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MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN THE BACKGROUND EVALUATION
OF TOP-RANKING AND BOTTOM-RANKING
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AT SOUTH
DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE

BY

ROBERT EDWARD TEMBECK

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science, Department of
English, South Dakota State
College of Agriculture
and Mechanic Arts

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This thesis is approved as a creditable, independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree, but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Henry W. Hunk
Thesis Adviser

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Head of the Major Department

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INTRODUCTION

"At any rate, we have seen that intellect and achievement are far from perfectly correlated. Why this is so, what circumstances affect fruition of human talent, are questions of such transcendent importance that they should be investigated by every method that promises the slightest reduction of our present ignorance."¹

In 1962 a grant from the South Dakota State College Institutional Fund for Research and Related Activities made possible a three-part research program devised to study the role played by as yet unidentified factors in students' backgrounds which affect their performance in English:

The basic premise of the project will be that as yet unidentified or unisolated factors in students' backgrounds play a large part in their success or failure in college freshman English--and in later work calling for the possession of the skills and the general maturity implied in the freshman English credits. The purpose of the work will be to discover, isolate, and describe the premised factors; and to prepare material concerning them that may be communicated to the college (especially to the English Department) and to the people of the state (to parents, students, superintendents, school boards, teachers, legislators), the form of the prepared material to be typical but anonymous profiles of students prepared by their backgrounds for success or for failure in college freshman English. Ability and intangibles of motivation will not, of course, be overlooked in the profiles, but the search will be for an accurate picture of other governing factors in the environment.

At present the three major elements in the profile will be: (a) the student's home environment; (b) the

¹Lewis M. Terman and Melita H. Oden, The Gifted Child Grows Up (Stanford, 1947), p. 2.

student's high school environment and instructional pattern; and (c) selected students' later evaluation of these factors.²

This thesis, a study of phase (c) in the above, is an analysis of the evaluations made by top-ranking and bottom-ranking students of those factors in their backgrounds connected with performance in English. These students were enrolled at South Dakota State College in the fall of 1962 and had graduated from the 20 high schools selected for study in phase (b).

High school and home environments have already been analyzed.³ The present study shows what the students have to say about these environments and the factors they emphasize as having had a negative or a positive effect on their performance in English. It is hoped, both by the author of this thesis and the students who formed the sample for this study, that the findings presented here will be of aid for South Dakota State College English teachers in understanding the causes for some of the

²C. M. Fox and M. L. Shane, "Application for Funds From Research Committee," South Dakota State College English Department, October 15, 1961, p. 2.

³Phyllis B. Weichenthal, Major Differences Between Ten Top-Ranking and Ten Bottom-Ranking South Dakota High Schools: A Study of English. Master's thesis, South Dakota State College, 1962.

Marion R. Hvistendahl, Major Differences in the Home Environment of Top-Ranking and Bottom-Ranking Students of English at South Dakota State College. Master's thesis, South Dakota State College, 1962.

problems their students have, and will eventually stimulate some desire in non-academic circles for affecting a positive change in factors associated with a negative effect on English usage.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In comparison with the vast body of works available for a literary study in English, literature pertaining to a statistical study is quite meagre. The following review of pertinent literature is thus drawn from a survey of studies in achievement rather than from those in English. It may be seen that the present study may be included in the domain of studies in achievement as the ranking given each student in this study indicates his relative high or low achievement in English.

Some studies dealing with over-all college achievement present the highly pertinent conclusion that the measurement of linguistic ability is a significant indication of over-all achievement. Brooks and Weynand found that ACE test scores were more useful in predicting achievement than Kuder Preference Record scores.⁴ Blake found that linguistic measures best indicated the relationship between childhood environment and scholastic aptitude.⁵ Root correlated test scores over a period of several years for predictability value and found that the best single criterion for college success was the mark made in

⁴Melvin S. Brooks, and Robert S. Weynand, "Interest Preferences and Their Effect Upon Academic Success," Social Forces, XXXII (March, 1954), pp. 281-285.

⁵Robert C. Blake, "The Relation Between Childhood Environment and the Scholastic Aptitude and Intelligence of Adults," The Journal of Social Psychology, XXIX (1949), pp. 37-41.

freshman English.⁶ In his article reporting the findings of the 1958 Paramount School District workshop which concentrated on determining standards for grouping children of superior, average, and low ability, Myers lists the recommendation of the student's English teacher as one of the four significant criteria.⁷

It may be pointed out that in some studies the validity of linguistic measure as an indicator of achievement is questioned. This questioning, however, occurs in studies dealing with over- and under-achievement, such as those of Rotchich,⁸ Dinener,⁹ and Duff and Siegel,¹⁰ and not in studies dealing with high- and low-achievement such as the present one.

Before turning to an examination of some of the relatively few statistical studies specifically in the field of English, it

⁶ A. R. Root, "College Achievement," The Journal of Higher Education, VII (October, 1936), pp. 387-388.

⁷ John W. Myers, "Identifying Students of Superior and Low Ability," The English Journal, XLIX (October, 1960), pp. 485-487.

⁸ Irving Rotchich, Achievement and Capacity: A Comparative Study of Pupils With Low Achievement and High Intelligence Quotients With Pupils of High Achievement and High Intelligence Quotients in a Selected New York City High School, D. Ed. thesis, New York University, 1953.

⁹ Charles L. Diener, "Similarities and Differences Between Over-Achieving and Under-Achieving Students," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXVIII (January, 1960), pp. 396-400.

¹⁰ O. Lee Duff, and Lawrence Siegel, "Biographical Factors Associated With Academic Over- and Under-Achievement," The Journal of Educational Psychology, LI (February, 1960), pp. 43-46.

should be noted that further material in the area of general achievement having direct bearing on specific areas covered in this study, such as childhood reading habits and amount of parental education, will be referred to in those parts of chapter 4, where a comparison between the finding of this and other studies is presented.

An excellent model for quantitative work in English is Krothwohl's study, designed to test whether any statistical evidence could be presented in support of the general belief that achievement in English is dependent on both ability and willingness to work on the part of the student. Keeping within the framework of a rigorous statistical method, Krothwohl has been able to isolate a valid measure to be used in English achievement. "By comparing scores in an English achievement test and an English aptitude test, it is possible to assign a number to an individual called an index of industriousness, which measures an intangible trait called industriousness or indolence for English achievement."¹¹

Of the three other studies dealing with achievement in English, Wagner found that college English performance was predicted about equally well by a measure of English in secondary school, of a secondary school foreign language, of general high

¹¹William C. Krothwohl, "An Index of Industriousness for English," The Journal of Educational Psychology, XL (December, 1949), p. 480.

school performance, or the Cooperative English Test.¹² Byrns found a positive correlation between the amount of high school language and the college average grades in English for those students whose psychological test scores fell below the seventieth percentile.¹³ In an extensive study designed to determine the relationship between the amount of high school English and achievement in college English, Sweeney concludes: "Although there is not a statistically significant relationship between the amount of high school English taken and success in College English, there should be one. Further studies are needed to determine just what the inhibiting factors are."¹⁴

Though the underlying issue in this study and those reviewed is essentially the same, i.e. an attempt to isolate some factor or factors that will prove to be pragmatically valuable in relation to achievement in English, this study is narrower in scope in that it turns the focus away from the field in general to the students in particular.

¹²Mazie E. Wagner, and Eunice Strabel, "Predicting Performance in College English," The Journal of Education Research, XXX (May, 1937), pp. 694-699.

¹³Ruty Byrns, "Entrance Requirements and College Success," School and Society, XLI (January, 1935), pp. 101-104.

¹⁴Mary Rose Sweeney, A Study of the Relationship of the Quantity of High School English to College Performance in English, D. Ed. Thesis, University of Kansas, 1961.

