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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE KINDERGARTEN
READINESS ROOM IN THE FREMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty
University of Nebraska
at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska ay Omaha

by

Keith A. Rohwer

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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April 14, 1982
Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The child who has difficulty in learning because of largely unidentified handicaps almost without exception faces failure in a conventional school program. Often he experiences months and sometimes years of unsuccessful work before he receives remedial aid. This failure, resulting from the inability to develop potential capacities, can only lead to compounded and more serious problems when the school program demands, through its presentation of academic material, that the child use skills which he has never developed, or tries to build on experiences that the child has never had, or requires the utilization of a concept yet unestablished. To prevent more serious learning problems from occurring, identification of the child with learning disabilities should be made as early as possible in his school career. (5,387)

Not all children who enter a kindergarten program in the Fremont, Nebraska Public Schools possess the necessary skills or capacity for success in the program. Many of these children do not achieve success in the basic kindergarten curriculum areas that are designed to prepare them for the first grade. Therefore these students are retained to spend another year in the kindergarten program, developing these needed skills. A possible consequence of this early failure is a damaged self-concept. This poor self-concept

may affect the rest of the child's academic life.

Most state laws require a child to enter school at a particular chronological age. However, not all children are ready to cope with the learning situation at such a time due to organic, environmental, or intrapsychic conditions. As Careth Ellingson states in her book The Shadow Children, many learning disorders are often the result of sheer immaturity, and a child who has not reached a stage of neurological development comparable to his chronological age may be defeated before he starts. If it is required that all children go to school, then appropriate education must be provided for every child and the concept of individual differences must be understood. If the children with learning disabilities are correctly diagnosed before they have suffered the trauma of continued failure, and if they receive skilled help from properly motivated and trained educators, they can lead happy and productive lives. (2,589)

After considerable deliberation about the problem, the Fremont school officials decided that a program would be developed to meet the needs of children so that they would not experience early failure. The Westside Community Schools of Omaha, Nebraska, have a program for the early and continuous intervention of the disabled learner. This program was used as a basis to develop the Fremont Public Schools philosophy regarding early intervention in learning disabilities. It was the school board's decision to begin a readiness kindergarten program that would help these children develop at their own rate.

The first step was to establish a new screening method for the children who were entering kindergarten. In past years the screening simply involved checking of eyes and ears by the nurse, proof of date of birth by a valid birth certificate, and filling out the necessary school entrance forms. To assess whether or not a child should enter the regular kindergarten or the alternate kindergarten readiness program a new screening process was developed and put into use in May of 1979.

The new screening process involved testing in areas of speech, language development, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and provided information about vision and hearing problems. Specifically these tests include the Peotone Language Scale, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, a Speech and Language Screening which includes a Visual Discrimination Test, a Motor Activity Scale, and the Visual Motor Integration Test. This screening took most of a day for each school and was done by a team consisting of teachers, nurses, and administrators.

A staffing was then held in which all of the children's scores were recorded and compared to the "norm" scores for the Fremont Public Schools. Any child who fell below the norm in seven specific areas was recommended for further diagnostic testing by psychologists from the Educational Service Unit #2 located in Fremont. The parents must give their permission to do this further evaluation.

It was from this group that children were recommended for either the regular kindergarten program, the readiness room program, or a combination of the two programs. A

conference was then held with the parents to discuss the recommendation. If the parents agreed to the placement they were asked to sign the necessary papers and the program was implemented. If the parents did not agree, the child was then placed in the regular kindergarten program.

This program was first started in the fall of 1979. It is currently entering the third year of its operation in the Fremont Public School System.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the readiness room kindergarten program in the Fremont Public School System.

Statement of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis Number One

It is hypothesized that children given the opportunity to develop at their own rate in the readiness room kindergarten will, in subsequent years, be more successful in the regular kindergarten program and in the first grade.

Hypothesis Number Two

It is hypothesized that children assigned to the readiness room kindergarten will, in subsequent years, have a more positive self-concept than children who fail the kindergarten program.

Hypothesis Number Three

It is hypothesized that children assigned to the readiness room kindergarten will, in the subsequent year,

be more like their classmates than children who are unsuccessful and retained in the regular kindergarten program.

Hypothesis Number Four

It is hypothesized that children assigned to the regular kindergarten program without the recommendation of the screening staff will be less successful than children assigned with the screening staff's recommendation.

Procedure

The procedure for testing hypothesis number one will be to contrast the kindergarten and first grade retention rates for the three years prior to the implementation of the readiness room program, with the rates of retention after the implementation of the readiness room kindergarten program for comparative differences.

The procedure for testing hypothesis number two will be to test for a comparison degree of difference between the self-concept of children in the 1979-1980 readiness room program that are currently enrolled in the 1980-1981 kindergarten program and the children who failed kindergarten during the 1978-1979 and the 1979-1980 school years. This self-concept will be measured by using a self-concept rating scale devised by the psychologists at the Educational Service Unit #2 located in Fremont. This self-concept rating scale is located in the appendix.

The procedure for testing hypothesis number three will be to test for significant differences between the achievement

of children who were assigned to the readiness room kindergarten in 1979-1980 and the kindergarten children of 1980-1981.

The procedure for testing hypothesis number four will be to test for significant differences between the retention rate of children assigned to the kindergarten program without the recommendation of the screening staff and the retention rate of those assigned to the kindergarten program with the recommendation of the screening staff.

Assumptions

It is assumed that the kindergarten screening inventory used to identify children with specific skill problems is a valid procedure.

It is assumed that children can remediate the skills, through proper diagnosis and instruction, that were identified in the kindergarten screening inventory.

It is assumed that the program designed to remediate the identified skills is a valid one.

It is assumed that the children who are able to remediate these skills will then achieve greater success in the regular kindergarten program when they begin the next school year.

Definition of Terms

The term "success" in this paper will refer to the non-failure of a student that is the result of working at his or her own rate and pace.

The phrase "Kindergarten Readiness Room" will refer to a classroom designed to help remediate specific skills that have been identified by the screening inventory.

The phrase "continuous progress" was defined, for this study, as a constant and steady improvement made by a student who is working at his or her own rate and pace. This steady improvement will be determined by comparing the pre-test and post-test results of the children who are enrolled in the readiness room program.

The phrase "Kindergarten Screening Inventory" is defined as a set of tests designed specifically to determine a child's readiness to begin the kindergarten curriculum program in the Fremont Public School System.

The phrase "diagnostic testing" is defined for this study as a careful study of the academic areas in which a child may show signs of having difficulty. This test is given in a one-to-one situation and the areas are reviewed very extensively.

The phrase "regular kindergarten program" is defined for this study as the program that is offered at each elementary school in the Fremont Public School System to prepare children, both academically and socially, for the remainder of their school years.

The term "learning disabilities" is defined for this study as an educationally significant discrepancy between a child's estimated potential for learning and his day to day level of functioning.

Delimitations

This study was limited to students from the ten elementary buildings in the Fremont Public Schools. These students were all attending either the Readiness Room Kindergarten, the regular kindergarten, or the first grade during the 1979-1980 and the 1980-1981 school years.

The specific skills evaluated in this study are with respect to: 1) language skills, 2) gross motor skills, 3) fine motor skills, 4) speech skills, and 5) vision and hearing capabilities.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL) procedure was designed with a format for the screening of large populations. Developmental evaluation of all children was viewed as a positive rather than a negative factor. Counseling of parents and the community was envisioned as an asset for early childhood program development. Therefore, a team evaluation could provide the vehicle for individual assessment within a setting which stimulated a typical prekindergarten or kindergarten classroom. The following items constitute the DIAL scale: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, several areas of different concepts, and also areas of communication.

Developmental performance delay does not deny biological dysfunction. It does suggest that within the growth and development processes of childhood, a child may resist unsuccessful or uncomfortable experiences. Obviously, the child will move toward areas where he is more successful. Whether biological differences or experience create a constraint, such constraints are viewed as developmental delays. Thus, delay may be totally or partially aligned to environment and experience. Notation of delay is the first step. Experiences which will guide the child toward successful

performance is the next step. Prevention of potential learning difficulties is the objective for developmental evaluation. (10,18)

The term specific learning disabilities as defined and adopted by Congress suggests that the target population consists of a definite type of problem youngster, namely, "those who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language (spoken or written), which disorder may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. These disorders include such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction dyslexia, and developmental aphasia."

