

**THE EFFECT OF REMEDIAL READING  
UPON CONTENT AREA GRADES**

**BY**

**BRENDA BURNSIDE MOORE**

THE EFFECT OF REMEDIAL READING  
UPON CONTENT AREA GRADES

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in Education

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by  
Brenda Burnside Moore  
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Research Paper written by Brenda Burnside Moore entitled "The Effect of Remedial Reading Upon Content Area Grades." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, with a major in Guidance and Counseling.

Elizabeth H. Stokes  
Major Professor

Accepted for the Council:

Wayne E. Skaggs  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

According to Carter (1970) reading is a purposeful process of identifying, interpreting, and evaluating ideas in terms of the mental content of the reader. Reading is not just a stimulus-response action, it is a function of the entire person. Meaning is obtained from the person, not from the printed material. When a person has a reading disability it does not affect just his ability to read, but it affects the entire person.

Durr (1970) states that successful remedial reading is essential for the satisfactory performance of students in the content area subjects. In junior and senior high schools, remedial reading may prevent some youths from becoming dropouts.

It is generally agreed that the purpose of remedial reading is to help children overcome reading deficiencies. In order to determine deficiencies, it is necessary to make a careful diagnosis of the types and the extent of the problem.

Remedial reading has proved to be effective in the teaching of reading skills to a person. Studies by



Gates (1969), Turner (1961), Strang (1968), and Wilson (1967) have shown this to be true. Less has been written, however, about the degree of improvement to be expected in the area of content grades.

### Statement of the Problem

It is agreed that reading ability has a direct effect on other subject areas. It is assumed that if reading ability can be improved, other subject areas should also improve.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of remedial reading on subject area grades for a group of eighth grade students of New Providence Junior High School. The subjects involved were enrolled in a remedial reading program for a period of one year.

### Significance of the Problem

Remedial reading is being taught in many schools today. There needs to be some justification for the teaching of remedial reading. Most teachers feel that the child has improved, and this is often reflected on standardized tests of reading. It is assumed that this improvement will be reflected in improved grades in subjects requiring reading. There is need for research

to determine if the teaching of remedial reading does result in improved grades in content areas.

### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to twelve students at New Providence Junior High School. These students had been chosen for remedial reading by the English teachers with no specific criteria used other than teacher recommendations. No attempt was made to control intellectual, environmental, and motivational factors as all the students in the program were included in the study.

### Source of Data

The data used in this study were obtained from the grade rosters for the previous year (1970-1971) and the current year in which students were enrolled in the program (1971-1972). The rosters had been compiled by the teachers and contained all grades made by a student for each six-weeks grading period. Only the first five six-weeks grading periods were used for both years as the data were collected before the end of the current school year. Since there could be no comparative basis for the sixth period in the 1971-

1972 year, it was felt a comparison could be made by using only the first five grading periods for both years. A brief outline of the remedial reading course was obtained from the ninth grade English teachers.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter I discusses the problem of the study. Chapter II presents the review of previous literature on the effects of remedial reading. Chapter III presents the data collected and interprets it. Chapter IV summarizes the findings of this study, presents conclusions, and makes recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is only logical to assume that a child, after remedial reading will show signs of being an improved reader. There are several means of evaluating the success of a remedial reading program. Barge (1965) reports the frequency of methods used. The method most used is the keeping of records of reading activities. Subjective evaluation by the reading teacher is another frequently used method. Grades in English are used about half of the time to appraise success. Lastly, the method used least often, is reports on reading improvement by teachers of other subjects.

Standardized test scores are often used to evaluate the results of remedial reading. Harris (1970) cites the usefulness of standardized tests for measuring the effectiveness of remedial instruction. Strang (1968) says that there is evidence of remedial reading being effective as measured by standardized tests when the students are initially able. However, Strand (1968) points out that sometimes standardized test scores lead to exaggerated results. Care must be taken in interpreting



the test scores. The "true" gain may not be reflected by the standardized score. The gain is often smaller than it appears to be.