METHODOLOGY

Determination of Sample:

The universe from which the sample for the present study was selected consisted of the total number of students (785) who had enrolled at South Dakota State College between the Fall of 1955 through the Fall of 1959 after having graduated from the 20 high schools selected by Mrs. Weichenthal in her study. This universe then had to be narrowed down to those students (187) enrolled at South Dakota State College during the Spring Quarter of 1962, as that was the time set for interviewing. To avoid introducing a new variable, the same criteria used in selecting the high schools were used to select the students to be interviewed.

The criteria used were the student's American Council on Education Psychological Examination (1954 edition) total percentile (hereafter referred to as ACE test), the South Dakota State College English Placement score percentile, and the grade-point average in freshman English for a minimum of one quarter and a maximum of three quarters at South Dakota State College.¹⁵ The grade-point average was also converted to a percentile and a ranking order for each of the 187 students was established in

¹⁵For the rationale underlying the choice of these factors see Weichenthal, op. cit., pp. 20-23.

each factor. Still in keeping with Mrs. Weichenthal's methodology, ranking orders in each of these three factors were added, thus giving each student a total-rank-digit relative to the other students. A total of 80 interviews was set as the number which could be covered in one quarter. The interviewing was not carried over into the 1962 Summer and Fall Quarters because a number of these students would have graduated by then.

In order to offset failure in establishing contact for any of the interviews, the original number of 80 was brought up to 84. By using the total-rank-digit, the 42 top-ranking and 42 bottom-ranking students were selected to serve as the sample for this study.

Contacting Sample:

Foreseeing the possibility of encountering lack of response on the part of some of the students who had had difficulty in their English courses, it was determined that the study be publicized to the student body in as congenial and informal a manner as possible before any attempts at contacting were made. Thus, early in the quarter, a letter (Appendix A) was sent to The Collegian, the student publication of the college. This appeared in the March 29, 1962, issue.

During the following week, a letter (Appendix B) was sent to each of the 84 students informing him that he had been selected for an interview. (A copy of the letter sent to The Collegian was included to ensure some knowledge on the part of

the student as to the reason for the interview.) A postcard indicating time and date was enclosed with the letter and the student was informed that if the time indicated were not suitable he was to indicate a preference and arrangements would be made for an interview at the preferred time.

At the end of the first month of the Spring Quarter a second letter (Appendix C) was sent to those students who failed to return the postcard and to those who had not shown up for their interviews despite their returned cards.

By the end of the fourth week of the period set for the interviews (April 16-May 18) only 52 of the 84 interviews had been completed. Hence, a third step was taken. A letter (Appendix D) was sent from the Dean of Academic Affairs to those students who had failed to appear for their interviews. This was followed by direct contact between the interviewer and student by telephone and, where no telephone number was available, by a visit to the student's home. In the latter case, contact was made with the parents of the student and their support was gained.

By the end of the Spring Quarter of 1962, 68 interviews were completed. Of these, 36 were top-ranking students. To balance both groups for purposes of analysis, the information from the four lowest members of the top-ranking group was discarded.

It was found that a bottom-ranking student could be defined as one whose mean total-percentile score on the ACE, EP, and GPA

fell between 7.00 to 46.33 and a top-ranking student as one whose score fell between 72.33 to 96.66. A breakdown of this sample according to sex is shown in Table 1. Tables 2 and 3, which follow, show the distribution of this sample according to the 20 high schools from which they came.

It may be seen that, especially in the case of an analysis of the number of students from top-ranking high schools, there is an overlap in the ranking of the students and of the high schools. The top-ranking student group is not solely composed of students who have graduated from the top-ranking high schools. We also find that four of the students who had graduated from top-ranking high schools are included in the bottom-ranking group of students. If we were to consider the bottom-ranking students coming from top-ranking high schools as under-achievers, and the four top-ranking students coming from the bottom-ranking high schools as over-achievers, it is possible that certain conclusions might be drawn concerning the relationship between over- and under-achievement and linguistic measure. That would, however, fall outside the area of the present study which is limited to considering a high- and a low-achieving group.

Procedure of Interview:

It was felt that answering questions about background factors, especially in relationship to level of performance in a college course, might prove to be a sensitive area to some of the

Table 1. Breakdown of Sample
According to Sex

Sex	Top-Ranking Students	Bottom-Ranking Students
Male	18	30
Female	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	32	32

Table 2. Breakdown of Sample According
to Top-Ranking High Schools

Top-Ranking Schools	Top-Ranking Students	Bottom-Ranking Students	Total
Arlington	1	0	1
Brookings	13	8	21
Canton	0	1	1
Chamberlain	0	0	0
DeSmet	0	0	0
Huron	9	2	11
Madison	1	0	1
Sioux Falls	4	10	14
Wilmot	0	0	0
Yankton	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	28	21	49

Table 3. Breakdown of Sample According
to Bottom-Ranking High Schools

Bottom-Ranking Schools	Top-Ranking Students	Bottom-Ranking Students	Total
Beresford	0	2	2
Bridgewater	2	2	4
Centerville	0	2	2
Clark	0	0	0
Garretson	1	0	1
Gettysburg	0	1	1
Groton	1	1	2
Letcher	0	1	1
Onida	0	1	1
Roslyn	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	4	11	15

students. Hence a method of interviewing was needed that would take into account this sensitivity. The method followed was based on the general principles for interviewing laid out by Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin.¹⁶

A pilot questionnaire was used for the first four students interviewed. This was then modified in two ways. First, more

¹⁶ Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, "Interviewing," Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia & London, 1948), pp. 35-59.

detailed questions were added to those areas in the pilot questionnaire where the student gave the longest answers. Second, a five degree scale was settled upon for those questions which called for scaled answers rather than those of a yes-no type. Upon completion of the 64 interviews, the 16 open-end questions (indicated by asterisk: Appendix E) were closed according to the data from the interviews to allow for uniform tabulation.

The interviews were conducted in an office, and an informal atmosphere was established by offering the student coffee and cookies while the nature of the interview was explained to him. The student was not told that the study was being conducted on the basis of top- and bottom-ranking sample groups. To avoid bias, the interviewer did not know to which of the two ranking groups the student belonged. After the introduction, the student was asked to fill out Section I of the questionnaire and was assured that all replies would be confidential.

Four interviews were scheduled between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Interviewing time usually took up a full hour. This tight schedule gave the student to be interviewed the impression that this was a matter of some importance as other students were giving up some of their time too.

During the interview, the student was seated at the side of the interviewer's desk, facing him. To give the student something to do with his hands, a copy of the questionnaire was given him to follow. A pace was set, however, whereby the student

found it easier to answer the interviewer without looking at the questionnaire, thus avoiding a tendency to pick any of the printed answers. This procedure also enabled the interviewer to formulate the questions in a conversational manner with a varying tone of seriousness and humour which helped to prevent the student from becoming bored and losing interest.

After the interview was completed, the student was thanked warmly for his cooperation and was asked to encourage any friends included on the sample to respond. Care was taken so that the student left the interview with a positive attitude indicating interest in the study and expressing curiosity as to the final conclusions reached.

EVALUATION OF DATA

"I had read that out of the total population of three and a half million in Bombay, seven hundred thousand slept on the pavements -- but these are abstract figures, and statistics neither bleed nor smell."

Arthur Koestler

Statistics are used in this study to provide a substantial description of the differences in the evaluations of background factors affecting performance in English made by two groups of students at South Dakota State College. The statistics used in this study are not for the purpose of presenting any general conclusions extending beyond the particular group under study. Responses on each item of the questionnaire have been tabulated and will be discussed under the three main headings into which the questions may be grouped. In keeping with Mrs. Weichenthal's practice, a difference in the responses of the two groups to a given question will be considered "apparently significant" if it is more than ten percent.¹⁷

I. Evaluations of High School:

In the following table we see that both groups tended to rate their high school highly. When asked what factors determined the ranking they gave their high school, twenty-two students noted "size" and twenty-one "teaching-staff."

