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**Participant assessment of a reduction in tracking in high school
social studies**

Ratchford, Victoria Feimster, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1993

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**PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT OF A REDUCTION
IN TRACKING IN HIGH SCHOOL
SOCIAL STUDIES**

by

Victoria Feimster Ratchford

**A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education**

**Greensboro
1993**

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APPROVAL PAGE

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RATCHFORD, VICTORIA FEIMSTER, Ed.D. Participant Assessment of a Reduction in Tracking in High School Social Studies. (1993) Directed by Dr. Dale Brubaker. 178 pp.

The tracking controversy revolves around the issues: (1) how to organize students for academic achievement, and (2) how to provide an equitable curricular organization. Tracking proponents claim that the system facilitates academic achievement; opponents claim that it is inequitable. Courts have ruled tracking to be illegal (Hobson v. Hansen, 1967), but have been more lenient as time has passed since the Brown (1954) decision.

The traditional theory of tracking holds that the practice facilitates academic achievement for all groups. The divergent theory holds that tracking affects different groups differently. Most researchers find that tracking slightly benefits the high-ability group and penalizes the low-ability group (Rosenbaum, 1976; Gamoran, 1987; Oakes, 1982, 1985). Slavin (1990) found there was no achievement gain or loss for tracking at the high school level. Braddock and Slavin (1992) found negative effects of grouping for all students.

Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Salisbury, North Carolina, attempted to reduce tracking by eliminating the accelerated track in the high school social studies curriculum for the 1991-92 school year. The research questions posed for this study are the following:

1. After one year of implementation, how do parents, teachers, and students differ in their assessment of a social studies curriculum that has been reduced from three to two tracks when they assess the new curriculum for the concerns most often expressed by the proponents and opponents of tracking?
2. How do the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students relate to the issues of academic achievement and equity of the new system?

Parents, teachers, and students were surveyed using a questionnaire constructed to assess opinions about the issues most often raised about tracking: rate of instruction, lack of understanding, number of failures, difficulty of material, and interest of student. Responses were tallied into a histogram using MicroTest software, and then were compared for differences using SPSS software to do an ANOVA. Parent comments were analyzed for content using AskSam Qualitative software. A preferential question was compared for the three groups: *Would you have preferred an accelerated level of social studies to have been offered this*

year? Teacher interviews were held with a representative from each of the five high schools.

Responses to concerns raised and addressed through the questions indicated that fears expressed about reducing tracking had not been realized. Parent comments contradicted the general findings of the questionnaire and were much more critical of the reduced tracking system. Questionnaire results indicated that there was consensus among the three groups that the reduced track system was working as well as the previously used organizational system. The responses to the preferential question indicated that parents most strongly supported the more tracked system, followed by students. Teachers were least supportive of the more tracked system.

Teachers revealed in the interviews that they felt that academic achievement was as good or better than it had been, and that equity was enhanced by the reduced tracking system.

The reduced tracking system appeared to work as well as or better than the previously used more tracked system. More research should be done after the reduced tracking system is in place for another year.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Overview.....	1
The Case for Tracking.....	2
The Case Against Tracking.....	3
Points of Comparison.....	3
Statement of the Problem.....	5
A Historical Perspective.....	5
A Social Perspective.....	9
Purpose of this Study.....	11
Outline of the Study.....	12
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	14
The Academic Achievement Issue.....	15
Achievement:.....	14
Within Group Analyses.....	14
Between Group Analyses.....	17
Analyses of Research.....	20
The Equity Issue.....	25
From a Legal Perspective.....	25
From a Social Perspective.....	29
Studies of the American High School.....	34
Voices Favoring Ability Grouping and Tracking.....	36
Summary.....	38
III. METHODOLOGY.....	41
Program History and Context.....	41
Subjects.....	44

Design of the Study	45
Design of the Field Test	48
The Survey	50
Materials	51
Procedure	54
Data Analysis	56
Limitations of the Study	57
IV. RESULTS.....	61
Respondents	61
Reliability and Validity of Data	64
Research Question One	65
Parent Comments	72
A Direct Opinion	73
Research Question Two.....	75
V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS	81
Summary	81
Discussion of Survey Results	81
Discussion of Teacher Interviews	90
Theoretical Implications of Results	92
Practical Implications of Results	94
Suggestions for Further Research	96
Lessons from the Rowan-Salisbury Experience	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY	101
APPENDICES	108
A - Newspaper Articles	108
B - Questionnaires	140
C - MicroTest Histograms	158

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. What is Being Compared?	4
2. Responses to Questionnaire Items 1-7	70
3. Responses to Questionnaire Items 8-14 & 29	70
4. EOC Results: ELPS	77
5. EOC Results: U. S. History	77

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Weighted Grades Awarded By Tracks	42
2. Social Studies Courses Available: 1991-92	43
3. Teacher Predictions for the Success of Reduced Tracking in Social Studies	44
4. Courses to be Surveyed	44
5. Field Test Population	48
6. Question Content	53
7. Discussion Guide	56
8. Student Respondents	62
9. Parent Respondents	63
10. Teacher Respondents	64
11. Analysis of Variance Summary for Items 1-14 & 29	66
12. Parent Comments	73
13. Parent Responses	74
14. Teacher Responses	75
15. Student Responses	75

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
Overview

The intent of this study was to investigate the responses of teachers, students, and parents to the reduction of curricular tracks in a high school social studies program. After a year of experiencing a two-track social studies curriculum rather than the previous three-track organization, teachers, students, and parents were asked to assess the new curricular organization for the concerns most often expressed by the proponents and opponents of tracking. Responses from the three groups were analyzed to determine each group's perception of how well the new system is facilitating academic achievement and equity.

The two focal points of the analysis were effectiveness in facilitating academic achievement and equity. These concepts summarize the arguments most frequently voiced in the controversy of whether tracking is beneficial or detrimental for student learning. Those in favor of tracking believe that the arrangement facilitates learning, especially for the high-ability or high-achievement group. Those opposed to tracking believe that the arrangement is undemocratic and inequitable, particularly for the average and low-ability or low-achievement groups. The basic arguments have not changed over the years of the controversy (Turney, 1931; Esposito, 1973; Sarason, 1984; Slavin, 1990; Braddock & Slavin, 1992).

Most researchers suggest that tracking should be decreased because of its lack of positive effects on achievement and its inequity to some students (Oakes, 1985; Gamoran, 1987; Slavin, 1990; Braddock & Slavin, 1992). Educators in the Rowan-Salisbury Schools in Salisbury, North Carolina, followed this advice by reducing the high school social studies curricular tracks, or levels within courses, from three to two for the 1991-92 school year. The reaction of students, parents, and teachers to the first year of reduced tracking can help educators as they make decisions about how to provide a quality education for all students within an equitable organizational system.

The Case for Tracking

Glazer (1990) stated that the tracking argument divides into what parents and some educators believe and what education experts say. Proponents of tracking, mostly middle-class parents and some practicing educators, believe that the reduction of tracking will bring a concomitant reduction of standards in order to allow slow children to keep up with the group.

Slavin (1990) reported that the arguments for and against ability grouping have not changed since Turney (1931) identified them 75 years ago. Parents and educators who favor tracking contend that students' needs are better met when a teacher is working with a group more homogeneous in ability and with shared goals. High achievers, particularly, are believed to benefit from the added stimulation of more difficult material and the intellectual stimulation of other high achievers (Kulik & Kulik, 1982; Feldhusen, 1989; Gamoran, 1990).

The Case Against Tracking

Opponents of tracking, usually educational researchers, report that tracking perpetuates social and racial inequality and that it does not benefit high achievers (Oakes, 1985; Gamoran, 1990; Glazer, 1990; Slavin, 1990; Braddock & Slavin, 1992). Arguments opposed to ability grouping focus on the perceived damage to low achievers, who experience a slower pace and lower quality of instruction, less able or experienced teachers, low expectations for performance, and few positive role models (Rosenbaum, 1976; Oakes, 1985; Gamoran, 1989). Ability grouping is perceived to perpetuate social class and racial inequities, because lower-class and minority students are disproportionately represented in the lower tracks. Ability grouping and tracking work against democratic ideals by sorting students into categories from which escape is difficult or impossible (Slavin, 1990).

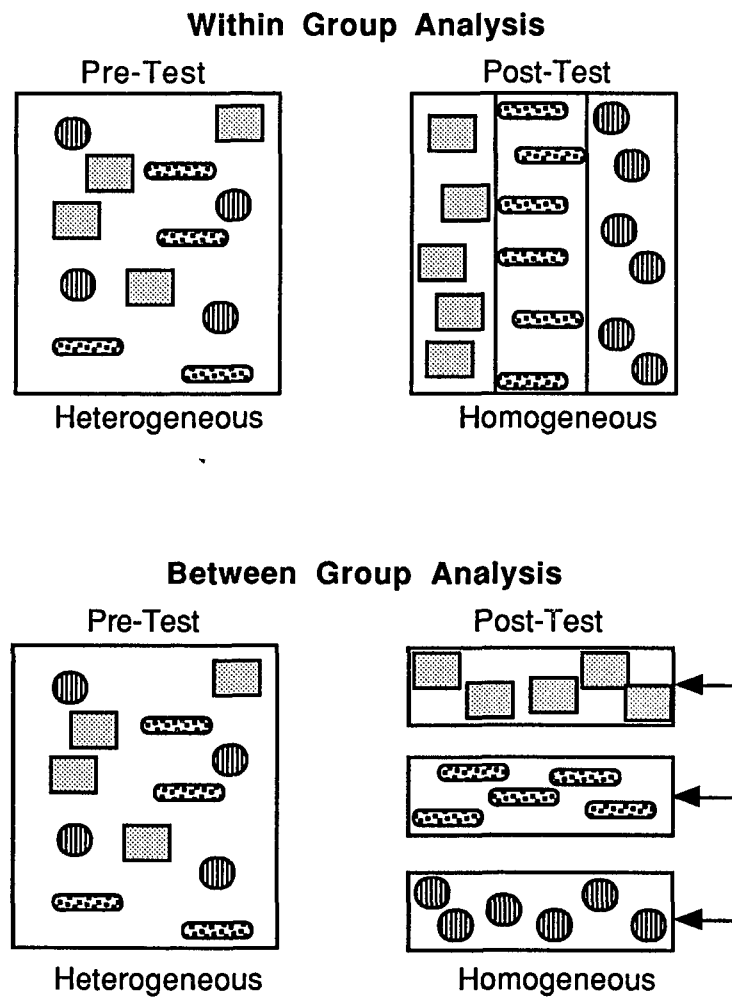
Points of Comparison

Research on the achievement effects of ability grouping has been conducted in one of two ways: (1) comparing achievement gains of students in homogeneous groups to students in heterogeneous groups, and (2) achievement gains of students in high ability groups to students in low ability groups (Slavin, 1990). When homogeneous groups are compared to heterogeneous groups, little or no effect is realized on overall achievement at the high school (or elementary school) level (Fowlkes, 1931; Borg, 1966; Findley & Bryan, 1970; Esposito, 1973; Good & Marshall, 1984; Slavin, 1990; Braddock and Slavin, 1992). When achievement gains are compared between tracks, high-track placement accelerates achievement while low-

track placement reduces achievement, when variables such as socioeconomic status and IQ are controlled (Alexander, Cook, & McDill, 1978; Oakes, 1982; Dar & Resh, 1986; Gamoran, 1987; Sorensen & Hallinan, 1986). (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1

What is Being Compared?



Statement of the Problem

Historically and philosophically, the issue of how to group students for instruction has centered on two issues: (1) how to facilitate academic achievement, and (2) how to provide an equitable curricular organization system for all students. The conflict between the two points of view has exacerbated the controversy of heterogeneous grouping versus homogeneous grouping. An understanding of the history that has produced the differing views regarding grouping and tracking will be useful.

A Historical Perspective

In its earliest forms, American education was confined almost entirely to individual teaching. According to Keliher (1931), in the first public schools, the individual child spelled his way through his speller at his own rate and took his daily turn at the teacher's desk to recite his quota of memory work. In the one-room school house with its many levels of age and attainment, the most frequent organizational system was to teach the basic curriculum of the three R's using small groups and individualized instruction.

As society became more complex and compulsory attendance laws forced more students into the public school for longer periods of time, educators were faced with the growing dilemma of what to teach, to whom, and how to group students for teaching. By the mid-1800's, schools had of necessity moved toward grading students into "high, grammar, and primary" levels, each representing a four-year period with "grades" for each year (Keliher, 1931). In the latter part of the 19th century, as non-English-speaking immigrants from eastern and southern Europe flowed into American cities, student enrollment in public schools increased dramatically.

In 1890, high schools served only 10% of the 14-17 year olds, but by 1920, 60% of that age group was enrolled in high school. With the increase in the number of students attending high school, leveling of courses and tracking toward vocational goals became popular alternatives for meeting individual needs (Oakes, 1989).

Although moving whole groups of students through grades and subjects at first seemed the most organizationally efficient way to teach the curriculum, problems arose when individual students began demonstrating differences in the quantity of what they learned and the rates at which they learned. The 1860 School Report of New Haven, Connecticut, identified the problem with the graded system as being that, "the progress required of each class cannot exceed the average capacity of each class" (Keliher, 1931, p. 11). Some students were expected to be retained, some promoted, and some might "skip" a grade. As early as 1868, Dr. William T. Harris, Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis, proposed a "flexible promotion" or "sifting-up" organization based on homogeneous grouping: "It is evident that the school best subserves this purpose [meeting the needs of the individual] when it classifies so that each pupil meets his equals in the recitation. Great inferiority or great superiority in his fellows mars the force of the lesson which he learns from seeing their work" (Keliher, 1931, p. 13).

Special programs for special students became both an answer to a problem and a problem itself in the 1950s and 1960s. The Brown mandate of 1954 established that *separate was not equal*. Segregation by race was no longer acceptable for the housing of students in separate schools. The reaction of many educators was to resegregate within the walls of the school.

The call to regroup within the school to meet the academic needs of the students seemed reasonable when teachers were reporting wide discrepancies among students' knowledge and skills.

A national impetus to accelerate the best students came in 1957 when the launching of *Sputnik* made the United States aware that its educational standards were falling behind those of the Soviet Union. In response to this need, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was passed, which provided funds for strengthening academic programs for abler students (Boyer, 1983). Conant's report in 1959 suggested that rigorous attention be accorded to the academically talented and that this could be achieved by ability grouping of students by subject (Oakes, 1985). The 1974 Education of Handicapped Children Act (PL-94-142) provided for the needs of special students, but in the least restrictive environment. Students might be temporarily homogeneously grouped for teaching, but ideally, they should be taught in the heterogeneous mainstream. The mainstreaming goal of PL-94-142 contradicted the American practice of meeting the needs of the individual by grouping together students of similar abilities. However, the law did facilitate a special education for the brightest students to enable the country to meet the need of developing competitive thinkers.

The issue of the relative importance of academic achievement came into question as the equity issue gained more recognition. From a legal perspective, students who have been relegated to the lowest ability groups have frequently turned to the courts with claims by their parent representatives that group placement is inequitable. The legal pendulum has swung from the right to left and back again in the hundred plus years

since this country has practiced ability grouping. Legal precedent to classify and distribute students by ability was established in Roberts v. City of Boston (1850) when the Massachusetts Supreme Court rejected the challenge by black parents to Boston's dual school system and supported segregation by ability, which happened also to be by race (Glazer, 1990). That precedent was challenged and defeated in courts of law in the 1960s and 1970s when numerous decisions reinforced the precept that homogeneous grouping as a means to avoid desegregation was not legal.

After the 1954 Brown decision that struck down the "separate but equal" standard established in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), the 1960 and 1970 courts generally found homogeneous grouping a facade for racial and social discrimination. Although no law specifically addresses the issue of homogeneous grouping, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the assignment of students to schools, classes, ability groups, and tracks in programs or activities that receive federal assistance. Schools with ability grouping or tracks must offer opportunities for students to change tracks according to progress. Tests must be appropriate to determine students' needs and be used appropriately to determine placement ("Student Assignment in Elementary and Secondary Schools and Title VI," 1989).

Court cases addressing the homogeneous grouping issue have most often been tried under issues of desegregation, testing and other placement methods, and handicapped students' rights. Hobson v. Hansen (1967) is the only case to date that directly addresses the tracking issue. Judge Skelly Wright found tracking undemocratic and discriminatory and mandated a

heterogeneous curricular system to replace the tracked system. Cases throughout the 1960s and 1970s tended to be decided against homogeneous grouping, a thin veil for resegregation, but as time has progressed and more school systems have desegregated, decisions have been more favorable toward homogeneous grouping (e.g., NAACP v. Georgia, 1985, and Quarles v. Oxford, 1989).

A Social Perspective

Rosenbaum (1976) drew on issues raised by the 1966 Coleman Report and by the 1972 Jencks study of inequality in American schools to describe the hidden curriculum of American schools. Set in a homogeneous working-class community, the Grayton school curricularly sorted students into the same social strata from which they had come and liberated very few into a better quality of life. His metaphor of tournament education illustrated that the student who loses out early in gaining access to high level tracks, loses out forever. The selection criteria of meritocratic tracking (ability, effort, and achievement) lack validity and stability and are inequitably applied to the student population to maintain the elite and non-elite in society. Rosenbaum's study called basic American stated values of equality and opportunity into question.

Researchers who have spent time inside high schools attest to very different educations that are available there. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) compared the high school to a huge shopping mall where one can buy any quality of education. The curriculum is both horizontal (encompassing different courses from English to Wood Shop), and vertical (English to Honors English). Sizer (1985) reported that the tracks are homes

to students of different social backgrounds. The honors programs “serve the wealthier youngsters, and the general tracks serve the working class. Vocational programs are often a cruel social dumping ground,” (p. 2). Boyer (1983) proposed a strong core curriculum that would open academic and vocational doors for all students. Recent ethnographic studies have attempted to provide interpretation as to why curriculum is differentiated in the American high school (Page & Valli, 1990).

The most extensive tracking study to date was done by Oakes, social scientist with the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California. Using data from Goodlad’s A Study of Schooling (1983) Oakes declared that homogeneous grouping, which on the surface appears to be practical, is actually quite inequitable. The racial and socioeconomic make-up of the tracks points up the inequity of the courses of study leading to the announced career goals. College-preparatory English is far richer in subject matter than is vocational English (Oakes, 1985).

Tracking cannot be abandoned without some system replacing it. Suggestions for alternative programs include cooperative learning (Oakes, 1985), discussion seminars (Adler, 1982), and computer-assisted instruction (Schlechty, 1991). Any organizational system that replaces or reduces tracking needs time for evaluation of how well students’ needs are being met and how well the new system is accepted by those who are most directly affected by it: the teachers, students, and parents. The problem is that those who determine curricular organizational systems may do so on objective data or subjective feelings, or a combination of the two. Parents may be less concerned with the issue of academic achievement as measured by

standardized tests than by the affective issue of how well the child liked a particular class. Students may be less concerned with what they learned than with the weighted grade assigned to the class. Teachers may be less concerned with academic achievement as measured by end-of-course tests than with practical problems of having to learn new teaching methodologies to accommodate a wider range of abilities. These differing concerns suggest that a study of a specific program in one school system would yield some conclusions of value to educators.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses of teachers, students, and parents to a reduction in curricular tracks in a high school social studies curriculum after one year of implementation. Accordingly, the following research questions were addressed:

1. After one year of implementation, how do parents, teachers, and students differ in their assessment of a social studies curriculum that has been reduced from three to two tracks when they assess the new curriculum for the concerns most often expressed by the proponents and opponents of tracking?
2. How do the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students relate to the issues of academic achievement and equity of the new system?

Although the terms “ability grouping,” “homogeneous grouping,” and “tracking” are used interchangeably in most literature, there are differences in meaning. Slavin (1990) defined “ability grouping” as any school or classroom organization plan which is intended to reduce the heterogeneity of instructional groups. “Between-class ability grouping” reduces the

heterogeneity of each class for a given subject. "Within-class ability grouping" reduces the heterogeneity of groups within the class (e.g., reading groups). Between-class ability grouping, the preferred structure in secondary schools, may take the form of "tracks," a program of study within which all courses are taken. Students are assigned to or choose a track, e.g., academic, general, or vocational, based on some combination of composite achievement, IQ, and teacher judgment. Membership in a track may carry additional requirements, e.g., an academic track student may have to take foreign language, whereas a vocational track student may have to take shop. Slavin (1987) called the assignment to higher and lower sections of the same courses "ability grouped class assignment."

Outline of the Study

Chapter I provided an overview of the problem of the best way to group students for academic achievement and equity. An historical perspective was given as background for the purpose of the study. The research questions were presented and terms were defined.

Chapter II reviews the literature addressing the issues of academic achievement and equity. The equity issue is reviewed from legal and social perspectives. Brief attention is given to comprehensive studies of the American high school. Comments from proponents of ability grouping are provided.

Chapter III describes the methodology undertaken in the study. Qualitative methodology used was a questionnaire administered to parents, teachers and students who participated in the reduced tracking program. Parent open responses were analyzed for content and teachers were

interviewed.

Chapter IV describes the results of the research and answers the research questions.

Chapter V provides a summary and discussion of the results presented in Chapter IV. Further research is needed to determine the effect of reduced tracking on academic achievement and equity and the attitudes of parents, teachers, and students about the reduction in tracking.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The proliferation of literature on tracking and its effects is confusing and contradictory. Proponents claim that tracking facilitates higher academic achievement. Opponents claim that it perpetuates an inequitable social class system. Rosenbaum (1976) stated that the 1968 NEA study of 50 studies on grouping reported that for every study showing a net gain through grouping, there was one showing a net loss. The inability of researchers to demonstrate conclusively the effect of grouping on achievement may partially explain why focus has shifted away from achievement to equity.

The Academic Achievement Issue

Achievement: Within Group Analyses

The traditional theory of grouping held that students learned better when grouped with their intellectual equals. Early studies carried through this premise by comparing achievement of homogeneous groups to achievement of heterogeneous groups. Fowlkes (1931) experimented with students in two schools, using three ability groups in one school (low, average, high) who were matched by IQ with a heterogeneous group in another school. Both were pre and posttested with alternate versions of the New Stanford Achievement Test. Out of the 21 comparisons Fowlkes made, only one case favored homogeneous grouping -- the history and civics studies for the low IQ group. This finding is an interesting contrast to

Slavin's (1990) summary finding from 29 studies that heterogeneous grouping is superior to homogeneous in social studies. Five cases favored heterogeneous grouping -- reading, literature and history, and civics for the average group, and language and geography for the high group. The remaining gains and losses were too slight to be statistically significant. Fowlkes' conclusion was that homogeneous grouping based on IQ was not advantageous for academic achievement, a contradiction of the prevalent traditional theory.

Borg (1966) studied the effects of ability grouping on achievement of elementary, junior high school, and high school students over a four-year period. Philip Lambert, Professor of Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin, stated in the foreword to Borg's work, "It is a well known fact in educational circles that ability grouping has definite effects on learning achievement and generally that such grouping is superior in results obtained to the random method." (p. ii) Ironically, Borg's study did not bear out the traditional theory. Students in the random (heterogeneous) group were given an enriched curriculum, and students in the ability (homogeneous) group were given an accelerated curriculum. At the end of the four years, Borg made 30 comparisons and found four that statistically favored District A (ability grouped) in mathematics. The differences broke down to one between superior pupils, two between average pupils, and one between slow pupils. Of the other 26 comparisons, there were no statistical differences. Borg concluded that ability grouping can be connected to slightly higher achievement in math, but not in other subject areas. His study included a review of 34 studies of grouping and achievement at the high

school level. While he noted that nearly all contain deficiencies that raise questions about their validity, the majority showed no statistical difference between the achievement of the ability group and the regular group.

Findley and Bryan (1970) surveyed 328 school districts to determine their ability-grouping practices, and particularly the methods by which students were assigned to ability groups. They found that ability grouping was favored by 57.6% of the elementary teachers surveyed and 87.3% of the secondary teachers surveyed. Larger districts were more likely than small to have their curriculum organized for homogeneous ability groups, and to claim that such an arrangement was the best way to meet individual needs, to make teaching easier, and to facilitate curriculum planning. Districts that did not homogeneously group saw the arrangement as likely to label students too early, limit their possibilities, and reduce teacher and student motivation. Findley and Bryan (1970) found conflicting evidence that ability grouping promoted scholastic achievement; at best, it benefited the higher group while penalizing the average and lower groups. They also found that ability grouping reinforced favorable and unfavorable self-concepts in children. The authors suggested alternative grouping strategies and teaching methodologies that would be more effective than ability grouping.

Kerchoff (1986) studied 11,000 British students over a five-year period, to evaluate the traditional learning theory that grouping is beneficial to all groups against the divergent theory that says grouping affects different groups differently. The study was sponsored by the National Children's Bureau of London, who followed every baby born in England, Scotland, and Wales during the week of 3-9 March, 1958. The subjects were tested for

ability and achievement at ages 7, 11, and 16. The achievement effects of grouping were studied in a homogeneous vs. heterogeneous format and a homogeneous vs. homogeneous format. Kerchoff identified four kinds of schools: (1) grammar schools, for high ability students, (2) secondary modern schools, for all except the high ability students, (3) comprehensive schools, for mixed-ability students, and (4) private schools, for those seeking high positions. The private schools were also likely to draw high-ability students. Kerchoff concluded that the effects of school type and ability group are independent of each other. Grammar and private schools produced gains in math, but not in reading. Students within tracks in the schools were compared to counterparts in the comprehensive school where there was no ability grouping. As for effects on groups, generally, the high groups gained and the low groups lost. Remedial classes were likely to lose in reading, when compared with counterparts in a heterogeneous setting; low-ability groups lost in both reading and mathematics; high-ability groups gained in both reading and mathematics. Kerchoff's study supported the divergent theory of grouping.

Between Group Analyses

In 1978 Alexander and Cook supported the divergent theory of grouping when they studied data collected from 1961-69 for the Study of Academic Prediction and Growth done by the Educational Testing Service. At that time they concluded that students in academic tracks learned more than others. In 1982, Alexander and Cook undertook a smaller study from the same data and determined that when certain variables were controlled, track placement did not affect achievement. The second study posed two

questions: (1) Why are some students placed in college tracks and others not? and (2) Why is track placement so influential? They found that track placement was made according to student ability and effort and had little connection to socioeconomic, racial, or gender bias. Additionally, they found that track placement was less influential on achievement than previously believed. They concluded that high school track placement was a result of differences begun much earlier, including differences in self-perception.

Dar and Resh (1986) studied two groups of Israeli high school students, one ethnically and socioeconomically heterogeneous and the other ethnically and socioeconomically homogeneous. They found that the intellectual component outweighed the ethnic and socioeconomic components in affecting student achievement. Their hypothesis that classroom intellectual composition positively supports academic achievement was supported. They concluded that a homogeneous structure hurt low-resource students more than it helped high-resource students and that the high resource students' losses in a heterogeneous setting were less than the low-resource students' gains in such a setting. Even controlling for socioeconomic differences, Dar and Resh found that grouping affected different groups differently. Their findings supported the divergent theory of grouping.

Gamoran (1987) used data from the *High School and Beyond* study to examine the effect on individual achievement from the school itself and from the curricular organizational structure (tracks) within the school. He expected to see indirect effects from different schools and direct effects from the tracks within the schools. He controlled for socioeconomic status and compared

achievement test scores for sophomores and then he compared the scores for the same students two years later. Part of the information given included the courses students had taken to that point. Looking at the results of six achievement tests per student, Gamoran found that socioeconomic status did not determine higher achievement, but that higher socioeconomic status students were more likely to have taken the academic courses and that students who had taken those courses scored higher on the achievement tests. He concluded that, "Tracking and course taking together account for substantively significant differences in student achievement." (p.153) Like Kerchoff, Gamoran (1987) found the greatest track advantage was in math. Gamoran found little school-level effect on achievement. Just because schools offered special programs for the gifted or advanced placement courses did not mean that their students scored higher on the tests.

However, schools that had more advanced math courses tended to score slightly higher on the science tests. A surprising finding from this study was that track placement affected achievement scores more than dropping out of school did. Using a least squares regression equation to predict scores of students who dropped out, Gamoran found the differences in scores according to track were greater than the differences between scores of lowest track students and those of dropouts.

Braddock and Slavin (1992) analyzed the data from the National Longitudinal Study (NELS:88) and provided information about the effects of ability grouping for all students. They studied eighth graders who attended schools in which ability grouping was or was not used, and then they examined outcomes for these students two years later, statistically controlling

for prior grades and test scores, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, school size, and other variables. They compared high, average, and low achievers separately in the tracked schools to their counterparts in the untracked schools. They found that students in the low track performed significantly less well than did the similar low achievers in the untracked schools on composite and core subject achievement tests in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, they found no consistent corresponding benefit of ability grouping for high or average achievers.

Analyses of Research

Analyses of research on the achievement -grouping issue are as varied as are research designs themselves. Goldberg, Passow, and Justman (1966) in their book The Effects of Ability Grouping, pointed out the variety of criteria for determining homogeneity, the duration of studies, and the inadequacy of matching experimental and control groups. Gamoran's (1987) initial review of research indicated that homogeneous grouping (a) produces conflicting evidence that it promotes scholastic achievement in the superior groups, (b) almost uniformly provides unfavorable evidence for promoting scholastic achievement in average groups, and (c) almost uniformly provides unfavorable evidence of promoting scholastic achievement in low groups.

Esposito (1973) began his review of ability grouping research with the same caution and concluded:

(1) Homogeneous ability grouping as currently practiced shows no consistent positive value for helping students to achieve more scholastically. Slight gains for the high group are off-set by losses for the average and low groups.

(2) The findings of the impact of homogeneous ability grouping on affective development are unfavorable. Students develop feelings of superiority or inferiority related to their ability-grouped status.

(3) Homogeneous grouping separates students not only by test results, but by socioeconomic status, and by ethnic status.

(4) Where homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping is related to improved scholastic performance, the curriculum is subject to modifications in teaching methods.

Kulik and Kulik (1982) conducted a meta-analysis of 52 studies of ability grouping in secondary schools. They found small but significant achievement gains for high ability students who received an enriched curriculum in a homogeneous setting. Multitrack programs for students of all ability levels produced near-zero effects. Achievement effects for average and below average students were statistically insignificant. Kulik and Kulik found the affective outcome that homogeneously grouped classes produced more positive attitudes in students than did heterogeneously grouped classes. This finding about attitude was contradicted by Oakes (1985). They also found that achievement in average and low-ability groups did not decline when high-ability students were moved to separate classes. Gamoran (1987) explained that the achievement was not affected by the grouping *per se*, but by teaching methods used with the group.

Because of the criticism of Slavin in 1984 that their meta-analysis included too many studies with inadequate experimental controls and that interaction effects may have skewed the findings on self-esteem, Kulik and Kulik conducted a second meta-analysis in 1985, entitled "The Effects of

Inter-class Ability Grouping on Achievement and Self-Esteem,” Their second study included 85 studies at the secondary and elementary levels which were analyzed for achievement and/or self-esteem. The Kuliks studied three different types of programs: xyz programs (students of a full range of abilities are assigned to homogeneous classes), honors programs (talented students were provided enriched, separate classes), and remedial programs (slow students were provided remedial, separate classes). They found clear positive results for achievement for the honors classes. They concluded that homogeneous grouping may improve achievement and self-esteem of slow learners, but has little effect on the achievement and self-esteem of average students. They cautioned that their findings concerning remedial classes were questionable because of the few studies available (four). A deficiency inherent in this study is that the authors did not separate the results by elementary and high school levels, although they did initially state that 40 of the studies were elementary and that 45 were high school.

The Kuliks (1987) concluded from their meta-analysis of the research on grouping that the strongest and clearest effects of grouping came from programs designed especially for talented students. They found that talented students gained more in grouped classes than in heterogeneous classes and that “grouping can be a powerful tool in the education of gifted and talented students” (p. 29). Their research has been useful to parent groups who have lobbied to maintain gifted and honors programs.

Feldhusen (1989) synthesized the research on gifted youth and found that multiple data sources were needed to identify giftedness. He criticized the present system of using primarily writing-based intelligence tests. He

also recommended acceleration of gifted youth to allow them to reach their potential, supporting his contention with the Kuliks' 1984 study which indicated that acceleration does not cause social or emotional problems for students. Feldhusen suggested grouping gifted and talented students for all or part of the school day to provide them motivation through mutual interest. He argued that the removal of the gifted to separate classrooms would afford the average a chance at leadership. He further predicted that gifted young people would achieve more and would be socially well adjusted when they were segregated from average and below-average students. Like the Kuliks' work, Feldhusen's has been especially well received by parents of higher achieving students.