Gates (1969) cites several points to be kept in mind when organizing a remedial reading program. The time allowance for remedial work should be generous. A few minutes of drill will not help if the child is not given the opportunity for a reading experience. Remedial work should be either individual or cooperative. Because of the attention demanded in remedial reading, the teacher should have only a few students. These students should have some individual attention and some time to work with other students. Successes should be emphasized in remedial work. The pupil probably has had many failure experiences in order to make him want to read, he needs some immediate success experiences. Improvement should be measured and the record shown. It is important to have constant evaluation going on during remediation. This way both the student and the teacher know where they stand in meeting their objective. This also gives the student the feeling of success he needs, he can see he is making progress.

Turner (1961) says there are three things to keep in mind when organizing a remedial reading class. Most important, the student must want help to improve his reading. Also there should not be more than fifteen

pupils in a class. In each class there should be only one non-reader. A non-reader needs so much of the teacher's time that more than one in a class would be too many.

Remedial reading is not always successful. Taking into consideration the above items, the program should be a success, but there are many variables to consider. Some of the factors that contributed to the lack of success in Texas schools are stated by Steirnagle (1971). Inappropriate material, incompetency of teachers, inadequacy of facilities, pupil teacher ratio, and inadequate methods of pupil screening were the major factors mentioned in the study. When these factors were controlled, the students made great gains.

Humphrey (1971) stated that remedial reading can be successful if there is good organization and staffing. There are certain steps a child goes through in learning to read, and if these steps are not taken into consideration when organizing a remedial program it may not be a success. Humphrey also said that students chosen to be in the program should have the ability to read at higher levels than they were reading.

There have not been many studies on the effect of remedial reading on other subject areas. Bailey and Housekeeper (1972) state that they found individualized reading increased pupils' competency in science.

A study on increased reading efficiency upon semester grade point averages (Belcher, 1972) points out that at the college level there is a correlation between the two. After students took a course in development of reading skills, both their reading rate and their grade point averages had improved. One group of students had taken the course because they could not get any other course they wanted. The second group took the course because they were advised it would help them improve their reading and their grades. The second group showed significantly higher gains in their grade point averages than did the first.

A search of the literature does reveal that research has indicated an improvement in reading as measured by standardized tests. In one study (Woolf, 1957) a group of college students who were given developmental reading made significant gain in reading speed and comprehension, while the students without developmental reading increased in reading speed but lost significantly in comprehension. These results were obtained from data on the test and retest of the Cooperative Reading Evaluation.

There is agreement that remedial reading will improve the person's reading ability and grades if the correct means are used in organizing and teaching a remedial program. However, there seems to be very

little reported research on the effect of remedial reading programs on the grades of the students involved in such programs.



### CHAPTER III

#### PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effect of remedial reading upon content area grades. All twelve students enrolled in the eighth grade remedial reading program at New Providence Junior High School were chosen for the study. The program had been in progress since the beginning of the school year, and the study was conducted after the fifth six-weeks grading period. There were no specific criteria used in determining which students would be part of the program of remedial reading. However, the students were recommended by the teachers on the basis of their observations, as being in need of remedial reading or of having some reading problem.

The remedial reading program lasted for an entire year. The students in this program were given individual and small group instruction. They worked with Scope Magazine, McGraw-Hill Practice Readers, Reader's Digest Skill Builders, some other reading series books, and current literature. The students were read to by the teacher and listened to records. They also did some cutting out of words and pictures from magazines.

No diagnosis of specific reading problems was conducted. As far as could be determined, specific reading skills that the individual students lacked were not taught. The program was quite general and did not deal with individual reading problems.

### Collection of Data

The data collected came from the grade rosters for the years 1970-1971 and 1971-1972. The grades were converted to numerical equivalents by the author. An A was equivalent to twelve points, an A- to eleven points and so forth, decreasing one point for each drop of a grade. One point was given for a grade of F. Grades were obtained for English, mathematics, science and social studies. Grades are recorded in six-weeks periods, and there are six periods per year. The data collected comes from the five grades made by the student while in the seventh grade and five grades made by the student while in the eighth grade. The last six-weeks grades were not included because these data were collected before the school year was concluded.

Table I shows the grades earned in English for the twelve students for the seventh and eighth grades. Table II shows the grades earned in mathematics, table III in science, and table IV in social studies.