The national population currently labeled as children with learning disabilities consists of at least three major subgroups of youngsters with learning problems, ranging from youngsters whose problem seems to stem primarily from the deficiencies of the learning environment to those who actually have major disorders interfering with learning. (1,528)

What is kindergarten screening and why and how do we do it? This is a question being asked in many schools and communities. For some, screening is perceived as the opening of a door to more positive learning experiences; to others, it is one more threat and infringement on the rights of individuals. Screening and other early assessment programs are a first step in an educational process that focuses on success in school. It begins with early identification of

those children who, because of problems of development and/or experience, may be least able to meet the typical expectations of the school. For these children school is often an unhappy, failure-ridden experience. Many of them can be identified at a young age and given help to prevent failure. It is far more humane to help them succeed by identifying and capitalizing on their strengths, and at the same time working to eliminate their difficulties than it is to just let them fail.. Kindergarten screening programs are one way of accomplishing this. (13,3)

How can we best get at that bundle of vitality which is the child? How can we distill the essence of a growing human being at a certain age and as a unique individual who can reflect age and make it into his very own? This is not an easy task. And yet if we use effective tools, the child reveals himself to all who will stop and listen to what he says, and who with seeing eyes will watch what he does.

Discovering and perfecting such tools was the life long work of Dr. Arnold Gessell, a work that has been carried on by his colleagues. It was Dr. Gessell's contention that "mind manifests itself" in whatever the infant and child may do. He also contended that behavior develops in a patterned, largely predictable way, with which skill can be measured. Though not everyone appreciates this fact, Dr. Gessell showed great respect for the child's life experiences. He stated very early: "The organism always participates in the creation of its enviroment, and the growth characteristics of the child

are really the end-product expressions of an interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic determiners. Because the interaction is the crux, the distinction between these two sets of determiners should not be drawn too heavily."

Nevertheless, it was his belief that regardless of environment and regardless of individual differences, many behaviors do develop through basic stages, common to all. It was to check this patterned development that he devised his infant preschool behavior tests. (4,3)

Over the years there have been many different measures used for determining a child's readiness to start school. Before the advent of kindergarten, first grade entrance was generally associated with the age of 6 years and the eruption of 6-year molars. The level of success of different children was expected to vary, but groups were small and there was time for individual attention.

The main weakness of chronological age as a criterion for school entrance is that even if it were possible to determine exactly the age at which the average girl or boy is ready to start kindergarten or first grade, any average would still imply that only 50% of any group of children might be expected to fall close enough to this average to insure their reasonable readiness. There would still be a great many exceptions to any general rule.

What must really be known in determining readiness for school entrance is a child's developmental level. There is a need to know at what age the child is behaving and functioning as a total organism and is in control of the learning process.

This is not a measure of the child's level of physical maturity, though physical maturity or immaturity can provide supporting evidence. It is more often than not a measure of physical immaturity.

The child's behavior level may be at, above, or below the level of his chronological age. But it is his behavioral level rather than his age in years which should be considered to be the correct clue to good grade placement. (6,17)

The importance of identifying children who are "at risk" learners at the time of entrance to kindergarten and first grade is attested to in literature and by new state legislative laws requiring early identification in a number of states, and by federal mandates for early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment.

There has been a proliferation of early identification instruments in the last several years. As Glidewell and Swallow (1969) point out: "Screening procedures have run the gamut from the interview to the full scale diagnostic battery, to symptom survey." From the behavioral point of view, there are weaknesses within the underlying assumptions and the construction of many instruments which mitigate against their use in most education settings.

To satisfy behavioral theory requirements, an early identification instrument must ascertain children's current performance levels on school relevant tasks. Consequently, a first postulate states that an early identification instrument must involve empirical observation of performances with minimal

interpretations on the part of observers. No attempts are made to locate predictive antecedents of later school failure since this always involves speculation on the part of the instrument designers regarding factors which constitute predictive antecedents of school failure. From a behavioral point of view, children's learning disabilities are identifiable through an analysis of current performance. (9,213)

There are many studies that contain information about the early identification of problems in learning. One of these studies, done by Norris Haring and Robert Ridgway in 1967, selected the 48 kindergarten classes of School District 110 in Johnston County, Kansas for use in their project. These classes had a total enrollment of over 1,200 children. The class teachers attended a series of instructional meetings designed to acquaint them with the techniques of observing a child's developmental status. The teachers, having learned the characteristics of every child in their classes, were requested to choose one quarter of their children whom they believed to be high risk in the probability of developing learning problems. In this initial screening, the teachers were asked to be particularly aware of problems in the areas of language development, visual perceptual adequacy, and fine and gross motor co-ordination. Close attention was given to specific behaviors that might indicate slower than normal growth.

To those children whom the teacher had identified as possible in developing learning disorders, they administered a screening scale, developed by the project staff. This

scale included performance items to help the teachers objectify their observations and assist in collecting information in these areas: a) personal appearance; b) psychological characteristics; c) gross muscle co-ordination; d) verbal fluency; e) speech development; f) auditory memory; g) auditory discrimination; h) visual memory; i) visual discrimination; j) visual motor performance; and k) directionality and laterality. If in the judgement of the teacher, a child rated poor in any one of the eleven areas, he was referred to the staff psychologists for further study. (5,390)

The Rhode Island Pupil Identification Scale, which is a pupil behavior observation scale for use by a classroom teacher, is a scale for the early detection of children with learning problems. The scale is a multipurpose instrument designed to improve the communication among the educator and his colleagues in the other child centered professions.

The primary functions of the instrument are: 1) To help the classroom teacher identify children with learning problems; 2) To help the classroom teacher indicate more readily, using the scale language, the specific aspects of the school problem requiring attention; and 3) To then permit the classroom teacher or the receiving specialist, whenever necessary and whatever their expertise, to address themselves more efficiently to the resolution of the specific school problem as observed in its natural surroundings.

The basic data - the teacher's objective and directed observation of a child's performance on a specific task within

the classroom - are probably as valid as the inferences derived through indirect assessment on tests using other behaviors and tasks. (11,98)

Though still in its infancy, the field of learning disabilities has become a major concern of both regular and special educators. Why do learning disabilities, which according to some experts afflict as few children as one to three percent, create such a widespread interest and concern? The answer is to be found in the incidence estimates of other learning disability experts which run as high as 30 percent. Clearly, the widely varying incidence estimates reflect an underlying disagreement as to what constitutes learning disability. The problem runs much deeper than definition; no definition of learning disabilities which restricts the incidence to one to three percent (however carefully worded) will address the real issue reflected in the widely varying incidence estimates, because the real issue concerns whether or not all children will receive an equal educational opportunity. Learning disabilities has become a blanket term subsuming all those otherwise unnamed conditions which involve inexplicable failure in school. School failure must be solved. (12,451)

Project SCREEN represents Illinois' unique initiative to deal directly with the issues surrounding learning disabilities. This project, according to its founders, is directed toward a better understanding of learning disabilities and toward a better method for identifying children's educational and

school adjustment problems in the primary grades. This mechanism will hopefully identify children with impediments to learning and school adjustment prior to the damaging and complicating effects of failure. (12,453)

A recent concern in special education is the early-identification of pre-school children who may encounter difficulty in academic learning and the immediate provision of appropriate preventive services for them. In the past, children with learning disabilities were identified primarily in the elementary school age period; but by identifying these children before they encounter difficulty, it may be possible to diagnose their disabilities and institute remedial education to prevent potential learning problems from occurring.

The crucial influence of the early childhood years on later success is becoming increasingly evident. The research of cognitive psychologists and language specialists clearly shows that by the time the child fails in school, much is already lost - in fact, it may be too late. The sooner such high-risk children are recognized, the greater the chances of preventing failure. (7,28)

Outside the field of learning disabilities, a substantial body of literature deals with the relationship of school-entrance age to academic achievement and/or adjustment. It has been suggested that immaturity is the common cause of difficulty in school. Since achievement and adjustment variables play a role in the diagnosis of learning disabilities, and since chronological age remains the chief criterion for school entrance in most states, a study was done by Cleborne D. Maddux an assistant professor at Sam Houston State

University. The research hypothesis for this study was that in a given group of children labeled learning disabled, there would be more children who were relatively young when they entered school, than children who were older school entries.

