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No. 409

THE LAUNCHING OF AN ACCELERATED SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of
the University of North Texas in
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

Alcynthia R. Montgomery, B. A., M. Ed.

Denton, Texas

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The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the readiness, planning, training and implementation stages of staff development in the implementation of the Accelerated Schools Program in a suburban elementary school. The research questions focused on how the school became interested in the accelerated program; the steps that were taken to make the school ready to accept the program; the training made available to the staff, parents and students; how teacher approval and acceptance were achieved; and how the implementation was initiated and to what degree.

Forty-eight staff members agreed to participate in the research. Participant observation was utilized along with interviews (both formal and informal), an open-ended questionnaire, parent surveys, and further documented collections. Data analysis was ongoing and followed a constant descriptive model.

The findings indicated that implementation of the accelerated program was not underway, and was still in the training stage. The administration was reserved in creating a vision for the school due to the site-based leadership

policy of bottom-up decision making. There were pockets of implementation in certain classrooms, but even those were not consistently accelerated. There is evidence to suggest that there is hope for the implementation of the accelerated program, as more training is provided and successes begin to be attributed to it.

Further research topics include comparative studies among matched pairs of schools and, more finitely, matched pairs of teachers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The goal of an Accelerated Schools Program (Levin, 1988a) is to bring the disadvantaged student into the mainstream by the end of sixth grade. This can be done by: (a) maintaining student self-esteem, (b) establishing and maintaining effective team work among educators, parents, and community, (c) using appropriate curriculum and instructional strategies, and (d) consistently assessing all of the ASP factors.

Levin (1988a), of Stanford University, has stated that the ASP can be cost-effective and also easy to implement and administer.

It is a challenging, faster paced curriculum, along with structural governance, and instructional, community, and parental outreach strategies that support the aim of bringing the disadvantaged students into the educational mainstream. (p. v.)

In light of the success rate that Levin had in his pilot districts of Redwood and San Francisco in California, the ASP was also adopted by other school districts in California, Illinois, Missouri, and Texas—where the ASP had the support of Texas Education Agency Commissioner Lionel Meno. Levin has built an alliance of educators and

associated institutions by which students can learn faster during all phases of their education through assistance by all means possible. Building on strengths, empowerment, and unity of purpose are the pillars that have formed the base for the growth of acceleration. Comer (1980), of the Yale Child Study Center, has evidence to suggest that "an accelerated approach can raise student achievement of the disadvantaged to the national norms for all students during the elementary years, and this gain can be sustained in later years" (p. 157).

In 1992-93, the Aberdeen Independent School District (AISD) (fictitious name to secure anonymity for participants) initiated the ASP. There were few guidelines for the implementation of the program, perhaps because it is philosophical in nature. The philosophy of the ASP—that it adapts to the needs of the institution rather than the institution to the program—may cause some difficulties in implementation.

As the population of the AISD has changed from suburban to urban, the district has felt the impact in the form of declining test scores, poor student attendance, and teacher frustration. Fourteen schools are currently undergoing acceleration, and each school is unique in its approach to implementation.

Although the AISD has always maintained a reputation for excellence and innovation, during the past few years the

district experienced a change in demographics and is dealing with economic pressures due to fund restriction by state legislation. AISD has made a commitment to the ASP. Suzanne Still, as a representative of the Satellite School at Texas A&M University, has conducted in-service training with follow-ups, explaining the building of the ASP into the schools. Satellite schools such as the one at Texas A&M are direct links to Stanford University, and are under the supervision of Levin. The formation of these schools is endowed by a major corporation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the readiness, planning, training, and implementation of an Accelerated School Program within Central Elementary School (fictitious name) (1992-1994) in AISD.

Research Questions

This study focused on and was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did Central Elementary School become interested in the acceleration program?
2. What steps were taken to make the school ready to accept this program?
3. What training was made available to the staff as well as to parents and students?
4. How was teacher approval and acceptance achieved?

5. How was implementation initiated, and to what degree to date?

Definitions

Accelerated Schools Program (ASP): A program whereby students are brought to mainstream ability by sixth grade, without remediation.

At-risk students: Any student in danger of not graduating from high school. The term disadvantaged is sometimes used synonymously.

Central Elementary (CE): An elementary school in the downtown area of a suburb of Dallas, Texas. CE has a demographically heterogeneous population.

Educational acceleration: The strategy for achieving accelerated learning.

Qualitative research: Data that is rich in description of people, places, and conversations, but is not easily handled by statistical procedures.

Texas Education Agency (TEA): The state regulatory agency for educational matters in Texas.

Texas State Definition of At-Risk: The state provides criteria for identifying at-risk students, or students who are at risk of dropping out of school. Those criteria for 1991-1992 are as follows (note: there has not been a further update):

A student in grades 1-6 who has not met the promotion requirements for a particular grade level is at-risk until

the student meets the promotion requirements of that grade level.

A student in grades PK-6 is defined as at-risk if the student: 1) did not perform satisfactorily on a beginning-of-school year readiness or achievement test, 2) failed at least one reading, writing, or math section of the most recent 3rd through 5th grade TEAMS/TAAS, 3) is a student of limited English proficiency (LEP), 4) has been a victim of abuse, as confirmed by the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS), or 5) engages in delinquent conduct as described by the Texas Family Code, 51.032(a).

A student in grades 7-12 is defined as at-risk if the student: 1) was retained (not promoted) at least once in grades 1-6 and is still unable to master the essential elements in the 7th grade or higher, 2) is at least two years below grade level in reading or math, 3) failed at least two courses and is not expected to graduate within four years of 9th grade entrance, or 4) failed at least one reading, writing, or math section of the most recent 7th through 12th TEAMS/TAAS.

Each homeless student and each nonhandicapped student residing in a residential placement facility outside the district of the parent/guardian residence is identified as at-risk.

Special education students are not to be identified as at-risk even if they meet one or more at-risk criteria. The

needs of special education students should be met through each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Each school reviews annually the list of at-risk students and determines appropriate programming for each student.

Procedures

Sample

The sample population was drawn from the staff of Central Elementary who agreed to participate in the research. A letter was sent to participants (Appendix A), and those who answered affirmatively became the sample. Key informants were later selected from the sample.

Instrumentation

Several types of instrumentation were utilized during the research: an open-ended questionnaire, a formal interview, an informal interview, observation, and journal writing. A review of the archival information relevant to the research was also done.

Method

This research is in the form of a case study of an elementary staff development program, ASP, that is in the process of being implemented. It was also necessary to chronicle the history of the ASP in the school district in order to establish a significant study.

Data Analysis

Data was categorized as it was collected. Major categories emerged according to the frequency of occurrence, and possible impact in direct relevance to the four-point plan of ASP. As data from the different instruments began to triangulate across several categories, major themes emerged. This qualitative analysis of data resulted in findings significant to the status of the staff development implementation.

Significance of Study

A major problem faced by schools undergoing acceleration implementation is lack of program itinerary. Acceleration must come from within the school itself; very little that is achieved outside can be generalized to individual schools. Moreover, little has been written concerning how individual schools went about the process. Description of an experimental implementation might prove helpful.

When Central Elementary was investigating the possibility of becoming accelerated, there was only one place to look: Hollibrook Elementary in Houston. There were few similarities between the schools. The significant similarity was the fact that Hollibrook was also an at-risk school. There were few studies, most in Illinois, and from Levin (1989) in Stanford, California. Having another example would have allowed the readiness phase of the staff

development plan to be more expedient and less vague. Hollibrook had no written journal or research from the viewpoint of staff development, but Central Elementary did ask the questions, upon the visitation, that could have been resolved by a written document, rather than impromptu interviews with staff members who related inconsistent generalities rather than specifics. Whenever specific questions were generated relating to a time line, or stages of acceptance, the common answer was stated in such a way as to mean that because something worked at one school, it did not mean that it would work at another. As an understanding of the philosophy took hold, it was possible to understand this significance. However, it would have helped as a guide in responding to teacher frustrations. Also, in understanding the infeasibility of generalizing findings in one school to another, it would have given greater freedom to explore our own inner workings, rather than to consider that we were always doing something wrong, and that ASP would be an overnight change.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

ASP does not refer to those students in programs such as gifted, talented, or handicapped either physically or mentally. Rather, it refers to programs for those students who lack home and community resources to fully benefit from conventional schooling practices, including but not limited to students with low academic achievement and high secondary drop-out rates, students from racial and ethnic minority groups, and students from an economically disadvantaged population: in short, children who lack experiences that allow them to benefit from school.

"Disadvantaged students are likely to become disadvantaged adults with high rates of unemployment, low paying jobs, poor political participation, and they are likely to produce children who will be themselves, educationally disadvantaged" (Levin, 1988b, p. 1). Presently, about 30% of all public school students in the United States are disadvantaged. The Texas Education Agency further defines the at-risk child as one who lacks experiences that would benefit him/her academically (Still, 1992).

History of Educational Acceleration

Educational acceleration is the strategy for achieving accelerated learning. All learning takes place under specific conditions (Carroll, 1963), and it is the purpose of accelerated education to create those conditions (Levin, 1988a). There are three ways that acceleration can be reflected: (a) more learning at a given level of difficulty, (b) more learning at a higher level of difficulty, or (c) a combination of the two. These tend to increase the amount of learning that takes place in a given period of time.

The amount that a student will learn over a period of time will depend on: (a) capacity, (b) effort, (c) time devoted to learning, and (d) quality of learning resources. Capacity is a personal attribute that enables a student to determine the success with which he or she can undertake a learning task (Levin, 1988a, p. 5). All students have different aptitudes to learn specific subjects—aptitudes related to their intelligence, character, emotional stability, and health. Effort is how intensely the student uses his or her capacity to learn a task in a given amount of time. Routinely, the greater the effort, the more learning. Motivation and incentives figure into the amount of exposure to a particular learning activity, which includes the time allocation both inside and outside the classroom.

The quality of learning resources depends on the amount, type, and relational ability of the resources available to the learner. These include: (a) quality of teaching, (b) characteristics of the curriculum, (c) organization of the instruction, (d) availability of texts and learning materials, (e) characteristics of fellow students, (f) quality of the learning facility, and (g) quality of the home environment. "Strategies to accelerate learning should operate on all four dimensions rather than a single one and should be designed to take account of interactions among the four factors" (Levin, 1988a, p. 7).

Many accelerated approaches to education have been developed. It is ironic that even though most of those approaches were geared to the slower learners, the programs and their strategies are used more often today to: (a) raise achievement levels of high achieving students, (b) manage behavior to make more time available, and c) place students in school at an earlier age.

Lozanov (1978) organized the Suggestive Accelerative Learning Technique (SALT) to alter the affective domain. The Bereiter-Engelman (1966) approach placed heavy emphasis on language development in response to the premise that cultural and language deprivation may be the cause of the achievement gap. The Yale Child Study Center (Comer, 1980) united parents with teachers as the governing body in school decision making and problem solving. Bloom's (1968) mastery

learning was an attempt to equalize the entry level characteristics of students by reducing the time variance students needed to reach mastery of a unit. The Better Baby Institute (Comer, 1980) introduced a concept called patterning that called for repetition of physical and cognitive exercises to assure proper development. Berliner (1985) advocated more student learning engagement through instructional pacing. Levin (1988a) has built a framework designed to help learners learn faster.

Vann's (1991) article does not mention accelerated schooling but comes very close to Levin's four-point plan. These proposals are geared to meet the needs of the at-risk children in Vann's school. They are designed to provide more (a) peer tutoring, (b) intensive coaching on basic skills by parent volunteers or high school students, (c) mainstreaming opportunities for special education children, (d) social workers and home visits, (e) counseling and guidance sessions, (f) parenting workshops, (g) intensive small group and individual remediation in basic skill areas, (h) summer school programs, (i) Saturday morning programs, (j) emphasis on listening, critical thinking, and study skills, (k) staff development for classroom teachers in effectiveness with at-risk kids, (l) transitional classes or smaller classes, (m) basic skill instruction, (n) all-day kindergarten classes, and (o) pre-kindergarten classes.

Calfee, LaSalle, and Cancino (1990) stated:

Teachers must use the natural knowledge and skills that all students bring to school and explicitly relate this information to the formal literacy demands of education. Also, schools need to examine their curriculum and testing so that they can move from basic literacy to critical literacy goals. (p. 47)

Fetterman and Haertel (1991) wrote:

Decision making should extend beyond school curricular and policy issues. Teachers should also be involved in decision making about the evaluation itself. The Accelerated School Program is a challenging educational effort and a much needed step to close the gap between disenfranchised and mainstream students. Its evaluation will have to be as novel and refreshing as the program itself if it is to be responsive to this challenge. (p. 22)

Slavin and Madden (1991) observed a five-year accelerated program in Baltimore called Success For All. At the end of the first year they wrote: "The results so far show the potential power of a coordinated approach to school-wide restructuring" (p. 19). They were observing the following programs: (a) remediation prevention, (b) classroom change, (c) continuous progress (individual pacing), (d) cooperative learning, (e) supplementary/

remedial, and (f) tutoring, including Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI).

A comparison was made between constructivism and acceleration in which it was noted that they share the same philosophical past (Accelerated Schools, 1994).

Constructivism is currently being used synonymously with accelerated schools. The accelerated schools' philosophy and process are firmly grounded in the constructivist approach (origin, methods, nature and limits of human knowledge). Constructivist concepts such as learning by doing, taking responsibility for one's own learning, and building shared understandings are embedded in the three principles of accelerated schools.

Piaget (as cited in Accelerated Schools, 1994) is credited with the origination of constructivism. Piaget noted that students are more stimulated to learn through observation during experiences; they construct new knowledge into their own world view and therefore gain new knowledge. In the constructivist environment the learning itself is empowering because it provides the learner with the materials to construct his or her own knowledge.

For a learning experience to be powerful and truly engaging, students must be able to make it their own. Powerful learning must occur at all times.

A key to the success of the accelerated school process is that through personal discovery and growth, individuals

begin to understand the philosophy and process as a part of themselves, and see themselves as fundamental parts of the philosophy and process. So powerful are their experiences that they build a new school culture, in which everyone in the school community works in concert for the benefit of the children.

Several studies have been done as to the implementation of ASP at a specific school site. Ferrara and Knight's (1993) qualitative study of a parent involvement cadre in an urban elementary school showed that cadre membership remained fairly stable. The inquiry process was used by the parent cadres, and the parents became more involved in the classrooms.

Another study (Chenowith & Kushman, 1993) regarding the readiness phase of change was done at three low-achieving elementary schools that implemented the ASP. The findings suggest that a whole-school transformation model must enlist the help of people who can show how the new model can fit with the existing school culture so that it is understood, shared and developed according to the school needs. The principals must be actively involved, use an indirect presentation approach, and understand staff experiences. Also, the principals need a clear vision of how their roles will change and how classrooms will eventually look.

The Louisiana ASP is a statewide network of schools that are changing from the traditional mode of schooling for

at-risk students to one of acceleration. In the project's first year report, the findings offer evidence that the three principles of ASP (unity of purpose, empowerment and building on strengths) are taking hold (St. John, 1992).

In a study of two ASP schools that had participated in the process for two years, the findings suggest that teachers achieved a spirit of empowerment, engaged in cooperative instructional planning, and provided enriched, active learning experiences (McCarthy, 1992).

There are presently three programs aimed at successfully preventing dropouts: the ASP; the Annie E. Casey Foundation's New Futures Initiative, which is aimed at establishing community collaboratives to address youth problems; and Baltimore's Success For All program for disadvantaged inner city elementary school children, based on Robert Slavin's research findings. These findings are as follows: To solve the dropout problems, the educators must identify school population characteristics, examine the district's management information system, utilize its resources, pick workable solutions, and get community support for district goals. The common characteristics of these three programs are early prevention; aggressive leadership; parent incorporation; school-based solutions; no remedial programs; empowerment for teachers and administrators to become active decision-makers; continuous progress in language skills that emphasize problem-solving

and teamwork; teachers who are tough, compassionate, and professional; teachers who relate positively to the different cultures; smaller classes; districts and states serving as resources and encouraging local decision-making; never allowing students to disappear into anonymity; teachers integrating own goals with those of the community; and school leaders mobilizing the entire community to help students (Baas, 1991).

Levin's (1988a) four-point plan suggests the following:

1. An effective approach should focus on creating learning activities, which are characterized by high expectations and high status for the participants.

2. A successful program should set a deadline for closing the achievement gap so that, ultimately, educationally disadvantaged children will be able to benefit from mainstream instruction.

3. An effective curriculum for the disadvantaged should not only be faster paced and actively engage the interest of such children to enhance their motivation, it should also include concepts, analysis, problem-solving, and interesting applications.

4. The design and implementation of successful educational programs to address the needs of the educationally disadvantaged will require the involvement of parents, the use of community resources, and the extensive

participation of teachers in formulating the intervention that will be provided.

Several assumptions underlie the ASP:

1. Unity of purpose: An agreement should be made among parents teachers and students on a common set of goals for everyone's efforts.

2. Empowerment: Key participants are to make important decisions at the school level and in the home to improve the education of students; no more laying of blame or saying that something is beyond their control. This would be manifested as a school-based decision approach with heavy involvement of teachers, parents, and administrators. There should also be a useful system of assessment.

3. Building on strengths: Utilizing all the learning and resources that students, parents, school staff, and communities bring to the educational endeavor. Disadvantaged students often have unusual assets, such as curiosity, oral and artistic expression, and high manipulative prowess. Building administrators are often underutilized because their role is to command rather than be a team member. They should be released from administrative duties to allow them to work creatively with parents, students, and staff.

The main features of an accelerated school are:

1. School-based governance, whereby the actual choice of curriculum, instructional strategies, and other school

policies are decided by the instructional staff of the school within the latitude set by the school district and with the principal taking an important leadership role.

2. Establishment of goals, including good student and teacher attendance and participation in school activities, and high morale boosting activities. Vandalism and behavior problems should be curtailed within the framework of district guidelines. Contributions of the school and community should be reciprocal through performing arts and community service.

3. Consistent pupil and school assessment should be established at school entry with periodic evaluations using a wide-spectrum of standardized achievement tests. These tailored assessments should be created by school staff for each strand of the curriculum to see if students are succeeding and also for diagnostic and accountability purposes. A school-wide assessment should evaluate parental involvement, student and teacher attendance, and student participation as well as the effectiveness of any other methods that might be initiated.

4. Improving nutrition and health of students necessitates working with both families and social service agencies to assure that these needs are met.

The curriculum uses a heavy language-based approach for all subjects, including math. "There will be emphasis on analysis, concepts, problem-solving and applications in all

subjects from the early primary grades" (Levin, 1988a, p. 28).

It is important to develop interesting applications that relate to the daily lives of the students in order to demonstrate the usefulness of the tools and concepts presented to them. There should be increased attention to the arts and physical education. "Students should be active subjects in their learning, rather than passive objects" (Levin, 1988a, p. 28).

The basic instructional strategies involved are: (a) reinforcing curricular approach, (b) making available more instructional time, (c) peer-tutoring, (d) grouping students heterogeneously, (e) learning cooperatively, and (f) creating consistent outside assignments or homework to teach independence and self-reliance. These strategies can be group or individual, beginning as early as the first grade.

Utilizing community resources is another facet of accelerated education. Adult tutors such as retired teachers or senior citizens, high school or college students, area businesses, and social service agencies such as Big Brothers or Sisters may be brought into the program.

All parents or guardians should be asked to affirm an agreement that clarifies the goals of the ASP as well as the obligation of parents, staff, and student. This can be in the form of a contract. The parents should require a reasonable bedtime of their child as well as the child's

regular, punctual attendance at school. Parents should have high expectations for their child and talk regularly of the importance of schooling. They should have an interest in their child's activities and encourage reading on a daily basis. They should insist that home assignments be completed and should respond quickly to questions from school. Parents should respond by signing a written agreement between all parties, should be given the opportunity to participate in school programs, and should receive training for providing active assistance to their children. They may need to go to adult basic education agencies to provide them with their own high expectations in regard to schooling.

Extended daily sessions are recommended, until five o'clock each afternoon if possible, which will increase learning time. Physical activities, arts, time for having extra help with homework, and for the younger students a rest period, and a time to unwind with structured play are some of the valid uses of this extended time. A summer session is also suggested to increase learning time.

This program is cost effective in that it implies the use of already available resources. Any additional costs would be for the extended sessions, summer programs, and possible parent education. "On the basis of benefit-cost studies, additional costs may be far outweighed by additional social benefits" (Levin, 1988a, p. 33).

District personnel may ask how long it takes to fully implement a program of this type. The pilot programs suggest it may take six years, or less, as districts gain experience. It is suggested that the program be implemented in one or two grades per year. Instructional packages have been prepared to better organize staff training time.

The school's organization may have to change slightly to increase accountability and decision making responsibilities per individual school:

1. Create appropriate decision making structures at the local school level.
2. Provide schools with technical assistance resources to address needs.
3. Structure an assessment team to evaluate the total process.
4. Change the district orientation from a central agency that sets out standardized directions and directives for individual schools to one that provides services for local school clients.

A preliminary ASP model, developed by Levin (1988a), a professor of education and economics at Stanford University and director of the Center for Educational Research at Stanford, provides information and technical assistance to schools during the development phase. In his capacity as a specialist in the economics of human resources and who has

written many books and articles on accelerated learning, Levin oversees the Stanford ASP Center.

History of Accelerated Schools in Aberdeen

Three years ago the researcher read an article by Levin about acceleration instead of remediation. The interesting point of the article was that if someone were about to miss a train, this person should hurry up, not slow down. Concurrent with this research, an upper level administrator in the AISD central administration was also becoming interested in the theory of acceleration.

The researcher decided to ask two open-ended questions regarding the possibility of accelerated schooling being implemented in the AISD:

1. How would this program fit into the district?
2. Are some of these things being done at present?

These questions were posed in a questionnaire to 48 staff members and parents.

Thirty questionnaires were returned. The researcher listed each of the four points of the Levin plan and requested that the respondents make notes as to the above questions.

In summarized form, the points, as well as the responses, included the following:

1. Learning activities: An effective approach would create learning activities characterized by high

expectations and a learning environment characterized by high status for the participant.

Response: Most felt that the district was doing this, at least in part. Annual planning for each school looks at climate and high expectations with action plans written to address them. The school actively seek ways to recognize students for their achievement in every learning area. A few dissenters who felt that the emphasis in our district is on the product rather than the participation. Winning is valued, trying is not. Too many teachers attach low expectations to culturally and economically different children. High expectations are set only for high achievers.

Many times, in the teacher's mind, the curriculum dictates the format and creativity is not used. Alternate education programs in the district are for minimal skills, not high expectations.

In reviewing essential elements, high expectations are a key element. Some classrooms and individual teachers create the kind of learning environment described, but this is not done school-wide or district-wide. To establish a high status environment, one needs to make it high status for teachers to work there. Pay the teachers more and make participation special so this feeling will filter down to the kids.

2. Setting deadlines for closing the gap: A successful program sets a deadline for closing the achievement gap so that, ultimately, educationally disadvantaged children may benefit from mainstream education.

Response: Many of the survey participants questioned this point. They wondered if the ASP were for all students, not just the disadvantaged. Most felt that this was definitely not being done in the district and that educationally delayed students were dumped in Learner Support or Special Education, and classroom teachers disavowed any responsibility for academic growth of students, saying such things as: "He can just sit there for all I care." Another commented: "How can we help the kids by establishing a time line when they are moving from district to district because of economic hardships?" Most felt that the ASP would be difficult to establish, monitor, and assess.

Special education students have been evaluated each six weeks and reviewed annually, but a deadline has not been set for mainstream education.

Reading Recovery has been a short term program for first graders that has attempted to close the gap in reading before mainstreaming them into average groups.

3. Effective curriculum: An effective curriculum for disadvantaged children would be not only faster paced but

would also actively engage their interests and motivate them to learn by stopping endless drill-practice repetition and moving on after each concept is grasped.

Response: Most felt that this was being done inconsistently in the district. More teacher training in integrating skills is required. Research shows motivation as a major learning cue; we could build on this, rather than using "next page in the book" or "one hundred percent mastery" techniques.

Learning comes from the students assimilating the information and putting it into use in their world. Some felt that the specific disadvantage needs to be identified, because some children have disabilities that mandate a slow, repetitive approach, while others have been culturally, environmentally, and emotionally deprived and need to have slow, careful nurturing and exposure to language and literature. Most feel that drill-practice is not the answer.

4. Implementation of a successful program: The implementation of successful educational programs to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged students requires the involvement of parents and the extensive participation of teachers.

Response: Most felt that this is being done through conferencing, parent volunteering, and the Family Matters program, as well as student/parent activities such as Field

Day and carnivals. Also, many felt that it is being done with discipline, but not in regard to high academic expectations. Parents rely on the schools to set the educational goals and expectations for their children; after all, the schools are the evaluators.

Educationally disadvantaged students typically have parents who are not interested in education.

5. Assessment: This approach requires: (a) an assessment of each child's performance at school entry and the setting of a series of objectives, (b) periodic evaluation of wide-spectrum, standardized achievement tests, as well as tailored assessments created by school staff for each strand of the curriculum enabling the school to see if the child is meeting objectives in a timely manner. We do have early childhood and pre-kindergarten screening in our district.

Response: Most responses were affirmative. AISD does plenty of testing and if this is a criterion of an exceptional school, the program should be outstanding. The whole language movement has made assessment more difficult. Teaching has not been followed up by evaluation; perhaps because the results cannot be evaluated by most standardized tests or even by most teachers.

The general summation of the evaluation of this data found that AISD could benefit from the use of the ASP. Much

is already being done, and the implementation of the remainder would not be cost prohibitive.

Levin (1988a) has combined the best of the accelerated plans to produce a workable, salient program that is timely for the "at risk" state of students in our educational institutions. "It is obvious that the emerging crisis can only be avoided or alleviated by the development of a highly successful intervention that will improve substantially the educational performance of the disadvantaged" (p. 2).

Therefore, work has continued on the implementation of the ASP in AISD. Money was requisitioned to send groups of interested district personnel to Hollibrook Elementary School in Houston, Texas, the school that initiated the ASP in our state. Hollibrook Elementary has had success as measured by parent, student, and teacher attitudes as well as test scores. School personnel embrace visitors because they believe so strongly in the ASP. The researcher and nine other AISD staff members spent the day, and left convinced that the ASP was indeed worth a try. The big question concerned the fact that Hollibrook was not similar in size, demographics, or physical plant to AISD. Was the Hollibrook experience with the ASP generalizable? The basic philosophy of acceleration allows for this possibility.

At Central Elementary (CE), the researcher organized a Delphi Search in order to discover the most important focus of our school for the upcoming year. All major results were

indeed relevant to the ASP. The next step was to form study groups for each element of the school's focus. Consensus was reached as to what needed to be done. The ASP philosophy was introduced. Support grew until there was a 92% commitment. Similar agendas were occurring at other schools in the AISD. Finally, eight schools committed to pilot the ASP, one junior high and seven elementary, for the 1992-93 school year. Twelve other schools expressed interest in subsequent years. Six more actually became involved in the AISD ASP for the year 1993-94, making the total number of schools 14.

Suzanne Still was principal of Hollibrook during their initiation of the ASP. She came to Aberdeen for training sessions in 1992. Launch groups were selected from each school, who then returned to train the rest of the staff. Suzanne Still is a part of the Texas A & M Satellite ASP, the hub of which is Stanford University and Levin. She returned for follow-up sessions in October, 1993, and visited the school to work with grade levels in the spring, 1994.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the readiness, planning, training, and implementation stages of staff development in an Accelerated School Program within Central Elementary School (1992-1994) in AISD.

Research Questions

This study focused on and was guided by the following research questions:

1. How did Central Elementary School become interested in the acceleration program?
2. What steps were taken to make the school ready to accept this program?
3. What training was made available to the staff as well as to parents and students?
4. How was teacher approval and acceptance achieved?
5. How was implementation initiated, and to what degree to date?

Miles and Huberman (1984) state that qualitative data are attractive, a source of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts. It is important to observe a chronological flow, assess local causality, derive beneficial explanations, and have a

quality of undeniability. Much of the research were field notes describing the culture. The first step was to understand the culture by examining the archival information available, such as demographic data and grade assessments, followed by formal interviews, data collection from an open-ended questionnaire, informal interviews, observation, and note-taking.

Site

Central Elementary was built in 1957 to accommodate the Collins Radio personnel transferring from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Many tract homes were constructed in this district, just south of the company headquarters. It was to be the second elementary structure of its kind in the district. The majority of the people who moved there were lower-middle to middle class. It became an important area to the growing suburban city. A new highway, a few blocks west, was constructed during the first two years of Central Elementary, and many families moved into the area because it was convenient to downtown Dallas. Another large company, Texas Instruments, opened its doors just southeast of the school during its first 10 years.

Since 1985, there has been a gradual change in the Central Elementary attendance area. Two large African-American churches have moved in, and the largest Islamic Mosque in the Southwest was constructed. A Buddhist temple was built two blocks north of the campus, and a burgeoning

Asian community one block west. There are several low-rent housing apartments in the area, but there is not the same mobility in the Central attendance area that is occurring in other attendance areas within the district. In 1985, total enrollment was 523, with 6% African-American, 6% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 84% other. In 1992, total enrollment was 596, with 13.5% African-American, 8.9% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 71.5% other. In 1993, total enrollment was 655, with 15% African-American, 11% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 64% other. There were 32% on free or reduced lunch, and there was a 40% mobility index.

The physical plant is showing its age, but is kept clean and technologically up to date. All rooms are air-conditioned and heated through a central computerized control. The halls are not cooled or heated. There is a security system, and adequate lighting and safety controls (see Appendix C).

Each classroom has seven 9 foot x 3 foot windows, and are self-contained with double sinks in most. Television access in each classroom allows for transmission of the district's educational programs. Each room has a single Apple computer, disk drive and monitor. A laboratory has 30 Macintosh computers for independent and guided practice. There is also a computer-assisted instruction laboratory with whole class programming and word processing features.

