

PRACTICES, EFFECTS, AND ATTITUDES OF TRACKING
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH PROGRAMS

MASTER'S PROJECT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Imagine a community consisting of members with somewhat diverse attributes, including varying ages, sexes, ethnic backgrounds, and economic statuses. As many opportunities arise in this community, the group tends to become segregated based on the assets the people have that permit them to take advantage of the opportunities. One subgroup, the upper group, is formed by their capability to indulge in nearly any of the given opportunities. Incidentally, this group predominantly consists of Caucasians or those minorities who are rather economically secure. Another group, the middle group, is somewhat limited in their being able to participate in the given opportunities. These people are of more varied races than the upper group, but most still are somewhat financially stable. Finally, the lower group members have the least assets, giving them little chance to take full advantage of the given opportunities in the community. Again incidentally, the group is mainly composed of minority members and those who are the least financially secure.

This image resembles a rather simplified description of the stratified socio-economic population of the United States, but it is not meant to be that. Instead, the image is that of a common

public high school tracking system in the United States. The opportunities referred to are various learning experiences, and the assets are not monetary resources but rather intellectual resources. The grouping occurs as a result of the students not having the same ability to endure the exact same learning opportunities.

This practice of ability grouping has been implemented for nearly a century in the United States and is used by the majority of public school districts in the country, especially at the secondary level (Raze, 1984; Oakes, 1985; Kulik and Kulik, 1982; Newfield and McElyea, 1983). However, its commonality does not necessarily indicate its popularity. Many education experts and parents of students debate whether ability grouping is a beneficial practice for all public school students.

One concern raised is referred to in the opening image of this study. According to researchers, the patterns of student placement in the varying ability groups are found to be closely related to race and socioeconomic levels (Ricchio, 1985; Oakes, 1985; Raze, 1984; Finley, 1984). This observation raises questions as to whether group placement is done objectively and fairly, and if the placement is done upon teacher or counselor recommendation, whether the students' academic abilities are being judged based on their home life advantages or disadvantages. Moreover, many experts and parents of students wonder how ability grouping influences both the students' and teachers' attitudes. Does this segregating and labeling of teenagers affect the students' self-esteems and their aspirations

for their futures? Those concerned want both the students' individual learning needs and the students' social needs met. These people also take interest in knowing to what degree, if at all, ability grouping affects the teachers' enthusiasm and approach to the different levels of classes. A final concern about tracking in public high schools is the quality of the material covered at the various tracking levels. In designing a district language arts curriculum, the writer learned that the state department of education requests a different set of course objectives and pupil performance objectives for the different tracked levels of the same class in the same grade level. For instance, they ask for one set of objectives to be written for the regular English 9 class and a different set for the college preparatory English 9 class. The writer questions whether setting different objectives based on varying ability levels still ensures an education of equal quality for all learners; maybe just the methods and means of achieving the objectives should differ.

Overall, because of the extensive implementation of ability grouping in secondary English classes, the writer does not foresee a great many schools aborting this practice. However, with so many educator and parental concerns, great care should be exhibited in carrying out ability grouping. The writer feels that a carefully planned and well-managed tracking program in secondary English programs could prove to be beneficial for all students and teachers involved.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine academic tracking practices of selected high school English departments in Western Ohio and to gain insight on the attitudes of English department chairpersons toward academic tracking practices.

Assumptions

In order to conduct this study, the author needed to make several assumptions. First, the author assumed the questionnaire was reliable and valid in that it measured the attitudes that were intended to be measured. Also, the author assumed that the selected teachers responded honestly to the designed questionnaire.

Limitations

Certain limitations affected this project. First, the teachers surveyed were selected from a limited geographical area within the state of Ohio. Second, the chairperson of the English department was not in every case available to participate, in which case the author requested that a different teacher from the department respond. Third, the sample size was somewhat limited, partly dependent upon the survey return rate. Finally, the author chose not to survey

teachers' opinions of ability grouping in relation to students in strict vocational programs or students in gifted programs beyond the normal English instruction.

Definition of Terms

Ability grouping/tracking/homogenous grouping. These terms were used interchangeably in this study to refer to the school practice of separating students for instruction by achievement or ability (Oakes, 1985). Although the terms sometimes refer to the assignment of students in all subject through a single track such as college, general or vocational curriculum), in this study the terms refer to placing students in each individual subject, particularly high school English (Finley, 1984).

Heterogeneous grouping. This terms refers to the school practice in which students who may vary widely in ability or achievement are taught together in the same classes (Raze, 1984).

Secondary or high school program. These terms were used interchangeably in referring to programs that include grades 9 through 12.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Tracking Practices

The educational trend of the 1990's encourages school districts to detrack their academic programs, but the implementation of this proposal would require great changes from a great number of people. Incidentally, in the mid-eighties Raze (1985) reported that over 77% of all United States school districts were practicing ability grouping. In the same time period a further study by Oakes (1985) found that just 1 of 25 studied schools were not using homogeneous grouping at all and that high school English was one of the most commonly tracked classes. Moreover, in the nineties researchers diligently continue to study the implementations and the effects of ability grouping. Evidently, despite the push from protestors, tracking practices do still widely exist in the American public schools.

For some of these public schools referred to, the fact that they do admit to using ability grouping may be nearly their only commonality in the practice. Due to the diversity of student populations, financial situations, community expectations, staff flexibilities and other contributing factors, tracking students was not always a well-defined, consistent practice among schools.

One way of tracking involves grouping students into ability levels for the entire instructional day. According to Kulik and Kulik (1982), the model that most schools follow for this type of tracking is the Santa Barbara Concentric Plan created around 1900. In this plan each grade level is divided into three sections, whereby each section masters primarily the same knowledge base for each subject. The difference in the sections comes about in that the first section does more extensive work than the second, and the second more than the third. In Oakes's research (1985) she found that one of the most frequently made divisions among students is the assignment into either an "academic" or "vocational" track overall. Another common identification for these tracks is "college bound" and "non-college bound" (Raze, 1985). In this grouping the majority or the entire schedule for a student is directed into one consistent track, primarily correlated with the student's future career expectations.

A second type of tracking involves divisions by individual content areas. This grouping may occur in addition to or exclusive of the previously described tracking according to Oakes (1985). Kulik and Kulik (1982) cite that this style of tracking is more frequently used at the high school level than the full schedule separation of groups. These divisions are commonly found at three levels but may go as high as six (Finley, 1984; Oakes, 1985). Divisions of this sort are typically termed on some of the following ways: gifted, advanced, academically enriched, honors,

average, remedial, general or low ability (Finley, 1984; Oakes, 1985; Raze, 1985).

Just as the actual grouping and labeling vary among districts, the placement policy of students into these groups is often somewhat unique to each district. Actually, according to Riccio (1985) a substantial number of school districts either have no written, formal policy, and individual decisions are made subjectively as needed, or the policies that are designed and adopted by districts are not always faithfully followed by the employees. However, many researchers do identify common criteria used in assigning students into ability groups; the criteria is just considered in varying degrees at different schools (Oakes, 1985).

One of the most popular measurements used is achievement or ability test results. Believed by some to be the best indication of a student's natural intelligence and potential success, some schools exclusively use IQ test scores to determine placement (Esposito, 1973; Kirp and Yudof, 1974). Another test that is widely used is a norm-referenced test which is intended to measure a student's overall academic progress against the entire test-taking group (Riccio, 1985). Finally, the least commonly used standardized test for ability grouping placement is a criterion-referenced test. This type of test most effectively measures a student's abilities and growth in specific academic areas but does not allow for student comparison (Riccio, 1985).

Based on the frequency of use of these standardized tests, the results have been perceived as valuable by educators, but especially in the last couple decades, concerns regarding the weaknesses and biases of these tests are being raised. Researchers such as Oakes (1985) question whether the content of these tests even correlates with the curriculum course objectives in the school districts. She explained that the items on achievement tests are chosen because a significant number of the pilot test takers incorrectly answered those particular questions. In other words, if the majority of students piloted could answer a question, that question was eliminated from the test. She continued by pointing out that the questions most readily missed were missed most likely because the material was not covered in an academic class, yet this untaught material was being used to evaluate the students' potential success with material that would be covered in an academic class.

The other major concern being addressed by researchers was that standardized tests are suspected to be culturally biased (Oakes, 1985; Riccio, 1985). Statistics in their studies showed that students from minority groups and low socioeconomic background consistently scored lower than other students on the tests. As Oakes explained, the capability of learning among and within social groups is normally distributed. Since these tests are designed to measure innate intelligence, a consistent discrepancy of results between social groups should not exist. Oakes concluded that

middle-class white students tend to score better as a group because the language, content, the pilot group, and the administration process of the tests are most compatible with their prior academic experiences.

In addition to standardized test scores, teacher and counselor recommendations are also commonly considered in student placement. Again, in some studied districts this was the exclusive criteria used (Raze, 1985; Riccio, 1985). The basis for these recommendations was not concretely evident, but this procedure surely allowed for a more personalized decision than using standardized test scores. In other cases the students' placements were based on performances in previous academic classes, which was determined by grades and/or teacher input (Finley, 1984; Ljung, 1990). One school described further by Ljung even checked individual student writing samples to aid in the decision. The problems with this process arose with human limitations. In large schools teachers and counselors struggled to know each student well enough to make an accurate decision. Incidentally, one study done by Rist (1970) indicated that teachers were assigning students to ability groups after only eight days of school. In cases such as this, the placement of students becomes extremely subjective. Still further studies showed a significant correlation between students' conduct manageability and their tracking assignments. (Cohen, 1993; Mackler and Giddings, 1965). Similarly, Finley's study (1984) found that students were sorted into classes more by

motivation than by ability, and finally, Oakes (1985) observed that students' clothing, communications skills, adult interaction and other behaviors often influenced by race and class likely, even if unconsciously, affect students' placements.