This study found that children labeled as learning disabled tend to have entered school at an early age. Such children may be more likely to be labeled learning disabled than children who enter school when they are older. It seems logical, with the findings of this study as evidence, to assume that young-entering children in school will continue to make up a disproportionately large part of groups of children that are labeled as learning disabled. (8,80)

The Orinda (California) School District's Developmental Kindergarten grew out of a number of concerns. Many parents were keeping their children out of school rather than take a chance on having them fail in a regular kindergarten. Teachers were concerned because some children entering kindergarten were slow to develop in some ways, and the teachers felt they were not able to give these children the attention they warranted. At the same time, administrators had to respond to questions about why the district did not have a program appropriate for these children.

Candidates for the Developmental Kindergarten program were discovered through a pre-kindergarten interview, parental requests, and recommendations from kindergarten teachers, nursery schools, and local pediatricians. There were no specific criteria for placement in the program the first year. The

children proposed for the new program were slow to develop in one or more of the following ways: physically, in terms of large and small muscle development and coordination; chronologically, due to medical reasons causing the children not to reach chronological parity; socially, seeming to require one-to-one attention and not being ready for small group activities; and linguistically, in terms of ability to speak, listen, and understand.

The decision to place a child in the Developmental Kindergarten program was made at a conference including the guidance consultant, the health consultant, the teacher, and the principal. If they agreed on a recommendation for placement, the parents were contacted. The program was explained and written approval was obtained before the child was placed.

The program has been in operation for the past five years and the data indicate that children who have been in the Developmental Kindergarten program require special services about as frequently as do other children. There has been a reduction in the need for educationally handicapped classes and it appears that part of this reduction is attributable to the success of this program. The assessment of the regular classroom teachers seems to indicate clearly that the overwhelming majority of these children are doing fairly well in school. In view of all this, the Orinda School District plans to continue the Developmental Kindergarten

concept. (3,48)

The related research that has been reviewed in the previous pages relates many programs that have been developed to work with children that are identified at an early stage to have some specific learning disabilities. This research adds positive reinforcement to the development of a Readiness Room Kindergarten Program in the Fremont Public Schools.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The objective of this study was to compile information concerning the effectiveness of the Readiness Room Kindergarten in the Fremont Public School System. Recent recommendations of educators seem to indicate that an intensified testing program is needed to better identify the educational and physical needs of children coming into kindergarten. For a long time, children of kindergarten age were thrust into a kindergarten environment without any previous knowledge of their mental or physical ability. Many times children who were put into a kindergarten environment without the necessary readiness skills would experience failure in the form of retention. It was because of these recommendations and also the children who were experiencing some failure that the Fremont Public Schools decided to develop an extensive screening process for children who were eligible for kindergarten. It was in this screening process that each child's skills were identified and examined. Children who were found to be lacking in some skill areas were then assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten. This has all led up to the need for some information concerning the effectiveness of this new program.

The preliminary step for the implementation of this project was to obtain permission from Dr. Robert K. Melick, the Superintendent of the Fremont Public Schools, to use information that was gathered from kindergarten screening

results, pre-tests and post-tests that were administered to children in the Readiness Room Kindergarten, and also information obtained from a self-concept survey that was given to kindergarten and first grade students in the Fremont Public School System during the 1980-1981 school year.

The primary procedure that was used throughout this study was the gathering of data and the analysis of that data as it pertained to the various hypotheses.

The first set of data that were analyzed dealt with information on children that were retained in the Fremont Public Schools over the past several years. This information was obtained from year-end reports that were submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education from each of the ten elementary schools. This information was obtained from the records that are kept at the Fremont Public Schools Central Office Building.

The data used to determine differences in the self-concepts of students in kindergarten and the first grade were obtained through the implementation of a survey. This survey was explained to the kindergarten and first grade teachers at separate grade meetings. The materials for each student were supplied to them and they in turn administered the survey to their students. This self-concept survey was devised by psychologists at the Educational Service Unit #2 located in Fremont, Nebraska.

Children who enter kindergarten in the Fremont Public Schools are all given a screening battery of specific tests to determine their readiness for school. The results of

these screening tests were all recorded for each youngster as well as for each school. Students who had some definite weaknesses in specific areas were referred for further diagnostic testing and may very well have qualified for the Teadiness Room Program. These students, at the end of their year in the Readiness Room, were given a post-test over many of the same areas that were tested in the initial screening. The data that were obtained from the post-test results of Readiness Room students were compared to a sampling of results from the kindergarten screenings of the same year. These children all entered the same kindergarten class and the classroom teachers had similar expectations for each of them.

The last set of data that were used dealt specifically with information about retention. However, this retention information concerned only the students who were qualified and diagnosed into the Readiness Room Kindergarten, but did not participate because of their parent's request that they go into a regular kindergarten classroom. This information was used to show their early success or failure in school as it related to their abilities to obtain the needed skills to be promoted into the first grade.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Not all children who enter a kindergarten program in the Fremont, Nebraska Public Schools possess the necessary skills or capacity for success in the program. Many of these children do not achieve success in the basic kindergarten curriculum areas that are designed to prepare them for the first grade. Therefore these students are retained to spend another year in the kindergarten program, developing these needed skills.

After considerable deliberation about the problem, the Fremont school officials decided that a program should be developed to meet the needs of children so that they would not experience early failures. It was the school board's decision to begin a Readiness Room Kindergarten program that would help these children develop at their own rate.

The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of the Readiness Room Kindergarten in the Fremont Public School System.

Hypothesis number one states that children given the opportunity to develop at their own rate in the Readiness Room Kindergarten will, in subsequent years, be more successful in the regular kindergarten program and the first grade.

The procedure for testing hypothesis number one was to contrast the kindergarten and the first grade retention rates for the three years prior to the implementation of the Readiness Room program, with the rates of retention after the implementation of the Readiness Room program for comparative differences.

The data were recorded on a table and a graph. Table 1 shows

the total number of retentions for a five year period in the Fremont Public Schools for kindergarten and first grade. The data is listed according to schools and specific years. This information was gathered from reports that were returned to the Central Office Building from all of the elementary building principals in year-end summaries.

Graph 1 shows the relationship between the number of retentions in kindergarten and first grade for the last five years in the Fremont Public Schools. The horizontal axis on the graph is used to represent the different years that are being reported and the vertical axis represents the number of retentions. The graph is in bar graph form and a key indicates the correct symbols for both kindergarten and the first grade.

Hypothesis number two states that children assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten will, in subsequent years, have a more positive self-concept than children who fail the kindergarten program.

The procedure used for testing hypothesis number two was to test for a comparison of difference between the self-concept of children in the 1979-1980 Readiness Room Kindergarten that are currently enrolled in the 1980-1981 kindergarten program and the children who failed during the 1978-1979 and the 1979-1980 school years. This self-concept measure was done by using a self-concept rating scale that was devised by the psychologists at the Educational Service Unit #2 located in Fremont.

The information from the self-concept questionnaires is recorded on Tables 2 through 6. There is one table each for