Slavin (1990) provided a recent and comprehensive review of research on ability grouping and achievement at the high school level. He had reviewed the research on grouping and achievement at the elementary level in 1987. The Kuliks' first study was included in his analysis (as are other articles they have written), but their second study was not, probably because high schools and elementary schools were not treated separately. Slavin reviewed 29 studies (6 randomized experiments, 9 matched experiments, and 14 correlational studies) and concluded:

(1) Comprehensive between-class ability grouping has little or no effect on achievement of secondary students. This conclusion is most strongly supported in grades 7-9, but the more limited evidence that does exist from studies in grades 10-12 also fails to support any effect of ability grouping.

(2) Different forms of ability grouping are equally

ineffective.

(3) Ability grouping is equally ineffective in all subjects, except that there may be a negative effect of ability grouping in social studies.

(4) Assigning students to different levels of the same course has no consistent positive or negative effects on students of high, average, or low ability (p. 17).

Allan (1991) reviewed the two reviews of research described above-- the meta-analyses of Kulik and Kulik (1982, 1984) and the best-evidence syntheses of Slavin (1986, 1990). She pointed out the methodological problem of trying to compare studies that set out with different research questions. She described the Kuliks' method as more objective than Slavin's method. The Kuliks located studies through replicable searches. They coded the studies for important features and described outcomes on a common scale. Results had to be reported in a quantifiable form before the Kuliks used the study. Slavin, according to Allan, combined meta-analysis and narrative review. Even though he computed effect sizes as did the Kuliks, he included several studies for which effect size could not be computed. Allan stated that the Kuliks disagreed with the mathematical procedure Slavin had used in his studies. Her conclusion was that the Kuliks' findings were more accurate than Slavin's. She faulted school systems who were cutting funding for special education classes based on the Slavin study when "The preponderance of evidence does not support the contention that children are academically harmed by grouping" (p. 65). It is no surprise that Feldhusen (1991) and Kulik (1991) agreed with her and that

Slavin (1991) disagreed.

The Equity Issue From a Legal Perspective

Legal issues regarding tracking are usually approached through cases dealing with racial discrimination, testing, equal opportunity, due process, and rights of the handicapped. When the government gives differential treatment to people in the same circumstances, their actions must pass the tests of “minimum rationality” and “strict scrutiny” for the “suspect classification” (Bryson & Bentley, 1980). Cases dealing with grouping practices most often refer to the Fourteenth Amendment (guaranteeing civil rights), the Civil Rights Law of 1964, The Handicapped Act of 1975, and the Brown decision of 1954, which held that “education . . . must be provided on equal terms to all people unless the state can demonstrate a compelling reason for doing otherwise” (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954).

Early cases established the precedent that separating students was legal. For example, Roberts v. City of Boston (1850) approved segregation by ability and Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) approved separate but equal facilities for education. Brown (1954) swung the pendulum to the opposite side with the ruling that “separate was not equal,” and desegregation began. Cases that came to the courts in the 1960s and the 1970s have generally struck down ability grouping when it has been interpreted by the courts as a facade for continued racial segregation.

Oakes (1983) questioned the constitutionality of tracking in consideration of the Fourteen Amendment to the U. S. Constitution that

guarantees equal protection and the 1954 Brown decision that held that separation of students by race was inherently unequal and that education must be made available to all on equal terms. She identified several characteristics of ability grouping and tracking that may be susceptible to legal action. They are: (1) the separation of students resulting in disproportionate placements of poor and minority students in groups; (2) the reduced educational quality in low groups; (3) the limited access low groups have to higher education or some occupations; (4) the relative permanence of ability classifications and inflexibility of grouping systems; (5) the stigmatization of low-track students; and (6) the misclassification of students resulting from inappropriate or haphazard classification processes.

Oakes (1983) cited Wisconsin v. Constantineau (1971) as establishing that a stigmatizing label could not be applied to a person without due process-- her contention is that membership in a low track is stigmatizing. She also cited Goss v. Lopez (1975) that held that education is a property right that could not be denied a child without due process. Students who have been denied entrance to upper tracks could sue on the basis of losing a property right without due process. The Mills case (1972) extended due process requirements for special class placement to exceptional children. Oakes (1983) suggested that the same rights apply to all children.

Oakes (1983) pointed to the landmark case on tracking, Hobson v. Hansen (1967), brought against Washington, D. C., school superintendent Carl F. Hansen on behalf of Julius W. Hobson, a Negro student assigned to a low track. Hansen had devised a four-track system for Washington schools after the forced desegregation of schools in 1956. He held that the

assignment of students to tracks was for their educational benefit and that the racial effect was "but an innocent and unavoidable coincidence of ability grouping." The parents of Hobson held that there was no remedial instruction in the lower tracks; that the curriculum was very limited and not equal to other tracks; that the self-image of students assigned to low tracks was damaged; that teachers did not expect students to do well in these classes and thus students were not challenged and did participate in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Judge Skelly Wright in his decision said, "The track system simply must be abolished . . . [It] discriminates against the disadvantaged child, particularly the Negro. [It] is undemocratic and discriminatory." The decision abolished tracking, but did not address the constitutionality or legality of ability grouping and the appropriateness of intelligence testing.

Following Hobson, numerous similar cases struck down ability grouping when it resulted in resegregation. Spangler v. Pasadena County Board of Education (1970) found that ability grouping resulted in racially imbalanced classes and violated the Fourteenth Amendment. Singleton v. Anson County Board of Education (1971) held that ability grouping could not be used to avoid desegregation. Larry P. v. Riles I & II (1972) found unconstitutional intelligence testing procedures that placed disproportionate numbers of black students in classes for the mentally retarded. Most of the early 1970s cases upheld the mandate to desegregate schools and removed ability grouping as an alternative for avoiding that mandate.

Oakes (1983) warned school districts who used grouping systems that result in racially identifiable classes that they are likely to be challenged

under the principles established in the cases discussed above. Only Hobson claimed that being poor is a suspect classification. Should further cases extend that idea, there is ample research to support that the poor are disproportionately placed in low tracks. Oakes (1983) acknowledged that no court has yet ruled that ability grouping in itself constitutes a violation of equal educational opportunity or that the processes involved in placement require procedural-due-process protections. However, she cautioned “[I]t is clear from the research on tracking and ability grouping that the practice constitutes a governmental action that restricts students’ immediate access to certain types of education and to both educational and occupational opportunities in the future” (p. 816).

As time has elapsed, the late 1970 and 1980 decisions have been more favorable for allowing ability-grouped classes. McNeal v. Tate County School District (1975) ruled that a desegregated school district could not use a grouping system that resulted in racially identifiable classrooms until it had operated an integrated system long enough to ensure that the harmful effects of prior segregation had been overcome. Recent rulings have allowed grouping with disproportionate racial representation to exist on the basis of the McNeal test. Most of the students in question had never attended a dual school system (segregated) and thus could not be victims of such a system, reasoned the court. In PASA v. Chicago Board of Education (1980), Judge Waddy reviewed IQ tests himself and did not find them culturally biased. He ruled that they could be used for group placements. NAACP v. Georgia (1985) in the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals held that a system that placed Blacks disproportionately into low groups was legal and satisfied

the McNeal test. Montgomery v. Starkville Municipal Separate School District (1987) also used McNeal to allow blacks to be placed disproportionately in low tracks, reasoning that the placements were the result of socioeconomic conditions. Quarles v. Oxford Municipal Separate School District (1989) allowed tracking through the eighth grade because there was a unitary system. The court rejected testimony of Dr. Jeannie Oakes, social scientist for the RAND Corporation whose work is discussed above, on the grounds that she had no personal knowledge of the Oxford school system.

The 1990's may see more action from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) toward eliminating tracking. In 1991, the OCR named tracking as one of its seven priority issues. The OCR 1986 case against Dillon County Schools, South Carolina, illustrates that federal funding can be withdrawn from a system that uses tracking to perpetuate segregation. The Dillon case found that the tracking system violated Title VI of The Civil Rights Law and that low track students were not being remediated or given access to higher tracks (Dillon County School District No. 1, Lake View, South Carolina and South Carolina State Department of Education, 1986).

From a Social Perspective

The finding of differences in achievement between tracks and a concurrent national history of attention to civil rights and social issues have turned the grouping debate away from academic achievement toward questions of equity. Slavin (1990) noted that since the 1970s, most studies have tended to compare the achievement of students in different tracks. He suggested that the differences in track achievement may be an effect of

differential course-taking. The student in the high track has a cumulative advantage of having taken courses such as Advanced Math, Chemistry, and foreign language, while the low track student may have taken courses such as Shop or other general or vocational courses. Social scientists have explained the unequal achievement of students in tracks as being not just a reflection of track placement, but a cause of track placement.

Rosenbaum (1976) studied the selection systems within schools and concluded that there was more difference within a school than between schools as to the education a student received. Spurred by the 1961 Coleman report and the 1972 Jencks study on the effects of family on schooling, Rosenbaum's systematic case study of Grayton School, which was racially and socially homogeneous, showed that the primary determiner of the quality of a student's education was track placement. He charged that the school was first responsive to bureaucratic imperatives of itself, then to society, and only lastly responsive to the needs and desires of family and students. Rosenbaum described the sorting mechanism used by schools as a tournament system: a student competitively found unworthy would early be relegated to a lower track from which rising was all but impossible. Rosenbaum condemned the lack of consistency in the system of track placement. Guidance counselors, in particular, were criticized for encouraging students to stay in lower tracks, rather than encouraging them to aspire for those tracks that would prepare them for better jobs and life styles. Rosenbaum's interviews with students convinced him that although some believed they had made their own decisions on track placement, the opinions of teachers, counselors, and administrators had shaped their

decisions.

Rosenbaum (1976) found meritocratic placement of students in curricular tracks unacceptable because of the lack of consistency in placement criteria and the eventual consequences of such decisions. He also noted that earlier studies described the opportunity structure, selection criteria, and social consequences of track systems, but did not separate the influence of social class from that of tracking itself. Rosenbaum chose a socially homogeneous community to focus on the effect of the tracking on the student.

On the issue of academic achievement, Rosenbaum (1976) pointed out the contradictions in studies done between 1950 and 1970. In consideration of the lack of consensus on the advantage of homogeneous grouping for academic achievement, Rosenbaum suggested that the natural system of heterogeneous grouping be employed, and that all students be prepared for varied life roles through a broad and general education. He particularly felt decisions about vocational education should be postponed until the last two years of high school. The suggestions have become part of the manifesto of Adler's Paideia Proposal (1982).

The most extensive study of tracking done in the last ten years was undertaken by Oakes (1982). She used data from the national research project, A Study of Schooling (Goodlad, 1983), to look at the effects of tracking on 13,000 students in 25 secondary schools. Her findings were published in full in Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality (1985). Oakes explored the theory of cultural reproduction: the inequities of the larger society are reinforced and reproduced through tracking. She

examined five variables of schooling: (1) curricular content, (2) instructional practice, (3) teacher-student relationships, (4) student-peer relationships, and (5) student involvement. Her hypotheses were as follows:

(1) The distribution of knowledge among social, economic groups is such that high status knowledge is distributed disproportionately to students from privileged and impoverished backgrounds.

(2) Instructional practice is differentiated so that school knowledge is more accessible to students of advantaged backgrounds.

(3) Classroom social relations and interaction are different for different groups in school.

While Oakes stopped short of confirming the cultural reproduction theory, she did state that the classroom practices she observed were consistent with the theory. The best educational experiences happened to the advantaged student.

She pointed out the varying public value of the different tracks and asserted that the tracks cause and support differences in students. In reviewing the research on academic achievement and tracking, she concluded that “no group of students has been found to benefit consistently from being in a homogeneous group” (1985, p. 7). As much as anything, Oakes questioned the processes and measures by which students were placed or counseled into tracks. Noting test bias against certain groups, she found that track placement was more often a reflection of social class than ability. As Goodlad (1984) had pointed out, Oakes found that the promises of vocational education were unfulfilled. She charged that tracking lowers self-esteem and aspirations, promotes misbehavior and dropping out, and

separates students along socioeconomic and racial lines. Tracking systems that Oakes described varied in degree and flexibility, but none facilitated much mobility between tracks, unless that mobility was downward.

Oakes presented a strong case for the inequity that tracking perpetuates by looking at the type and quality of knowledge available in the different tracks. The comments from students when asked, "What did you learn in here?" covered the range from high-level students who praised their classes for teaching them thinking skills and important knowledge to low-level students who responded that they had learned little and that what they did learn was not important. Student comments indicated that not only was the cognitive learning different in different tracks, but that the affective learning was also. Oakes (1989) summed up the inequity of lower-track classrooms as providing (a)unequal access to knowledge and (b)uneven classroom opportunities. She reported that the lower-track student who wants to learn often cannot because of the lack of positive climate that exists in the classroom.

Oakes (O'Neil, 1992) pointed out that school and societal norms support tracking. The low tracks have been seen as the place where the behavior problems do the least damage. In comparing our country's system to that of Japan, Oakes contrasted the family emphasis on academic work and the school organizational system that provides everyone the same educational experience through grade eight. The American system sorts students in kindergarten into academic and developmental levels. American students may be given a choice of courses and programs when they enter high school, but that choice is greatly limited by their prior experiences in the

kinds and quality of courses they have taken. Oakes continues to encourage educators to provide the best curriculum of real-world problem solving and higher-level thinking to all students.

Studies of the American High School

Studies of the American high school by Boyer (1983), Goodlad (1984),Sizer (1985), and Powell, Farrar, and Cohen(1985) did not focus primarily on tracking, but all confirmed tracking as the most common pattern of curricular organization. Boyer (1983) reported that at typical Ridgefield High 45% of the students received a regular diploma, 45% received a comprehensive diploma, and 10% received a college prep diploma. He noted that curricular decisions were most shaped by the track in which a student was enrolled--academic, vocational, or general--and that the core curriculum varied according to that track. Boyer agreed with Adler (1982) that all students need a strong academic core background, and that literacy is the most essential tool for gaining access to the rest of the curriculum. Noting that vocational education has not succeeded in introducing students to the world of work, he suggested a seminar where students would study how attitudes toward work have changed through the years. Boyer drew upon Oakes' 1982 study in his discussion of tracking.

Powell et al.(1985) provided a metaphor that describes the many tracks available in the high school in The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace. In addition to the horizontal curriculum (different subjects) and the vertical curriculum (different levels of courses), Powell described an extra curriculum and a service curriculum that have stretched the comprehensive high school to the point of

doing a little of everything and nothing well. He said that parents demand “Speciality Shops” (AP and Honors courses), and that the average student is left alone to wander through the mall, choosing whatever is most appealing. Most teachers and students strike a treaty that says, “If you’re orderly and attend most of the time, I’ll pass you” (Powell et al., 1985, p. 4). This study corroborated Oakes’ account of the different knowledge, skills, and attitudes available in different tracks.

Based on data gathered in his A Study of Schooling (1983) and discussed in A Place Called School (1984), Goodlad described tracking as an academic-vocational dichotomy. He was hard pressed to explain the growth in vocational subjects, except to say that schools have lived out a popular myth that some people are best equipped to work with their heads and some are best equipped to work with their hands. He noted the difficulty of students switching from a vocational track to an academic track, although such a move is theoretically possible. Goodlad concluded that the mandate to give lower ability students “relevant” education has actually denied them the very academic skills they need to raise themselves to a better way of life. Goodlad’s look into high schools produced considerable data that depending on track placement there were “significant differences in curricular content, instructional procedures, and elements of the student-teacher relationship...[that] suggest the probability of marked inequities among students in regard to access to knowledge and pedagogical practices.” (Goodlad, 1984, p. 152) Appearing before the Kappa Delta Pi Convocation (1992) Goodlad reiterated, “ You don’t place children in a so-called ability group and then create a self-fulfilling prophecy that results in

the child being cheated in the participation in the human conversation.”

Voices Favoring Ability Grouping and Tracking

Although most of the current literature appears to be opposed to tracking, there certainly is a strong contingency that continues to support the practice. Most of the voices in favor of tracking emanate from the curriculum designers who believe and practice the traditional theory of grouping to help all students. One such practitioner is Charles Nevi, director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Puyallup School District in Washington. Nevi (1987) reminded critics that federal funds for special and gifted students have required grouping for different specialized education. He held that grouping is necessary, unless everyone is to be taught everything simultaneously; grouping is a way to meet student differences based on ability and attitudes. Nevi based his argument in part on the Kuliks' work (1982, 1984, 1987), reviewed earlier, noting that students liked school and themselves better when grouped with peers of similar ability and interests. Nevi suggested a middle ground by differentiating tracking as both “appropriate” and “inappropriate.” Inappropriate tracking is the type described in Hobson v. Hansen, wherein certain children were denied educational opportunities on the assumption that they could not learn. Appropriate tracking structures situations so that students' special needs and abilities are considered. Students are constantly moved toward high status knowledge. Nevi suggested that the problem is not the grouping itself, but the quality of instruction the group receives.

The distinction between the group and the instruction was also

pointed out by Barr and Dreeben (1983) who contradicted researchers such as Oakes (1982,1985, 1989) and Rosenbaum (1976) who had found that group assignment represented social categories. These researchers found that pace and amount of material covered was a correlate of the group mean aptitude. They suggested that the fact that some groups moved more slowly and covered less than the group mean aptitude was probably a result of teacher decision. This study lent support to the parents who fear their child may be slowed down by the average ability of students in the class.

Another voice that has spoken out to maintain tracking is that of college professor Singal (1991). He identified two crises in American secondary education: (1) the ghetto social-problem students, and (2) the students who enter college unprepared. Singal referred to a 1978 study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals that had identified schools that were succeeding academically. Those schools were characterized by a practice of grouping students by academic ability in as many subjects as possible. In calling for an increase of assigned reading at all grade levels and a return to the study of humanities at the high school level, Singal also called for the institution of flexible ability grouping at the elementary and secondary levels.

Through parent groups organized to foster gifted education, numerous spokespersons have come forward to counter the move away from homogeneous grouping. Writing in the Journal for the Education of the Gifted, professor Robinson (1990) condemned the current move toward cooperative learning as an exploitation of the gifted. Beck (1990), a syndicated columnist who writes for the Chicago Tribune on child-rearing,

charged that “Educators who refuse to acknowledge the special needs of high-ability children--because of a preoccupation with at-risk youngsters, a misreading of research on the gifted, or a lopsided focus on equality instead of excellence--need to look ahead to the nation’s next century.” Beck attributed the current anti-tracking movement to the Carnegie Foundation’s 1989 report that had condemned tracking as being divisive and damaging to the nation’s children.

Feldhusen’s (1989) review of research on the gifted has been discussed earlier. He has effectively argued for the grouping of gifted students in core subjects for the purpose of their own development and for the purpose of providing the best leadership for this country in the 21st century.

Summary

The findings from research and the experts’ opinions can best be remembered through the window of theories. Researchers who explored the traditional theory that grouping helps everyone include Fowlkes (1931), Borg (1966), and Findley and Bryan (1970). They found inconsistent support for the theory. Supporters for the divergent theory that grouping has different effects on different groups include Alexander, Cook, and McDill (1982), Dar and Resh (1986), and Gamoran (1987). They found consistent support for the divergent theory. Kerchoff (1986) brought the traditional theory and divergent theory together and found for the latter.

Reviewers of research emerged with different findings. Esposito (1973) and Slavin (1990) found that there was virtually no effect on learning for ability grouping, but any positive effect would be realized by the high

group. Kulik and Kulik (1982, 1984, 1985, 1987) found that high-ability students benefited by ability grouping. Feldhusen (1989) found that the gifted benefited by acceleration and ability grouping. Allan (1991) reviewed the Kuliks' reviews and Slavin's reviews and sided with the Kuliks.

In studies of practices within schools, Rosenbaum (1976) found that track placement was done on nebulous criteria, but that it determined the quality of the education the student received. Oakes (1982, 1983, 1985, 1989, 1992) charged that track placement created an inequity of opportunity and helped to maintain a social class system.

Oakes (1983) charged that current ability grouping and tracking practices may violate the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and contradict precedents set in several court cases such as Brown (1954), Wisconsin v. Constantineau (1971), Goss v. Lopez (1975), Mills (1972), Larry P. I and II (1972 & 1979), and Hobson v. Hansen (1967).

The courts condemned tracking as discriminatory against the disadvantaged child in Hobson v. Hansen (1967). McNeal (1975) allowed racially identifiable classes if they were not the direct results of the dual school system of segregation. While federal funds have been withdrawn from a school district because of its insistence on tracking (Dillon County, 1986), the courts have been more lenient on tracking in the more recent years.

Portraits of the American high school by Boyer (1983), Goodlad, (1984), Sizer (1985), and Powell et al. 1985) confirm tracking as the accepted organizational system and generally condemn it as perpetuating mediocrity in a downward spiral of teaching and learning. The lack of

consensus on the issue of tracking accounts for its continued position as one of the most controversial subjects in American education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the responses of teachers, students, and parents to a reduction in curricular tracks in a high school social studies curriculum after one year of implementation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research were utilized. Parents, teachers, and students were surveyed by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire responses were compared using descriptive statistics. Parent comments were analyzed for content. Teachers were interviewed and their comments were analyzed. Conclusions were drawn from this researcher's perspective as a participant-observer in the program under study.

Program History and Context

Sarason (1984) stated that new settings are often rooted in old ones. When Rowan County Schools and Salisbury City Schools of North Carolina merged on July 1, 1989, bringing together one city high school, four county high schools, and their 23 feeder schools, leaders in the new setting took on a renewed mission to provide the best education for all Rowan County children. The merger meant more than a consolidation of finances and facilities; it meant a consolidation of curricular and evaluation systems. Salisbury's system of offering three levels of courses for the four core program areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies was

adopted by the new Rowan-Salisbury Schools. Salisbury's weighted grade system was also adopted to identify courses designed at three levels of (1) applied or regular, (2) academic or accelerated, and (3) honors or Advanced Placement. Table 1 describes the weight values for grades received in each track.

Table 1

Weighted Grades Awarded By Tracks

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Applied/Regular</u>	<u>Academic/Accelerated</u>	<u>Honors/AP</u>
A	4.0	5.0	6.0
B	3.0	4.0	5.0
C	2.0	3.0	4.0
D	1.0	2.0	3.0
E	0.0	1.0	2.0

In the Spring of 1991, the Rowan-Salisbury Central Curriculum Committee, composed of administrators from each of the five high schools and the central office staff, voted 4 to 1 (each high school having one vote) to offer a two-level, rather than three-level, social studies curriculum for the 1991-92 year. As Sarason (1984) had predicted, the decision was made after several discussions that revealed conflicting values and beliefs about tracking and homogeneous vs. heterogeneous organizational systems. The new setting eliminated the 5.0 (accelerated) track for high school social studies and set the expectation that the content formerly taught as accelerated would be taught at the regular (4.0) level. Students were left the alternative of choosing from the six courses available at the 4.0 level or the

three AP courses available at the 6.0 level, two of which were new (European History and American Government/Politics) (Table 2).

Table 2

Social Studies Courses Available:1991-92

Regular (4.0 Weight)	AP (6.0 Weight)
*Economic, Legal, & Political Systems	European History
*U.S. History	U.S. History (Meets Requirement)
World History	American Government/Politics (Meets ELPS Requirement)
World Geography	
Sociology and Psychology	
Contemporary Studies	
Bible History I, II, III	
Army ROTC I, II, III, IV	*Required for Graduation

Realizing that teachers would need training in teaching methods for heterogeneous groups, social studies teachers were provided a 30-hour staff development activity during the summer of 1991, addressing new techniques and methods of teaching likely to be successful with heterogeneous groups: cooperative learning, writing assignments, seminar style teaching, and computer and laser disc technology. Although some teachers were skeptical about organizing classes so that wider ability ranges were grouped together, most approached the new system with a positive attitude. Twenty-four social studies teachers from the five schools were surveyed for initial opinions in June, 1991. When asked, "How effective do you think the social studies restructuring effort will be in student learning?" they responded on a five-point Likert-type scale, with a 1 valued as representing "Not Effective" and a 5 representing "Very Effective." Their initial opinions indicated a

positive attitude toward the reduced track social studies experiment (Table 3).

Table 3

Teacher Predictions for the Success of Reduced Tracking in Social Studies

<u>Choice</u>	<u>No. of Respondents</u>
1 (Not Effective)	0
2	2
3	1
4	16
5 (Very Effective)	<u>5</u>
Total	24

With a mean score of 4 and 67% of the 24 respondents choosing the 4 option, this group of teachers appeared to approach the challenge with high expectations for success.

Subjects

The subjects of this study were drawn from those teachers, students and parents of students who had participated in the two-track social studies curriculum during its first year of implementation. Target courses are indicated in Table 4.

Table 4

Courses to be Surveyed

Economic, Legal, & Political Systems	AP European History
U. S. History	AP U.S. History
World History	AP American Government/Politics

These courses were selected because they were currently or formerly had been weighted above the regular 4.0 level.

The subjects were asked to rate the two-track system for the concerns most often expressed by proponents and opponents of tracking. Students who had been in Rowan-Salisbury since the 9th grade had experienced the three-track choice in social studies at the 9th and 10th grade levels. Three tracks were still available to them for the curricular areas of English, math, and science. Ninth graders were having their first experience with receiving weighted grades, according to the intended difficulty of a course. However, they had all experienced tracking to some degree in the K-8 experience. Most had experienced a differentiated curriculum in the areas of English and math since entering middle school at grades 5 or 6. They had also experienced achievement grouping in elementary school for reading and arithmetic. Of course, all of these experiences served as a backdrop for students' judgments about the current experience.

Design of the Study

The design for this study evolved out of the need to provide a way to measure the opinions of Rowan-Salisbury parents about the issues of reducing tracking. Appendix A provides insight into parent fears about reducing the quality of the content of the curriculum and slowing the pace for brighter students so that slower students could keep-up. The parent meeting described in the September 11, 1991 article was very emotional as parents charged that the school system had made decisions and then asked for parent approval. The combative tone of the meeting was reflected in the newspaper's placement of the articles in the paper. "Tracking: Parents Don't

Want Concept Completely Dropped, Officials Learn” ran on page 1A. The review of the Shirley Haworth’s speech encouraging the reduction of tracking ran on page 5A under the title “Separating Students by Ability Does Not Solve Problems, Teacher Says.”

In consideration of the public concerns about the reduction of tracking, which were the same concerns identified in the literature about tracking, Rowan-Salisbury curriculum planners decided to administer a questionnaire to the three groups affected by the restructured social studies curriculum-- parents, teachers and students, and compare the responses. There can be no pretest and posttest comparisons in this type of study because participants can assess the arrangement only after they have had the experience. The study design does not exactly replicate any of those described by Campbell and Stanley (1963), but comes closest to being the first-time assessment of the counterbalanced design in which all respondents are submitted to a treatment. The difference in this study is that each group was describing an experience from a unique point of view. Teachers assessed reduced tracking from the teaching position; students assessed it from the receiving position as students; and parents assessed it from the indirect position of what parents can know about their children’s experiences in school. The quasi-experimental counterbalanced design is appealing when one has control over a few naturally aggregated groups but cannot divide these natural groups into randomly equivalent subgroups for the presentation of a treatment or for testing. The analysis of variance is an appropriate method for comparing the groups results (Campbell and Stanley, 1963).

The counterbalanced design is strong for the sources of internal validity that include history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, regression, selection, and mortality. However, the method is questionable for the possibility of interaction of two or more of the internal validity sources, such as selection and maturation. The *selection-X* interaction refers to the limitation of the effects of the experimental variable to that specific sample and to the possibility that this reaction would not be typical of some more general universe of interest for which the naturally aggregated exposure-group was a biased sample. The way to assure internal validity is to administer the same questionnaire to the same subjects over an extended period of time.

The counterbalanced design is questionable for several sources of external validity. The interaction effect of the treatment and the testing might increase or decrease the respondents' sensitivity to the subject and cause them to answer in a certain way. There could also be interaction effects of selection biases and the experimental variable, and there could be reactive effects of experimental arrangements, which would preclude generalization about the effect of the experimental variable to nonexperimental settings. It is likely in this design that external validity may be breached by multiple-treatment interference. For example, in this study, respondents may have had difficulty separating the curricular organization issue from the total experience with a given teacher.

The reliability of any study is influenced by irrelevant factors that cause the results to fluctuate when they should not fluctuate (Vockell, 1983). The reliability of this study can only be assured by its replication over a period of

time. Within the limits of this study, the similar pattern of answers coming from the five schools and three populations surveyed suggest reasonable reliability.

Design of the Field Test

Student, parent, and teacher questionnaires were developed to address the common concerns of the homogeneous vs. heterogeneous debate, as identified by Turney (1931), Esposito (1973), and Rowan-Salisbury parents. Survey questions were worded to compare responses item by item from the student group, parent group, and teacher group. The field test population is described in Table 5.

Table 5

Field Test Population (All from West Rowan High School)

Students Field Tested:

<u>Students</u>	<u>Course</u>
23	ELPS
23	US History
<u>19</u>	AP US
N = 65 (88% of Enrollment)	

Teachers Field Tested: N = 7 (100% of Teachers)

Parents Field Tested:

A college research class attempted to contact the 74 student households by telephone to read parents the questionnaire and record their responses. They were able to complete 38 questionnaires through this approach.

N = 38 (51%)

Questions for the three surveys were constructed by the researcher with input from the director of secondary education, the director of testing, the other four curriculum specialists, the superintendent, and a social

science teacher from Catawba College. Questions were designed to assure that the concerns of all parties were reflected in the questionnaire. Questions 1-13 (Pilot Student Survey) addressed the issues raised in the literature concerning homogeneous/heterogeneous grouping. Questions 14-25 addressed methodology issues from the 1991 summer workshop for social studies teachers. Questions 26-29 addressed learning and teaching styles issues. A five-point Likert-type response set was chosen to determine degree of opinion about the questions. Wording the response choices was difficult because some questions dealt with time, some with speed, some with behavior, and some with values. Wordings for questions and responses were revised several times in an attempt to ask the appropriate question and provide appropriate responses.

The student field test was administered by teachers who had been instructed by this researcher about consistent procedures. Teachers were field tested by this researcher one day after school. In order to use time and money resources efficiently, parents were field tested via telephone interviews conducted by a social science class at Catawba College. Responses were analyzed by the researcher, the directors of secondary education and testing, and the social science professor from Catawba College.

A few revisions were made in the questionnaire before the actual survey was done. The field test indicated a problem with the parent survey in that many of the parents had no knowledge of or no opinion on some of the questions concerning their child's social studies class. Consequently, the parent survey was reconstructed so that a response choice of *Don't*

Know/No Opinion was available for each item. Directions for the parent survey were revised to encourage parents to return the questionnaire before the deadline.

Questions were added about *competition among students* (item 12) and *learning from other students* (item 13) since these were issues addressed in the literature. Item 10 was deleted (My personal concern about making good grades in this class was...) because participants commented that everyone would probably claim high concern. Actually, this question elicited the highest score on the field test (3.97). The questionnaire designers decided to delete the question because the previous item asking for an assessment of the class' concern about good grades was probably more meaningful in describing the more heterogeneous classroom. (Appendix B).

The Survey

The students, parents, and teacher populations of the target courses in the five high schools surveyed with the three revised instruments. Self-contained Exceptional Children were not surveyed. All students were surveyed in social studies class on May 12, 1992. Teachers had been instructed by curriculum specialists to distribute the questionnaires and instruct students about filling out the answer forms, but to offer no opinions that might prejudice students one way or the other in answering the questions.

Parent questionnaires were mailed to the homes of the students on the January, 1992 roll of the target courses. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included and coded so that a second mailing could be sent to

non-respondents. Questionnaires were separated from envelopes before tallying began so that responses could not be connected with respondents.

Because of the design of the software used to analyze the data, teachers who were surveyed were forced to describe their “course enrollment” as the one course they taught most of the day. Although teachers for all six courses did respond, no one taught AP US History or AP Government for most of the day.

Materials

Participants in the two-track curricular system assessed it for the issues most often raised about tracking by answering questionnaires designed to address the pros and cons of homogeneous grouping as identified by Turney (1931) and Esposito (1973). According to its proponents, homogeneous grouping is preferable to heterogeneous grouping for these reasons:

1. Homogeneous grouping takes individual differences into account by allowing students to advance at their own rate with others of similar ability, and by offering them methods and materials geared to their levels.
2. More individual attention from teachers is possible.
3. Students are challenged to do their best in their group, or to be promoted to the next level, within a realistic range of competition. Therefore, failures are reduced.
4. It is easier to teach to and provide materials for a narrower range of ability (Turney, 1931; Esposito, 1973).