A third criterion sometimes used for ability group placement is student and/or parent choice. Although under this criteria the ability tracks were technically selected and not assigned, Oakes (1985) suggested that these choices were still at times informed (and maybe even pressured) choices, influenced by counselors, teachers, administrators, and/or test results.

The districts are experimenting in their attempts to find the most accurate bases for assigning students to ability groups, but each attempt has its shortcomings. No matter what approach is used or what criteria is valued most strongly by a school, tracking placements can not be 100 percent dependably accurate or appropriate.

Effects of Tracking on Students

In theory ability grouping appears to consider the best interests of the learner. The practice primarily attempts to cater to individual learning needs of students by varying the pace of instruction, the methods of mastery, and the material so that it is suited to the students' future plans. However, in the practice of individualizing the education, parents, educators and researchers

alike question the actual effects of treating students differently from one another.

One found effect of tracking on students is that it can encourage segregation of the students into stratified social groups (as referred to in the opening of Chapter I). In 1985 Raze published a study showing that students were inclined to stereotype one another based on their tracking placement and rarely interact with students in any other ability group than their own outside the classroom. Because of these behaviors the educational experience is not equally opportunistic or positive for all students. In various cases tracking appeared to polarize students into anti-education and pro-education groups (Abraham, 1989; Lacey, 1970). The students in the anti-education group were often perceived as being "antisocial youngsters who (were) hurting themselves and others, demoralizing teachers, and disrupting school" (Cohen, 1993, p. 30). In return, both these students and their teachers had very little confidence in these learners' educational abilities, causing this group to become the dreaded, unreachable class (Cohen, 1993).

Further effects of this stratification were explained by Oakes (1985) who refers to a work written in 1976 by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis called Schooling in Captitalist America. Their claims were that this socialization of students in the educational system is very closely correlated to that of adults in the larger society. First through tracking students are trained to behave in

a specific way to meet the expectation of an authority-defined social order. In other words, they learn "appropriate institutional behaviors" (Oakes, 1985, p. 144). In addition, if the tracked groups are treated differently in this social order, the students will also likely detect evidence of discriminatory attitudes being reinforced in the different groups. Consequently, with the social relationships in schools closely imitating the social relationships in society, "students learn to accept the unequal features of the larger society as natural" (Oakes, 1985, p. 144). Bowles and Gintis felt that these learned behaviors will cause lower-grouped students to become lower-classed workers and higher-grouped students to become higher-classed workers.

Incidentally, some research did show that a students' future aspirations in the adult society are relative to their role in the educational system. For instance work by Raze (1984) showed that whether students attended college and what colleges were chosen was best predicted by students' ability groupings in school, not by their academic aptitude or capabilities.

A second effect of tracking on students is that it sometimes effects the individuals' self-esteems. As Oakes (1985) explained, advocates of tracking assume that students have the best chance to develop a healthy self-esteem when they are not in the same classes with a more successful, higher achieving student. These supporters fear less capable students will feel intimidated in such an environment. On the other hand protestors fear the segregation and

labeling that goes with tracking will negatively influence students' self-regard. Similarly to these split views, the research results were also quite divided.

Kulik and Kulik (1982, 1992) have published results that overall display positive effects on students' self-esteem through tracking. In 1982 they analyzed the data of 52 reports in relation to four major effects of tracking, one of which being the issue of self-concept. Just 15 of the reports contained such results. Of the 15 studies, seven reported that the esteem was found to be higher for students in homogeneously grouped classes; two of these studies showed statistically significant differences. Six of the studies indicated higher self-concepts for students in heterogeneous grouped classes; again, two of these studies showed statistically significant differences. Finally, two of the reports concluded equal self-concepts between the two groups.

A second document published by Kulik and Kulik also presented results in favor of tracking. In 1992 they again examined 13 of 56 studies that described effects of grouping of self-esteem. In this document, they reported that the average overall effect was a decrease in self-esteem; however, they emphasized that the decline was "very small and statistically nonsignificant" (1992, p. 75). When the data was examined by comparing individual aptitude groups, homogeneous tracking tended to raise the self-esteem of lower

aptitude students but lower the self-esteem of higher aptitude students. In summary, Kulik and Kulik claimed their effects of grouping on self-esteem to be "near zero" overall (p. 76).

Another group of researchers to find results supporting positive effects of ability grouping on self-esteem is Newfield and McElyea (1983). These researchers surveyed 36 seniors and sophomores from 1016 different schools, basically comparing students from homogeneously grouped classes to students from heterogeneously grouped classes. Interestingly, the results for both the sophomores and seniors were similar. The students in high ability groups had higher self-concepts, seeing themselves with pride and importance and believing themselves to be more popular than high ability students in heterogeneous groups. For the students considered to have low ability, no significant difference in their attitudes towards themselves was apparent. Again, like Kulik and Kulik, Newfield and McElyea found no detrimental effects of tracking on students' self-esteem.

In considerable disagreement are those who believe that the stigma attached primarily to lower achieving students in homogeneous grouping is damaging to their self-concepts (Cohen, 1993; Oakes, 1985; Riccio, 1985). In one study done by Oakes, she surveyed students from 25 very diverse American public schools, asking them to respond to statements regarding students' views of themselves. Their responses led Oakes to conclude that students' attitudes towards themselves are highly related to their tracking

assignments. Students in high ability groups reported more positive self-regard in both academic and general areas. Students in low ability groups had the most negative self-esteems, academically and generally. Students in the middle ability groups perceived themselves near the middle of the two extremes. Oakes's results apparently point to truly detrimental effects of tracking on self-esteem in only the lower ability groups, but Riccio (1985) further generalized similar results in his work, stating that "whatever (tracking) does to help high-achieving students is more than offset by the stigma (incapable of learning) attached to students in lower groups" (p. 28).

Overall, the writer did not see conclusive results as to whether ability grouping alone influences students' self-regard. Maybe the effects on self-esteems are more related to what happens after the students are tracked, not to the actual tracking.

A third effect of tracking on students is that it may encourage less desirable social behaviors of students in the lower ability groups. In the classroom Oakes (1985) found a much less cooperative relationship among the students in low tracks than in high tracks. The low track students reported a considerable amount of arguing and ridiculing among students, and unlike the higher ability groups, they did not feel that other students in their classes wanted to help or befriend them. These students are spending time meant for instruction on personal combat and behavior correction.

Furthermore, the students in the lower groups were found to have more negative responses to the instruction in classes. Oakes's research (1985) indicated that these learners were far less conscientious than others about completing classroom tasks. They reported feeling apathetic about doing homework, following teachers' instructions, influencing class activities, and staying on task. Not only are these behaviors and attitudes unwelcomed, but they will inevitably negatively influence their academic advancements as well. Both students in the average and high groups perceived themselves as significantly more involved in their classes.

Oakes (1985) also cited evidence that tracking contributes to delinquent behaviors outside the classroom. Low tracked students participate less in school-related extracurricular activities, have more behavior problems at home, and drop out of school more frequently. Incidentally, in a study done by Cohen (1993), he indicated that when one suburban school implemented a detracking plan in 1990, the district experienced fewer incidents of vandalism and destructive behavior from their students. He attributed the improvement to student's feeling less hostility and negativity within themselves.

Each of the effects of tracking on students cited thus far have indicated caution against the practice; however, overall, ability grouping does not appear detrimental to the students' attitudes toward the specific subject matter in which they are

tracked and their general attitudes toward school. Oakes (1985), who overall concluded that tracking is harmful to students' attitudes, found that the compared groups did not vary in how much they enjoyed a specific tracked course or in how important they felt the subjects were. Also, all students expressed similar satisfaction with their school's overall performance.

The study of seniors and sophomores done by Newfield and McElyea (1983) evaluated similar ideas of students' attitudes towards school. When comparing high achieving homogeneously grouped sophomores and high achieving heterogeneously grouped sophomores, the ability grouped students expressed more satisfaction. They showed more interest in school, had better school attendance, and graded their school's academic program higher. The researchers also analyzed the differences in attitudes towards specific subjects between the groups. Again, the homogeneously grouped students held more positive feelings. For instance, when asked about their English classes, the ability grouped sophomores believed English to be more interesting and more important for their futures; furthermore, they felt more comfortable with the content material and dreaded English class less than the heterogeneously grouped students. The results for the comparisons of homogeneously and heterogeneously grouped high achieving seniors were similar.

In the same study Newfield and McElyea also compared homogeneous and heterogeneous groups of low achieving students.

This analysis produced results of no significant difference in attitudes toward school between the groups for both the sophomores and seniors except in one area. In contrast to the previous results, the low achieving sophomores in regular classes expressed less dread for English than the ability grouped sophomores.