TABLE I  
GRADES EARNED IN ENGLISH

Student	Seventh Grade					Eighth Grade				
	Six-weeks periods									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	5	4	3	2	6	1	6	5	5	4
2	1	1	1	4	4	3	1	1	5	6
3	9	7	11	4	4	1	5	8	5	4
4	6	10	9	4	8	1	1	1	9	6
5	1	1	3	1	2	1	2	3	6	7
6	8	11	9	5	6	3	3	7	7	8
7	6	3	1	4	6	1	6	8	7	9
8	4	7	4	2	6	1	2	3	2	3
9	3	11	4	2	6	6	1	5	5	2
10	5	5	3	3	6	6	9	9	8	6
11	3	8	6	3	9	6	4	3	6	6
12	4	4	5	1	2	3	1	3	5	4

TABLE II  
GRADES EARNED IN MATHEMATICS

[illegible]



TABLE III  
GRADES EARNED IN SCIENCE

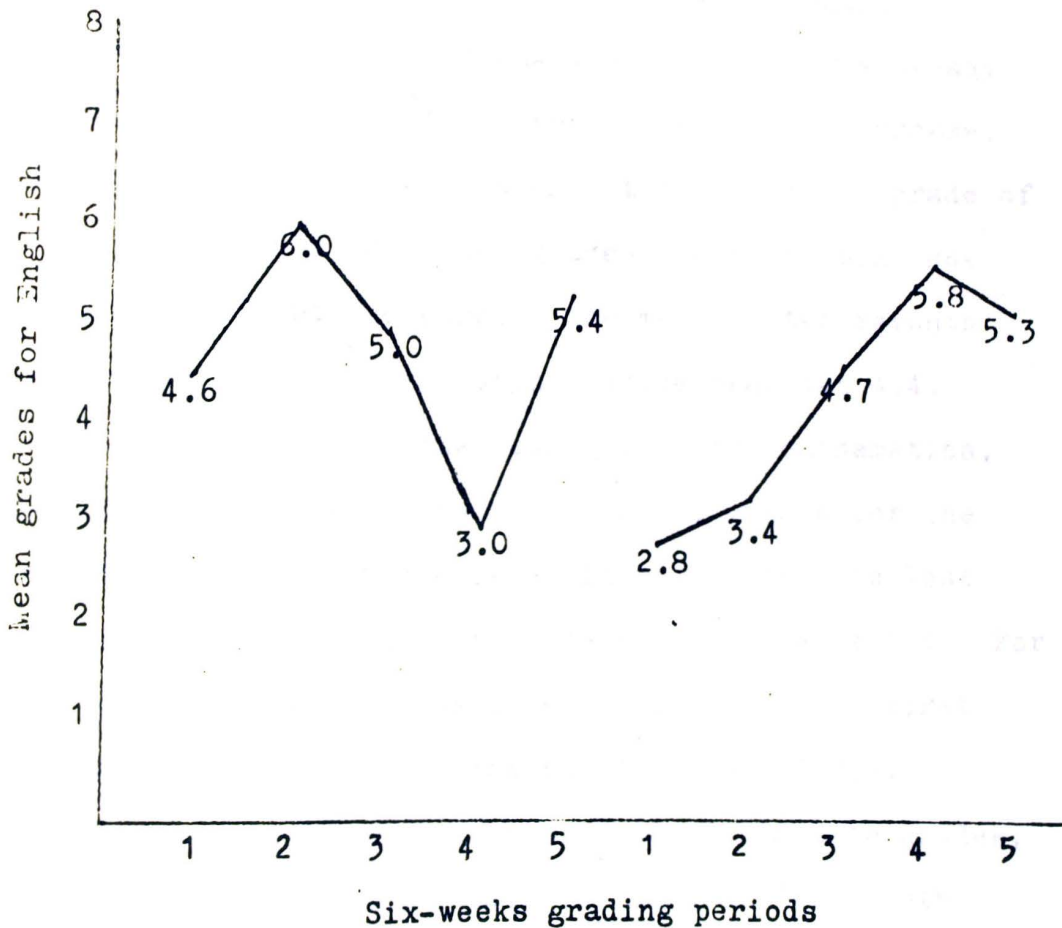
Student	Seventh Grade					Eighth Grade				
	Six-weeks periods									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	5	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	6	4
2	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1
3	5	3	6	5	5	3	1	1	1	1
4	10	8	4	12	6	1	1	1	3	1
5	4	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	5	4	3	2	2	1	3	1	1	1
7	8	5	3	2	5	3	1	1	1	1
8	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
9	5	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
10	5	5	6	5	9	1	1	1	1	1
11	5	4	4	2	1	1	6	1	1	4
12	5	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