¹⁷See Weichenthal, op. cit., p. 30 and Appendix F.

Table 4. Students' Evaluations of High School

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Highly superior	6	18.75	8	25.00
Superior	22	68.74	19	59.48
Average	4	12.48	3	9.36
Inferior	0		2	6.24
Highly inferior	0		0	

Though only two of the bottom-ranking students classified their high school as "Inferior," in a later question determining the students' evaluations of their high school specifically in regard to preparation received for college English, eleven bottom-ranking students responded "Inferior."

Table 5. Students' Evaluations of High School
According to Preparation Received
for College English

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Highly adequate	19	59.48	5	15.63
Adequate	9	28.12	13	40.61
Indifferent	1	3.12	3	9.36
Inadequate	3	9.36	11	34.37
Highly inadequate	0		0	

From Table 5 it is seen that there exists a tendency on the part of the top-ranking students to rate their high schools higher than the bottom-ranking students. This is indicated by the fact that 43.85 percent more top than bottom-ranking students thought their high schools were "Highly Adequate" whereas 25.01 percent more of the bottom-ranking students indicated their high school as "Inferior."

Insofar as questions concerning the courses taught are concerned, 71.87 percent of the students in both groups classified science courses as the most popular ones. The two most frequent reasons given for this popularity were: "Interesting Subject" and "Likeable Teacher." When the student was questioned as to which course he liked best, 75.93 percent responded science, and the basic reason given was: "Interesting Subject." Only 18.59 percent of both groups listed "Humanities" as the courses liked best while in high school.

Two apparently significant differences in the area of extra-curricular activities appear in Table 6, where it is seen that 15.88 percent more of the bottom-ranking students listed "Social" as their primary extra-curricular interest and 34.37 percent more of the top-ranking students listed "Music." Concerning the role played by music in the two groups, it is important to note that an apparently significant difference appears between the two groups insofar as the students' attitudes toward music are concerned and not as to whether or not the

Table 6. Interest of Students in
Extra-curricular Activities

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Debate	2	6.24	2	6.24
Dramatics	0		0	
Field Trips	2	6.24	6	18.75
Social	7	21.87	12	37.75
Offices	3	9.36	3	9.36
Music	15	46.87	4	12.50
Other	3	9.36	5	15.63

student had been exposed to music as a child. This is illustrated by the fact that no significant differences between the two groups were found in their responses to the following questions: "What kind of music were you accustomed to hearing as a child?" and "Did your parents take you to high school concerts?"

Students were then asked what activities they participated in outside school. Of the responses, a difference of 25.00 percent exists between 28.12 percent of the top-ranking students and 3.12 percent of the bottom-ranking students who listed "Hobby" as their major activity outside school. When questioned as to what this hobby consisted of, the most frequent answer given was "Reading."

Table 7. Time Spent by Students
During High School

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
School Work	10	31.25	7	21.56
Extra-curricular	8	25.00	6	18.75
Outside School Activities	14	43.75	20	62.50

From Table 7 it is seen that an apparently significant difference of 18.75 percent exists between the two groups in that the bottom-ranking students tend to have spent more time on activities outside school than have the top-ranking students.

Insofar as participation in sports is concerned, it was found that whereas 34.37 percent of the top-ranking students listed "None," only 6.24 of the bottom-ranking students indicated that they had not participated in any sports while in high school. Of those students who had participated in sports, there exists a difference of 44.06 percent between the 65.62 percent of the bottom-ranking students who spent more time than was required in sports and the 21.56 percent of the top-ranking students.

In this analysis of the students' responses it was seen that certain apparently significant differences exist between the two groups. However, though this knowledge is valuable insofar

as it adds to our understanding of the nature of the students making up the two groups, the differences found so far cannot be said to be significant in relationship to any one isolated subject, such as English, but rather may be seen to be indications of differences in over-all achievement.

II. Evaluation of Environment:

In an attempt to isolate factors affecting English usage, questions were designed touching upon two environmental areas: the community, and the family. The size of the community was not found to be a significant factor, for though twice as many bottom-ranking students as top-ranking students came from towns having a population of less than 5,000, a tendency to identify a bottom-ranking student as one coming from a small town is checked by the fact that twice as many bottom-ranking students as top-ranking ones came from towns having a population of more than 40,000.

Insofar as the effects of community institutions are concerned, it was found that whereas 15.63 percent more top-ranking students came from towns having two movie theaters, 50.00 percent more bottom-ranking students came from towns having more than three movie theaters (this includes drive-in movies). It was also seen that 22.12 percent more top-ranking students claim to have spent less time (once a month) at the movies than bottom-ranking students. The spread may be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Time Spent by Students at the Movies

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Once a month	11	34.37	4	12.25
Once a fortnight	8	25.00	9	28.12
Once a week	10	31.25	14	43.75
More	0		0	

For the group as a whole, a positive relationship exists between the speaking of a foreign language at home and the placement of a student at the lower level of achievement. Of the top-ranking students only 12.25 responded positively to this question, whereas 28.12 of the bottom-ranking students stated that a language other than English (German, Scandinavian, and Latvian in descending order of frequency) was spoken at home during their childhood.

An apparently significant relationship between the two groups is found concerning parental education and the kind of employment of the father. This parallels the findings in a study conducted by Robert Blake at the University of Texas.¹⁸ Blake found that the strongest relationship between childhood environment and achievement in college existed for linguistic

¹⁸Robert C. Blake, op. cit., pp. 37-41.

measures. It was found that the two important characteristics of the childhood environment associated with high test scores were the amount of parental education and the kind of employment of the father.

Table 9. Breakdown of Occupation of Father

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Retired	2	6.24	2	6.24
Business	12	37.49	6	18.75
Farming	8	25.00	16	50.00
Teaching	3	9.36	1	3.12
Other	7	21.56	7	21.56

From Table 9 it may be seen that twice as many of the fathers of the top-ranking students as of the bottom-ranking ones are business men, whereas an exact opposite ratio is true where the fathers are farmers. Edward Frankel has also found that of two groups of students, more of the fathers of the top-ranking group were in the top three occupational areas.¹⁹ A possible reason for this difference may be seen to lie in the

¹⁹Edward Frankel, A Comparative Study of Achieving and Underachieving High School Boys of High Intellectual Ability, Ph.D. Thesis, Yeshiva University, June, 1958.

relatively greater demand placed on a business man for correct usage than on a farmer. This argument is supported by Doris Noel's study of 124 children in grades 4A to 6A in the following conclusions:

1. The language usage which the child hears his parents use does, to a very large degree, determine the quality of language usage which the child uses.
- *****
4. When intelligence is held constant, the occupation of the father does not materially affect the quality of language used by a child.²⁰

Thus we see that rather than isolate the occupation of the father as a significant factor, we should consider it significant when coupled with another factor indicating the father's level of usage at home. A contradiction between the two criteria would obviously render the factor of the father's occupation in itself as insignificant. Such a contradiction, however, does not arise in this study. The factor chosen to be correlated with occupation was the amount of education the father had received. Table 10 illustrates that an apparently significant difference (23.31 percent) exists between the 21.56 percent of the fathers of top-ranking students whose education extended to the 8th grade and the 46.87 percent of the fathers of bottom-ranking students.

It might be noted, however, that no significant differences between the two groups were found in response to: "What

²⁰Doris I. Noel, "A Comparative Study of the Relationship Between the Quality of a Child's Usage and the Quality and Types of Language Used in the Home," The Journal of Educational Research, XLVII (November, 1953), pp. 161-177.

would you say was the attitude of your father toward English?"

Responses from both groups clustered around "Indifferent" and "Positive."