Kulik and Kulik (1982) also conducted research to measure tracking effects on students' attitudes towards school. Feeling that the results of other published studies were "based primarily on anecdotal and uncontrolled studies" (p. 426), they did a meta-analysis of completed studies to produce what they believed to be more controlled, accurate results. First, eight studies were examined for data indicating how tracking effects students' attitudes towards specific subject matters. Seven of the studies showed more positive attitudes in the homogeneously grouped students; three of these had statistically significant differences. In addition, eleven studies were analyzed for results on students' attitudes toward their schools in general. In eight of the studies, homogeneously grouped students again were more satisfied; two of these studies had statistically significant differences. Their overall conclusion was that tracking benefited the students in their opinions of the subjects they were studying but did not appear to influence their opinions toward their schools.

In summary, because tracking segregates students rather than treating them as one equally intelligent group, some educators and parents questions its influence on students' social relations,

self-concepts, behaviors, and attitudes. The literature indicated conflicting data on many of these tracking effects, suggesting that other factors should be examined before deciding its educational value.

Effects of Tracking on Academic Achievement

In addition to concerns of students' personal and social development, academic growth in homogeneously grouped students is under investigation. Feldhusen and Moon (1992) explained that schools that do implement ability grouping often believe that it helps to compensate for the learners' varying background knowledge and experiences related to the course content and for students' varying abilities to deal with complicated, abstract material. These schools attempt to supply stepping blocks of information as individually needed by the learners to ensure success for the greatest number of students. Unfortunately though, research indicated that these practices of tracking do not actually always result in the best possible academic achievement for all.

The majority of researched studies presented the effects of tracking on academic achievement to strictly favor high ability grouped students with no significant positive effect on average or low grouped students. For instance, Gamoran (1992b) cited a study described in works by Fogelman (1983) and Kerchoff (1986). They conducted a five-year study in Britain for which they followed the

progress of more than 9,000 students in grouped and ungrouped secondary schools. The average standardized test scores varied very little when comparing the groups as a whole, but the high achieving grouped students scored significantly better than the high achieving ungrouped students, whereas the low achieving grouped students scored significantly worse than the untracked low achieving students. In other words the achievement as a whole for the groups was comparable, but the grouped students' achievements became more diverse with the years of tracking.

Also, in regard to academic achievement, Newfield and McElyea's study (1983) produced similar results. When both the high achieving sophomore and senior tracked and untracked groups were compared on achievement in English class, the tracked students performed slightly better on both a writing and vocabulary test. In contrast, when the same study was conducted with low achieving sophomores, the groups scored similarly on the vocabulary test, but the heterogeneously grouped students did significantly better. Moreover, the low achieving seniors showed no significant difference between the scores of either test. Again, as Raze (1984) concluded in his work, the main effect of tracking in these cases seems to be positive for the high ability students but neutral or even slightly negative for the low and average ability groups.

Finally, one study completed by Kulik and Kulik (1982, 1992) indicated the same findings. They examined 51 studies to determine

the effects of ability grouping on achievement tests. Nearly 60% of the students showed higher scores in the homogeneous groups and about 40% were higher for the heterogeneous groups. In both cases though, the differences between the scores was trivial until they were analyzed separately by ability level. Then, as in the British study, the higher students from the tracked groups scored significantly higher than the untracked groups, but little difference was evident in the average and low groups. In the 1982 study Kulik and Kulik concluded that high ability students benefit from the stimulation of other high ability students and from the challenge of a more difficult curriculum and that no detrimental effects on average and low ability groups exist. In return, in their reanalysis of 1992, Kulik and Kulik cautioned that the elimination of tracking programs that customize instruction to ability achievement and interests would harm American schools; their belief was that detracking would result in lower achievement for the high ability students with no achievement change (i.e. improvement) in the other ability groups.

In contrast, other cases found the effects of tracking on academic achievement to be positive for all ability groups. All of these cases were anecdotal research rather than statistical research. Greenbaum (1990) explained that when she taught to a ninth grade heterogeneous class, she witnessed student frustration and floundering. When she taught to challenge all the learners, high ability students were actively successful, middle ability

students struggled somewhat but usually learned well, but low ability students became frustrated and their grades worsened. Despite extra teacher and peer guidance for these less able students, they still could not overcome the academic losses. Even Cohen (1993) recognized that in their detracked system those few students who "just get by" were more likely to face failure and not receive a diploma. In the same way, when Greenbaum designed the instruction primarily for low ability students, the high ability students' academic success fell. She proposed that tracking in classrooms must exist to "serve a need for individualization in classrooms" (p. 69). Students in the ability grouped classes were more likely to receive instruction at their needed pace and method, providing for more success.

Greenbaum did recognize that tracking would not be necessary if class sizes were small enough for instructors to meet one-on-one with each student regularly, but rarely are classes in American public school such a manageable size. Greenbaum further supported her case by emphasizing that even Oakes (1986), who has proven to be an advocate of heterogeneous grouping, admitted that tracking should be used in classrooms where the pupil-teacher ratios are higher than fifteen to one.

Ljung (1990) who is also a teacher in a tracked English program strongly shared Greenbaum's claims that ability grouping works in helping her students reach their academic potentials. Her school's program consists of four tracks: honors, advanced

placement, regular, and basic. Most groups received the same materials, but the instructors changed the approach and emphasis. One sign of success Ljung shared was that each year several students improved and advanced from the basic track to the regular track. Also, this school held a poetry reading contest, and the editorial board selected over one third of the winning poetry from students in basic English classes. Third, nearly 87% of their graduates attended college, and finally, Ljung explained that school alumni frequently returned to her and shared their achievements in their educations and jobs.

Overall, the administrators and teachers in these tracked schools have learned to bypass the negative academic effects found in other programs, resulting in a winning situation for all.

Finally, still other studies indicated that the effects of tracking on academic achievement are not significantly negative or positive for any students involved. Slavin (1990) has published one of the most referred to and most extensive studies showing these results. He reviewed a selection of 29 studies: six of these compared students who had been randomly assigned to tracked and untracked classes, nine compared students who were matched on academic measures and divided--one into a tracked class and the other into untracked, and the remaining 14 compared matched groups of students from tracked schools and untracked schools.

Slavin's overall conclusion was that the "effects of ability grouping on student achievement are essentially zero" (p. 484).

Students in grades 7-12 were analyzed and the results were consistent for all the ages. Also, the results did not vary whether the school tracked all day or simply for certain classes. No differences in results were apparent for all the varying subjects, and, lastly, the size and location of the school did not alter the evidence.

In addition to overall achievement, Slavin further analyzed the studies for the impact of tracking on the different independent groups as did Fogelman and Kerchoff. Again, Slavin claimed the results to be "indistinguishable from zero" (p. 485). Even when the different ability groups were compared over a five year period, no studies revealed significant differences.

Slavin summarily concluded that ability grouping has "no consistent positive or negative effects" on any student (p. 494). On one hand he recommended discontinuing tracking, but on the other hand, he claimed that schools who have detracked are failing to show proof that detracking improves achievement. As Slavin suggested, other educational factors seem to be more influential in determining academic success.

In 1992 (a,b) Gamoran completed a review of research, also finding similar results as Slavin. He agreed that tracking in and of itself rarely affected academic achievement in schools and offered the interpretation that academic achievement was impacted only when other variables were inconsistent within the tracking system.

Once again, as in the data from the previous section, how and to what extent tracking affects academic achievement has not been absolutely determined. Some of the discussed researchers, especially Slavin (1990) and Gamoran (1992a, 1992b) recognized that the inconsistent findings may be related to the failure or inability to control all factors involved in the study. Another set of variables that needed to be examined for more informative results included tracking effects on teacher effectiveness, instruction approaches, and course content.

Effects of Tracking on the Quality of Education Provided

A further concern of ability grouping is that it may cause some students, especially those in a low track, to receive a less-quality education. Critics fear that educators will favor the more academically oriented learners, even if not intentionally, and that these feelings will surface in their teaching attitudes and behaviors and in the educational opportunities provided.

One way tracking may affect the quality of education is by influencing teacher morale and the extent of competition among teaching staffs. Not all cases showed negative results. In the Illinois school in Ljung's study (1990), there was no stigma attached to teaching lower classes; instead, members of this staff worked collaboratively to meet the needs of all the students in their tracked English program. The teachers volunteered to teach

their basic classes, and all ability levels of classes were shared by all instructors. Also, team meetings were held and teachers of the low ability students were offered extra training in areas such as reading instruction, cooperative learning, and classroom management. No ill feelings appeared to exist among this staff as a result of tracking.

However, in other cases, the effects of tracking were destructive for teachers. Cohen (1993) shared that his teachers did everything possible to avoid being assigned to teach low ability classes. After one year of experimenting with heterogeneous grouping, where each teacher had just two or three of the more challenging students, the teachers asked to extend the program to include more grades. Even those who previously did not teach any low ability groups were willing to remain untracked rather than return to the old system. In all, the staff's feelings toward low ability students in untracked classes and toward their teaching assignments were more positive.

The study that revealed the most dissension among the staff due to tracking was done by Finley in 1984. She observed and interviewed 19 full-time English teachers in a southwestern, suburban high school in the United States. In this school not every teacher taught all track levels: four taught only the high ability groups, twelve taught a combination of groups, and nine taught only the low ability groups. Interestingly, Finley reported that the teachers' satisfaction with their job depended upon what

and whom they taught...not only because their rewards depended upon good relationships with students but because "esteem from colleagues was related to the ability level they taught" (p.239). The teachers who taught the high ability groups felt they did so because they were especially qualified; in the same way, they believed that those who didn't teach high ability students didn't because they weren't qualified. Even the teachers themselves who only taught low ability groups doubted their own competence because of other teachers' perceptions and their frequent struggles with students. From another view, staff members who only taught top level classes were accused of "unfair politicking" with administration (p. 239).