Five portable classrooms are staffed by specialists in learner support, resource, reading recovery, speech and language, and English as a Second Language classes. There is one 6th grade classroom in a portable building.

Population

Each of 61 staff members was given a Request for Participation letter. The professional staff of Central Elementary was comprised of 45 educators in grades prekindergarten through Grade 6: administration; special education; and specialists in art, music, physical education, library, speech, and counseling.

The support staff of 17 included two secretaries, a computer aide, a prekindergarten aide, and one full-time and two half-time special education aides. There were five cafeteria workers and two cafeteria/material center aides, one full-time and one half-time. There was one daytime lead custodian and two night custodians. One nurse was on site two and one-half days per week. There were two male teachers on the staff. Four teachers are members of minority groups: one Hispanic, one African-American, and two Asian.

Sample

The sample consisted of those who responded affirmatively to the letter to participants (see Appendix A). There were 48 professional and nonprofessional staff members, more finitely defined as 13 nonprofessional staff

members, including secretarial staff, cafeteria workers, custodial help, and aides. Fifteen special professional staff members (those without classrooms) agreed to participate, including teachers of art, music, library skills, physical education, special education, learner support, English as a Second Language, a counselor, a speech therapist, and administrative personnel. Twenty classroom teachers responded affirmatively: 12 primary and 8 intermediate.

Key Informants

Two key informants were selected: a primary teacher, the campus facilitator for the site-based leadership, and an intermediate teacher, the former site-based leadership facilitator. Both teachers were on the launch team of the ASP for the building.

The two informants were selected from those staff members who maintain a high degree of professionalism, a knowledge of the content of this research, and a willingness to volunteer their time. The researcher used the key informants in three preconceived ways: as a part of the sample that was interviewed, as two of the five participants who were asked to write about their initial reaction regarding the implementation of ASP at Central Elementary, and to provide information as to their feelings regarding the questionnaire responses. The researcher typed each response under the corresponding question. The key

informants were to mark the responses as to whether they felt them to be positive or negative. They were also encouraged to annotate reactions to responses, and to give a general overview of their reactions to the total responses to each question.

Key informants were also asked to give feedback as to trends or ideas that were emerging. A typical question asked was: "How do you suppose this will relate to our process of acceleration?" Both informants were very willing to discuss these issues at any time and were able to articulate their ideas. Another typical question was: "What do you suppose the result of this will be?" Memos were made as to their responses and were categorized along with the other data. There were 34 entries made of informal encounters with the key informants.

Staff Management

Central Elementary was in the eighth year of site-based leadership (site-based management). In 1987, Central Elementary, as one of eight schools in the district, piloted the program. There was a core team that involved a representative from each grade level or area, and chairpersons from each of four action teams. There were two parent representatives, and all meetings were open to anyone desiring to attend. There were four action teams: Discipline/Safety, Instructional Focus, Student Self-esteem, and Parent Community/Adopt-a-School. The Adopt-a-School

program had yielded two companies as adopters. Although there was no monetary benefit, there was a large volunteer corps that donated time to help in classrooms. There was an open line of communication between action teams and the core team.

Central Advisory Council

The Central Advisory Council was a group of teachers, parents and community members that discussed and made recommendations about specific concerns voiced by other parents and teachers. There were four annual meetings. This committee was formed in 1992 as a result of a decision made by the Parent Community Action Team.

Data Collection

Collection of data took five forms: (1) archival information, (2) observations, (3) formal and informal interviews with willing participants, (4) an open-ended questionnaire, and (5) note-taking.

Archival Information

Archival information concerned demographics and student assessment. Demographics included statistics on school population over the past five years, including mobility index, ethnicity percentages, and population count. Student assessment consisted of descriptive information collected over the past five years regarding standardized test scores, attendance, discipline, and pull-out program placement.

Observation

Formal observation was made during group meetings, including 13 staff meetings, four local school council meetings (the core committee is derived from action teams formed from site-based leadership), and eight action team meetings. Informal observation was made during the normal school day—at lunch, grade level meetings, and in passing. Notes were taken during or immediately after observations, and information was categorized for qualitative analysis.

Open-ended Questionnaire

The entire sample was asked to answer an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire evolved directly from Levin's four-point plan providing a structure to the study. Forty-eight members responded: 13 nonprofessional staff, further defined as secretarial staff, cafeteria workers, custodial help, and aides. Fifteen special professional staff members responded, further defined as teachers of art, music, physical education, special education, learner, support, librarian, English as a Second Language, counselor, speech therapist and administrative personnel. Twenty classroom teachers responded, including 12 primary and eight intermediate. All data was entered into the word processor and eight copies were made. Each piece of data was singled out and deposited into an envelope containing similar data under a single category. Many times, the data fit into more

than one category—the reason for the seven additional copies.

Note-taking

Note-taking began during observations and took place at times during or immediately after observations. Notes concerning observations and interviews were transcribed, recorded and categorized as soon as possible.

Formal Interview

The Fred Wood Model (Wood, 1989) of staff development was used as an organizer for collected data. The model, called RPTIM, stands for Readiness, Planning, Training, Implementation, and Maintenance. In order to use this as a framework, the activities during the specific phases were discussed, and were followed by reactions from formal personal interviews of 37 sample members regarding the phases. The 37 people were those with whom the researcher could gain some time, after school and during conference periods. There were 29 professional staff and 8 support staff interviewed.

Informal Interviews

As research progressed, it became necessary to involve some teachers in informal interviews. Interviews were done to gain information regarding the instruction within an accelerated school. Was instruction creative? Were high expectations evident? Was there more whole-language, cooperative-learning, and thematic teaching in the

classroom, as recommended by Dr. Levin's four-point plan? Or, were the teachers using the same strategies that were in existence prior to the introduction of ASP, i.e., lesson plans done weeks in advance, heavy textbook usage, lecture instruction, and teacher/dictator class management? The researcher informally interviewed and noted a different facet of instruction each week for six weeks. The facets were textbook use, methodology, scheduled time, inclusion, resource utilization, and discipline plans.

Data Analysis

The data were organized using Levin's (1988a) four-point plan as a framework. The categories were (a) learning activities, (b) setting deadlines for closing the gap, (c) providing effective curriculum, and (d) implementing a successful program. The first two dealt with instruction, the third with curriculum, and the last with governance. All four together form the building blocks of ASP.

Notes from observations and interviews were sorted into appropriate categories, as were the data from the open-ended questionnaire. An attempt was made to sort the data into the four main preconceived categories. Each of these categories was then separated into subcategories. Some data did not fit into preconceived categories, so new categories emerged. The nature of qualitative study should reveal new and important categories and themes not possible to predict at the onset of a research project.

Key informants contributed additional data when queried regarding raw data gleaned from the various instrumentation. They were asked to peruse raw data as it emerged, and comment about the frequency of some data, and the positive and negative aspects of the data. Data was organized by entering it into a word processor and categorizing it into manila accordion folders to facilitate perusal by the key informants. The data was itemized according to when it was collected so that the key informants would not have to view the same material over and over, unless they requested it. Vivid descriptions and discussion were noted from the key informants and quoted along with other representative findings in the Narrative of Findings.

Conclusions were drawn from emerging themes and static responses, as well as from archival data. Recommendations were made regarding the status of the ASP at Central Elementary School. Generalizations were made as to the status of the ASP in the Aberdeen Independent School District. All data were analyzed in relation to the research questions of this study.

Since the readiness, planning and training stages took place over the past four years, a collection of the events was utilized with supporting documentation. Making contact with informants, and setting up a conceptual framework for consistency and replicability, was necessary.

Research Questions and Associated Instrumentation

Research question #1: How did this school become interested in the ASP? [Readiness Stage] This question was best answered through the data collected from personal formal interviews, specifically questions #1 and #2. How did you first hear of the ASP, and do you recall your first reaction to it?

Research question #2: What steps were taken to make this school ready to accept this program? [Planning Stage] This question was best answered by an historical account of the Delphi instrument done in the fall of 1992 to gain consensus as to whether the school was in need of the change of ASP. Interview questions #3 and #4 were also indicated: Were you a volunteer to be a part of the ASP investigative team, and why or why not?

Research question #3: What training was made available to the staff as well as to the parents and students? This was best answered by a historical account of the training made available to the staff, and through interview question #5: Do you feel that you had adequate training to implement the program in your classroom/job?

Research question #4: How was teacher approval and acceptance achieved? [Historical Implementation] This was best answered through a historical account of the agreement to accept the program stage, and through the interview question #6: How do you feel the program is going at

Central? It was also at this stage that the role of site-based leadership was discussed through interview question #7: Do you feel that the site-based leadership is supportive of the program? Notes from staff meetings, participant observations, and parent observations were also utilized.

Research question #5: How was implementation initiated, and to what degree, in the initial year and in the subsequent year? [Current Implementation] This was best answered through the use of an open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix B). Informal interviews, note-taking from school-day occurrences and meetings also provided data.

CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVE OF FINDINGS

This chapter is organized according to the research questions. It became necessary to use many different data collection techniques to gain current data relevant to each of the five questions. First, the findings are discussed, then the data collection techniques used to acquire the data, with appropriate representative vignettes and personal dialogue. Interviews, notes, participant observation, parent survey, and the 20 question open-ended questionnaire are all explained.

Interviews were conducted to gain more information relevant to research questions #1 through #4. As the study progressed, it became obvious that the archival information and observations were not providing enough detail regarding the first phases of the staff development process of ASP. The Fred Wood (RPTIM) staff development model was used in structuring the research questions. As research question #1 corresponded to the readiness stage, relevant data were collected through interview questions #1 and #2. As research question #2 corresponded to the planning stage, relevant data were collected through interview questions #3 and #4. As research question #3 corresponded to the training stage, relevant data were collected through

interview question #5. As research question #4 corresponded to the beginning of implementation, relevant data were collected through interview questions #5 and #7.

Interviews

The following material is data collected through formal interviews with 37 subjects from the sample group. The 37 people were those with whom the researcher could gain some time after school and during conference periods. There were 29 professional staff (those with teaching credentials), and 8 support staff (secretaries, aides, custodial).

Readiness

The readiness phase of the staff development portion of ASP coming to Central Elementary was done over a period of nine months. This researcher's prior research and the ensuing interest of a top Central Elementary administrator led to more interest in the program. The initial research began during a doctoral class in Curriculum. The assignment was to do research on a program affecting curricular decisions. Recent research on the Accelerated School Program by Dr. Henry Levin was investigated and a report was written detailing aspects of the program, along with results of the open-ended questionnaire. A copy of the report was sent to the central administrator, who was interested in the report. Interest spread via area superintendents and principals in the district.

A team of interested staff members was sent to Houston to observe an ASP in progress. The researcher led several orientation sessions at successive staff meetings, whereby the basic philosophy, possible implementation, and history of the Program were discussed among staff members.

Interview questions #1 and #2 dealt with the readiness phase of the Program staff development.

1. How did you first hear of the ASP?
2. Do you recall your first reaction to it?

The responses were varied. Many of the respondents recalled laborious meetings dealing with abstract philosophy, Venn diagrams, accounts of schools undergoing the change of acceleration, and charts of plunging test scores. Other respondents remember nothing about the build-up, only the request for "buy-in," the pressure that ensued, and start-up procedures. The majority of the respondents remember the order of events as sequential and logical.

One respondent said, "It seemed to be something you were very excited about, Cindy, so we tried very hard to listen and understand. I don't know that any of us took it to heart in the beginning, but were willing to try." Another said, "It really helped when concrete examples were offered, like how it could be used in the classroom, instead of all that philosophical junk."

Several said similar phrases to this one: "We thought, Oh no, here comes another 'program.' If we ignore it, it will go away."

Most felt that the specific details of program implementation in other districts and the success rates were good to know, and even though it was hard to understand something that did not have set guidelines, at least there was something to look forward to. Some people felt that the principal was not entirely in favor of the program, because her feelings were never expressed.

"It was hard to tell whether administration wanted us to buy into the plan because when we asked specific questions, we were told we would have to figure it out for ourselves; we guess maybe there was not a good knowledge of the plan on her part, either."

Others felt that the principal had already promised that Central would have to pilot the program whether we bought into it or not. Six of the respondents were emphatic in saying that the principal was very much in favor of the program, so they decided to give the backing. Nine of the respondents could remember nothing of the beginning of the program and, to date, do not have feelings about it one way or another.

All staff members were on-site during the readiness stage. This means that they were all working in the Central

Elementary building during the formative stage of staff development of the ASP.

Planning

A Delphi Search, consensus forming instrument, was utilized to gain insight into what were the main issues facing Central. Several meetings were held to see if ASP could address these issues. A questionnaire was circulated asking for unity in adopting the ASP for Central Elementary. Staff members were to circle one of the following: I think we should adopt the ASP, I am interested, I am interested but do not understand ASP, and I want no part of the new program. The overall concensus was that ASP would address the important issues that faced the Central community. Those staff members who could not endure another program implementation were consulted as to the degree of their discontent with the program, and possible solutions to ease their discomfort; however, two opted to transfer the next school year.

Interview questions #3 and #4 had to do with the planning stage.

3. Were you a volunteer to be a part of the investigative team?
4. Why or why not?

Out of the 37 responses, 16 recalled that they were very interested in learning more about the program, 11 stated that they definitely did not want to take part, and

the remaining 10 could not remember. Of these 10, seven were support staff. When the researcher asked the 11 who stated that they definitely did not wish to take part their reasoning behind their decision, five stated that they did not want to devote time to something that would "infringe on quality family time." Four stated that they were really wanting it to "just go away." The remaining two said that they had enough to do in order to be good teachers. The 16 who were interested had several reasons: six wanted to be on the ground floor of something new at Central, five were interested in learning more about how it would work at Central, and the rest volunteered because they assumed it was required.

Training

Suzanne Still, past principal of Hollibrook Elementary School in Houston, was asked to train our staff. Ms. Still was, at the time, director of the satellite program of ASP at Texas A&M University. She has since left that position to become a private consultant. A launch team was selected by grade level interest, and three days were utilized in training during the summer. The first day was spent team-building. The second day was spent learning about the philosophy of ASP, and the third day dealt with how to custom fit the program into our elementary school. This team was then to go back to the school and teach the rest of the staff about ASP. A follow-up training session was held

in October and another in the spring of 1992. The district provided a training session, held by Ms. Still, for all launch teams in the fall of 1993, and Central invited Ms. Still to visit the school in the spring of 1994.

Interview question #5 referred to the training aspect of the program.

5. Do you feel that you had adequate training to implement the program in your classroom/job?

None of the 37 respondents answered affirmatively to the question. Seven people did state that they realized that the nature of the program did not allow for preparation. They understood that in order to be successful in the program, one had to allow it to evolve, and that attainment of completion was out of the question. They understood that it is the process that is important, not reaching set goals.

One respondent put it very clearly, "I don't know how I grew to accept the philosophy. I do know that it seems natural, and I do know that the children are aware of something different going on, and they feel that they are part of their own learning."

Some of the complaints were that it was vague; and it had no written directions or teacher's guide, few examples, and very little leadership. Five of the responses indicated that Ms. Still did not exemplify something of which they wanted to be a part. One stated that she felt that Ms.

Still was glorifying her experiences, and that it was highly entertaining, but that it had little to do with our school and staff. Eleven of the responses hungered for information regarding how to change the actual classroom environment to accommodate ASP.

One response was interesting in that it alluded to a private group that went to Hollibrook "being privy to knowing how to work ASP in the classroom, and being secretive about it with the other staff members."

Another teacher stated that the researcher was "the only one willing to discuss some specific ways to incorporate ASP into the classroom".

Four of the responses were wishes that "the principal would have told us what was expected, instead of letting us struggle around not knowing what to do."

Eleven responses shared confusion that more training was not offered on a continuous basis. One person stated, "It was shot out of a cannon and there was no one to catch the ball". When asked for clarification, she stated, "It is one more example of the district telling us that we have to do something, and building it up like it is the answer to all of our prayers, and then dumping on it like all the other programs. There just doesn't seem to be any more training offerings in ASP, and I don't get it, do they think we are doing it? Do they think we are there? We are so far from there, it isn't even funny?"

Three people shared the same sort of frustration. They felt that the children were reacting favorably to the child-centered classrooms, and the growing parent involvement, but there was still a feeling that they were falling short of implementing the ASP.

Implementation

The implementation phase of the program began in the fall of 1992. Teachers were encouraged by signs posted in the hall and the lounge encouraging them to be child-centered, appreciative of parent and community help, and to plan with the curricular needs of the community in mind. The action teams that were already formed honed in on accelerated philosophy and became four committees instead of the original seven. Each committee was to address an important issue facing Central elementary. The issues that evolved were those which sprung from the Delphi search: discipline, instructional/curricular redirection, student self-esteem and parent and community involvement.

Interview question 6 had to do with the implementation phase of the program.

6. How do you feel the program is going at Central?

Again, all responses but seven were wishes for more training. Most responses were glib, in that they had no frame of reference into how it was supposed to be going. One response was, "I am still teaching, and I think I am enjoying it more, than when everything was so scheduled and

rigid, but I don't know what I am doing as far as being accelerated."

There were several responses referring to the students feeling more ownership of the school. "There seems to be better discipline, and the school seems to look better."

"I know that the kids enjoy making the classroom rules and consequences. I think they like school better. I have trouble letting go of my own ways, but I know when I do, it feels good."

"Sometimes, when we try to be empowered, the principal gets upset, and we seem to go backward for a while, then everything smooths back out."

"I feel a lot of support from parents, and I used to just hate it when parents would drop in. As a matter of fact, there used to be a rule that before a parent could come to a classroom, it had to be cleared in advance, with principal approval. Now, it seems very natural to have parents around."

"Teachers are all using cooperative learning, and trying methods other than lecturing, but it is very hard to teach to the top when you lose half the class."

"Inclusion is good for the kids because they do not feel the pressure of being different. I think ASP had a lot to do with the decision to use inclusion. It is easier to teach when there aren't a lot of kids being pulled out."

Seven people responded in a negative way toward the ASP.

"Nothing has changed around here, except we have lost three exceptional teachers."

"It has been three years, and I haven't seen a need to change one single thing."

"No one has said a thing to me. I don't see the big deal, anyway."

"When I try to get information about this, I never get any answers, just the run-around. So, I just keep teaching and loving my students."

"I came in in the middle and never did understand what is supposed to go on."

"No, I haven't asked anyone . . . if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

"I don't worry about it, life is too short."

One person chose not to answer.

Interview question #7 was added to explain the role of site-based leadership in conjunction with ASP.

7. Do you feel that the site-based leadership is supportive of the program?

Fourteen respondents answered with the idea that it is hard to differentiate between the two, because the action teams were designed to focus on ASP at Central. Eleven felt that they are in constant opposition to each other, and one person said, "We are not paid to be administrators, and we are not doing a very good job at it."

Most felt that there is a lot of emphasis on site-based leadership and that ASP is falling along the way. "We very rarely discuss ASP, and we never discuss it at action team meetings."

Seven of the respondents asked the researcher questions, including: "Aren't we supposed to decide ASP issues at our action team meetings?"

"What is the difference, anyway?"

"We had site-based before we were accelerated, and I don't think accelerated ever became a site-based issue." "Why don't we ever get trained in ASP anymore, I always feel like I know what's going on for a little while after we get trained."

"Aren't the site-based teams the accelerated basics?"

"We had to state which of our action team goals had to do with ASP, but we never heard anything about it. Do you know what that was all about, was that for your dissertation?"

Eight of the respondents stated that they didn't know much about what was asked and could not answer. Four of the eight were support staff.

Notes

Staff meetings were generally held every Thursday afternoon for approximately 30 minutes. There were 13 meetings. The researcher took notes regarding ASP. In three instances, ASP was mentioned. The first instance was

in reference to a discipline book, *Positive Discipline in the Classroom*. It was related that the philosophy would certainly adhere to the child-centered philosophy of ASP.

The second instance was in regard to test scores. It was stated by a staff member that drilling for the State Test of Academic Achievement was in direct opposition to the philosophy of ASP, and that teaching relevancy to the child instead of "drill and kill" was the answer. Several staff members agreed. The administrator in charge of the meeting stated that the staff needed to do "whatever it takes to pull the scores up."

The last instance was in reference to a student self-esteem program called P.O.P.S. It was stated by the staff member who presented an introduction to the program that the philosophy of the program would link directly to the ASP.

Since the researcher was considered a building authority on the philosophy of ASP, many times during the course of the data collection, staff members would question specific aspects. Notes would be taken as soon as possible. There were two categories of questions: Is this accelerated? How could this be done in an accelerated way? The first category was always the easier to answer. As ASP progressed in the building, it became obvious to me that if a staff member was interested enough to ask if they were accelerating, more often than not, they were.

The second question usually dealt with empowerment. The teacher did not understand the process it took in empowering his/her students to take responsibility in the learning process. The following is an example: A teacher entered the researcher's room to show a cooperative learning chart detailing the Native American tribes of Texas. She then began to show the researcher how the students had selected a tribe, researched it and taught it to the rest of the class. She went on to exclaim how much both she and the students had enjoyed it, and how much easier it had been than lecturing. She had shared it with another teacher and that teacher tried it with five different tribes, then the two classrooms crossed over and shared all the tribes with each other. She wanted to know if it were accelerated. She was worried about the fact that what usually was a six-weeks unit had become only a two-weeks unit. The students had become so interested in the research aspect that she was considering allowing them to research the aspect of early survival and how it relates to today's world.

Another example was when a teacher asked how the teaching of language could be accomplished without using the textbook. She was extremely distressed because her colleague had "not cracked a language book the entire year." I suggested that she ask the teacher who was no longer using texts how she was teaching language. I also suggested that language be taught through the variety of reading and

writing that is done and not taught as a separate entity. The teacher left the room stating that she would "check it out," but, after all, she had taught for a long time and no one had found fault with the way she had taught language before. She was told that no one was finding fault with it now, and that it was she who had asked.

Participant Observation

As a participant observer, it was possible to continue to teach in my fourth-grade self-contained classroom, and still continue to do the research required. I have been a teacher at Central for 11 years. I also have served two years as PTA president. My three children attended the school from second to sixth grade. I have served as grade level chairman, discipline committee chairman, and specialist on-site (liaison of staff development). I am a member of the initial launch team of the ASP, and serve on the local school council.

Informal Interviews

There are many differences between the traditional school and an accelerated one. Dr. Levin's program suggests whole language approaches, heterogeneous grouping of students, creative teaching strategies, textbook use as resources only, teaching plans that encourage spontaneity and extended thinking, and student ownership of the classroom. So, in order to understand the degree of acceptance of the program, it became necessary to informally

interview, observe and take notes regarding the following facets of instruction. I chose a different facet each week for six weeks, which were textbook use, methodology, scheduled time, inclusion, resource utilization, and discipline plans.

Seventeen teachers were informally interviewed about their textbook usage rate. Eight of these were intermediate, two were special education, and seven were primary. Of the intermediate teachers, three used textbooks for the major part of instruction. Two used textbooks about 50% of the time as an instructional tool, and three teachers very rarely used textbooks for anything other than as a resource for research. Neither of the special education teachers used textbooks as a primary teaching source. None of the primary teachers used textbooks as a major teaching tool, but used state adopted reading texts on a regular basis.

Eleven teachers were informally interviewed about their instructional methodology. Six primary teachers responded. None of the six used the lecture method for more than 10% of the classroom time. All used cooperative learning, peer tutoring, inquiry learning, and individualization of instruction. Five intermediate teachers responded. Three stated that they used the lecture method to introduce concepts, and cooperative learning to reinforce learning. Two stated that they rarely lectured, and engaged the whole

class in being responsible for their learning. Ten of the 11 teachers stated that they were trying to integrate the curriculum when they could.

All teachers were in self-contained classrooms, and so were not under time constraints as to having to switch classes. Of the 14 teachers interviewed regarding how they schedule their teaching day, all but two stated that they have specific periods for specific subjects. Most periods last 45 minutes to one hour. The two who chose to have large time blocks were feeling confident that they were integrating the curriculum. The time blocks in both instances were based on reading and language, and reading across the curriculum in science and social studies.

Fourteen teachers were interviewed as to whether their students are involved in pull-out programs during the school day. This question has to do with the evidence of inclusion in the building. All 14 had students that are in pull-out programs. All had students in the district's gifted and talented program, called REACH, and nine had students involved in speech/language, 10 had students in learner support. One shared a student with a special education teacher. Seven of the teachers had a special education teacher who came in once a week to work with students in the whole class setting.

Sixteen teachers were interviewed regarding the classroom utilization of resources. Eleven stated that they

had adequate resources within their own classroom, including maps, dictionaries, encyclopedias, magazines, and almanacs. They also stated that they use the library to do whole class studies on wildlife, cultures, geographical areas and bibliographies. Five teachers stated that their rooms were poorly equipped with resources, and that any materials needed were acquired through the librarian, or borrowed from other teachers.

Twenty-one teachers were interviewed as to how they develop their classroom discipline plans. Sixteen responded by stating their class makes up the rules and consequences during the first few weeks of school. Three teachers stated that the students always decide to use the rules that all the teachers have used in the building for years, i.e., raise hand to speak; keep feet, hands and objects to self; follow directions the first time; and have materials ready. One teacher believed that rules must be up the first day. Nine of the teachers interviewed were interested in trying the Positive Discipline in the Classroom philosophy.

Parent Survey

In the spring of 1993, a parent who was on the launch team decided to do a parent survey regarding customer satisfaction with the school. Ninety surveys were returned. In the spring of 1994, it was repeated (see Appendix E). One hundred and fifty surveys were returned. The survey was used as a tool to determine parent perception changes during

used as a tool to determine parent perception changes during the year of ASP implementation. Permission was granted by the parent, and a graphic representation was chosen. The parent presented the survey results at the site-based leadership core meeting, and the results were shared at the following staff meeting. The researcher made notes on conversations in reaction to the survey. The teachers were, on the whole, very pleased with the results of the survey.

One comment, "I really feel that the parents are aware of how hard we work for their kids, it makes me feel good to see some concrete evidence of it. I wish they would just tell us instead of having to have a survey tell us."

The question that had the largest positive response was the one dealing with the children's attitude toward school (#20). The teachers appeared pleasantly surprised that the parents felt that the students were satisfied. One teacher stated, "The students seem to be happier at school this year over last year, or at least they are going home with better experiences than last year. I know it does seem like things are more relaxed and fun."

It appears that the listing of things that are considered the best at Central (#26) are the same things that the teachers are feeling. One teacher stated that she doesn't mind having a parent walk in the room anymore, and that she used to feel threatened by it. Another comment was that the listing of things parents like least about Central

the teachers seemed appreciative of the fact that the survey was done, and that it was repeated two consecutive years so that comparisons could be made. One of my key informants stated, "It always feels good to see how well we are doing."

Questionnaire

The 20 question open-ended questionnaire was utilized to assist other instrumentation in answering research question #5. Each question is stated and representative responses follow.

#1: "It is important that learning activities are created that characterize high expectations."

There were 34 positive responses and one negative. Some representative responses were: "We must have high expectations for all students. This must be communicated constantly to students, too. They must know that we expect the very best at all times. We must make our teaching meaningful and children must know that learning activities are important."

"We will never raise achievement if we do not raise expectations for all learners. To create learning activities that have high expectations is important and takes time and training. Too often, high expectation equals number of pages and not quality of process."

"It has been my experience that students rise to their teachers' level of incompetence. High expectations coupled with expertise is a winning combination."

"It has been my experience that students rise to their teachers' level of incompetence. High expectations coupled with expertise is a winning combination."

"I have pushed/pulled students to reach much higher than their previous established "self-concept."

"My own travels of the world, friends from other cultures, and relations to exceptionally successful people have allowed me to share and model what can be achieved and the pleasure of living that comes from it."

"My hands-on teaching style demands high expectations of all students."

#2: "It is important that the student be involved in a learning environment that provides high status for the learner."

There were 32 positive responses and three blank responses. Some representative responses were: "Learners must feel involved in the process and be an important and integral part of planning and feel a responsibility for the outcome."

"Absolutely, the learning and the student who strives for that learning and understanding must be the classroom focus, so often it is the opposite—the behavior problems that receive the attention."

"Yes, I had a student one year who had been in a classroom the year before where he was belittled and expectations were low for him. He was able to do what we

were doing, but not confident enough until he knew we wouldn't laugh at his mistakes."

"Respect for the learner and his attempts at learning should be given, no matter what his functioning level."

#3: "A successful program would net a deadline for closing the achievement gap so that ultimately educationally disadvantaged children will be able to benefit from mainstream education."

There were 10 positive responses, 20 negative responses and 4 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "Good plans that help to mainstream disadvantaged children are a benefit to everyone."

"These children must learn to achieve in the mainstream—that is real life."

"Mainstreaming is helpful to the entire class in certain situations. It lets the class know we are all different. But, it many times reinforces bad behaviors of the disadvantaged students."

"I do not believe in deadlines. All children can learn, but they learn at different paces and learning can come and go due to so many factors in the children's lives."

"Unfortunately, the full inclusion with very limited support has closed the gap in our grade level by pulling our fast learners down and by holding their pace."

"I have a support teacher 45 minutes every three days."

"This is next to worthless in the reading area especially."

"I do believe everyone benefits from each other in some way. It doesn't come with closing the gap."

"I personally was a late bloomer. I didn't want to go to school from kindergarten through sixth grade."

"I remember all the books read to me."

"For whatever reason, I clicked at 11 and graduated at the top of my eighth-grade class, my senior year class, and had a four point in my master's degree."

"If I had had a deadline in elementary school, I'd be a toilet cleaner today, or would have hated school for pushing me too hard to close the gap."

"Thank you for the kind people who let me get what I could and who showed positive encouragement and love, and who let me slowly find my way until I was ready and had the self-confidence to use my ability to achieve on level."

"I never did understand this. How can we tell when the gap is closed? How did we define gap?"

#4: "An effective curriculum for disadvantaged children would be faster paced."