Table 10. Amount of Education of Father

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 9th	7	21.56	15	46.87
9th grade	2	6.24	2	6.24
10th grade	2	6.24	1	3.12
11th grade	0		1	3.12
12th grade	6	18.75	6	18.75
Freshman-Sophomore	5	15.63	1	3.12
Junior-Senior	8	25.00	5	15.63
Masters	1	3.12	1	3.12
Ph.D.	1	3.12	0	

Though the same correlation between education and occupation is not as significant in the case of the students' mothers, the amount of the mother's education is. From Table 11 it may be seen that 18.74 percent more of the top- than the bottom-ranking students' mothers went to college.

Insofar as the mother's attitudes toward English are concerned, the students' answers of both groups indicated

Table 11. Amount of Education of Mother

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 8th	2	6.24	1	3.12
8th grade	4	12.48	5	15.63
9th grade	1	3.12	2	6.24
10th grade	2	6.24	3	9.36
11th grade	0		1	3.12
12th grade	7	21.56	11	34.37
Freshman-Sophomore	12	37.49	5	15.63
Junior-Senior	3	9.36	4	12.48
Masters	1	3.12	1	3.12

Table 12. Parents' Concern With the Child's Usage

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Not concerned	3	9.36	11	34.37
From time to time	11	34.37	4	12.48
Concerned	8	25.00	11	34.37
Very concerned	10	31.25	6	18.75

"Positive" most frequently. The parents' direct concern with the child's usage is indicated in Table 12.

From Table 12 it may be seen that significantly more of the parents of top- than bottom-ranking students show concern about usage.

Of the apparently significant differences between the environmental factors of the two groups we may then consider time spent at movies and the use of a language other than English at home as having had a possible negative effect on English usage. The factors which may be considered to have had a possible effect were found to be the father's occupation in conjunction with the amount of the father's education, the amount of the mother's education, and the parents' concern with the child's good usage in English.

III. Evaluation of English in the High School:

In the students' evaluation of their English in high school, the greatest number of apparently significant differences between the two groups was found in relation to reading. It is interesting to note that whereas top-ranking students displayed a marked tendency to be critical of their writing, bottom-ranking students emphasized reading and grammar as their weak areas in English. This was in spite of the fact that 59.48 percent of the top-ranking students stated that they had enjoyed writing as compared with the 25.00 percent of the bottom-ranking students.

When asked whether they had enjoyed the reading done in high school, the following results were given in Table 13.

Table 13. Students' Enjoyment of Reading Done
in High School

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, enjoyed reading	27	84.06	18	56.36
No, did not enjoy reading	5	15.63	14	43.75

It may be seen that a strong relationship between top-ranking students and reading enjoyment exists. Tables 14 and 15 following will bear out the importance of reading as a background factor wherein apparently significant differences between the two groups exist.

Table 14. Students' Self-Ranking of Reading
Ability in High School

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Top 10 percent	20	62.50	4	12.48
Above average	8	25.00	5	15.63
Average	1	3.12	15	46.87
Below average	2	6.24	8	25.00
Bottom 10 percent	1	3.12	0	

From Table 14 it is seen that there is a 50.02 percent difference in the "Top 10 percent" criterion between the self-ranking of the students in the two groups concerning their reading ability. When asked what factors they considered as affecting this ranking the following responses indicated in Table 15 were given:

Table 15. Factors Affecting Students' Self-Ranking in Reading

	Top-Ranking Students		Bottom-Ranking Students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Read at home	12	37.49	1	3.12
Interested	5	15.63	4	12.48
Easy	2	6.24	1	3.12
General knowledge	1	3.12	2	6.24
Enjoyable	7	21.56	3	9.36
Did not read at home	1	3.12	6	18.75
Difficult	1	3.12	5	15.63
Not interested	0		5	15.63
Other	3	9.36	5	15.63

Table 15 indicates that more than any other criterion, it is the factor of reading done at home that plays a significant role in determining the student's reading ability. Lawrence Kasdon lays

a parallel emphasis upon family background on the reading ability of college freshmen. He found that 54 percent of the students in his study were able to read before entering the first grade. In his conclusion Kasdon emphasized family background as more important than any school experience or teacher.²¹

As for the relationship between reading ability and college performance, Anderson and Dearborn found that when intelligence is held constant a positive relationship between reading ability and college achievement still existed amongst Harvard freshmen.²²

Contrary to expectation no significant difference was found between the two groups concerning the attitude of the students towards their English teachers. However, this negative correlation between performance and attitude toward teacher is borne out in the studies of Brookover,²³ and Jones and Adaskin.²⁴

²¹Lawrence M. Kasdon, "Early Reading Background of Some Superior Readers Among College Freshmen," The Journal of Educational Research, LII (December, 1958), pp. 151-153.

²²Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, "Reading Ability as Related to College Achievement," The Journal of Psychology, XI (April, 1941), pp. 387-396.

²³Wilbur Brookover, "The Social Roles of Teachers and Pupil Achievement," The American Sociological Review, VIII (August, 1943), pp. 389-393.

²⁴Bobby L. Jones and Joan R. Adaskin, A Study of the Attitudes of High Scholastic Achievers and Low Scholastic Achievers Towards Their Teachers, Master's Thesis, Boston University, 1957.

When asked whether they had liked or disliked English while in high school an apparently significant difference of 25.00 percent between the responses given by the two groups was found in that 43.75 percent of the bottom-ranking students answered "Disliked" as compared with 18.75 percent of the top-ranking students who so answered. When asked if they could think of any factor which might have affected this attitude, 31.25 percent (the highest cluster of responses) of the top-ranking students answered "teacher" as the cause of either a negative or a positive attitude.

In a study of the evaluation of the students of English taken at high school, it was seen that an apparently significant difference between top-ranking and bottom-ranking students exists concerning reading enjoyment and reading done at home as a child permitting one to associate both these factors with the group of top-ranking students.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the Spring Quarter of 1962, 32 top-ranking and 32 bottom-ranking students at South Dakota State College were interviewed in an effort to isolate certain factors in their background which might be associated with success or failure in college English. This sample was selected from those students who had graduated from the ten top-ranking and the ten bottom-ranking high schools comprising the sample used by Phyllis B. Weichenthal in her thesis: Major Differences Between Ten Top-Ranking and Ten Bottom-Ranking South Dakota High Schools: A Study of English. The criteria used for selection were the ACE total percentile, English Placement Test score percentile, and grade point average for at least one quarter and no more than three quarters of freshman English as established in Weichenthal's thesis.

Despite three different attempts made by mail, telephone, and a visit to the home, interviews with only 68 of the 84 students selected were completed. To balance the top-ranking group with the bottom-ranking group, information from four of the lowest of the top-ranking students was discarded. This gave two groups of 32 units each for frequency tabulation. As established in Weichenthal's thesis, a difference between the responses of the two groups was considered "apparently significant" if it was ten percent or more. The data analyzed were broken down under

the three major headings which form a major classification of the material covered in the questionnaire.

I. Evaluations of High School:

Differences found in this area were considered leading to a descriptive understanding of the two groups rather than as playing a significant role as background factors affecting English because they may well be associated with college achievement as a whole rather than with any one subject in particular.

1. Courses: Of the students in both groups, 71.87 percent classified science courses as the most popular ones in high school.
2. Extra-curricular Activities: In extra-curricular activities, 15.88 percent more of the bottom-ranking students were interested in social events than were top-ranking students, while 34.37 percent more of the top- than bottom-ranking students were interested in a hobby, which, most frequently, consisted of reading.
3. Sports: There is a marked difference in the responses of the two groups concerning sports. Of the top-ranking students, 34.37 percent indicated that they had not participated in any sports while in high school as compared to 6.24 percent of the bottom-ranking students who so indicated. Of those students who had participated in sports, 65.62 percent of the bottom-ranking students spent more time than was required on sports as compared to 21.56 percent of the top-ranking students who did so.

II. Evaluations of Environment:

1. Movies: No significant difference between the two groups was found concerning the size of the town from which they came.