According to its proponents, heterogeneous grouping is preferable to homogeneous grouping for these reasons:

1. Homogeneous grouping is undemocratic and affects the self-concept of all children adversely by placing a stigma on those in lower groups while giving high-group children an inflated sense of their own worth.
2. Most adult life experiences do not occur in homogeneous settings, and students must learn to work with a wide range of people.
3. Students of lesser ability may profit from learning with those of greater ability.
4. It is impossible to achieve truly homogeneous grouping, even along a single achievement variable, since test data are not generally reliable or valid enough for this type of distinction.
5. Homogeneous grouping may provide less sensitivity to individual differences in children by giving the teacher the false sense that students are similar in social needs, achievement, and learning style, while heterogeneity permits different patterns of abilities and needs to merge with a group of children.
6. Homogeneous ability grouping tends to segregate children along ethnic and socioeconomic lines as well as ability.
7. Teachers may be assigned several groups to teach and may not have or take time to differentiate assignments.
8. Teachers object to teaching lower groups (Turney, 1931; Esposito, 1973).

The revised surveys not only addressed the issues raised by Turney (1931) and Esposito (1973), but methodology issues that interested the director of secondary education. While the issue of teacher methodology is an important subject that demands further study, it is not part of this study.

Therefore, only questions 1-14 and 29 were analyzed by this researcher. Responses to the other questions are being studied by the Rowan-Salisbury schools director of research in an attempt to look closer into techniques and methods used within classrooms. Question content is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Question Content

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Rate of instruction | 16. Methodology: technology |
| 2. Rate: disruptive students | 17. Methodology: video tapes |
| 3. Rate: lack of understanding | 18. Methodology: seminars |
| 4. Number of failures | 19. Methodology: cooperative groups |
| 5. Difficulty of material | 20. Assigned homework |
| 6. Interest in class | 21. Did homework |
| 7. Importance of content | 22. Reviewed homework promptly |
| 8. Importance to future | 23. Asked oral questions |
| 9. Active participation | 24. Emphasized concepts |
| 10. Attention to individual needs | 25. Learns best |
| 11. Grade concern | 26. Most difficulty learning |
| 12. Competition among students | 27. Method used most |
| 13. Students learned from others | 28. Method used least |
| 14. Teacher expectation | 29. Overall experience |
| 15. Methodology: lecture | 30. Teacher prep time/ Communication |
| | 31. Ease/difficulty of teaching |
-

These issues were addressed in the surveys because they are the arguments most often given by parents, teachers, students, and educational researchers and writers to convince others that homogeneous grouping is good or bad. Getting below the surface issue of, "Do you like homogeneous grouping?" by asking about perceived strengths and weaknesses of the arrangement will help decision makers such as superintendents, principals,

curriculum specialists, and school board members to identify specific facets of the arrangement that are or are not working well.

Procedure

Questionnaires were typed, duplicated, and distributed from the central office. Curriculum specialists at each of the five high schools were trained by the director of testing to assure consistent administrative procedures for student and teacher surveys at the five sites. Teachers at each school site were given the same instructions as to how and when to administer the questionnaire. All students and teachers were surveyed on May 12, 1992. Parent surveys were mailed from the central office from a Student Information Management System (SIMS) list of parent addresses for the target group. Surveys were mailed on May 15 with a request that they be returned by June 1, 1992 in the provided envelope. Because the first mailing did not produce enough responses, a second questionnaire with return envelope was mailed on June 9. Responses were accepted until June 26, 1992.

Using a soft lead pencil, students and teachers answered their questionnaires on General Purpose Data Sheets Number III. The data sheets provided two small blocks for comments. Parents answered questionnaires on the actual questionnaire and their responses were transferred to the data sheets described above to be scanned as the other responses were. Parent comments were analyzed through the AskSam software program for qualitative analysis. Student comments on the data sheets were not analyzed because a review of the responses indicated there

would be no new information gathered from the lengthy process of entering the comments into AskSam. Teachers did not offer written responses to the survey, but gave their opinions in focused interviews.

The open responses of parents were typed into AskSam for qualitative analysis. AskSam allows free form entry of information. Content analysis is provided through features that tally words and patterns of words.

Focused interviews with a social studies teacher from each school were held in October, 1992 to address the academic achievement-equity issue and help this researcher formulate an answer the second research question, How do the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students relate to the issues of academic achievement and equity of the the new system.

Each department elected a representative who met with this researcher to discuss the announced topic. The interviews were held after school for approximately 45 minutes. To begin the discussion, the teachers were shown the parent, teacher, and student responses to Question D (Figures 2, and 3, and Table 11) and asked to comment. The Discussion Guide shown in Table 7 was used by the researcher to lead the interview. The interviews were taped and analyzed for content.

 Table 7

Discussion Guide

How do the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students relate to the issues of academic achievement and equity of the new system?

Is the curricular organization system we are presently using facilitating academic achievement?

- Does it appear students are learning as well as they did under the old system?
- How meaningful is one year of data?
- When and how will we know if students are achieving academically?

Is the curricular organization system we are presently using equitable to all students?

- Are all levels of a course open to all students?
 - Is it fair to require prerequisites?
 - Is it equitable to provide some students with higher status knowledge than others?
 - Does the weighting of grades affect equity one way or the other?
-

Data Analysis

Responses to the questionnaires were analyzed using MicroTest survey software and SPSS qualitative analysis software.

MicroTest provided a Frequency Tabulation Report in a histogram format that shows the number and percentage of respondents who selected each response for each item. (Appendix C) The report includes summary statistics. Parents were directed to leave blank any questions for which they had no opinion. These blanks are tallied under the "missing" category in the histogram. For purposes of comparison, these missing responses are disregarded for all groups when the means are compared for significant differences.

Data were transferred from MicroTest to SPSS through an ASCII file (Appendix D). The five options for each question were weighted 1-5 and

means for each question were compared through an analysis of variance (ANOVA), a statistical technique used to determine whether the differences between two or more means are greater than would be expected from sampling error alone. MicroTest carries means to the hundredths place, while SPSS carries means to the ten thousandths place; thus there are slight differences between the statistics reported. Quantitative analysis of the surveys was used to answer the first research question:

The open responses from the parent survey were analyzed for content through the word and phrase count feature of the AskSam program.

An analysis and comparison were also done of one question in the demographic section: "Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated level) to have been taught this year?" (1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided. Responses to this question were compared school-by-school to determine if particular opinions were located in particular schools.

The focused interviews with teachers were taped using a cassette audiotape. This researcher listened to the tapes twice, taking notes each time. Notes were summarized into a consensus narrative.

Limitations of This Study

The method of study used here was a survey format utilizing questionnaires. The purpose of using a questionnaire was to provide three response sources from small to large groups about the same issues. Although questionnaires are efficient methods of data collection, they contain inherent problems such as readability, word meaning, and length. Even with field testing, validity is difficult to ensure in created questionnaires such as the ones used here. Obtaining the targeted number of responses does

assure statistical validity for the population; however, only one school (South Rowan) returned enough parent responses to assure validity. Nevertheless, the parent responses from the other four schools were used, because they were close enough to the target number that they probably accurately represented the parents' perceptions from that school. Enough responses were received from the total parent group to assure validity for the parents as one population.

As in any survey, respondents' answers depended upon their interpretation of the question. For example, one question asks each of the three groups the students' perception of the "importance" of what was learned in the class. Herein lies one of the weaknesses of survey research: one cannot know the frame of reference that causes a responder to choose a certain answer. Also one cannot know how a responder interprets and chooses labels such as "somewhat low," "average," and "somewhat high." Those choices depend on the individual frame of reference and expectation. By definition of this kind of research, however, responses are quantified for comparison and a conclusion is drawn.

Another limitation to this study lay in the fact that the student and teacher samples were quite large for the population surveyed, while the parent respondents represented a much smaller segment of that population. Students and teachers were drafted responders who responded on school time. Parents who responded were interested enough to answer a long questionnaire and to mail it back in, tasks done voluntarily on their time. The parent sample was less representative of their population than the other two sample groups were of theirs.

Credibility of parent responses is particularly limited because parents are responding out of second-hand information, rather than first-hand experience. However, the most vocal opposition to reducing tracking came not from the students or teachers, but from the parents. It seems only fair to publish their perceptions alongside the perceptions of those who actually participated in the experience.

This study is also limited by the time that the new two-track system had been in place. A year is a short time to evaluate a new organizational system. Another survey should be done at the end of years three and five to longitudinally assess attitudes toward reduced tracking.

Another limitation of the survey was the difficulty of quantifying parent open responses. Although AskSam affords the freedom of entering data and then imposing structure, someone must make the determination of where the parent responses are to be counted. The researcher made an honest attempt to do that, but another person may have disagreed with where responses were counted.

The content analysis of the interviews presented a similar problem. What this researcher chose to highlight may not have been what another researcher would choose. Also, the teachers interviewed were selected by the individual faculties to represent their opinions; however, the representative may or may not have represented the majority opinion. Representatives sometimes are sent to such meetings because they are the newest members or the faculty or the most outspoken ones.

A final limitation of the study is that once the perceptions of the three groups were gleaned, it was difficult to relate those perceptions to the central

issues of academic achievement and equity that formed the conceptual base of the study. Each respondent reported his/her perception from a unique viewpoint that likely contradicted another person's unique viewpoint. For example, two parents may have said that "pacing" was a problem in the new system. One parent may have thought the pacing too slow and the other thought it was too fast. One parent may have thought that the AP courses were a strength because they facilitated academic achievement. Another parent may have felt that AP courses were a weakness because they were too difficult for his child and denied his child the "best" teacher.

The data gathered in this study can be disaggregated by course in which the student was enrolled. An appropriate follow-up study would be to look at opinions according to the track in which the child is enrolled. This study was an initial study to begin comparing and contrasting perceptions of the three overall groups of parents, teachers, and students.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS
Respondents

Rolls containing names and addresses of students' parents/guardians were secured for the target courses in January in order to provide ample time to prepare questionnaires for mailings. Parent surveys were mailed on May 15 and a second mailing to nonrespondents was issued on June 9. Teachers and students were surveyed at school on May 12. Completed surveys from the students 1992 tallied 2,383, representing a student group of 1,180 males (50%) and 1,203 females (50%). The discrepancy between the January enrollment and the May returns is accounted for by students withdrawing from school or the course, absentees, and students who did not fill out a questionnaire. Further description of the student group is given in Table 8.

Table 8
Student Respondents

	School Site					Total
	East	North	Salisbury	South	West	
<u>On Roll</u> <u>Jan. 1992</u>	554	425	518	766	524	2,787
<u>Surveyed</u> <u>May 12, 1992</u>	444 80%	355 84%	426 82%	685 89%	473 90%	2,383 86%
Course Enrollment						
<u>ELPS</u>	1138 (48%)		<u>AP US History</u>		84 (4%)	
<u>US History</u>	768 (32%)		<u>AP Eur. His.</u>		45 (2%)	
<u>World His.</u>	324 (13%)		<u>AP Amer. Gov.</u>		24 (1%)	
						2,383 (100%)
Ethnic Description						
<u>No.</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>No Answer</u>	
	1826 (76.6%)	493 (20.7%)	26 (1%)	6 (.3%)	32 (1.5%)	
						2,383 (100%)

Although parents were contacted twice via mail to secure enough responses to represent accurately each school population, only South Rowan returned enough questionnaires to assure their responses are a valid representation of that subpopulation. Needed returns for validity are based on January enrollment figures because questionnaires were mailed to all households with a student enrolled in January. Therefore, parent responses represent a larger percentage of students surveyed on May 12 than those enrolled in January (34% compared to 29%). According to Scheaffer,

Mendenhall, & Ott (1990), a sample size of 338 is a valid representation of a population of 2,787. The total parent returns more than meet the minimum sample size requirement for the total population. According to Vockell (1983), a sample size of 817 that represents a population of 2,787 carries a confidence interval of plus or minus 3.02%. The narrow confidence interval means the sample size likely represents the population. A description of parent respondents is given in Table 9.

Table 9

Parent Respondents

Returns By School				
<u>School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Students Surveyed</u>	<u>*Needed Returns</u>	<u>Received Returns</u>
East	554	444	220	192 (35%)
North	425	355	201	87 (20%)
Salisbury	518	426	217	125 (24%)
**South	766	685	254	275 (36%)
West	524	473	217	138 (26%)
System	2,787	2,383	335	817 (29%)

* Needed returns for validity according to Scheaffer, Mendenhall, & Ott (1990).

**The only school to return the number of responses needed.

Parent Returns According to Their Students' Course Enrollment			
<u>ELPS</u>	349 (43%)	<u>AP US History</u>	77 (9%)
<u>US History</u>	221 (27%)	<u>AP Eur. His.</u>	21 (3%)
<u>World His.</u>	134 (16%)	<u>AP Amer. Gov.</u>	15 (2%)

Returns According to Parent Ethnic Group					
	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>No Answer</u>
<u>No.</u>	723	81	7	5	1
<u>%</u>	88.5	10	.9	.5	.1

Teachers surveyed are described in Table 10. All courses were represented through teacher response. The software used, MicroTest, allowed respondents to record only the course taught for most of the day. Teachers' answers applied to their total days' schedule.

Table 10

Teacher Respondents

	School					
	<u>East</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Salisbury</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Population</u>	8	6	6	8	7	35
<u>Sample</u>	7	6	6	7	7	33
<u>% Return</u>	88%	100%	100%	88%	100%	94%
	Returns According to Course Taught Most					
<u>ELPS</u>	13 (39%)		<u>AP US History</u>		0 (0%)	
<u>US History</u>	16 (48%)		<u>AP Eur. His.</u>		2 (6%)	
<u>World His.</u>	2 (6%)		<u>AP Amer. Gov.</u>		0 (0%)	
Ethnic Group						Sex
<u>White</u>	32 (97%)		<u>Male</u>		17 (52%)	
<u>Black</u>	1 (3%)		<u>Female</u>		16 (48%)	

Reliability and Validity of Data

The advantage of questionnaires is that they can be designed for specific research problems. The disadvantage of questionnaires is that they are generally suspect in regard to reliability and validity (Berdie & Anderson, 1974). For this study, validity of the responses was assured by the number returned. Content validity was assured by the field testing of the instrument and the consequent revisions discussed in Chapter III. The director of secondary education, the director of testing, and this researcher were

satisfied that the instrument accurately measured the participants' perceptions of the tracking issues under consideration.

Reliability deals with consistency of meaning conveyed to a respondent. Through the field test, respondents were given the opportunity to critique questions for meaning. Their suggestions were incorporated into the revised instrument. The consistency of responses from each of the five schools ensured reliability. Ensuring anonymity of the respondents and asking questions using familiar terms enhance reliability of questionnaires (Berdie & Anderson, 1974). Both practices were followed for this questionnaire.

Research Question One

An item-by-item comparison of responses from the three groups surveyed provided an answer to the first research question: After one year of implementation, how do parents, teachers, and students differ in their assessment of a social studies curriculum that has been reduced from three to two tracks when they assess the new curriculum for the concerns most often expressed by the proponents and opponents of tracking?

Mean scores for the three groups derived through MicroTest are presented for the 15 survey items concerned. Figures 2 and 3 provide a graphic representation of the comparison of responses. MicroTest results are provided in Appendix C.

Through SPSS software an analysis of variance was used to compare the differences in responses from parents, teachers, and students. A summary table is presented in Table 11

. Parents assessed rate of instruction at 2.91; teachers assessed it at

Table 11

Analysis of Variance Summary for Items 1-14 and 29

ITEM	PARENT		TEACHER		STUDENT		D.F.	GROUP ANOVA	
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		F-RATIO	F PROB. LEVEL
1	2.9071	0.9368	2.5758	0.9364	3.0097	0.8098	2	8.1502	0.003*
2	2.6146	1.2597	2.8485	1.2021	2.5789	1.2222	2	0.9722	0.3784
3	2.3857	1.134	2.9091	1.0713	2.1343	1.0858	2	21.734	.0000*
4	1.9548	1.2239	3.2121	0.9924	2.2629	1.2681	2	31.0148	.0000*
5	2.8162	1.0583	3.2121	0.9604	2.8564	1.0017	2	2.5819	0.0759
6	2.9091	1.2101	2.8182	1.0141	2.821	1.12222	2	1.7884	0.4075
7	2.71	1.0472	2.6667	0.9574	2.5993	0.9656	2	3.5555	0.0287*
8	3.1237	1.1475	4.2121	0.6963	3.0585	1.134	2	17.4086	.0000*
9	3.8592	1.1049	3.7879	0.9924	3.6067	1.1006	2	15.5552	.0000*
10	3.4881	1.1854	3.9394	0.8638	3.4239	1.1676	2	3.8511	.0214*
11	2.9945	1.1432	2.7576	1.0906	2.9941	1.1065	2	0.7355	0.4794
12	2.6941	1.1332	2.5152	1.1214	2.6328	1.1138	2	0.40665	0.3444
13	2.7457	1.1147	3.0606	0.9663	2.6555	1.0505	2	4.0838	0.017*
14	3.3929	1.0915	3.6061	0.9334	3.3948	0.9883	2	0.7136	0.49
29	2.87	1.0235	2.6364	0.8223	2.9296	1.0198	2	2.235	0.1073

* Denotes Significant Between Groups Difference

2.58; students assessed it at 3.01. Teachers assessed the rate as “slower” than parents or students did. There was a statistically significant difference between teachers and the the other two groups.

Parents assessed the number of students who slowed the class down because they were disruptive at 2.61; teachers assessed it at 2.85; students assessed it at 2.58. Seventy-five parents (9%) did not respond to this item. Disregarding the non-respondents, there was no significant difference among the three groups’ responses. All agreed that the number was between “somewhat low” and “average.”

Regarding the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn’t understand the material, parents responded at 2.39; teachers responded at 2.91; and students responded at 2.13. Parents who did not answer this question totaled 9.5%. Comparing those who did respond, there was a significant difference between parents and students; there was also a significant difference between students and teachers; and there was a significant difference between teachers and parents. All responses fell between the “somewhat low” and “average” range.

Parents assessed the number of failing grades students experienced on tests or major assignments, at 1.95; teachers assessed it at 3.21; and students assessed it at 2.28. There was a significant difference between parents and students; between teachers and parents and between teachers and students.

Parents assessed the difficulty of material studied in the class at 2.82; teachers assessed it at 3.21; and students assessed it at 2.86. Students differed significantly with parents, and teachers differed significantly with both

parents and students. Teachers assessed the material as more difficult than the other two groups did. However, all three groups assessed difficulty as close to the “about right” descriptor.

Parents assessed the interest the child had in the subject matter, at the 2.91 level; teachers and students assessed it at the 2.82 level. There was no significant difference among the three groups. All agreed that the interest was close to the “average” description.

Parents assessed the importance of the content studied in the course, at the 2.71 level; teachers assessed it at the 2.67 level; and students assessed at the 2.60 level. While parents and students significantly differed in their assessment, teachers fell between the two groups and did not significantly differ with either. Eighty-six parents (10.5%) did not respond to this question, indicating they did not have an opinion about how important students believed the content to be.

Parents assessed the importance of the content for the child's future at the 3.12 level; teachers assessed it at the 4.21 level; and students assessed it at the 3.06 level. Only 33 (4%) of the parents failed to answer this question. Teachers expressed one of their strongest opinions here by moving into the level 4 descriptor. Teachers significantly differed with parents and students, finding content to be of “somewhat high” importance, while the other two groups evaluated “content importance to the child's future” as “average.”

Parents assessed the child's active participation in the class at the 3.86 level; teachers assessed it at the 3.79 level; and students assessed it at the 3.61 level. Parents significantly differed with teachers and students,

finding the participation to be closer to the “often” description, while the other two groups described it as “occasionally.”

Parents assessed whether teachers paid attention to the child’s needs as an individual at 3.49; teachers assessed it at 3.94; and students assessed it at 3.42. Teachers significantly differed with parents and students by choosing closer to the “often” option. Parents and students found the attention to be somewhat above the “average” descriptor, but not as high as the teachers judged it.

Parents assessed the number of students in the class who were concerned about good grades at 2.99; teachers assessed it at 2.76; and students assessed it at 2.99. There was no significant difference between any two of the groups, with the parents and students agreeing exactly. However, 86 (10%) of the parents did not answer this question, indicating they had no opinion about the number of students in the class who were concerned about good grades.

Parents assessed the competition among students in the class at 2.69; teachers assessed it at 2.52; and students assessed it at 2.63. No two groups differed significantly with all three groups assessing “competition” between the “somewhat low” and “average” range.

Parents assessed the number of students in the class who learned from each other at the 2.75 level; teachers assessed it at the 3.06 level; and students assessed it at the 2.66 level. Parent responses here indicated this was the item about which they felt least knowledgeable; 113 (13.8%) did not answer. There was significant difference between parents and students and between teachers and students, but parents and teachers did not differ

significantly in their assessment of “students learning from each other.” All three groups described the number of students who learned from each other as being close to the “average” range.

Parents assessed teacher expectations in the class at the 3.39 level; teachers assessed it at the 3.61 level; and students assessed it at the 3.39 level. There were no significant difference between any two groups.

Item 29 allowed the groups to respond with an overall evaluation of the learning experience in social studies class for the year. Parents assessed the experience at 2.55; teachers assessed it at 2.64; students assessed it at 2.36. There was no significant difference between any two groups.

Figure 2
Responses to Questionnaire Items 1-7

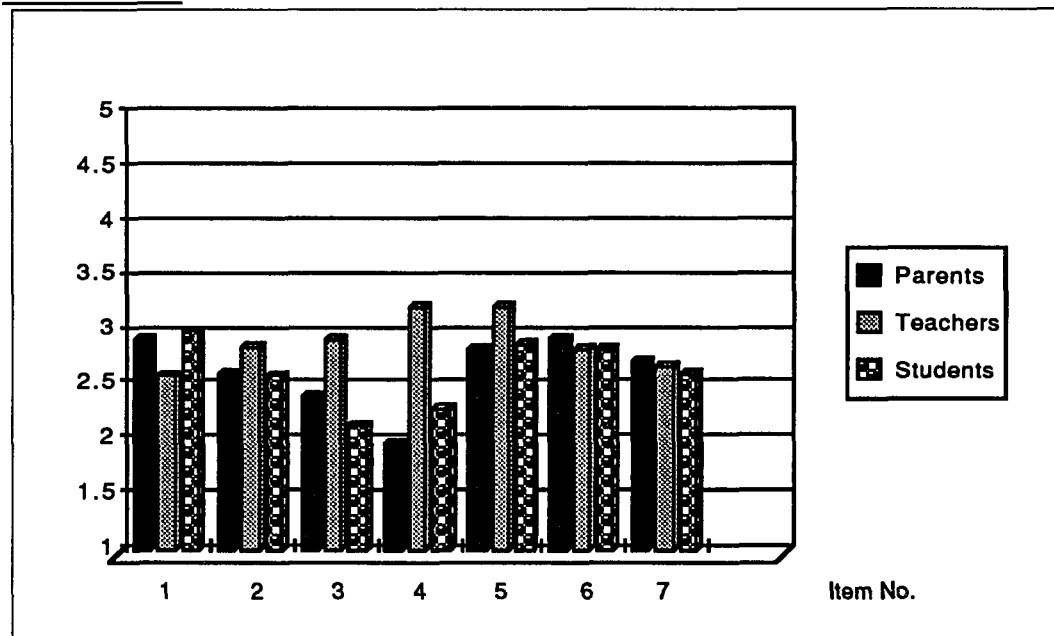
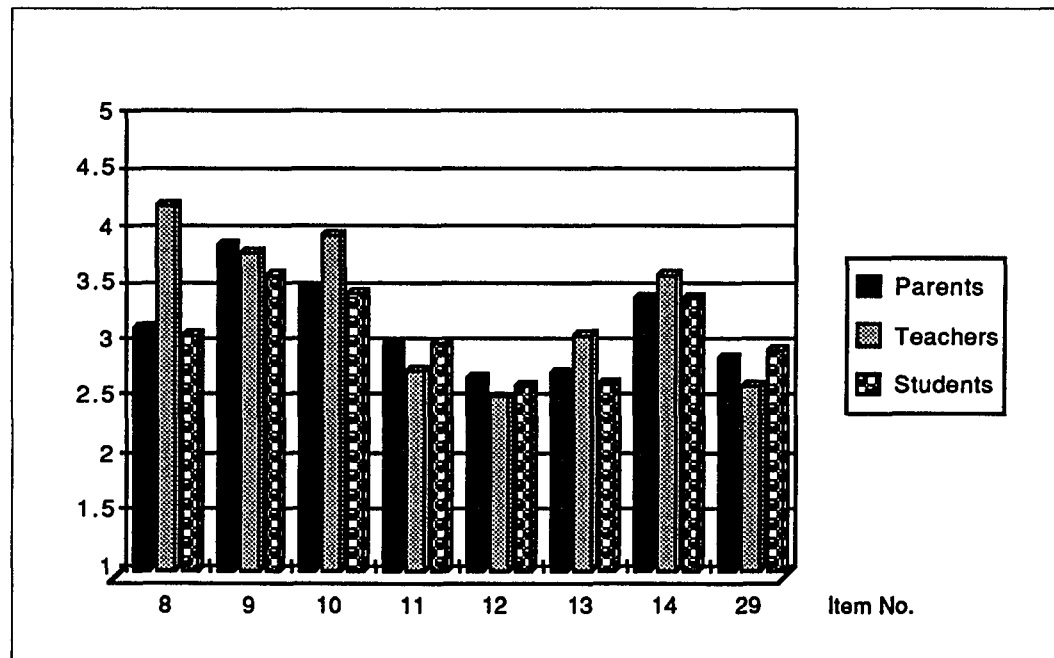


Figure 3
Responses to Questionnaire Items 8-14 & 29



Parent Comments

The first research question was further addressed through an analysis of parent comments about strengths and weaknesses of the two-track system. Comments were entered into the AskSam qualitative analysis computer program, and categories of comments were established as follows:

Structure. Strength comments identified the two-level organizational structure as a strength and referred to aspects such as pacing, the weighted grade system, and the level of difficulty or challenge of the content. Weakness comments identified the two-level organizational structure as a weakness and referred to aspects such as, the loss of the 5.0 weight, the pacing, and the level of difficulty or challenge of the content.

Teacher. The teacher's personality, attitude, and personal attributes were identified as the strength or weakness of the experience.

Content/Material. Content (e.g., economics, civics) or materials (e.g., worksheets, text, videos) were identified as strengths or weakness of the experience.

Methodology. The methodology used or misused by the teacher was identified as the strength or weakness of the experience (e.g., discussion, group work, projects, field trips).

Other Students. The attributes and contributions of other class members were identified as a strength of the experience. However, the attitudes, misbehavior, and disciplinary problems of other class members were also identified as a weakness of the experience.

Other Factors. Other factors such as the physical environment, class size, and the student himself were identified as being both strengths, and weaknesses of the experience.

Comments were tallied in more than one category if appropriate to the content. For example, this strength comment was counted in the categories of Teacher, Content, and Methodology: "Economics will prepare for independence. Information on budgeting, credit cards, checking accounts was interesting. Teacher was interesting. Used discussion."

Frequencies of parent responses for the categories are given in Table 12. From the two mailings that produced the 817 returns, there were 428 that had written responses (270 from the first mailing and 158 from the second).

Table 12

Parent Comments

	Strength		Weakness	
	No.	%	No.	%
Structure	17	18	79	82
Teacher	148	73	55	27
Content/Material	87	61	55	39
Methodology	111	57	83	43
Other Students	15	27	40	73
Other Factors	16	57	12	43

N = 428

A Direct Opinion

The three groups were asked to express a direct opinion of the decision to reduce tracking by responding to Question D in the Demographic

Section: "Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?" Responses of the three groups are presented in the charts given in Tables 13, 14, and 15. As a total group parents offered the strongest support for three tracks (54% = Yes); students offered the next strongest support (41% = Yes); and teachers offered the weakest support (37% = Yes). Teachers gave the strongest negative response to the question (40% = No); students followed with a 38% No vote; and parents provided a 30% No vote. In the Undecided category, 23% of the teachers were undecided, 20% of the students, and 16% of the parents.

Table 13

Parent Responses

Would you have preferred 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?

	<u>1(Yes)</u>	<u>2(No)</u>	<u>3(Undecided)</u>
East	96 (50%)	67 (35%)	29 (15%)
North	46 (53%)	20 (23%)	21 (24%)
Salisbury	90 (72%)	17 (14%)	18 (14%)
South	129 (47%)	96 (35%)	50 (18%)
<u>West</u>	<u>81(59%)</u>	<u>43 (31%)</u>	<u>14 (10%)</u>
Total	442 (54%)	243(30%)	132 (16%)

Table 14

Teacher Responses

Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?

	<u>1(Yes)</u>	<u>2(No)</u>	<u>3(Undecided)</u>
East	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	0 (0%)
North	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	3 (50%)
Salisbury	1 (17%)	4 (67%)	1 (17%)
South	5 (71%)	0 (0%)	2 (29%)
<u>West</u>	<u>0 (0%)</u>	<u>3 (75%)</u>	<u>1 (25%)</u>
Total	11 (37%)	12 (40%)	7 (23%)

Table 15

Student Responses

Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?

	<u>1(Yes)</u>	<u>2(No)</u>	<u>3(Undecided)</u>
East	201(46%)	166 (38%)	73 (17%)
North	128 (36%)	133 (38%)	91 (26%)
Salisbury	206 (49%)	133 (32%)	82 (19%)
South	251 (37%)	294 (43%)	138 (20%)
<u>West</u>	<u>92 (41%)</u>	<u>183 (39%)</u>	<u>95 (20%)</u>
Total	978 (41%)	909 (38%)	479 (20%)

Research Question Two

The second research question, How do the perceptions of these parents, teachers, and students relate to the issues of academic achievement and equity of the new system? was partially answered by an analysis of teacher interviews with a representative from the social studies department in each school. There was some disagreement, but much agreement among

the teacher representatives who discussed the second research question by the discussion guide given in Chapter III.

Academic Achievement. The consensus about academic achievement was that there is no valid way to measure it. Two teachers stated that the end-of-course test (EOC) was not a valid measure, but when pressed to name one, they could not. Although teachers give grades on a daily, weekly, quarterly, semester, and yearly schedule, no one suggested that grades are a valid measure of academic achievement. Three of the five teachers interviewed stated that course credit should be determined more by behaviors and attitudes as judged by the teacher than by grades on any kind of test. "Why I've had students hardly do anything all year and then pass that (EOC) test," said one teacher. The two other teachers stated that the EOC test is as good a measure of mastery of the curriculum as is available. "It is based on what the state says we're supposed to teach," said one teacher. All five teachers pointed out that the system EOC scores for ELPS and U.S. History had actually improved slightly for the 1992 year. They felt that the test scores validated the fact that heterogeneous grouping had not ruined the academic achievement of the students. (See Figures 4 and 5 for end-of-course test results.)