There were 14 positive responses and 17 negative, with 3 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "I think more interestingly paced would be a better fit—not so much paper work and more thinking."

"Faster paced than what? I think it needs to be rich with concrete experiences."

"This year, with our new anthology basal, the slower reader has often lied to save face because the fast pace was impossible, but they sensed the fast readers were bored to death even though we worked on patience and understanding."

"The whole class divided into eight groups with mixed ability left me being a disciplinarian not a teacher. The slower children were screaming to go at a pace where they could stretch but still achieve."

"If faster paced means that ideas and concepts are constantly a focus in the classroom with strategies and skills practiced appropriate to the individual student, with each student providing support and modeling in his/her areas of strength for others; students given choices and accountability for those choices ever present, then yes, I agree with it. If it means moving quickly through proper scope and sequence, leaving some students in the dust, then I don't agree."

"A faster paced curriculum would tend to frustrate the language/learning disordered child. He would need to understand the underlying language concepts before being expected to deal with a faster paced curriculum."

#5: "An effective curriculum for disadvantaged children would actively engage their interests and motivate them to learn."

There were 31 positive responses and 3 negative responses. Some representative responses were: "Definitely! I have a child this year whom I reached through football. This was about the only way I could get him to read at the beginning of the year. Now he has moved on to other subjects, but it took something he was interested in and had background knowledge in to boost his confidence enough to build his reading skills."

"Curriculum can't do it all, the home environment plays a big part in interests and motivation."

"Participation and learning is far greater in quantity and quality when learners choose topics to be studied. I've observed this repeatedly during the last several years."

"This curriculum is essential for all students, not just the disadvantaged. If we hope to create successes as educators, we must tap the interests of all students. We need to venture away from the basic curriculum to engage in areas of interests."

#6: "The implementation of a successful educational program to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged children requires the involvement of parents."

There were 27 positive responses and 7 negative responses. Some representative responses were: "Parents need to be partners in their child's education. In some cases parents need to be taught how to help their students. The instructional focus committee is considering sponsoring

sessions with parents, sharing with them specifics on what their child is going to be taught and how parents can help."

"The learning of the child needs to be supported and encouraged at home. Parents in the schools helping students learn and serving as role models would be even better. I see a huge difference in the progress of my Reading Recovery students. It is obvious which students are reading at home on a nightly basis and which ones are not. The parents support of these 1st graders, listening to them and encouraging their efforts is a very important part of the program."

#7: "The implementation of a successful educational program to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged children requires the extensive participation of teachers."

There were 28 positive responses and 6 negative responses. Some representative responses were: "What does this mean? Not time beyond that which we already give—time that would be taken from our own families and outside lives and ultimately is both resented and counterproductive."

"Teachers should be hand-picked, those who are interested, who have experienced or who are willing to do in-service on working successfully with disadvantaged students."

"Teachers modeling and planning actively involved and planning hands-on concrete "authentic" activities, but even

more so a teacher must become a learner in the classroom learning community."

"The teacher cannot do it all."

"It takes a lot of time and effort to discover what will work with your students and then to implement it. A teacher can make or break a student by the message he/she gives them about how much care/time/effort they want to put into their program and ultimately to each child."

"Teachers, of course, need to direct the learning. We were told that teachers at Hollibrook work smarter, not harder. We need to examine why we do things and prioritize our activities. If an activity does not contribute to advancing the student, why are we still doing it?"

"In order for a program to be successful, the teachers must be committed to the same goals. I do not feel that it is necessary for each teacher to teach the same lesson the same way, at the same time. It is, however, crucial for all teachers to desire the same outcomes for students."

"A great deal of time is involved, and many times I have asked myself if it is worth it, because the successes are so slight and so small."

#8: "I have tried to incorporate different learning methods to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged student."

There were 24 positive responses, 3 negative responses and 7 blank responses. Some representative responses were:

"We are all trying to stretch our brains to involve the kids more--textbooks are being abandoned more and more."

"I haven't incorporated different teaching methods, exactly. I have incorporated better presentation of my established methods. Teachers of educationally disadvantaged students need to be the very best in the district. Sometimes, first year teachers are placed in these schools, and that is a bad idea."

"I am trying to focus on what the child can do, give lots of encouragement and take him from there."

"The ways that students learn are varied. I have found that students from disadvantaged situations as well as children from different cultural backgrounds require adjustments in teaching strategies. These students seem to need a real world, hands-on approach to learning. They often need a higher level of activity while learning, too--less sitting and doing ditto sheets."

#9: "My teaching strategies have changed a great deal to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged student."

There were 22 positive responses, 6 negative and 6 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "Personally, I need to be in-serviced on teaching the disadvantaged. Coming from a middle class background, I am not as skilled at this as I would like to be."

"We are on less of a schedule and are teaching until mastery occurs."

"I have changed many of my teaching strategies to meet the needs of educationally handicapped students. Some of the changes have been pretty drastic, while others have been only small adjustments."

"Since the world, society, children's needs, etc., are constantly changing, it stands to reason that teaching strategies must change continually."

#10: "My personal planning/ preparation time has changed to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged student."

There were 17 positive responses, 10 negative responses, and 7 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "I feel that I spend a great deal more time planning and preparing. It may be the change in grade levels that has impacted my time commitment as much as our growing educationally disadvantaged students."

"I spend some extra time finding appropriate materials and deciding how the information should be presented."
"Planning real-world, hands-on activities requires much more time for me. It is much easier to write down a page number from a workbook, but the effectiveness of such rote planning is far less beneficial than the planning required to really teach." "It should, but we need more planning/preparation time at school during school hours."

"There are never enough resources or time."

#11: "My grade level/subject area planning/preparation time has changed to meet the needs of our changing population."

There were 20 positive responses, 4 negative, and 9 blank. Some representative responses were: "It seems like we meet less during school time and more informally outside of school."

"I am eager to latch on to whatever works, therefore, my grade level peers are an important support group in planning and preparing strategies and/or content for instruction."

"We spend a great deal of time trying to plan and teach across the curriculum with our thematic units. We do a lot more hands-on teaching with a literature rich base. We just need more time to really share all the wonderful teaching that is occurring."

"Each year is different. If you find yourself pulling things out of a file cabinet year after year, chances are the stuff should be thrown out. Each child is different. I get very disturbed by the statement, 'This is the way we always do it.'"

"Along with the changes, I hope the content is changing."

"We have captured some time each six weeks to do more planning together."

"Show me where there is an extra minute."

#12: "A staff attitude change has taken place at our school to accommodate the changing population."

There were 21 positive responses, 10 negative responses and 3 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "I sense an attitude change, but not always for the positive. Many still seem overwhelmed by all the changes. Some still long for the good old days which aren't coming back. A smaller percentage seems to have accepted the changes and are looking for new ways to meet needs."

"Yes, I think we are comfortable with our population change and have tried to work with the cultural and economic population change. In fact, I think we've generally come to really appreciate the diversity and opportunities for the growth and understanding this provides."

"I believe this is the case for teachers who have been at Central long enough to experience the changing population firsthand. Those who can't change have probably transferred."

"Some have not bought into it and never will, but I know they see the changes."

"Some of our staff members have made dramatic changes in this area. There are many who are still teaching with methods used when they were students themselves--lecture, ditto sheets, workbooks, etc."

"I don't feel that our staff attitude has really changed much."

#13: "More parents are becoming part of the school day in our building."

There were 24 positive responses, eight negative, and 2 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "It still seems to me to be a small core group who are involved. However, so many of our parents work at jobs where they cannot leave."

"I have some support this year, at last. I tend to see the same parents all the time, which makes me think it is the same ones, not more of them."

"I see a lot more parent participation. The teachers are utilizing volunteers daily in the classroom as well as for special day activities."

"I see more parents coming to our school at various times during the school day to do many different things, from helping with math, reading, and art to taking over classes so that teachers can capture time."

"It is good, but it needs to have a control so that it doesn't become a problem to any teacher or student."

#14: "The community is taking some responsibility in becoming part of our school."

There were 22 positive responses, 9 negative, and 3 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "Other than occasional guest speakers, I don't see much evidence at

all of the community becoming part of our school. The fault isn't necessarily with the community, though. Have we done our part to communicate our needs to the community?"

"In the Central community the resources need to be tapped, such as senior citizens, businesses supporting "A" students with awards, etc."

"Very little. It's very difficult to get people to become involved. We do have our adopt-a-school volunteers, but that is a small percentage of community people. We have not been very successful in involving non-parent neighborhood people. We tried an involvement program several years ago in trying to get people involved in volunteer work, but only two or three came, and they didn't follow through."

"We need more involvement from the community, because the more they learn about education and what we must deal with daily, the better."

#15: "The morale of our staff is improving."

There were 19 positive responses, 13 negative responses and 2 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "The morale on this staff would be greatly improved with more openness and more listening to each other. There seems to be some people afraid to put aside tried and true ways."

"Our morale is declining rapidly. We have more and more expectations, fewer 'perks,' and less positive

reinforcement. I see many of our excellent teachers burned out or even leaving at the end of the year."

"I think we have a few negative voices that keep things stirred up with comments. I'm not sure we've ever bonded or shown unity of purpose which was needed at the onset."

"As the year has gone by the morale has improved, and it was good to start with."

"There is a good percentage that feel mistreated and overwhelmed—10-15%. I don't see it changing much overall. We tend to have our peaks and valleys. Unfortunately we focus on our down times more than our successes."

"I think the teachers are doing a good job of building each other up."

"When people care, they will improve and help others with their positive outlook."

"I see more teachers working together for the benefit of our students. Teachers are open to sharing ideas with each other. If a teacher feels a part of a team, the morale improves."

#16: "The learning atmosphere is more relaxed this year."

There were 16 positive responses, 13 negative and 9 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "I have observed more hands-on, cooperative learning groups in certain classrooms this year. This type of learning

requires a less structured situation. This is great for oral language development."

"It is on some days when I can concentrate on what is really important and forget the other junk."

"There is still so much emphasis on test scores, and so much pressure from administration that it filters down to the kids and makes our learning atmosphere less relaxed than ever."

"This varies with grade levels and teachers. I'm relaxed, but I was last year, too. Last year, I think people kept waiting for something to happen to make them accelerated. This year we are back to our own thing."

"We are real serious and not having enough fun with our students."

"I think we are more flexible. We are trying new things and in some classes teachers have established a community of learners."

"I feel that teachers feel stressed, and that carries over into the learning environment."

#17: "The absentee rate of our students has declined this year."

There were 11 positive responses, 3 negative, and 20 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "I am not aware of any changes."

"I do not sense a school-wide problem."

"I don't have any raw data, but it seems to have declined."

"I do seem to notice a decrease in tardiness."

#18: "There is a distinction between administration and teaching staff in the matter of team work."

There were 23 positive responses, 4 negative, and 7 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "I think administration does a good job of balancing responsibilities. Nobody's perfect."

"Accelerated school training has helped us begin the process of learning to work together as a team with equal input and equal responsibility for meeting the needs of our students."

"Yes, but I would like to see administration more involved in the day to day activities with the students in the classroom."

"I've always received support for my ideas and efforts. I have always found an open door when I had a question, concerns or idea."

"There isn't a team that involves administration. They are a team, and we are a team."

"I feel we are all part of a team. I know administration has allowed the staff to be part of the decision making. For example, in the area of the budget, we were allowed to make the decision as to whether or not to

become a part of the ISS program at another elementary school."

"I think administration holds back as far as being a part of a team in order to allow staff members the freedom to share, plan, voice opinions, etc."

"I still feel we get many directives from administration. Some that are necessary, but some should truly be left to site-based decisions."

"The school should be one team working together toward a common goal."

#19: "Our site-based leadership has become a more integral part of our work life."

There were 22 positive responses, 5 negative, and 7 blank responses. Some representative responses were: "There are times when there are brief glimmers when we feel empowered."

"Yes, and it is stealing from planning/ preparation time. It is not a welcome part because of this. We are not compensated as administrators, but we are required to put in extra time and assume extra duties normally handled by administrators."

"The more site-based we are, the more empowered we feel, and we will continue to focus on the special needs of our students."

"More jobs have been dealt out, but as far as critical decision making, we have a long way to go."

"I don't feel we are really leading ourselves. We're given a lot of directives, such as how we need to use our early release days, that are not what we know we need to be spending our precious time on."

"I would say it is a more accepted part of our work life. Sometimes we feel that other committees tell us what to do. Some support the idea of site-based leadership and the process, and others resent it and wish administration would run the school."

"It has taken years, but I think we are there now."

"It is either working or we are getting used to it."

"I would agree. We seem to understand the process better, so we look and plan ahead better. We have learned to work with the other staff members. Everyone has the opportunity to participate in decisions and activities. It has changed the attitude of, 'they told us', to 'we decided.' "

"We have taken ownership of our work life. We have a process to change the things that must be changed."

#20: "Are we production-centered, child-centered, or is there a balance?"

There were 11 positive responses, 19 negative responses and 4 blank. Any response other than child-centered was considered a negative response. Some representative responses were: "With the help of an accelerated school commitment, we are changing to be more child-centered. We

do need to make that our primary goal in site-based decisions."

"I think there is a balance."

"Child-centered without a doubt. It is clearly evident that students are the focal point of our existence here at Central. Our ministry is to serve, love, teach, respect and celebrate children. I think that all of the teachers here feel that unity of purpose."

"I believe that there is a balance, but we have to work at it constantly. Because of state mandates regarding standardized tests and test scores, we must be production centered. This also applies to graduation requirements. On the other hand, we try to meet individual children's needs within our classrooms by using various methods—modification, tutoring, peer teaching, etc. I believe a balance is more realistic in our education system today."

"Oh . . . it's hard to be child-centered in a production-centered world. I think we are really making strides in becoming a child-centered place. I especially see that in my involvement with the special services team and discipline committee. We're getting there. Now if the state testing program and the ultra-conservative people who want 'competencies' and cookie cutter kids would just go away, we could get on with it."

"It seems to vary from room to room and grade level to grade level. Overall, I don't feel we are focused as a

staff as to how we see ourselves in relation to this statement. We're still not pulling together in the same direction."

Coding Categories

The preconceived categories at the onset of this research were: (a) learning activities, (b) setting deadlines for closing the gap, (c) providing effective curriculum, and (d) implementing a successful program. All of these formed the basic foundation of ASP. However, as the research progressed, the categories that emerged regularly from filing the collected data, in order of frequency, were student morale, instruction, parent involvement, staff collegiality, and staff morale. Each of these categories will be discussed as to what the findings indicated. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe the coding categories in this way:

In reading through your data, certain words, phrases, patterns of behavior, subject's ways of thinking, and events repeat and stand out. Developing a coding system involves several steps: You search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics your data cover, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns (p. 82)

These categories emerged through the triangulation of data. Interviews, both formal and informal, an open ended

questionnaire, discussions with key informants, journalled observations, and an analysis of a parent survey all served as means of collection of data. Each individual piece of information was placed under a separate code heading. There were very few pieces of information that did not fit under any of these five codes.

Student Morale

Student Morale was broken down into three subcategories: inclusion, attendance, and discipline.

Inclusion: Our students have been involved in the inclusionary process for the past two years. None of the staff had a formal in-service in this strategy. The school elected to try inclusion after understanding that it would fit into the ASP, and after the investigative group visited Hollibrook School and saw the benefits of inclusion there. There was also a thrust in the district for schools to move toward inclusion. Four schools were piloting the program. Last year was the most inclusionary year, with the prior year being a transition year, and this new year being a maintenance year. Last year was the subject year for this study. During this year, all special education students were mainstreamed into regular classrooms through the majority of their day. Articulation speech students were pulled from their classes for this specific instruction. All learner support and reading recovery students were serviced in small groups, with teachers also coming into the

classrooms for whole group team teaching with the regular classroom teacher. All resource students were serviced in the whole group team teaching strategy.

The majority of the classroom teachers seemed to realize the benefit of the inclusion strategy for the children. Most comments were positive in this regard. "The kids really seem to like staying in their classrooms. They seem almost relieved to not have to be pulled out."

"We are really liking the peer teaching concept, where kids help kids. Even the resource students have special strengths that they share with the class."

"We know it is more work for the special teachers, but the children are truly benefitting from being treated like the rest of their friends."

A vignette of a speech student demonstrates the self esteem that results from being a part of a class. A fourth grade student did not want to come to school at the beginning of the year because she hated having to leave class to go to speech for language development. She felt that the kids made fun of her because she had to leave. After she was told that she would no longer have to leave the classroom, and that the speech teacher would be coming in to work with the entire class on language development, she seemed relieved. The teachers did not realize the impact of the inclusion process on this student. The child took a leadership role in the language development classes,

and became recognized by her peers as "the best actress and talker in the class." One special education teacher stated that she is on the run all the time, but can see it is better for her kids. Several negative comments appear to be caused by the fact that the classroom teachers do not like to give up part ownership of their classes to the special teacher. There does not seem to be time for the classroom teachers to plan with the special teachers, and so many teachers are frustrated that they are not organizing their own strengths, let alone necessary materials for good instruction. Many teachers do not seem certain of their roles in inclusion, and the same number desire some in-service in this strategy.

Attendance: This subcategory was further broken down into actual physical attendance, tardies, and mental attendance during classes.

Actual physical attendance has remained the same over the past three years. The major reason is that Central has always had a 94%-96% documented attendance rate. This is unusually high for a school designated at-risk. Students come early in the morning for several reasons: School is a safer haven than is their home with parents having already left for work, and parents prefer to drop the children off at school in the early morning, rather than to pay for a day care facility to deliver them. Students begin arriving at 7:00 a.m. with a good majority being on campus by 7:45. The

school day begins at 8:05. Because Central is a district made up of families where it is necessary that both parents work, many times students are brought to school with illnesses requiring home stay. It is easier for the parents to do this than pay for child care or lose daily wages. There does not seem to be any negative effects from this on attendance records; however, teachers lament the fact that students cannot concentrate on classroom activities when they are sick, and office personnel are busy in the clinic when there is a virus going around.

Most teachers noted that tardies seem to be on the decline, and that the students are peer pressuring their friends not to come in late. One teacher noted that one of her students always went out of her way to let a chronic tardy student know that he had missed the announcements and part of the computer lab. After a week of this, he began to show up on time and the other student acknowledged this fact in a class meeting in the form of a compliment. Several teachers pointed out that the students would often want to know why the tardy students were late and would offer suggestions as to how they could be on time. It seemed to the teachers that the fellow student concern was more valuable than the teacher concern. It should be noted that many teachers did not comment on the aspect of absenteeism and tardiness, because they were not aware of the raw data on the subject. Students seemed to be coming to school more

ready to learn. Several teachers pointed out that students seemed to be better dressed (hair combed and shirts tucked in) than in past years. One teacher said, "It seems that the kids are getting up earlier, having breakfast, and arriving early at school ready to go." Another teacher responded by saying the kids are more attentive, more responsible, and seem to be having fun. Many teachers said that they had noticed no appreciable difference. No one said that they noticed a decline in mental attendance.

Discipline

There were three subcategories that emerged under this category: student discipline, classroom discipline, and general building-wide discipline. Student discipline can be empirically measured by the number of times students were sent to detention hall. There was a 34% reduction in detention hall usage last year over the previous year. Students who have earned three or more detentions are required to attend a Student Concern Committee meeting along with their parents. There were no Student Concern meetings required the first semester, and only nine the second semester. This is a 41% reduction. A Student Concern Committee meeting is where members of the discipline committee, the parents of the student, the student, and the counselor, decide another course of action to help the students make better decisions regarding their behavior.

Student discipline can also be measured by the respect the students show their building.

Fifteen teachers noted that they had improved behavior in their classes. A frequently stated reason was that the students were showing more responsibility for their actions in the classrooms due to the fact that they helped create the rule structure in those classes. Eleven teachers did not notice a difference in student discipline, and six of these teachers did not change their discipline strategy during the past two years. A few stated that smaller class sizes in the intermediate grades would create better discipline. Nine teachers were interested in becoming involved in a study group about how to discipline positively in the classroom. Three teachers were already trying this strategy and were getting favorable results.

The custodian stated, "The kids seem to be doing better about not bothering the stuff hung on the walls, and the bathrooms seem to be staying a little cleaner." Most teachers stated that they felt a general improvement in the overall behavior of the students. The cafeteria discipline was still a problem, but was no worse than past years. The students seemed to be better behaved both before and after school. Teachers began handling more of their own discipline and were not sending problems to the office. This was the case over the past five years, and is steadily improving.

Instruction

Most of the data collected, having to do with instruction, had nothing to do with curriculum. Most comments about curriculum dealt with the fact that teachers felt that it was a set curriculum, immovable, and therefore not bearing mention. When questions were asked about curriculum, most answers were instruction based. For example, in the questionnaire, there was a question having to do with a faster paced curriculum, the responses were all geared to instruction. This is a direct quote that exemplifies the responses: "It means that ideas and concepts are constantly a focus in the classroom with strategies and skills practiced appropriate to the individual student, with each student providing support and modeling in his/her areas of strength for others; students given choices and accountability for those choices ever present--then yes. It must mean moving quickly through scope and sequence, leaving some students in the dust."

Most of the teachers were doing basically the same sort of instruction that they had always done. A core group of teachers accepted the accelerated philosophy of instruction. From the collected data, it showed seven teachers who had begun to move into the ASP in the majority of their instructional practices. They were using resources other than text books, thematic units with curriculum integration, cooperative learning, inquiry teaching, peer teaching,

child-centered room organization, and positive discipline with a democratic management system. There were six more teachers who were beginning to become child-centered in their room organization, but not in classroom management. They were experimenting with the other ASP components, and were feeling success in their efforts. They had not abandoned the use of textbooks as the driving force of their curriculum. There seemed to be confusion as to how the ASP could fit into the classroom. One teacher noted, "I feel that the pace should be accelerated for some children, but I'm not certain how they can grasp the skills necessary to proceed to more difficult steps." One of the teachers who was proceeding with the ASP philosophy told me, "I have completely stopped teaching 'it' and now concentrate on teaching 'them.'"

There were no whole-group staff development offerings in instructional practices during the past two years (1993-94). Teachers were very frustrated by this fact. They felt that they should have the information whereby they could begin feeling comfortable using ASP philosophy in their own classrooms. The teachers who were not using the ASP approaches were, for the most part, inquisitive about the successes that the ASP teachers were enjoying. Recounting experiences, vignettes and showing documentation of these successes were invaluable in swaying these teachers over to

trying the new approaches. Nine teachers shared this fact during the informal interviews.

Parent Involvement

Five years ago, parents were not encouraged to help in classrooms or to go on field trips, and were required to give the front office prior notice of classroom visitation before entering a classroom. The reasons for this were that parents would disrupt the classroom, might glean personal information about an individual child (not their own), and might criticize what was (or was not) going on in the classroom. At the conclusion of this study, many parents could be seen in the halls and in the classrooms. They were valued as chaperones on field trips, and they were appreciative, not critical, of what was going on. As part of the ASP, parent involvement was necessary. The parents who volunteered at the school were a core group. There were 21 parents who were at school on at least a weekly basis. There were many teachers who wished that we could reach more parents so that they could have a visible role in the school day. The PTA was very active and supportive of all programs. There were parents who were active participants in the site-based leadership core group (LSC). Initially, the LSC was deemed closed to those not on the committee. It was never advertised as an open committee. At the conclusion of this study, all action teams and the LSC were open to anyone, and it was advertised as such. There was a

Central Advisory Committee, CAC, made up of community, parents, and staff members. Interested parents could volunteer to serve on this committee to help solve any Central community problems that arose.

Some of the responses that the faculty made were: "Without everyone's participation, the students will not reach their full potential."

"Parent involvement is extremely important in the education of students. Involvement in the schools shows students that it is not just teachers who think education is important. Parents can show their children by being interested and reinforcing that education is a must."

"Parents are helping us capture time, by staying with our kids while we plan and collaborate. We do this each six weeks, which gives us two to three hours of uninterrupted time."

"Parental involvement is essential. Schools are finally admitting they're not full of experts who can do it alone."

The parents enjoyed being an important part of the school. The ones who volunteered regularly also wished that more parents would get involved. Many felt that the PTA should be the vehicle by which parents get involved. PTA attendance ebbs and flows according to whether children are presenting a program, then those who have a parent interest

are present. There seems to be a problem getting other parents to attend.

Staff Collegiality

Staff Collegiality was broken down into two subcategories: sharing of ideas, and planning together.

Sharing ideas: As mentioned in other parts of this narrative, there were teachers who were understanding and utilizing the components of ASP, and there were teachers who wanted to understand the program. There were also teachers who seemed to avoid the program. Several times there was mention of the teachers who are accelerated not wanting to share their successes. Some of the teachers felt that it was almost cliquish to be involved with the ASP. The paradox was that the teachers who were considered to be accelerated were certain that they were trying to spread the word through the sharing of their successes. One piece of evidence that came out is that five of the seven accelerated teachers felt that they themselves were being pushy or critical when they tried to explain how an accelerated approach could be utilized in a specific situation. One accelerated teacher said that whenever she brought up the accelerated approach, the other people in the grade level rolled their eyes and said, "Please, give it up!" I asked her how she felt about this and she said that it was more important to get along on the grade level than to espouse ASP. She accepted the teasing good-naturedly and continued

to do the accelerated things, because she felt it to be successful. The accelerated teachers said it is better for them to say, "That is accelerated," when one of their colleagues share something from their class. The teacher is often surprised and says something to the effect of "It is?" Perhaps it is this method of sharing the accelerated approach that will help the teachers experiment more with the ASP components.

Planning together: Most grade levels planned together on building issues such as developing a homework policy, field trips, budgets, ordering, and scheduling. Some did not plan together on how the curriculum is to be approached in the individual classrooms. Some teachers felt that they were planning together less because of the implementation of ASP. Teachers were on different levels of understanding, and the accelerated teachers were not willing to sacrifice what they were doing in order to stay with the others, and the others were not asking the accelerated teachers to stay on the same concepts at the same time, because they did not wish to interfere with what they were doing. So, the picture of what happened was that most of the people on a grade level were approximately in the same place as far as scope and sequence, and one or two were doing their own thing, integrating the curriculum and using thematic units.

The special area teachers, such as art, music, physical education, and library were integrating grade level content

curriculum into their own curriculum. Most of the teachers were very appreciative of this. The librarian was teaching summarization, main idea and research in the library. The music teacher was teaching teachers to appeal to the learning differences in the classroom, along with cultural music that coincided with the social studies curricula. The art teacher was also working with multiculturalism, math patterns, and contours. This had come about during the implementation phase of ASP.

Staff Morale

Subcategories emerged in the data collection of this category: time constraints, administration, and fellowship.

Time constraints: This not only emerged as a subcategory, but continually crept into conversations and questionnaire responses. Teachers felt that there was no time to improve on teaching strategies, let alone understand a philosophical new program that encompasses every aspect of school life. The few in-services that were held to determine how time could be captured just seemed to frustrate the teachers more. The following are comments made by some of the teachers.

"How can we capture something that is not even there?"

"When we do capture time, we end up spinning our wheels on some new directive by the district or administration."

"We don't know what to do when we do capture time; we can't work together, because we are too far apart on

philosophy, and we feel like we are doing something wrong when we sneak back into our room to get filing, records, cleaning, or individual planning done."

"We need to stop trying to find time when it is contrived, rather, we should be willing to stay later and work through things as they come up."

One point that was raised continually was the fact that the teachers at Central were already spending more time at school, rather than being with their own families. One teacher felt that forcing teachers away from their own home life was adding to the problem of mediocrity in society. The source of a lot of frustration was the fact that LSC and action team meetings were set in the evenings to enable more parents to attend, and then the parents did not come. CAC meetings and PTA meetings were held at night, along with bookwarmings and multicultural and fund-raising dinners.

Fellowship: The staff seemed to get along very well, even though there was a wide variety of ages and interests. Some of the teachers missed getting together occasionally, as was done in the past. Many of the teachers wished they could get together with colleagues, but again they worried about time away from their families. Many of the social functions were contrived, and then the teachers felt guilty when they did not attend. Some of the teachers mentioned that they were amazed to know some of the strengths of the staff that came out at an in-service on ASP. There was

never anything formulated from this, and many think it would be an interesting way to get to really know each other, and perhaps utilize some of the hidden talents in the classrooms.

Administration: Many of the teachers had hoped that ASP would free up the administrators from old responsibilities to work more closely with the classroom teachers and kids. This was not the case. The administrators were cooperative and supportive, but had so many new responsibilities as an old superintendent left and a new one began. One teacher said, "Teachers are allowed more flexibility in decision making to a point, but in many cases the final decision rests with the administrator." An administrator answered this by saying, "As long as accountability remains with the principal, the final decision must rest with administration." One staff member felt that "administrators hold back as far as being part of a team in order to allow staff members the freedom to share, plan and voice an opinion."

Someone on the launch team stated that the administration has seemingly been in support of the ASP, but has not vocalized any visions along this line, and as a matter of fact, when teachers seem to get on a roll, toward becoming accelerated, the administrators seem to throw road blocks in the way. One example of this was to reinforce the fact that textbooks should only be used as a resource, and

then require that the new Anthology Basal was to be used cover to cover. There were many misunderstandings regarding this. Some people thought that it was exactly as the principal stated, to use it exclusively the first year to get to know it, and then use it as needed in subsequent years. Others felt that it was a sign that ASP was not the direction that administration wanted to take, because it was taking too long.

At any rate, the lack of administrative support, as far as ASP goes, was disconcerting to many. In the spring semester, ASP was not mentioned formally in any staff meeting or any communication with staff. The researcher noted that the administrator did work on the district ASP, and directly influenced and supported the program in other buildings. One teacher explained it this way, "She just wants us to find our own way, not lead us to it, because as we know with inquiry learning, it is more relevant when we find it. In most cases the principal must see the big picture, while we are busy looking at our own little parts."

