
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FOURTH QUARTILE STUDENTS

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This study is based upon the records of the State High School Scholastic Contest. The testing program was started in 1935 and examinations have been given each year since that time. Altogether 35,991 students have taken part in the program. Therefore the students ranking in the fourth quartile have numbered approximately 9,000. There is some difficulty in determining the exact number because of tie scores.

The examinations used as a basis for obtaining the scholastic standing of the high school students are of the comprehensive achievement type. They are composed of four sections, including English, History, Science and Mathematics. In the regular scholastic program, the preliminary examinations are given to students who are required or permitted to take them in the local high schools under the control of some local teacher or administrator. These examinations are then sent to the University for grading. When the grade standing has been determined about 9% or 10% of the high ranking students are then invited to take the final examination which has been administered in about 10 places in the State under the direction of some person selected by the University. In 1946 a monograph was published giving a history of the scholastic contest showing results of the final examinations and the predictive value from the standpoint of college achievement of the students. Since the publication of the monograph in 1946, a number of questions have arisen as to what has become of the low ranking students.

This report is concerned with the lower 25% group. The procedure was to prepare lists of students by years for each high school showing the grade that each student had obtained on the preliminary examination that he had taken. It might be explained that although the examinations were the same length, that is, had the same number of items each

year, the top score for the fourth quartile varied somewhat from year to year. However, since the lower 25% was taken for each year the slight variation in the top grade of the groups had no bearing on the information presented in this report.

The second step was to prepare a questionnaire to submit to the various high schools in the State. This questionnaire asked for information on the following points:

1. In regard to what the students are now doing. The high school official was asked to check the following:
 - a. Common laborer
 - b. Skilled laborer
 - c. Farm owner
 - d. Farm tenant
 - e. Housewife
 - f. Professional worker
 - g. Business owner
2. Did the student attend college? If so:
 - a. Number of years
 - b. Did he graduate?
 - c. Average grade of student
 - d. Hours of failing work, if any
3. What is the approximate weekly wage of the individual?

After the lists of students checked as attending college was prepared, a question sheet was made out containing the names of students that had attended various higher institutions of learning and the registrars were asked to give the following items of information:

1. Number of years the student attended the institution
2. Did the student graduate?
3. Average grade of student
4. Hours of failing work, if any

As stated before, the number of students falling in the fourth quartile was approximately 9,000. Reports from the high schools to which questionnaires were sent contained 1,033 names. It might be explained that questionnaires

were not sent to all high schools and, as nearly always happens, some high schools did not answer the questionnaires. However, the figures given here represent about 11% sampling and due to a high degree of uniformity the sampling is thought to be rather highly reliable.

In regard to occupations of the students, the report shows the following results:

- a. Common laborer—129
- b. Skilled laborer—69
- c. Farm owner—10
- e. Farm tenant—67
- e. Housewife—357
- f. Professional worker—58
- g. Business owner or manager—101

These figures reduced to per cents are:

- a. Common laborer—12
- b. Skilled laborer—6
- c. Farm owner—1
- d. Farm tenant—6
- e. Housewife—34
- f. Professional worker—6
- g. Business owner or manager—10
- h. Unaccounted for—14
- i. College—8
- j. Business school—1.5

Answers in regard to earning power were received on only 155 students. The range was from \$20 to \$100 per week. The average was \$38. While these figures are frankly estimates, they probably are not too far out of line, especially in small communities where wage conditions are well known. They do show that those making the report have not heard of any outstanding earning capacity or else it would likely be the subject of local comment and would have been reported.

Of a total of 1,033 students only 79 were reported to have attended college. Reports from registrars have been received from 25 of these people. Some reports have not yet been received and some students reported to have attend-

ed certain institutions were reported as never having enrolled by the registrars. These reports show that only 2 graduated from college. The average grade on a percentage basis was 74. The highest average of any student was 89, and the lowest was 69. The total number of semester hours failed was 65%. Eighty-two per cent of these students failed in one or more subjects.

These figures indicate quite clearly that so far as college material is concerned very few students from the lower 25% group will ever make satisfactory college students. As is always the case, there will be an exception occasionally, but the surprising thing in this study is that there appear to be practically no exceptions. These low ranking students either do not have the ability to do good college work according to current standards or else their interest lies along other lines and they are unwilling to put forth the effort to make satisfactory college students.

Another interesting point is the large proportion of the young women who get married very soon after graduating from high school. Further points to be brought out in this study are: what is the proportion of these fourth quartile young women, as compared with the proportion of the first quartile, that get married? A still further point on which it is hoped to obtain information is the number of children that these girls have as compared with the number of children the high ranking girls have. This report should be looked upon as provisional and several other lines of thought will be included in the final report.

When the study is completed it will be published as another monograph growing out of the program of scholastic testing.