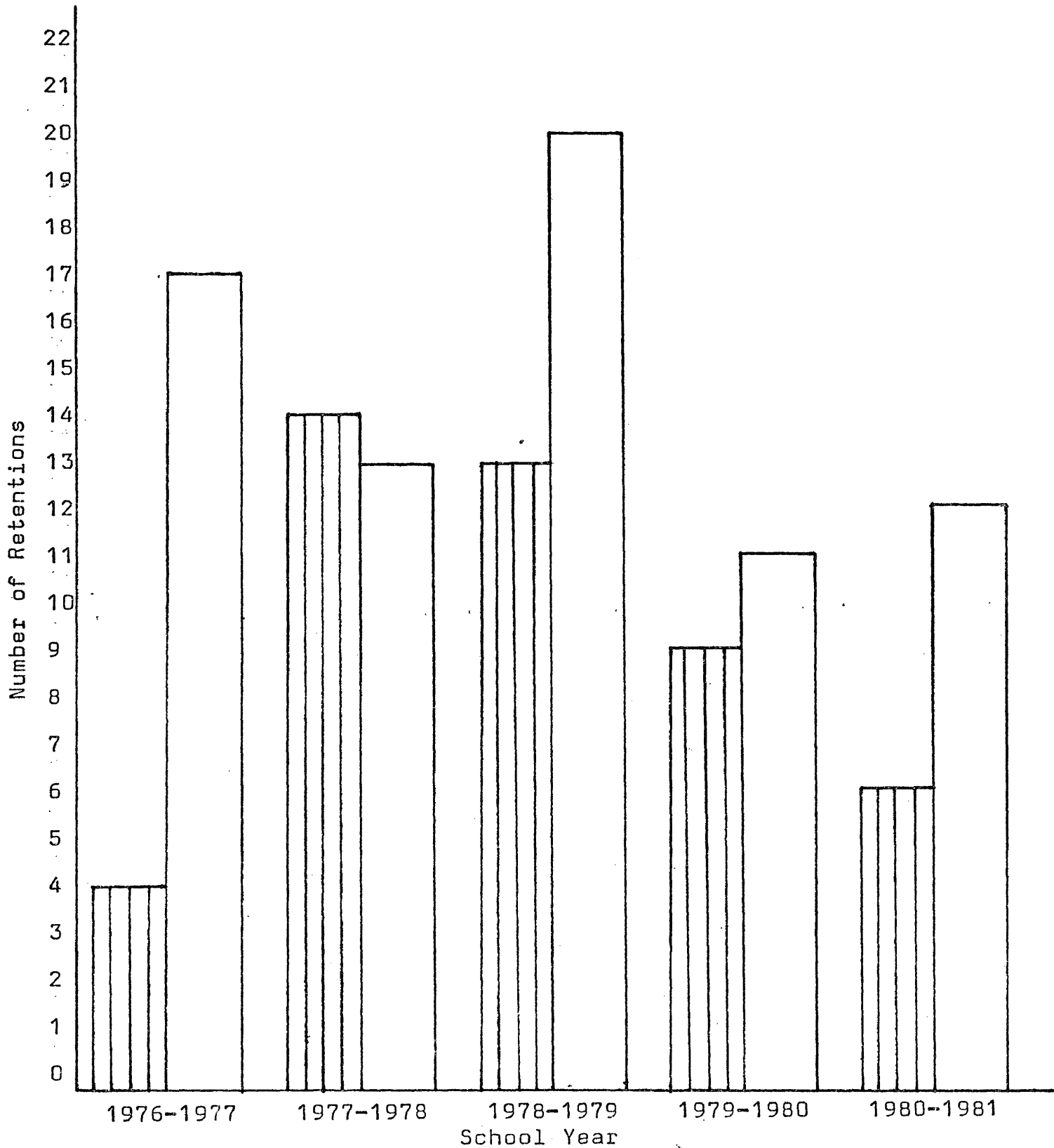
Table 1

The Total Number of Retentions
for a Five Year Period in the
Fremont Public Schools

School	1976-1977		1977-1978		1978-1979		1979-1980		1980-1981	
	Kind.	1st	Kind.	1st	Kind.	1st	Kind.	1st	Kind.	1st
Clarkson	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Clarmar	0	3	0	4	0	4	1	1	0	1
Davenport	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	0
Grant	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	0	1	1
Howard	1	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0
Lincoln	1	1	4	3	2	2	0	1	0	1
Linden	0	7	2	3	0	6	2	4	1	5
Milliken	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
NorthSide	2	3	5	0	3	1	3	2	0	2
Washington	0	0	3	1	3	0	2	1	2	0
Total	4	17	14	13	13	20	9	11	6	12

Graph 1

Number of Retentions by Year



KEY

Kindergarten

First Grade



kindergarten students, kindergarten students who were retained, kindergarten students who spent a year in the Readiness Room, first grade students, and first grade students who were retained. The children were given a choice of three responses for each question and the percentage of responses for each choice are recorded on the tables.

Graphs 2 through 4 show the comparison of the self-concept ratings of the children in the 1979-1980 Readiness Room Kindergarten and the children who failed and were retained during the 1978-1979 and the 1979-1980 school years. The responses on the graphs correlate with the three choices that the children could make on the original questionnaires. Graph 2 compares the percentages of happy face responses, graph 3 compares the percentages of neutral responses, and graph 4 compares the percentages of sad face responses.

Hypothesis number three states that children assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten will, in the subsequent year, be more like their classmates than children who are unsuccessful and retained in the regular kindergarten program.

The procedure for testing hypothesis number three was to test for significant differences between the achievement of children who were assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten in the school year 1979-1980 and the kindergarten children during the school year 1980-1981.

There were several sets of information gathered regarding this hypothesis. The first set of information concerned the growth of students who had been assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten from the beginning of the 1979-1980 school

Table 2

The Mean Percentage For Total
Number of Student Responses
Kindergarten Students




<u>Questions</u>	<u>Percentages</u>		
			
1. When my teacher says good morning to me, this is how I feel.	96	2	2
2. When I come to school in the morning, this is how I feel.	79	13	8
3. When I work with a friend, this is how I feel.	82	12	6
4. When the teacher helps me by myself, this is how I feel.	85	9	6
5. When I work in a small group, this is how I feel.	68	16	16
6. When I work by myself, this is how I feel.	57	10	33
7. When I am reading, this is how I feel.	80	12	8
8. When I am working on math, this is how I feel.	81	13	6
9. When other people think about me, this is how they feel.	79	11	10
10. When other people work with me, they feel this way.	83	11	6
11. My teacher feels like this about me.	90	5	5
12. My dad feels like this about me.	89	8	3
13. My mother feels like this about me.	88	7	5
14. When my teacher calls on me, I feel like this.	84	10	6
15. When I am the leader of a group, this is how I feel.	91	7	2
16. I think that most people feel like this about me.	85	8	7

Table 3

The Mean Percentage For Total
Number of Student Responses
First Grade




<u>Questions</u>	<u>Percentages</u>		
			
1. When my teacher says good morning to me, this is how I feel.	95	4	1
2. When I come to school in the morning, this is how I feel.	66	26	8
3. When I work with a friend, this is how I feel.	77	16	7
4. When the teacher helps me by myself, this is how I feel.	75	15	10
5. When I work in a small group, this is how I feel.	53	25	22
6. When I work by myself, this is how I feel.	51	17	32
7. When I am reading, this is how I feel.	80	16	4
8. When I am working on math, this is how I feel.	72	22	6
9. When other people think about me, they feel like this.	75	13	12
0. When other people work with me, they feel this way.	83	12	5
1. My teacher feels like this about me.	84	10	6
2. My dad feels like this about me.	84	12	4
3. My mother feels like this about me.	84	10	6
4. When my teacher calls on me, I feel like this.	63	24	13
5. When I am the leader of a group, this is how I feel.	92	5	3
6. I think that most people feel like this about me.	80	14	6

Table 4

The Mean Percentage For Total
Number of Student Responses
Kindergarten Readiness




<u>Questions</u>	<u>Percentages</u>		
			
1. When my teacher says good morning to me, this is how I feel.	100	-	-
2. When I come to school in the morning, this is how I feel.	85	11	4
3. When I work with a friend, this is how I feel.	78	11	11
4. When the teacher helps me by myself, this is how I feel.	89	7	4
5. When I work in a small group, this is how I feel.	67	11	22
6. When I work by myself, this is how I feel.	59	19	22
7. When I am reading, this is how I feel.	71	18	11
8. When I am working on math, this is how I feel.	71	21	8
9. When other people think about me, they feel like this.	71	14	15
0. When other people work with me, they feel this way.	79	14	7
1. My teacher feels like this about me.	96	4	-
2. My dad feels like this about me.	89	4	7
3. My dad feels like this about me.	82	11	7
4. When my teacher calls on me, I feel like this.	86	14	-
5. When I am the leader of a group, this is how I feel.	93	4	3
6. I think that most people feel like this about me.	82	7	11

Table 5

The Mean Percentage For Total
Number of Student Responses
First Grade Retained







<u>Questions</u>	<u>Percentages</u>		
			
1. When my teacher says good morning to me, this is how I feel.	95	5	-
2. When I come to school in the morning, this is how I feel.	68	21	11
3. When I work with a friend, this is how I feel.	68	21	11
4. When the teacher helps me by myself, this is how I feel.	74	5	21
5. When I work in a small group, this is how I feel.	74	21	5
6. When I work by myself, this is how I feel.	63	32	5
7. When I am reading, this is how I feel.	74	21	5
8. When I am working on math, this is how I feel.	53	32	15
9. When other people think about me, they feel like this.	63	22	15
0. When other people work with me, they feel this way.	74	26	-
1. My teacher feels like this about me.	100	-	-
2. My dad feels like this about me.	74	21	5
3. My mother feels like this about me.	84	16	-
4. When my teacher calls on me, I feel like this.	74	5	21
5. When I am the leader of a group, this is how I feel.	95	5	-
6. I think that most people feel like this about me.	79	16	5