Discussion of Findings

Many people played an important part in this research. Being a participant observer was intriguing. Through interviews, questionnaires, note-taking, and observing, I have researched, analyzed and reported on how things are and how they got that way. Being very careful not to interpret any of the narrative of findings in a personal way was

difficult. Being a true proponent of the ASP has been difficult because there was always the awareness that the research must remain unbiased. However, there was no way of knowing in what direction the data would flow. There was no way to describe everything, only that which seemed critical to the social implications of this study. "It is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something" (Geertz, 1973, p. 80).

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the readiness, planning, training and implementation stages of staff development in an accelerated program in the Central Elementary School. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How did the educators in this school become interested in the Accelerated Program?
- 2) What steps were taken to make this school ready to accept this program?
- 3) What training was made available to the staff as well as to parents and students?
- 4) How was teacher approval and acceptance achieved?
- 5) How was implementation initiated, and to what degree, in the initial year and in the subsequent year?

Categories, subcategories and themes emerged from initial grouping and subsequent regrouping of data. Triangulation of data was attempted successfully by coding and recoding. Because a bottom-up process was used, pieces of information were categorized developing a picture of the implementation phase of ASP, allowing generalizability to be

more possible. The basic philosophy of ASP does lend itself to be relevant to other school cultures; the process involved in the staff development aspect was most relevant. Four categories emerged as significant: student morale, instruction, parent involvement, staff collegiality/morale.

Student morale

The student population at Central has become more multicultural, more needy, and less academic in the past 10 years. In the years since the implementation of ASP, the students have also become more disciplined, more responsible and more content. Is it because of the ASP? The teachers feel that allowing the students to feel a part of the planning process gives the students an ownership of their own learning. I sense that the unity of purpose and the main goal of the entire staff is student success. This has indeed changed with the coming of ASP. In the not too distant past, the goal of many teachers was to teach the required scope and sequence and get to the end of the textbooks. We are beginning to teach "them" and not "it." This is bound to have a positive impact on student morale.

Instruction

Instruction is becoming innovative. More teachers are trying new strategies to meet the needs of their classes. We cannot expect all teachers to adapt to the innovations at once. After all, many do not believe that their teaching styles are outdated, and many are not. Through inclusion,

thematic teaching, the use of in-person speakers, and other resources and strengths in our community, teachers will continue to be able to give the students the relevancy that learning today requires. Many teachers are wanting to begin the accelerated process but still do not have the knowledge it requires. More in-service and study groups would help in this regard. ASP needs to be the driving force behind the school day. We need to talk about it freely, and often, and not be embarrassed by our successes. TAAS Test scores have risen in the past two years from barely "acceptable" to a fraction of a percentage away from becoming a "recognized" school (see Appendix D). There has not been an acknowledgment from the staff or administration that the score improvement was due to ASP. At best, there is an undercurrent of suspicion that it may be among the reasons for improvement. Seven teachers who are using accelerated philosophy seems to have more readiness to credit the ASP. When the building has had a central focus, three years ago writing, last year reading, and this year math, there has been a positive test result. This appears to reflect the overall belief that unity of purpose can give desired results.

Parent involvement

Parents have become a part of the school day. This has been the remarkable difference since the implementation of ASP. It is hard to discern if parent involvement emerged as

a result of ASP, or as a natural occurrence. Through the use of the daily volunteers, the advisory council, strong PTA involvement, and the commitment to excellent communication between teachers and parents, we have become partners in the education of the children. The ultimate goal is to bring all of the parents into the inner workings of the school. It is estimated that one-fourth of our parents are actively involved; whereas, five years ago, there was only one-sixteenth.

Staff Collegiality:

Central Elementary has always had a warm, friendly staff. Since the implementation of ASP, there seem to be more groupings of teachers as support groups, and less individualism. However, these groups do not seem to be driven toward becoming more accelerated, rather as support to keep on doing what was always done. It is the accelerated teacher that is more individualistic. There is still a willingness to share, socialize, and group for the good of the kids at Central. There is no ostracism of each other for trying new things, and there is acceptance and congratulations for successes. There remains a camaraderie against administrative policy, i.e., kindergarten class size, insurance inequities, etc., but not against the building administration.

CONCLUSION

The three building blocks of the ASP have remained constant throughout the research: building on strengths, unity of purpose, and empowerment coupled with responsibility. The data supports that each condition existed, in degrees, as strata throughout the school year. It was also obvious that any public school, with the good of its students in mind, would have these building blocks. An accelerated school, on the other hand, would have all three working at an optimum degree, coincidentally. At Central Elementary, a unity of purpose was functioning at a higher degree than were the other two. Most teachers now have a child-centered curriculum in the classrooms, but remain teacher-centered in instruction. The parents are encouraging the child-centered curriculum, but are unaware of instructional practices, and so are complacent with the status quo. Empowerment will take much more time, because wants defer to needs, and needs defer to administrative support, and administrative support defers to central policy.

The rewards of site-based leadership are being collected, as all staff members see the importance of their input, but as all responsibility is felt by the building administrator, the staff input effect is not always realized. There are spots of building on strengths, but only the tip of the iceberg has been felt. Administration

has been reserved in creating a vision for the school due to the site-based leadership policy of bottom-up decision making. This has been a factor in the reluctance of some teachers to embrace the program. The community has not embraced the needs of the school, because the needs have not been successfully communicated. Parents are becoming a larger force in the operating organization of the school, but most are not involved at all. Communication has been a central issue this year, so the need has been felt. Many good ideas fall victim to lack of follow through because of lack of communication. This is typical in a philosophical, process oriented program. Change is not an event, it is a process.

It is my conclusion that Central Elementary has not implemented the ASP, but rather is in a phase between training and implementation. More training and sharing of successes, more parental support, more teaching of "them" [the students] and not "it" [the subject], will push the program forward into the implementation stage of staff development.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several studies came to mind as this research was underway. It would be interesting to use four matched pairs of schools (four not ASP and four ASP) to see if improvements were made in teacher job satisfaction, student attendance, and test scores. It would be well to allow a

period of three years to pass during research so that results would reflect the process, as well as the outcomes. Another interesting study would concentrate on textbook usage in the classrooms, as evidenced by lesson plans, and the comparison ensuing being a percentage of textbook usage versus percentage of thematic, whole language approaches and student success/customer satisfaction.

Another study would investigate whether teachers consider themselves ASP teachers, and the comparison of the teaching styles of those who do with those who do not. Another study would research any ASP school that is considered to be in the maintenance stage of staff development. What does it look like, how does it feel, what are the benefits, and how is maintenance being accomplished?

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Colleague:

I am asking for your help. I will be conducting a qualitative research project for my dissertation. It is about the implementation of Accelerated Schooling at Terrace Elementary. I may be asking you to fill out a questionnaire, be informally interviewed, and be observed during routine professional behaviors. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may discontinue at any time with out any penalty or prejudice, and your names will not be used in any results of the study. Your name will be assigned a code number, and no one will ever gain knowledge of the code. I will always preserve your confidentiality and anonymity. I will not interfere with your teaching or your students in any way.

This project has been reviewed by the University of North Texas Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, and the Committee of Research Review of the A.I.S.D.

Please indicate whether you will participate in this project by checking the statement below. Place the completed form in my box as quickly as possible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cindy Montgomery

Please check one of the following:

I will participate in this project. _____

I choose not participate in this project. _____

Your Signature _____

Today's Date _____

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please comment on the following statements/questions. This is anonymous, so please be objective. Details such as anecdotes or other supporting documentation are appreciated.

1. It is important that learning activities are created that characterize high expectations.

2. It is important that the student be involved in a learning environment that provides high status for the learner.

3. A successful program would set a deadline for closing the achievement gap so that ultimately educationally disadvantaged children will be able to benefit from mainstream education.

4. An effective curriculum for disadvantaged children would be faster paced.

5. An effective curriculum for disadvantaged children would actively engage their interests and motivate them to learn.

6. The implementation of a successful educational program to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged children requires the involvement of parents.

7. The implementation of a successful educational program to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged children requires the extensive participation of teachers.

8. I have had to incorporate different teaching methods to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged student.

9. My teaching strategies have changed a great deal to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged student.

10. My personal planning/preparation time has changed to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged student.

11. My grade level/subject area planning/preparation time has changed to meet the needs of our changing population.

12. A staff attitude change has taken place at our school to accommodate the changing population.

13. More parents are becoming a part of our school day in our building.

14. The community is taking some responsibility in becoming a part of our school.

15. The morale of our staff is improving.

16. The learning atmosphere is more relaxed this year.

17. The absentee rate of our students has declined this year.

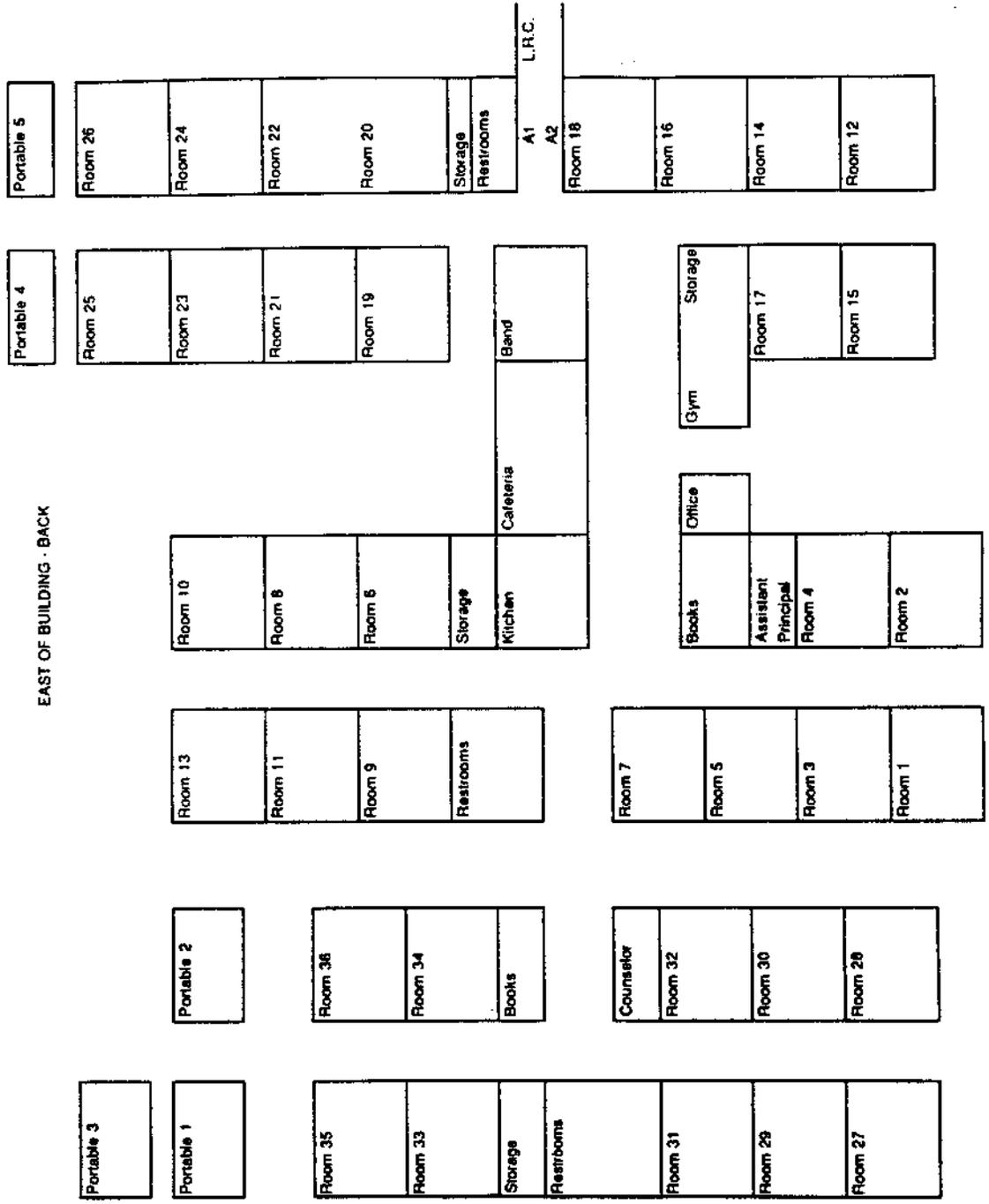
18. There is a distinction between administration and teaching staff in the matter of team work.

19. Our site-based leadership has become a more integral part of our work life.

20. We are production-centered, child-centered, or a balance.

APPENDIX C
BUILDING PLAN

EAST OF BUILDING - BACK

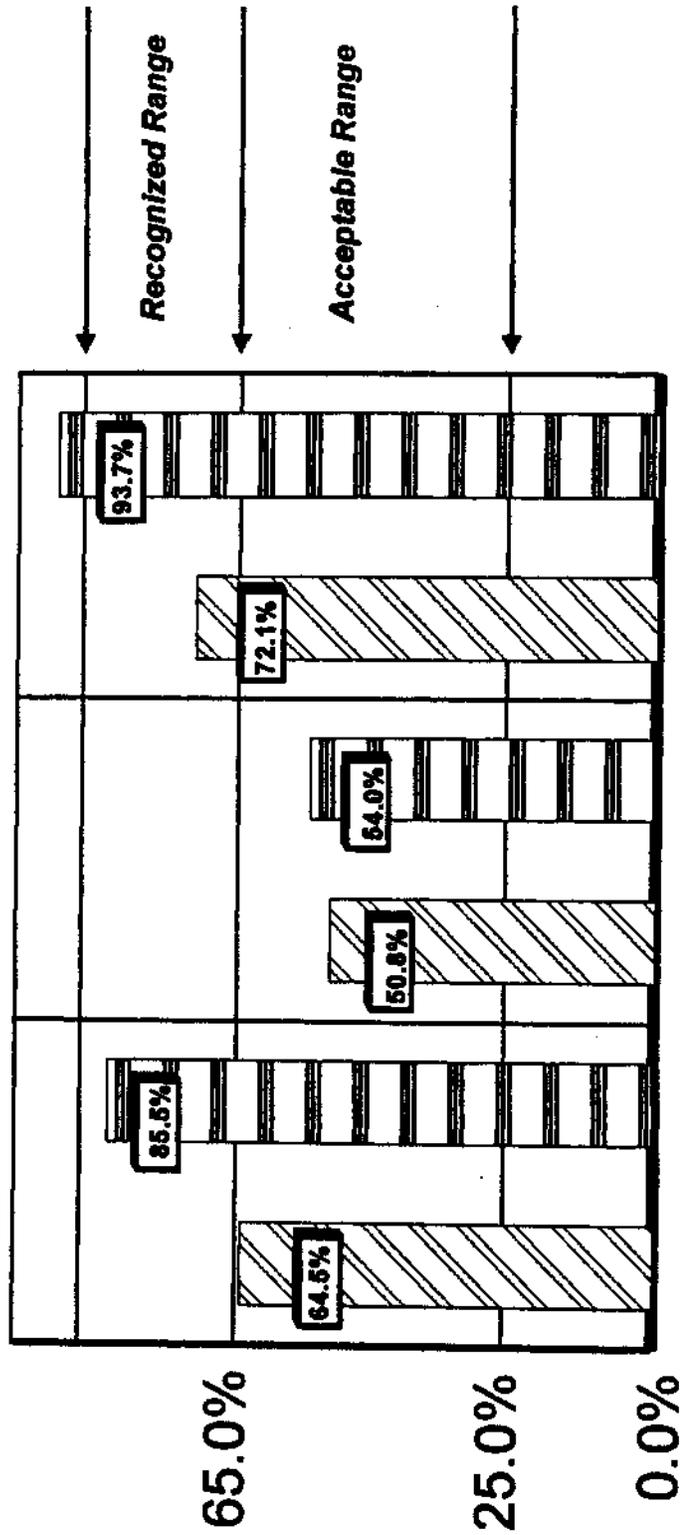


APPENDIX D
TEST RESULTS

Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

4th Grade - All Students

TEA STANDARD 90.0%



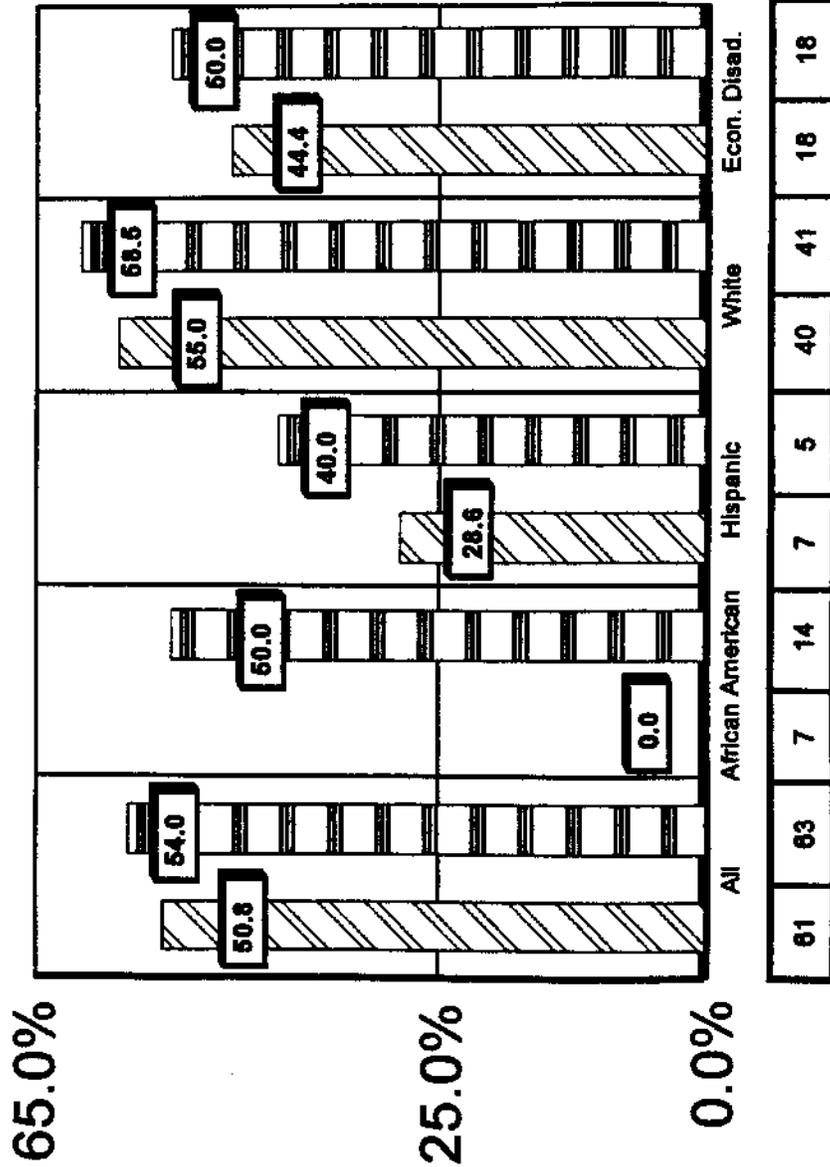
Reading Mathematics Writing

n = 62 n = 63 n = 63



Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

4th Grade Mathematics - By Sub-Group

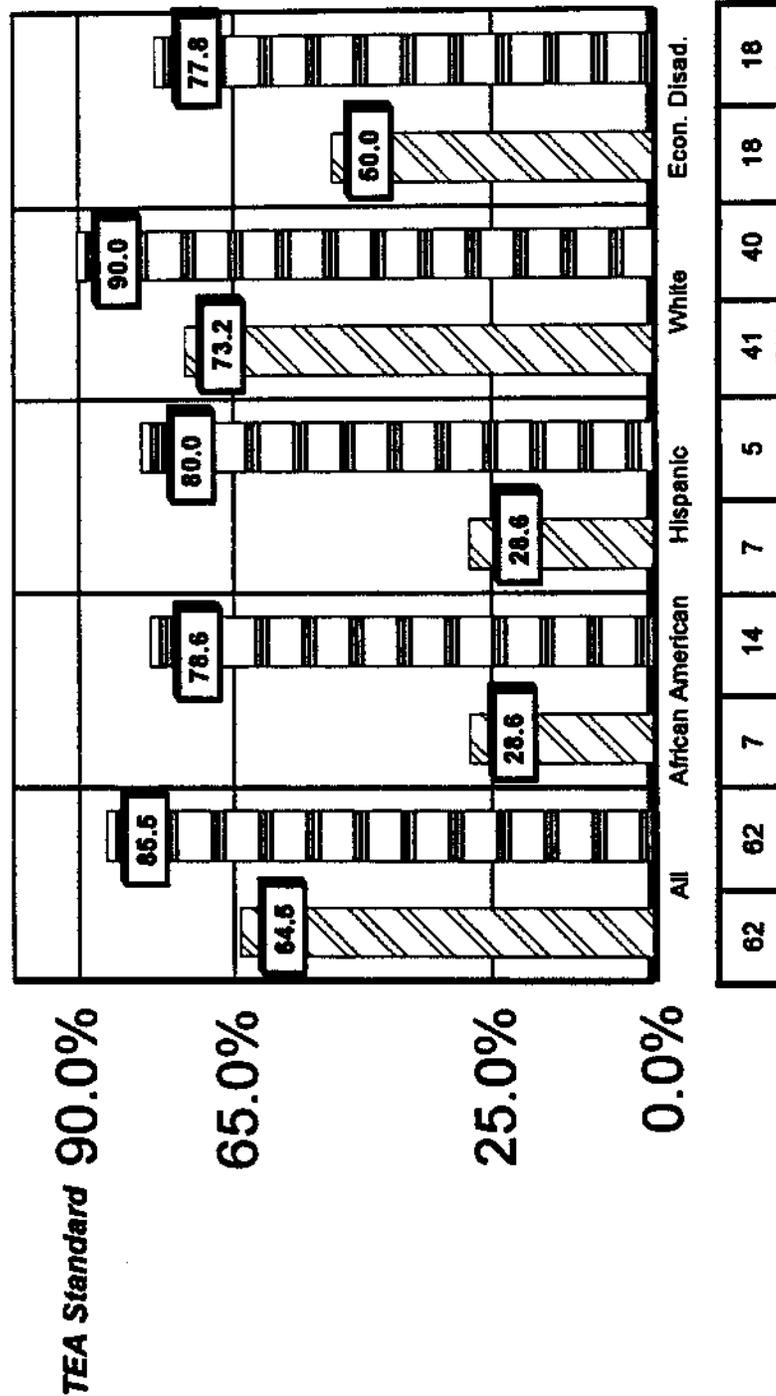


Number of Students Taking Exam

1993
 1994

Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

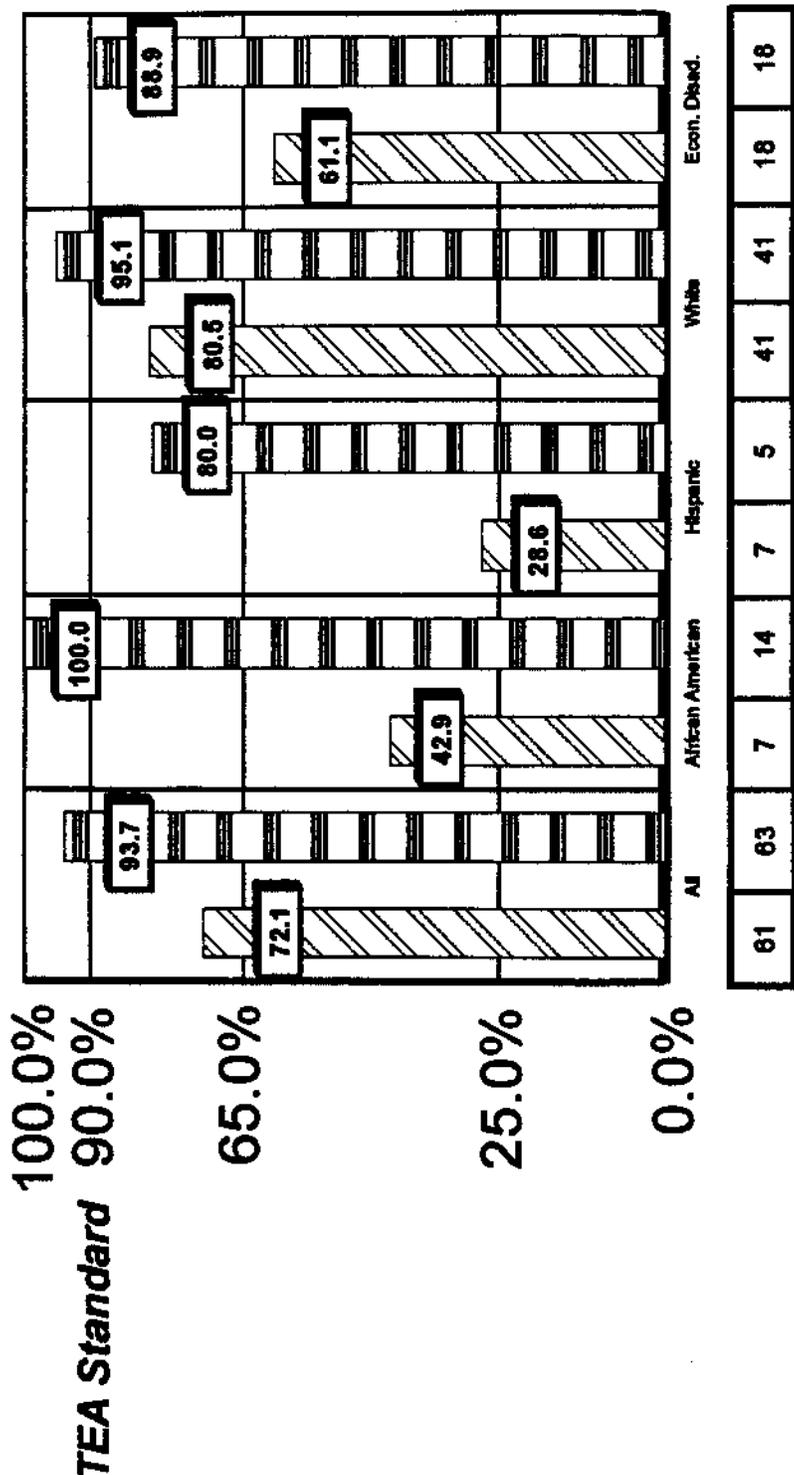
4th Grade Reading - By Sub-Groups



▨ 1993
 ▤ 1994

Number of Students Taking Exam

Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results 4th Grade Writing - By Sub-Groups



1993 1994

Number of Students Taking Exam

Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

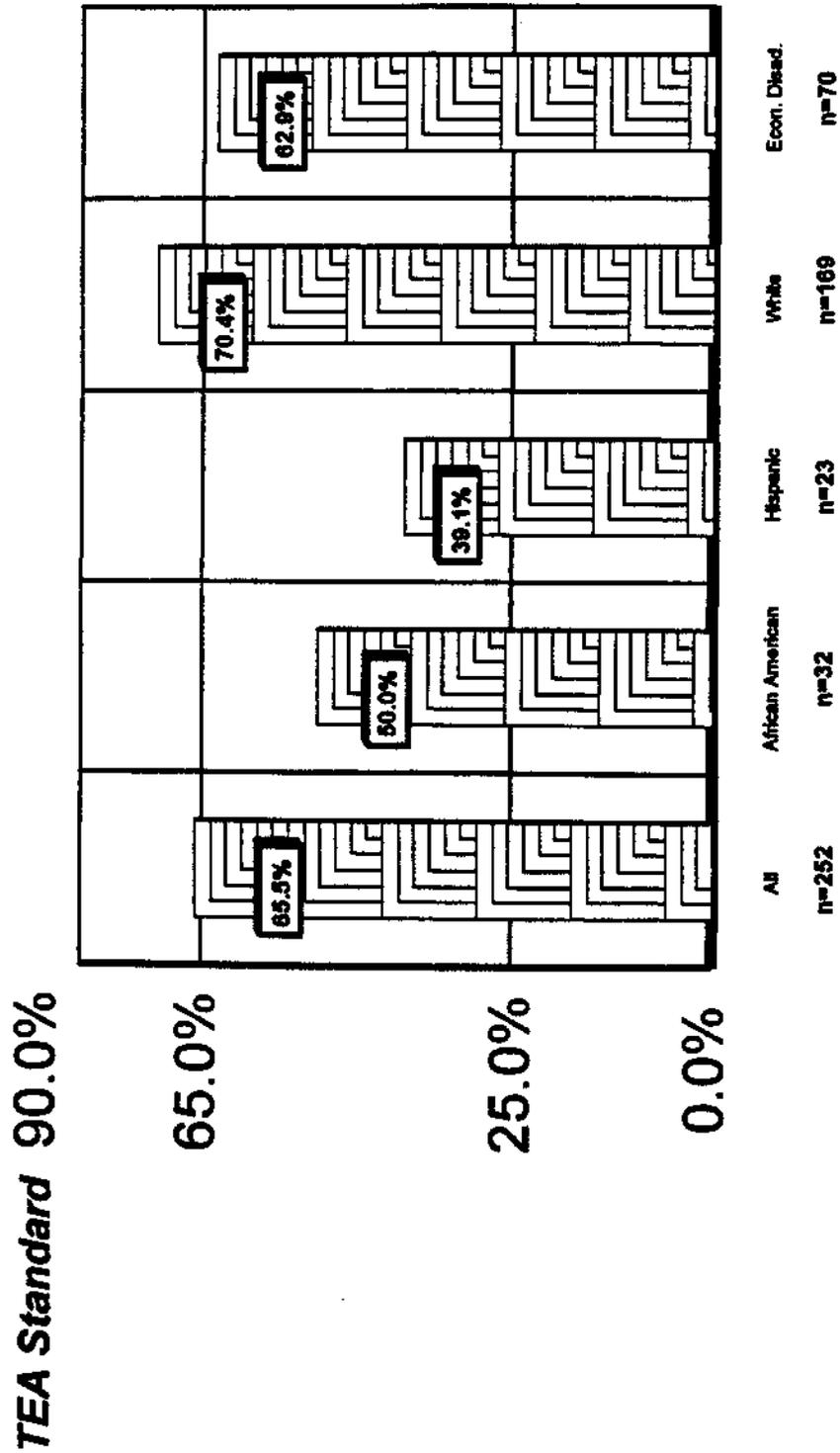
Improvement To 90% Standard (4th Grade)

	READING			MATHEMATICS			WRITING		
	Required Improvement	Actual Improvement							
All Students	5.1%	21.0%	7.8%	3.2%	3.6%	21.6%			
African American	12.3%	50.0%	18.0%	50.0%	9.4%	57.1%			
Hispanic	12.3%	51.4%	12.3%	11.4%	12.3%	51.4%			
White	3.4%	16.8%	7.0%	3.5%	1.9%	14.6%			
Economically Disadvantaged	8.0%	27.8%	9.1%	5.6%	5.8%	27.8%			

NOTE: Required improvement percentages represent the percent increase per year required over a five (5) year period to reach the TEA 90% Standard. The required improvement percentages are based on the 1993 test scores.

Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

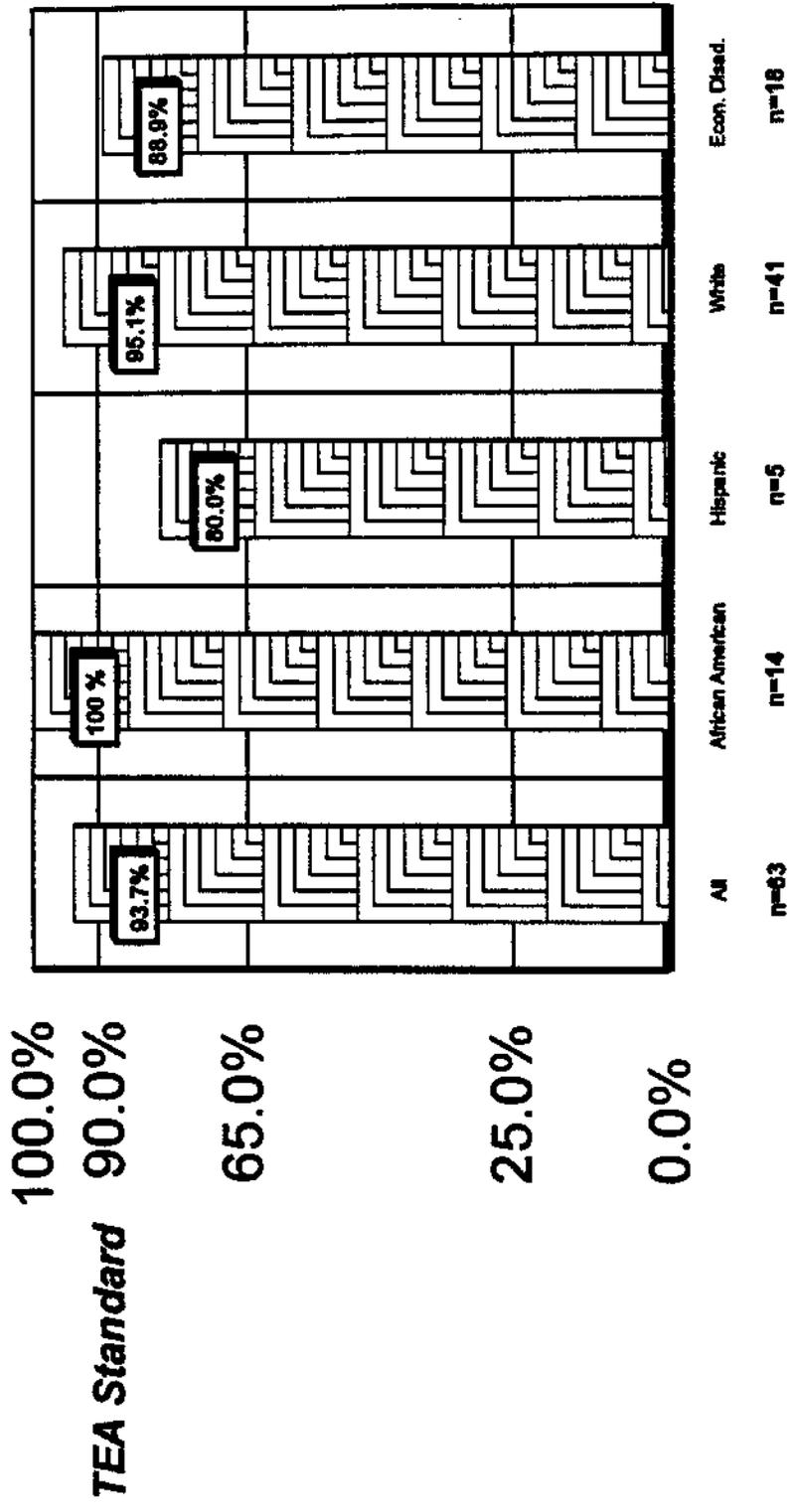
Mathematics: Grades 3 - 6



1994

Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

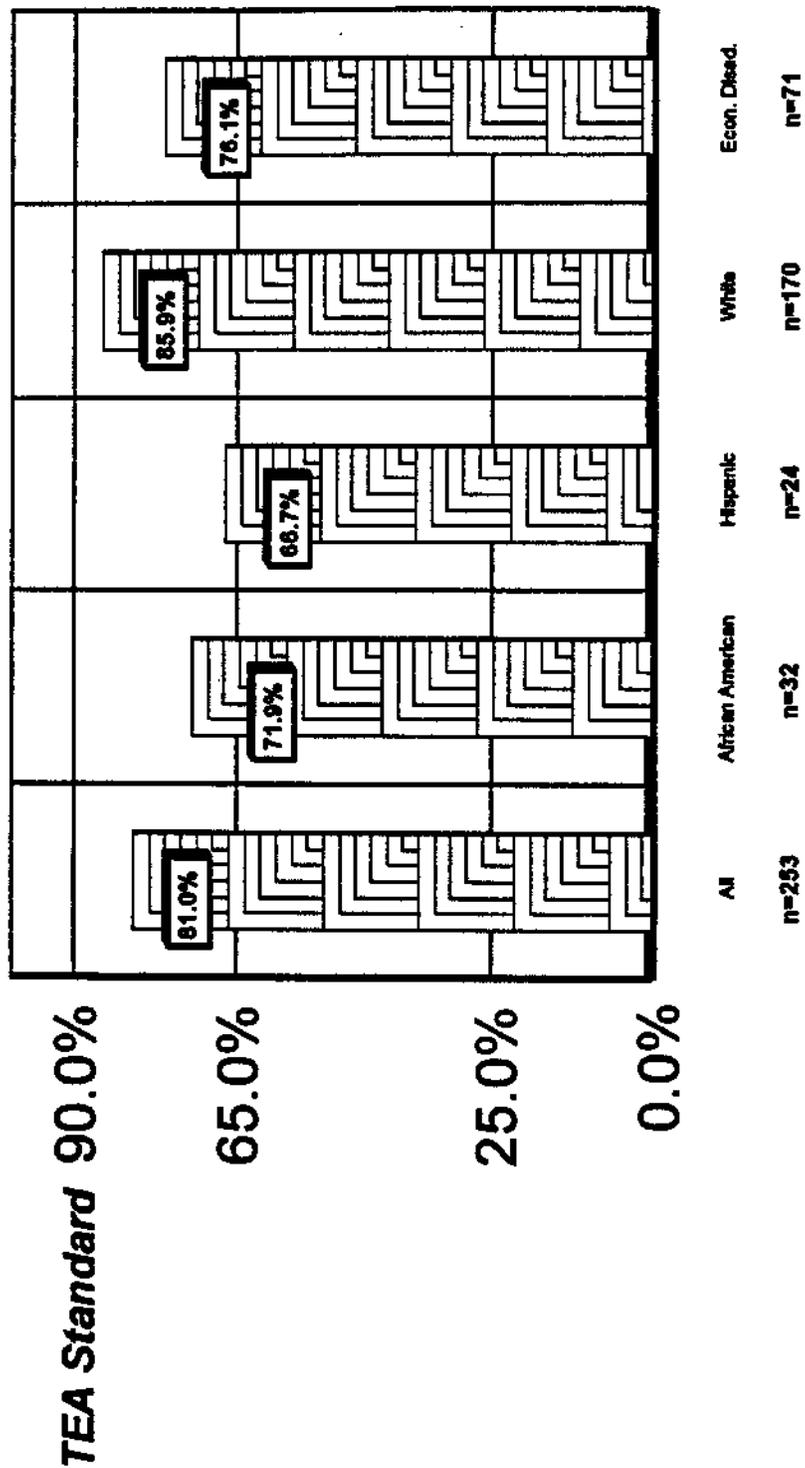
Writing: Grade 4



1994

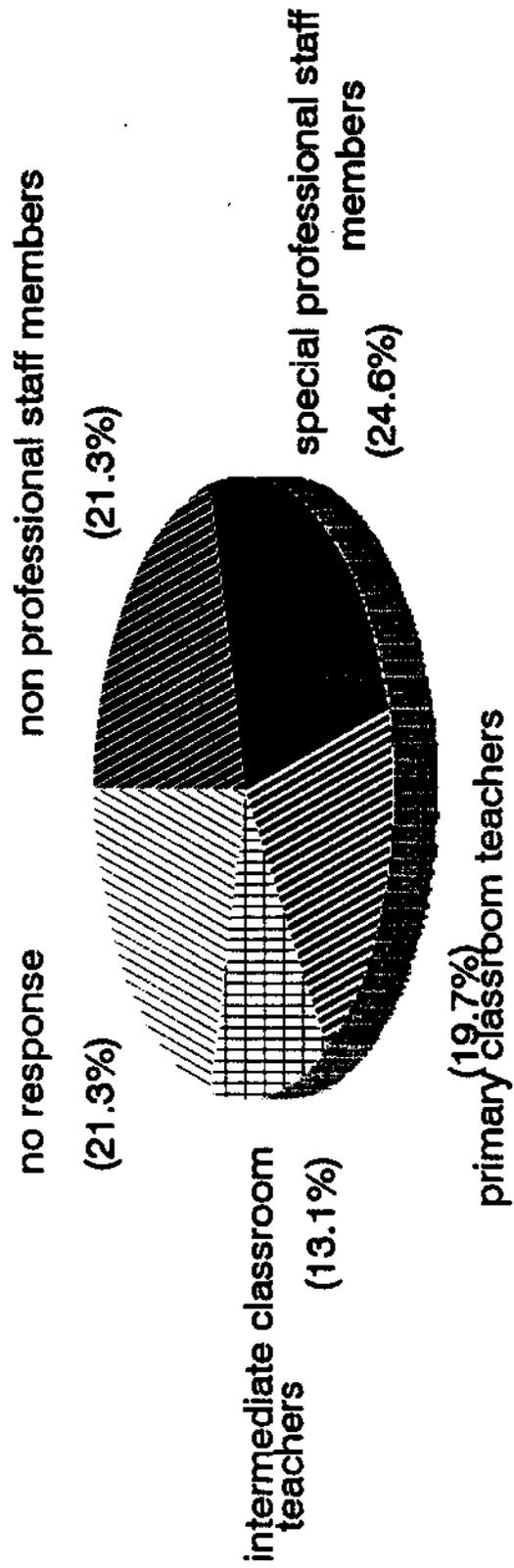
Central Elementary 1994 TAAS Results

Reading: Grades 3 - 6



1994

Sample Derivation



APPENDIX E
Parent Survey

Dear Central Parents,

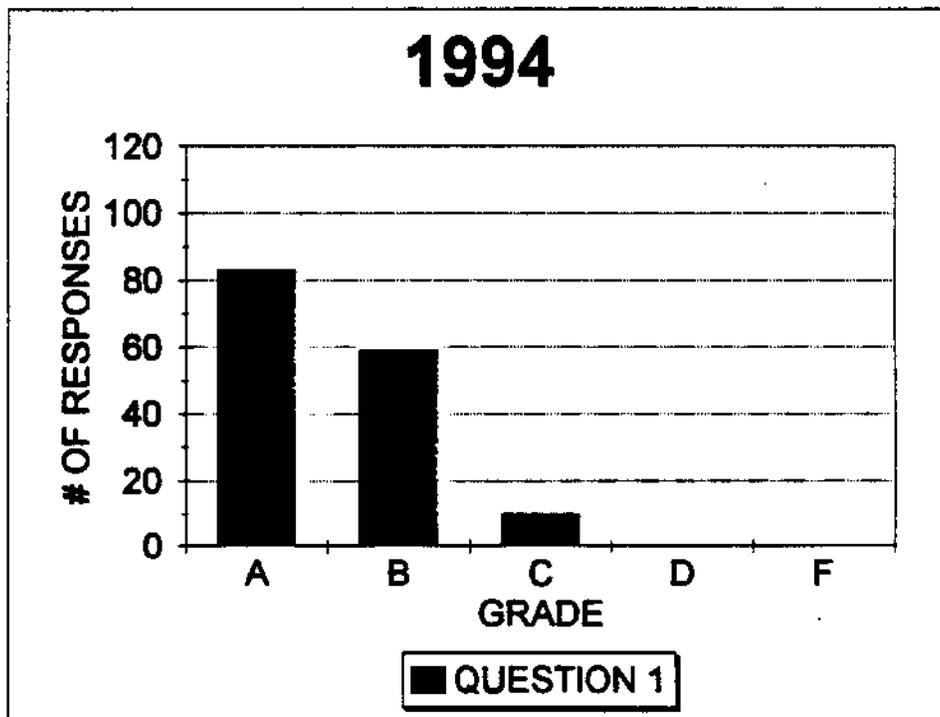
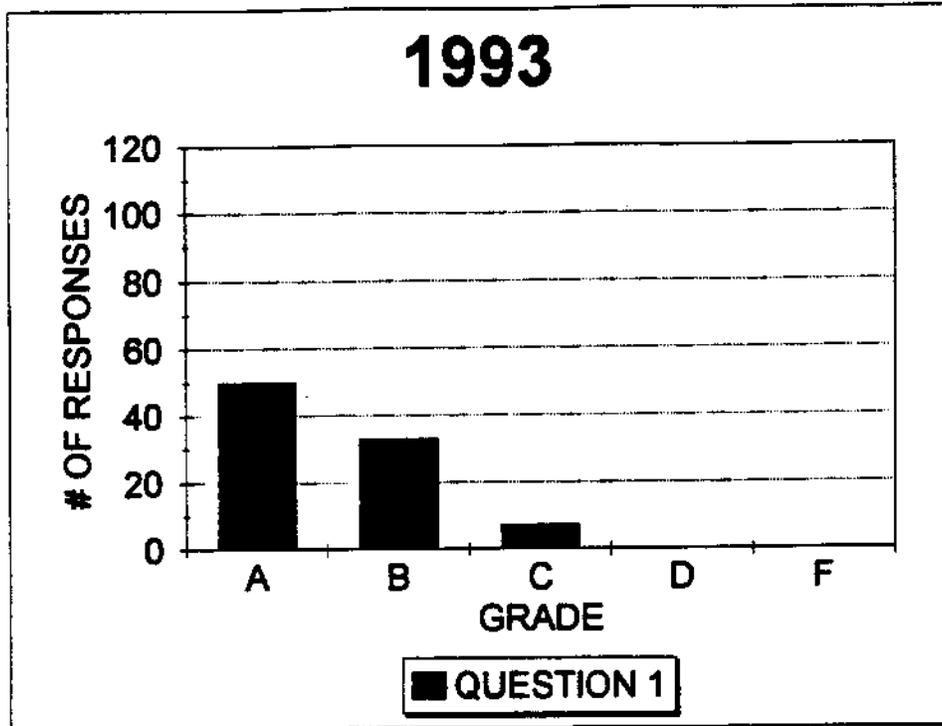
We are seeking parental input as to your impression/perception/evaluation of our school. Many of the questions in this survey have been taken from the 12th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools.

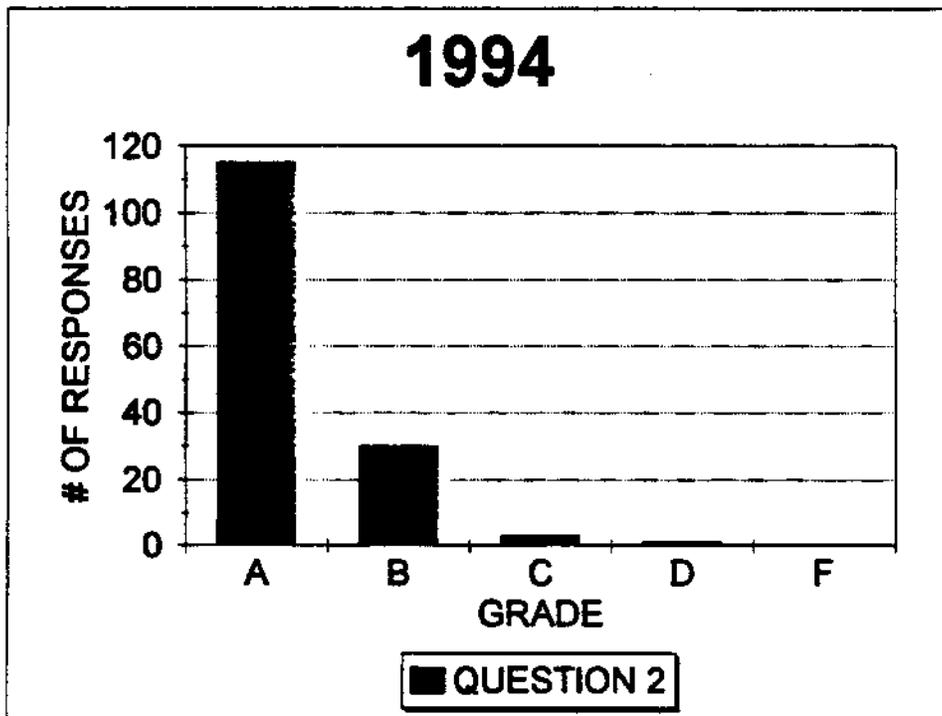
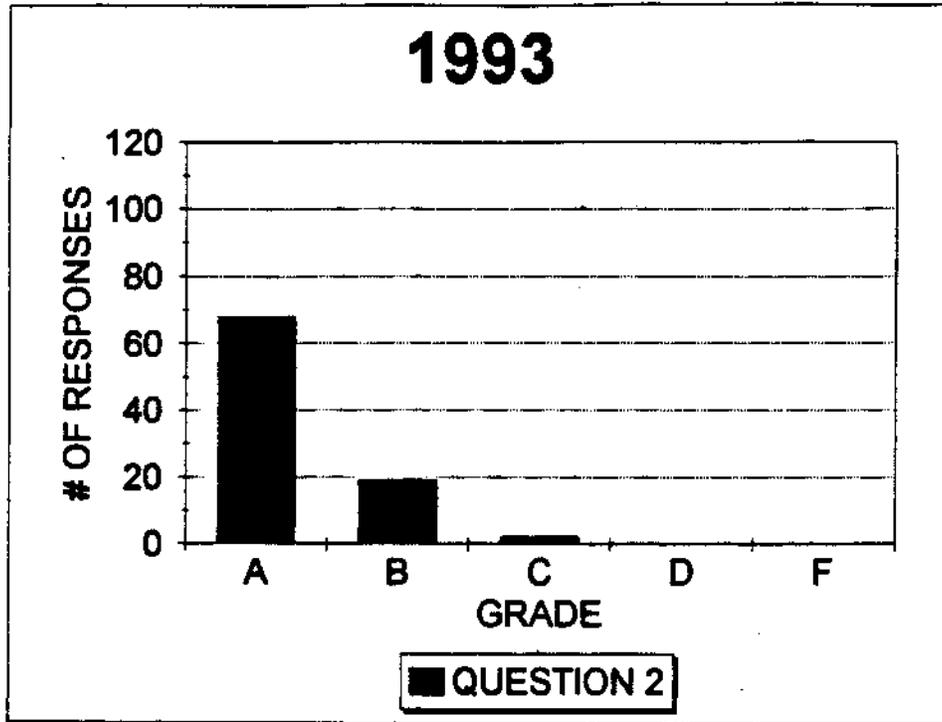
YOUR attitudes are important to us. Please take the time to provide us with your assessment of our educational facility.

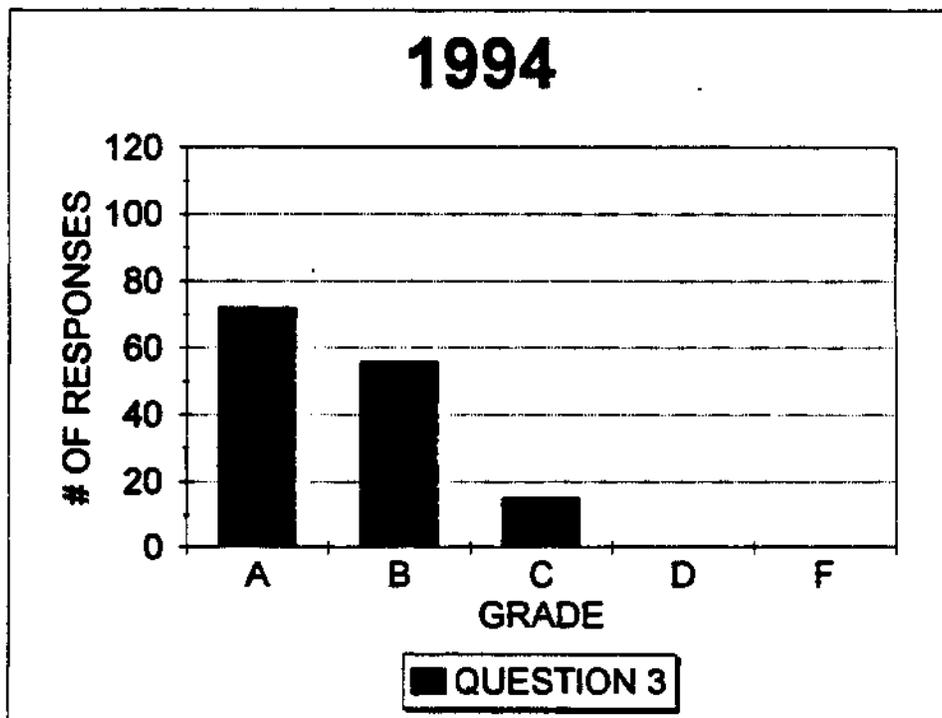
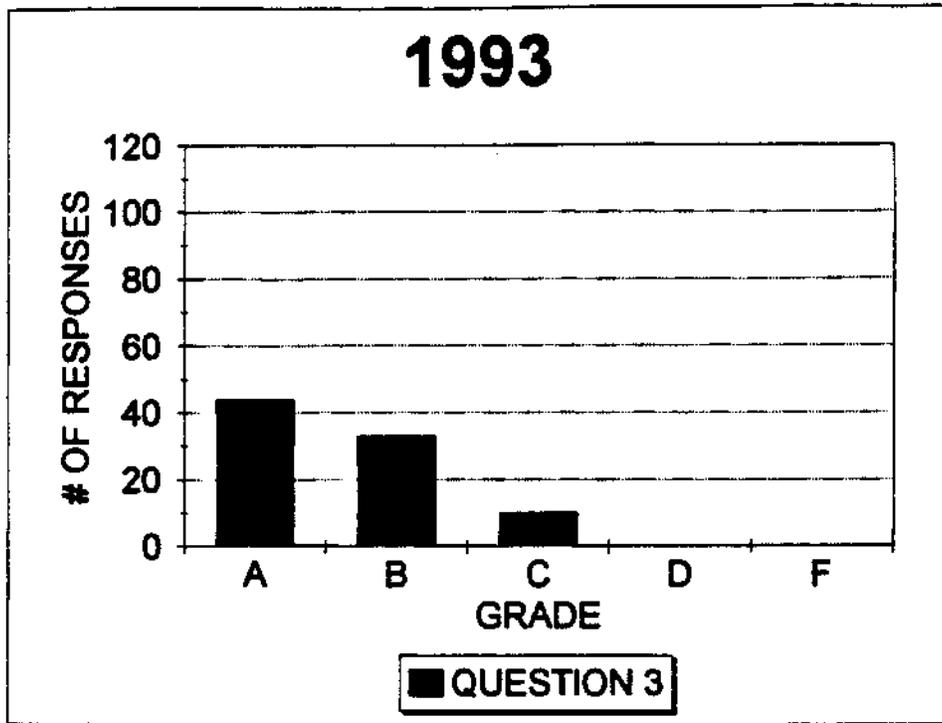
Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give to Central in the following areas?

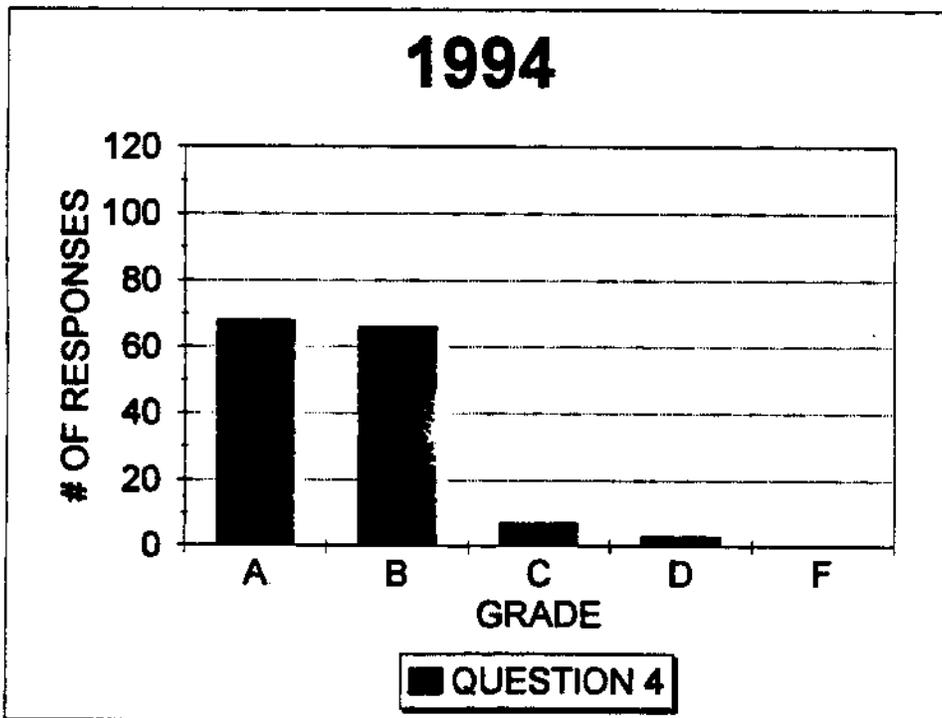
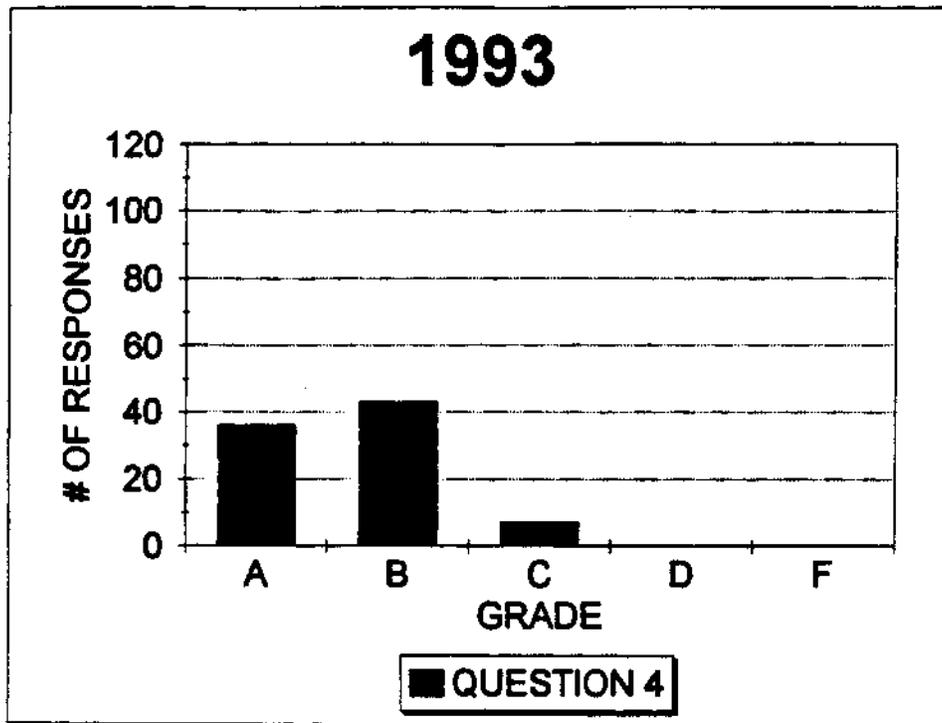
PLEASE CIRCLE ONE