Like Cohen's staff, this staff also avoided low group teaching assignments when possible. In designing their elective courses, some teachers intentionally made their classes difficult so less motivated students wouldn't register for them. Furthermore, of all the teachers interviewed, none would choose to teach low classes if they were creating their ideal class schedule. Overall, much resentment and competition resulted from this staff's tracking assignment, segregating them professionally much like Oakes described the students being segregated socially in her study.

Tracking can also affect the quality of education in that it sometimes influences the relationship between the teachers and students. Oakes (1985) cited a study done by Walberg and Anderson in 1972 which reported that more learning occurred in classes where

a greater degree of trust and care existed among all members of a classroom. In such an atmosphere, friction was reduced so student and teachers felt they were working for the same goal.

Unfortunately, research also pointed out that a conducive level of intimacy was not felt equally in the different ability groups. In Oakes's analysis (1985) of 25 schools, she interviewed students and teachers alike, inquiring about their perceptions of the tone in the different classes. Despite that fact that observers involved in conducting the study observed almost no evidence of teachers being blatantly positive or negative in any ability level, low tracked students perceived the teachers as significantly more uncaring, unfair, sarcastic, and negative than other students. They also viewed the teachers as being overall more punitive. The responses from teachers conveyed similar regard. Teachers of high ability groups felt warmth and congeniality from the students, but teachers of low ability groups experienced resentment and apathy from the students.

In Raze's overview of research (1984), he too found the teacher-student interaction to vary among ability groups. First, he found students in the high ability classes to be praised more often and criticized less than students in low ability groups. He also cited research done by Winn and Wilson (1983) that showed instructors of high track students paying more attention to them as individuals. These teachers listened to the students more, spent time with them and communicated with them in a friendly manner.

Finally, the interviewing done by Finley (1984) in the southwestern, suburban school exemplified nearly the same attitudes. When describing students in high ability groups, teachers said they were responsive, enthusiastic and motivated. Teachers enjoyed having these students because of their shared interest and mastery of the traditional English curriculum. When discussing the students in low ability groups, teachers confessed to disliking the resistance, indifference, and rebellious attitudes they felt from these students. Teachers were frustrated because they felt they must always instill motivation into these learners. Finally, probably the most revealing evidence of differentiation was in the way the teachers valued the students' appraisals. Teachers were quicker to welcome students' opinions on teachers and class activities when the opinions were from high tracked students. When low tracked students complained, teachers were less likely to take the view seriously, assuming the attitude that low track students "do not know what is good for them" (p. 241). Even though research proposed that low track students would respond to personal relationships, many teachers were not encouraging these to develop.

Tracking may also influence the quality of education provided through the amount and methods of instruction students receive in the varying ability groups. In fact Cohen (1993) discovered that in his suburban New York high school the teachers and the low tracked students formed an unwritten pact that if the teacher didn't make the students work too hard, the students in return

would cause fewer behavior problems in class. Whether these kinds of deals were made in other districts was not evident, but sufficient data does exist showing instructional differences between the varying ability groups.

First, the amount of time the different ability groups actually spent on learning activities varied according to Oakes (1985). In her study she conducted a three day observation of the actual time spent on instruction and other learning activities during a class period. In the observed English classes, the high track spent 81% of the time on instruction whereas the low track spent just 75%. The results of the middle track fell in between these two. Furthermore, Oakes found discrepancies in how much time the teachers expected students to spend on homework activities. Teachers expected an average of 42 minutes daily for the high ability students and 13 minutes daily for the low ability students. Again the middle group's time was in between these two, but it favored the higher times. A pattern was clearly displayed in this data, causing Oakes to conclude that because in the lower track classes less time was both allocated and used for instructional activities, less active learning was occurring in these rooms.

The methods and material used in the instruction for the different ability groups also varied in some schools. Raze (1984) claimed that teachers of low ability students used less effective and less creative teaching approaches and that these students were not given equal access to stimulating learning materials. He

found that low ability instructors mostly drilled their students in a large group setting, implementing minimal one-on-one instruction. Page (1991) and Gamoran (1992a) also reported similar findings where low track learning appeared to be more fragmented and structured. Lower track students did more objective-based seatwork whereas high track students completed more sustained subjective-based activities. Both groups spent time on oral discussions, but the lower track students were provided fewer open-ended questions that could initiate debate and differences of opinion. Overall Page characterized the lower ability lessons as "ambiguous refractions" of the norm (p. 198).

Finally, Oakes (1985) also found the intellectual processes of lessons varying greatly between the different ability tracks. She interviewed teachers, asking them to list the five most critical things they wanted their students to learn during their classes. The responses included both academic and nonacademic goals. When Oakes examined the learning goals not specifically related to content, she realized that students in the different ability groups were expected to learn different kinds of cognitive behaviors. Specifically in English, teachers of high ability students stressed critical thinking, independence, high activity, creativity, and self-discovery learning. In contrast, teachers of low ability students emphasized conformity, social interaction, cooperation, punctuality, and study habit improvement. Teachers of average groups responded more closely to the high ability tracks in this

respect. Students were not equally being encouraged to develop their intellectual capabilities and levels of thinking.

The researchers cited thus far are not only citing differences, but they are also finding fault in these differences. They uphold their view that all students should be offered an equal education. However, others hold an opposing view. Feldhusen and Moon (1992) applaud at least some differences in the education provided to different ability learners. They argued that students of varying ability levels do learn differently and should be taught differently. Their research stated that more able students learn more effectively in a less-structured class with indirect flexible teaching methods, but that less able students learn better in a structured environment with complete, direct instruction. Hence, they readily supported the variances described in the previous studies.

Also found, in complete contradiction to all of these studies, were the cases that showed no significant variation in materials and methods used for different ability groups cases where the variations in instruction actually favored the lower ability groups. Gamoran (1992a) closely examined two schools in his studies that proved to have effective and successful low tracked English classes. At both schools, the same classic literature was used for all ability level classes, but one school varied the number of novels read per group according to ability. Also, both schools equally valued oral discussion in all tracks, encouraging

debate and discussion of literary themes among all students. In the observed lesson, the low ability grouped discussion was more teacher-structured. For instance, the teacher wrote responses on the board more for emphasis and reinforcement of main ideas. She also provided more examples and related the material to students' prior knowledge more often. Nevertheless, the cognitive levels of students' thinking and responses were similar.

Similarly Ljung (1990) also provided a description of a successful lower track English class. The teachers in her school did not vary the instructional material for the different groups either, but they did frequently vary their methods and emphasis. For example, again, the literature used for all tracks was the same, but as Ljung explained, the instructional activities were actually more varied for the low track students. They participated in more problem-solving, role-playing, field trips, and audiovisual viewing to help compensate for their weaker background knowledge.

Lastly, another effect of tracking on the quality of education is that students in the different ability groups may not all experience the same quality curriculum. These findings closely mirror the results presented on instructional materials and methods. Page (1991) supplied the most explicit description of the curriculum differences in her study of two ability grouped high schools. She recognized basically three patterns in the way the curriculum changed for the low ability grouped classes.

The first pattern she described was referred to as the skeleton model. In this model, the subjects taught in the content areas remained the same for all students, but the low tracked students covered the material in less depth. Page explained that this plan valued the traditional, subject-oriented goals, and it socially allowed the students to feel more equal to their peers because all students were studying the same material. Problems with this plan occurred when teachers failed to make the difficult but entertaining material intellectually meaningful to the less able students and when teachers neglected to challenge students to improve basic skills by too readily adapting materials to their ability level.

The second curriculum difference that Page observed occurring in lower ability groups was a skill-based curriculum. She explained that this model reflected "a hierarchal notion of bodies of knowledge, cognition, and information in which 'foundations' (were) prerequisite to advanced subjects and complex operations" (p. 187). Basic skills in subject areas were drilled repeatedly, avoiding higher level concepts until the fundamentals are mastered. Skill teachers emphasized the differences in students as learners and felt it was important to openly address these differences. They did not show concern as to the effects this curriculum had on students' feelings or self-esteem. Rather, they based their instruction on industry, efficiency and structure.

The third pattern Page identified was the relevant curriculum. This pattern was supported by those who believe that the curriculum should be based primarily on developmental needs and interests of students. This model was often used for academically unsuccessful students and tended to emphasize lessons addressing moralistic, life issues. The teachers attempted to have students considering and discussing their positions and roles in various topics such as alcohol abuse or financial stability. This model placed the teacher in the role of influencing students' values and of determining what topics would be relevant in a diverse classroom.

In summary, in Page's studies she found all lower grouped classes did vary in curriculum in some way. She concluded by stating that not all the low tracked classes were ineffective; some resembled regular classes, yet they had subtle but important differences.

Oakes (1985) also found curriculum differences between the ability groups in the 25 schools she observed. For instance, the lessons for the high track English classes were designed around material that would be needed to attend college. These students thoroughly analyzed classic and modern literature and extensively wrote various forms of expository writing. They also focused on developing their own writing style and practicing vocabulary and reading comprehension exercises required on college entrance exams. However, the low track students in the same schools rarely learned this same material. Their material included young-adult fiction,

basic literacy skills, reading textbooks and workbooks, narrative paragraph writing, and functional literacy skills.