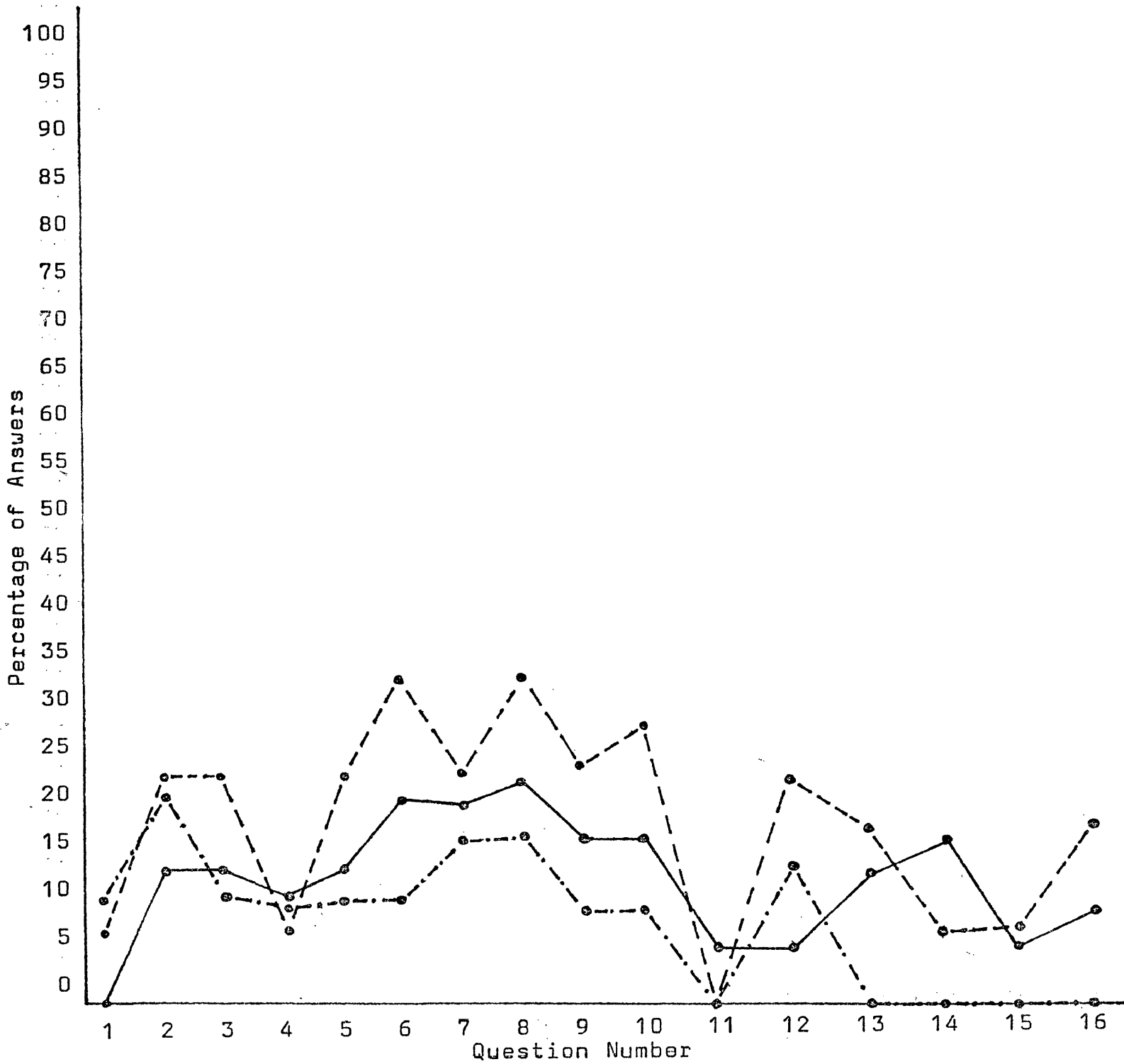
Table 6

The Mean Percentage For Total
Number of Student Responses
Kindergarten Retained

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Percentages</u>		
			
1. When my teacher says good morning to me, this is how I feel.	87	7	6
2. When I come to school in the morning, this is how I feel.	60	20	20
3. When I work with a friend, this is how I feel.	80	7	13
4. When the teacher helps me by myself, this is how I feel.	73	7	20
5. When I work in a small group, this is how I feel.	67	7	26
6. When I work by myself, this is how I feel.	73	7	20
7. When I am reading, this is how I feel.	67	13	20
8. When I am working on math, this is how I feel.	69	13	18
9. When other people think about me, they feel like this.	69	6	25
10. When other people work with me, they feel this way.	75	6	19
11. My teacher feels like this about me.	81	-	19
12. My dad feels like this about me.	82	12	6
13. My mother feels like this about me.	100	-	-
14. When my teacher calls on me, I feel like this.	100	-	-
15. When I am the leader of a group, this is how I feel.	100	-	-
16. I think that most people feel like this about me.	100	-	-

Graph 3

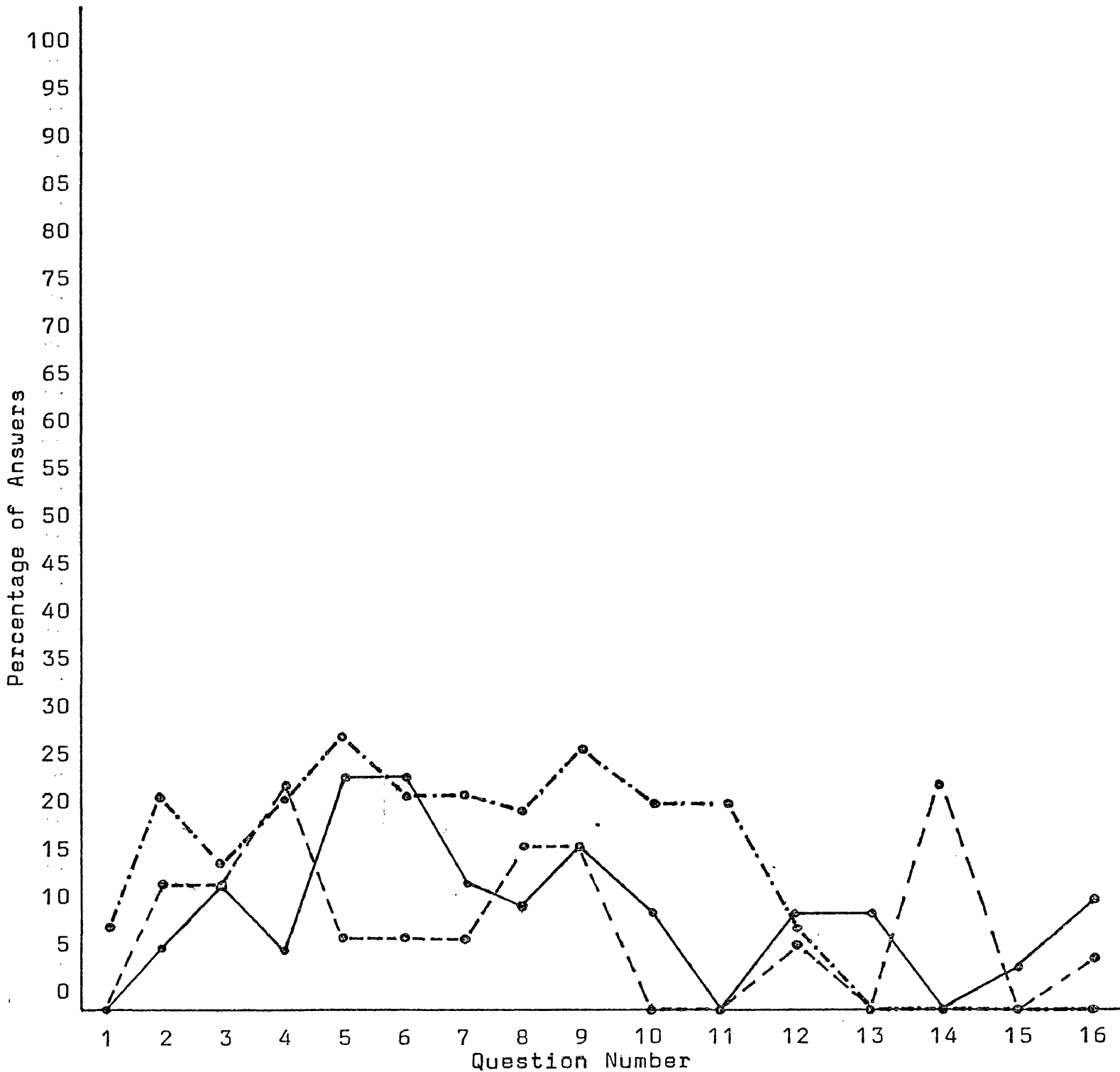
Comparison of Percentages of Neutral Responses for all Three Groups