Figure 4 Rowan-Salisbury EOC Results - ELPS

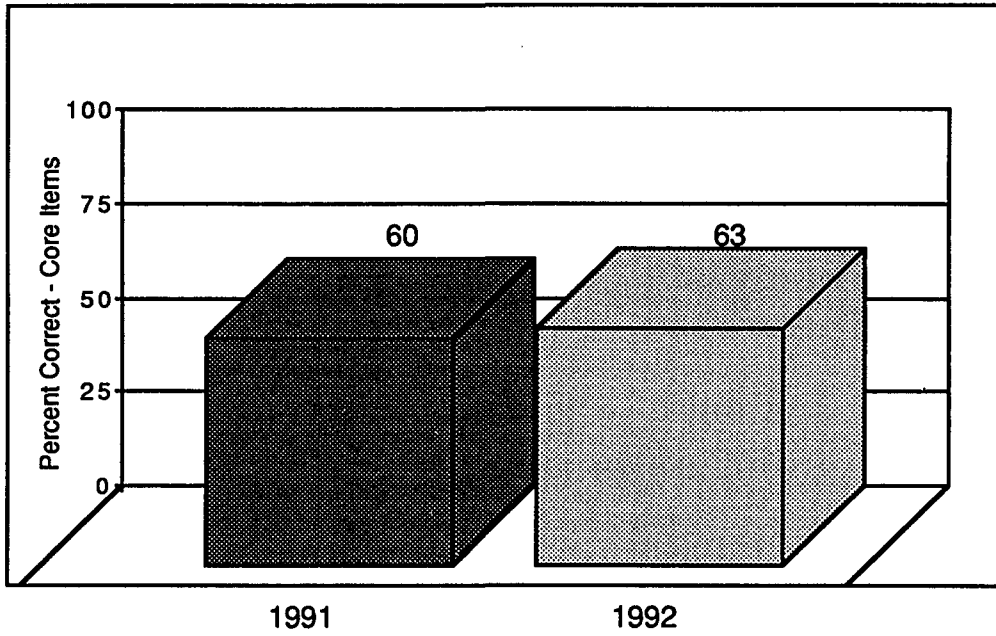
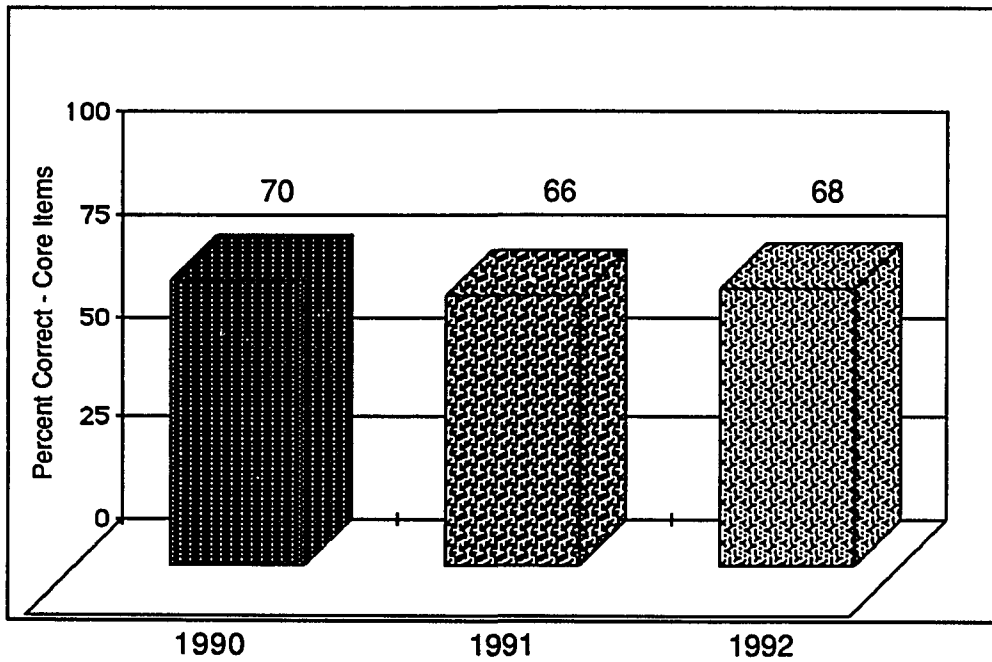


Figure 5 Rowan-Salisbury EOC Results - U.S. History



The teachers interviewed stated that the two-track system was preferable to the three-track system. The teacher interviewed from Salisbury High, where the highest teacher anti-tracking scores were recorded, reasoned that the socioeconomic structure probably explained the parent and student preference for three tracks reported in Question D. He noted that the school serves large upper and lower classes and a small middle class. The parents who responded would more likely be those upper or middle class parents who fear the three-track system that is working for them may be weakened through heterogeneous grouping. Likewise, he reasoned that most respondents had their minds made up before the experiment began as either in favor of or opposed to tracking, and that one year was too short a time for minds to change one way or the other.

Another teacher reasoned that teachers responded in a pro-tracking manner because they wanted to teach the higher tracks and not have to teach the less motivated students. When this researcher suggested that not everyone could teach the high tracks, the teacher responded that teachers may have answered in hope that they would eventually get the "good" kids.

The teachers agreed that the responses of all three groups (parents, teachers, and students) to Question D had little connection to the issue of academic achievement. All the teachers did believe the responses were somewhat based on a desire to raise grade point averages through the weighted grade system. One teacher expressed deep frustration at students who would take accelerated courses and then complain about the level of work. He felt that students were interested in getting the 5.0 for grade purposes, but were unwilling to do the corresponding work.

Equity. Some teachers initially had difficulty identifying an equity issue in tracking. The only inequity they saw was that some students deny other students educational opportunities through acting out and creating disturbances. The complaints about discipline applied more to the 9th grade level than to any other. Two teachers reported that the heterogeneous arrangement facilitated better behavior. Each had taught general level courses before and believed that the infusion of the higher level student into the class caused the general level student to be assimilated into a better behavior pattern.

One teacher reasoned that the equity issue could not be determined until the system agreed on a philosophy of who is being educated for what. The teacher saw two opposing views: (1) prepare everyone for college, and (2) prepare some for college, some for a technical education, and some for work. He said, "Until we know what we want to do, we can't talk about equity."

When the Oakes idea of high and low status education was presented to the teachers, one commented that the only reason a student gets a low status education is because he chooses to do so. Another teacher, in a different interview, disagreed and commented on the cumulative effect of course taking. He said, "We are in an educational caste system. Kids are taking on a level and living in it. There was a lot more there to work with, but we just didn't harvest it. By the time they're in the fourth grade they know what group they belong to."

The teachers agreed that the respondents' assessment of the reduced track system had little to do with equity. From both the statistics and

comments, it can be observed that almost everyone responded from a personal point of view . Very few parents (or teachers) rose to a global view to look at the impact of the curricular organization on the entire student body.

One teacher offered a bit of wisdom that may sustain Rowan-Salisbury and other curriculum planners as they look for better ways to teach students. He said, "If we believe that what we are doing is right, we should continue with it, regardless of what detractors say. It takes time for people to accept the big C word -- Change."

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS
Summary

The assessment tools used to answer the research questions posed in this study produced contradictions that are difficult to resolve. Results from the fifteen items on the questionnaire appeared to disagree with the responses to Question D in the demographic section. The analysis of the parent comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the reduced tracking program appeared to disagree with the teachers' perceptions of the success of the program. In general, the concerns that increasing heterogeneity within the classroom would cause learning to be hampered were not confirmed, according to the responses of the parents, teachers and students to the fourteen items on the questionnaire. The objective data of end-of-course tests indicated that more had been learned under the more heterogeneous system. However, parents still preferred the three-tracked system to the two-tracked system.

Discussion of Survey Results

Discussion of Item Responses. According to the literature, one of the primary arguments for homogeneous grouping is the belief that students can learn more and move faster when they are not held back by classmates who either cannot or will not keep up. Items 1, 2, and 3 on the questionnaire were designed to address the academic achievement issue of

pacing. Responses to item 1, *rate of instruction*, indicated that teachers felt the rate was moving more slowly than parents or students did. That perception seems logical considering teachers are under the constant pressure to cover a certain amount of material in a defined time period. No group reported a great number of disruptions (item 2) that slowed the learning, but again, teachers were more critical than the other two groups. As the disciplinarians in the classroom, teachers would be more sensitive to disruptions than were students or parents. Likewise, they were more critical in item 3, *the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand the material*. It is understandable that over 9% of the parents did not have an answer for items 2 and 3. Not knowing about impediments to pacing probably indicates that pacing was not a problem.

Items 4, 5, and 14 were designed to assess the academic achievement issue of different ability levels needing different levels of material. The discrepancy between the parents' perception of students' grades and the teachers' and students' perceptions can be explained by remembering that the parents represent a more select group than do the teachers or students. When these parents reported that the number of failing grades for their children was "somewhat low," they were probably right. Teachers and students are describing a broader spectrum of students in their answer. Item 14, *teacher expectations*, confirms item 5. Teachers believed that they have higher expectations than parents and students do.

Items 6, 7, and 8 were designed to assess the alignment of the students' interest with content. An equitable curriculum would be interesting to each child, contain content the child believed to be important, and actually

be important for the child's future. An argument for homogeneous grouping is that more learning occurs if students are grouped together according to similar interests and needs. When asked about the *interest* in the subject matter, the three groups agreed that it was in the average range. Teacher responses on item 7, *how important students felt the content is*, reflects their frustration in attempting to teach something they believe is not valued by the audience. The contrast between teachers' responses to item 7 and item 8 implies teachers may be spending time teaching material that is not valued in itself, but is valuable to the child's future. That future could include earning course credit, graduating from high school, and becoming a contributing citizen. The teachers' strong opinion on item 8, *the importance of the content to the child's future*, sadly contrasts with what they perceive that students believe.

Items 9 and 10, *the child's active participation in the class* and *the attention paid to the child's needs as an individual*, were designed to assess whether the child received an equitable amount of attention in the class where there was a broad range of abilities. The parents' optimistic perception that the child was participating "often" (3.86) was more positive than the teachers' and students' perceptions of active participation. Again, parents who responded may not be representative of the total parent group. The fear that students would no longer receive individual attention in a heterogeneous setting was not borne out according to the responses. Teachers believed that they were giving more individual attention than parents or students did. However, all assessed individual attention above the 3.0 or average level (from 3.42 to 3.94).

Items 11 and 12 were designed to assess the influence of other students' attitudes in the class. The atmosphere generated by students concerned about good grades and competition could affect academic achievement and equity. All groups agreed that the number of students who were concerned about good grades was in the average range (2.76-2.99). Similarly, competition was found to be between somewhat low and average (2.52-2.69). Whether competition is a motivator to learning is arguable. More recent theorists argue for team effort toward a learning goal, rather than individual effort.

Item 13 addresses cooperative learning through the larger issue of learning from others in the class. Several educators have suggested cooperative learning as an effective teaching method for heterogeneous classes (Findley & Bryan, 1970; Goodlad, 1983; Oakes, 1988; Braddock & Slavin, 1992). The fact that students assessed this item lower than teachers or parents did (2.66-3.06) gives cause for teachers to reconsider how their procedures can be altered to facilitate more learning from other students.

The fact that there was no significant difference between any two groups in the final evaluation of the year's learning experience (item 29) indicated that for the three groups the experience was "good." This consensus was encouraging after the initial controversy about the reduced tracking system.

The areas where there was the most disagreement are understandable when one considers the respondents' points of view. Item 3, *the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand the material*, probably reflects the teacher's sense of

responsibility to get to every child and move instruction along. Ironically, the complaint that the pacing would be a problem was one of the charges most often made by parents when the program got under way. (See Appendix A.) The difference in opinion on item 4, *the number of students with failing grades*, is probably the result of the fact that teachers and students were describing the total population and that parents were speaking for only their child and any immediate classmates they might know. The difference in opinion on item 8, *the importance of the content to the student's future*, is logical. Teachers would naturally believe in the importance of the subject or they would not devote their lives to teaching it.

Overall, the survey responses indicated that the reduced tracking system was working as well as any other organizational pattern the students had experienced. This perception was supported by the objective data of end-of-course tests.

Discussion of Question D. The three groups' assessment of the reduced tracking organizational pattern indicates that the fears critics had expressed about more heterogeneity in the classroom were not realized at the end of the first year. However, the results of the questionnaire for items 1-15 seemed to contradict the responses to Question D in the Demographic Section of the survey, (*Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?*) Over 50% of parent respondents from every school except South Rowan said Yes.

The parent vote in favor of a three-track system may be based on several reasons. To begin with, it is unlikely that attitudes for or against something as controversial as tracking will change in one year. Longitudinal

data are needed to determine the full impact of changing the curriculum organization. Parents appeared to be saying through the survey that the detriments to learning they feared would befall (slower pacing, lower quality of content, content less specific to the child's needs, less participation by the child, less attention from the teacher, influence from unmotivated or undisciplined peers, and lowered teacher expectations) had not happened, but (according to Question D), they would prefer the security of the system they had known for several years rather than a new system. A majority of parents from every school except South Rowan would have preferred offering a 5.0 or accelerated level (East - 50%; North - 53%; Salisbury - 72%; South - 47 %; and West 59%). Ironically, South Rowan parents were the only ones to return enough responses to assure that the sample represented the larger population.

Salisbury parents' strong support of the more tracked system is understandable in light of the fact that the three-level curricular organization had originated in the old city system many years before merger; they had ownership in a system that was working pretty well, at least for the parents who responded to the survey. A second irony exists in the contradiction between the Salisbury teachers' response to Question D and the parents' response to it. Only one teacher (17%) answered Question D with a Yes. The fact that the teachers see the value in reducing tracking will probably help parents and students become more accepting of the new program, but that will take time. Salisbury High School has suffered the same fate of many city schools that have had to deal with meeting the needs of a changing and diverse student body. As the Salisbury teacher noted in the interview, the

school serves a diverse socioeconomic student body. The traditional theory of tracking has been that homogeneous grouping meets the needs of all three groups. It is likely that it will take time with positive experiences in both the affective and cognitive domains before parents and students accept a heterogeneous organizational system.

Students were less supportive of having the 5.0 level than parents were, but more supportive than teachers were. In total, 41% of the students answered Question D with a Yes. Again, Salisbury students expressed the strongest pro-tracking voice with 49% of them responding Yes. Although the students' comments were not analyzed because of the great number and the likelihood that they would produce no new perceptions not voiced by the parents, a cursory examination by this researcher produced two major attitudes from the students. The students who took the time to write a comment did not like to have their learning time infringed upon by students who misbehave. Secondly, the students liked having the 5.0 track for the purpose of grade point averages (GPA). Parents, too, were well aware that the 5.0 track facilitated a higher GPA without the very high demands of Honors or Advanced Placement courses. Teachers pointed out in their interviews that too many students sign up for courses to get the weight added to their grade, and then "whine" about the work required for that level of the course. It would be an interesting experiment to offer the three tracks of a course, with each receiving the same weight, and see how many students would sign up for the more demanding levels. Teachers guess that very few would. While weighted grades were initiated as a way to reward students for more demanding work, they have become the reason that

students take courses. As one of the teachers noted in the interview, "What's a 5.0 A in one class is not a 5.0 A in another class. Teachers are different and subjects are different." Perceptions about the weighted grade system may have interacted with perceptions about the tracking system and threatened the validity of responses. Students and parents who benefited from the weighted system may have been unable to separate the issues of weight and curricular organization to give a valid answer to the questions asked.

Discussion of Parent Comments. While the survey respondents represented the most concerned parents, the respondents who took time to write a comment represent an even more elite group. As one teacher said in his interview, "These are the parents who come to PTA and who support all the school activities." They are the worker parents that every school needs in order to progress. Most of the parent comments were concerned about academic achievement and equity. The fact that 82% of the comments about structure identified it as a weakness probably reflected a general anti-heterogeneous grouping sentiment. Those parents may have felt that the removal of the 5.0 level, termed the middle level by some, was unfair. Their children had been forced into a general level that was too low, or an honors level that was too high. They were well aware of what the 5.0 could do to a GPA and probably believed they had been a benefit promised years before.

Almost three-fourths of the responses identified teachers as the strength of the 1991-92 program. The mention of personal characteristics and the appreciation for the individual attention afforded students should be very uplifting to teachers. Teachers often believe that parents do not know or

appreciate what they do, but these comments indicated a high degree of respect and appreciation for teachers' efforts. Many parents reported classroom discussions that were extended around the dinner table.

The content/material studied was identified by 61% of the respondents who mentioned it as a strength of the new system. Although there was criticism that some material was irrelevant or too easy or too difficult, most parents felt that the content was strong and appropriate to the course.

Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents identified specific teacher methodology as being a strength of the course. They described activities such as discussions, writing assignments, and field trips as experiences their children would retain.

"Other students" were identified more often as a weakness than a strength (73% to 27%). Concern about the effect of other students on the individual student is at the heart of the heterogeneous-homogeneous debate. Parents identified behaviors and attitudes of other students as being the biggest detriment to the reduced tracking experience. Some mentioned lack of academic ability, but most noted behavior problems that they believed interfered with their child's learning. While it is difficult to isolate discipline within the learning environment, parents are demanding a controlled learning environment where their students' right to learn is not infringed upon by another. The same demand was echoed by students in their comments.

The "other factors" that parents mentioned included class size (too large), lack of air conditioning, floating teachers, and frustration with the child himself; "I can't get him to do anything, either," one parent said.

The overwhelming impression from the parent comments was that they could not assess the organizational structure separate from their own child's experience with a particular teacher. The experience was judged as excellent, mediocre, or poor almost exclusively through the lens of the teacher's personality. Comments ranged from "The teacher didn't seem to care if they learned," to "The teacher was prepared, had high expectations, put in extra time with students...is dedicated...needs encouragement and recognition." It should be uplifting to teachers to know that 73% of the responses that mentioned teachers were complimentary. In a time when there is daily criticism in the media about the educational system and the poor job teachers are doing, teachers need to know that the parents whose children they teach feel positive about what they're doing.

Overall, through their responses to Question D and their written comments, parents were not in favor of decreasing homogeneous grouping. Esposito (1973) stated that opponents of heterogeneous grouping based their arguments not on research, but on what they considered logical reasons. The parent responses in this study confirmed Esposito's finding.

Discussion of Teacher Interviews

The teachers were given the difficult task of relating the survey results to the larger issues of academic achievement and equity. They perceptively judged that the groups' opinions about how well the two-track system was working had little to do with academic achievement and more to do with perceived personal equity than group equity. Teachers acknowledged that losing the 5.0 track had caused some students to go up to an AP course and that for some that had been good and for some it had been bad. The

teachers who taught AP felt that there should be a time, perhaps after first quarter, when a student who was really struggling could opt out of an AP course into a regular course. Overall, the teachers felt that academic achievement had been enhanced during the 1991-92 year, and that was in part because some students had been “forced” into the more challenging level of AP. Teachers were also quick to point out that end-of-course tests had actually improved at every high school during the year. Their comment that it is impossible to accurately measure academic achievement is well taken. Only by observing real life situations can one know if learning has occurred. Unfortunately, rarely are teachers or researchers afforded that opportunity.

The difficulty some teachers had in grasping the equity issue as presented by researchers such as Rosenbaum (1976), Oakes (1982, 1985), and Goodlad (1984) probably indicates the depth of the daily grind and real world in which they are embroiled and the few opportunities they have to rise above that reality into the area of philosophy. While two of the teachers interviewed quickly moved to the global view of the equity issue, the other three responded strictly from the perspective of, “What’s fair in my classroom.” When the second-class education some students are getting was pointed out to the three, they blamed the students and not the organizational system. Achievement was located in the mind and heart of the student, not in the system the curriculum designers had set in place.

The teacher who commented that a clear philosophy must be agreed upon before the equity issue can be approached was right on target. The American educational system is a growing paradox of values. Do we want to

educate all children for the academic life, or do we want to educate some for the academic life and some for the more practical service life? The teacher who commented that students take on a level and “live in it” brings to light the slight effect the high school can have in providing everyone the same opportunities when students have been living in a level for eight or nine years. Students do not begin kindergarten as equals; they are even less equals when they begin 9th grade.

Theoretical Implications of Results

The experiment of reducing tracks in a high school social studies program was undertaken by the Rowan-Salisbury system after reading and discussing findings of current educational experts. Numerous researchers had offered evidence that tracked systems facilitated academic achievement no better than heterogeneous systems (Esposito, 1973; Findley & Bryan, 1970; Oakes, 1985; Braddock & Slavin, 1992). Slavin’s (1990) review of 29 research studies indicated that tracking was particularly detrimental to academic achievement in high school social studies. The courts had ruled against tracking as not only inequitable but illegal (Hobson v. Hansen, 1967). Add to that those voices of researchers such as Rosenbaum (1976) and Oakes (1982) who suggested that tracking not only perpetuates inequality, but helps to create it. Additionally, the Carnegie Foundation (1989) had called for an end to tracking in the middle school. This program, then, was an attempt to heed the advice of the experts. Was it successful?

The indications are that for the initial year the reduction of tracking in high school social studies was successful. A survey assessment of parents, teachers, and students indicated that the fears of more heterogeneity in the

classroom were not realized. Academic achievement as measured by the one constant yardstick, end-of-course tests, did improve. Equity was facilitated because for the required social studies credits, everyone had an opportunity to experience a quality curriculum at the 4.0 level or choose an more stringent curriculum at the 6.0 level.

The traditional theory of tracking--that it benefits all groups--hardly seems supportable in light of the more recent research. It is doubtful that the parents who voiced opposition to reduced tracking would argue for the traditional theory. Rather, accepting the divergent theory--that tracking benefits the high group most--they want that opportunity for their children. Schneider, program development specialist at the national Education Association (NEA) noted, "Very few middle-class parents are willing to take the chance that their children are not going to be pushed, so they don't allow them to be in the programs which have the other kids," (Glazer, 1990, p. 749). Parents' demands that their children have a quality education provide the leverage educators need to maintain the integrity of a curriculum. However, educators are also charged with the responsibility of providing a program that is academically rich and challenging for all students, including those who don't have parent advocates.

The equity issue as presented by Oakes (1982, 1983, 1985, 1989) makes the practice sound almost like a conspiracy to keep the lower class in its place. While it is undoubtedly true that the tracks do not afford the same status of knowledge, this researcher contends it is academic snobbery to think that everyone wants the same status of knowledge. Many skilled craftsmen would consider it a punishment to have to earn their life's bread in

academia. While their professions do not open the doors of society to them, those are not doors upon which they ever want to knock. Those in the academic world may believe that they have the best life, but the rest of the world does not necessarily agree. The challenge educators face is providing an education that affords all children a level of competence that ensures there are real choices. Too often, the vocational track is the default track for the student who has not mastered the skills that allow a more academic choice.

Practical Implications of Results

One of the teachers interviewed said, "We need to market our successes better. We need to invite parents in to see what's going on in the classroom." That comment encompasses the practical implications of the first year of reduced tracking. The good news that academic achievement did not fall and that teachers and students feel positive about the year's experience needs to be shared with all audiences, but particularly with the parent contingency that has been highly skeptical of reducing tracking.

Nevertheless, the voices of caution cannot and should not be ignored. Singal (1991) particularly makes a good case for the return to stricter academic standards. The question is why these standards are not required of all students. Having worked in education for over 20 years, this researcher's personal experiences indicate that students usually rise to the level of expectation, just as Good and Marshall (1984) found they did. The need to produce a well educated student goes beyond the responsibility to develop the individual. It goes to the country's need to develop its best resources to the fullest extent.

The term “tracking” has become so pervasive that in many people’s minds, it means any kind of homogeneous grouping for any length of time. Even the most strident anti-tracking voices do not condemn all forms of homogeneous grouping. Obviously, when foundation work needs to be done, students may need to be grouped for reading or math sessions in order to learn and practice new skills. Tracking becomes a problem when students are subject to permanent grouping; then students perceive themselves and teacher perceive students as entrenched in a given track. Oakes (1992) pointed out that in Japan students get the same education up through the 8th grade and only at the high school level are they divided into differentiated groups for different career goals. While the United States and Japan have very different cultures, we can learn from their commitment to provide all students an equal education until there is a career goal reason to do differently. We could keep options open for children through grade eight, rather than determining at kindergarten which students will prepare for college and which will prepare for a job upon high school graduation.

Oakes and Lipton (1992) concluded that a culture of detracking was more important than the specific strategy chosen to detrack. Their observations in schools where detracking is occurring produced these suggestions for leaders of such schools:

1. Recognize that tracking is supported by powerful norms that must be acknowledged and addressed; particularly, conceptions about intelligence and the purpose of school.
2. Expect change to be comprehensive. The curriculum cannot be offered in a heterogeneous format without attention to teaching methodology,

assessment strategies, and grading practices.

3. Be prepared to be engaged in a process of inquiry and experimentation that is idiosyncratic, opportunistic, democratic, and politically sensitive. There is no prepackaged detracking plan. Each setting must produce its own.

4. Encourage alterations in teachers' roles and responsibilities, including changes in the ways adults in the school work together. Teaming teachers in cross-disciplinary teams has proved successful in several schools.

5. Persist in the commitment to scholarship and democratic values. Leaders must see themselves as risk-takers who are creating a culture for detracking.

Suggestions for Further Research

Both affective and objective data need to be monitored as the reduced tracking experiment continues another year in Rowan-Salisbury. Because the curricular offerings are planned a year in advance, data from the 1992-93 year will be used to plan the 1994-95 curriculum. Should the indicators remain positive that reduced tracking is working, other program areas should be examined for the possibility of reducing tracking. It would seem logical to move to the science curriculum next and reduce tracking in the core subjects required by everyone, Physical Science and Biology. The two most heavily tracked program areas are English and math. The argument for tracking these subjects has arisen out of the philosophy that students are being educated for different life roles. Teachers say, "Some kids don't need to know how to write a research paper, or work calculus." If differentiated

education is what the school business is about, this needs to be acknowledged. On the other hand, if it is intended that all students will be educated to a level of academic excellence where they have a real choice about life roles, that needs to be acknowledged and the curriculum be configured accordingly.

Rowan-Salisbury is moving its curriculum to an outcome-based philosophy wherein program areas and courses are focused on defined outcomes that are assessed through student demonstration. The curriculum is structured around the question, "What will the students be able to do when they finish this course, program, or school?" Outcome-based education and detracking have a common linchpin in the philosophy of high expectations for all students. If the Rowan-Salisbury leaders can maintain that focus, they will more likely meet success in their attempt to create a culture where all students are able to demonstrate skills and knowledge.

Further research about the impact of the reduction of tracking should be conducted with focus on these questions:

1. What are parent, teacher and student attitudes toward reducing tracking as the experiment continues?
2. What do objective data such as end-of-course tests show about academic achievement as the experiment continues?
3. Consider ability scores and determine predicted achievement scores from those. How are students meeting their prediction?
4. How is the more heterogeneous arrangement affecting discipline within the classroom?
5. What kinds of teaching methods are successful with college preparatory groups, with vocational preparatory groups, with all students?

The responsibility of educators is to be as objective and equitable as possible in the analysis of data and the reception of opinions about how effectively the curriculum is working. Above all, it must be remembered what Gamoran (1990) said about tracking, "It all boils down to what we do with kids after we assign them to classes. How well we teach is much more important than how we arrange them for teaching" (p. 3). Teachers will need continued staff development as they attempt to meet the needs of a more diverse classroom.

Lessons From the Rowan-Salisbury Experience

As noted by Oakes and Lipton (1992), reform attempts are quite susceptible to the political environment in which they occur. Appendix A indicates some of the controversy that has surrounded this limited experiment to reduce tracking. The curriculum planners in Rowan-Salisbury chose not to attempt to reduce tracking in another program area for the 1992-93 school year to provide time to gather data and analyze the results of the first year of reduced tracking.

Wheelock and Hawley (1992) researched school systems that have increased heterogeneous grouping and suggested do's, don't's, and beware's for educators considering reorganizing their curriculum on a more heterogeneous basis. The Rowan-Salisbury experience confirms their findings. A few are highlighted below:

- Do become familiar with common arguments in favor of ability grouping and have responses prepared. Beware of the inclination to think that everyone will automatically be convinced that change is desirable and necessary just

because research and “right” are on your side.

- Do consult with and inform all parents early in the planning stages; identify parent support, and be prepared for tough questions from opponents.

- Do introduce changes in grouping, curriculum, and instruction in phases, allowing for feedback to the whole school and opportunities for modification. Beware of implementation that assumes school reform will take place all in one year.

- Do begin by peeling off the lowest tracks from the ability grouping hierarchy. Beware of plans that eliminate the top track or that move from three levels to two levels by dividing the middle level into high and low groups (pp. 9-10).

Heeding this advice could have avoided a lot of controversy in Rowan-Salisbury. The curriculum planners chose to eliminate the low-track in content, but they eliminated the middle-track in the weighted grade system. The rationale was that the weight for all regular classes was a 4.0 and that if the 5.0 were maintained, students would tend to sign up for elective 5.0 social studies classes, rather the 4.0 electives they had been taking in other program areas. The quality of course content is so connected to the weighted grade system that parents and students could not accept that the course content was academic (5.0) but the weight was regular (4.0). Also, parents and students who had enjoyed the numerical advantage of the 5.0 track felt that grade point averages were being unduly reduced.

- Do begin with the most enthusiastic teachers who are

sold on the idea. Beware that teachers commandeered into teaching heterogeneous classes can undermine success.

- Do continue to circulate information about alternatives to ability grouping, publicize your successes throughout your implementation effort, and enlist your students in describing their experiences to parents and teachers. (p. 11).

It would be well to follow Wheelock and Hawley's (1992) advice to consider school reform on a minimal five-year plan. Educators need time to reorganize resources for an atmosphere in which all students are expected to achieve high standards.

In retrospect, it probably would have been wiser to focus the first efforts to reduce tracking at the elementary level. Rowan-Salisbury did begin the reduction of tracking at the elementary and middle school levels shortly after the movement was begun at the high school level. There was practically no controversy at that level, where there is no weighted grade system and less concern about grade point averages. Changes at the high school level always bring more publicity and controversy than those at the lower grade levels. Rowan-Salisbury attempted to put into practice what most of the educational experts suggested was a system that would be more equitable and better facilitate academic achievement for all students. Whether that attempt will succeed will require more years of planning, research, and re-planning. It promises to be an exciting and rewarding time for those involved with the Rowan-Salisbury School System.

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Appendix A
Newspaper Articles

The Salisbury Post

Reporting historic Rowan County, North Carolina, since 1905

Changes Schools are overhauling curriculum

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

The Rowan-Salisbury Schools will take a tentative step this fall that could begin a radical overhaul of its 13-year curriculum.

"We know what we've been doing is not working," says Dr. Judy Grissom, assistant superintendent for instruction for the school system.

The new curriculum would attempt to better prepare students for life in the 21st century by turning them from passive receivers of information into active participants in the learning process.

"Our teachers will no longer be caretakers of the memory banks," says Allen Brantley, director of secondary education for the school system. "Our students will become workers and producers. It's a change in philosophy."

If approved by the school board, most of the new curriculum could be in place by fall 1994.

School-board chairman Anne Fuller says the board is supportive of enhancing curriculum.

"I think we need to do whatever we can to meet the needs of all students at the highest level," Mrs. Fuller says. "It certainly appears that we need to make some changes to prepare students better for whatever they choose to do in the future."

The first step, already approved by the board, will begin this year in high school social studies classes. Most tracking, a longtime practice of separating students by ability, will be eliminated. The purpose is to ensure that all students receive quality instruction.

Students have generally been separated into three tracks: general/vocational; academic or accelerated/college preparation; and honors/advanced placement (AP).

The general and accelerated tracks have been

Teachers will no longer be caretakers of the memory banks. Students will become workers and producers.

— Allen Brantley



Terry Osborne, left, and Stephen Bullock at workshop on social studies changes

Page 1B
Salisbury, N.C.
Sunday, August 11, 1991

eliminated in social studies courses. Now, most students will be in one level of courses, while gifted students can enroll in AP courses. Students can earn college credit by passing AP exams.

If the social studies experiment succeeds, most tracking may be eliminated in other core high school subjects, such as English, math and science, in coming years.

There are two other key parts of the proposed curriculum overhaul:

- The introduction of a core curriculum that must be mastered by students in order to graduate.

- Staff training in new teaching techniques that address the needs of individual students.

The changes will begin at the high school level and if successful, continue to the elementary and middle school levels.

"We want to get a nice flow from one level to another," Dr. Grissom says. "At the end of three years, we hope to have a K-12 program."

If the school board approves the revamping of its entire school curriculum, it will be following a state and national trend to improve student achievement.

Evidence points to a crisis in public education

in North Carolina: low scores on standardized tests, a high percentage of unskilled workers, high illiteracy and dropout rates.

Rowan-Salisbury ranked below par on the state's first report card for schools, and student test scores have been below state and national averages.

Curriculum experts say the basic failing of schools is that they haven't changed as society has.

"We're preparing most for college entrance when there are different focuses," says Vernon Hixie, state coordinator for secondary education in Region 5. "Students can be passed and still not read at a ninth-grade level. That just shouldn't be. We need to change the structure so each student can learn at their own level."

Rowan-Salisbury's plans fall in line with recommendations by the state Task Force on Excellence in Secondary Education. The task force's No. 1 recommendation is a switch to outcome-based education programs.

That means, according to the task force report: "Schools must be results-oriented. Expectations about what students should know and be able to do must be clearly stated."

› See Changes, Page 7B

A CONTINUED . .

Changes

› From Page 1B

"Curriculum, instruction and assessment should be based on essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that young people will need to be successful during the 21st century. Schools need to be restructured to provide the learning opportunities designed to develop essential knowledge, skills and attitudes."

Outcome-based education is vastly different from current methods, Brantley says.

"The key is that there are certain outcomes you expect students to master before they graduate," Brantley says. "Now, students collect units toward graduation. The benefit of outcome-based education is that students progress at their own rate. When they demonstrate proficiency, they move on. There's a lot of flexibility."

Funding

The state will select four school systems for pilot projects in outcome-based education. Rowan-Salisbury plans to apply for selection.

The school system has also applied for federal grants for both the social studies experiment (\$97,634) and overall high school curriculum changes (\$132,543).

The money would pay for equipment, supplies and consultants to help train the local staff in teaching the new curriculum.

Without the state or federal funding, the school system will have to look at budgeting local dollars to make the curriculum changes.

"We'd have to move slower than we'd like, but all this work will not be thrown out the window," Dr. Grissom says. "It's too important. It's such a key to turning around our test scores and dropout rates."

With outcome-based education, students are tested throughout the school year and given opportunities for remedial help. They don't advance to another level of education until they've met identified goals.

"It means we don't allow students to fail," Dr. Grissom says.

School officials hope to develop a computerized testing bank. Students would also have a portfolio of their work that accompanies them throughout high school, Dr. Grissom says.

Learning for life

Schools need to provide teaching that shows students how to learn for life, Brantley says.