Again, the majority of the research supported that differences do exist in the course curricula for the various tracked classes. Though, the research did not prove whether the changes positively or negatively influenced the quality of education the students were provided.

The final section of this research, like the preceding sections, continued to exemplify that tracking can affect the variables that influence the quality of provided education: teacher morale, student-teacher relationships, course instruction and materials, and class curriculum. But the effects were not always detrimental, and the inequalities did not exist in every case. Upon analyzing equally inconsistent data, Slavin in 1990 concluded that it simply did not matter who students took classes with if the instruction was consistently good.

In summary, this review of research on ability grouping attempted to analyze the effects of tracking on the student, on academic achievement, and on the quality of education provided for the student. In all concerned areas the writer was able to find data that showed both positive and negative effects of ability grouping. The inconsistencies suggest that tracking, alone, does not impact the areas in question so much as the way tracking is perceived and handled by all those involved in the program.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Subjects and Setting

The subjects surveyed for this study included 35 high school English teachers from 33 different districts. The questionnaire was actually presented to 52 high school English department chairpersons with the request that either they or another teacher in the department complete it; however, not all questionnaires were returned.

All involved subjects were chosen based on their district location. The 52 selected schools are all located in the western region of Ohio. The writer accessed the 1994 Ohio Language Arts Leaders' Directory published by the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Education for nearly one half of the chosen subjects, and area phone directories were used in choosing the other subjects. The writer limited the study to the western region of Ohio because of her familiarity with these districts and because of her own professional interests. The writer teaches in this geographical area and was interested in evaluating her schools' tracking practices in relationship to the practices in somewhat similar, surrounding districts.

The study included schools of varying sizes. Approximately 45% of the schools were rural; 25% were urban; and 30% were suburban. Of the returned questionnaires, 49% came from rural schools; 21% came from urban schools; and 30% came from suburban schools.

In general, the rural schools that participated serve a village of or fewer than 6,000 members in a primarily agricultural area. The urban schools varied somewhat in size, serving communities ranging from approximately 8,000 members to 21,000 members. These moderately-sized cities were located in still somewhat agricultural areas with primarily small industry support. Finally, all of the suburban schools served suburbs of a major Ohio city with approximately 183,000 members. These areas, of course, are highly industrialized and commercialized areas.

Instrumentation

The Tracking Practices and Attitudes Questionnaire (TPAQ) used for this study consisted of a combination of nine open-ended questions and 22 Likert scale items. The open-ended questions requested information pertaining to demographics and tracking practices. The Likert scale items requested attitudinal responses to statements regarding common research results and practices of ability grouping.

The Likert portion of the TPAQ was designed based around 11 tracking issues. For each issue, one positive statement and one negative statement were composed for the questionnaire. For instance, the statements in items 10 and 22 both refer to the optimal learning environment for lower ability students, but item 22 is phrased in favor of homogeneous grouping whereas 10 is phrased against it.

Each set of items was based on the ideas reviewed in previously published literature and chosen to coincide with the focused issues in this study's Chapter II: tracking effects on the students, on academic achievement, and on the overall quality of education provided to the learners.

Three paired items addressed issues of how ability grouping impacts the students. Items 15 and 22 refer to works done by Abraham (1989), Cohen (1993), Lacey (1970), Oakes (1985) and Raze (1985) that suggested a relationship between tracking and social stratification. Also, statements 5 and 18 (set) and 3 and 16 (set) related to tracking effects on the self-concepts of high ability and low ability grouped students, respectively. The ideas for these items were drawn from studies done by Cohen (1993), Kulik and Kulik (1982,1992), Newfield and McElyea (1983), Oakes (1985), and Riccio (1985).

Additionally, three other paired items addressed the effects of tracking on academic achievement. Set 2 and 17 and set 8 and 12 questioned the necessity of ability grouping to meet the individual

learning needs of varying ability students. Further, items 1 and 13 referred to the diversity of academic achievement between ability groups over time. All of these items were chosen based on research from Cohen (1993), Feldhusen and Moon (1992), Gamoran (1992a, 1992b), Greenbaum (1990), Kulik and Kulik (1982, 1992), Ljung (1990), Newfield and McElyea (1983), Raze (1985) and Slavin (1990).

Finally, the last five items on the TPAQ related to the extent that tracking affects the quality of provided education. Items 9 and 21 addressed the research of Cohen (1993), Finley (1984), and Ljung (1990) which suggested some teaching staffs become divided as a result of tracking. Also, the idea for item set 4 and 11 and set 7 and 20 were prompted from these same studies, questioning which educators should be assigned to teach which ability groups. The last sets of items, 10 and 6 (set) and 14 and 19 (set), address the quality of teacher instruction in the various ability groups. These statements were drawn from ideas in the research by Cohen (1993), Finley (1984), Gamoran (1992a, 1992b), Ljung (1990), Oakes (1985), Page (1991), and Raze (1984).

The reviewed research depicted inconsistent findings; therefore, the writer hoped to attain more accurate data by conducting her own study addressing these same issues of ability grouping.

Upon completion of the TPAQ, 52 copies were mailed to the selected subjects in November of 1994. A self-addressed stamped

envelope and a small gratification token were enclosed with the questionnaire to encourage a higher return rate. Approximately 50% of the questionnaires were returned through the mail in this first effort of contact. Then, the last 17% were attained after making telephone calls to various subjects whom the writer or the writer's colleagues had personally known. A second mailing of the questionnaire was not necessary.

Data Collection and Analysis

The TPAQ was administered primarily to determine the ability grouping practices and attitudes of area English instructors. The responses to the open-ended questions depicted the number of schools that practiced homogeneous grouping in their English departments, the tracking system used, and the procedures implemented for assigning students to ability groups.

The Likert items were statistically tabulated and analyzed. On the Likert scale each item was measured on a scale of 1-5. Since the TPAQ had 22 Likert items, the highest possible score for a subject completing the questionnaire was 110 points, showing strong favoritism towards tracking. In tabulating the results, because of the negative and positive paired items, the scale on the positive items needed to be reversed. That is, a "one" on a statement, indicating strong agreement with positive effects of tracking, translated into five points. In the same way a "two"

equalled four points, a "four" equalled two points, and a "five" equalled one point. With this system, the higher the score, the more the instructor favored ability grouping.

The collected data from the TPAQ has been analyzed and presented in five ways. Table 1 simply indicates each total TPAQ score for all 35 teachers and the overall TPAQ mean score. Table 2 includes the percentages of each possible response given for all items on the TPAQ and the TPAQ mean score for each of the 22 Likert scale items.

Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present an analysis of the results based on the responding subjects' years of teaching experience. Data is divided into three groups: teachers with 0-10 years, teachers with 11-20 years, and teachers with 21-30 years. Tables 3, 4, and 5 show the percentages of teachers from each group that responded as such for each possible answer. Table 6 indicates the mean score for each item based on years of experience.

The tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 are designed like the previously discussed tables, but they present the data in groups based on schools that fully track, schools that partially track, and schools that do not track. Schools that partially track were considered to be the schools that tracked for only part of the grades from 9-12 or that were currently phasing out their tracking system.

Finally, table 11 records the percentage and mean scores of the survey responses divided into the three subject areas upon which the Likert items were designed: the effects of tracking

on students, on academic achievement, and on the quality of education provided.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The question whether to use ability grouping or not in schools clearly stands as one of the most controversial issues in public schools. For many decades, numerous articles, journals, and books purporting contradicting positions and data have been published, and school systems have tracked and detracked in response to the fluctuating evidence. Interestingly, a similar overall uncertainty towards ability grouping existed in the data collected in this study.

The total mean score and the collection of total TPAQ scores indicated mixed attitudes (see Table 1). First, consider if the subject completing the TPAQ had responded "undecided" to each statement, the subject's TPAQ score would have been 66.00 (3.00×22), and the statistical range indicating an overall "undecided" position would be 55.00 to 76.78 (2.50×22 to 3.49×22). As shown, the actual total mean score was 67.49 which falls in the "undecided" range. Similarly, the most popular score, or the mode, was 63.00, and the median score was 66.00. Furthermore, an examination of the distribution of total scores showed 22 of the 35 subjects scored in the "undecided" range with one subject scoring exactly 66.00. Moreover, only four subjects scored between the range 33.00-54.78 falling in the range which indicated an overall

Table 1: Total TPAQ Scores Showing Overall Tracking Attitudes

Subject	Total TPAQ score
1	78
2	59
3	68
4	63
5	67
6	83
7	71
8	80
9	62
10	82
11	64
12	81
13	53
14	58
15	79
16	79
17	62
18	92
19	53
20	70
21	76
22	63
23	63
24	43
25	48
26	66
27	70
28	62
29	67
30	65
31	63
32	63
33	68
34	80
35	61

Total Mean Score: 67.49 (out of 110 possible)

unfavorable attitude toward ability grouping. The lowest score was a 43.00. On the other hand, ten subjects scored between the range of 77.00-98.78 indicating an overall favorable attitude toward ability grouping. The highest score was 92.00. No scores indicated strongly negative (range = 22.00-32.78) or strongly positive (range = 99-110) attitudes.