KEY:
 _____ Readiness Room
 - - - - - 1978-1979 Retained
 - . - . - . 1979-1980 Retained

Graph 4

Comparison of Percentages of Sad Face Responses for all Three Groups



KEY:
 _____ Readiness Room
 - - - - - 1978-1979 Retained
 - . - . - . 1979-1980 Retained

year to the end of the same year. There were six tests that both pre-test and post-test scores were recorded concerning the Readiness Room Kindergarten students. These tests included the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, visual discrimination, information retention, visual memory, auditory memory, and comprehension. This information is recorded on Tables 7 and 8 and it shows the comparison of the students' scores prior to being enrolled in the Readiness Room program and their scores upon completion of the program. These scores are designated by the headings of pre-test and post-test on the two charts.

The second set of information deals with a sampling of scores from students who entered our regular kindergarten program without the benefit of the Readiness Room program. These scores were obtained from the testing done at our annual kindergarten round-ups and screenings. The only tests that are similar and can be used as a basis for comparison are the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the visual discrimination test. These scores are recorded on Table 9. The scores for the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test are recorded in terms of chronological ages, the scores for the other tests are all recorded in terms of rqw scores. These scores are arrived at through the use of norms that have been established for the children who are old enough to enter kindergarten in the Fremont Public Schools.

Table 10 shows the comparison of the average scores taken from the information that is reported on the previous two tables. This information will contain averages for the scores of the Readiness Room students prior to their year in the

Table 7

Pretest and Posttest Information
Regarding Students Enrolled in the
Readiness Room Kindergarten

Student #	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test		Visual Discrimination		Information	
	Pretest M.A.	Posttest M.A.	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
1	4-6	5-11	1	4	7	10
2	8-6	7-6	1	2	8	12
3	9-1	10-2	2	2	5	6
4	4-11	5-11	3	4	8	10
5	6-6	8-7	3	4	9	9
6	4-11	5-11	1	2	9	3
7	5-8	7-1	2	2	9	7
8	5-3	5-7	3	4	7	10
9	5-6	6-6	2	2	8	11
10	4-4	7-1	3	3	8	9
11	5-1	8-5	0	4	11	12
12	5-8	6-8	3	4	7	12
13	7-5	7-1	4	4	9	12
14	4-2	6-10	2	3	6	11
15	5-3	7-1	1	4	4	6
16	6-4	7-6	2	4	7	8
17	5-6	8-1	1	1	9	11
18	6-8	7-3	3	4	8	7
19	9-6	12-3	4	4	6	9
20	5-4	6-1	2	4	6	9
21	7-5	7-8	3	3	3	9
22	6-10	9-2	1	2	8	11
23	5-3	6-6	1	4	8	10
24	6-10	7-3	3	2	9	11
25	5-11	6-10	2	3	10	8
26	6-4	7-3	1	4	2	6
27	6-8	8-11	3	4	12	9
28	5-1	7-1	2	4	8	10

Table 8

Pretest and Posttest Information
Regarding Students Enrolled in the
Readiness Room Kindergarten

Student #	Visual Memory		Auditory Memory		Comprehension	
	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest	Pretest	Posttest
1	8	7	6	6	8	12
2	3	9	6	8	9	11
3	8	5	6	5	7	6
4	7	6	9	6	7	10
5	10	8	8	8	11	9
6	9	7	13	2	7	1
7	8	8	7	8	10	10
8	5	11	6	7	4	6
9	5	7	9	9	14	11
10	8	8	9	8	10	10
11	4	7	11	8	6	8
12	5	20	10	19	7	12
13	11	13	7	13	8	11
14	8	11	11	11	9	10
15	6	7	8	8	5	10
16	8	6	9	6	6	8
17	8	13	8	13	8	11
18	4	14	9	14	7	9
19	6	7	11	8	8	11
20	12	7	1	6	6	10
21	6	8	6	6	8	8
22	6	12	12	12	7	7
23	6	12	12	12	7	7
24	5	18	6	6	9	8
25	11	11	9	11	6	6
26	8	4	5	4	7	6
27	8	15	7	15	6	10
28	7	13	7	10	10	12

Table 9

Sampling of Kindergarten Screening
Scores of the 1980-1981 Kindergarten Class

Student #	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	Visual Discrimination	Student #	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	Visual Discrimination
1	4-7	1	26	7-7	3
2	7-3	2	27	6-10	2
3	8-6	0	28	4-11	1
4	7-3	2	29	5-6	1
5	6-10	1	30	5-8	2
6	6-8	1	31	8-11	2
7	5-3	1	32	8-0	4
8	6-4	2	33	4-11	3
9	7-7	1	34	5-3	1
10	4-7	1	35	4-11	2
11	6-4	2	36	4-11	2
12	5-8	2	37	3-9	3
13	8-4	2	38	8-2	2
14	4-7	2	39	5-10	2
15	7-5	2	40	6-6	4
16	8-9	2	41	5-1	2
17	7-7	4	42	7-10	2
18	6-6	2	43	5-11	1
19	5-8	1	44	7-5	3
20	6-10	4	45	5-1	1
21	6-2	4	46	4-4	2
22	5-11	2	47	8-0	3
23	8-4	3	48	4-9	0
24	5-10	2	49	4-9	1
25	5-1	2	50	7-7	1

TABLE 10
AVERAGE SCORES FOR KINDERGARTEN
AND READINESS ROOM STUDENTS

	Peabody Test Average	Visual Discrimination Average
1. Readiness Room students pre-test scores	5-5	2.1
2. Readiness Room students post-test scores	6-3	3.1
3. Kindergarten students scores from screening sampling	6-3	1.96

program, scores of the Readiness Room students after their year in the program, and scores of the sampling of regular kindergarten students from their screening results. Only the information from the visual discrimination tests and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Tests will be used.

Hypothesis number four states that children assigned to the regular kindergarten program without the recommendation of the screening staff will be less successful than children assigned with the screening staff's recommendation.

The procedure for testing hypothesis number four will be to test for significant differences between the retention rate of children assigned to the kindergarten program without the recommendation of the screening staff and the retention rate of those assigned to the kindergarten program with the recommendation of the screening staff.

The information regarding this hypothesis is recorded on Table 11 and is divided into four separate categories. The first category is designed to report the number of children who were recommended to take part in the Kindergarten Readiness Room, but the parents decided not to have their child participate. The second category of information deals with the number of these same students who then had to repeat their kindergarten year in school. The third category of information deals with the total number of students that were eligible to enroll as kindergarten students in the Fremont Public Schools during the 1978-1979, 1979-1980, and 1980-1981 school years. The fourth category of information deals with the number of children that were recommended for the regular kindergarten and

TABLE 11

Information Regarding Students Recommended for the Readiness Room Kindergarten Compared with Students not Recommended for the Program

	1978/1979	1979/1980	1980/1981
Children recommended for the Readiness Room, but chose not to participate in the program.	0	3	5
Children recommended for the Readiness Room, but chose not to participate and were then retained in kindergarten.	0	1	2
Total number of children eligible to enroll in the regular kindergarten program.	355	326	374
Children recommended for the regular kindergarten and were then retained in kindergarten.	13	9	6

were then retained to spend another year in the regular kindergarten program.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to assess the effectiveness of the Readiness Room Kindergarten Program in the Fremont Public School System. The hypotheses to be tested were: 1) that children given the opportunity to develop at their own rate in the Readiness Room Kindergarten will, in subsequent years, be more successful in the regular kindergarten program and in the first grade; 2) that children assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten will, in subsequent years, have a more positive self-concept than children who fail the kindergarten program; 3) that children assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten will, in the subsequent year, be more like their classmates than children who are unsuccessful and retained in the regular kindergarten program; 4) that children assigned to the regular kindergarten program without the recommendation of the screening staff will be less successful than children assigned with the screening staff's recommendation.