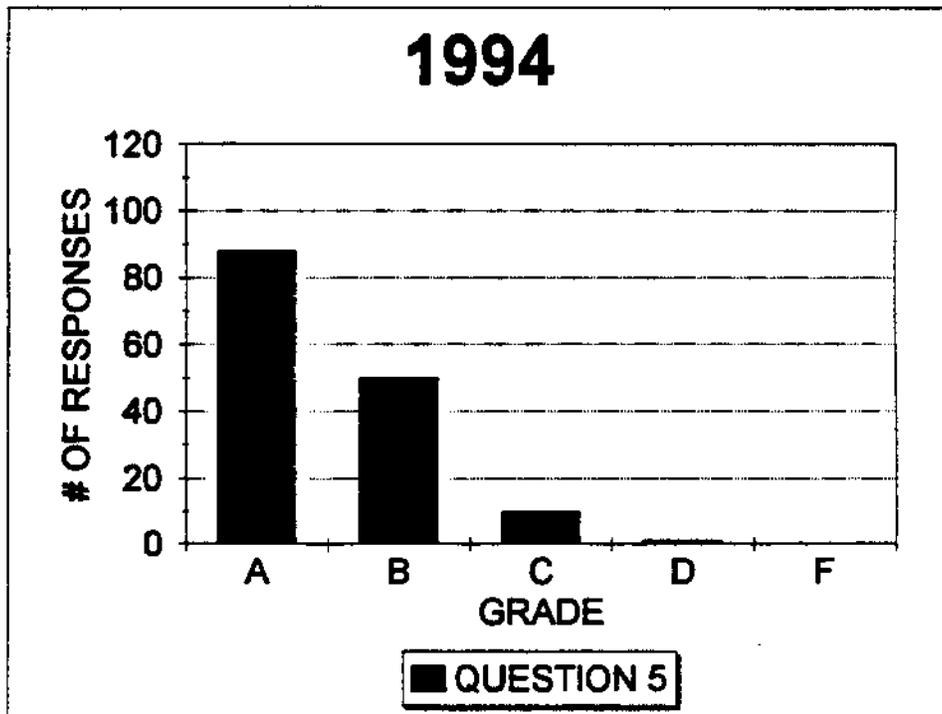
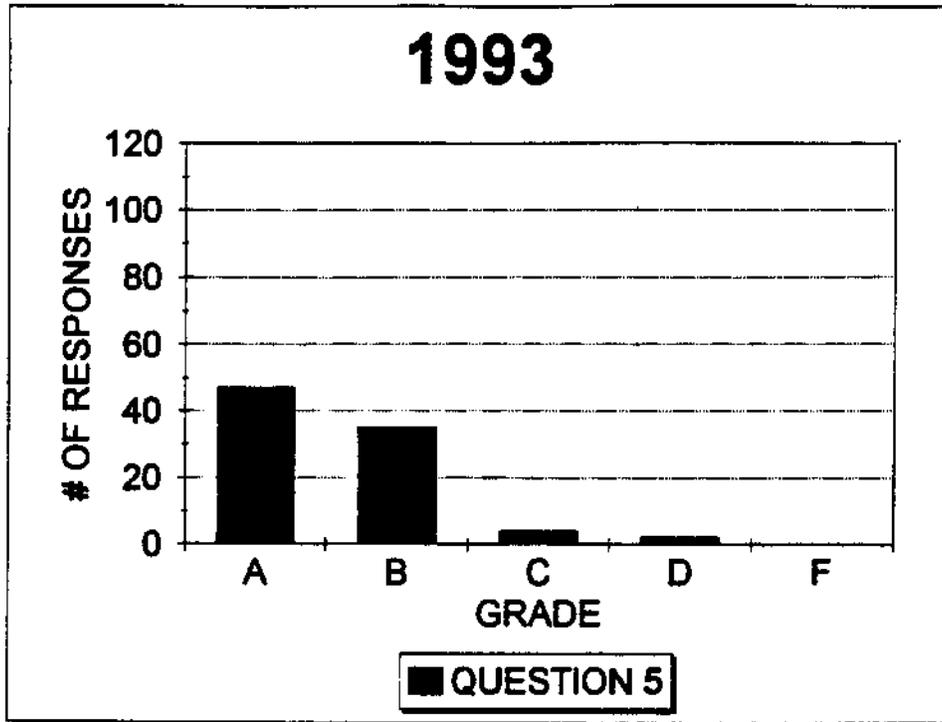
- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The overall quality of education: | A | B | C | D | F |
| 2. The quality of the teachers? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 3. Behavioral guidelines, which were sent out at the beginning of the year, have contributed to improvement of school-wide discipline | A | B | C | D | F |
| 4. This year's discipline has been conducive to a learning environment? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 5. The school climate has been quiet and orderly? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 6. Restructuring of the seating and movement in the cafeteria has led to a pleasant atmosphere? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 7. Standards for pupil work? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 8. Teaching of reading? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 9. Teaching of mathematics: | A | B | C | D | F |
| 10. The principal's overall leadership? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 11. Provision of enrichment for the the gifted and talented? | A | B | C | D | F |
| 12. Provision of services for children with handicaps or other problems? | A | B | C | D | F |

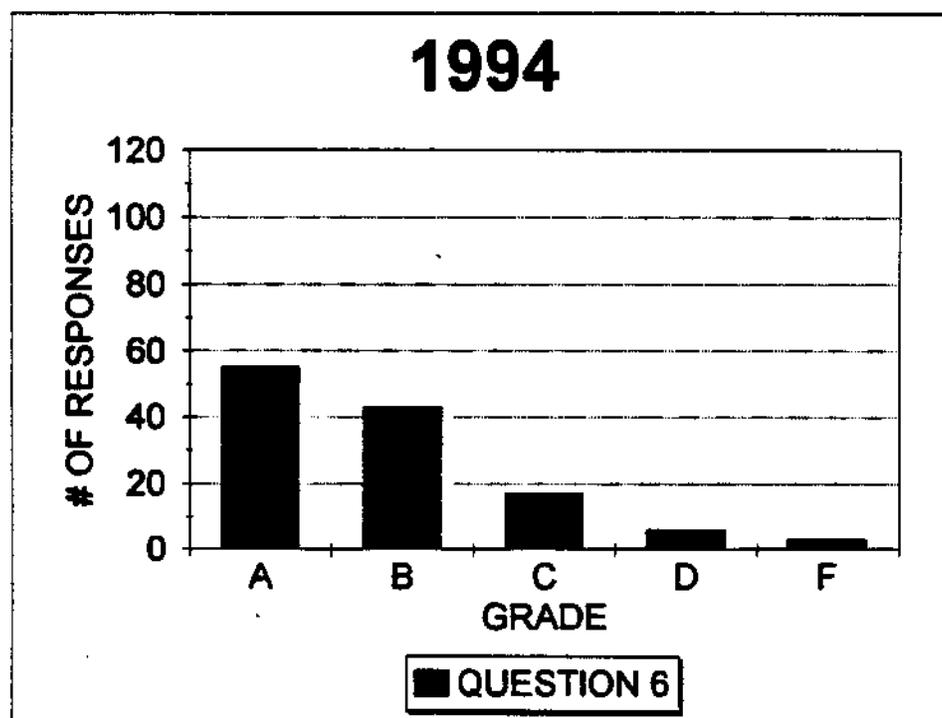
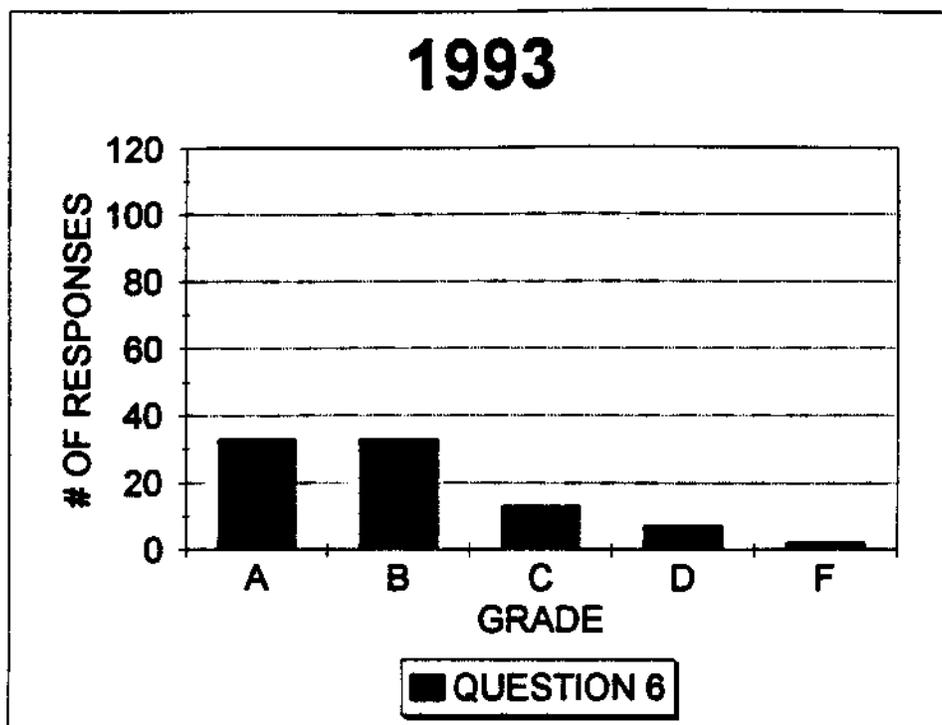


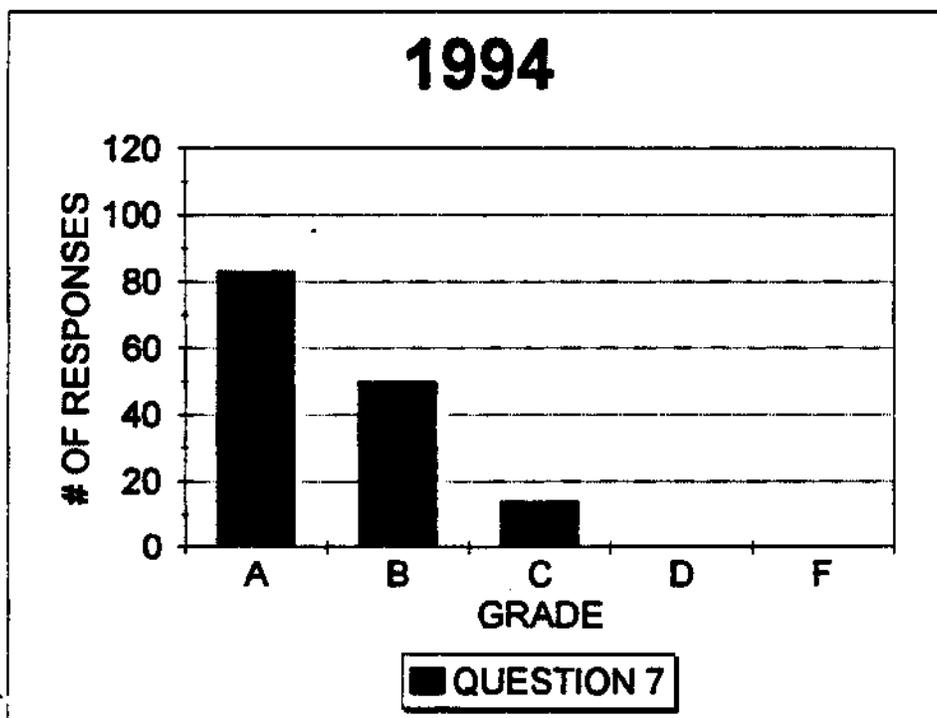
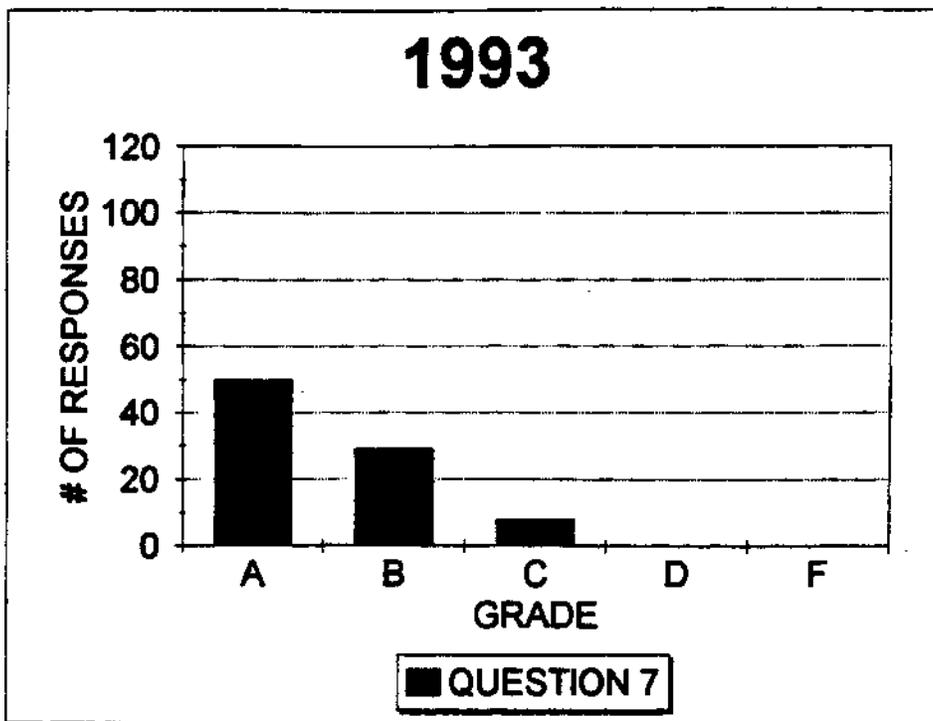


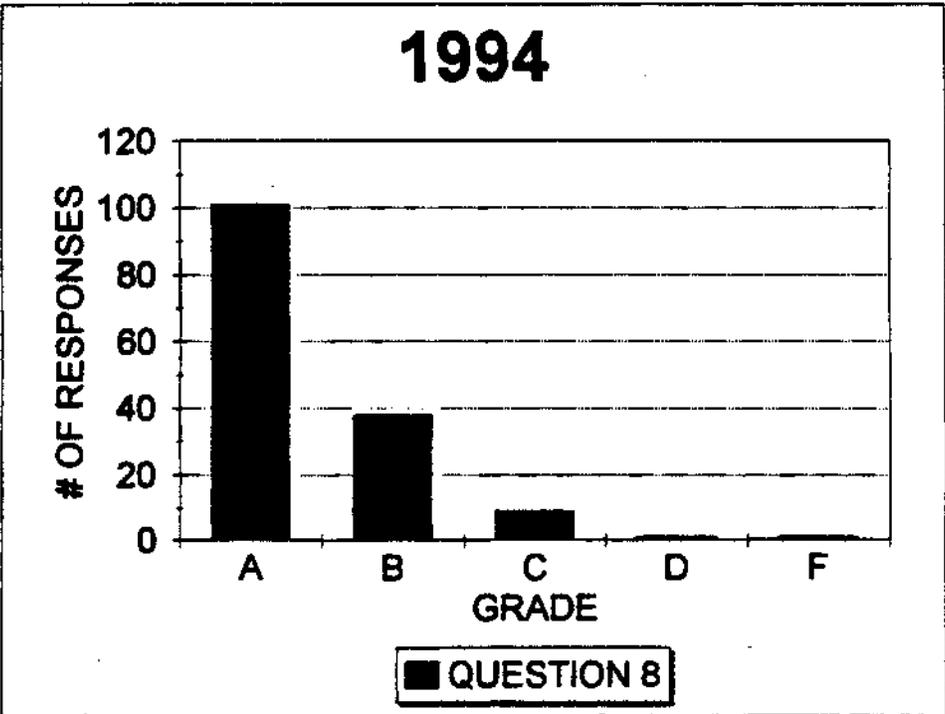
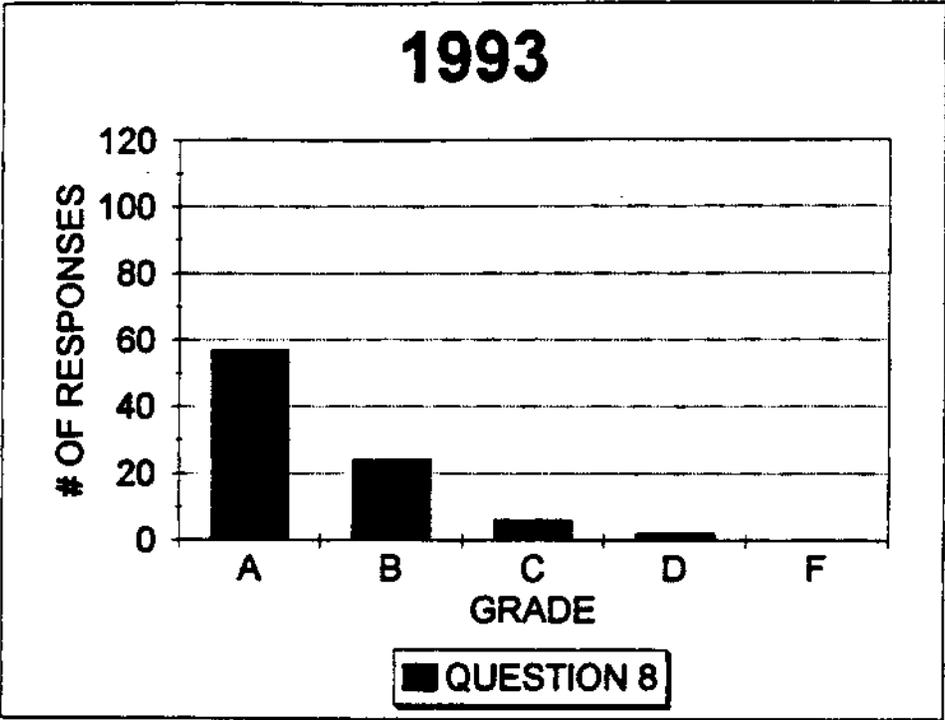


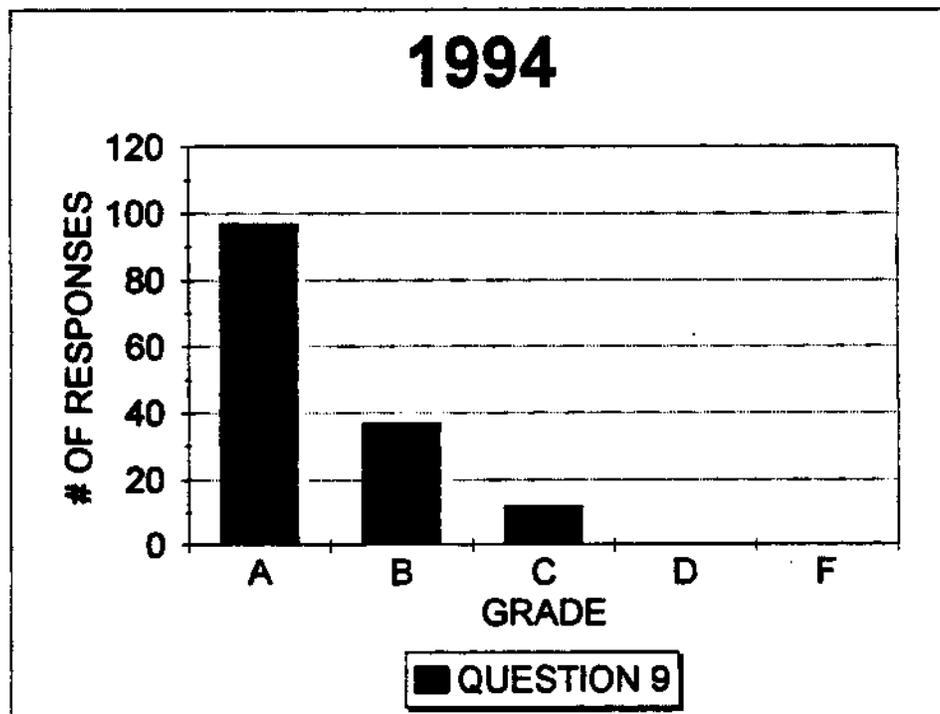
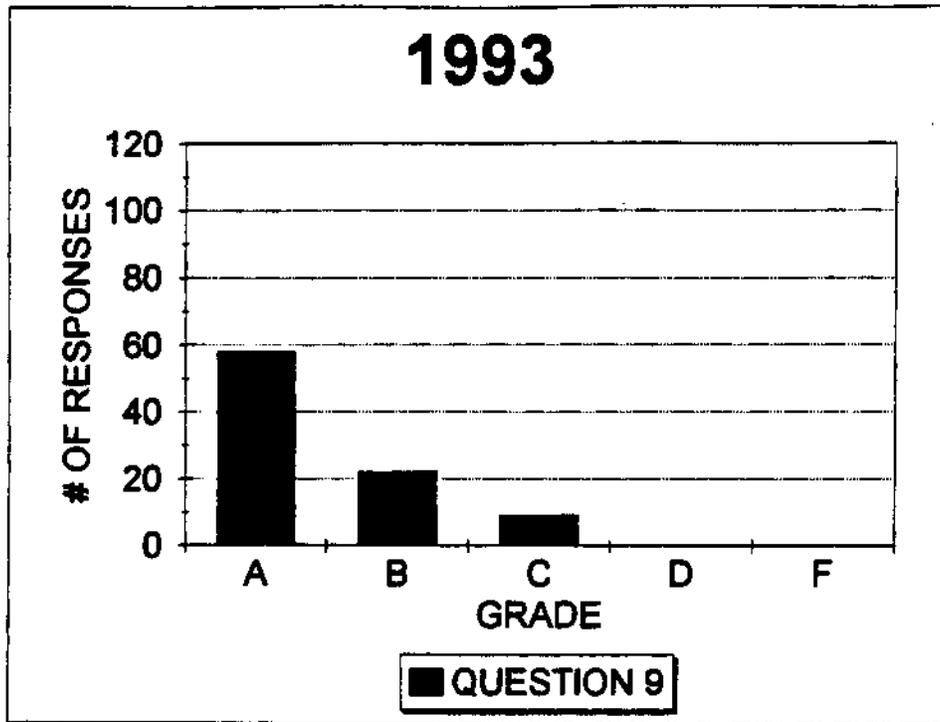


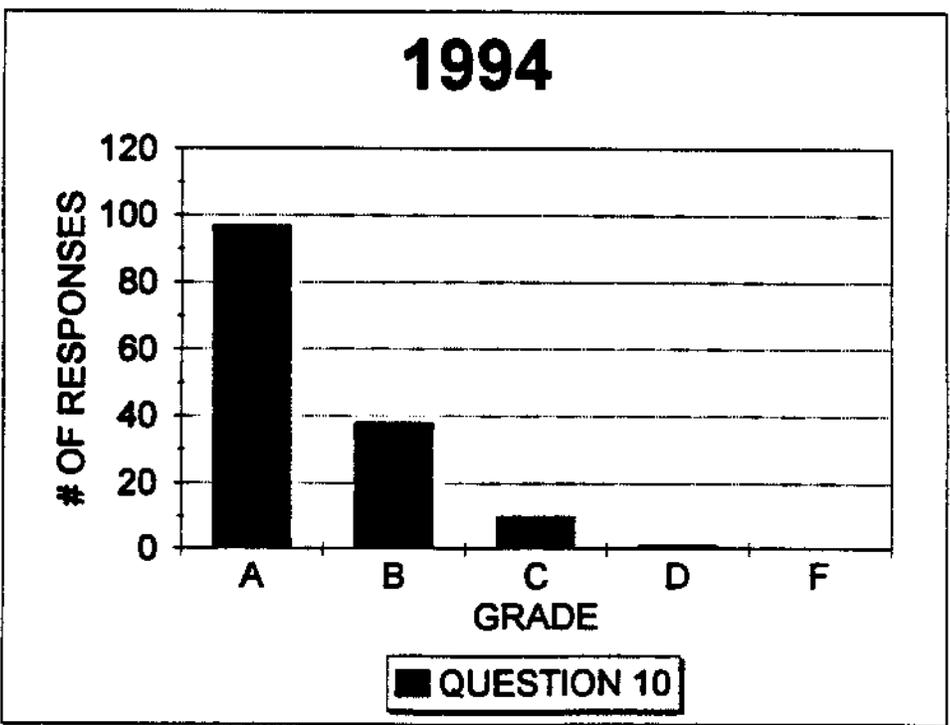
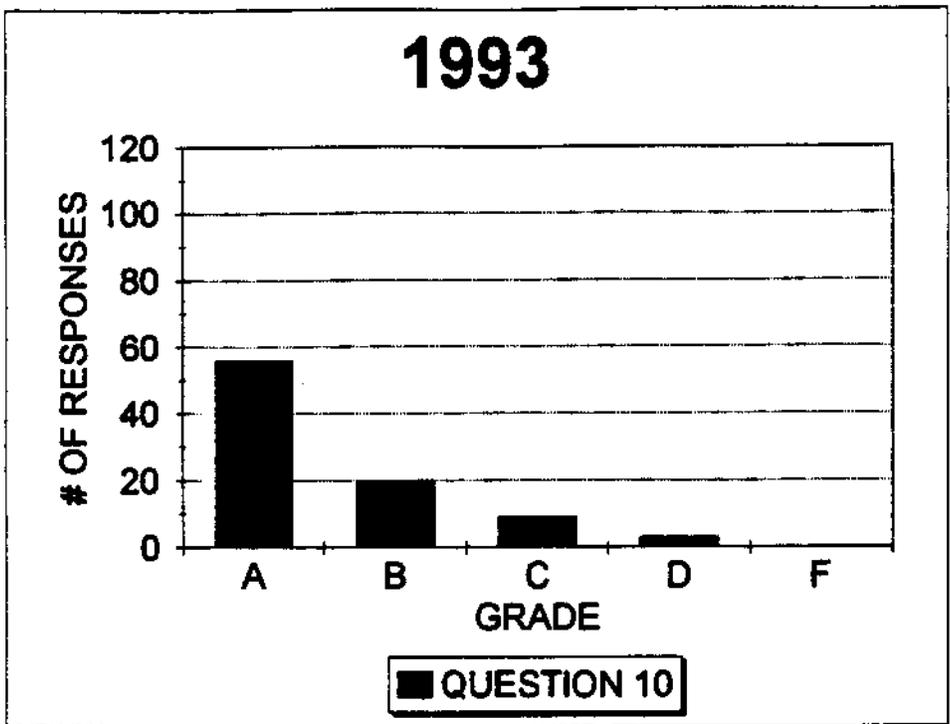


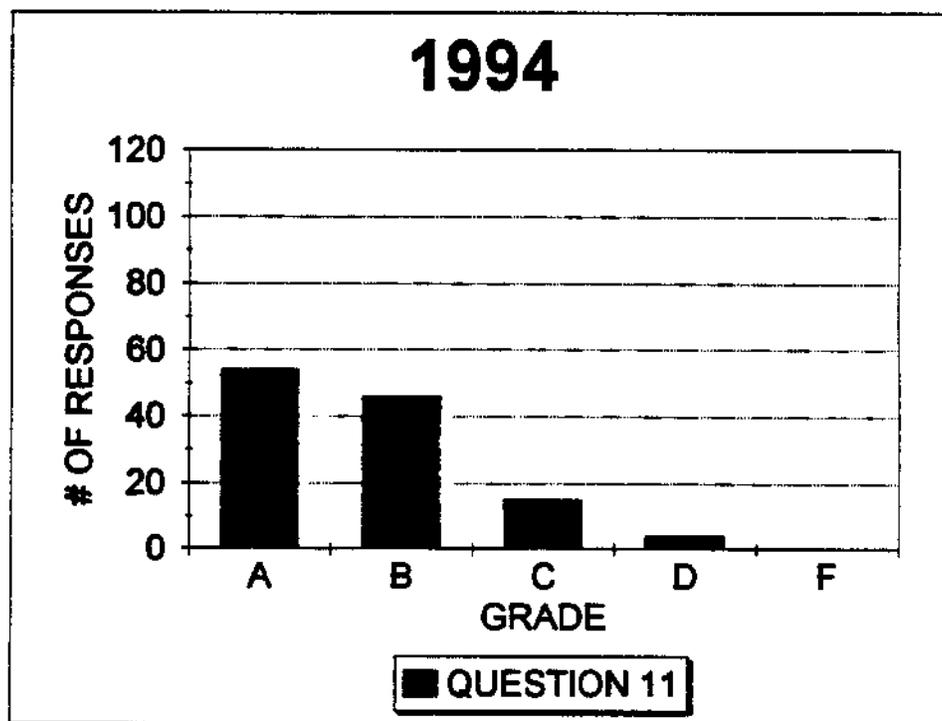
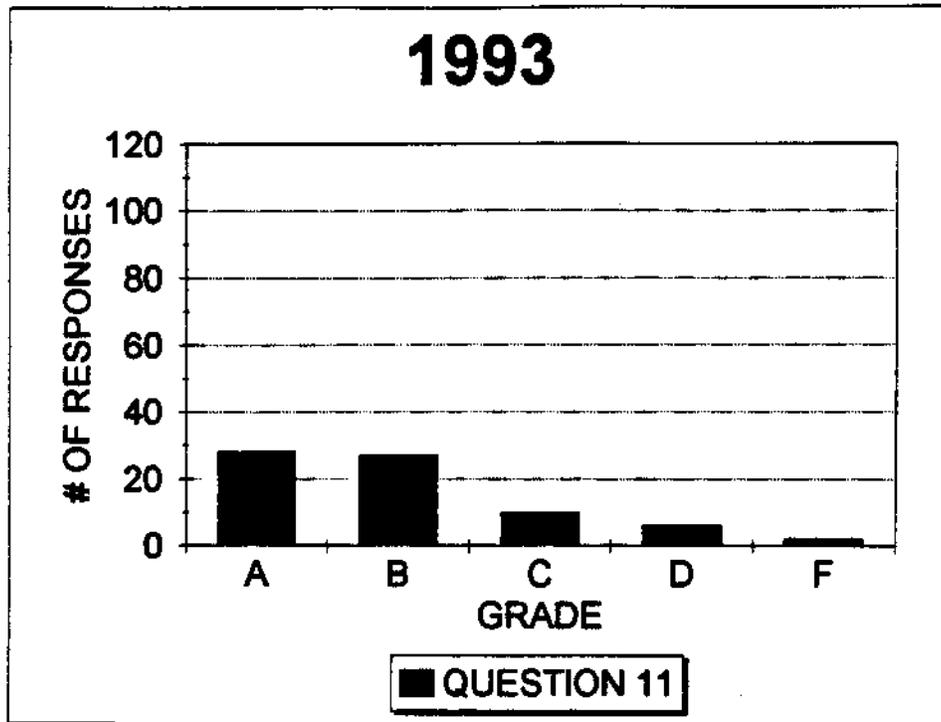