The scores of the individual TPAQ items also hovered around the undecided range (see Table 2). Sixteen of the twenty-two item mean scores fell between 2.50 and 3.49. The scores for only statements 3 and 15 were in the range showing negative attitude (1.50-2.49), and the scores for statements 4, 11, 9, and 20, falling in the range of 3.50-4.49, indicated a positive attitude. Again, no scores were in the extreme ranges.

One note of interest the writer observed was that some of the paired items did not fall in the same range (see Table 2). The item mean results for set 3 and 16, set 15 and 22, set 9 and 21, and set 10 and 20 varied by one range. In each case, one item mean fell in the "undecided" range, and the other item mean fell in a range one above or one below the "undecided." The only statement set that consistently scored in a range other than "undecided" was set 4 and 11. The mean item scores on these statements were the highest overall, falling in the range indicating a favorable attitude towards tracking.

When the results were considered in relation to the amount of teaching experience the subjects had, the results were similar.

Table 2: Percentage and Mean Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes by TPAQ Items

survey item	Survey Answers					item mean
	SA	A	U	D	SD	
1	6%	20%	54%	17%	3%	2.91
2	20%	26%	14%	29%	11%	3.14
3	26%	40%	6%	29%	0%	2.37
4	0%	3%	6%	31%	60%	4.49
5	11%	43%	20%	26%	0%	3.40
6	6%	20%	29%	29%	17%	2.69
7	6%	26%	17%	34%	17%	2.69
8	9%	26%	9%	46%	11%	2.74
9	3%	11%	26%	34%	26%	3.69
10	9%	29%	37%	23%	3%	2.83
11	26%	46%	11%	11%	6%	3.74
12	14%	31%	20%	29%	6%	2.80
13	0%	29%	40%	26%	6%	2.91
14	9%	34%	23%	29%	6%	3.11
15	3%	17%	20%	46%	14%	2.49
16	3%	29%	9%	46%	14%	2.60
17	6%	37%	17%	37%	3%	2.94
18	3%	29%	29%	34%	6%	3.11
19	6%	11%	17%	60%	6%	3.49
20	0%	14%	20%	51%	14%	3.66
21	6%	37%	26%	31%	0%	3.17
22	14%	31%	26%	23%	6%	2.74

The mean total scores for each group fell in the "undecided" range (see Table 6). Just a slight difference existed between the highest score from the group with the least experience (Group 1) and the next highest score from the group with the most teaching experience (Group 3). The lowest score from the middle group (Group 2) varied approximately eight points from the other two groups.

Analysis of the individual items exemplified some of these similar results but also showed larger differences (see Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6). First, on ten of the items the response item mean scores fell in the exact same range for all three subject groups. For survey item 3, all three groups had scores in the second range, which suggested feelings against tracking. For items 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 17, 20, and 21, all three groups scored in the "undecided" range. Finally, the item 4 mean scores all fell in the fourth range, suggesting feelings in favor of tracking.

Eleven of the survey items showed responses where two of the groups shared item means from the same range and a third group's range varied. Predictably, Group 2 varied the most often in such cases. These subjects consistently scored one range lower on survey items 8, 9, 10, 12, 19, and 22. In four other such cases, Group 3 varied in scores on items 5, 7, 15, and 16. On item 5 Group 3 scored one range lower, but on the other three items, they scored one range higher. Finally, the item mean score of survey item 11 for Group 1 was one range higher than the other scores.

Table 3: Percentage Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes of Teachers with 0-10 Years of Experience (n=4)

survey item	Survey Answers				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
2	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%
3	25%	50%	0%	25%	0%
4	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
5	50%	25%	0%	25%	0%
6	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%
7	0%	25%	25%	0%	50%
8	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%
9	0%	25%	0%	25%	50%
10	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%
11	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
12	0%	25%	50%	25%	0%
13	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%
14	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%
15	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%
16	0%	25%	0%	50%	25%
17	0%	25%	25%	50%	0%
18	0%	75%	0%	25%	0%
19	0%	0%	25%	75%	0%
20	0%	25%	0%	25%	50%
21	0%	50%	25%	25%	0%
22	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%

Table 4: Percentage Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes of Teachers with 11-20 Years of Experience (n=6)

survey item	Survey Answers				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	0%	17%	50%	33%	0%
2	0%	33%	17%	33%	17%
3	17%	50%	33%	0%	0%
4	0%	0%	17%	33%	50%
5	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%
6	0%	33%	17%	33%	17%
7	0%	0%	33%	50%	17%
8	0%	17%	0%	67%	17%
9	17%	0%	50%	33%	0%
10	17%	50%	17%	17%	0%
11	0%	83%	17%	0%	0%
12	33%	33%	17%	17%	0%
13	0%	50%	33%	17%	0%
14	17%	0%	33%	50%	0%
15	0%	0%	33%	50%	17%
16	0%	17%	0%	67%	17%
17	0%	67%	17%	17%	0%
18	0%	0%	33%	67%	0%
19	17%	33%	33%	17%	0%
20	0%	0%	33%	50%	17%
21	0%	17%	33%	50%	0%
22	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%

Table 5: Percentage Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes of Teachers with 21-30 Years of Experience (n=25)

survey item	Survey Answers				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	8%	24%	48%	16%	4%
2	24%	28%	12%	24%	12%
3	28%	36%	0%	36%	0%
4	0%	4%	4%	32%	60%
5	8%	40%	20%	32%	0%
6	8%	16%	32%	28%	16%
7	8%	32%	12%	36%	12%
8	8%	32%	8%	40%	12%
9	0%	12%	24%	36%	28%
10	4%	24%	44%	24%	4%
11	24%	40%	12%	16%	8%
12	12%	32%	16%	32%	8%
13	0%	28%	36%	28%	8%
14	8%	40%	20%	24%	8%
15	4%	20%	16%	48%	12%
16	4%	32%	12%	40%	12%
17	8%	32%	16%	40%	4%
18	4%	28%	32%	28%	8%
19	4%	8%	12%	68%	8%
20	0%	16%	20%	56%	8%
21	8%	40%	24%	28%	0%
22	8%	36%	24%	24%	8%

Table 6: Mean Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes
of Teachers Based on Experience

survey item	Years of Experience		
	0-10	11-20	21-30
1	3.00	3.17	2.84
2	3.00	2.67	3.28
3	2.25	2.17	2.44
4	4.00	4.30	4.48
5	4.00	3.67	3.24
6	2.50	2.67	2.72
7	2.25	2.17	2.88
8	3.00	2.17	2.84
9	4.00	3.00	3.80
10	2.50	2.33	3.00
11	4.75	3.83	3.56
12	3.00	2.17	2.92
13	2.75	3.33	2.84
14	3.25	2.83	3.16
15	2.25	2.17	2.56
16	2.25	2.17	2.76
17	3.25	2.50	3.00
18	3.50	2.33	2.92
19	3.75	2.50	3.68
20	4.00	3.83	3.56
21	3.25	2.67	3.28
22	3.00	2.00	2.88
Total scores:	69.50	60.65	68.64

Four of the differences were seen by the writer as significant because the difference between the highest and lowest item mean scores was equal to or greater than 1.00 (see Table 6). One item that showed this difference was item 9 which suggested that ability grouping encouraged competition among teachers. Groups 1 and 3 expressed that they did not perceive this to be true whereas Group 2 was undecided. Also, item 22 indicated a significant difference in attitudes. This statement stated that ability grouping caused social stratification of the students. Groups 1 and 3 were undecided but Group 2 indicated that stratification does occur. Further, item 11 addressed whether teachers with the least experience should be assigned to predominantly teach lower ability groups. Groups 2 and 3 indicated they felt that this assignment should not be made, and Group 1 strongly felt this assignment should not be made. The differences in emphasis of attitudes on this item may be in relation to how directly the teachers in each group would be affected by this practice. The largest mathematical difference in group responses for these items was on item 19. This statement stated that higher ability students received better academic instruction in a heterogeneously grouped class. Groups 1 and 3 disagreed with the statement, but Group 2 was clearly undecided.

Finally, on one item all three groups disagreed (see Table 6). Item 18 addressed the effects of heterogeneous grouping on the self-esteem of high ability students. Group 2 felt that tracking

was not necessary to foster these students' self-esteem; Group 3 was undecided; and Group 1 felt tracking did boost these students' self-esteem.

In summary, the overall differences in the TPAQ scores for subject groups based on years of teaching experience was not significant, but in the majority of cases where scores varied, Group 2 showed the least support for ability grouping.

Again, large discrepancies were not noted when the data was analyzed based on the current tracking practices in the schools where the surveyed subjects teach. At the time of the study, twenty subjects did track (see Table 7), seven subjects partially tracked (see Table 8), and eight subjects did not track (see Table 9). The mean total scores for each group again were in the "undecided" ranges. The subjects from schools that do track (Group 1) had the highest score, showing the most favorable attitude toward ability grouping. The second highest score belonged to the subjects from schools that partially track (Group 2), and the lowest score came from the subjects from schools that do not track (Group 3). The order of these total scores appeared logical, but the small discrepancies between the scores were somewhat surprising to the writer.