From the students' evaluations of the effect upon English usage by attendance at such community institutions as movies, clubs, churches, and bars, it was found that 50.00 percent more bottom-ranking students than top-ranking ones came from towns having more than three movie theaters and 22.12 percent more top-ranking students claim to have spent less time at the movies than bottom-ranking students.

2. Foreign Language: It was found that a foreign language was spoken in the homes of 15.87 percent more bottom-ranking than top-ranking students. The effect of a foreign language spoken in the childhood environment becomes particularly significant at South Dakota State College where no special provision in English is made for foreign students.

3. Father's Occupation and Education: Twice as many of the fathers of bottom-ranking students as top-ranking ones are farmers. Twice as many of the fathers of top-ranking students as bottom-ranking ones are in business. A difference of 23.31 percent exists between the fathers of top-ranking students who completed their education at the 8th grade and the fathers of bottom-ranking students.

4. Mother's Education: A difference of 21.81 percent exists between 37.49 percent of the mothers of top-ranking students who

went to college as compared to the 15.63 percent of the mothers of the bottom-ranking students who did.

The differences found between the two groups in the amount of parental education indicates that this could well be one of the determining factors of a child's usage patterns. This factor is borne out by the fact that more of the top-ranking than the bottom-ranking students indicated that their parents had shown concern about their English usage during their childhood.

III. Evaluations of English in High School:

1. Reading: A strong relationship exists between top-ranking students and reading enjoyment while in high school. A difference of 50.02 percent exists between top-ranking and bottom-ranking students insofar as self-ranking in reading ability at the top ten percent level of the class is concerned. The most significant factor leading to this was found to be the reading done at home during childhood by 37.49 percent of the top-ranking students as compared to 3.12 percent of the bottom-ranking students.

2. Teacher Influence: Though no significant factor was found between the two groups in relationship to attitudes towards high school English teachers, when asked whether they had liked or disliked English while at high school, 31.25 percent of the top-ranking students cited "teacher influence" as affecting their positive or negative attitude toward English.

One of the obvious limitations of this study is that the area covered has lost in depth what it has been able to portray in breadth. Hence, it is recommended that future studies dealing with the problem of attempting to isolate factors in the backgrounds of students affecting their performance in English be made in those areas where a possibly significant causal relationship might be seen to exist according to the findings made in the present study. The two areas which this study has found to be important in relationship to English usage have been: 1) the amount of parental education, and 2) early reading habits. Thus the following problems are posited for further study.

- 1) Is there a significant relationship between parental education and the child's ability in areas other than English, or is the relationship only significant concerning English? If so, what pragmatic method can be devised to counterbalance this handicap on the parts of students whose parents have insufficiently completed their education?
- 2) A problem of special interest to the English Department at South Dakota State College would be a detailed study of the usage patterns common to farm homes since it is indicated in this study that a negative correlation exists between good usage and the farm environment. A knowledge of these patterns will enable the English teacher dealing with a high percentage of students

from a rural area to apprehend and devise remedies for the peculiar type of usage problems such students have.

- 3) Further studies are needed in the attitudinal patterns of grade and high school students toward English. Somewhere along the continuum of grade school, high school, and college, a decided shift from the "humanities" to the "sciences" seems to be taking place. An understanding of the reasons for this shift other than such general platitudes such as "This is the age of sputnik," is of utmost importance for a pragmatic understanding of the student as he faces college freshman English.
- 4) Some of the highlights of the interviews carried out in this study occurred when the eccentricities of English teachers were described. These ranged from the usual foibles to an account of an elderly matron riding up and down the aisles on a bicycle. As the most vital element in a course is the teacher, survey studies of grade and high school English teachers as compared to teachers of other subjects should investigate whether or not there is any truth in the "old school m'arm" concept of the grade and high school English teacher.
- 5) Since this study indicates a strong correlation between top-ranking students and both the enjoyment and the amount of reading done at home, studies concentrating on an analysis and suggestions for improvement of the instruction done in reading at the grade school level would be a definite step in an attempt to counter-balance lack of reading habits in the child's home.

A great deal of time and money has been spent in an effort to isolate certain factors affecting students' performance in English. It is sincerely hoped that the conclusions presented in the three phases of this research program can be made to serve as the basis not for theoretical and graduate assistant speculation, but for some concrete pragmatic overhauling of those areas found to be significant when the findings of these three areas have been correlated.

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APPENDIX A

From The Collegian, (March 29, 1962).

Dear Students:

There has been a growing concern on the part of the various members of the faculty and with a large portion of the student body about what is somewhat vaguely designated as "English." Actually the main part of this concern is most keenly noticeable with the Freshmen as they struggle through their English 1-2-3 or 4-5-6 requirements. Students who have little or no difficulty following the intricacies of analytic geometry or the equally involved processes of trigonometry when confronted with the basic tenets of pronoun agreement or comma splices seem to be baffled, and, to some extent, resentful.

The English Department has been successful in obtaining funds from the Research Committee to investigate the matter. Three zealous graduates -- closely supervised by Messrs. Maynard Fox and M. L. Shane -- are presently at work in an analysis of the relationship of students' backgrounds to performance in English.

As a result of this, some of you may be called upon to help us out with an interview. Hence the success or failure of this project to quite an extent depends upon your active co-operation.

We appreciate the fact that time is of the greatest importance for you and all care will be taken that the scheduling

of these interviews be done efficiently so that none of your time will be wasted. This efficiency, however, entirely depends on your good will in responding when called upon. You may be contacted by telephone or through the mail and we will focus these interviews--generally lasting from 45 to 60 minutes--around the time which you determine.

We sincerely hope that with your help we will be able to pinpoint some of the factors that have influenced the development of your abilities in English.

Sincerely,

Robert Tembeck
English Department

APPENDIX B

First Letter Sent to Students

Dear

Enclosed is a copy of a letter which appeared in a recent issue of The Collegian. It will give you some idea -- if you have not already read it -- as to what this is all about. We have chosen a sample of eighty students to be interviewed and you are one of them. Your co-operation in this interview will be of help both to the English Department and to the student body.

Interviewing eighty students in one quarter is going to take some doing so we have worked out a rather rigid schedule after checking with your present course hours. If the time indicated on the enclosed card is suitable to you, please make a note of it and simply drop the card in a mail box tomorrow. The interview will then take place at the time indicated in Room 308 in the Library (I hope we'll have some coffee boiling). If you will not be able to come at the time indicated, please write down a substitute date and hour -- as close as possible to the original date -- on the card and mail it. If there is a conflict we will get in touch with you. Otherwise please don't forget to show up at the date indicated.

With thanks for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Robert Tembeck
English Department

APPENDIX C

Second Letter Sent to Students

Dear

Sorry to be troubling you again about your interview but your co-operation is too important to be overlooked. You are not just one figure amongst hundreds of others; the sample of these interviews has been carefully limited to 80 students from high schools in South Dakota which have been visited by one of our research assistants. This, as I am sure you realize, is quite a small sample and hence every single one of the interviews is of utmost value to the project as a whole. No action may be taken until the information is gathered from all 80 of these students.

If you have had trouble fitting the interview with your college schedule please feel free to call at Library 308 any afternoon between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. and you will find me at your disposal. I sincerely hope that you will be kind enough to sacrifice one hour of your time to a project that is becoming more and more significant as information is gathered from these interviews.

Sincerely,

Robert Tembeck

APPENDIX D

Third Letter Sent to Students

May 28, 1962

A few months ago the Research Committee of the college awarded a grant to members of the English Department. The purpose of the research project is an attempt at a better understanding of some of the difficulties encountered both by students and teachers in relation to instruction in English at South Dakota State College.

As a member of our student body, I know that you are vitally interested in any action which would result in the improvement of instruction. Your cooperation in allowing a member of the research staff to interview you will be appreciated and will greatly assist us in this project.