TABLE IV  
GRADES EARNED IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Student	Seventh Grade					Eighth Grade				
	Six-weeks periods									
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	3	3	1	3	8	2	9	11	9	9
2	4	2	4	2	2	2	7	10	9	9
3	2	4	5	3	3	1	1	3	8	8
4	3	5	7	1	6	9	6	3	12	9
5	3	2	1	2	6	3	3	3	1	1
6	3	7	7	3	2	6	1	6	6	6
7	5	5	3	2	9	3	1	2	8	1
8	5	2	2	3	5	10	7	9	7	9
9	2	5	7	1	6	6	6	8	9	8
10	9	9	9	6	6	3	3	2	3	3
11	6	6	4	4	9	9	6	9	8	9
12	2	3	5	1	3	4	7	6	6	6

The most accurate picture of the students' achievement in content areas seemed to be demonstrated by the use of graphs. There are five graphs, four showing the mean grades for the content areas and one showing the means of the grades for all content areas.

GRAPH I



Graph I shows the mean grades for English. The English grades give the most indication of an upward trend. From a grade of 2.8 in the first grading period

of the eighth grade to a grade of 5.3 in the fifth grading period there is a steady increase. Even though there was a decrease from 5.8 to 5.3 in the fifth period, the grade of 5.3 is still higher than the grade of 4.7 made in the third grading period.

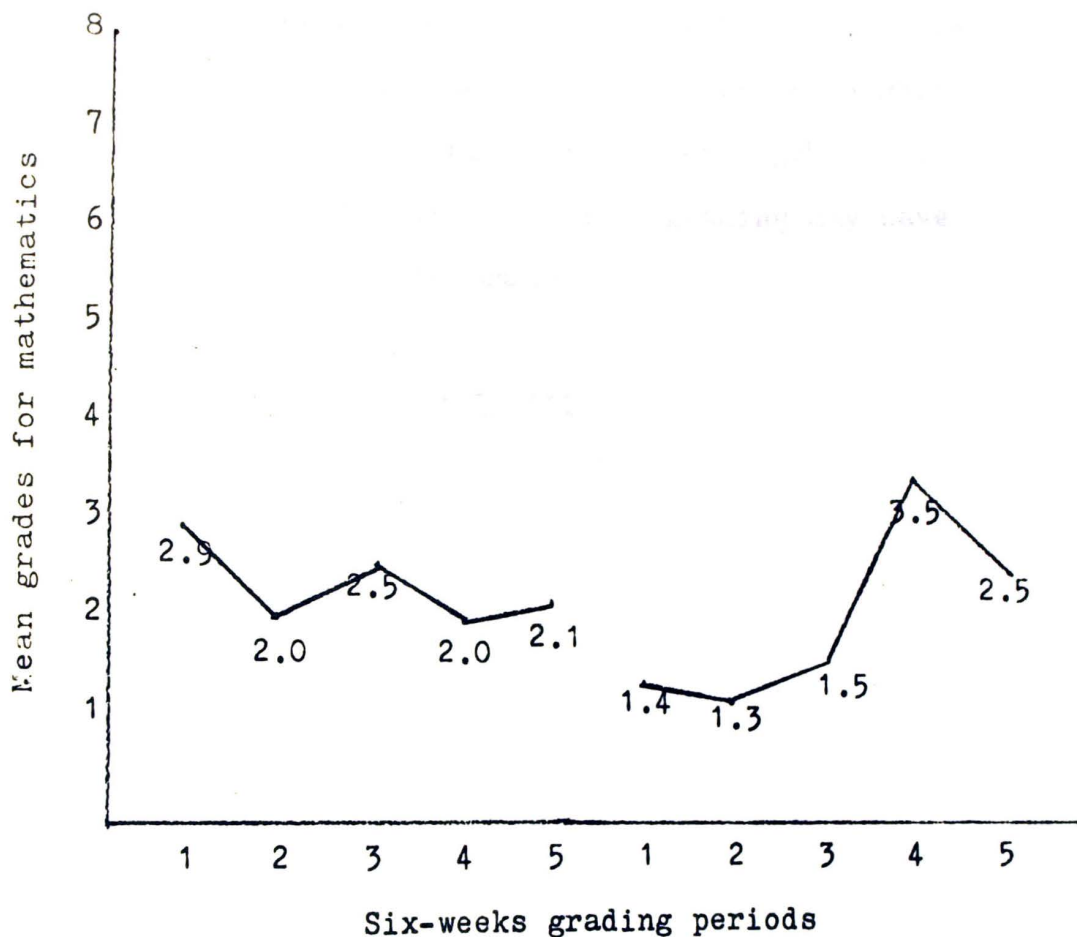
When the eighth grade English grades are compared to the seventh grade English grades it is apparent that the eighth grade grades are more consistent and do show steady improvement on the part of the students. The grades for seventh grade English do not show a steady progressive rise, instead they increase and decrease. The last grade of 5.4 is higher than the first grade of 4.6, but between these two grades there has been one increase and two decreases. The mean of the seventh grade was 5.0 while the eighth grade mean was 4.4.