As in the previous tables, the analysis of individual items depicted more variances (see Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10). This data showed that the three groups completely agreed on just six of the twenty-two survey items: 1, 2, 5, 13, 14, and 21. On all these

Table 7: Percentage Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes of Teachers in Schools That Do Track (n=20)

survey item	Survey Answers				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	0%	20%	65%	10%	5%
2	25%	30%	15%	25%	5%
3	15%	45%	10%	30%	0%
4	0%	0%	10%	40%	50%
5	10%	50%	10%	30%	0%
6	5%	20%	50%	15%	10%
7	0%	20%	20%	50%	10%
8	5%	30%	15%	45%	5%
9	0%	15%	25%	35%	25%
10	0%	20%	55%	20%	5%
11	10%	50%	15%	20%	5%
12	0%	20%	35%	40%	5%
13	0%	20%	45%	30%	5%
14	10%	40%	30%	10%	10%
15	0%	20%	30%	45%	5%
16	0%	30%	10%	55%	5%
17	0%	25%	25%	45%	5%
18	0%	40%	35%	20%	5%
19	0%	10%	25%	55%	10%
20	0%	20%	20%	55%	5%
21	5%	45%	20%	30%	0%
22	5%	25%	35%	30%	5%

Table 8: Percentage Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes of Teachers in Schools That Partially Track (n=7)

survey item	Survey Answers				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	14%	14%	43%	29%	0%
2	29%	14%	0%	43%	14%
3	57%	14%	0%	29%	0%
4	0%	14%	0%	14%	71%
5	14%	29%	29%	29%	0%
6	14%	14%	0%	43%	29%
7	14%	0%	29%	29%	29%
8	29%	0%	0%	57%	14%
9	14%	0%	0%	43%	43%
10	29%	29%	0%	43%	0%
11	4%	29%	0%	14%	0%
12	29%	43%	0%	14%	14%
13	0%	29%	29%	29%	14%
14	14%	43%	0%	43%	0%
15	14%	14%	14%	29%	29%
16	14%	14%	0%	43%	29%
17	0%	57%	0%	43%	0%
18	14%	29%	0%	57%	0%
19	14%	29%	0%	57%	0%
20	0%	14%	14%	43%	29%
21	14%	29%	14%	43%	0%
22	29%	14%	29%	14%	14%

Table 9: Percentage Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes of Teachers in Schools That Do Not Track (n=8)

survey item	Survey Answers				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	13%	25%	38%	25%	0%
2	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%
3	25%	50%	0%	25%	0%
4	0%	0%	0%	25%	75%
5	13%	25%	38%	25%	0%
6	0%	25%	0%	50%	25%
7	13%	50%	0%	13%	25%
8	0%	25%	0%	50%	25%
9	0%	13%	50%	25%	13%
10	13%	50%	25%	13%	0%
11	38%	38%	13%	0%	13%
12	38%	50%	0%	13%	0%
13	0%	50%	38%	13%	0%
14	0%	13%	25%	63%	0%
15	0%	13%	0%	63%	25%
16	0%	25%	13%	38%	25%
17	25%	50%	13%	13%	0%
18	0%	0%	38%	50%	13%
19	13%	0%	13%	75%	0%
20	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%
21	0%	13%	50%	38%	0%
22	25%	5%	0%	13%	0%

Table 10: Mean Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes
of Teachers Based on Their Tracking Practices

survey item	School's Tracking Practice		
	DO	PARTIALLY	DO NOT
1	3.00	2.86	2.75
2	3.45	3.00	2.50
3	2.55	2.00	2.25
4	4.40	4.43	4.75
5	3.40	3.29	3.25
6	2.95	3.57	2.25
7	2.50	2.43	3.13
8	2.85	2.71	2.25
9	3.70	4.00	3.38
10	3.10	2.57	2.38
11	3.40	4.29	3.88
12	3.30	2.43	1.88
13	2.80	2.71	3.38
14	3.30	3.29	2.50
15	2.65	2.57	2.00
16	2.65	2.43	2.38
17	3.30	2.86	2.13
18	3.10	3.00	2.25
19	3.65	3.00	3.50
20	3.45	3.86	4.00
21	3.25	3.14	2.75
22	3.05	2.71	2.00
Total scores	69.80	66.01	61.54

items the responses for all the groups fell in the "undecided" range.

On these tables fifteen of the survey items showed responses where two of the groups shared item means from the same range with the third group's item mean in another range. Group 3 varied in responses eight times (items 4, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, and 22). On item 4 their response fell one range higher whereas on the other seven items, they responded one range lower. Group 1 varied five times (items 3, 11, 12, 14, and 20); on items 3, 12, and 16 their responses fell one range higher, but on items 11 and 20, one range lower. Finally, Group 2 varied two times (items 7 and 19). For both of these items the groups responded in one lower range. On all of these 15 items, the discrepancy never varied more than one range.

Three of the item response differences on these same tables showed a discrepancy of more than 1.00. One such survey item was item 22 (which also showed a significant discrepancy on the tables relating to teacher experience). On this item, Groups 1 and 2 responded that they were undecided as to whether grouping caused student social stratification, whereas Group 3 agreed that grouping does cause stratification. Particularly, Groups 1 and 3 varied the most in this item mean. Further, item 17 addressed whether ability grouping was necessary to provide for the learning needs of the most able students. Groups 1 and 2 were undecided in their responses, and Group 3 felt that ability grouping was not necessary

in this case. Finally, the largest mathematical difference in this group of survey items occurred with statement 12 which suggested that ability grouping was not necessary to provide for the learning needs of less able students. Groups 2 and 3 responded in agreement that ability grouping was not necessary, whereas Group 1 was undecided. Interestingly, much of the reviewed literature explained that one of the main reasons grouping was implemented was to prevent neglecting the needs of at-risk students. The subjects surveyed in this study apparently do not support this logic. Furthermore, on item 17 Group 2, those that partially track, was undecided, but on item 12 this groups did not support ability grouping. The subjects in the schools that partially track seem to believe that ability grouping is more necessary for high ability students than for low ability students. This attitude was supported by some of the reviewed literature, particularly Feldhusen and Moon (1992).

Finally, again, on one item all three groups disagreed (see Table 10). Item 6 stated that lower ability students receive better academic instruction in homogeneously grouped classes. Group 2 agreed with the statement; Group 1 was undecided, and Group 3 disagreed with the statement. Again, uncertainty surfaced on the need of ability grouping for lower ability students.

Overall, the mean total TPAQ score differences were not large enough to vary in ranges; however, some of the individual item scores were. Also, interestingly, on all of the items of variance,

the subjects in Group 1, those that do track, responded in the "undecided" range. Apparently, most teachers who are in schools that do track are questioning whether it is a beneficial practice.

Finally, in examining the data by item topic, the mean totals for each topic again all fell in the "undecided" range (see Table 11). The lowest proportional score was given in responses to the effects of ability grouping on students' self-esteems. The only items related to this topic that showed definite opinions were survey items 3 and 15. Item 3 suggested that homogeneous grouping caused lower self-concepts for less able students. The subjects as a whole agreed with this statement. Also, statement 15 questioned whether social stratification occurred as a result of grouping; again teachers agreed that it does.

The middle score (proportionally) was found on the items regarding academic achievement (see Table 11). All of these item mean scores fell in the "undecided" range. Incidentally, paired survey items 1 and 13 resulted in the exact item means. These items questioned whether students became more diverse in their academic achievement over time in an ability grouped setting. Paired item 2 and 17 (set) and 8 and 12 (set) varied slightly more. The former set addressed the learning needs of the more able students, and the latter set addressed the learning needs of the less able students.

Lastly, the highest proportional score resulted from the questions in relation to how ability grouping affects the quality

Table 11: Percentage and Mean Scores Showing Tracking Attitudes by TPAQ Item Topic

survey item	SA	Survey Answers				SD	mean total
		A	U	D			
Self-esteem							
3	26%	40%	6%	29%	0%	2.37	
16	3%	29%	9%	46%	14%	2.60	
5	11%	43%	20%	26%	0%	3.40	
18	3%	29%	29%	34%	6%	2.89	
22	14%	31%	26%	23%	6%	2.74	
15	3%	17%	20%	46%	14%	2.49	
Total:						16.49/30.00	
Academic Achievement							
1	6%	20%	54%	17%	3%	2.91	
13	0%	29%	40%	26%	6%	2.91	
2	20%	26%	14%	29%	11%	3.14	
17	6%	37%	17%	37%	3%	2.94	
8	9%	26%	9%	46%	11%	2.74	
12	14%	31%	20%	29%	6%	2.80	
Total:						17.44/30.00	
Quality of Education							
4	0%	3%	6%	31%	60%	4.49	
11	26%	46%	11%	11%	6%	3.74	
7	6%	26%	17%	34%	17%	2.69	
20	0%	14%	20%	51%	14%	3.66	
10	9%	29%	37%	23%	3%	2.83	
6	6%	20%	29%	29%	17%	2.69	
14	9%	34%	23%	29%	6%	3.11	
19	6%	11%	17%	60%	6%	3.49	
9	3%	11%	26%	34%	26%	3.69	
21	6%	37%	26%	31%	0%	3.17	
Total:						33.56/50.00	

of education provided to students (see Table 11). Four of the ten items showed responses in favor of ability grouping. The highest item scores came in response to item 4 and 11 which addressed whether teachers with the least experience should be assigned to teach predominantly low ability students. The teachers clearly disagreed that this practice should be used. Similarly, item 20 stated that the most effective teachers should teach primarily high ability grouped students, and teachers disagreed with this practice. Finally, item 9 questioned whether ability grouping encouraged competition among teaching staffs. Again, the surveyed teachers responded that this dissension did not occur. Overall, the subjects in this study did not display support for the "unfair politicking" and dissension exemplified in Finley's study (1984, p. 239).