"The high school curriculum is so fragmented and we teach in isolation," he says. "Kids see no relevance or interaction between things. It's like a football coach talking about football all week and then sending the team out Friday night to play. There's no practice. The teachers need to coach and the students need to practice. If not, they see no practical use for what they're learning."

The new high school curriculum proposal is the work of the Secondary Curriculum Study Commission, appointed in fall 1990. Its members include the five high school assistant principal curriculum specialists, Dr. Grissom and Brantley. The cur-

riculum specialists spent a month this summer working on the study. The school board approved the extra month of employment.

This year's restructured social studies curriculum is the pilot project for revamping the remaining high school core curriculum. The commission decided to begin the non-tracking experiment with social studies because it couldn't find much difference between the general and accelerated levels of courses in that area, Dr. Grissom says. Also, new materials for social studies instruction are available, she says.

The local budget includes \$10,000 for supplies and \$14,000 for teacher training.

Curriculum guide

As part of the project, a committee of teachers (one from each high school) will analyze the social studies courses and define the outcomes students should achieve. Then the committee will write a curriculum guide.

The study commission is also working to identify the courses that lead students to college, technical college or the work force.

The federal grant would then pay for the local staff to work with Dr. Dale Brubecker of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in developing the core curriculum that high school students should master before graduation.

The school system hopes then to develop a manual of its high school proposal for distribution to every school district in the United States.

The local school system began a yearly high school curriculum-review process in 1987 and began publishing a curriculum guide for students.

Members of the Secondary Curriculum Committee are Dr. Grissom, Brantley, the principals, curriculum specialists/assistant principals and guidance counselors from each high school and directors of vocational education and student services.

Weighted grading

That group first settled on a core curriculum and decided to implement a weighted grading system, meaning students earn points according to the level of the course.

For example, an A in a general level course results in the standard four points. But an A in an accelerated course earns a student five points and an A in a honors/advanced placement course, six points.

The purpose of weighted grading is to encourage students to take challenging courses without fear of being penalized by lower grades.

There's too much emphasis on grades and class rank, Brantley and Dr. Grissom say.

"Parents should be concerned about where their particular child should be at in school, and not compare children or schools," Dr. Grissom says.

After three years of teaching in weighted-grade system of tracking students, social studies teachers reported that students in the general level set goals below their capabilities. Lower-ability students who wound up in an accelerated course did well because expectations were high, the teachers say.

The teachers requested that the

curriculum committee consider heterogeneous (different ability levels) student grouping for all social studies courses except AP classes.

Recommendations

The commission will make recommendations this fall to the strategic planning committee on curriculum. That committee, along with four others, was formed in the summer of 1990 to set goals for the future of local education and strategies for achieving the

goals. It consists of citizens and school staff members. The Secondary Curriculum Committee will also study the commission's recommendations in the fall, before a presentation to the school board.

If the recommendations are accepted, they will be included in the secondary curriculum guide published next spring.

Dr. Grissom hopes to appoint a middle school study commission for work next summer and one for elementary in two years.

Tracking

Parents don't want concept dropped completely, officials learn

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

EAST SPENCER — School officials adamantly told parents at a Tuesday public meeting that there are no plans to do away with tracking of students in all curriculum areas.

Rowan-Salisbury high schools are experimenting this year with eliminating tracking in social studies classes. Tracking is the grouping of students by ability levels.

Dr. Martha Swann, a Catawba College political science professor, said parents believed that decisions had already been made to expand the experiment to other curriculum areas. She questioned if school officials really wanted parent input.

"I'm annoyed that you want me to support this after the decision has been made," Dr. Swann said. "I feel some resentment."

After Dr. Swann spoke, school officials wanted to end the formal meeting and answer

parents' questions individually. But Henry Klutz, principal of West Rowan High School, took over in defending the decisions made by the school board and curriculum specialists.

"We've been working since before merger to bring together the high school curriculum and see what we need to do," Klutz said.

"Tracking is one thing we looked at. We know some things are not working and tracking does not work for the most part. I do not feel this

See Tracking, Page 5A

One parent at the meeting supported the school staff.

"I'd like to see our administrators have the leadership and professionalism to act on their expertise and not be intimidated by parents," the speaker said.

Klutz said he was disappointed that more parents didn't attend the meeting. About 85 were there.

"None of us have the expectations of students that we should have," he said. "When we try to raise expectations, people are up in arms. They talk about cheerleading or band practice, not senior English or AP biology. It's real disappointing when you think you're throwing strikes and you find out you're throwing balls."

"When I deal with parents, it's always an adversarial relationship. Before I can tell my side, I hear that I've wronged their child. We're trying to better teach the kids in this system and two of them happen to have the same last name I have. You need to expect me to expect a great deal of your kids. I don't understand if we're trying to prepare children, how anything but school can be a priority."

Tracking

From Page 1A

is some pre-ordained thing we're going to do in every area."

School board chairman Anne Fuller also denied that plans to end all tracking had already been made. She admitted she had previously been in favor of tracking.

"But I've been so disappointed," Mrs. Fuller said.

The brightest students performed worse on the SAT in comparison to state and national averages than did students of less ability, she said.

"We have faced that there is a crisis in education, but there is no foredrawn plan to end all tracking," Mrs. Fuller said, directing her comments to Dr. Swann. "You have my word on that as chairman of the board of education. I hope you don't want to sabotage what we're doing. We have to consider what is happening to the children and not just what parents think and feel."

CONTINUED . . .

Separating students by ability does not

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

EAST SPENCER — Research does not show that tracking or separating students by ability improves achievement, a Catawba College professor told local parents on Tuesday.

"What the research studies indicate is that maybe the top 10 percent of students benefit from tracking," said Dr. Shirley Hayworth. "But, let's face it, those students will probably make it no matter what we do for or to them. That leaves 90 percent of the children the public schools are responsible for educating showing no net effect in terms of achievement."

Competition is OK, but shouldn't be overemphasized, Dr. Hayworth said. Learning to cooperate with people who are different from you is also important, she said.

"Look at society," Dr. Hayworth said. "Do you deal only with people of the same intellectual level?"

Tracking can work in some curriculum areas, but not in all, Dr. Hayworth said.

Dr. Hayworth, director of the division of teacher education at Catawba, said her background includes working with curriculum change and social studies in the field.

Local students are being grouped together in social studies this year as an experiment with non-tracking.

About 85 people attended last night's meeting for parents in the North and West Rowan and Salisbury areas. Parents of South and East Rowan students attend a similar meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Long Street administrative office in East Spencer.

School officials said they picked social studies for the non-tracking experiment because there appeared to be little difference between levels of courses, they said.

No one should be satisfied with reports of student performance, Dr. Hayworth said.

"I am first and foremost a teacher and I think I speak for teachers," she said. "We're tired of being beat over the head about how inadequate we are."

Finding out why students are not performing well is the key to making changes, Dr. Hayworth

said. For success in education, she said that teachers need to be treated as professionals; they need access to research; and they need the support of parents and school administrators.

Also, she said quality education is dependent upon knowledgeable, committed teachers, interested, supportive parents and committed students.

"With all those, how could we fail?" Dr. Hayworth said.

Local school officials have admitted there are problems with education and are making available the resources for change, she said.

She said the goals of tracking have been identified as the following:

- Improving student performance.
- Improving student self-esteem by removing some from competition with brighter children.

The Salisbury Post, Wednesday, September 11, 1991—5A

solve problems, teacher says

• Increasing teacher effectiveness.

The ability level of children is determined mostly by standardized tests, Dr. Hayworth said. There is cultural and socio-economic bias in testing, whether it's intentional or not, she said.

Also, human expectations play a part in labeling children for learning, Dr. Hayworth said.

"We often find that our expectations are way below the mark of

what that student can do," she said.

Students and parents also participate in making decisions about grouping in school, Dr. Hayworth said. They don't always have adequate information.

Tracking also hurts self-esteem of the low-ability students, Dr. Hayworth said. They are separated from strong role models, she said. They suffer from alienation,

defeatism and resistance to injustice, she said.

"They go down the track unafected and sometimes neglected," she said. "Usually, all the special programs are at either end. I keep waiting for all the parents of the middle children to rise up and say 'class action suit.'"

Perhaps the worst effect of tracking is on the middle-level students, Dr. Hayworth said.

Sept. 15, 1991

A classless society in the schools?

I certainly don't have any answers in the local debate on whether to phase out "tracking" in the schools.

But I do have some questions:

• Is this change being contemplated for practical educational reasons or for philosophical, ideological, and/or political ones? It's not just an exercise in social leveling, is it?

• Is there something wrong with being smart? And are we in danger of penalizing smart kids by denying them special educational opportunities adapted to their ability level?

• Though there may be no statistical evidence that tracking works, as those in favor of phasing it out say, is there any evidence that *not* tracking will work any better?

Tracking, as I understand it, is the practice — which most of us grew up with — of grouping kids in classes according to their performance or perceived potential. You have fast

tracks for gifted kids, regular tracks for average kids, and slow tracks for kids with problems. All supposedly get specially tailored attention.

Stress the word "supposedly." In real life, the elite students typically get the most attention — often because they're the most rewarding to work with and the most well-behaved. I used to hang around with a group of high school teachers many years ago in another place, and I remember being offended at hearing them sit around at parties and complain about having to teach a class of "dummies."

If teachers harbor those attitudes, they're sure to transmit them to slow-track students, with subsequent stigmatization, defeatism and low self-esteem. The result can be a tendency to live up to the low expectations of others — and a lifetime of failure.

That's bad. And it's one reason the Rowan-Salisbury schools are now toying with the idea of abolishing tracking.

Let's emphasize, by the way, that this experiment is so far confined to high school social studies classes. The school board and administration swear up and down that they don't necessarily have any plans to take it any

further than that. We ought to take them at their word and let them carry out their pilot program without a lot of harassment.

At the same time, though, I've got my doubts — somewhere down at the gut level. Somebody reassure me.

I trust we're not talking about dumbing-down here. Or gearing everything to the lowest common denominator. Or averaging everything out and aiming it at the mass of middle-ability students while the gifted ones yawn with boredom and the not-so-gifted ones sleep or set fires in the trash can.

If that were the case, wouldn't we be moving in the wrong direction at a time when we're supposed to be worried about the decline of American excellence in an increasingly competitive world economy and all that?

Elitism has no place in the schools, they say, and that has a good, egalitarian ring to it. But I think it depends on whether you're talking about an aristocracy that one has to be born into or a meritocracy that's open to anyone with the brains and the heart to earn himself a place in it.

I understand the democratic appeal of non-tracking to those who dream of

moving toward a classless society where no one is made to feel second-class or to spin his wheels at some kind of dead end. And mixing everybody up does enrich the educational experience by exposing kids from widely differing backgrounds to each other.

But to succeed, non-tracking will surely have to rely to an unusual degree on dedicated and ingenious teachers capable of keeping the high kids in a classroom challenged without passing the lower ones by. Sounds like quite a juggling act. Maybe it could be accomplished by tailoring individual assignments. Of course, that is still a kind of in-class tracking.

The jury's still out on all this. Proponents make some good arguments for shutting down all the separate tracks and routing everybody onto one eightlane superhighway, but then they made good arguments for replacing phonics with something called look-say, too. Or for open classrooms. Or for the New Math.

I hope this educational fad fares better than those earlier ones, which seem to have gone the way of video discs and mood rings.

Steve Bouser is editor of *The Post*.



Steve Bouser

'Tracking' is no help to anyone

This is written in response to comments made by Dr. Shirley Hayworth at a recent meeting of the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education. She spoke on a plan by the schools to eliminate "tracking," or grouping of students by ability, in social studies classes.

Alleluia and praise the Lord! Dr. Shirley Hayworth finally came out and said what we parents all knew. Separating students by ability does not solve problems.

If the truth were known, the teachers knew that also.

I am a parent of seven children. Three were in the gifted and talented classes, two were middle-rollers, one was in special ed and the verdict isn't in yet as to what the last one will be labeled.

Six have graduated from Salisbury High School. The three in the gifted and talented classes, from preschool on, always had their noses in books. The two middle-rollers would rather

play and socialize and join organizations and study enough to be just above average. The one in special education had to struggle.

Special education in reality means it's special because you get less education and less attention than anyone else in school.

I agree with Dr. Hayworth. The top 10 percent would excel if they never went to school. The middle-rollers need more help and more stimulation to motivate them to study. Both our middle-rollers did better in college than high school.

Dr. Hayworth is correct. All the gifted and talented classes do is instill in the students that they are a cut above. Now, are these the type of people you want to be our doctors, nurses, dentists, teachers and engineers? I think not. We need people who know how to interact on an equal level with those whom they will serve.

What happens to a middle-roller? They are trapped on a lower level than they might be able to achieve. In a non-tracking situation they have the op-

portunity to elevate themselves as high as they can go.

As a parent, I would like for our school system first and foremost to be a safe environment. We do not want to worry about whether or not our children might be hit over the head with a chair or hit in the eye with an apple that is thrown across the cafeteria.

Secondly, we would like a sane environment where learning can take place — desks with students sitting properly and quietly doing their work.

Students that are unruly and cause disturbances in the class so that 97 percent of the student body cannot learn will have to be asked to leave. They can partake of home-study, tutoring, reform school or public schools for behavior modification.

We cannot allow a very few students preventing the masses from attaining an education for which their parents are paying dearly.

— Patricia Moore
Salisbury

Sept. 22, 1991

End tracking?

Not every change is a needed reform

Dr. Martha Swann, a political science professor at Catawba College, spoke at a recent meeting of the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education to question the decision to eliminate "tracking" in social studies classes. This is an amplification of her remarks.

By Dr. Martha Swann
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I would like to applaud Superintendent Don Martin and the school board for recognizing that our existing high school curriculum has problems. Recognition of a problem is the first step to solving it.

Simply put, our current approach is not working (at least not for everyone). The board and superintendent have decided to try to solve the problem.

I am concerned that in trying to reform an unsatisfactory curriculum, we might be considering future actions that are not necessarily a reform, but only likely to result in a change. I am concerned that if the board and the administration do not provide teachers with the necessary support they will need to successfully implement a heterogeneous curriculum, we will not achieve a reform, and may wind up with more problems

than we have now, or ever bargained for.

If we are going to reform our system, then let's do it the right way. If we do not have the resources or commitment to do so, then I would rather improve the system we've got now.



Some argue that the current tracking system did not achieve its intended goals (goals well articulated by Dr. Shirley Haworth), because it was not adequately supported. Examples such as classes being too large in all levels, inappropriate placement in courses and lack of parental involvement are typically cited.

Not unique

With first-grade classes as large as 29 or 30, middle school math classes ranging in size from 26-35, and high school honors classes pushing 30, an argument could be made that this is a systemwide problem, certainly not unique nor caused by the high schools' tracking curriculum.

Others, equally concerned about

the quality of our current educational system, appear to believe that any form of tracking is inherently biased, unfair, prejudicial, and, dare I add, even "evil." As such, its detractors believe it "should" be abandoned at all costs. But what do we replace it with? What are our choices?

I believe that advocates of tracked and non-tracked approaches hold the same concerns I do: What do we need to do to provide quality education for our students? What will it take to provide our children with an educational system that challenges them and takes them to the very outer limits of their abilities? Will my child be able to get into college, and once there, be able to survive and compete academically?

Every parent I know has these, as well as other, concerns about their children's futures.

No 'sabotage'

My recent comments and questions at a public meetings stem from these worries. I have no idea why Mrs. Fuller (Anne Fuller, chairman of the school board) stated that she hoped I would not

See Tracking, Page 4E

Tracking

From Page 1E

attempt to "sabotage" their efforts. It was my understanding that the board was holding public meetings and, in accord with President Bush's advice, is trying to "increase parental involvement."

As a concerned parent, I have been trying to get answers to questions about both the current tracking system and their experimental program — non-tracked social studies classes in the high schools, which may lead to untracking other courses as well.

If my questions caused anyone discomfort, or members of the Board and/or the administration found them difficult to answer, that is regrettable. But just because questions and/or comments are unpleasant does not mean they are not worth considering.

It is my understanding that for heterogeneously grouped classes to work, a number of actions need to occur. Teachers need to be "retrained" to teach in this type of setting. Apparently this often requires a serious change in both teachers' value orientations and their preparations/assignments. Additionally, a communication support network needs to be developed and provided.

Also, classes need to be randomly assigned. But more important than randomization is the need for "balance": i.e., children of above-average, average, and less-than-average abilities all need to be in the same classes.

(I could not find any definitive proportions recommended in the literature, but the general idea seems to be that not too many of any one group dominate in any single class.)

Class size

Additionally, class size appears to be very important, as well as the disciplinary topic being taught.

Experts recommend that heterogeneously grouped classes ideally have 21-23 students in each, with a possible ceiling of 27-29. Apparently, in classes above that range, the goals of heterogeneous grouping become increasingly difficult to achieve.

Some subjects, such as math, appear to naturally "track" themselves. Those who can do calculus can, and many others (myself included!) "cannot." Research suggests that other subjects may have similar constraints within which heterogeneous grouping is not consistently successful. While classes in literature, for example, may be successfully non-grouped, classes in composition present serious problems if extreme differences in abilities exist.

My purpose is not to defend the current tracking system, nor is it to advocate the "untracked" pilot program. Rather, I hope we will all seriously consider what we want to achieve, how we want to achieve it, and if we are willing to do what it takes to do so.

I suspect that one of the main reasons reform is being considered is that our systems's SAT scores have been below average and unsatisfactory to the school board and public alike. There is, however, a significant difference be-

tween a change and a reform. A change means a different way of doing something, while reform implies significant improvements.

Reorienting needed

My recent observations of our current system and the pilot program leave me with several concerns. If the reorienting of teachers' values and approaches is critical, then administrative support will be needed.

Teachers in the social studies pilot program received 30 hours of staff development this summer to prepare them for the new program. The workshop was "optional" and participants were paid to attend. (Not everyone chose to do so.) My point is that the necessary amount of retraining, and continued updating should be provided to our teachers if we expect them to successfully implement a reform in any curriculum. Such activities cost money.

The random assignment of students is possible. This will be easier to achieve in the county high schools than at Salisbury High, due to demographic differences within the respective student populations. To obtain "balanced" classes (balanced by ability, ethnicity, gender, race, and ideally by socio-economic-status as well) may take considerable personnel efforts and man-hours.

This is not to say it cannot, nor should not be done, but rather to recognize the fact that such an effort may be necessary and may run into more administrative expenses.

Class size

As for class size, well, we don't

appear to be doing a very good job with that now. The pilot social studies classes vary from 16 to 35 students. Attempts have been made to achieve some balance in numbers, but several other factors dictate class schedules.

Many classes push the limits within which we can expect the program to achieve its educational goals. If the school board (and the public) wishes to untrack its curriculum, I suggest that serious attention be given to holding the student/teacher ratios down to 20/1 to 23/1, which will mean hiring more teachers — and that means more costs.

I am interested to see what will happen this year. If 10, 20, 30 or 40 percent of the students in the now ungrouped classes fail to meet the new higher standards, will teachers actually flunk that many students? If so, will administrators have the courage to support their teachers when parents descend upon them with complaints?

If many students do fail, and if the majority of these students fall into minority categories, how will the system deal with charges of discrimination and racism? I sincerely hope none of these possibilities develop. For these reasons I hope the pilot program works. I am just concerned that if the School Board does not adequately prepare and support the program, such eventualities are certainly possible.

Discipline

My last concern deals with disciplinary differences. The nature of social studies courses lends itself to an untracked ap-

proach. But the same is not true of English and math. These are also the two subjects which have the most direct effect on SAT scores (due to the fact that both are heavily tested and weighted on the exam).

Additionally, the verbal and quantitative scores that are of great concern to college admissions committees appear to be specifically related to composition, advanced algebra and geometry abilities. It is in these areas that untracked programs appear to have weaker results, and often hurt students in the top 10 percent.

Obviously, the needed support, personnel and reductions in class sizes will probably cost money — maybe a lot. If we want this educational reform to work, then we'll have to find the money to support it. Let's be prepared to do so from the start. This issue matters to me because the quality of my two daughters' education is at stake.

If Mrs. Fuller, the board and Superintendent Martin seriously want to reform our system, I heartily applaud their efforts and offer my support. I am simply concerned that if the needed support teachers must receive for such reforms to be successful is not provided, then we may change for the worse and not improve for the better.

I do not want my daughters to go through "the worst." Therefore, I hope we will all seriously consider what we want to do with education in Rowan County. Let's support our teachers 150 percent, whatever program is finally voted on by the board (tracked or untracked). Our children's futures are on the line.

Public resists school plans

By Tracy Pressor
THE SALISBURY POST

Rowan-Salisbury school officials say they're finding public resistance to new programs designed to improve student success.

On the other hand, school personnel need to be more responsive to public concerns, says one parent.

School board chairman Anne Fuller says she hears parents saying they're unhappy about low test scores and that students aren't prepared for the workplace. But changes, such as less tracking of students by ability and stricter homework and tardy policies, have also drawn complaints.

"We need parent reinforcement for what we're trying to do because if the public is not receptive to change, the school system is going to have a hard time," Mrs. Fuller says. "I always want to say 'What are we here for if not to teach so children can learn?' With the resistance we're facing, you may see some people throwing up their hands."

Cindy Noell, chairman of the

Community Involvement Committee for strategic planning, says school officials often make changes without public input.

"They're using their expertise and I agree with that," she says. "However, when people have questions, they're not getting satisfactory answers."

Henry Kluttz, principal of West Rowan High School, says current efforts to improve the local schools are critical.

"We're in a real precarious situation in public education," Kluttz says. "Demands are great and expectations are high. I hear complaints all the time about students having too much homework and high school should be fun."

"I want it to be fun too, but that should be the icing on the cake. You have to make the cake first. The bottom line is we're not holding kids accountable. The general public has to do it too. We need support."

Dr. Don Martin, schools superintendent, says public criticism doesn't bother him.

"At least it's not apathy," he says. "Criticism makes you study and work harder when you're trying to convince someone. All of what we're doing is related to higher expectations. We expect everyone to do better."

Resistance to change in education is going on across the state. In published comments last week, Howard Haworth, a member of the state school board said, "I think it's clear that in a number of areas, education reform in North Carolina is really not under way yet. The system seems to have a remarkable ability to resist being reformed."

Martin says he's received a lot of anonymous letters lately that contain complaints about the school system.

"I wish people would not be afraid to sign their names if they want to comment on something," he says.

Mrs. Noell says parents don't feel comfortable about presenting their concerns to school officials.

"Parents are concerned about

› See Public, Page 2A

Sept. 30, 1981

Public

From Page 1A

the changes and the problems," she says. "They feel frustrated. I think school personnel are defensive to public input because it's negative and that is a human response."

"But it's the problems that we need to work on. I wouldn't encourage fussing and carrying on, but there has to be an opportunity to say something if you're concerned."

Grievance board?

Some type grievance board at the school level would be helpful, Mrs. Noell says. Advisory councils could play that role.

The school board does allow an opportunity for public comment at its meetings, but most parents feel intimidated in that setting, Mrs. Noell says.

"We're talking from feelings," she says of parents. "We're the ones who hear our children when they come home from school."

"The school personnel need to get down on the community's level and let us feel comfortable about venting our frustration. We're getting somewhere when people get excited and upset. At least that shows they care."

Another opportunity for parent involvement is the strategic planning committees. The five committees, made up of school staff members and citizens, have been working over a year on ways to improve the school system.

The meetings are open to the public, with 10 scheduled for October. All the committees will present a report to the school board on Oct. 29.

Mrs. Noell says she got involved in the planning process because of her frustration.

"I thought participating was the way to go," she says. "And there has been some positive response. But I don't feel yet that we've communicated with the community enough. People still don't know about the committees."

Mrs. Noell says she is an

advocate for public schools, but often hears that the public is dissatisfied.

"I don't know many people who are pleased," she says.

No challenge

Test scores aren't the only issue, Mrs. Noell says. She says parents worry that students aren't being challenged. Current programs aren't being implemented effectively and teachers need more training to implement changes, she says. Parents also worry about the quality of personnel, Mrs. Noell says.

Parents sometimes feel they aren't welcome in schools, she says.

"It's public school," she says. "That's who pays for it. It's not enough that the administration be happy with it. The whole community must feel supportive."

Mrs. Noell says she thinks that the ideas coming from her committee will make a positive impact on community involvement in schools.

Martin and Klutz both say that the problem with public attitudes about the schools is one with individuals. Martin uses low SAT scores as an example. He says students aren't using practice materials available at high school libraries two nights a week.

"The community generally says we don't like that and it's a bad reflection on the school system," Martin says. "But it doesn't get down to the individual level that each score makes up the system's score. It's the same thing with taking rigorous courses. They'd rather have less work because it takes less time."

"Maybe that's an over-generalization, but some of that is happening — that the district should be doing better, but not the individual child."

Not discouraged

Martin, who is in his 12th year as a school superintendent, says it's natural for people to respond negatively to change.

"I'm not discouraged by it," he says. "We'll keep working. Even

though the test scores are negative, it does get attention. Sometimes that's what it takes."

One part of change in the school system involves cutting down on time spent out of the classroom. But school personnel must make some changes too, Martin says.

He says he attended a recent regional meeting of the N.C. High School Athletic Association. A lot of coaches attended the daytime meeting and missed several hours in their classrooms, he says.

"They could have that meeting in the evening, but it would interfere with football practice," Martin says. "What does that say about the priority of being in the classroom?"

Because of some of the educational experiments the local system is trying, it could stand a chance of winning federal grants related to President Bush's education goals.

"We're getting our feet wet and looking ahead to the future," Martin says. "But it takes a lot of time and effort to blaze new trails. Public support is really important."

"We're positioned to move ahead and be successful. That's what every organization in the marketplace is doing."

On the right track?

SHS students,
teachers unsure
of latest move

Page 4
Salisbury, N.C.
Saturday, October 26, 1991

By Phuong Ly
SALISBURY HIGH SCHOOL

Social studies courses are no longer grouped into three levels. Instead, students have the option of taking a regular class, which is a combination of the general and academic levels, or an Advanced Placement class.

Senior Nicole Massey believes that the new structure pushes general students to their potential. "Because academic students are in the class, it makes me want to go faster. The class becomes more challenging. I'm glad they changed the structure."

Philip Loflin, a senior, says that the class moves at a faster pace because the academic students "speak up in the classroom discussions."

Some teachers also see the pilot program as beneficial.

"It's improved behavior in my classroom," says Keith Rhoney, social studies teacher. "Now, the lower level students have good examples to follow and model after. Before, all they had were mostly bad examples to follow and model after."

Social studies teacher Tom Sexton believes that with a "healthier learning environment and a greater dichotomy of students in the same class," the students that were classified as general are now being challenged more.

Charles Cobble, social studies teacher, feels that the pilot program "has gotten rid of some of the stereotype." He says students are no longer classified as general or academic, "they're just students."

Some complaints

Some students who were in academic classes last year and have decided to take general this year think the program is hurting them.

Junior William Moore says that his general U.S. History class is going at a slower pace than his academic world history class last year.

"Time has to be taken to help the slower learning students," says Moore.

Rhoney agrees that there is a "problem of what to do to let other students who grasp concepts quickly work on while I help the others."

To try to combat the problem, both Rhoney and Gobble pair up students so that the students can help one another.

"It's worked relatively well," says Rhoney. "Bringing them together lets the higher level students see how the other half lives, so to speak. It lets those students try to help his peers."

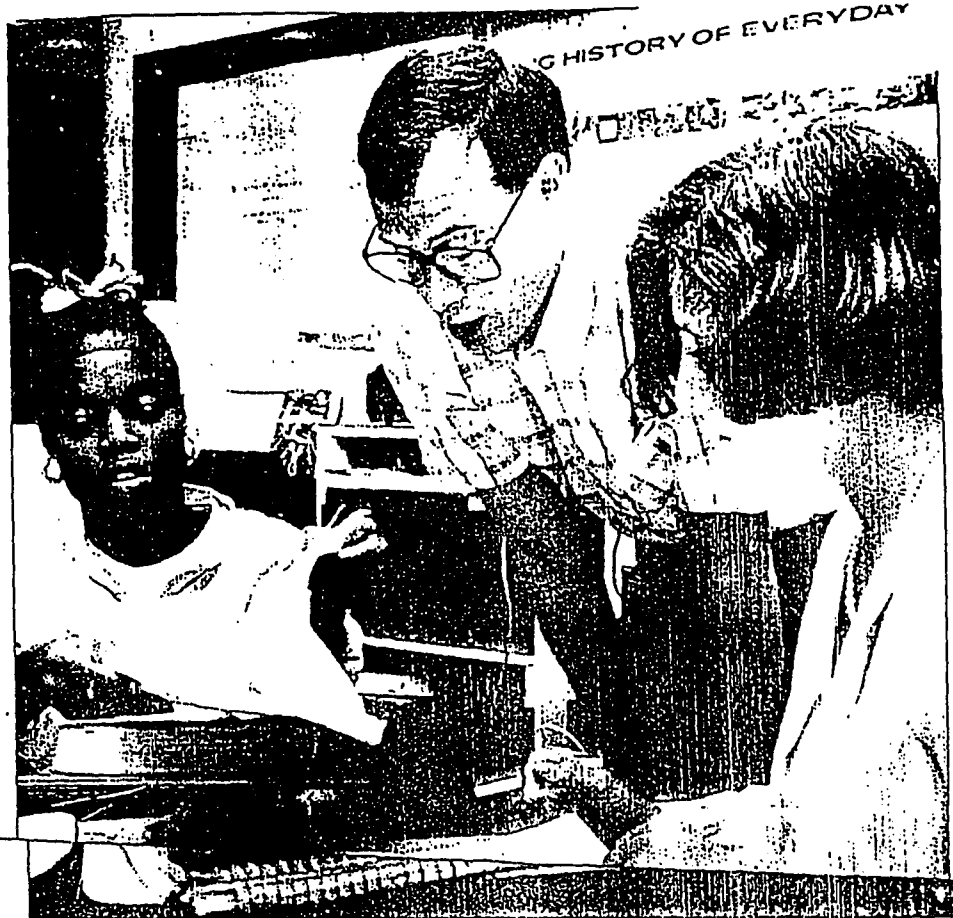
Loflin says that "it helps to have students who learn faster than you in the class because they can help you."

Gobble also prepared enrichment activities for the students in the class who are quicker learners.

Middle ground

Some students argue that the general and AP levels are too extreme and that a middle ground needs to be offered.

"I think I belong in an academic class instead of the AP U.S. History class that I'm in right now," says Robbie Winecoff, a junior. He says that the pilot program pushed him into taking AP because "there is no way I would go into a general class."



WES MILLER:THE SALISBURY POST

Teacher Keith Rhoney talks with Donna Hunter, left, Fran Johnson

Senior Raye Lee says that the pilot program "limits students to very hard classes or very easy classes."

"The AP material is too hard for students who should be in middle level classes. However, those students can't get anywhere at a slower pace," says Dana Harrington, a junior.

Catherine Rivens, assistant principal in charge of curriculum, says "people are equating the 4.0 weight of the heterogeneously grouped class with the quality of the instruction."

"The class is weighted at a general level, but the quality of instruction is in no way general," says Ms. Rivens.

Junior Ron Stout feels that his history class is "moving at a more academic level than general."

"The tests and assignments are fairly challenging," says Stout.

At the end of the school year, educators and administrators will make a total evaluation of the pilot program. Recommendations will then be made to the school board.

Senior Jewel Harrison says that "sticking students in general classes gives them no incentive to do better."

Junior Deborah Staley says that in some of her classes, she has noticed that "students get pressure from their buddies. Some of the students don't want to learn because they're afraid that their friends will pick on them."

She says that putting general students among more academically inclined students will make them do better in school.

"If someone who is not afraid to raise their hand and say the answers in class, then the general student will take that action in a positive way and say 'if they can do it, I can do it also,'" says Miss Staley.

Others feel that tracking may not be ideal, but it is better than non-tracking.

"There are different types of people: some learn quick and others learn slower. Therefore, there should be different types of classes for those different learning ability levels," says Stout.

Freshman Laura Bracken says that when classes are grouped according to learning ability, the teacher is able to focus in on individual students better.

Senior Shawn Jones says that if students were heterogeneously grouped, "the faster students would get bored and the slower ones would get left behind."

Will English be next subject for experiment?

Catherine Rivens, assistant principal in charge of curriculum at Salisbury, says that many people were under the false impression that English would be next for a non-tracking approach.

She believes that even if the social studies pilot program is deemed a success, "it will be at least two years before another core subject will be tested."

Salisbury Nicole Massey believes that the pilot program will not work in English classes because "English builds upon stuff you are already supposed to have learned."

Jolene Philpott, a senior, says, "English is a complicated subject and if you group English classes into only two levels, you would have people with little background in reading and people with more of a background in the same class."

English teacher John Brown says that heterogeneous social studies classes can be taught with students who have a multitude of reading levels.