By analyzing the results of the information gained from the study of hypothesis number one it can be seen that there has truly been fewer numbers of retentions in the Fremont Schools' kindergartens since the origination of the Kindergarten Readiness Room Program. The table shows that there was a high of 14 retentions of kindergarten students in 1977-1978 and that there were only 6 kindergarten retentions during the 1980-1981 school year. This was during the second year of the

Readiness Room Program. The indepth screening that is now done certainly helps us to identify students who have a high risk of failure and need additional work on specific skills. The students who participated in this program then have the needed skills to be more successful in the regular kindergarten program and the first grade.

The use of a self-concept questionnaire, as was done for hypothesis number two, can be somewhat controversial when analyzing the results. However, there were certainly some interesting results from the data that were collected. On the graph that shows the comparison of happy face responses one can see that the Readiness Room students scored at higher percentages on 8 of the 16 items. It was interesting to note that on the last four questions the children who were retained during the 1979-1980 school year all responded with a happy face concerning the last four items. This most certainly had an effect upon the final analysis. Taking all of the implications of using such a tool into consideration one can still see that children who have participated in the Readiness Room Program will have a more positive self-concept.

Hypothesis number three, which states that children assigned to the Readiness Room Kindergarten will be more like their classmates in the subsequent year is probably the most important of any of the questions that we have tried to answer in this paper. When one looks through the information on Tables 7 and 8 one can see the growth that the students made in the areas of visual memory, auditory memory, comprehension, information, visual discrimination, and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. When one compares the posttest scores of

students in the Readiness Room Kindergarten with screening scores of regular kindergarten students, one can see that these students are definitely in a position to compete with these students in the various skill areas.

The data that were collected concerning hypothesis number four does show that children who entered kindergarten without the recommendation of the screening staff did have a higher retention rate than those children who entered kindergarten with the recommendation of the screening staff. However, one must consider the number of children that one is studying for this analysis and the fact that children whose parents refused to have them participate in the program definitely had some skill area deficiencies.

Conclusion

Based upon the information that was obtained from the pretests and posttests, the self-concept questionnaires, the retention information, and the sampling of information from the screening of regular kindergarten students one can draw several conclusions.

It would seem very evident that a program designed to improve the skills of children before they enter kindergarten would stress the use of well-designed techniques to improve each individual's performance level. The Kindergarten Readiness Room Program in the Fremont Public Schools is organized upon this very philosophy.

When one looks at the growth of these students in the particular areas it is apparent that these specific children are indeed progressing at their own pace. They are increasing

their competence so that they can enter a regular kindergarten and feel success.

The self-concept of these children is increasing when they feel better about what they can accomplish in school. This self-confidence definitely has to be an asset as they are promoted into other grades and presented with new and exciting challenges.

If the retention rate is lessened, and the statistics show that it has lessened, then one can believe that the program is truly helping those students who have been identified as having some learning difficulties.

The Kindergarten Readiness Program in the Fremont Public Schools is now entering its fourth year of operation. It has done an admirable job of serving and assisting the students ^{who} that have participated. Its effects upon students are now being felt as these youngsters enter the regular classroom structures. The Fremont Public Schools look forward to the continuing success of this program in our school system.

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APPENDIX

SCHOOL _____

RET. - Yes or No

NAME _____

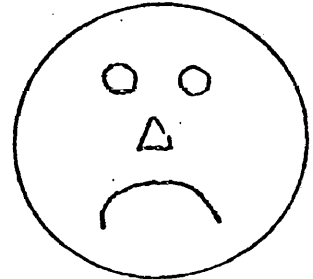
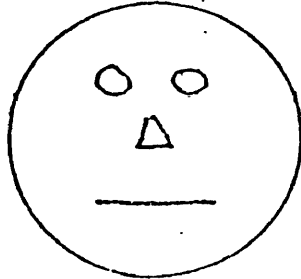
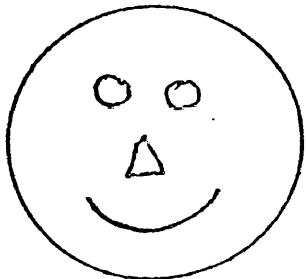
READINESS - Yes or No

KINDERGARTEN or FIRST

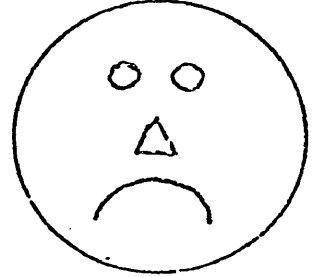
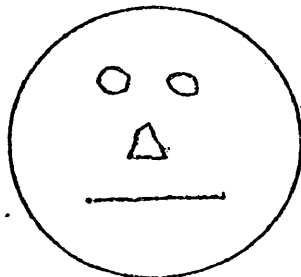
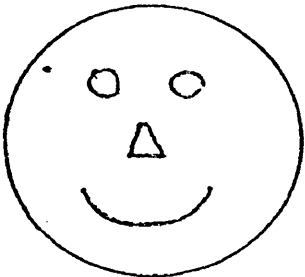
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ME AND MY FEELINGS

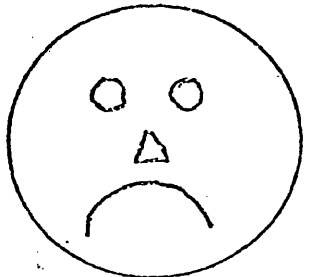
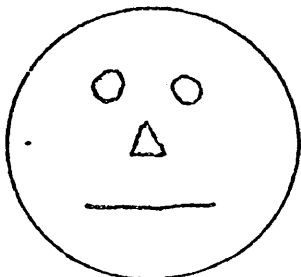
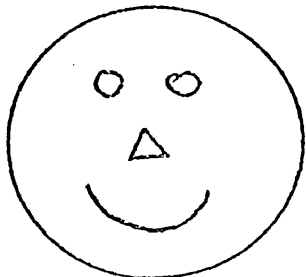
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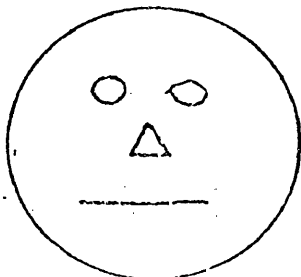
2. When I come to school in the morning, this is how I feel.



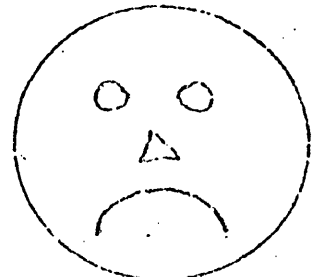
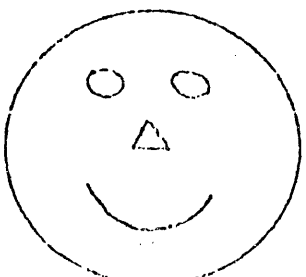
3. When I work with my friend, this is how I feel.



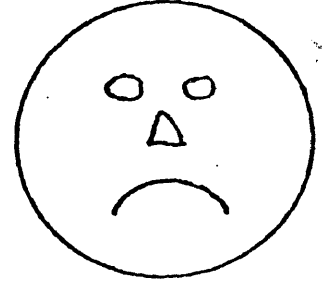
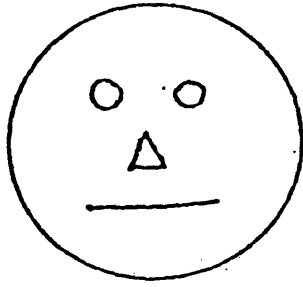
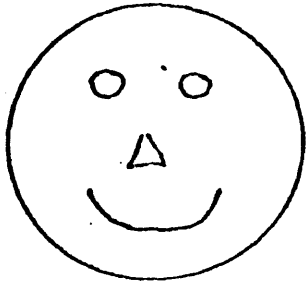
4. When the teacher helps me by myself, this is how I feel.