Graph II shows the mean grades for mathematics. There is not a steady increase in the grades for the eighth grade, but there is an increase, and the last grade of 2.5 is higher than the first grade of 1.4. For the seventh grade grades this is not true; the first grade of 2.9 is higher than the last one of 2.1.

The mean of the seventh grade mathematics grades, 2.3, is slightly higher than the mean of the eighth grade grades, which is 2.0. Reading would not be expected to be as important in mathematics as it would be in subjects that required more reading.



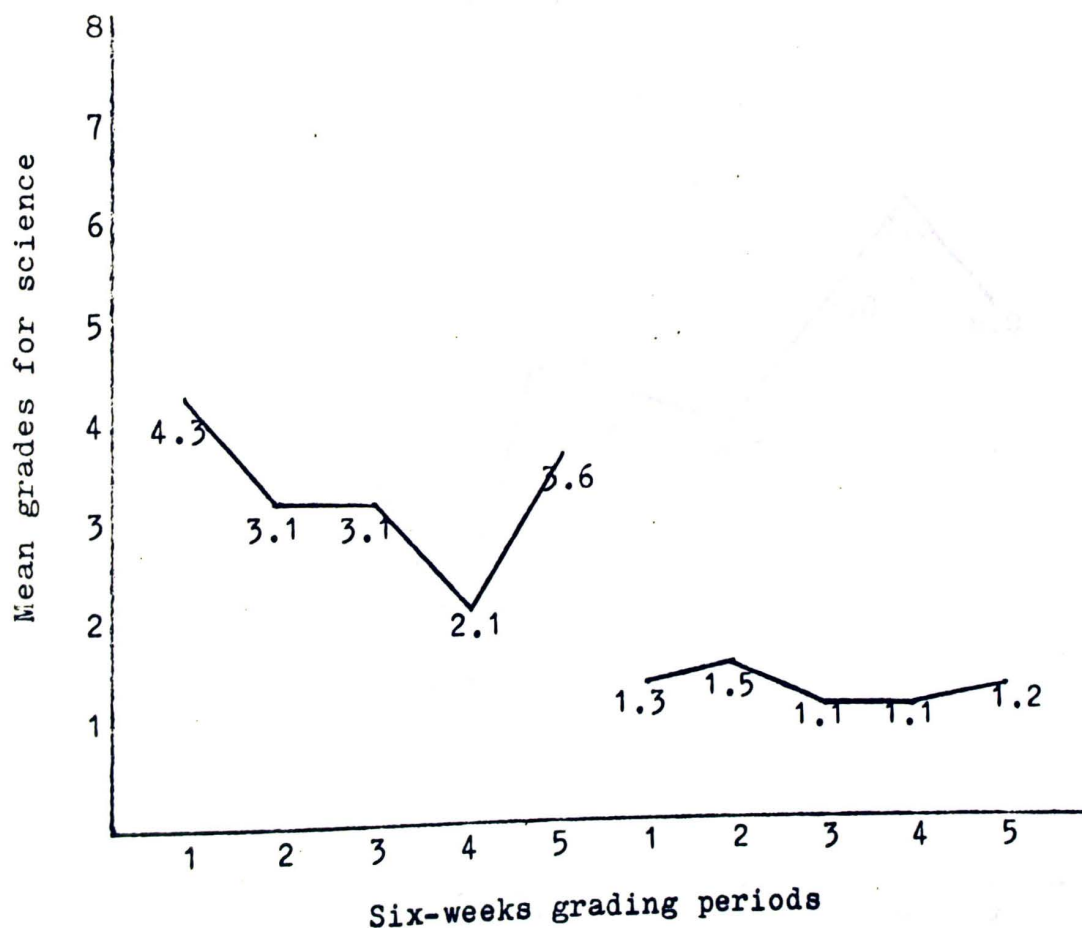
GRAPH II



