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A COMPARISON OF THE  
MOST SUCCESSFUL AND THE  
LEAST SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS IN A  
TEACHERS COLLEGE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM COURSE

by

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## PREFACE

This study was conducted with the co-operation of the 1969 second-year students of Palmerston North Teachers College. I am also grateful to the Principal, the staff of the College and in particular my colleagues in the Education Department, for their help and the use of College facilities. I am especially grateful to Mr A. Forrest, Senior Lecturer in Education, Palmerston North Teachers College, without whose encouragement and assistance this work may not have been completed, and to Mr D. McAlpine, Senior Lecturer in Education, Massey University, for his help in planning and executing this study.

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J.K. Millar

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## *1. Nature*

Throughout the recent years of teacher training in New Zealand there appears to have been a number of popularly held beliefs, seldom recorded in written form, unsupported by evidence, but never-the-less persistent, concerning the worth of the training given, and the quality of the students who undertake it.

Some of these may be summarized as:

- (1) Women students, as a group, are superior to men in
  - (a) intelligence,
  - (b) academic success,
  - (c) teaching ability.
- (2) Older students who come to Teachers College after a period in another occupation are more successful than younger students in both academic courses and practice teaching.
- (3) There is a low, if any, positive correlation between success in academic course in the College and success in practice teaching in the schools.
- (4) Personality is the most important factor for success in teaching.

This study examines certain aspects of these beliefs through statistical analyses and evaluation. Using the academic results of a College course in language curriculum as the independent variable, the study examines,

1. Whether certain dimensions of intelligence and personality are correlated with success or failure in the samples selected.

2. Whether there is a change in self evaluation of attitudes towards teaching language and knowledge of methods between the beginning and the end of the course.
3. Whether results of the course are indicative of results in the
  - (a) College academic rating
  - (b) College practice teaching rating.

A survey of available literature failed to discover any published investigations that have objectives similar to the above, although studies by Brim (1966), Davis and Satterly (1969), Holland (1960), Li (1969) and Tarpey (1965) investigate various relationships that are relevant to this study. The most relevant is that by Li (1969) in which she investigates the connections between attitudes towards teaching, as measured by the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (M.T.A.I.) and intelligence, as measured by the A.H.5, with marks in practical teaching and the theory of education examination of two groups of students. The findings show significant relationships between the M.T.A.I. and end-of-year theory examination and also between the M.T.A.I. and practical teaching assessments. There was no significant difference in intelligence between the most successful students and the least successful in teaching practice.

The limitations in the relevance of this study appear to be that:

- (1) it concerns Chinese graduate students in the Department of Education in the University of Hong Kong so that conclusions may not be valid cross-culturally, and
- (2) the tests used were administered without translation or adaptation and the scores translated to American norms.

In addition to the above there are many studies that examine teacher

personality characteristics.

Gage (1964, p.506) says,

"The studies falling within the scope (of teacher personality and characteristics)... are too numerous for individual mention, much less for adequate treatment".

However, the literature relating to teachers in training is much less voluminous and reference will be made to selected studies at appropriate times.



## 2. Hypothesis

### GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

That there are significant differences in intelligence, personality, age and sex between students who are successful and those who fail in the Language Curriculum course taught at Palmerston North Teachers College in 1969.

### (i) SPECIFIC HYPOTHESES

- h 1.* Students who are successful have significantly higher scores on the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory than those who fail.
- h 2.* Students who are successful have significantly higher scores than those who fail on both the pre and post test results of the Self Evaluation Form for Language Teaching.
- h 3.* Students who are successful have significantly higher scores in the amount of change in a positive direction in the pre and post test of the Self Evaluation Form for Language Teaching, than students who fail.
- h 4.* Students who are successful and those who fail have significantly different scores in each of the factors of the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire with the exception of Factor B (intelligence).

*h 5.* Students who are successful have significantly higher scores on the Group Test of High Grade Intelligence A.H.5, than those who fail.

*h 6.* Students who are successful are older than those who fail.

*h 7.* Women students are significantly more successful than men.