"In English, the gap between reading levels is too wide," says Brown.

"Literature is written on an abstract level and requires a great deal of individual attention and

time consuming explanation. Some students are able to read and think on an abstract level, but those slower to catch on will hold back the rest of the class."

English teacher Raemi Evans believes if the general and academic English classes are merged, then general students "will profit by being around students who can make strong contributions to the class."

Mrs. Evans also says that for the program to work, there should be more accelerated students in the class than general students.

Brown agrees that if that were the case, then non-tracking might work. But "at our school, there is a large percentage of students who read below grade level," he says.

"With a majority of weaker students, non-tracking would pull down" the more academically inclined students, Brown says.

Ms. Rivens says she hopes to see non-tracking in all subject areas. She believes that "ideally, non-tracking should start at the elementary level first, then there won't be a problem with non-tracking when the students get to high school.

"I believe that non-tracking can and will work

because tracking certainly has not been successful," she says. "We cannot continue to prepare a small segment of the population for success. If we don't educate our young people now, we'll have to take care of them later."

Brown doesn't believe in 100 percent tracking because "there are some areas in which non-tracking can be successful."

But, he says those who think problems with low-achievers "will be solved by non-tracking, even when started at the elementary level, have their heads buried in the sand; there are too many variables involved.

Non-tracking would work, he says, if "you could insure that students could stay reasonably in the same ability level, ... but common sense will tell you that the further students are along in school, the more widespread their ability levels are."

He says that much of the solution rests in the hands of parents. "Parents need to provide students with the proper environment and proper social training."

High school changes proposed

Oct-27, 1991

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

A proposal for radical changes in the high school curriculum to make sure students do not fail will be presented to the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education on Monday night.

The proposal recommends:

- That students prove they have mastered desired skills before they can move on to new material or graduate.

- Phasing out of tracking (ability grouping) and weighted grading, which allows students to earn extra points in difficult courses.

The proposal, developed by a committee of the five high school assistant principals, is known as outcome-based education. The assistant principals work as curriculum specialists in their schools.

Vicky Ratchford of West Rowan High School will present the committee's position paper. Other committee members are Bill Deaver (South Rowan), H.K. Gaster (North Rowan), Judy Patton (East Rowan) and Catherine Rivens (Salisbury).

Working with the committee are Dr. Judy Grissom, assistant superintendent for instruction, and Allen Brantley, director of secondary education.

“The ultimate goal is to improve achievement scores and learning. If that happens, we ought to be able to explain why.”

”

— Dr. Don Martin

The committee's report is a philosophy for curriculum restructuring, says Superintendent Don Martin. The board will not vote on it yet.

“We're not at the decision point of saying, 'this is what we are going to do,’” Dr. Martin says.

School officials hope to get a grant to become one of four pilot systems of outcome-based education. Applications are due in February. Teachers must vote to become a pilot for the system to be considered. Martin says school board approval is also necessary.

On the tracking issue, the committee says that system prevents average and below-average students from receiving quality instruction and above average students fall far behind the achievement level of students in other countries.

This year, the school system is experimenting with less tracking of students in social studies classes. Before moving to eliminate tracking in other subject areas, school officials want to see the results of the social studies experiment and hear what parents and students think.

“The ultimate goal is to improve achievement scores and learning,” Martin says. “If that happens, we ought to be able to explain why.”

Also in the new recommended structure:

- Students would move at their own pace.

- Teachers would grade in pencil until a student masters a concept and then the grade would be changed in ink. Teachers would use only the grades of A, B, and C and I for incomplete.

“Putting a 'D' or an 'F' on a paper signals the end of that activity even though the student learning was unacceptable. What we need to consider is not grading work until it is acceptable,” the position paper says.

- Students having problems would receive immediate remedial opportunities.

Road map to future

October 27, 1991

School board to see plan Monday

By Tracy Presson

THE SALISBURY POST

A road map for operating local schools in the future will be presented to the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education on Monday.

The "Strategic Action Plan" is designed for "charting the course for the future of public education in Rowan County," says the cover of a notebook containing the 132-page plan.

"This is not a plan to put on the shelf," says Dr. Don Martin, Rowan-Salisbury Schools superintendent. "It is a way of operating."

Martin says he wants the school board to use the plan to measure the success of the school system. He recommends a review of the plan every six months.

Martin also wants to match the total school system budget with the goals included in the plan.

"We should be able to identify all the money we spend with a goal area," he says.

Some of the activities included in the plan require funding. There is no established budget yet.

Plan runs through '95

The plan includes time lines for accomplishing each activity, from now until 1995.

"There is obviously more in here than anybody can think about doing right away," Martin says. "But it's important to get it all down on paper to get a feeling of the whole scope. I don't think there's anything I would call radical, but there are different ways to think about some things."

The action plan is the result of 15 months of work by five committees made up of citizens and school staff members. The committees' membership currently totals 153.

The document is also divided into five sections: community involvement, curriculum, personnel, student services, and support services.

The five committee chairmen — Cindy Noell, Jim Cohen, Michael Hughes, Jay Boulter and David Smith — will present the plan to the board.

Goals accepted

The board has already accepted the goals and objectives established by the committees. Those parts of the plan have been mounted in the board's meeting room as a constant reminder.

What board members will hear on Monday are the strategies and activities for accomplishing the goals.

The school system has already implemented parts of the plan. For example, all 28 schools are publishing monthly newsletters this year as way to improve communications with parents.

Also, the support services committee spent much of its time working on the bond referendum proposal.

Some places for activities are left blank in the plan because the committees are still working.

"This is an evolving process," Martin says. "But it is becoming a good organizational framework."

Citizens can review a copy of the action plan by coming by the administrative offices located on Long Street in East Spencer and on Ellis Street.

Here's some of the activities included in the plan:

Community involvement

- Expand the roles of school advisory councils in planning.

- Design more effective school volunteer programs.

- Offer more programs to increase communication between school personnel, parents and students. School-wide picnics are one suggested activity.

- Implement a telephone voice mail system at each school for receiving and sending messages.

- Establish a method of lobbying for school needs at the local, state and national level.

Curriculum

- Identify what courses high school students should take to enter college, technical college or the work force; and identify a core curriculum all students must master at the elementary, middle and high school levels before advancing or graduating.

- Lessen tracking or separation

of students by ability.

- Allow teachers more input in management; more planning time; more training; more support; more resources; and manageable class sizes.

- Provide students with exposure to technology and the arts and humanities. Provide opportunities for students to work with pre-schoolers and elderly people.

- Raise expectations for all students and encourage students to be responsible for their own learning.

Personnel

- Identify job descriptions.

- Expand recruiting efforts in high schools and colleges.

- Expand orientation activities for employees.

- Improve working conditions by providing: hot water heaters in teacher lounges; access to private telephones for conferences; copy machines in good condition; more teacher assistants for elementary schools.

- Reduce paperwork and class size and class load.

- Develop employee assistance programs.

Student services

- Provide family student advocates to give representation on educational issues.

- Provide programs on human relationships, family development and other issues.

- Provide joint family/student homework assignments.

- Provide free health screenings for students.

- Provide information on summer programs for young people.

Support services

- Periodically review the status of school facilities and needed funding for improvements.

- Develop plans for a centralized maintenance and administrative facilities.

- Develop drug testing procedures for bus drivers, including random testing.

- Evaluate need for improved computer system.

- Increase nutrition education

Wednesday, October 30, 1991

Overwhelming: Ideas to

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

The work is just beginning. That is the conclusion of school board members, who on Monday received 160 pages of plans aimed at improving the Rowan-Salisbury system.

"I'm overwhelmed," said board chairman Anne Fuller. "There has been a mountain of work accomplished already. Obviously, there is still a lot to accomplish and the board needs to be accountable."

The board heard an action plan for the future developed by five committees of staff members and citizens, along with a proposal for changes in the high school curriculum written by assistant principals who work as curriculum specialists.

The latter report recommends a change to outcome-based education, a system of expecting students to achieve certain results before graduating. It also recommends less "tracking" or grouping students by ability.

Vicky Ratchford, assistant principal at West Rowan-High-School, said the report is still in draft form.

"We welcome discussion from parents and teachers," she said.

Ted Blanton, a Salisbury attorney and parent, asked when parents could ask questions and present concerns about the curriculum proposal. He requested a spot on a future board meeting agenda after Dr. Don Martin, schools superintendent, mentioned that option.

The emphasis of local cur-

riculum change is on making sure all students are prepared for the future, Mrs. Ratchford said. High-performance schools have more students taking academic-level courses, she said.

"There is no place in the future for the unskilled and uneducated," she said. "We have to educate all our students."

Tracking

The tracking issue is drawing the most attention, Mrs. Ratchford said. The school system is experimenting with less tracking in social studies classes this year, with general and academic levels being combined. Advanced-placement courses are still available for gifted students.

Using a tracking system means assuming that some students can't

improve schools pour in

or won't learn, Mrs. Ratchford said.

Any curriculum changes in the direction of outcome-based education and less tracking wouldn't be included in next year's curriculum guide, Martin said. If the social studies experiment is successful, however, the system may start making other changes in two years, he said.

"What you're proposing is forward thinking," Mrs. Fuller said. "We want to do what is right for the majority, and hopefully, for all children."

Martin said the system will apply for a state grant to be one of four pilot districts for outcome-based education. The first year of funding would pay for teacher training. Teachers must vote for the curriculum change for the

system to be considered for the grant.

Still openings

The other report, which is a guide for school system operations, is the result of more than a year of work by the five committees. The board earlier accepted goals and objectives recommended by the committees. On Monday, the board heard suggestions for accomplishing the goals.

The committees are still working. Each is open to new members.

"It's frustrating sometimes to communicate with the whole community," said Cindy Noell, chairman of the community involvement committee. "People still don't know about these committees."

Jim Cohen, chairman of the

curriculum committee, said that committee's membership had doubled since January. The issue of tracking has drawn the most interest.

"The last several meetings have been exciting," Cohen said. "We've had a lot of discussion and some heated debate about the lessening of tracking. There is a great deal of concern about stepping into that too soon."

Without counting the opinions of school staff members on the committee, 50 to 60 percent of the citizen members are opposed to the reducing of tracking, Cohen said.

He said he didn't approve of all the suggested activities included in the curriculum committee's

See Schools, Page 2D

CONTINUED

Schools

▶ From Page 1D

proposal." He said the goal of reducing tracking should probably be reworded to say that the school system will move in that direction if the social studies experiment is successful.

"I feel we are really just getting started," Cohen said. "Our job won't be done by this time next year."

More study needed

The support services committee primarily focused on preparing the bond referendum proposal, said chairman David Smith. The committee suggests continual study of school facilities.

"We don't want to get into a situation where we review on a 15- to 20-year basis," Smith said. "It needs to be an ongoing process. We do not want our facilities to depreciate and get outdated without some proactive measure up front."

Smith said people think the school system has put all its efforts into planning for the bond referendum. But the five committees are addressing other school system needs, he said.

The student services committee had to approach its task differently, said chairman Jay Boulter.

"We had to look at all the other systems which serve children," he said.

By the year 2000, 50 percent of all children in Rowan County will live in single-parent households or with parents that have remarried, Boulter said.

All the candidates for local Teacher of the Year said that the dissolution of the family is the biggest problem facing education, according to the selection committee.

More cooperation

The student services committee recommends more cooperation between home and school and other service agencies. A Family-School Collaboration System (FSCS) at each school would provide advocates to represent and assist students and families.

The community involvement committee hopes to make school advisory councils more active, Mrs. Noell said. Parents don't always feel comfortable talking to the school board, she said.

Volunteer efforts also need to be emphasized more, Mrs. Noell said. She said parents have told her that they sign up to help, but no one from the school ever calls.

The personnel committee surveyed teachers to determine how to improve working conditions, said chairman Michael Hughes. Teachers want less paper work and reduced class sizes and class loads. Employee assistance programs are also needed, Hughes said. The survey also showed that teachers want a voice in school decisions, he said.

Parents complain to board about plans on tracking

By Tracy Presson
SALISBURY POST

EAST SPENCER -- The school board heard Monday that parents oppose a perceived plan to eliminate all tracking of high school students.

"I think all the administrators have made up their minds that tracking will be done away with if they have anything to do with it," said attorney Ted Blanton. "Parents are not going to go away until we get some response from the board."

Blanton and Dr. Martha Swann, a Catawba College professor, both spoke to the board.

Blanton recommended that school reform should start with the board allowing students and parents to choose schools.

"The end result of such free choice and its resulting competition would be innovative schools, better student performance and a departure from bland conformity," he said.

Tracking is the grouping of students by ability. The school board is experimenting with the

elimination of tracking in high school social studies classes this year. General and accelerated courses have been combined. Advanced placement courses, which offer college credit, are still available for gifted students.

School curriculum specialists say the social studies experiment is an effort to provide challenging courses to all students.

"Instead of grouping all students together, an alternative school should be established for students who need extra help," Dr. Swann said.

"We cannot make everyone equal," she said. "We can only equalize opportunities."

Dr. Swann said parents are not enemies of school leaders. The two groups should work together, she said.

"The parents have not created the 'us vs. them' environment that exists now," Dr. Swann said. "We want to believe you and we're having problems doing so."

Dr. Don Martin, superintendent of the Rowan-Salisbury Schools, said he had not planned to respond to Blanton and Dr. Swann.

"But I can't help it," Martin said. "I don't believe the two of you are really interested in working with us. What I'm having trouble understanding is this: that administrators have already made the decision. Where is it coming from?"

Dr. Swann said parents have been told conflicting stories about proposed curriculum changes and asked for their opinions, but school leaders have not listened. She said the recent bond issue for schools

See Tracking, Page

Dec. 31, 1976

■ CONTINUED . . .

Tracking

From Page 1A

facility improvements failed because of dissatisfaction with the school system.

Perception on classes

Dr. Swann also said that the coming year's curriculum guide reflects proposed changes. Another reason that parents mistrust school officials is because the same materials are being used in levels of English classes at Salisbury High this year. Dr. Swann said. Parents see that as a move to eliminate tracking in English too, she said.

Martin and school board chairman Anne Fuller said that the new curriculum guide does not include any changes in levels of courses in other subject areas. The name of accelerated English courses has been changed to "college preparatory" and the social studies experiment will continue, they said.

"The public needs to hear that there has been no change," Mrs. Fuller said. "We are holding in place (the social studies experiment) while we evaluate."

School officials are most interested in the outcomes of curriculum experiments, Martin said. The school system hopes to be one of four pilot districts in the state to receive funding for implementing outcome-based education, which involves requiring high school students to master certain skills and knowledge before moving on.

"That is what we want to drive our curriculum," Martin said.

Date for decision

He said the social studies experiment will be monitored over a two-year period. Scores on end-of-course tests will be compared to previous scores, Martin said.

"Our whole intent is to create a pool of data from which to make informed curriculum decisions," he said. "I'm not satisfied with the progress our students are demonstrating on the measures we have before us. If I was, I shouldn't be here."

Blanton challenged the board to survey all high school teachers for their opinions on tracking. It should be done in a way that teachers won't fear "retribution"

for their answers, he said. Dr. Swann volunteered to conduct the survey.

Martin said the results of such a survey may only reflect a resistance to change.

"To be successful in any new delivery system requires a change in teacher behavior," he said. "We do need all the information we can provide teachers and we need to get feedback."

Dr. Swann said that gifted students will come out on "the short end of the stick" without tracking.

"Those in favor of ability grouping are charged with being elitists," Blanton said. "That is simply false. We are worried about excellence. We ought not hold those who can excel in a prison of mediocrity. Putting all students in one group is a recipe for disaster. Ability grouping makes sense from grade 1 on, and especially in junior and senior high. It is essential if we're really going to stand for excellence."

Board response

Martin said local gifted students aren't measuring up to those in other systems. Students from lower-income families and with less-educated parents perform more competitively with their counterparts, he said.

The system is offering more advanced placement courses and paying for all students to take the exam for college credit, Martin said.

Board vice-chairman Jonathan Shores said he was concerned that students with learning disabilities receive the same opportunities as other students.

"We've got to find a balance so no child will be denied the best education we can offer," he said.

Dr. Swann also expressed concerns about drugs and violence at school. She said she has seen large groups of students gather after school at Salisbury High School. She said she has seen knives pulled and that police have been called to break up confrontations.

Dr. Swann also said that the board wastes time on administrative matters that it should allow Martin to handle.

Martin said he would respond to the parents' concerns in writing.

"We will certainly consider everything you've said," Mrs. Fuller said. "We appreciate the information and we will get back to you."

Rowan-Salisbury Teacher

Dec-11, 1991

LOCAL

of the Year - Tom Sexton

Coach

▶ From Page 1B

their own and then, evaluate them either through a test or game.

Sexton doesn't like to be called "Coach" in the classroom or "Mr." on the field.

Allen Brantley, local director of secondary education, says Sexton is a "creative teacher."

"He does a lot of innovative things," Brantley says. "He is true facilitator of learning. He cares about kids and he has an excellent academic program."

Sexton is in the middle of a current controversy, an experiment with grouping social studies students of various levels of ability together in class. He favors the idea.

"There is too much inequity now," Sexton says. "It has raised a controversy because the big-C word is there — change. Our department's philosophy is that we are going to challenge every student. I haven't scaled down my classes at all. We're providing an opportunity to move away from an educational caste system."

Another recent controversy didn't affect him, Sexton says. A change in the homework policy requires teachers to give homework on a regular basis. The previous policy left the decision up to teachers.

Sexton says homework has always been a part of his teaching. He didn't mind the change in wording of the policy.

"If a change is for the benefit of the kids, I don't mind following rules and regulations set down by the school board," Sexton says.

Rules vs. performance

He says North Carolina school systems are among the most regulated in the country.

"But test scores are still low," Sexton says. "We somehow have to find a happy medium between regulations and performance in the classroom. I think our administration is concerned and aware



Teacher Tom Sexton

that teachers need as much time as possible to promote excellence in the classroom."

Sexton says teachers have to be flexible because change comes often in the education field. A sense of humor is another key ingredient for teachers, he says.

"People can be defeated by a problem or take it in stride," Sexton says. "One way I deal with problems is to joke about them."

He says he always tells his athletes that a game is not a do or die situation.

"That takes the pressure off," Sexton says.

Student involvement

Involving students in class is one of Sexton's priorities.

"You have to bring the curriculum to the students," he says. "They have to feel affected by it or they won't be interested."

Sexton's students says his Teacher of the Year award is no surprise to them.

"He is one of the most interactive teachers," says senior Robert Miller. "He loves his work and you can always tell that he's excited and interested. He doesn't want just superficial answers from students. He wants us to think and analyze."

Senior Alexis Sockwell remembers when Sexton was an assistant coach for the football team.

"As a teacher, I didn't think he

would be as good as I've found that he is," Alexis says. "He gets you" involved in stuff. It's never boring. If you don't know something right off, he helps you and makes you feel good about learning something that you didn't know before."

No lectures

Sexton's students like that he doesn't lecture to them.

"We can have a conversation," says senior Jaime Daugherty. "And Mr. Sexton doesn't let just one person do all the talking. It's really informative and a lot of fun. I always look forward to coming to class. When you don't get involved in class, you can just wander off."

Sexton's joke about driving by Sexton's house and catching him watching C-Span. They've also picked up on one of his favorite expressions. When a student answers a question incorrectly, another student will say, "You're not asking the right questions."

Sexton has a good rapport with his students and manages to keep their attention in class.

"I won't let someone just sit there," he says. "I can't stand to see someone out in left field when everyone else is in the ball park."

Young teachers often make the mistake of trying to be friends with their students, Sexton says.

"You can't be their buddy, because they'll treat you that way," he says. "But you can show that you care."

On Monday, Sexton's advanced placement American government and politics class of 12 seniors studied the 1988 presidential election through the use of a laser disc program.

Sexton asks students what issues will be important in the 1992 election. Students reel off a list. Everybody contributes an answer. During the other half of the period, students used The Post and USA Today to study current events.

One student mentions something he read about the abortion issue.

"See if you can find that," Sexton says. "and bring it in."

THE OPINION PAGE

The Salisbury Post

Thursday, December 12, 1991 Page 8A

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Getting on the right track

The Rowan-Salisbury school board faces a no-win situation on the "tracking" issue. But if officials follow some basic principles, there may be a way out of the current controversy.

Parental resentment of tracking (educators prefer to call it "ability grouping" or some such) has always simmered below the surface here and elsewhere. By assigning students by ability into slow, average and gifted categories, the school system upsets some parents who feel their children are unfairly stigmatized as slow learners — or who fear that teachers don't work as hard to help such students.

There is also evidence that tracking can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. A student who becomes identified as performing at a certain level may live up to those expectations. And that self-image may become a lifelong reality.

Yet whenever school officials consider cutting back or eliminating tracking, parents of above-average students complain that their children will be denied a chance to be challenged in their studies. Diluting the course work to the lowest common denominator, these parents say, will leave the brightest students bored and academically deprived.

Both camps wave bulky studies in the air, claiming that the latest findings back up their claim that tracking is a success or failure.

Academic opportunity

Despite rumors of an impending "de-tracking" of other subjects, those in charge of the Rowan-Salisbury schools adamantly respond that the only non-tracking courses planned — and on a trial basis at that — are high school social studies classes. Given the limited nature of this experiment, it's reasonable to let it run its course and then assess the results.

Whatever the school board members decide, they would do well not to stray from two important principles:

• Schools must give every student, regardless of ability, a chance to reach his or her fullest academic potential.

• America's schools must do better in stimulating their brightest students — a failure that some experts have dubbed the "second crisis" in American education...

European elitism

Therefore, American schools should steer clear of a European-type approach that locks children into rigid academic tracks at an early age and doesn't allow them to switch regardless of their later school successes or preferences.

Perhaps the system could continue tracking but give students more opportunities to switch tracks in midstream. Or some classes may lend themselves to de-tracking while others do not.

Universal public education means our schools should provide opportunity and attention to all youngsters. That shouldn't mean, however, that the brightest students should be held back by a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching. If we intend to compete in the international marketplace in coming decades, our schools must not sacrifice educational excellence on the altar of rigid student equality.

But at this point, there's no reason to think the local school system has anything that radical in mind. A pilot program is just that — an experiment. This one ought to be allowed a chance to prove itself.

Dec. 7, 1991

Parents should speak out on tracking

By Cindy P. Noell
SPECIAL TO THE POST

I am writing in response to The Post editorial, "Getting on the right track."

I refer to the paragraph that says, "Despite rumors of an impending 'de-tracking' of other subjects, those in charge of the Rowan-Salisbury schools adamantly respond that the only non-tracking courses planned — and on a trial basis at that — are high school social studies classes. Given the limited nature of this experiment, it's reasonable to let it run its course and then assess the results."

If I felt this paragraph were true, I would agree with you. Most people do not realize and are not being told that de-tracking has already begun in full force in all 17 elementary schools in the Rowan-Salisbury system.

Teachers are told by administration not to rotate students between teachers, so they can be ability-grouped in math and reading. This is a big change in some of the elementary schools.

Before this year it was at the discretion of the principal and teachers of the individual schools to decide what was best for their particular student population. Student populations do differ greatly from one part of the county to the other, and it makes

a difference in meeting the needs of students.

Who doubts that the elementary schools in the city area have the far greater number of disadvantaged children? This means the range of low- to high-learning abilities are very great. This wide range with only a small middle group makes teaching all students in the same classroom very difficult.

The school system says it is possible with teacher training and motivated teachers. I agree the teacher can do some grouping within her own classroom to teach all levels, but how many do this? Not enough!

I certainly don't think it is necessary to ability-group in all subject areas, since all students have something to give and can enrich each other. However, in the core subjects of reading and math, I do think it is necessary.

In an ideal classroom situation where the discipline is very good, a teacher can teach a wider range of abilities. But most of our teachers have to deal with very disruptive behavior daily, thereby losing a lot of class time when students could be learning.

Our school system has something called the "Assertive Discipline Plan." These are certain steps to be followed with consequences for stu-

dents who do not obey rules and disrupt the class.

These rules are not being followed. I have been in the schools, in the classroom, have children in the classroom that are frustrated because they see students that "cuss" at teachers and don't get written up, but another child may chew gum and get written up very quickly.

Both things are against the rules. Be consistent; show the kids you mean business and follow the "Assertive Discipline Plan."

I am a parent who is involved with the schools, hopefully in a positive way. I have been active in the PTA's, volunteer tutoring programs, Booster Clubs and have been a grade mother and chairperson of the community involvement committee for almost two years, because I wanted to work with the system.

I have seen some very good things happening in the school system this year, such as monthly news letters to parents to keep them informed about school activities. My children go to a school where the principal is working with parents to try and make his school the best it can be.

My concern is that when parents disagree with Dr. Don Martin and his staff, we are labeled by them as troublemakers and parents "who are really not interested in working with

us." If we agree with all the ideas of the administration, then we are caring and involved.

The main concern that prompted me to write this letter is the mention of the outcome-based education experiment that our system is trying to get funding for. I have received a stack of information on this idea and attended a curriculum meeting to listen to the report on this teaching method. It is experimental and I don't agree with what it will mean for all our students, but if we get the money from the government our school system will do it and we parents will be told, this is the way it will be.

I'm sure my speaking out so frankly about the way I feel will cause the school administration to be upset with me, but I will always continue to volunteer and support this school system when I can, because you can't give up and let the children down. I would strongly urge a letter-writing campaign from all concerned parents in the Rowan school system to your school board members and let them know how you feel about school issues.

One, two or three, even 50 parents will not make a difference. It will take us all!

Cindy P. Noell lives in Salisbury.

THE OPINION PAGE

The Salisbury Post

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Page 6A

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More goals for 1992

Even in economically gloomy times, Rowan County has the opportunity to move forward on issues ranging from education to the arts. Here is the second installment of The Post's goals for the new year.

Despite their hard work and dedication, the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education and Superintendent Don Martin have a problem on their hands: Many Rowan parents feel that school officials have insufficient interest in receiving input from the public.

Whether the topic is tracking or curriculum overhaul, school officials must reassure the public that channels are available to receive comments from parents. Once parents put forward suggestions, a greater effort should be made to include them in new policies under development. The tracking issue is one example.

On the positive side, the school system should continue its efforts to strengthen curriculum. Providing the proper training for personnel will be a crucial part of that effort. The school board should work toward implementing the recommendations of the five strategic planning committees. Promotion of the tech-prep curriculum is vital.

The schools' need-to-do list also includes greater efforts to help disadvantaged students. Moreover, in the wake of the controversy over the former Dunbar school and the NAACP's opposition to the 1991 school bond issue, school officials should work to repair the strained relations with the black community. No progress will be possible, however, unless black leaders also demonstrate a willingness to work constructively to heal these wounds.

The school board will need to re-examine its facility needs and see if it can develop a smaller bond proposal. Last fall's \$49 million school bond package, defeated by a 52-to-48 percent margin, was just too large for many voters to swallow.

One of the brightest notes on the education front is the creation of the Rowan-Salisbury Educational Foundation, which uses local contributions to encourage creative teaching methods in our schools. Promotion of this exciting new program is essential.

In economic matters, Rowan faces some serious concerns. Many traditional manufacturing jobs are disappearing, and the county's retail sector has also been suffering. One result: The average per capita income for Rowan has slipped below the state average.

Salisbury should improve its retail mix, and Rowan as a whole should explore ways to motivate other grocery chains to come into the Lion's den here to increase shopping opportunities for residents.

The Salisbury-Rowan Chamber of Commerce should move forward with its plans to encourage new people to enter the leadership ranks in the business community and within the Chamber itself. To that end, the Leadership Rowan project should begin this fall.

Government and civic leaders should continue to press for revamped phone service so South Rowan residents can call Salisbury without having to pay long-distance charges. That's especially needed since so many emergency agencies are located in the county seat.

Efforts to renovate the Meroney Theatre must get off the ground, so that the facility will ultimately house not only the Piedmont Players but the United Arts Council and the new Playwrights Center as well.

The overall aim should be the creation of a performing arts center to serve as a focus for Salisbury's growing development as an arts magnet for the Piedmont. To that end, the community should further explore the idea of an annual regional arts festival.

Tracking reaches lower grades

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

The controversy over "tracking" has spread to Rowan-Salisbury elementary schools.

Some parents are upset that elementary schools are no longer doing as much separation of students by ability for reading and math instruction.

School officials say there has been a change in student grouping this-year with the implementation of a new reading series for grades K-5. Elementary students are also being grouped less for math instruction.

"Flexible" grouping is the preferred method of instruction for the reading series, but elementary schools are using several

different methods, says Dr. Martha West, director of elementary education.

"We have not mandated anything in elementary schools," Dr. West says. "What we've tried to do instead is keep teachers and principals updated on research and practices, and they decide what's best for their school."

Dr. West will speak on student grouping in elementary schools at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 21, at the Ellis Street school offices.

The big difference this year seems to be in former city elementary schools, where students had previously been pulled out of class for instruction in certain subjects. Former county elementary schools followed less of a "pull-out" pattern.

"There is a definite national trend away from tracking," Dr. West says. "The research shows that once a child gets in the low group, they never get out."

Research shows high achievement results for students who have not been ability-grouped, Dr. West says. When the top-level students leave the class, the other students have no good role models, she says. Flexible grouping also provides an opportunity for gifted students to develop leadership skills, Dr. West says.

But parents worry that teachers won't be able to work with different levels of students within one classroom. They say the result is

▶ See Tracking, Page 12B

Page 1B
Salisbury, N.C.
Monday, January 13, 1992

12B—Monday, January 13, 1992. The Salisbury Post

■ CONTINUED . . .

Tracking

From Page 1B

instruction geared toward the middle-level student.

"That's why we encourage different types of grouping, so students can be in groups where they will be challenged," Dr. West says.

Difficult for teachers

Joyce Davis, a Cabarrus County teacher, says flexible grouping is a good idea but putting it into practice is difficult. Mrs. Davis is using the method with the new reading series, which she says is more literature-based. Her two children attend school in Rowan County.

"Grouping different types of students helps children learn how others think, Mrs. Davis says.

"I have seen a difference in how first-graders see themselves," she says. "The children are very unaware of which children are very good readers and which ones don't read at all."

That aspect of the program helps raise self-esteem at an important age, Mrs. Davis says. School administrators must be aware that teachers need more planning time to make flexible grouping succeed, she says.

"If the teacher is willing to put in the time, it can be wonderful," Mrs. Davis says. "I think there are some very gifted teachers who can pull it off, but it is difficult for others."

More planning time

Some local principals are providing more planning time for teachers during periods when students attend classes in music, PE or the library.

"We're having all kinds of staff development," Dr. West says. "I don't want teachers trying new things until they feel comfortable. But it is important for teachers to know the new ideas. Obviously,

we're not solving the problems with the old ones."

There is some confusion between tracking and ability-grouping. Tracking involves locking a child into a certain level for an entire school career, says Dr. Judy Grissom, assistant superintendent for instruction.

Ability-grouping is done by subject. For example, a student may excel in language arts but not in math.

In middle school, students are divided into teams for classes. But those who show potential in language arts or math are grouped together for those classes. Also, exceptional children and students who need remedial help are grouped together. But grouping together of different types of students is done as much as possible, says Dr. Elen Pittillo, director of middle grades education.

Experiment

The school system is involved in an experiment with less tracking in high school social studies classes this year. General and accelerated classes have been combined. Advanced-placement classes still remain.

Parents have accused school officials of planning to eliminate tracking entirely, while school officials have said they will carefully evaluate the social studies experiment before making any other changes.

However, the same materials are being used for different levels of high school English this year. Allen Brantley, director of secondary education, says the school system is moving toward using a single textbook in many subjects.

Money is one reason. Another is that all students deserve the same instruction regardless of their ability, Brantley says. All students must take the same end-of-course state test.

Most elementary schools do not

have children changing classes this year, Dr. West says. Part of that trend involves integrating the curriculum, she says. That's hard to do when students study subjects under different teachers, Dr. West says.

"We want to show that what they are studying is something to use and not just something to study," she says.

Pull-out programs

There are still weekly pull-out programs for the academically gifted and for students who need remedial help.

Academically gifted students in grades 3-5 are pulled out of regular class for instruction with a certified AG teacher.

"There is no plan to eliminate the AG program," Dr. Grissom says. "We have a very strong program. I don't anticipate any changes."

In March, parents may attend a panel discussion on the local AG program.

With the new reading series, the teacher introduces the lesson and then may group students in various ways. Students do not remain in the same groups every day.

Classroom activities involve the whole class, small groups, pairs of students and individual students. All students work on the same lesson and use the same textbooks and materials. Student who are doing well participate in enrichment activities. Students who need more attention receive remediation.

Cooperative learning is a part of the grouping plan. Students with differing abilities are assigned group tasks.