In conclusion, doubts and uncertainties about tracking effects definitely existed among all surveyed teachers. The most confidence the subjects showed was in their willingness to serve the less able students and to work cooperatively with other staff members. Also, many teachers surveyed expressed the fear that ability grouping does negatively affect the self-esteem and social acceptance especially for less able students. No certainties were shown in regard to the effects of ability grouping on academic achievement on the TPAQ responses. Just as suggested from the results in the reviewed published literature, students' self-esteems, their academic achievement, and the quality of

education provided do not rely solely, or maybe even primarily, on whether schools use ability grouping but rather on how the schools use ability grouping.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The opening chapter of this study presented several considerations that educators and parents have in regard to the educational practice of homogeneous grouping, especially in secondary English classes. These particular concerns were the motivation for the writer to conduct this study, with the intent to determine tracking practices of selected high school English departments in Western Ohio and to gain insight on the attitudes of English department chairpersons toward academic tracking practices. Assumptions and limitations of the study were also discussed, and relevant topic-related terms were defined.

Chapter II provided a review of related literature. Common tracking practices were identified and discussed, particularly focusing on tracking system structures, group labels, and placement methods. Then the writer analyzed the related literature in regard to its effects on those involved in its implementation. The study first exemplified the influence on students' behaviors and attitudes. Next, the writer discussed its effects on academic achievement of all students. Finally, the chapter identified the effects of tracking on teacher morale, student-teacher relationships, course instruction and materials, and class

curriculum. Overall, in all concerned areas the writer was able to cite data that indicated both positive and negative effects of ability grouping.

In Chapter III the writer described the procedure of the study. As discussed, thirty-five high school English teachers participated in the study by completing a survey created by the writer. The survey topics and items were described, and the data collection and analysis were explained.

Finally, Chapter IV of the study presented and addressed the data results from the surveys. Eleven tables were used to display the data, and it was analyzed according to the teachers' years of experience, the participating schools' current tracking practices, and the survey item topics. The results in this chapter correlated with the inconclusive results in Chapter II, indicating further uncertainty about the effects of ability grouping.

Conclusions

One conclusion that may be drawn from the data is that teachers of this study appear to suspect that tracking may have negative effects socially on some students. The overall responses to item 3 indicated that the surveyed teachers felt that tracking may cause lower self-concepts for less able students.

Interestingly, when these item responses were examined based on years of teacher experience, all groups maintained this position,

but when examined by subjects' tracking practices, only two groups supported this attitude, with the group that did track responding indecisively. Also, the grouped responses to item 15 showed that the subjects believed tracking may cause social stratification among students. The data based on years of experience showed that two groups supported this happening; the group with 21-30 years of experience statistically fell slightly into the undecided range. The other set of tables showed that the group that did not track felt most strongly that stratification could be a result of tracking with the other two groups undecided.

Secondly, the teachers in this study also conveyed notable confidence in their responses showing that tracking was not likely to cause competition or dissension among the teaching staffs. Overall, in the data for items 4 and 11, the subjects responded that they did not feel teachers with the least experience should be assigned to primarily teach low ability students. These responses were consistent regardless of the subjects' years of experience or current tracking practices. Similarly, item 20 stated that the most effective teachers should teach primarily high ability grouped students. The study participants' responses communicated that they believed all ability groups should be shared in an attempt to ensure that all groups are educationally valued equally by teaching staffs. The only groups on the tables that did not statistically indicate this attitude was the group that did not practice tracking; their responses showed uncertainty. Finally, item 9

responses indicated that the surveyed teachers overall did not feel that tracking encouraged negative competition among staffs. In the table breakdown based on years of experience, two groups responded as such, and the middle group was undecided. The table based on tracking practices also showed two groups consistent with this attitude and the group that did not track to be undecided.

Lastly, the strongest conclusion supported by the data was that for all the aspects of ability grouping examined in this study, the surveyed teachers shared prevalent uncertainty regarding the effects of homogeneous grouping. Twenty-two of the thirty-five total survey scores fell in the "undecided" range with zero scores showing strong attitudes for or against tracking. Also, sixteen of the twenty-two item means fell in the "undecided" range; again, no scores showed extreme attitudes. Furthermore, the mean scores for the three groups on the tables focusing on teachers' experience and tracking practices fell in the "undecided" range. Finally, the means on the table indicating attitudes toward the three topic areas also indicated undecided responses. Consistently, the overall grouped mean scores used in this study exemplify doubt and uncertainty.

Implications for Practice

Because the research review and the survey data indicated very few definite effects of homogeneous grouping, it appears that other

factors related to tracking must be considered. The writer does not feel that this study provides evidence to recommend detracking; however, schools that do implement ability grouping should do so with caution.

First, the tracking plan used should be thoroughly designed, consistent, and accurately recorded. Educators, counselors, and students should know clearly what criteria is to be used for group placement, and the focus for this criteria should be based solely on instructional objectives to avoid discriminatory and subjective group placement. Furthermore, the writer suggests that the policy provide opportunity for students to move into different ability groups when appropriate. This flexibility may help prevent negative social effects on students by not locking them out of a higher group in the educational society. Movement should definitely be considered between academic years and if scheduling and curriculum requirements permit, also at other throughout the year.

The other implication of this study is the necessity for schools to ensure that all ability groups are shared equally among educators and academically valued equally. Some schools are apt to assign the low ability students to the newest teachers in the department. This practice tends to stigmatize the various student ability groups, and it carries the implication that teachers who have "put in their time" for the district are being rewarded by being assigned to teach the higher ability groups (and vice-versa).

None of the surveyed teachers in this study saw this practice as educationally beneficial.

Moreover, schools must ensure that effective instruction is occurring in all ability groups. At all levels, teachers' expectations of students should be challenging. The courses for the different ability groups should basically be the same except for the instructional pace, some teaching methods, and some course material. Overall, the writer recommends maintaining the same English curriculum and course of study for all of the ability groups for a particular course, making changes only when it is necessary to meet the students' learning needs.

In conclusion, it is the hope of the writer that this study in some way will assist educators, especially English teachers, in their debate as to whether or not homogeneous grouping should be implemented in their schools. Additionally, the writer hopes that districts using ability grouping have been provided useful data and suggestions to ensure their students are actually benefiting socially and academically in their educational programs.

APPENDIX

Tracking Practices and Attitudes Questionnaire

Name: (optional) _____

Years of teaching experience: _____

School Name: _____

Grade levels included at the high school _____

Does your English department track students by ability grouping? yes no

If tracking is not used, for how many known years has your department grouped heterogeneously? _____

If tracking is implemented in the English department, list the tracks used for each applicable grade level (excluding gifted, remedial, or vocational English classes taught off the main campus or in addition to normal English instruction):

ninth

tenth

eleventh

twelfth

Are any of your district's students involved in any such programs described in the exception above? yes no If so, please explain:

Identify the method(s) your district uses to place students in ability groups:

standardized test scores
administration recommendation
parent preference
students' future plans
other _____

teacher recommendation
student preference
past performance in English classes
guidance counselor recommendation

Respond to the following statements regarding tracking practices in high schools, indicating your level of agreement using the following codes:

- 1 - Strongly Agree
- 2 - Agree
- 3 - Undecided
- 4 - Disagree
- 5 - Strongly Disagree

- _____ 1. Students tracked in different ability groups become more diverse in their academic achievement over time.
- _____ 2. Ability grouping is necessary to provide for the learning needs of the most able students in a class.
- _____ 3. Placement in a lower ability grouped class causes lower self-concepts for those students.
- _____ 4. Lower ability grouped classes should predominantly be assigned to be taught by teachers with the least experience in the department.
- _____ 5. Placement in a higher ability grouped class results in a higher self-concept for those students.
- _____ 6. Lower ability students receive better academic instruction in a homogeneously grouped class.
- _____ 7. The most effective teachers in the department should teach primarily the low ability grouped students.
- _____ 8. Ability grouping is necessary to provide for the learning needs of the less able students in a class.
- _____ 9. Ability grouping of students encourages competition among teachers to be able to teach certain classes.
- _____ 10. Lower ability students receive overall better academic instruction in a heterogeneously grouped class.
- _____ 11. Lower ability grouped classes should not be assigned to be predominantly taught by teachers with the least experience.
- _____ 12. Ability grouping is not necessary to provide for the learning needs of the less able students in a class.
- _____ 13. Students tracked in different ability groups do not become more diverse in their academic achievement over time.
- _____ 14. Higher ability students receive better academic instruction in a homogeneously grouped class.
- _____ 15. Ability grouping does not cause social stratification of the students.
- _____ 16. Placement in a lower ability grouped class does not cause lower self-concepts for those students.
- _____ 17. Ability grouping is not necessary to provide for the learning needs of the most able students in a class.
- _____ 18. Placement in a heterogeneously grouped class does not foster a higher self-concept for higher ability students.
- _____ 19. Higher ability students receive better academic instruction in a heterogeneously grouped class.
- _____ 20. The most effective teachers in the department should teach primarily the high ability grouped classes.
- _____ 21. Ability grouping of students does not encourage competition among teachers to be able to teach certain classes.
- _____ 22. Ability grouping causes social stratification of students.

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