Graph III shows the mean grades for science. Neither the seventh nor the eighth grade grades show a steady improvement by the students. In the seventh grade the grades decreased considerably from the first to the fourth grading periods. Although there was an increase in the fifth grading period, the grades were lower than the first grading period. In the eighth

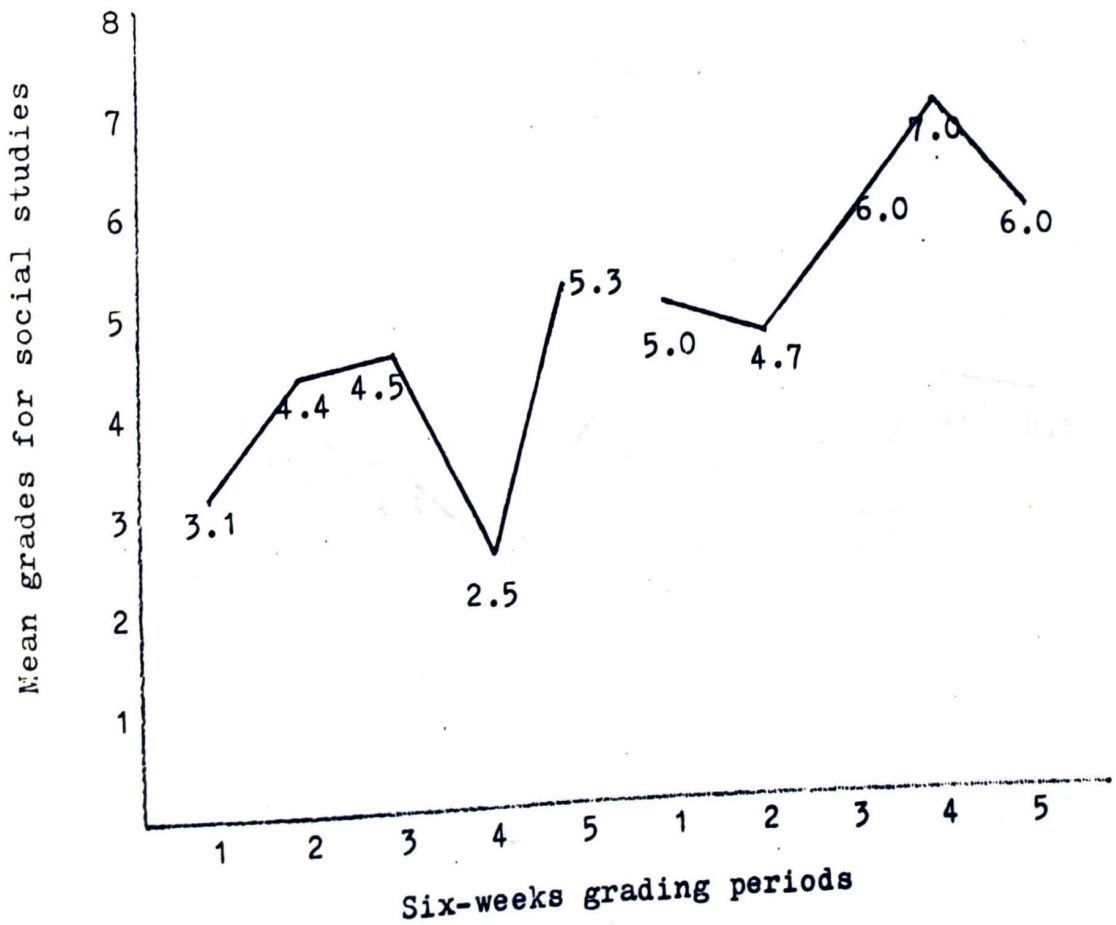
grade the grades decreased from the first to the fifth grading period, but only slightly. The mean of the seventh grade grades in science was 3.2, whereas the mean of the eighth grade grades was 1.2. It will be noted that none of the science grades in the eighth grade were as high as the lowest seventh grade. It appears that a different system of grading may have been used in the eighth grade.