Will you please notify Mr. Tembeck (692-6111; Ext. 659 or call at Library 308 between 1-4 p.m.) when you would be available for an interview.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Harold S. Bailey
Dean of Academic Affairs

APPENDIX E

Survey of Student Backgrounds in English

Interview Questionnaire*

I. Vital Statistics:

Date of Interview _____

Name _____

Major _____

Birth Date _____

Division _____

Place of Birth _____

Advisor _____

II. Academic:A. High School:

C1. How many times did you change high school?

(0) _____ Never

(1) _____ Once

(2) _____ Twice

(3) _____ Three times

(4) _____ Four times

(5) _____ More

C2. Why?

(0) _____ Family moved

(1) _____ Flunked

(2) _____ Town probation

(3) _____ Other

*Questions preceded by asterisk have been closed.

C3. In what way would you say moving affected your over-all high school education?

(0) _____ Highly negative

(1) _____ Negative

(2) _____ Indifferent

(3) _____ Positive

(4) _____ Highly positive

C4. How would you evaluate the academic standing of your high school in relation to other high schools in your state?

(0) _____ Highly superior

(1) _____ Superior

(2) _____ Average

(3) _____ Inferior

(4) _____ Highly inferior

C5. Would you say this was originally due to its

(0) _____ Location

(1) _____ Size

(2) _____ Administration

(3) _____ Teaching staff

(4) _____ Other

C6. Which would you say were the most popular courses in your high school?

(0) _____ Science

(1) _____ "Humanities"

(2) _____ Sports/Physical Education

C7. Why?

- (0) _____ Likeable teacher
- (1) _____ Easy course
- (2) _____ Interesting subject
- (3) _____ Were tied in with non-academic interests
- (4) _____ Courses were favored by parents
- (5) _____ Courses were liked by their friends
- (6) _____ Other

C8. Which courses would you say were taught by the more popular teachers?

- (0) _____ Science
- (1) _____ "Humanities"
- (2) _____ Sports/Physical Education

C9. Why were these teachers popular? (Either most important or rank)

- (0) _____ They were nice guys
- (1) _____ They knew their subject
- (2) _____ They made the subject interesting
- (3) _____ They were formal in class
- (4) _____ They were informal in class
- (5) _____ They spent time outside class with students
- (6) _____ Appearance
- (7) _____ They were fair in grades

C10. What courses did you like best?

(0) _____ Science

(1) _____ "Humanities"

(2) _____ Sports

C11. Basic reason for liking these courses.

(0) _____ They were popular

(1) _____ You liked the teacher

(2) _____ You found them easy

(3) _____ You found the subject interesting

(4) _____ They tied in with your non-academic interests

(5) _____ Your parents favored these courses

(6) _____ Your closest friends liked these courses

(7) _____ Other

C12. What extra-curricular activities, apart from sports, were your friends most interested in? (rank)

(0) _____ Debate

(1) _____ Dramatics

(2) _____ Field trips

(3) _____ Social events sponsored by the school

(4) _____ Class offices

(6) _____ Band, Chorus

(7) _____ Others

C13. In a rough estimate, how much time would you say your friends spent on extra-curricular activities per day?

(0) _____ Less than 15 minutes

(1) _____ 15 minutes

(2) _____ 30 minutes

(3) _____ 1 hour

(4) _____ 1½ hour

(5) _____ 2 hours

(6) _____ 2½ hours

(7) _____ 3 hours

(8) _____ 4 hours

(9) _____ More

C14. What extra-curricular activities were you most interested in?

(0) _____ Debate

(1) _____ Dramatics

(2) _____ Field trips

(3) _____ Social events sponsored by the school

(4) _____ Class offices

(5) _____ School offices

(6) _____ Band, Chorus

(7) _____ Other

C15. How much time would you say you spent on these extra-curricular activities?

(0) _____ Less than 15 minutes per day

(1) _____ 15 minutes

(2) _____ 30 minutes

(3) _____ 1 hour

(4) _____ 1½ hour

(5) _____ 2 hours

(6) _____ 2½ hours

(7) _____ 3 hours

(8) _____ 4 hours

(9) _____ More

C16. How much time after school would you say you spent on school work?

(0) _____ Less than 15 minutes

(1) _____ 15 minutes

(2) _____ 30 minutes

(3) _____ 1 hour

(4) _____ 1½ hour

(5) _____ 2 hours

(6) _____ 2½ hours

(7) _____ 3 hours

(8) _____ 4 hours

(9) _____ More

*C17. Could you say which subjects you spent most of this time on? (rank)

- (0) _____ Math
- (1) _____ Physics
- (2) _____ Chemistry
- (3) _____ Biology
- (4) _____ Business
- (5) _____ Humanities
- (6) _____ English

C18. Was there anything else which regularly took up a major share of your time during your high school days?

- (0) _____ Dating
- (1) _____ TV
- (2) _____ Hobby (What? _____)
- (3) _____ Driving around in a car
- (4) _____ Family trips
- (5) _____ Community activities (What? _____)
- (6) _____ Hunting
- (7) _____ Work
- (8) _____ Other

C19. Which of these three areas--school work, extra-curricular activities, other interests--would you say took up most of your time?

- (0) _____ School work
- (1) _____ Extra-curricular activities
- (2) _____ Other interests

C20. What sports did you participate in while in high school?

- (0) _____ None
- (1) _____ Basketball
- (2) _____ Football
- (3) _____ Baseball
- (4) _____ Tennis
- (5) _____ Track
- (6) _____ Other

C21. Did you spend more time than was required in sports?

- (0) _____ Yes
- (1) _____ No

C22. If yes, how much more would you say per school day?

- (0) _____ $\frac{1}{2}$ hour
- (1) _____ $\frac{3}{4}$ hour
- (2) _____ 1 hour
- (3) _____ $1\frac{1}{4}$ hour
- (4) _____ $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour
- (5) _____ $1\frac{3}{4}$ hour
- (6) _____ 2 hours
- (7) _____ $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours
- (8) _____ 3 hours
- (9) _____ 4 hours or more

C23. To what extent did you enjoy watching sports?

- (0) _____ To a great extent
- (1) _____ To some extent
- (2) _____ Indifferent
- (3) _____ Did not enjoy it
- (4) _____ Did not enjoy it at all

C24. Was your mother a sports fan?

- (0) _____ Wildly enthusiastic
- (1) _____ Fan
- (2) _____ Not a fan
- (3) _____ Utterly disliked sports

C25. Was your father a sports fan?

- (0) _____ Wildly enthusiastic
- (1) _____ Fan
- (2) _____ Not a fan
- (3) _____ Utterly disliked sports

*C26. Did you win any distinctions in sports?

- (0) _____ Lettered one year
- (1) _____ Lettered two years
- (2) _____ Lettered three years
- (3) _____ Lettered four years
- (4) _____ Other Distinctions (Captain, prizes)
- (5) _____ Lettered and Distinctions
- (6) _____

B. English in High School:

C27. How many years of English did you take while in high school?

(0) _____ Less than one

(1) _____ One

(2) _____ Two

(3) _____ Three

(4) _____ Four

(5) _____ More

C28. How much reading was required?

(0) _____ None

(1) _____ Less than 1 hour a week

(2) _____ 1 hour a week

(3) _____ 2 hours a week

(4) _____ 3 hours a week

(5) _____ 4 hours a week

(6) _____ 5 hours a week

(7) _____ 6 hours a week

(8) _____ More

C29. Did you enjoy reading?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C30. How would you say you ranked in relation to the class insofar as reading was concerned?

- (0) _____ Top 10%
- (1) _____ Above average
- (2) _____ Average
- (3) _____ Below average
- (4) _____ Bottom 10%

*C31. Why?