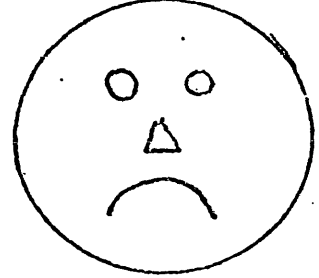
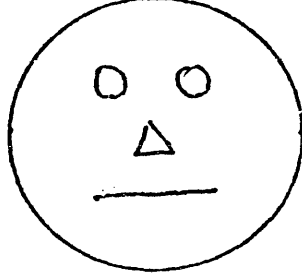
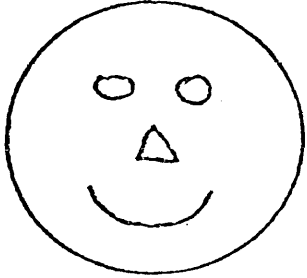
5. When I work in a small group, this is how I feel.



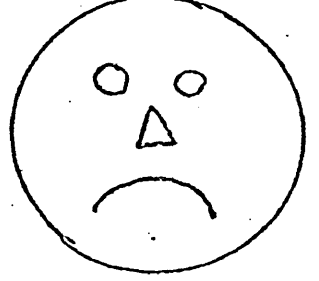
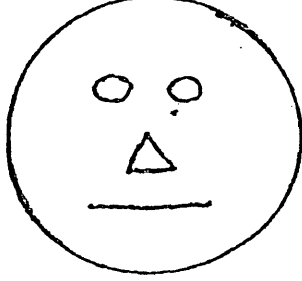
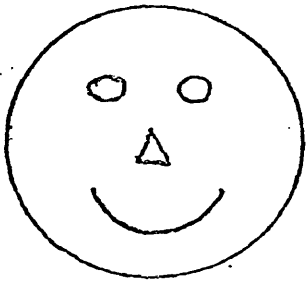
6. When I work by myself, this is how I feel.



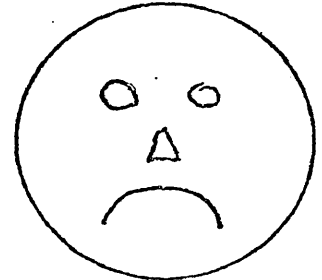
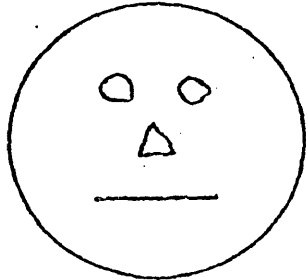
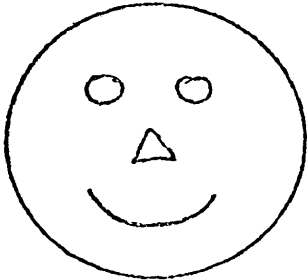
7. When I am reading, this is how I feel.



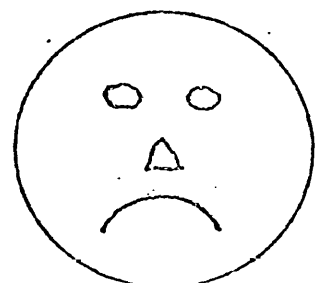
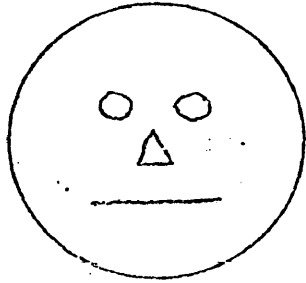
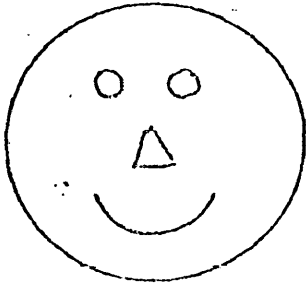
8. When I am working on math, this is how I feel.



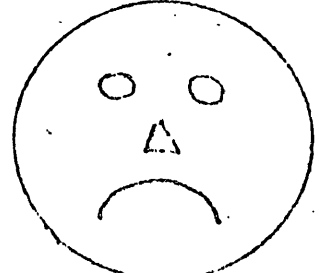
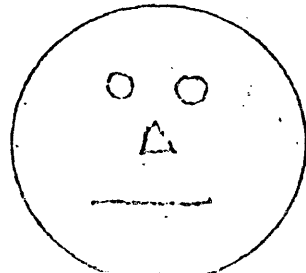
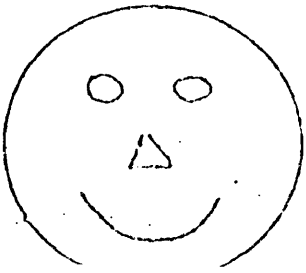
9. When other people think about me, they feel like this.



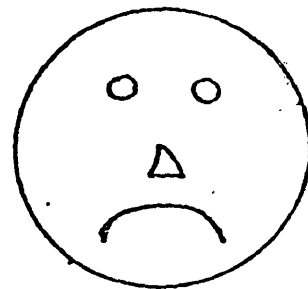
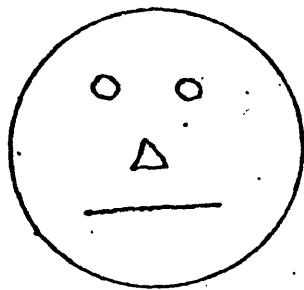
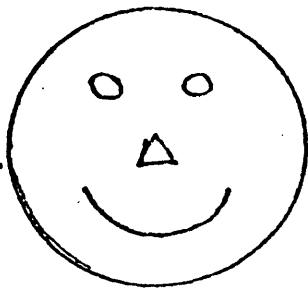
10. When other people work with me, they feel this way.



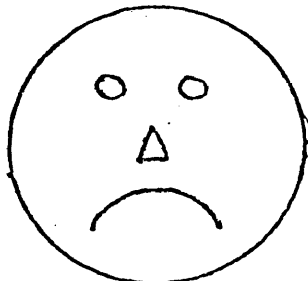
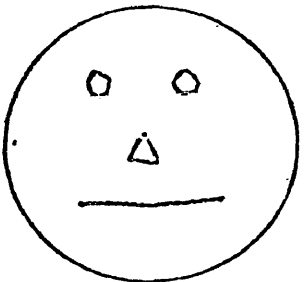
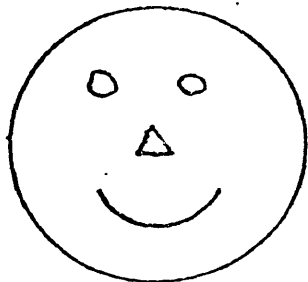
11. My teacher feels like this about me.



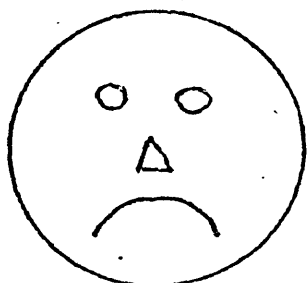
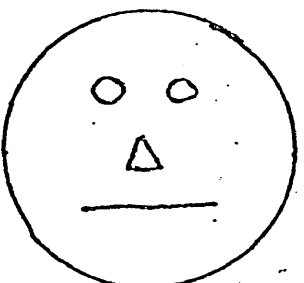
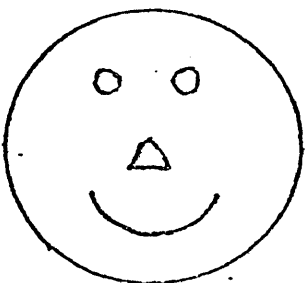
12. My dad feels like this about me.



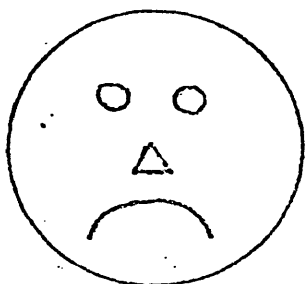
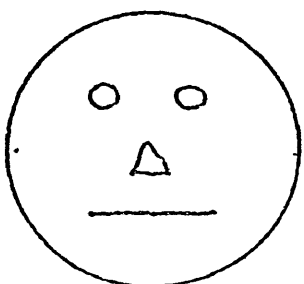
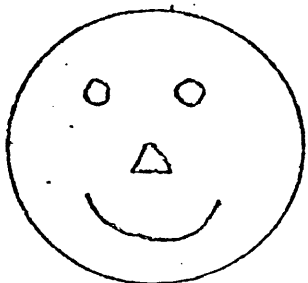
13. My mother feels like this about me.



14. When my teacher calls on me, I feel like this.



15. When I am the leader of a group, this is how I feel.



16. I think that most people feel like this about me.

