either the grades were unfair, or the students did not clearly understand how they were graded. The latter is a simple matter to correct by explanation; the former requires diligent effort on the part of the teachers.

The results of this study cannot be considered final, for they do not include a study of all the factors which enter into grading and the many factors which influence the student's opinion of his grade. Also, no objective standards were used to determine whether or not the grades the students received were actually fair; only the opinions of the students and the opinions of teachers as reflected by grades were used. Further study is necessary before more valid conclusions can be drawn.

⁸Lawson, op. cit., pp. 493-507.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PERIODICAL ARTICLES

- Clark, Paul E., "Can College Students Grade Themselves?," School and Society, 47:614-614, May 7, 1938.
- Clark, Paul E and C. Hale Rice., "A Comparison of Grades in College Science With the Student's Own Estimates," School and Society, 50:447-8, September 30, 1939.
- Lawson, Edna E., "The Problem of Adequate Evolution of the College Student's Achievement," Educational Administration and Supervision, 26:493-507, October, 1940.
- Reinhardt, Emma, "Opinions of a Group of College Students Concerning Their Marks," School and Society, 46:447-48, October 2, 1937.
- Rosenquist, C. E., "Some Factors Influencing Final Marks in an Introductory Course in College Biology," School and Science, and Mathematics, 44:560-4, June, 1944.
- Rundquist, Edward A., "Sex, Intelligence and School Marks," School and Society, 53:452-6, April 5, 1941.
- Schnieb, Anna A., "Reliability of Judgements Made by Teachers College Students with Reference to Their Scholastic Achievements," Elementary School Journal, 43:298-303, January, 1943.
- Swenson, Clifford G., "Girls are Teacher's Pets," Clearing House, 17:537-40, May, 1943.
- Wiley, L. E., and Sheridan, Harold J., "Study of College Grades," Journal of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars, 17:28-34, October, 1941.
- Woods, Roy C., "Ability of College Students to Evaluate," Peabody Journal of Education, 13:192-4, January, 1936.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX B

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF SUBJECTS THAT
ARE FAIR, UNFAIR, TOO HIGH, AND
TOO LOW

SUBJECTS	FAIR		UNFAIR		TOO HIGH		TOO LOW		TOTAL	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Art	41	75	2	036	4	07	8	145	55	100
Commerce	144	80	9	05	5	03	22	12	180	100
Education	293	79	15	04	15	04	49	13	372	100
Special										
Education	3	60	0	00	1	20	1	20	5	100
English	126	81	6	04	6	04	18	115	156	100
Foreign										
Languages	63	84	2	03	7	09	3	04	75	100
Home Economics	33	85	2	05	0	00	4	10	39	100
Industrial										
Arts	57	78	3	04	2	02	12	16	74	100
Library										
Science	4	100	0	00	0	00	0	00	4	100
Mathematics	119	88	4	03	3	02	10	07	136	100
Music	100	84	5	04	3	03	11	09	119	100
Philosophy	32	82	0	00	3	08	4	10	39	100
Physical										
Education M	75	79	2	02	0	00	18	19	95	100
Education W	10	67	2	13	1	07	2	13	15	100
Science	240	80	8	03	13	04	40	13	301	100
Social Studies	260	84	9	03	6	02	34	11	309	100
Speech	105	744	10	07	2	014	24	17	141	998
Supervised										
Teaching	40	85	0	00	1	02	6	13	47	100
Total	1745	81	79	04	72	03	266	12	2162	100

INDIANA STATE
COLLEGE
LIBRARY