- (0) _____ Read at home as a child
- (1) _____ Interested in assigned readings
- (2) _____ Never had difficulty with it
- (3) _____ Helped develop general knowledge
- (4) _____ Have always enjoyed it
- (5) _____ Did not do outside reading
- (6) _____ Had difficulty with it
- (7) _____ Not interested in subject
- (8) _____ Teacher influence
- (9) _____ Other

C32. What kind of writing were you required to do in English?

- (0) _____ None
- (1) _____ Grammar exercises only
- (2) _____ Short paragraphs
- (3) _____ Long paragraphs
- (4) _____ Themes

(5) _____ 1 and 2

(6) _____ 1 and 4

(7) _____ 1, 2 and 4

C33. Did you enjoy writing?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

*C34. Why?

(0) _____ Opportunity for self expression

(1) _____ Relief from grammar

(2) _____ Enjoyed it

(3) _____ Not difficult

(4) _____ Not emphasized

(5) _____ Took too much time

(6) _____ Had difficulty

(7) _____ Could not express myself

(8) _____ Other

C35. What was your weak area in English?

(0) _____ Reading

(1) _____ Writing

(2) _____ Grammar

(3) _____ 0 and 1

(4) _____ 0 and 2

(5) _____ 1 and 2

(6) _____ All

C36. What was your strong area in English? *if you have?*

(0) _____ Reading

(1) _____ Writing

(2) _____ Grammar

(3) _____ None

C37. Did you fail any of your high school English courses?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C38. If yes, what would you say this was primarily due to?

(0) _____ Some incompetency on the part of the teacher

(1) _____ Lack of interest in the subject

(2) _____ It was not considered important

(3) _____ More time was spent on other subjects

(4) _____ You thought you knew it all

(5) _____ You were just lazy

(6) _____ The subject was too hard

(7) _____ You disliked the subject

(8) _____ Other

C39. How popular would you say your English teachers were?

(0) _____ Very popular

(1) _____ Popular

(2) _____ Average

(3) _____ Unpopular

(4) _____ Very popular

C40. How many different English teachers did you have?

- (0) _____ No changes
- (1) _____ Two different teachers
- (2) _____ Three teachers
- (3) _____ Four teachers
- (4) _____ Five teachers
- (5) _____ More teachers

C41. Did any or all of your high school teachers have a positive influence on your English attitude?

- (0) _____ Yes
- (1) _____ No

*C42. To what, exactly, would you say this was due?

- (0) _____ Good disciplinarian
- (1) _____ Efficient
- (2) _____ Stimulating
- (3) _____ Knew subject well
- (4) _____ Liked the students
- (5) _____ Other

C43. Did any of your high school teachers have a negative influence on your attitude toward English?

- (0) _____ Yes
- (1) _____ No

*C44. To what, exactly, would you say this was due?

- (0) _____ Had certain idiosyncrasies
- (1) _____ Did not correct assignments
- (2) _____ Indifferent to subject
- (3) _____ Indifferent to students
- (4) _____ Too busy with other courses
- (5) _____ Too dogmatic
- (6) _____ Other

C45. What would you say your feelings were on the whole concerning your English teachers in comparison with the feelings you had for your other teachers?

- (0) _____ Highly negative
- (1) _____ Negative
- (2) _____ Average
- (3) _____ Positive
- (4) _____ Highly positive

C46. In what way would you say this feeling influenced your performance in English?

- (0) _____ None at all
- (1) _____ Very little
- (2) _____ Average
- (3) _____ More than average
- (4) _____ Greatly

C47. How well do you feel that you cooperated with your high school English teachers?

(0) _____ None at all

(1) _____ Very little

(2) _____ Some

(3) _____ Well

(4) _____ Very well

C48. Did you like or dislike English while in high school?

(0) _____ Liked very much

(1) _____ Liked

(2) _____ No particular feelings

(3) _____ Disliked

(4) _____ Hated

*C49. Can you think of any reason why you felt this way?

(0) _____ First felt this in Grade school

(1) _____ First felt this in High school

(2) _____ Influence of other students

(3) _____ Influence of teacher

(4) _____ Subject had no challenge

(5) _____ Subject not concrete

(6) _____ Disliked writing and grammar

(7) _____ Liked writing and grammar

C50. Has your attitude changed since then?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C51. If yes, in what way?

(0) _____ Highly negative

(1) _____ Negative

(2) _____ Indifferent

(3) _____ Positive

(4) _____ Highly positive

C52. If affirmative, when did you first begin to sense for yourself the importance of "good English?"

(0) _____ Junior High School

(1) _____ Senior High School

(2) _____ After leaving high school before entering college

(3) _____ Freshman at college

(4) _____ Sophomore at college

(5) _____ Junior at college

(6) _____ Other

*C53. What do you think made you change your attitude?

(0) _____ Developed understanding of subject

(1) _____ Developed interest in subject

(2) _____ Realized importance of correct usage for everyday life

(3) _____ Influence of teacher

- (4) _____ Influence of parent
- (5) _____ Influence of other students
- (6) _____ Needed it for other college courses
- (7) _____ Other

III. Environment:

A. Town:

C54. How large was your home town while you were in high school?

- (0) _____ 0-5,000
- (1) _____ 5,000-10,000
- (2) _____ 10,000-15,000
- (3) _____ 15,000-20,000
- (4) _____ 20,000-40,000
- (5) _____ 40,000-60,000
- (6) _____ 60,000-80,000
- (7) _____ 80,000-100,000
- (8) _____ More than 100,000

C55. How many movie theaters were there in your home town?

- (0) _____ None
- (1) _____ One
- (2) _____ Two
- (3) _____ Three
- (4) _____ Four
- (5) _____ More

C56. How often did you go to the movies?

- (0) _____ Once a month
- (1) _____ Once every two weeks
- (2) _____ Once a week
- (3) _____ Twice a week
- (4) _____ More than twice a week

C57. Would you say your speaking habits were affected by the movies?

- (0) _____ Greatly to the better
- (1) _____ To the better
- (2) _____ Indifferent
- (3) _____ To the worse
- (4) _____ Greatly to the worse

C58. Would you say that your attendance at any of the following places had a noticeable effect on your speaking habits.

- | | Better | Worse | |
|-----------|--------|-------|--------------------|
| (0) _____ | _____ | _____ | Clubs |
| (1) _____ | _____ | _____ | Church |
| (2) _____ | _____ | _____ | Swimming pool |
| (3) _____ | _____ | _____ | Billiard pool |
| (4) _____ | _____ | _____ | Neighborhood group |
| (5) _____ | _____ | _____ | Bars |

B. Family:

C59. In what country or state were the following born?

- (0) _____ Maternal grandfather
- (1) _____ Maternal grandmother
- (2) _____ Paternal grandfather
- (3) _____ Paternal grandmother
- (4) _____ Mother
- (5) _____ Father

C60. What language is spoken at home besides English?

- (0) _____ None
- (1) _____ German
- (2) _____ Scandinavian
- (3) _____ Italian
- (4) _____ French
- (5) _____ Spanish
- (6) _____ Other (Indicate)

C61. When would you say you were first able to speak?

- (0) _____ Abnormally early age
- (1) _____ Early age
- (2) _____ Average age
- (3) _____ Late age
- (4) _____ Abnormally late age

C62. What is the present occupation of your father?

- (0) _____ Retired
- (1) _____ Business
- (2) _____ Farmer
- (3) _____ Teacher
- (4) _____ Other (Indicate)

C63. Present occupation of your mother?

- (0) _____ Teacher
- (1) _____ Secretary
- (2) _____ Nurse
- (3) _____ Home maker
- (4) _____ Other (Indicate)

C64. What grade did your father complete?

- (0) _____ Less than 9
- (1) _____ 9
- (2) _____ 10
- (3) _____ 11
- (4) _____ 12
- (5) _____ 13-14
- (6) _____ 15-16
- (7) _____ Masters
- (8) _____ Ph. D.
- (9) _____ Other

C65. What grade did your mother complete?