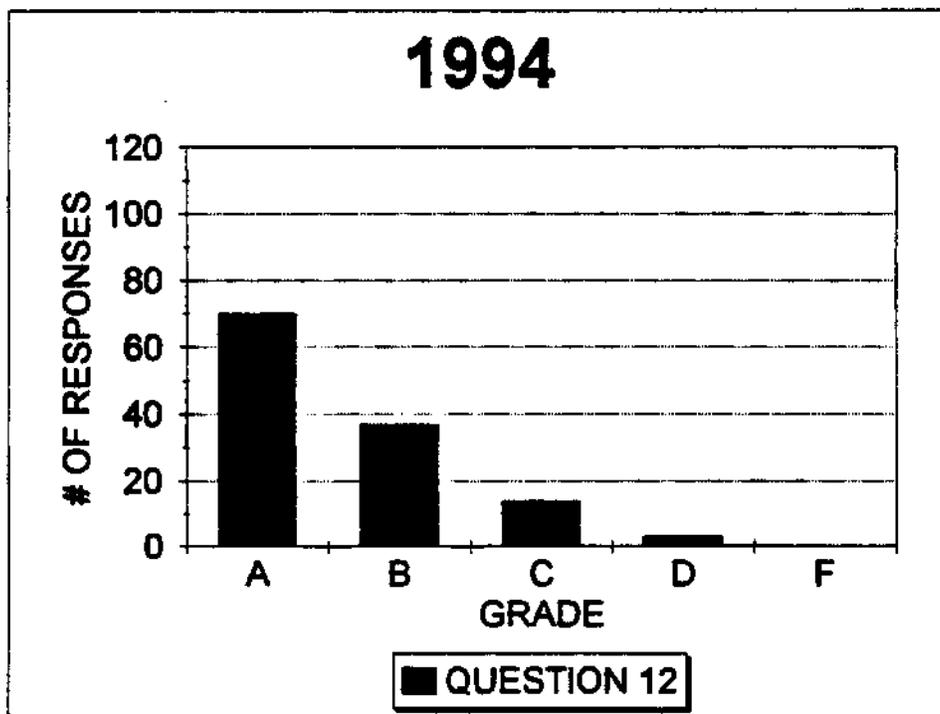
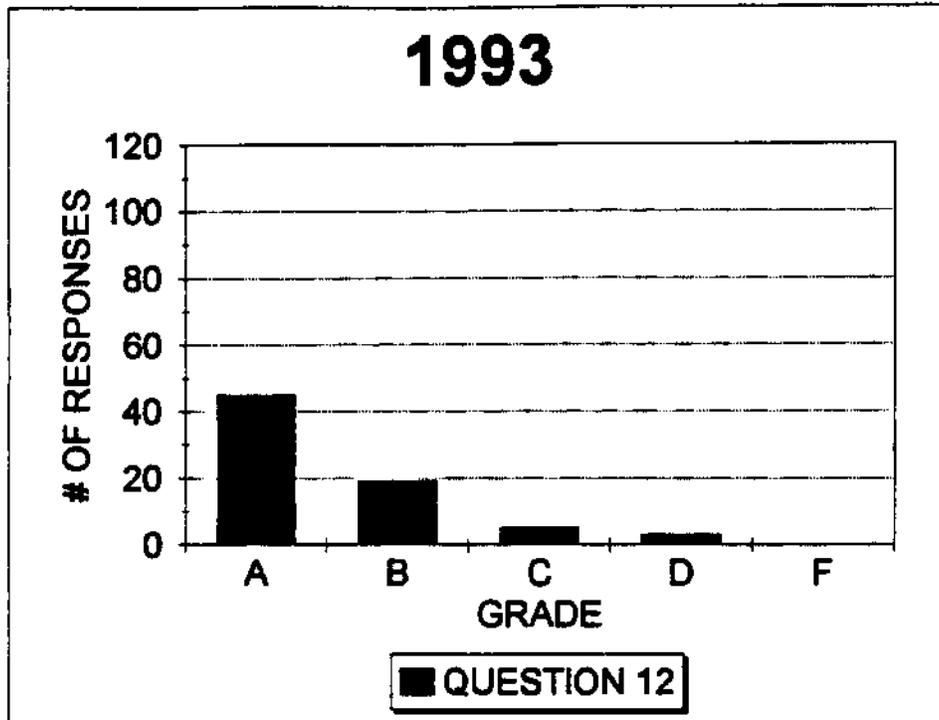


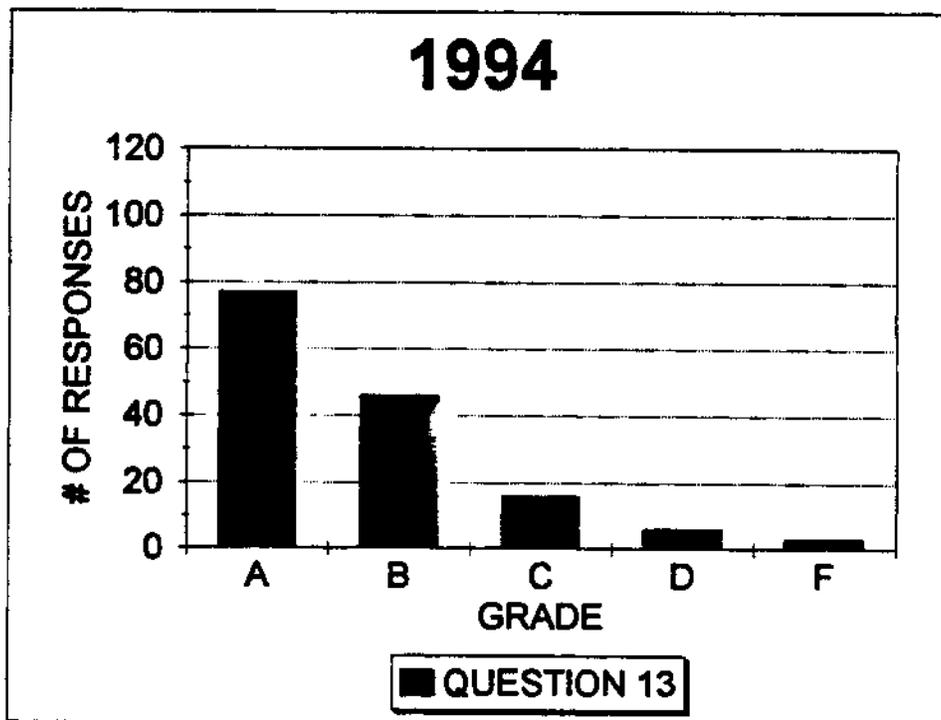
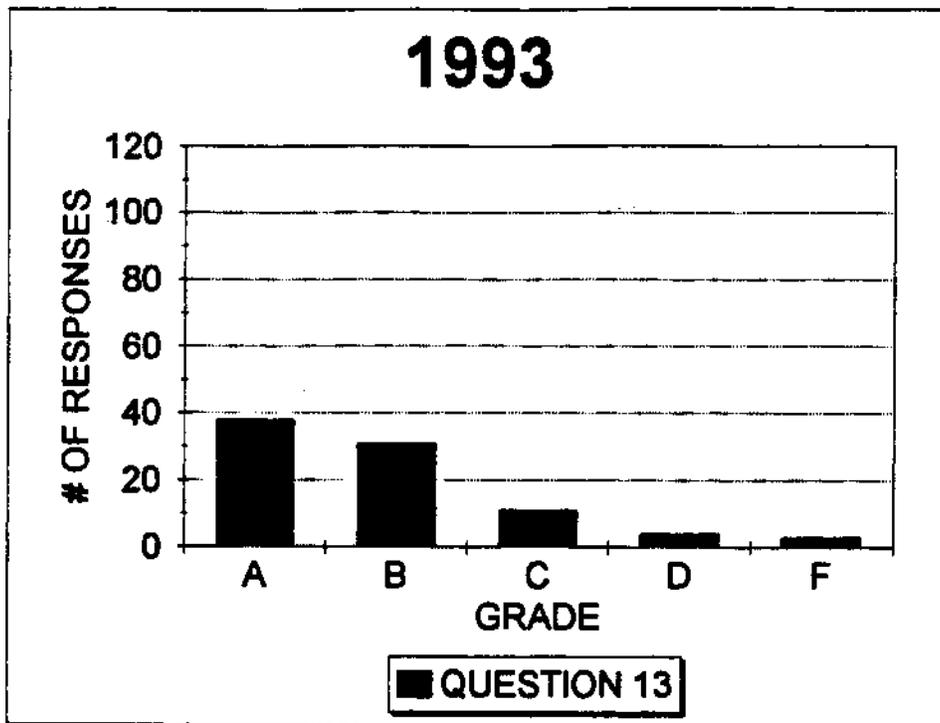


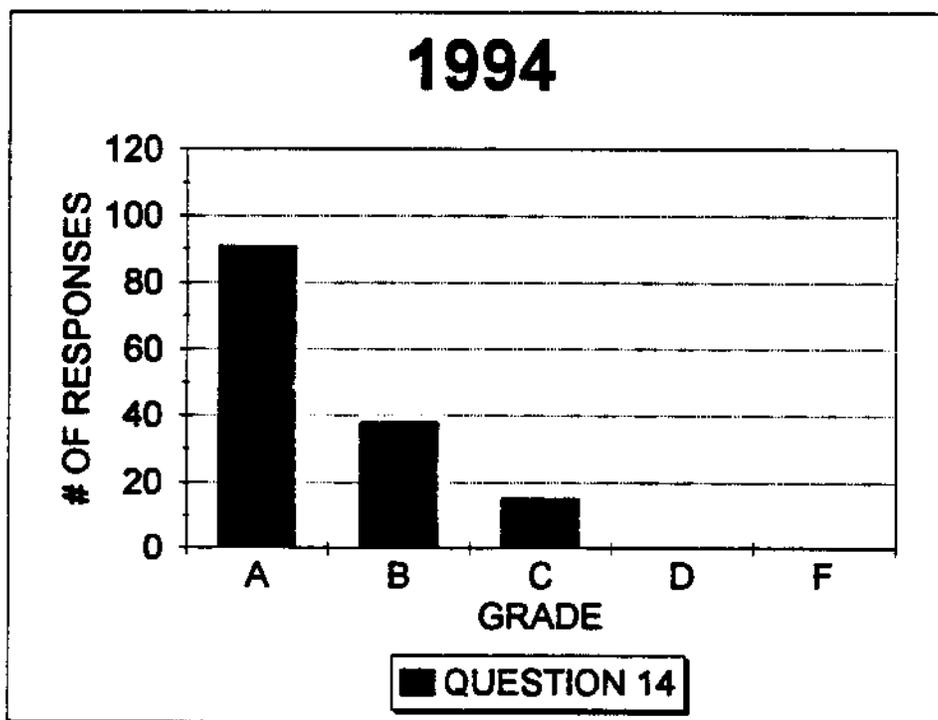
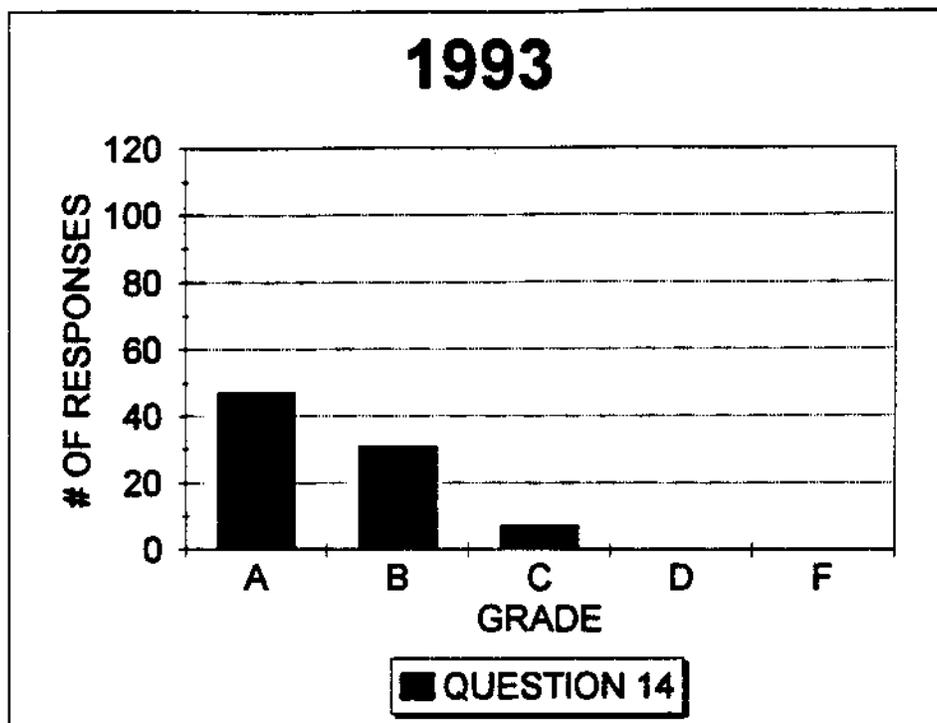


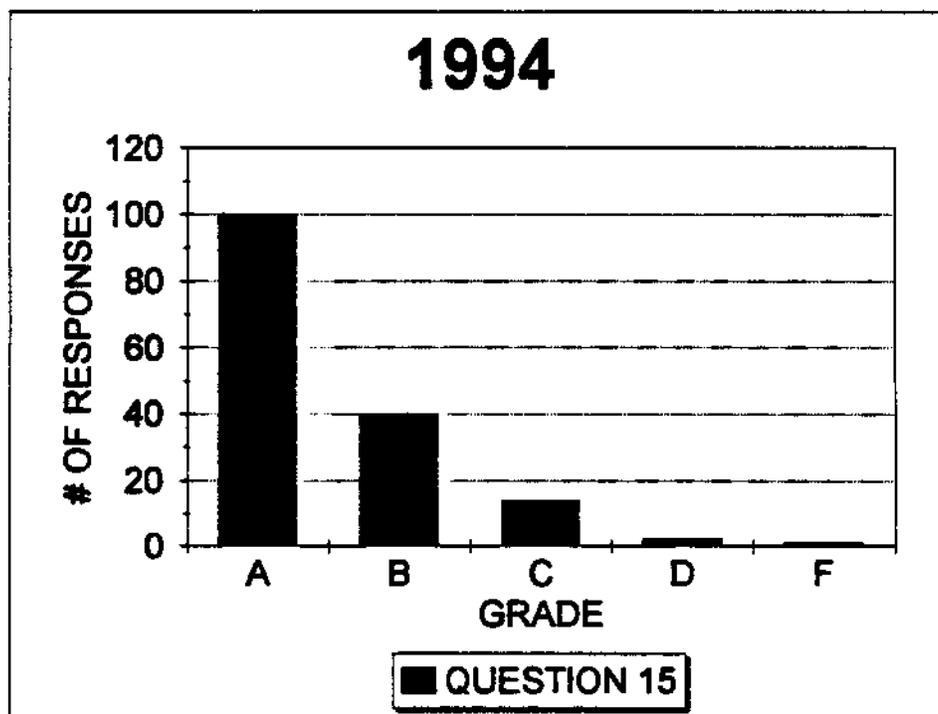
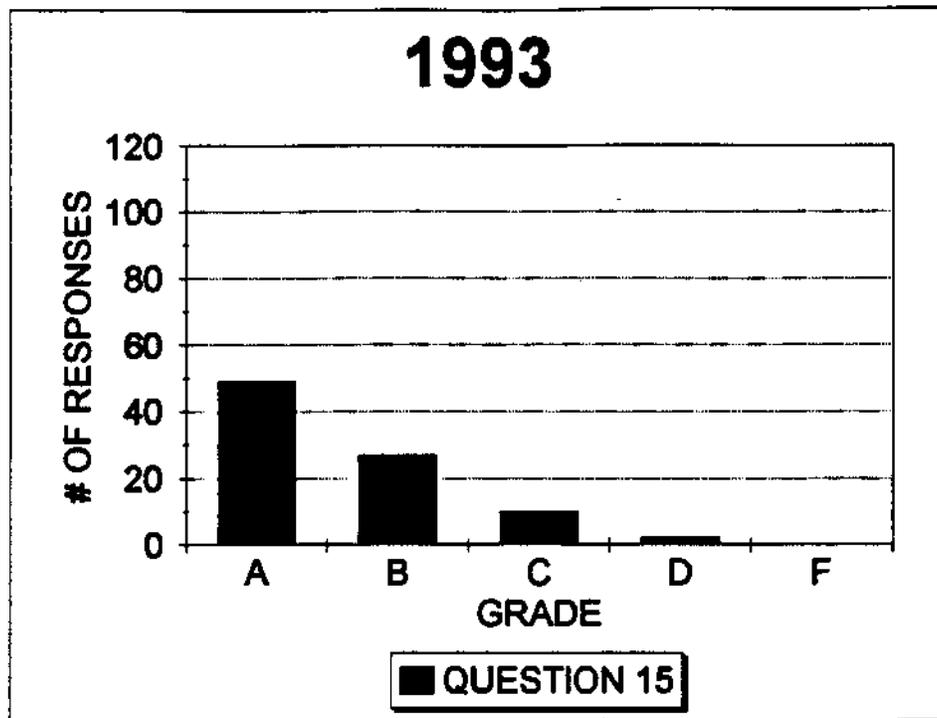


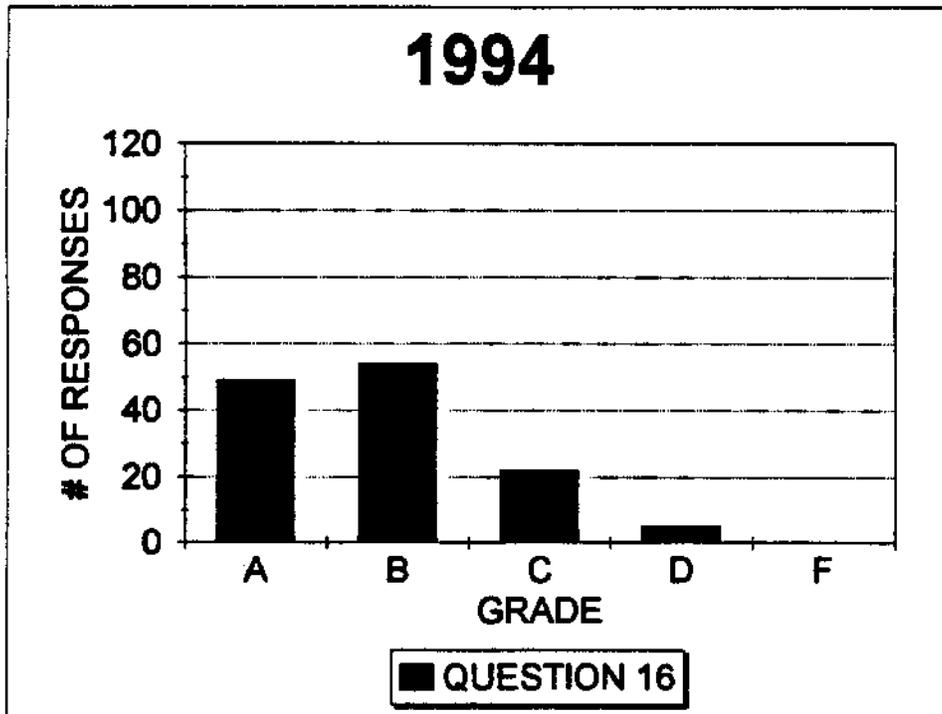
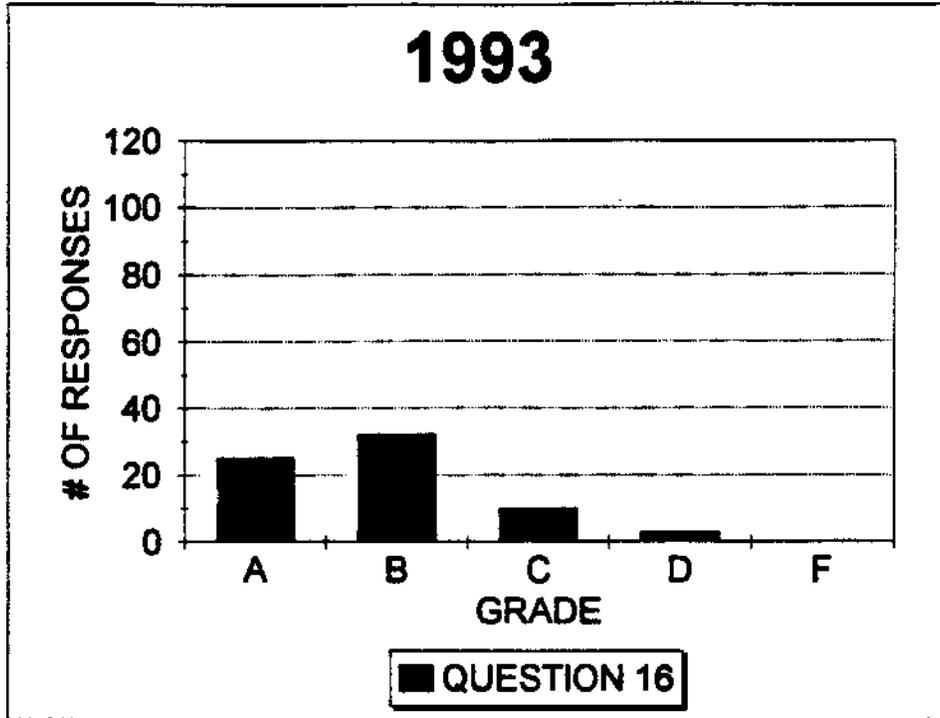


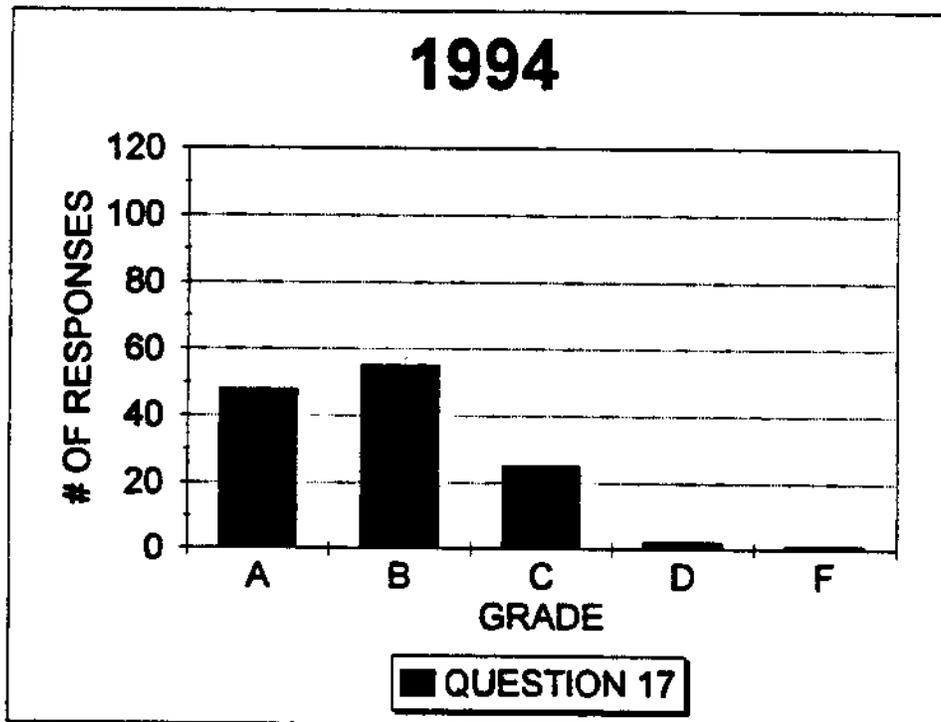
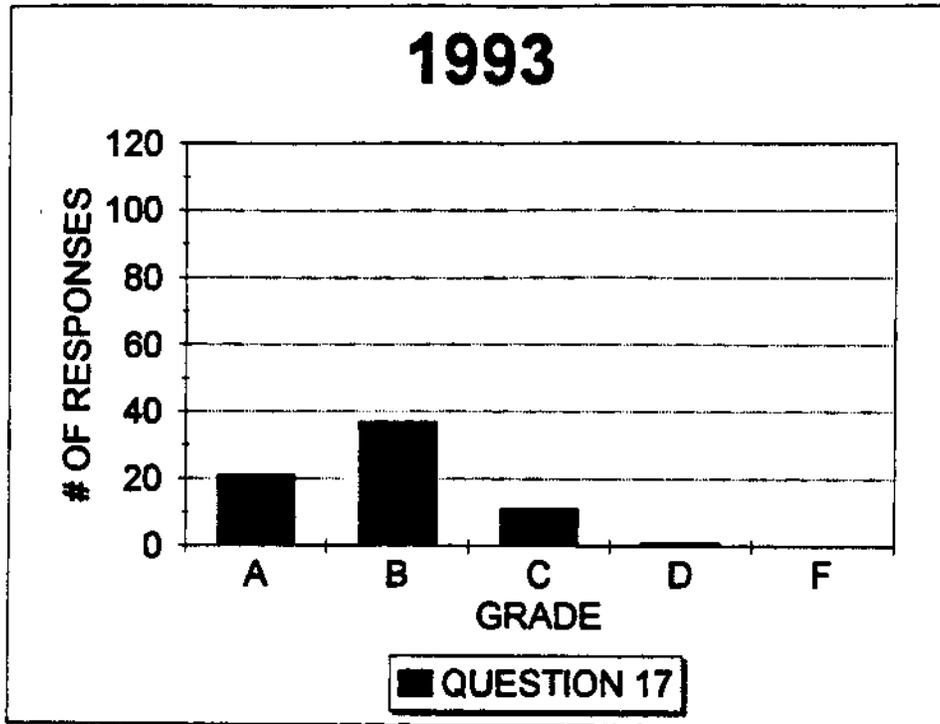


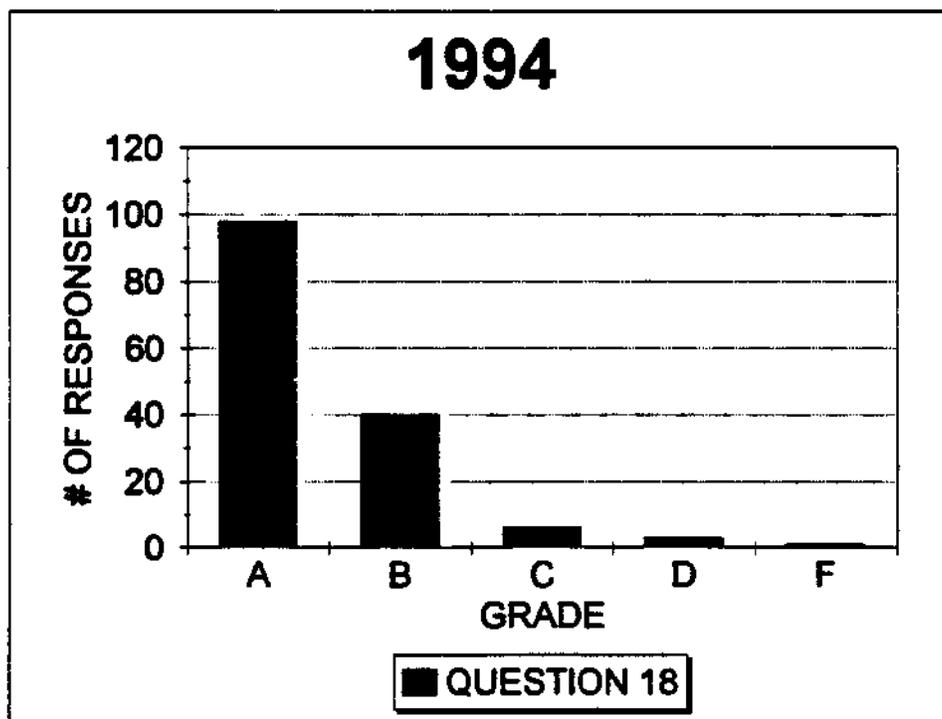
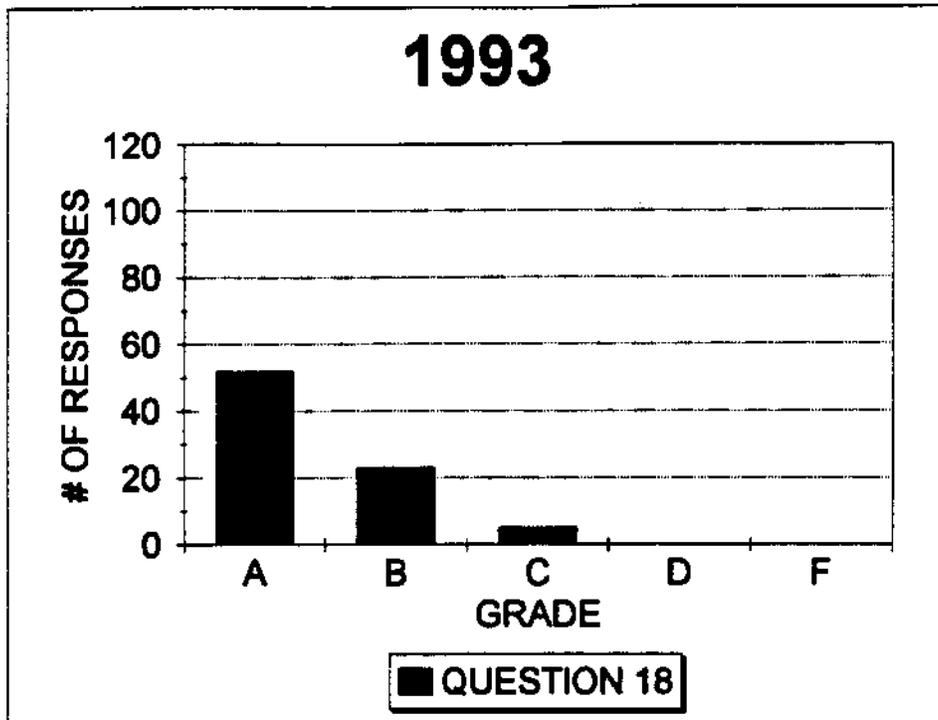