"The idea is to help teach students to work together to solve a problem," Dr. West says. "When they grow up and go out in the work place, they won't be working on their own. But in school, we have always encouraged students to work on their own and not share."

Parental input

6B — Tuesday, January 14, 1992.

Some ways to send a message to school system

By Dr. Don Martin
SPECIAL TO THE POST

In the Jan. 2, 1992 editorial, "More Goals for 1992," you wrote, "Whether the topic is tracking or curriculum overhaul, school officials must reassure the public that channels are available to receive comments from parents."



I am writing this article to inform your readers of the channels that are available to receive comments from parents. The following routine channels of communication should always be available: talking with teachers, counselors, principals, central office staff (including me) and the Board of Education. (The Board has established a time at the beginning of each meeting to receive communications from the public).

Three other communication channels that are available to the public include strategic planning meetings; school PTA officers; and school advisory council members. I want to comment about each of these.

As I evaluate what has been accomplished in our school district during the past 2½ years, I am extremely pleased with our strategic planning process. In June 1990, a

public meeting was held inviting members of the public to help plan our school district's future. Over 60 citizens attended and many signed up to serve on one or more of five strategic planning committees.

These committees met twice a month between July and November, 1990. In December 1990, each committee finalized a broad range of goals and objectives in the following areas: curriculum, community involvement, personnel, support services and student services.

In January 1991, the Rowan-Salisbury Board of Education adopted these goals and objectives, which are prominently displayed in our board meeting room at Long Street.

These committees continued to meet throughout 1991. Each committee is chaired by a local person and is assigned a staff facilitator who provides information and arranges presentations for each meeting. An interested citizen may attend one meeting or every meeting.

During the past 18 months (since July, 1990), the curriculum committee has met 27 times; the support services committee, 24 times; the personnel committee, 21 times; the community involvement committee, 21 times; and the student services committee, 20 times. In summary, citizens have had 113 opportunities to talk with staff members in a small group about our school district.

I recognize that some parents, for one reason or another, may be unable to attend or are uncomfortable attending a strategic planning meeting. Local school PTAs and advisory councils offer two less official channels of communication.

Each school has an active PTA that meets regularly. Each school also has an advisory council, whose members are parents or other interested persons appointed by the school board to serve two-year terms. Advisory councils meet regularly with school principals.

If you would like to know the names of any advisory council members, just call the particular school or my office.

In your Jan. 2, 1992 editorial, you commented, "Once parents put forward suggestions, a greater effort should be made to include them in new policies under development. The tracking issue is one example."

Without question, the tracking issue has struck a nerve among some parents. We have copied articles for parents summarizing a great deal of the research on this topic, showed video tapes, conducted parent discussions and explained carefully the experiment now underway in many of our high school social studies classes.

Coincidentally, Mrs. Cindy Noell sent a letter to The Post (Dec. 27, 1991) encouraging parents to speak out on tracking. She believes that principals have been mandated to make student grouping changes at the elementary

school level.

Because of this confusion, Dr. Martha West, our director of elementary education, will address this topic at the next meeting of the curriculum strategic planning committee, which will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 21, 1992 at 7 p.m. at our Ellis Street office.

Public input is important in shaping the desired educational outcomes and goals for our children. It is important for the public to understand the rationale and research that supports any educational decision.

Our strategic planning committees are designed to provide ample opportunity for public input and the sharing of information. Ultimately, decisions must be made by school personnel and approved by the elected board of education.

There is no doubt in my mind that our educational delivery system must change if we are to adequately prepare our students to enter tomorrow's workforce. Change is uncomfortable for all of us. As we continue to struggle for excellence, educators and parents may not always share the same viewpoint, but hopefully all of us will continue to work together to achieve a mutual goal — providing the best education possible for all students who live in Rowan County.

Dr. Don Martin is superintendent of the Rowan-Salisbury school system.

Some ideas to help our ailing schools

Jan. 26, 1992

It is refreshing to know at least one group is doing something to improve and encourage creative teaching methods in the classroom. The Rowan-Salisbury Educational Foundation is to be commended for "promoting and supporting excellence in teaching and learning."

"The hundreds of committee meetings, from the national to the local level, other than turning out a lot of bureaucratic, rhetorical theorizing, are mostly spinning their wheels. Outcome-based education is certainly not a new concept, it is the same concept as performance-based and competency-based instruction that vocational instructors have been using for years."

If student test scores and grades are going to be improved, it will be inside the classroom doors where "the rubber meets the road", not in committee and board meetings. As Jim Hunt said in his recent Post interview, "the teachers are the ones who help us really change the schools."

A few curriculum changes might be needed, but the main trust in improving test scores and grades should be to get the directors of instruction, the supervisors, the curriculum specialists, the principals and assistant principals into the classrooms to help improve the instructor-student learning process.

One hundred and thirteen meetings by four committees in 18 months is ridiculous, particularly when the superintendent says, "Ultimately, decisions must be made by school personnel and approved by the elected Board of Education."

One other point of discussion is the lengthening of the school day or the school year. This change is absolutely not necessary.

The solution is to eliminate 95 percent of the infringements on present classroom time. It would be appalling to know the number of time periods that are missed or cut short as students are removed from a class for various reasons. Keep our students in the classrooms and laboratories.

— Arnold W. Lingle
Salisbury

Will ideas for schools really fly?

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK — You can count on one thing from the education reformers who set the agenda for school improvement discussions: Their ideas, no matter how worthy or unworthy, will be expressed in jargon that will leave the typical parent puzzled.

That's certainly the case with the whole movement towards a "competency-based" system of education, one that relies on a student's "mastery of skills."

Relief for North Carolina parents may have literally dropped out of the sky recently, however, and it came from the most unlikely of places: A politician, Colorado Gov. Roy Romer advocated this reform when he spoke to the World Class Schools Conference this month, and he did so with an example that makes sense.

Romer, a Democrat in his second term, is a national advocate for defined educational goals and standards. He says that our schools should decide what we want our children to learn, and then move children along the education ladder as they progress towards the ultimate goal. For those holding Ph.D.s in education, I'll translate: "Establish 'competencies' and advance students as they master those competencies."

Romer's metaphor comes from his experiences as the owner of a flight school. When one opens a school for future pilots, one must teach people how to fly. You get your pilot's license when you learn how to get an airplane up into the air, fly it around in any number of dangerous situations, and then put it back on the ground in one piece.

"What is fixed is what we need to know," Romer told the conference of business and education leaders from across the state. You must know how to fly a plane. What is variable, he said, is the amount of time it will take "to learn that skill."

In other words, no matter how many hours of flight school you undertake, you don't get the license until you can fly.

"Public education is just the opposite," Romer complained. Students move out of third grade after 180 days, not after they have mastered the skills which have been determined to be essential for children aged eight and nine to master.

In the public schools, progress is made by sitting out your time, not by learning the necessary material. If such a system existed for pilots, no one would be willing to fly. It would be too dangerous.

But who decides what skills a third grader should master?

Romer advocates creation of national goals. He's been instrumental in the decision of the National Governor's Association and President Bush, for example, to set a goal for 2000 that the U.S. lead the world in math education.

Jan 23, 1992

Paul O'Connor writes columns for the Capitol Press Association.



Paul T.
O'Connor

Schools of future

Achievement-oriented plan shows promise

By Tracy Presson

THE SALISBURY POST

EAST SPENCER — A radical new curriculum model local school officials are proposing may be the "wave of the future," a state education specialist told parents Tuesday night.

"It changes everything about the way we think about education," said David Holdzkom, chief consultant in personnel services with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

Holdzkom talked about outcome-based education (OBE) with about 30 parents and school staff members at the Long Street school administrative office.

The state school board and the General Assembly are sponsoring a pilot project in outcome-based education. Four school systems will receive funding to implement the curriculum model. The Rowan-Salisbury system is applying for funding.

Here's Holdzkom's definition of OBE: "Focusing

and organizing all of the school's programs and instructional efforts around the clearly defined outcomes we want all students to demonstrate when they leave school."

In OBE, all students must meet certain standards before moving on to new material. Students may not all graduate at the age of 18, Holdzkom said.

"Age is not the issue. Achievement is the issue," he said.

A switch to OBE will require significant retraining of teachers, Holdzkom said. To be considered for state funding, a school system must offer proof of teacher support.

The local staff wants to begin OBE at the high school level and work backwards, said Dr. Don Martin, superintendent. The school board will hear the local proposal at its Jan. 27 meeting. Martin also plans to meet with all staff members to discuss the proposal.

› See Plan, Page 2D

2D—Wednesday, January 15, 1992, The Salisbury Post

LOCAL

Plan

▶ From Page 1D

School officials were disappointed with attendance for Holdzkom's talk, considering the recent outcry over curriculum changes.

"They missed an opportunity," said Dr. Judy Grissom, assistant superintendent for instruction.

Holdzkom praised local school leaders for their efforts in curriculum reform.

"You're doing experiments the way I like — slowly, with a firm hand on the rudder," he said.

OBE can involve tracking or ability grouping, but Holdzkom said heterogeneous grouping is more consistent with the model. High expectations for the success of all students is the key, he said.

Tracking results in competition and low self-esteem for some students, Holdzkom said. Students need to learn cooperation instead of competition, he said.

Holdzkom said OBE is different from other models for curriculum reform in that it means "doing better things" instead of "doing things better." Most educational research focuses on the latter, he said.

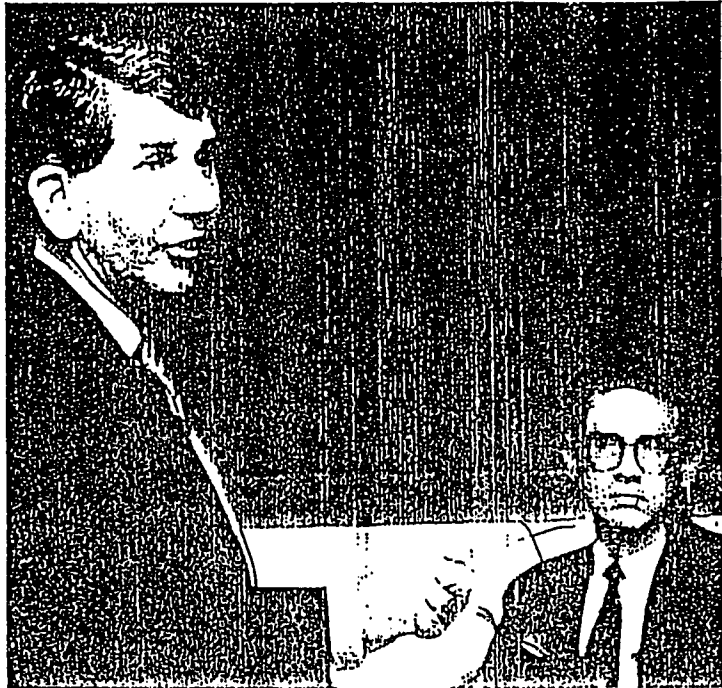
People must change their ideas about education in order to accept OBE, Holdzkom said.

For instance, it's assumed that all 6-year-olds are in first grade, but it may be that they're not all ready after finishing kindergarten, he said.

People also assume that so many children will excel and so many will fail, Holdzkom said. The rest fall somewhere in between, he said.

"We don't take intervention seriously enough," Holdzkom said.

OBE involves using a fixed standard of success rather than a competitive or comparative stan-



JAMES BARRINGER/THE SALISBURY POST

David Holdzkom talks to parents; Don Martin listens

dard, Holdzkom said. Currently, students and classes are compared and people think it's important to know who is at the top, he said.

OBE can be explained through the example of getting your driver's license, Holdzkom said. People receive different scores on the driving test, but everyone gets the same result — a license. If you don't pass the test, you eventually take it again.

Scouting merit badges are another example Holdzkom gave. Scouts know exactly what they must do to earn a badge.

OBE also uses amounts of time differently. Instead of expecting a student to learn algebra in 180 days, students would get more or less time.

In OBE, a student's aptitude becomes their rate of learning

instead of their ability to learn, Holdzkom said.

"No one is just sitting there getting nowhere," he said. "The whole idea is making progress."

Grading is also handled differently with OBE. If grades are given at all, they should be As and Bs and N for "not yet."

"We use grades to validate that a student has reached a high standard of success," Holdzkom said.

Today's schools provide students with very few of the skills employers look for, he said.

"My son's high school is doing a wonderful job preparing him for the world he lives in now," Holdzkom said. "But I'm scared that my kid is not being prepared for the world in which he will live."

Parents want improved elementary curriculum

By Tracy Presson
THE SALISBURY POST

Parents expressed concerns with new elementary school teaching methods on Tuesday, but agreed that they should work with school officials on improving the curriculum.

About 35 people attended a meeting of the curriculum planning committee to hear a presentation on elementary student grouping by Dr. Martha West, Rowan-Salisbury schools' director of elementary education.

Some elementary teachers are using different methods this year, a move directly related to the adoption of new reading textbooks. Instead of separating students by ability, teachers are doing more flexible grouping.

Here are some concerns parents mentioned:

- Parents are frustrated because they think children aren't learning. They said brighter students aren't progressing because they are helping the other students and the new reading book is too hard for some of those students. Parents said the result is a dumbed-down curriculum.

- Parents aren't receiving any feedback on their children's progress.

- Teachers are frustrated because they are not sure of how to



implement new methods, parents said. Teachers did not receive enough training before starting something new, they said.

- Parents said they are not made aware of changes until they happen.

Dr. West emphasized that teachers have not been required to use flexible grouping. She said teachers do need more training.

"There are a lot of things we're getting at that we're learning about because we are trying something different," she said. "We expect teachers and principals to do what is best for children. There are just no easy answers.

We've wrestled with this for a long time."

Research implies that students should spend more time in heterogeneous groups and more time participating in cooperative learning, Dr. West said. Students learn best when interacting with other students or adults instead of doing individual work, she said.

Worksheets should be emphasized less, even though parents like to see this type of work coming home, Dr. West said.

Dr. Don Martin, schools superintendent, suggested parents talk to principals about specific problems at their child's school. If they don't receive satisfaction, they can come to him, he said.

Parents said that it may be better to have all teachers doing the same thing in order to measure the results adequately.

Martin pointed out that teachers select textbooks. He also said

administrators are interested in measuring results and in matching teaching and learning styles.

Last year, seven elementary schools did some tracking (separating by ability) of students, Dr. West said. This year, two schools still have students change classes for math and language arts.

Dr. West explained a teaching method designed by Dr. Patricia Cunningham of Wake Forest University, who will be working as a consultant with the school system.

Dr. Cunningham's method combines writing, individual reading, paired reading, and phonics activities. All students receive the same instruction in each "block." Children who are having trouble get an opportunity to read some easier materials.

The method was first tried last year in Winston-Salem and produced good results, Dr. West said.

A parent at last night's meeting said her child had been in that program before the family moved to Rowan County. She said the Rowan-Salisbury Schools should implement it.

Appendix B
Questionnaires

**Interview Questions
Reduced Tracking System**

141

Parent Interview: Pilot

Introduce self and reason for interview (to find out how parents believe the social studies program is progressing. "Your child has participated this school year in a social studies curriculum organized to reduce tracking (grouping students of the same ability level together for classes). You probably remember that in previous years there had been three tracks or levels available in social studies:

Regular - 4.0 weight (at A level)
Accelerated - 5.0 weight
Honors/Advanced Placement - 6.0 weight

This school year the Rowan-Salisbury system reduced the track choices to two so that students could choose these courses at the regular 4.0 weight

Economic, Legal & Political Systems (required 9th grade)
United States History (required 11th grade)
World History

or these courses at the 6.0 weight

Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. History (may replace regular)
AP European History
AP American Government/Politics (may replace ELPS)

Having had a child in one of these courses for this year, we would like to know your perceptions of how the year has gone.

I. Demographic Information

1. Which high school does your child attend?
East North Salisbury South West
2. In which social studies course is your child presently enrolled?
4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
4303 U.S. History
4302 World History
4803 AP U.S. History
4802 AP European History
4813 AP American Government/Politics
Unknown
3. Which social studies course did your child take last (before this one)?
4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
4601 Accelerated Economic, Legal & Political Systems
4303 U. S. History
4603 Accelerated U.S. History
4803 AP U.S. History
4302 World History
4602 Accelerated World History
None of the Above
Unknown
4. Would you have preferred that your child take the academic track (5.0) weight in a social studies course if it had been available this year?
Yes No No Opinion
5. What was your child's grade in social studies at the end of the 3rd quarter?
A B C D E Inc. Unknown
6. What is your child's sex? male female

7. What is your child's ethnic group? White Black Asian Other

II. Survey

1. Do you feel your child has had a successful experience this year in his/her social studies course? (S1-12) (Examples? Elaboration?)

2. Did he/she feel the class moved too quickly or too slowly?(S1)

3. Did he/she experience a lot of failing grades (especially on tests) in this class?(S2)

4. Did he/she find the material too difficult or too easy?(S3)

5. Did he/she seem to be interested in the subject?(S4)

6. In your opinion, what was the value of the content of the information your child learned in this class? (S5 & 6)

7. Did your child mention class activities that would indicate he/she was actively participating in the class? (Examples?) (S7)

(a) Did he/she mention use of seminars, group work, or laser discs?(13,15)

8. Did you feel the teacher paid attention to your child's individual needs in this class? (Examples?) (S8)

9. Did your child mention other students in the class?

(a) Were most of the other students in the class motivated to make good grades? (S9)

(b) Were there many students who slowed the class down because they disrupted? (S10)

(c) Were there many students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand material? (S1)

10. How useful do you think what your child learned in this class will be for his/her future career or educational goals? (6)

11. Do you think your child would take an accelerated or honors course if it received no extra weight in calculating his grade point average?

12. How could the social studies curriculum be improved? Any other comments?

Thank you for participating in this survey.

TEACHER SURVEY: Pilot
Assessment of the Social Studies Program to Reduce Tracking

Directions: During this school year, you have taught a social studies curriculum organized to reduce tracking. Please indicate your assessment of how well the new system is working by answering the following questions. Use a number 2 pencil and answer under Special Codes on the answer sheet by filling in the bubble. Do not mark in the top row indicated by 0. Give one answer per question.

The survey form is designed for you to describe one course at a time. Please fill out a form for each different course you taught (not each different section). If there were great differences between sections, fill out another form and mark beside of question E which section you are describing.

Demographic Information:

- A. At which high school do you teach?
(1) East (2) North (3) Salisbury (4) South (5) West
- B. Which social studies course do you teach for most of the day?
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4303 United States History
(3) 4302 World History
(4) 4803 AP United States History
(5) 4802 AP European History
(6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics
- C. Which social studies course did you teach for most of the day last year?
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4601 Accelerated Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(3) 4303 U.S. History
(4) 4603 Accelerated U.S. History
(5) 4803 AP U.S. History
(6) 4302 World History
(7) 4602 Accelerated World History
(8) None of the Above
- D. Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?
(1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided
- E. Which social studies course are you describing in this survey?
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4303 United States History
(3) 4302 World History
(4) 4803 AP United States History
(5) 4802 AP European History
(6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics
- F. How many years have you taught social studies, including this year?
(1) 1-5 (2) 6-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-20 (5) 21 or more
- G. How many of those years have been in the Rowan-Salisbury System?
(1) 1-5 (2) 6-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-20 (5) 21 or more

STUDENT SURVEY: Pilot
Assessment of the Social Studies Program to Reduce Tracking

Directions: During this school year, you have experienced a social studies curriculum organized to reduce tracking. Please indicate your assessment of how well the new system is working by answering the following questions. Use a number 2 pencil and answer under Special Codes on the answer sheet by filling in the bubble. Do not mark in the top row indicated by Q. Give one answer per question.

I. Demographic Information:

- A. Which high school do you attend?
(1) East (2) North (3) Salisbury (4) South (5) West
- B. In which social studies course are you presently enrolled?
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4303 United States History
(3) 4302 World History
(4) 4803 AP United States History
(5) 4802 AP European History
(6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics
- C. Please indicate the last social studies course you took before this year.
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4601 Accelerated Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(3) 4303 U.S. History
(4) 4603 Accelerated U.S. History
(5) 4803 AP U.S. History
(6) 4302 World History
(7) 4602 Accelerated World History
(8) None of the Above
- D. Would you have taken the academic track (5.0 weight) in a social studies course if it had been available this year?
(1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided
- E. What was your grade in the class you are presently taking at the end of the 3rd quarter?
(1) A (2) B (3) C (4) D (5) E (6) Incomplete
- F. Approximately how many students are in your social studies class?
(1) 15 or less (2) 16-20 (3) 21-25 (4) 26-30 (5) 31 or more
- G. Of which class are you a member, according to homeroom?
(1) freshman (2) sophomore (3) junior (4) senior
- H. What is your sex?
(1) male (2) female
- I. What is your ethnic group?
(1) White (2) Black (3) Asian (4) Other

II. Survey Questions: Use a no. 2 pencil and fill in the bubble corresponding to the answer you choose.

1. I found the rate at which the instruction moved in my classes to be
(a) very slow (b) somewhat slow (c) about right (d) somewhat fast (e) very fast
2. The number of falling grades my students experienced on tests in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about usual (d) somewhat high (e) very high
3. The difficulty of the material I taught in this class was
(a) very easy (b) somewhat easy (c) about right (d) somewhat difficult (e) very difficult
4. The interest my students had in the subject matter in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
5. Most students appeared to believe the importance of the content studied in this course was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
6. The importance of what I taught for most students' futures is
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
7. Most students actively participated in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
8. I paid attention to individual student needs in this course
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
9. In comparison to other classes I have taught, the number of students in this course who were concerned about good grades was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
10. In comparison to other courses I have taught, the number of students who slowed this course down because they were disruptive was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
11. In comparison to other courses I have taught, the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand the material was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
12. My expectations for students in this course were
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about right (d) somewhat high (e) very high
13. In this course I taught by lecture
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
14. In this course I used technology such as laser discs or computers
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
15. In this course I used video tapes
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
16. In this course I used seminar discussions
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
17. In this course I used cooperative groups
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
18. In this course I assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
19. My students did the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often

20. I promptly reviewed the assigned homework
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
21. In this course I asked oral questions
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
22. In this course students usually answered the oral questions
 (a) with one or two words (b) with a sentence (c) with several sentences
23. My test questions in this course were usually
 (a) multiple choice or true/false (b) short answer or fill in the blank (c) discussion or essay
 (d) a combination of techniques
24. What received most emphasis in this class?
 (a) memorizing facts
 (b) understanding concepts
 (c) both received equal attention
25. The method through which I believe most students learn best is
 (a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
26. The method of learning through which it is most difficult for most students to learn is
 (a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
27. The method of teaching I used most often is
 (a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
28. The method of teaching I used least often is
 (a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
29. If there are other questions you believe should be asked to understand better how the social studies project is progressing, please write them in below.

Please indicate on the answer sheet what you consider to be the strongest point and the weakest point of the social studies class you have taken this year.

Strength (Comment 1):

Weakness (Comment 2):

Thank you for your participation in this survey

II. Survey Questions: Use a no. 2 pencil and fill in the bubble corresponding to the answer you choose.

1. I found the rate at which the instruction moved in this class to be
(a) very slow (b) somewhat slow (c) about right (d) somewhat fast (e) very fast
2. The number of falling grades I experienced on tests in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about usual (d) somewhat high (e) very high
3. The difficulty of the material we studied in this class was
(a) very easy (b) somewhat easy (c) about right (d) somewhat difficult (e) very difficult
4. The interest I had in the subject matter in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
5. Most students appeared to believe the importance of the content studied in this course was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
6. The importance of what I learned in this class for my future is
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
7. I actively participated in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
8. The teacher paid attention to my needs as an individual in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
9. In comparison to my other classes, the number of students in this class who were concerned about good grades was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
10. My personal concern about making good grades in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
11. In comparison to my other classes, the number of students who slowed the class down because they were disruptive was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
12. In comparison to my other classes, the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand the material was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
13. Teacher expectations in this class were
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about right (d) somewhat high (e) very high
14. In this class the teacher taught by lecture
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
15. In this class the teacher used technology such as laser discs or computers
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
16. In this class the teacher used video tapes
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
17. In this class the teacher used seminar discussions
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
18. In this class the teacher used cooperative groups
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
19. In this class the teacher assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often

20. I did the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
21. The teacher promptly reviewed the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
22. In this class the teacher asked oral questions
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
23. In this class students usually answered the oral questions
(a) with one or two words (b) with a sentence (c) with several sentences
24. Test questions in this class were usually
(a) multiple choice or true/false (b) short answer or fill in the blank (c) discussion or essay
(d) a combination of techniques
25. What received most emphasis in this class?
(a) memorizing facts
(b) understanding concepts
(c) both received equal attention
26. The method through which I believe I learn best is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video
(e) completing work sheets
27. The method through which it is most difficult for me to learn is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video
(e) completing work sheets
28. The method my teacher used most often is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video
(e) completing work sheets
29. The method my teacher used least often is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video
(e) completing work sheets

Please indicate on the answer sheet what you consider to be the strongest point and the weakest point of the social studies class you have taken this year.

Strength (Comment 1):

Weakness (Comment 2):

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
Assessment of the Social Studies Program to Reduce Tracking
Rowan-Salisbury Schools

149

Directions: During this school year, your child has experienced a social studies curriculum organized to reduce tracking. Please indicate your assessment of how well the new system is working by putting your answer in the blank provided. Questions refer to the experience of the child whose name is on the address label. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by June 1, 1992. Even if you have to answer "No Opinion/Don't Know" to several questions, your response is important in helping us plan better educational experiences for your child.

I. Demographic Information:

- A. Which high school does your child attend?
(1) East (2) North (3) Salisbury (4) South (5) West
- B. In which social studies course is your child presently enrolled?
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4303 United States History
(3) 4302 World History
(4) 4803 AP United States History
(5) 4802 AP European History
(6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics
- C. Please indicate the last social studies course your child took before this year.
(1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4601 Accelerated Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(3) 4303 U.S. History
(4) 4603 Accelerated U.S. History
(5) 4803 AP U.S. History
(6) 4302 World History
(7) 4602 Accelerated World History
(8) None of the Above
(9) Don't Know
- D. Would you have advised your child to take the accelerated track (5.0 weight) in a social studies course if it had been available this year?
(1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided
- E. What was your child's grade in social studies at the end of the 3rd quarter?
(1) A (2) B (3) C (4) D (5) E (6) Incomplete (7) Don't Know
- F. Do you believe you understand the weighted grade system presently used?
(1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided
- G. Of which class is your child a member, according to homeroom?
(1) freshman (2) sophomore (3) junior (4) senior
- H. What is your child's sex?
(1) male (2) female
- I. What is your child's ethnic group?
(1) White (2) Black (3) Asian (4) Other
- J. What is your relation to your child?
(1) Mother (2) Father (3) Female Guardian (4) Male Guardian (5) Other

II. Survey Questions: Answer your questions according to comments your child has made, returned papers you have seen, report cards, discussions with your child, and any contacts you have had with your child's social studies teacher.

1. My child found the rate at which the instruction moved in this class to be
(a) very slow (b) somewhat slow (c) about right (d) somewhat fast (e) very fast (f) no opinion/don't know
2. In comparison to other classes, the number of students who slowed this class down because they were disruptive was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) no opinion/don't know
3. In comparison to other classes, the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand the material was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) no opinion/don't know
4. The number of failing grades my child experienced on tests or major assignments in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) don't know
5. The difficulty of the material studied in this class was
(a) very easy (b) somewhat easy (c) about right (d) somewhat difficult (e) very difficult (f) don't know
6. The interest my child had in the subject matter in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) no opinion/don't know
7. Most students appeared to believe the importance of the content studied in this course was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) don't know
8. The importance of what my child learned in this class for his/her future is
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) no opinion
9. My child actively participated in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) don't know
10. The teacher paid attention to my child's needs as an individual in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) no opinion
11. In comparison to other classes, the number of students in this class who were concerned about good grades was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) don't know
12. In comparison to other classes, competition among students in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) don't know
13. The number of students in this class who learned from each other was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) don't know
14. Teacher expectations in this class were
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about right (d) somewhat high (e) very high (f) no opinion
15. In this class the teacher taught by lecture
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) don't know
16. In this class the teacher used technology such as laser discs or computers
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) don't know
17. In this class the teacher used video tapes
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) don't know
18. In this class the teacher used seminar discussions
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) don't know

19. In this class the teacher used cooperative groups
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often (f) don't know
20. In this class the teacher assigned homework
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always (f) don't know
21. My child did the assigned homework
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always (f) don't know
22. The teacher promptly reviewed the assigned homework
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always (f) don't know
23. In this class the teacher asked oral questions that required a sentence or more to answer
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always (f) don't know
24. In this class the teacher emphasized learning concepts, rather than memorizing facts
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always (f) don't know
25. The method through which I believe my child learns best is
 (a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets (f) don't know
26. The method through which it is most difficult for my child to learn is
 (a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets (f) don't know
27. The method my child's teacher used most often is
 (a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets (f) don't know
28. The method my child's teacher used least often is
 (a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets (f) don't know
29. Overall, my child's learning experience in social studies class this year has been
 (a) poor (b) fair (c) good (d) superior (e) excellent (f) no opinion
30. How often have you had communication (written and/or verbal) with your child's teachers this year (all teachers, not just social studies)?
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often

Please indicate on the answer sheet what you consider to be the strongest point and the weakest point of the social studies class your child has taken this year. Any other comments are welcomed.

Strength (Comment 1):

Weakness (Comment 2):

*Thank you for your participation in this survey.
 All answers are confidential.*

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE
Assessment of the Social Studies Program to Reduce Tracking

Directions: During this school year, you have taught a social studies curriculum organized to reduce tracking. Please indicate your assessment of how well the new system is working by answering the following questions. Use a number 2 pencil and answer under Special Codes on the answer sheet by filling in the bubble. Do not mark in the top row indicated by Q. Give one answer per question.

The survey form is designed for you to describe one course at a time. You may fill out a new answer sheet for each course you taught of those listed in question B, or you may provide answers about the course you taught the most. If there were great differences between sections of the same course, you may fill out another answer sheet to describe the different sections. *At least* one answer form should be completed by all teachers of the courses listed in B.

Demographic Information:

- A. At which high school do you teach?
 (1) East (2) North (3)Salisbury (4)South (5)West
- B. Which social studies course do you teach for most of the day?
 (1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
 (2) 4303 United States History
 (3) 4302 World History
 (4) 4803 AP United States History
 (5) 4802 AP European History
 (6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics
- C. Which social studies course did you teach for most of the day last year?
 (1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
 (2) 4601 Accelerated Economic, Legal & Political Systems
 (3) 4303 U.S. History
 (4) 4603 Accelerated U.S. History
 (5) 4803 AP U.S. History
 (6) 4302 World History
 (7) 4602 Accelerated World History
 (8) None of the Above
- D. Would you have preferred a 5.0 (accelerated) level to have been taught this year?
 (1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided
- E. Which social studies course are you describing in this survey?
 (1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
 (2) 4303 United States History
 (3) 4302 World History
 (4) 4803 AP United States History
 (5) 4802 AP European History
 (6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics
- F. How many years have you taught social studies, including this year?
 (1) 1-5 (2) 6-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-20 (5) 21 or more
- G. How many of those years have been in the Rowan-Salisbury System?
 (1) 1-5 (2) 6-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-20 (5) 21 or more
- H. What is your sex?
 (1) Male (2) Female

- I. What is your ethnic group?
 (1) White (2) Black (3) Asian (4) Other

II. Survey Questions: Use a no. 2 pencil and fill in the bubble corresponding to the answer you choose.

1. I found the rate at which the instruction moved in my classes to be
 (a) very slow (b) somewhat slow (c) about right (d) somewhat fast (e) very fast
2. In comparison to other courses I have taught, the number of students who slowed this course down because they were disruptive was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
3. In comparison to other courses I have taught, the number of students who slowed this course down because they didn't understand the material was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
4. The number of failing grades my students experienced on tests in this course was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about usual (d) somewhat high (e) very high
5. The difficulty of the material I taught in this course was
 (a) very easy (b) somewhat easy (c) about right (d) somewhat difficult (e) very difficult
6. The interest my students had in the subject matter in this course was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
7. Most students appeared to believe the importance of the content studied in this course was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
8. I believe the importance of what I taught for most students' futures is
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
9. Most students actively participated in this class
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
10. I paid attention to individual student needs in this course
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
11. In comparison to other courses I have taught, the number of students in this course who were concerned about good grades was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
12. Competition among students in this course was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
13. The number of students in this course who learned from each other was
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
14. My expectations for students in this course, compared to other courses I have taught, were
 (a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about right (d) somewhat high (e) very high
15. In this course I taught by lecture
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
16. In this course I used technology such as laser discs or computers
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
17. In this course I used video tapes
 (a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often

18. In this course I used seminar discussions
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
19. In this course I used cooperative groups
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
20. In this course I assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
21. My students did the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
22. I promptly reviewed the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
23. In this course I asked oral questions that required a sentence or more to answer
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
24. I tried to emphasize learning concepts rather than memorizing facts
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
25. The method through which I believe most students learn best is
(a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
26. The method of learning with which most students have the most difficulty is
(a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
27. The method of teaching I used most often is
(a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
28. The method of teaching I used least often is
(a) reading material themselves (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
29. Overall, my teaching experience in social studies this year has been
(a) poor (b) fair (c) good (d) superior (e) excellent
30. The amount of time required for preparing for my social studies classes this year has been
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about usual (d) somewhat high (e) very high
31. The difficulty of teaching my social studies classes this year has been
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about usual (d) somewhat high (e) very high

Please indicate on the answer sheet what you consider to be the strongest point and the weakest point of the social studies classes you have taught this year.