(0) _____ Less than 8

(1) _____ 8

(2) _____ 9

(3) _____ 10

(4) _____ 11

(5) _____ 12

(6) _____ 13-14

(7) _____ 15-16

(8) _____ Masters

(9) _____ Ph. D.

C66. How many brothers do you have?

(0) _____ None Age _____

(1) _____ 1 _____

(2) _____ 2 _____

(3) _____ 3 _____

(4) _____ 5 _____

(5) _____ More than 5 _____

C67. How many sisters do you have?

(0) _____ None Age _____

(1) _____ 1 _____

(2) _____ 2 _____

(3) _____ 3 _____

- (4) _____ 4 _____
(5) _____ 5 _____
(6) _____ More than 5 _____

C68. Would you say any particular favoritism was shown? _____

- (0) _____ You
(1) _____ Brother
(2) _____ Sister
(3) _____ No one

C69. Why? _____

C70. To what extent would you say your father liked reading?

- (0) _____ Not at all
(1) _____ Just what he had to
(2) _____ Newspapers
(3) _____ Magazines and newspapers
(4) _____ Fiction
(5) _____ Non-fiction

C71. To what extent would you say your mother liked reading?

- (0) _____ Not at all
(1) _____ Just what she had to
(2) _____ Newspapers

(3) _____ Magazines and newspapers

(4) _____ Fiction

(5) _____ Non-fiction

C72. How often did either of your parents read to you while you were a small child?

(0) _____ None at all

(1) _____ Irregularly over long intervals

(2) _____ Irregularly over short intervals

(3) _____ Regularly once a week

(4) _____ Regularly once a night

(5) _____ Other

C73. When did they stop reading to you?

(0) _____ 6

(1) _____ 7

(2) _____ 8

(3) _____ 9

(4) _____ 10

(5) _____ 11

C74. How concerned would you say your parents were with teaching you to "talk good English?"

(0) _____ They were not concerned at all

(1) _____ From time to time

(2) _____ They were concerned about it

(3) _____ They were very concerned about it

C75. How strict were your parents about your English grades as compared to other grades?

- (0) _____ Very
- (1) _____ Quite
- (2) _____ Not strict
- (3) _____ Not at all strict

C76. Did you get help on your English assignments?

- (0) _____ Yes
- (1) _____ No

C77. From whom?

- (0) _____ Mother
- (1) _____ Father
- (2) _____ Friends
- (3) _____ Brothers/Sisters
- (4) _____ Other

C78. What would you say was the attitude of your father toward English?

- (0) _____ Highly positive
- (1) _____ Positive
- (2) _____ Indifferent
- (3) _____ Negative
- (4) _____ Highly negative

C79. What would you say was the attitude of your mother toward English?

(0) _____ Highly positive

(1) _____ Positive

(2) _____ Indifferent

(3) _____ Negative

(4) _____ Highly negative

C80. To what extent did this attitude influence you while in high school?

(0) _____ Highly influenced

(1) _____ Influenced

(2) _____ Indifferent

(3) _____ Not influenced

C82. What sort of reading material did you have at home?

(0) _____ None

(1) _____ Newspapers

(2) _____ Magazines and newspapers

(3) _____ Fiction

(4) _____ Non-fiction

(5) _____ Both fiction and non-fiction

C83. Did you have a personal library at home while you were at high school?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C84. What were the titles of some of the books you liked best?

C85. Did you read any of your parents' books?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C86. If yes, do you remember any of the titles?

C87. About how many books would you say there were in your home library?

(0) _____ Less than 20

(1) _____ 20-40

(2) _____ 40-80

(3) _____ 80-100

(4) _____ 100-150

(5) _____ 150-200

(6) _____ 200-300

(7) _____ 300-500

(8) _____ More

C88. What kind of music were you accustomed to hearing as a child?

(0) _____ Popular

(1) _____ Semi-classical

(2) _____ Both

(3) _____ Classical

(4) _____ All

C89. Did your parents take you to plays?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C90. Did your parents take you to concerts?

(0) _____ Yes

(1) _____ No

C91. What career did your parents intend that you should follow?

(0) _____ Nothing definite

(1) _____

C92. How strict were they about your following it?

(0) _____ Highly strict

(1) _____ Strict

(2) _____ Indifferent

*C93. What advice did you receive from your father as being the most important thing in life?

(0) _____ Practical

(1) _____ Economic

(2) _____ Education

(3) _____ Religion

(4) _____ Moral

(5) _____ Hard work

(6) _____ Happiness

(7) _____ Health

(8) _____ Other

*C94. From your mother?

(0) _____ Same

(1) _____ Practical

(2) _____ Economic

(3) _____ Education

(4) _____ Religion

(5) _____ Moral

(6) _____ Hard work

(7) _____ Happiness

(8) _____ Health

(9) _____ Other

IV. Present Attitudes:

C95. Present primary non-academic interests?

- (0) _____ Arts
- (1) _____ Sciences
- (2) _____ Sports
- (3) _____ Social
- (4) _____ Hunting
- (5) _____ Hobby _____

C96. Apart from school books, what reading do you do?

- (0) _____ None
- (1) _____ Newspapers
- (2) _____ Magazines, newspapers
- (3) _____ Fiction, popular
- (4) _____ Non-fiction
- (5) _____ Both fiction and non-fiction
- (6) _____ Literature, "good" books
- (7) _____ All

C97. What did you learn in Freshman English?

- (0) _____ Nothing definite
- (1) _____ How to write correct English
- (2) _____ To read and understand better
- (3) _____ To speak correct English
- (4) _____ New Words

- (5) _____ Self-expression
- (6) _____ Logical thinking
- (7) _____ Other

*C98. What was your basic motivation in the college Freshman English course?

- (0) _____ It was required
- (1) _____ Grades
- (2) _____ To develop writing
- (3) _____ To bypass proficiency test
- (4) _____ To learn self-expression
- (5) _____ Develop knowledge of literature
- (6) _____ Realized its importance
- (7) _____ Other

C99. Was the course of any help to your other courses in later college years?

- (0) _____ Highly negative
- (1) _____ Negative
- (2) _____ Indifferent
- (3) _____ Positive
- (4) _____ Highly positive

*C100. If yes, in what way?

- (0) _____ Reading
- (1) _____ Reading comprehension
- (2) _____ Reading speed
- (3) _____ Writing
- (4) _____ Writing self-expression
- (5) _____ Writing grammar
- (6) _____ Writing organization
- (7) _____ Getting a job
- (8) _____ Other

C101. Which of the three parts of the course did you like the best?

- (0) _____ Grammar
- (1) _____ Writing themes
- (2) _____ Reading and discussion

C102. How would you say your reaction was to your freshman English instructors as compared to your other freshman instructors?

- (0) _____ They were the same
- (1) _____ They were better
- (2) _____ They were worse

C103. What preparation could you say you received while in high school for college freshman English?

- (0) _____ Highly adequate
- (1) _____ Adequate

- (2) _____ Indifferent
- (3) _____ Inadequate
- (4) _____ Highly inadequate

C104. Insofar as interest is concerned, what was your reaction to the course?

- (0) _____ Highly interesting
- (1) _____ Interesting
- (2) _____ Indifferent
- (3) _____ Dull
- (4) _____ Highly dull

C105. Did your attitude toward English change after Freshman English?

- (0) _____ It did not
- (1) _____ Became highly negative
- (2) _____ Became negative
- (3) _____ Became indifferent
- (4) _____ Became positive
- (5) _____ Became highly positive

APPENDIX F

In this thesis percentage scores have been carried to two decimal places in an effort to keep within the pattern set in the Weichenthal thesis. It is realized, however, that the significance of the percentile figures is dependent upon that of the sample. Hence, if the sample contains only one significant figure, the percentile should be considered as one significant figure, if two, then only two of the percentile figure should be viewed as significant.