GRAPH III



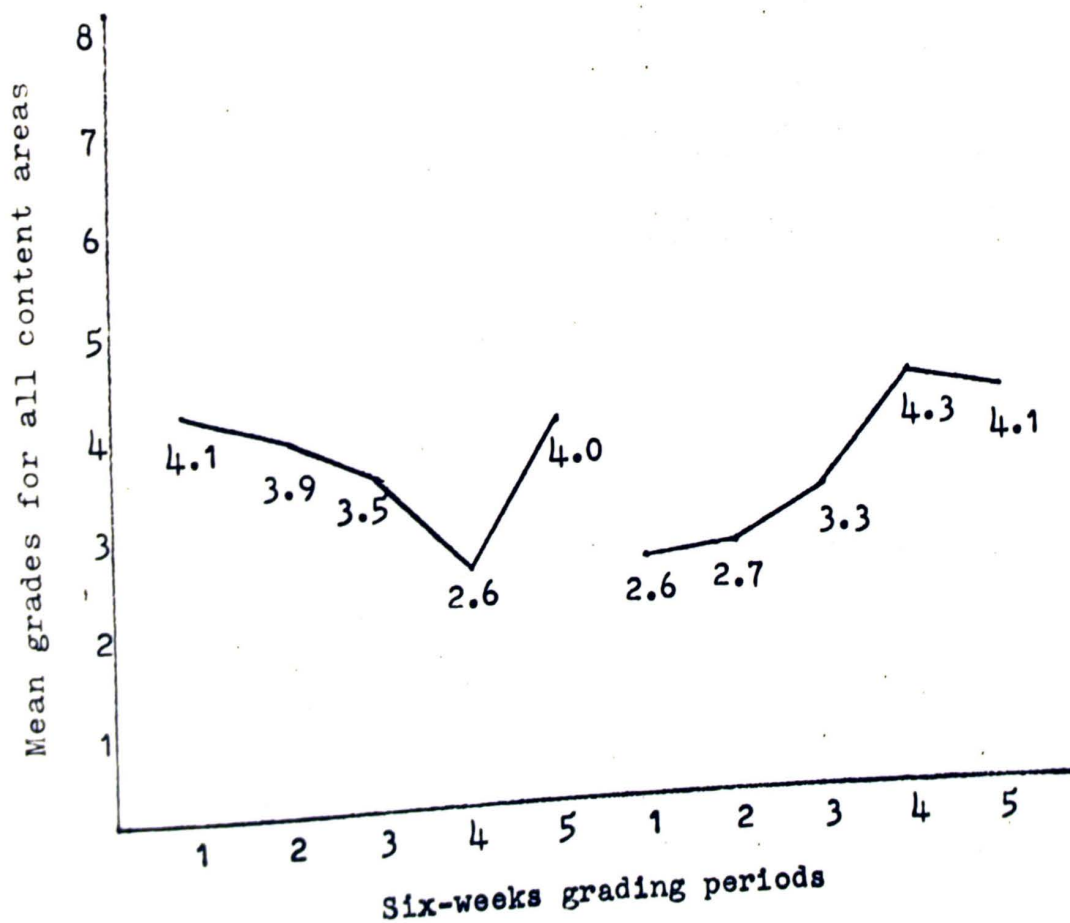
Graph IV shows the mean grades for social studies. There are two drops during the five grading periods of the eighth grade, but the grades increased from the first grading period to the fifth. For the eighth grade grades there is a sharp increase over the first two grading periods. In the seventh grade only the fifth grading period is higher than the other periods. The means of the seventh grade grades is 4.0, the mean for the eighth grade is 5.8. This shows that the grades overall of the eighth grade were better than those of the seventh grade.