Strength (Comment 1):

Weakness (Comment 2):

*Thank you for your participation in this survey.
All answers are confidential.*

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
Assessment of the Social Studies Program to Reduce Tracking

Directions: During this school year, you have experienced a social studies curriculum organized to reduce tracking. Please indicate your assessment of how well the new system is working by answering the following questions. Use a number 2 pencil and answer under Special Codes on the answer sheet by filling in the bubble. Do not mark in the top row indicated by 0. Give one answer per question.

I. Demographic Information:

A. Which high school do you attend?

- (1) East (2) North (3)Salisbury (4)South (5)West

B. In which social studies course are you presently enrolled?

- (1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4303 United States History
(3) 4302 World History
(4) 4803 AP United States History
(5) 4802 AP European History
(6) 4813 AP American Government/Politics

C. Please indicate the last social studies course you took before this year.

- (1) 4301 Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(2) 4601 Accelerated Economic, Legal & Political Systems
(3) 4303 U.S. History
(4) 4603 Accelerated U.S. History
(5) 4803 AP U.S. History
(6) 4302 World History
(7) 4602 Accelerated World History
(8) None of the Above

D. Would you have taken the accelerated track (5.0 weight) in a social studies course if it had been available this year?

- (1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided

E. What was your grade in the class your are presently taking at the end of the 3rd quarter?

- (1) A (2) B (3) C (4) D (5) E (6) Incomplete

F. Approximately how many students are in your social studies class?

- (1) 15 or less (2) 16-20 (3) 21-25 (4) 26-30 (5) 31 or more

G. Of which class are you a member, according to homeroom?

- (1) freshman (2) sophomore (3) junior (4) senior

H. What is your sex?

- (1) male (2) female

I. What is your ethnic group?

- (1)White (2)Black (3) Asian (4) Other

II. Survey Questions: Use a no. 2 pencil and fill in the bubble corresponding to the answer you choose.

1. I found the rate at which the instruction moved in this class to be
(a) very slow (b) somewhat slow (c) about right (d) somewhat fast (e) very fast
2. In comparison to my other classes, the number of students who slowed the class down because they were disruptive was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
3. In comparison to my other classes, the number of students who slowed the class down because they didn't understand the material was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
4. The number of failing grades I experienced on tests in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about usual (d) somewhat high (e) very high
5. The difficulty of the material we studied in this class was
(a) very easy (b) somewhat easy (c) about right (d) somewhat difficult (e) very difficult
6. The interest I had in the subject matter in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
7. Most students appeared to believe the importance of the content studied in this course was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
8. The importance of what I learned in this class for my future is
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
9. I actively participated in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
10. The teacher paid attention to my needs as an individual in this class
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
11. In comparison to my other classes, the number of students in this class who were concerned about good grades was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
12. In comparison to my other classes, competition among students in this class was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
13. The number of students in this class who learned from each other was
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) average (d) somewhat high (e) very high
14. Teacher expectations in this class were
(a) very low (b) somewhat low (c) about right (d) somewhat high (e) very high
15. In this class the teacher taught by lecture
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
16. In this class the teacher used technology such as laser discs or computers
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
17. In this class the teacher used video tapes
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
18. In this class the teacher used seminar discussions
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often
19. In this class the teacher used cooperative groups
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) very often

20. In this class the teacher assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
21. I did the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
22. The teacher promptly reviewed the assigned homework
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
23. In this class the teacher asked oral questions that required a sentence or more to answer
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
24. In this class the teacher emphasized learning concepts, rather than memorizing facts
(a) never or very rarely (b) rarely (c) occasionally (d) often (e) almost always
25. The method through which I believe I learn best is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
26. The method through which it is most difficult for me to learn is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
27. The method my teacher used most often is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
28. The method my teacher used least often is
(a) reading material myself (b) hearing a lecture (c) participating in a discussion (d) watching a video (e) completing work sheets
29. Overall, my learning experience in social studies class this year has been
(a) poor (b) fair (c) good (d) superior (e) excellent

Please indicate on the answer sheet what you consider to be the strongest point and the weakest point of the social studies class you have taken this year.

Strength (Comment 1):

Weakness (Comment 2):

*Thank you for your participation in this survey.
All answers are confidential.*

Appendix C
MicroTest Histogram

Date: 07-21-92

National Computer Systems
MICROTEST Survey

Histogram

Total Respondents: 817

Ratchford Survey

Subgroup Respondents: 817

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 1 = The rate at which the instruction moved in this class was:

A = very slow..... ****
 B = somewhat slow..... *****
 C = about right..... *****
 D = somewhat fast..... *****
 E = very fast..... ***

A: 7.5%	B: 20.8%	C: 51.0%	D: 15.1%	E: 5.7%	Mean = 2.91
f = 58	f = 161	f = 395	f = 117	f = 44	Missing = 42

Item 2 = Number of stu who slowed down class due to being disruptive:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ****

A: 27.0%	B: 16.7%	C: 32.6%	D: 15.4%	E: 8.4%	Mean = 2.61
f = 200	f = 124	f = 242	f = 114	f = 62	Missing = 75

Item 3 = Number of stu who slowed class because they didn't understand:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... **

A: 29.1%	B: 23.3%	C: 30.9%	D: 13.5%	E: 3.2%	Mean = 2.39
f = 215	f = 172	f = 228	f = 100	f = 24	Missing = 78

Item 4 = Number of failing grades experienced on major tests/assignments:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = about usual..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... ****
 E = very high..... **

A: 54.2%	B: 14.2%	C: 18.4%	D: 8.3%	E: 4.9%	Mean = 1.95
f = 432	f = 113	f = 147	f = 66	f = 39	Missing = 20

Date: 07-21-92

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 5 = The difficulty of the material studied in this class was:

A = very easy..... *****
 B = somewhat easy..... *****
 C = about right..... *****
 D = somewhat difficult.. *****
 E = very difficult..... **

A: 14.1%	B: 20.5%	C: 39.2%	D: 22.2%	E: 4.1%	Mean = 2.82
f = 111	f = 162	f = 309	f = 175	f = 32	Missing = 28

Item 6 = The interest my child had in the subject matter in this clas

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *****

A: 15.7%	B: 18.4%	C: 37.7%	D: 15.6%	E: 12.6%	Mean = 2.91
f = 126	f = 148	f = 303	f = 125	f = 101	Missing = 14

Item 7 = Most students appeared to believe the importance of content

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 15.0%	B: 22.8%	C: 43.6%	D: 13.0%	E: 5.5%	Mean = 2.71
f = 110	f = 167	f = 319	f = 95	f = 40	Missing = 86

Item 8 = The importance of what my child learned for his future is:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *****

A: 10.1%	B: 15.2%	C: 42.0%	D: 17.9%	E: 14.9%	Mean = 3.12
f = 79	f = 119	f = 329	f = 140	f = 117	Missing = 33

Item 9 = My child actively participated in this class:

A = never or very rarely **
 B = rarely..... ***
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 4.3%	B: 7.5%	C: 20.9%	D: 32.7%	E: 34.6%	Mean = 3.86
f = 33	f = 58	f = 162	f = 253	f = 268	Missing = 43

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 10 = Teacher paid attention to my child's needs as an individual:

A = never or very rarely ****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 7.5% B: 12.4% C: 26.3% D: 31.1% E: 22.6% Mean = 3.49
 f = 57 f = 94 f = 199 f = 235 f = 171 Missing = 61

Item 11 = Number of students who were concerned about good grades was:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *****

A: 12.0% B: 17.0% C: 43.0% D: 15.6% E: 12.4% Mean = 2.99
 f = 88 f = 124 f = 314 f = 114 f = 91 Missing = 86

Item 12 = Competition among student in this class was:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ****

A: 17.6% B: 23.7% C: 38.1% D: 12.9% E: 7.7% Mean = 2.69
 f = 128 f = 173 f = 278 f = 94 f = 56 Missing = 88

Item 13 = Number of students in this class who learned from each other

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 17.2% B: 20.0% C: 40.2% D: 16.2% E: 6.4% Mean = 2.75
 f = 121 f = 141 f = 283 f = 114 f = 45 Missing = 113

Item 14 = Teacher expectations in this class were:

A = very low..... ***
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = about right..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *****

A: 5.3% B: 12.5% C: 39.3% D: 23.7% E: 19.3% Mean = 3.39
 f = 40 f = 95 f = 299 f = 180 f = 147 Missing = 56

Date: 07-21-92

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 15 = In this class the teacher taught by lecture:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 11.1%	B: 11.9%	C: 24.3%	D: 22.1%	E: 30.6%	Mean = 3.49
f = 82	f = 88	f = 180	f = 164	f = 227	Missing = 76

Item 16 = Teacher used technology such as laser discs or computers:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... **

A: 45.4%	B: 14.5%	C: 24.1%	D: 11.2%	E: 4.8%	Mean = 2.16
f = 320	f = 102	f = 170	f = 79	f = 34	Missing = 112

Item 17 = Teacher used video tapes:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 12.4%	B: 14.2%	C: 35.3%	D: 21.7%	E: 16.4%	Mean = 3.15
f = 92	f = 105	f = 261	f = 160	f = 121	Missing = 78

Item 18 = Teacher used seminar discussions:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... ****

A: 28.0%	B: 19.9%	C: 29.9%	D: 13.7%	E: 8.5%	Mean = 2.55
f = 198	f = 141	f = 212	f = 97	f = 60	Missing = 109

Item 19 = Teacher used cooperative groups:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... **

A: 19.2%	B: 25.9%	C: 38.0%	D: 17.0%	E: 4.8%	Mean = 2.60
f = 130	f = 185	f = 271	f = 113	f = 34	Missing = 104

Date: 07-21-92

Percent in tens:1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

Item 20 = Teacher assigned homework:

A = *****
 B = *****
 C = *****
 D = *****
 E = *****

A: 9.8% B: 14.6% C: 29.7% D: 29.3% E: 16.7% Mean = 3.29
 f = 77 f = 115 f = 234 f = 231 f = 132 Missing = 28

Item 21 = My child did the assigned homework:

A = ***
 B = **
 C = ****
 D = *****
 E = *****

A: 5.2% B: 4.3% C: 8.6% D: 14.2% E: 67.6% Mean = 4.35
 f = 41 f = 34 f = 68 f = 112 f = 533 Missing = 29

Item 22 = Teacher promptly reviewed the assigned homework:

A = *****
 B = *****
 C = *****
 D = *****
 E = *****

A: 10.0% B: 12.4% C: 18.0% D: 25.0% E: 34.5% Mean = 3.62
 f = 70 f = 87 f = 126 f = 175 f = 241 Missing = 118

Item 23 = Teacher asked oral questions that required a sentence to ans

A = ****
 B = *****
 C = *****
 D = *****
 E = *****

A: 8.3% B: 12.2% C: 24.1% D: 35.3% E: 20.1% Mean = 3.47
 f = 60 f = 88 f = 174 f = 255 f = 145 Missing = 95

Item 24 = Teacher emphasized learning concepts rather than memorizing

A = *****
 B = *****
 C = *****
 D = *****
 E = *****

A: 10.6% B: 15.3% C: 29.4% D: 26.3% E: 18.5% Mean = 3.27
 f = 75 f = 108 f = 208 f = 186 f = 131 Missing = 109

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 25 = The method through which I believe my child learns best is:

- A = reading mater myself *****
- B = hearing a lecture... *****
- C = part in a discussion *****
- D = watching a video.... *****
- E = completing worksheet *****

A: 10.9%	B: 12.6%	C: 55.9%	D: 11.4%	E: 9.3%	Mean = 2.96
f = 82	f = 95	f = 422	f = 86	f = 70	Missing = 62

Item 26 = The method which is most difficult for my child to learn is:

- A = reading mater myself *****
- B = hearing a lecture... *****
- C = part in a discussion **
- D = watching a video.... *****
- E = completing worksheet *****

A: 44.3%	B: 23.9%	C: 3.7%	D: 9.3%	E: 18.8%	Mean = 2.34
f = 323	f = 174	f = 27	f = 68	f = 137	Missing = 88

Item 27 = The method my child's teacher used most often is:

- A = reading mater myself *****
- B = hearing a lecture... *****
- C = part in a discussion *****
- D = watching a video.... *****
- E = completing worksheet *****

A: 9.6%	B: 36.5%	C: 29.6%	D: 8.6%	E: 15.7%	Mean = 2.84
f = 68	f = 258	f = 209	f = 61	f = 111	Missing = 110

Item 28 = The method my child's teacher used least often is:

- A = reading mater myself *****
- B = hearing a lecture... *****
- C = part in a discussion *****
- D = watching a video.... *****
- E = completing worksheet *****

A: 18.6%	B: 22.2%	C: 12.9%	D: 31.0%	E: 15.3%	Mean = 3.02
f = 124	f = 148	f = 86	f = 207	f = 102	Missing = 150

Item 29 = Overall, my child's learning exper in SS this year has been:

- A = poor..... *****
- B = fair..... *****
- C = good..... *****
- D = superior..... *****
- E = excellent..... *

A: 11.4%	B: 23.3%	C: 34.5%	D: 28.6%	E: 2.2%	Mean = 2.87
f = 92	f = 188	f = 279	f = 231	f = 18	Missing = 9

Date: 07-21-92

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 30 = Frequency you have had communication with child's teachers:

A = never or very rarely *****

B = rarely..... *****

C = occasionally..... *****

D = often..... ****

E = very often..... *

A: 39.5%	B: 22.5%	C: 28.4%	D: 8.3%	E: 1.2%	Mean = 2.09
f = 317	f = 181	f = 228	f = 67	f = 10	Missing = 14

Item 31 = Second Survey?

Y = Yes..... *****

N = No.....

Y: 100%	N:	Mean = 1.00
f = 327	f = 0	Missing = 490

Histogram

Total Respondents: 33

Ratchford Survey

Subgroup Respondents: 33

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 1 = Rate at which instruction moved in my classes to be:

A = very slow..... *****
 B = somewhat slow..... *****
 C = about right..... *****
 D = somewhat fast..... *****
 E = very fast..... **

A: 12.1%	B: 33.3%	C: 42.4%	D: 9.1%	E: 3.0%	Mean = 2.58
f = 4	f = 11	f = 14	f = 3	f = 1	Missing = 0

Item 2 = No. who slowed course down because of being disruptive was:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 18.2%	B: 18.2%	C: 30.3%	D: 27.3%	E: 6.1%	Mean = 2.85
f = 6	f = 6	f = 10	f = 9	f = 2	Missing = 0

Item 3 = No. who slowed course down because didn't understand materia

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... **

A: 12.1%	B: 21.2%	C: 33.3%	D: 30.3%	E: 3.0%	Mean = 2.91
f = 4	f = 7	f = 11	f = 10	f = 1	Missing = 0

Item 4 = No. of failing grades on tests/major assignments was:

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... ***
 C = about usual..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 9.1%	B: 6.1%	C: 45.5%	D: 33.3%	E: 6.1%	Mean = 3.21
f = 3	f = 2	f = 15	f = 11	f = 2	Missing = 0

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 5 = Difficulty of material I taught in course was:

- A = very easy..... ***
- B = somewhat easy..... ***
- C = about right..... *****
- D = somewhat difficult.. *****
- E = very difficult..... *****

A: 6.1% B: 6.1% C: 60.6% D: 15.2% E: 12.1% Mean = 3.21
 f = 2 f = 2 f = 20 f = 5 f = 4 Missing = 0

Item 6 = Interest students had in subject matter was:

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... ***

A: 9.1% B: 27.3% C: 42.4% D: 15.2% E: 6.1% Mean = 2.82
 f = 3 f = 9 f = 14 f = 5 f = 2 Missing = 0

Item 7 = Most appeared to believe the imp of the content studies was

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... ***
- E = very high..... ***

A: 9.1% B: 33.3% C: 45.5% D: 6.1% E: 6.1% Mean = 2.67
 f = 3 f = 11 f = 15 f = 2 f = 2 Missing = 0

Item 8 = Believe the importance of what I taught for most stu future

- A = very low.....
- B = somewhat low.....
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... *****

A: B: C: 15.2% D: 48.5% E: 36.4% Mean = 4.21
 f = 0 f = 0 f = 5 f = 16 f = 12 Missing = 0

Item 9 = Most students actively participated in this class

- A = never or very rarely ***
- B = rarely..... **
- C = occasionally..... *****
- D = often..... *****
- E = very often..... *****

A: 6.1% B: 3.0% C: 15.2% D: 57.6% E: 18.2% Mean = 3.79
 f = 2 f = 1 f = 5 f = 19 f = 6 Missing = 0

Date: 07-21-92

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 10 = I paid attention to individual student needs in this course

- A = never or very rarely
- B = rarely..... *****
- C = occasionally..... *****
- D = often..... *****
- E = very often..... *****

A: B: 9.1% C: 12.1% D: 54.5% E: 24.2% Mean = 3.94
 f = 0 f = 3 f = 4 f = 18 f = 8 Missing = 0

Item 11 = No of students concerned about good grades was:

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... ***
- E = very high..... *****

A: 15.2% B: 18.2% C: 51.5% D: 6.1% E: 9.1% Mean = 2.76
 f = 5 f = 6 f = 17 f = 2 f = 3 Missing = 0

Item 12 = Competition among students in this course was:

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... ***

A: 21.2% B: 27.3% C: 36.4% D: 9.1% E: 6.1% Mean = 2.52
 f = 7 f = 9 f = 12 f = 3 f = 2 Missing = 0

Item 13 = No. of students in course who learned from each other was:

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... **

A: 9.1% B: 12.1% C: 45.5% D: 30.3% E: 3.0% Mean = 3.06
 f = 3 f = 4 f = 15 f = 10 f = 1 Missing = 0

Item 14 = My expectations for students in this course were:

- A = very low.....
- B = somewhat low..... ***
- C = about right..... *~*****~*****~*
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... *****

A: B: 9.1% C: 51.5% D: 18.2% E: 24.2% Mean = 3.61
 f = 0 f = 2 f = 17 f = 6 f = 8 Missing = 0

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 15 = In this course I taught by lecture:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... **

A: 15.2% B: 15.2% C: 36.4% D: 30.3% E: 3.0% Mean = 2.91
 f = 5 f = 5 f = 12 f = 10 f = 1 Missing = 0

Item 16 = In this course I used technology (laser disks/computers)

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often.....

A: 21.2% B: 24.2% C: 42.4% D: 12.1% E: Mean = 2.45
 f = 7 f = 8 f = 14 f = 4 f = 0 Missing = 0

Item 17 = In this course I used video tapes:

A = never or very rarely **
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often.....

A: 3.0% B: 21.2% C: 51.5% D: 24.2% E: Mean = 2.97
 f = 1 f = 7 f = 17 f = 8 f = 0 Missing = 0

Item 18 = In this course I used seminar discussions:

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... ***

A: 21.2% B: 15.2% C: 48.5% D: 9.1% E: 6.1% Mean = 2.64
 f = 7 f = 5 f = 16 f = 3 f = 2 Missing = 0

Item 19 = In this course I used cooperative groups:

A = never or very rarely ****
 B = rarely..... ****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... **

A: 9.1% B: 9.1% C: 57.6% D: 21.2% E: 3.0% Mean = 3.00
 f = 3 f = 3 f = 19 f = 7 f = 1 Missing = 0

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 20 = In this course I assigned homework:

A = never or very rarely
 B = rarely.....
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = almost always..... *****

A:	B:	C: 37.5%	D: 40.6%	E: 21.9%	Mean = 3.84
f = 0	f = 0	f = 12	f = 13	f = 7	Missing = 1

Item 21 = My students did the assigned homework:

A = never or very rarely **
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = almost always..... *****

A: 3.0%	B: 21.2%	C: 27.3%	D: 33.3%	E: 15.2%	Mean = 3.36
f = 1	f = 7	f = 9	f = 11	f = 5	Missing = 0

Item 22 = I promptly reviewed the assigned homework:

A = never or very rarely
 B = rarely.....
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = almost always..... *****

A:	B:	C: 15.2%	D: 36.4%	E: 48.5%	Mean = 4.33
f = 0	f = 0	f = 5	f = 12	f = 16	Missing = 0

Item 23 = In this course I asked oral ? that req a sent or more to ans

A = never or very rarely
 B = rarely.....
 C = occasionally..... ***
 D = often..... *****
 E = almost always..... *****

A:	B:	C: 6.1%	D: 57.6%	E: 36.4%	Mean = 4.30
f = 0	f = 0	f = 2	f = 19	f = 12	Missing = 0

Item 24 = I tried to emp learning concepts rather than memorizing fact

A = never or very rarely
 B = rarely.....
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = almost always..... *****

A:	B:	C: 15.2%	D: 60.6%	E: 24.2%	Mean = 4.09
f = 0	f = 0	f = 5	f = 20	f = 8	Missing = 0

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 25 = Method through which most students learn best is:

A = read mat themselves. **
 B = hearing a lecture... **
 C = part in a discussion *****
 D = watching a video....
 E = completing work shee ***

A: 3.1%	B: 3.1%	C: 87.5%	D:	E: 6.3%	Mean = 3.03
f = 1	f = 1	f = 28	f = 0	f = 2	Missing = 1

Item 26 = Method with which most students have difficulty is:

A = read mat themselves. *****
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part in a discussion **
 D = watching a video....
 E = completing work shee

A: 84.4%	B: 12.5%	C: 3.1%	D:	E:	Mean = 1.19
f = 27	f = 4	f = 1	f = 0	f = 0	Missing = 1

Item 27 = Method I used most often is:

A = read mat themselves.
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part in a discussion *****
 D = watching a video....
 E = completing work shee ***

A:	B: 18.8%	C: 75.0%	D:	E: 6.3%	Mean = 2.94
f = 0	f = 6	f = 24	f = 0	f = 2	Missing = 1

Item 28 = Method I used least often is:

A = read mat themselves. *****
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part in a discussion **
 D = watching a video.... *****
 E = completing work shee *****

A: 18.2%	B: 21.2%	C: 3.0%	D: 33.3%	E: 24.2%	Mean = 3.24
f = 6	f = 7	f = 1	f = 11	f = 8	Missing = 0

Item 29 = Overall, my teaching experience in SS this yr has been:

A = poor..... **
 B = fair..... *****
 C = good..... *****
 D = superior..... **
 E = excellent..... **

A: 6.1%	B: 36.4%	C: 48.5%	D: 6.1%	E: 3.0%	Mean = 2.14
f = 2	f = 12	f = 16	f = 2	f = 1	Missing = 0

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 30 = Amount of time req for preparing SS classes this yr has been

- A = very low..... **
- B = somewhat low.....
- C = about usual..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... *****

A: 3.0%	B:	C: 30.3%	D: 33.3%	E: 33.3%	Mean = 3.94
f = 1	f = 0	f = 10	f = 11	f = 11	Missing = 0

Item 31 = Difficulty of teaching my SS classes this yr has been:

- A = very low.....
- B = somewhat low.....
- C = about usual..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... *****

A:	B:	C: 39.4%	D: 39.4%	E: 21.2%	Mean = 3.82
f = 0	f = 0	f = 13	f = 13	f = 7	Missing = 0

Date: 07-21-92

National Computer Systems
MICROTEST Survey

Histogram

Total Respondents: 2383

Ratchford Survey

Subgroup Respondents: 2383

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 1 = I found the rate at which instruction moved in class to be

A = very slow..... **
 B = somewhat slow..... *****
 C = about right..... *****
 D = somewhat fast..... *****
 E = very fast..... **

A: 4.0%	B: 15.7%	C: 60.1%	D: 15.7%	E: 4.5%	Mean = 3.01
f = 96	f = 373	f = 1428	f = 374	f = 107	Missing = 5

Item 2 = Compare to other classes, no. who slowed because disruptions

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 26.5%	B: 18.8%	C: 31.4%	D: 17.0%	E: 6.3%	Mean = 2.58
f = 630	f = 446	f = 746	f = 405	f = 150	Missing = 6

Item 3 = No. who slowed the class because didn't understand material

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *

A: 37.0%	B: 26.5%	C: 24.9%	D: 9.4%	E: 2.2%	Mean = 2.13
f = 879	f = 629	f = 591	f = 224	f = 53	Missing = 7

Item 4 = No. of failing grades I experienced on tests was

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = about usual..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 39.4%	B: 18.2%	C: 22.6%	D: 14.3%	E: 5.5%	Mean = 2.28
f = 936	f = 432	f = 537	f = 339	f = 131	Missing = 8

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 5 = Difficulty of material we studied was

A = very easy..... *****
 B = somewhat easy..... *****
 C = about right..... *****
 D = somewhat difficult.. *****
 E = very difficult..... **

A: 10.9%	B: 22.1%	C: 41.2%	D: 22.1%	E: 3.7%	Mean = 2.86
f = 258	f = 525	f = 979	f = 526	f = 87	Missing = 8

Item 6 = The interest I had in the subject matter was

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... ***

A: 16.0%	B: 18.8%	C: 39.1%	D: 19.3%	E: 6.8%	Mean = 2.82
f = 380	f = 448	f = 931	f = 460	f = 161	Missing = 3

Item 7 = Most believed the importance of the content studied was

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *

A: 15.7%	B: 25.3%	C: 44.4%	D: 12.4%	E: 2.1%	Mean = 2.60
f = 374	f = 601	f = 1055	f = 295	f = 51	Missing = 7

Item 8 = The importance of what I learned for my future was

A = very low..... *****
 B = somewhat low..... *****
 C = average..... *****
 D = somewhat high..... *****
 E = very high..... *****

A: 11.2%	B: 17.3%	C: 36.7%	D: 24.2%	E: 10.7%	Mean = 3.06
f = 266	f = 410	f = 871	f = 575	f = 253	Missing = 8

Item 9 = I actively participated in this class

A = never or very rarely ***
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 5.3%	B: 9.5%	C: 27.8%	D: 34.1%	E: 23.3%	Mean = 3.61
f = 125	f = 227	f = 662	f = 811	f = 555	Missing = 2

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 10 = Teacher paid attention to my needs as an individual

- A = never or very rarely ****
- B = rarely..... *****
- C = occasionally..... *****
- D = often..... *****
- E = very often..... *****

A: 8.1%	B: 13.2%	C: 25.4%	D: 34.9%	E: 18.5%	Mean = 3.42
f = 192	f = 315	f = 603	f = 829	f = 439	Missing = 5

Item 11 = The number of students who were concerned about good grades

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... *****

A: 11.6%	B: 17.3%	C: 40.5%	D: 21.3%	E: 9.3%	Mean = 2.99
f = 277	f = 411	f = 964	f = 507	f = 222	Missing = 2

Item 12 = In comparison to other classes, competition among stu was

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... ***

A: 18.6%	B: 25.7%	C: 35.3%	D: 14.8%	E: 5.7%	Mean = 2.63
f = 442	f = 612	f = 839	f = 352	f = 135	Missing = 3

Item 13 = No. of students in this class who learned from each other

- A = very low..... *****
- B = somewhat low..... *****
- C = average..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... **

A: 16.6%	B: 24.2%	C: 40.5%	D: 14.4%	E: 4.3%	Mean = 2.66
f = 395	f = 577	f = 963	f = 343	f = 102	Missing = 3

Item 14 = The teacher expectations in this class were

- A = very low..... **
- B = somewhat low..... ****
- C = about right..... *****
- D = somewhat high..... *****
- E = very high..... *****

A: 4.0%	B: 8.9%	C: 46.5%	D: 24.7%	E: 15.9%	Mean = 3.39
f = 96	f = 211	f = 1105	f = 587	f = 377	Missing = 7

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 15 = In this class teacher taught by lecture

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 14.0%	B: 16.4%	C: 23.1%	D: 21.8%	E: 24.7%	Mean = 3.27
f = 332	f = 388	f = 549	f = 518	f = 586	Missing = 10

Item 16 = Teacher used technology (e.g., laser discs or computers)

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... ****
 E = very often..... **

A: 50.0%	B: 16.9%	C: 21.7%	D: 8.4%	E: 3.1%	Mean = 1.98
f = 1186	f = 401	f = 514	f = 200	f = 73	Missing = 9

Item 17 = Teacher used video tapes

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 18.5%	B: 14.3%	C: 30.6%	D: 22.4%	E: 14.2%	Mean = 3.00
f = 438	f = 338	f = 725	f = 531	f = 337	Missing = 14

Item 18 = Teacher used seminar discussions

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... ***

A: 32.3%	B: 25.2%	C: 23.7%	D: 12.4%	E: 6.4%	Mean = 2.35
f = 765	f = 598	f = 563	f = 294	f = 152	Missing = 11

Item 19 = Teacher used cooperative groups

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... **

A: 19.2%	B: 25.9%	C: 35.8%	D: 14.7%	E: 4.4%	Mean = 2.59
f = 456	f = 614	f = 850	f = 340	f = 105	Missing = 9

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 25 = The method through which I believe I learn best is

A = read material myself *****
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part. in a discussio *****
 D = watching a video.... *****
 E = completing worksheet *****

A: 13.6% B: 14.1% C: 43.0% D: 19.4% E: 9.9% Mean = 2.98
 f = 321 f = 334 f = 1015 f = 458 f = 235 Missing = 20

Item 26 = The method through which it is most difficult for me to learn

A = read material myself *****
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part. in a discussio *****
 D = watching a video.... *****
 E = completing worksheet *****

A: 36.2% B: 25.2% C: 9.2% D: 10.5% E: 19.0% Mean = 2.51
 f = 853 f = 593 f = 216 f = 247 f = 447 Missing = 27

Item 27 = The method my teacher used most often is

A = read material myself *****
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part. in a discussio *****
 D = watching a video.... *****
 E = completing worksheet *****

A: 11.3% B: 30.8% C: 35.3% D: 8.7% E: 13.9% Mean = 2.83
 f = 265 f = 725 f = 830 f = 204 f = 327 Missing = 32

Item 28 = The method the teacher used least often is

A = read material myself *****
 B = hearing a lecture... *****
 C = part. in a discussio *****
 D = watching a video.... *****
 E = completing worksheet *****

A: 18.9% B: 21.9% C: 13.1% D: 32.6% E: 13.5% Mean = 3.00
 f = 446 f = 516 f = 309 f = 768 f = 319 Missing = 25

Item 29 = Overall, my learning experience in SS class this yr has been

A = poor..... *****
 B = fair..... *****
 C = good..... *****
 D = superior..... *****
 E = excellent..... **

A: 10.4% B: 21.0% C: 37.7% D: 27.3% E: 3.7% Mean = 2.93
 f = 240 f = 485 f = 872 f = 632 f = 85 Missing = 69

Percent in tens:1....2....3....4....5....6....7....8....9....10

Item 20 = In this class the teacher assigned homework

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 9.5%	B: 16.4%	C: 31.9%	D: 26.3%	E: 16.0%	Mean = 3.23
f = 225	f = 388	f = 755	f = 623	f = 378	Missing = 14

Item 21 = I did the assigned homework

A = never or very rarely ****
 B = rarely..... ****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 7.6%	B: 8.9%	C: 17.6%	D: 22.0%	E: 43.8%	Mean = 3.86
f = 181	f = 211	f = 416	f = 522	f = 1038	Missing = 15

Item 22 = Teacher promptly reviewed the assigned homework

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 9.3%	B: 10.9%	C: 22.9%	D: 25.5%	E: 31.5%	Mean = 3.59
f = 220	f = 258	f = 542	f = 605	f = 746	Missing = 12

Item 23 = Teacher asked oral questions req. a sentence or more to ans

A = never or very rarely ****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 7.9%	B: 14.7%	C: 29.9%	D: 31.9%	E: 15.5%	Mean = 3.32
f = 188	f = 347	f = 709	f = 756	f = 368	Missing = 15

Item 24 = Teacher emphasized learning concepts rather than memorizing

A = never or very rarely *****
 B = rarely..... *****
 C = occasionally..... *****
 D = often..... *****
 E = very often..... *****

A: 11.1%	B: 17.3%	C: 34.7%	D: 25.4%	E: 11.4%	Mean = 3.09
f = 263	f = 410	f = 821	f = 602	f = 270	Missing = 17