*h 8.* Students who are successful have a significantly higher practice teaching rating than those who fail.

*h 9.* Students who are successful have a significantly higher College rating than those who fail.

(ii) DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study:

1. "College" shall be defined as the Palmerston North Teachers College during the 1969 academic year.
2. "Success" shall be defined as students who were more than one standard deviation above the mean of the total score of the Language Curriculum course results. These results comprised course work marks which received a 40% weighting, and final examination results which received a 60% weighting as shown in the table below. The course results were used to calculate the course "rating".

Course Work (40% weighting)

<u>Course Work</u>	<u>Number During Course</u>	<u>Marking Scale</u>	<u>Course Marks</u>
Essay	2	1 - 10	50
Minor Test	8	1 - 10	30
Lesson Plan	2	1 - 10	20
		<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Final Examination (60% weighting)

<u>Type of Question</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Marks</u>
Multiple Choice Items	40	40
Short Answer	20	20
Essay	2	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

3. "Failure" shall be defined as students who were more than one standard deviation below the mean of the total score of the Language Curriculum Course results (defined above).
4. "Course Rating" shall be defined as the official College results of the academic courses on a 1 - 5 point scale of which 1 is the highest score and 5 is the lowest score.
5. "College Rating" shall be defined as the overall assessment on the 1 - 5 point scale, of academic work, calculated from all course ratings for each student in that year, and supplied to the Palmerston North Teachers College Council and to the New Zealand Department of Education.
6. "Practice Teaching Rating" shall be defined as the final result for practice teaching work calculated by the Principal Lecturer in Charge of Practical Training from 15 independent ratings for each student made by College Lecturers, Head-teachers and Class-teachers over the two year period.

### 3. The Course

Palmerston North Teachers College requires that all students undertake, and complete, a study of the teaching of language in the primary school, this course being known as a Curriculum Study in Language. A senior staff member has responsibility for the writing and teaching of this course which is moderated by the Head of the Education Department who also appoints a team of four lecturers to assist in the teaching.

Since all students undertake the same course, it may be considered as the independent variable, and factors that contributed to success or failure, other than the teaching methods employed by the College, may be sought.

A copy of the objectives of the course, the topics for study, and methods of teaching, obtained from College records, is supplied in Appendix "A".

#### METHODS OF COURSE EVALUATION

Since the course rating is used as the basis of the selection of the samples it is appropriate to describe the methods of evaluation at this point.

##### 1. Course Work

Course work, which received a weighting of 40% in the rating, was made up of:

- (a) Two essays - all were marked by the senior lecturer in charge of

the course.

- (b) Eight objective-type tests - set by the team as a group, administered and marked by the lecturers in charge of seminar groups.
- (c) Two lesson plans - all students were interviewed individually by one lecturer who assessed the work during the interview.

## 2. Examination Work

At the end of the course students sat a three-hour examination during which they were required to answer:

- (a) 50 multiple-choice items
- (b) 20 "short answer" questions
- (c) 2 essay question, selected from 5 options

All essay answers were marked by the senior lecturer in charge of the course and the remainder of the examination by the lecturers in the team. The compiling of the course rating was carried out by the senior lecturer in charge of second-year studies.

## *4. Sample*

On February 10th 1969 the second-year group of 244 students began a curriculum study, "Language Teaching in the Primary School". During the course seven students left the College, reducing the total number to 237 who fulfilled all course requirements and offered themselves for examination.

Following College procedures, students were allotted a course rating in which there was a weighting of 60% for the examination work and 40% for course work. Using the total score of the course results from which the course rating was obtained the mean and standard deviation were calculated. Students more than one standard deviation above the mean were selected as group one (success), and those more than one standard deviation below the mean were selected as group two (failure). Group one contained 33 students while there were 32 in group two.

### Age

The age range of the students in group one is from 18 yrs to 39 yrs (mean 22 yrs), and the range in group two is from 18 yrs to 22 yrs (mean 19 yrs)

### Sex

Of the 33 students in group one, seven are men and 26 are women.

Of the 32 students in group two, 16 are men and 16 are women.