GRAPH IV



Graph V shows the means of the grades for all content areas. During the seventh grade there is a slight decrease from the first grading period to the fifth, from 4.1 to 4.0. This is only a slight decrease, but the fourth grading period shows a large decrease from the first, 4.1 to 2.6. In the eighth grade there is no large decrease. In the eighth grade there is a steady increase from the first grading period to the fourth. The fifth grading period grades decreased slightly, but the mean of the fifth grading period is still higher than

GRAPH V





the mean of the first grading period in the eighth grade. From this graph it can be concluded that the grades overall improved from the seventh grade to the eighth grade.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect remedial reading has on school grades in subject matter areas. With many schools having remedial reading program, there needs to be research to justify these programs.

Reading specialists agree that many changes do occur as a result of remedial reading, attitudes towards reading improve, standardized test scores improve, and reading skills improve. There is a scarcity of research, however, on the effect of remedial reading programs on school grades earned by students enrolled in remedial reading programs.

The subjects used in the study were enrolled in the eighth grade remedial reading program at New Providence Junior High School in the Clarksville-Montgomery County, Tennessee school system. Twelve students were enrolled in the program for the entire 1971-1972 academic year. The students enrolled in the program were recommended by the classroom teacher but no specific diagnostic procedures were used to select the students.

The study was conducted at the end of the fifth grading period and included all the students in the program. The grades earned by the twelve students for the first five six-weeks periods of their seventh grade year were compared with the grades earned for the first five six-weeks grading periods of their eighth grade year. The grades were collected for English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The mean scores of the twelve students in each subject for each grading period were entered on graphs for comparison purposes. There were inconsistencies from one grading period to another with no consistent upward or downward trend in any subject. The English grades for the eighth grade showed the most consistent upward trend, with the social studies grades in the eighth grade showing the next most consistent upward trend. Mathematics and science were inconsistent at both grade levels from one grading period to the next.

There was a consistent increase in the mean of all four grades combined from the first to the fourth grading period in the eighth grade. There was only a slight decrease in the fifth grading period, however, the fifth grading period still remained higher than the first three grading periods. The seventh grade mean grades for the five grading periods for all subjects showed a consistent decrease from the first grading period through the fourth,

but increased in the fifth period. The fifth grading period mean was still less than the mean of the first grading period.

### Conclusions

It was not felt that it would be meaningful to test the mean scores for significance of increase because of the inconsistencies apparent from one grading period to the next. It was felt that the graphs, therefore, presented the most meaningful description of the changes that occurred.

Although the data showed that the students' grades did improve overall from the seventh grade to the eighth grade, the absence of a control group would not permit the conclusion to be drawn that the change could be attributed to the remedial reading program. It is possible that the grades of eighth grade students not enrolled in the remedial reading program in the 1971-1972 year would show the same upward trend.

It was felt when the study was designed that the use of the grades for the same students for the two year period would be sufficient to determine if the remedial reading program had made a difference in their school grades. The inconsistencies in grading from one grading period to another, however, and the different grading



procedures of teachers from one subject to another and one grade level to another indicate that a control group should have been selected. It could have then been determined if the same trends were present with the grades of other students in the eighth grade as compared to the seventh grade.

### Recommendations

Based on the review of the literature the following recommendations should be considered when setting up a remedial reading program. Careful selection of students for a remedial reading program should be emphasized. Careful diagnosis of reading difficulties should be made. The teacher should place emphasis on developing needed skills and abilities in an effort to correct reading problems.

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. that further research be conducted to determine the effect of the remedial reading program on standardized test scores.

2. that further research be conducted to determine the effect of the remedial reading program on school grades, using control groups to secure more definitive results.

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