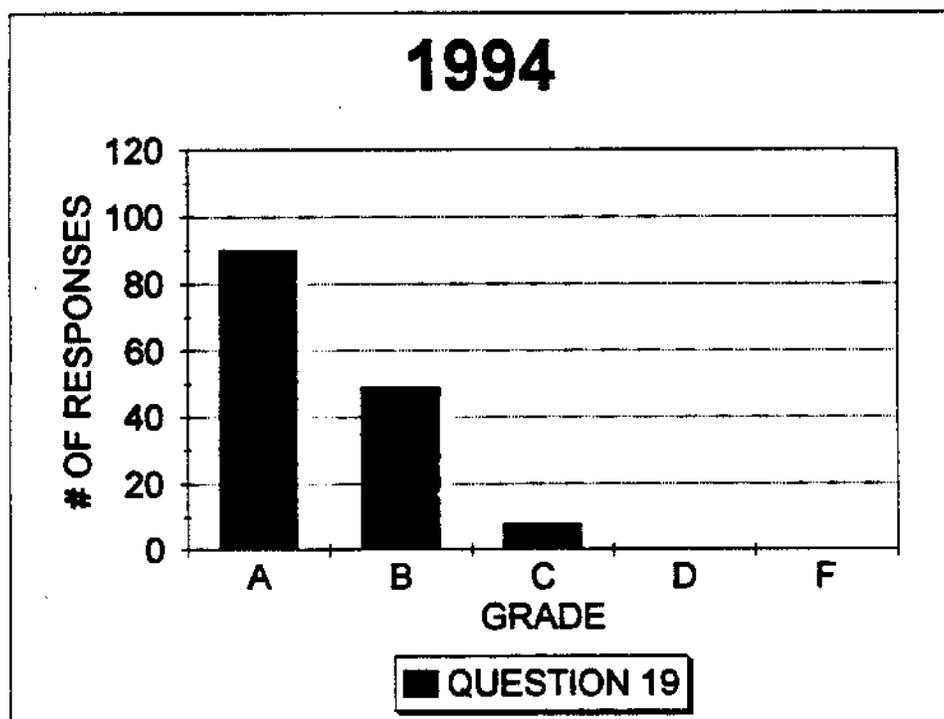
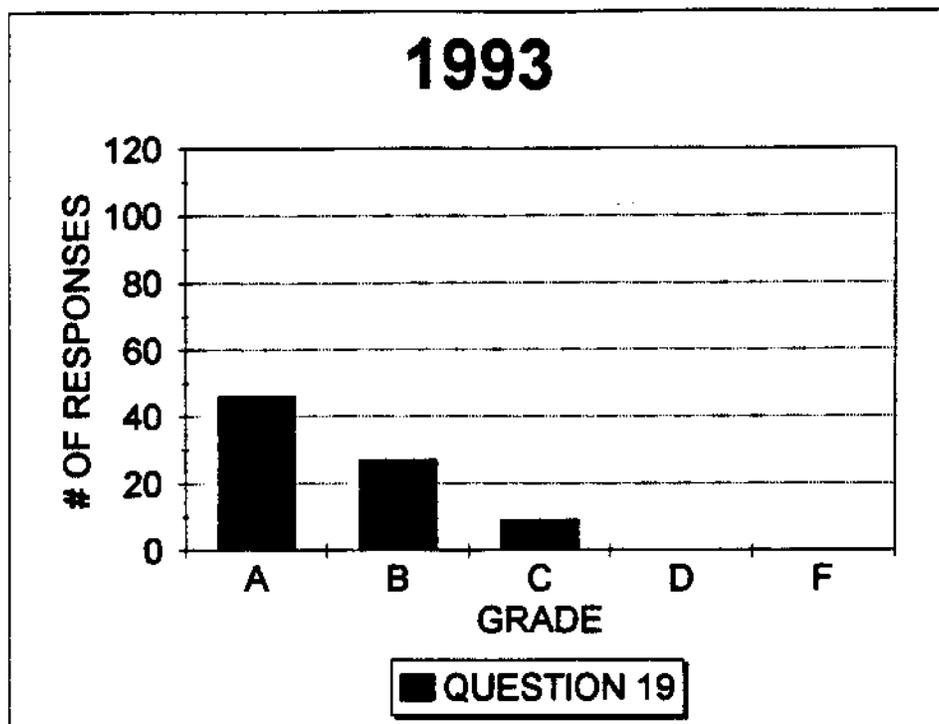


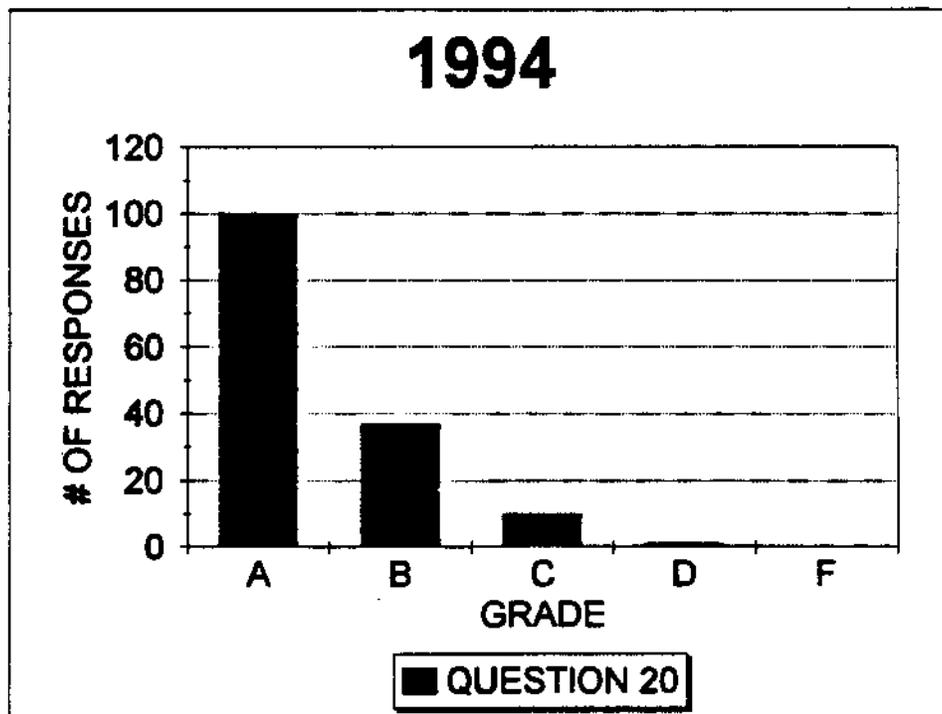
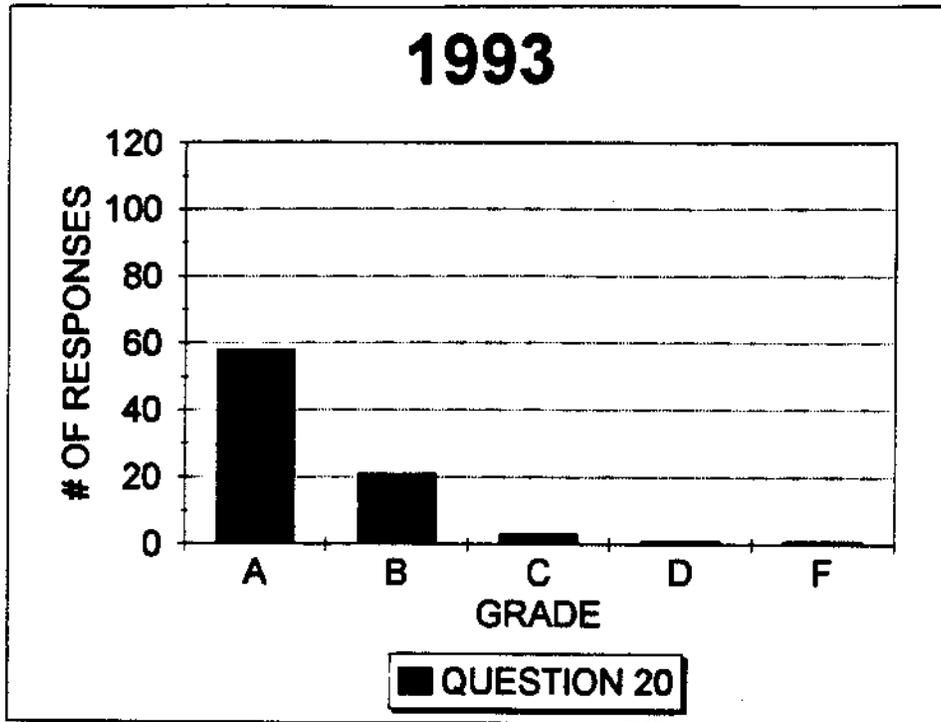


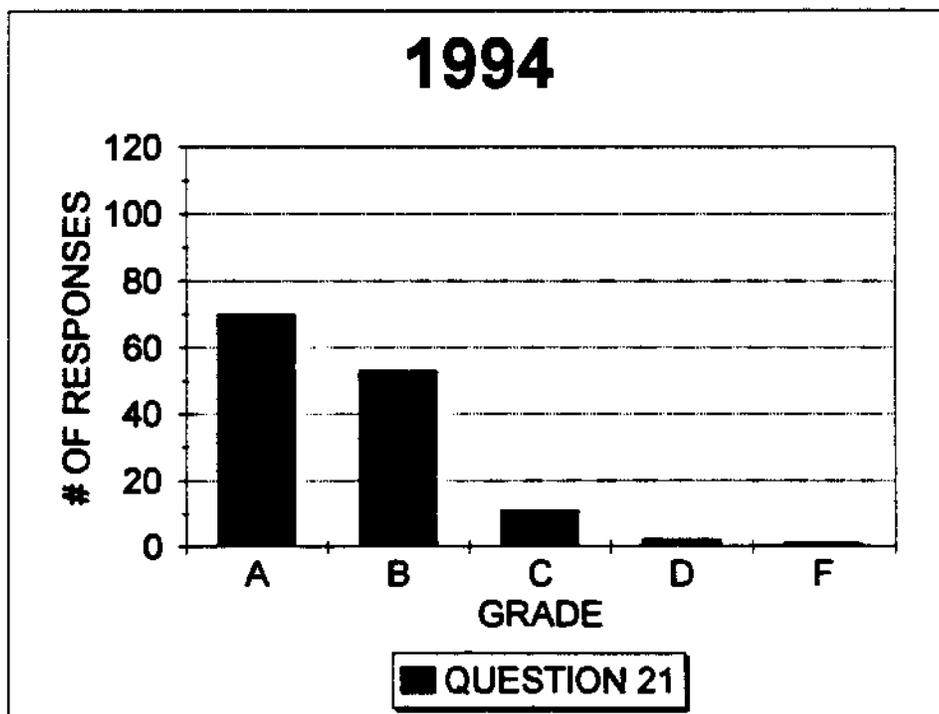
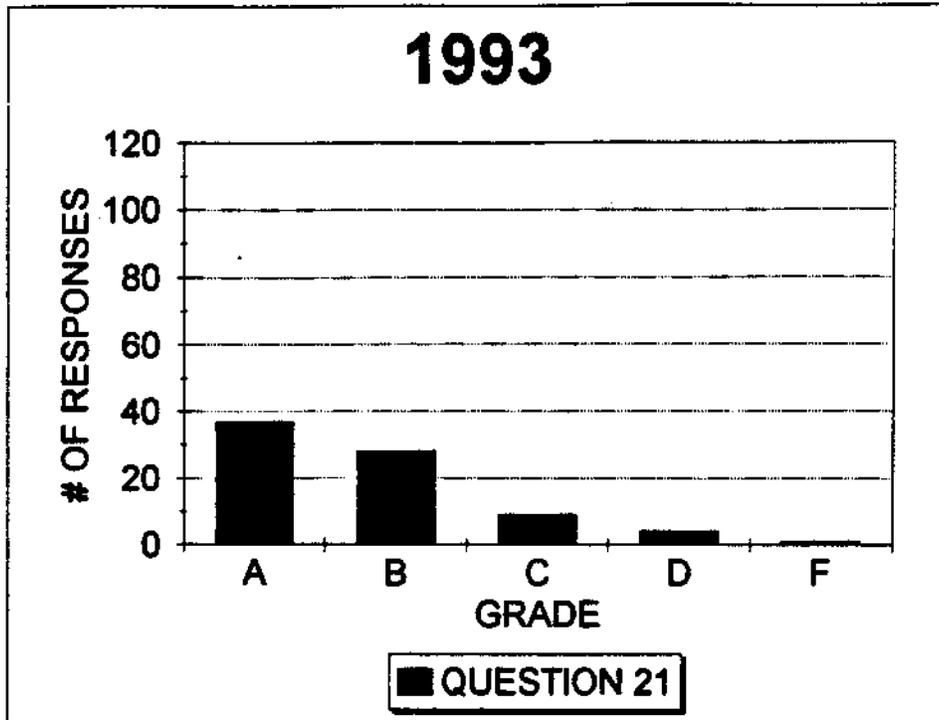


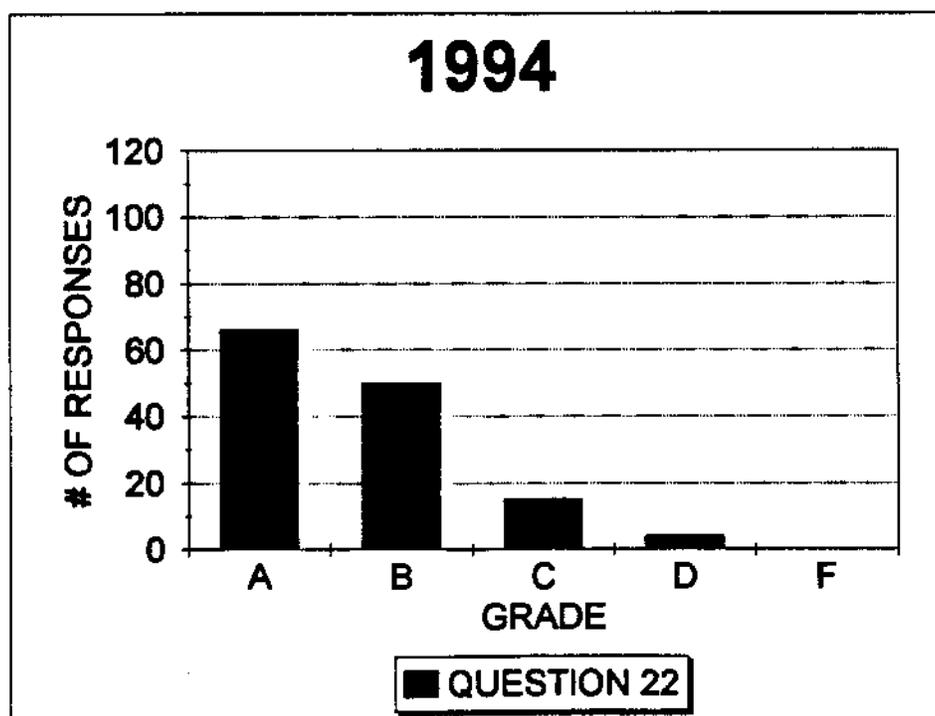
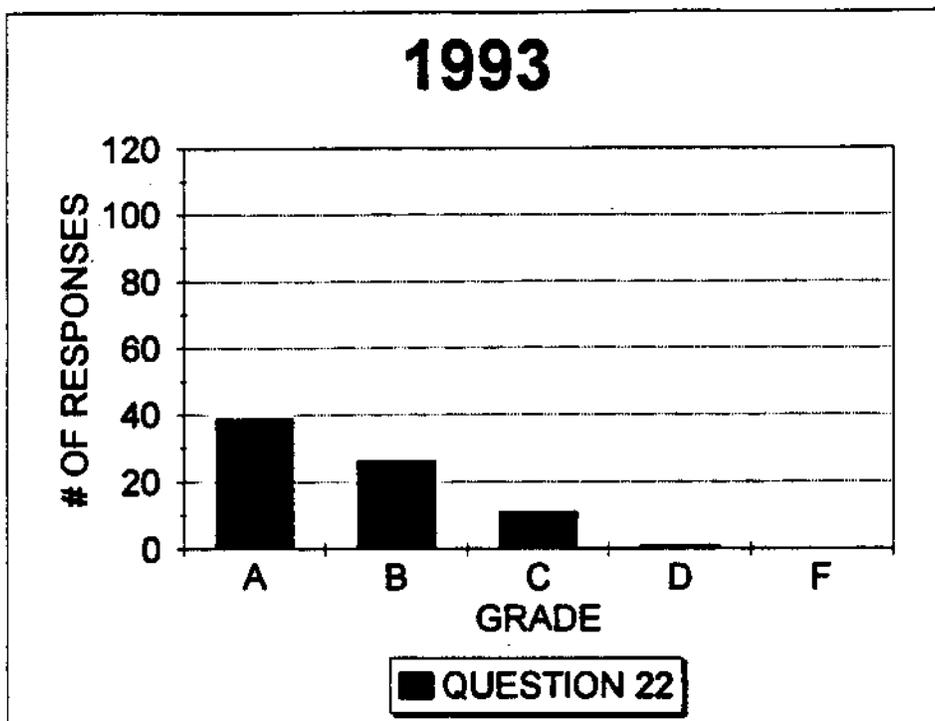


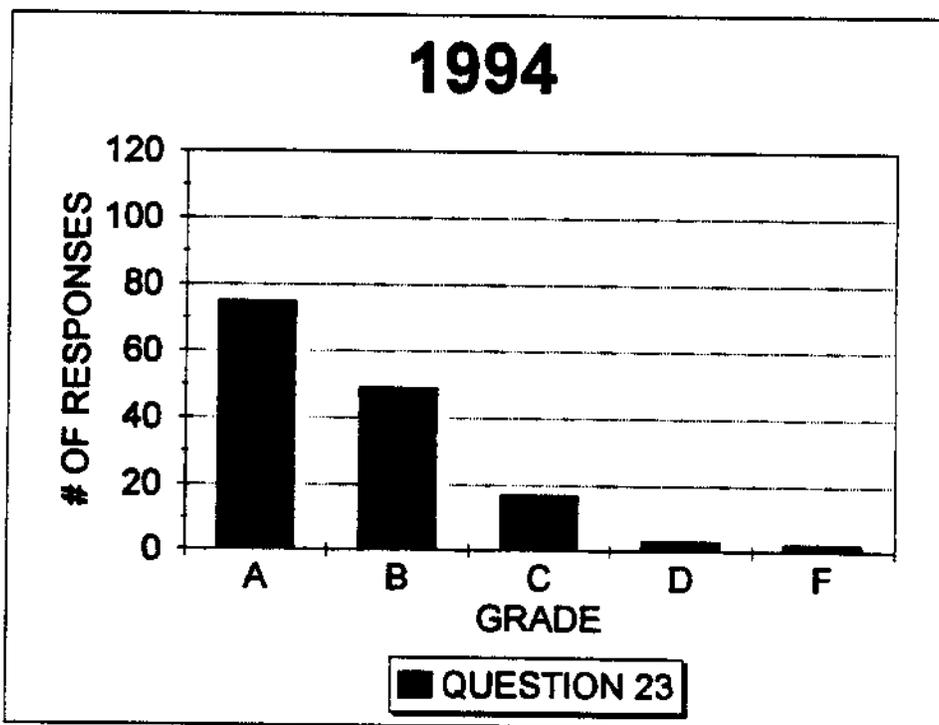
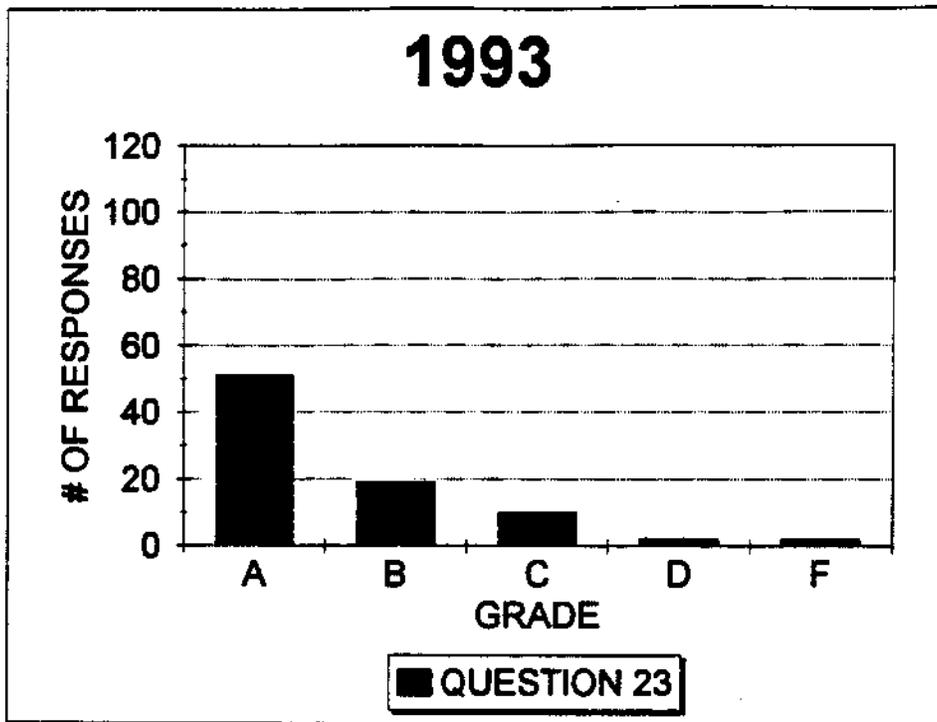


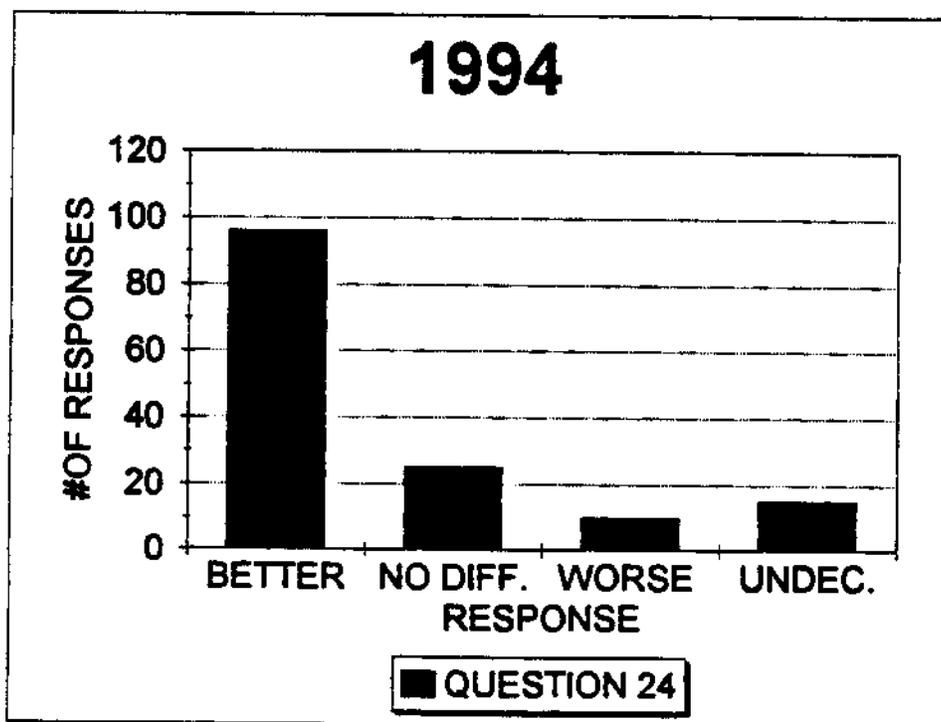
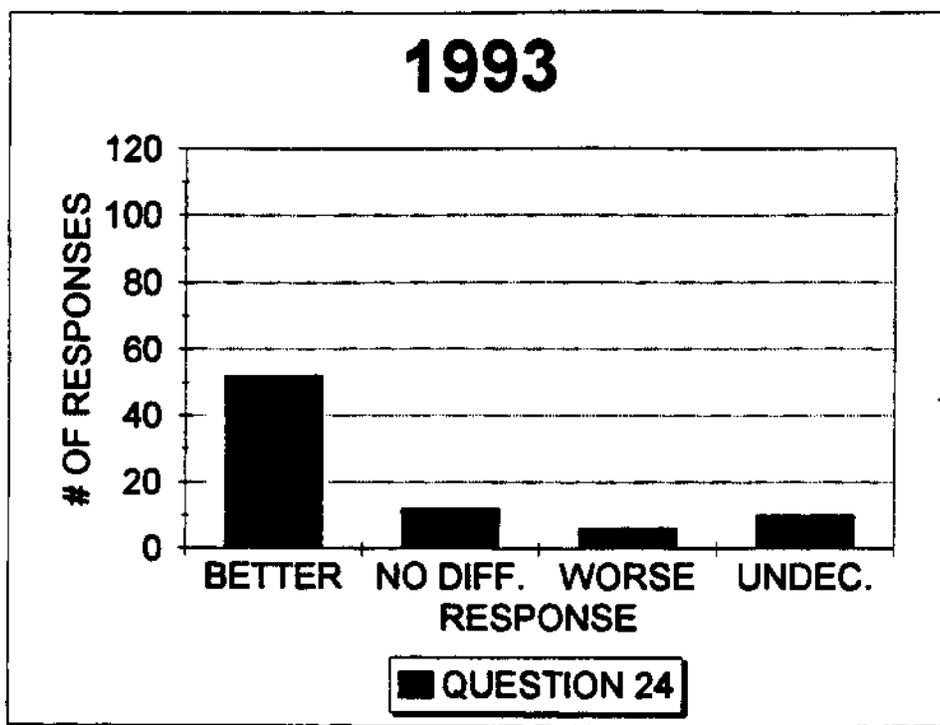


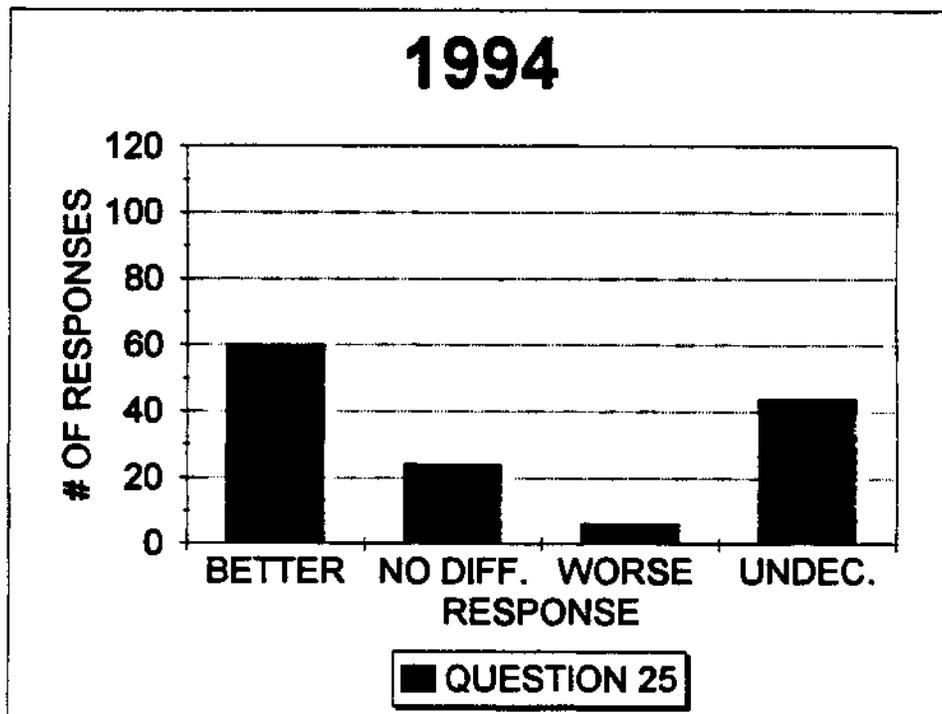
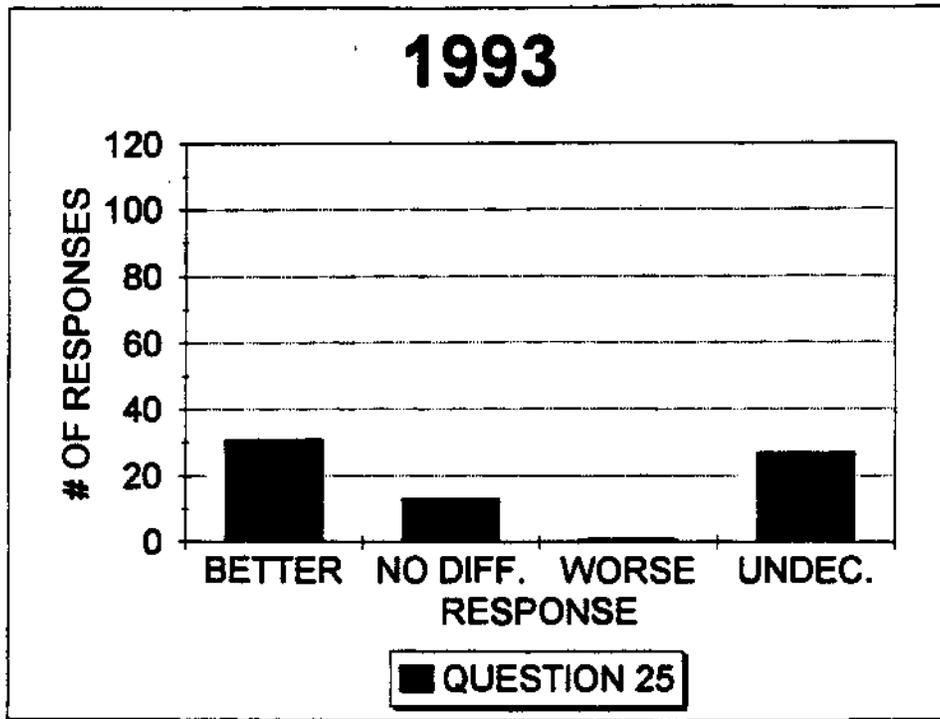












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