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The Relation Between Attendance and Achievement in the Third Grade of the San Jose School

Vera Cutler

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THE RELATION BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN THE THIRD GRADE OF THE SAN JOSE SCHOOL

By

Vera Cutler

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

THE RELATION BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT IN THE THIRD GRADE OF THE SAN JOSE SCHOOL

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Most teachers are interested in the school attendance of their pupils. This is particularly true of elementary school teachers, who are desirous of having their students acquire at least a minimum of fundamentals each year. Some teachers take an extreme view, contending that attendance is so important that pupils who are absent should be penalized. Others doubt if attendance is important enough to warrant careful checking on absences. In between these two extremes are the teachers who take the view that a moderate number of absences do not interfere seriously with a child's school work.

These opinions are based more or less on casual observations and subjective judgments. Little has been done to investigate the relation of attendance to achievement, as few schools have an objective testing program from which data may be obtained to determine what the relation is.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Are teachers justified in the belief that a student who is frequently absent from school cannot acquire the fundamental knowledge gained by the child who attends regularly? Does the child with greater intelligence attend school more regularly than the child of lesser intelligence? If not, does his greater intelligence make it possible for him to acquire the knowledge whether or not he attends school regularly? This study seeks to throw light on these questions by determining what relation exists between school attendance and achievement when intelligence is held constant.

SOURCES OF THE DATA

The data for this study were taken from the permanent record sheets, and the teacher's registers, of the San Jose Experimental School. The former contain the results of a five-year testing program.

DEFINITIONS

The term "school year", as used in this study, means 180 days of school. Absences were recorded each half day. The total number of absences was deducted from 180 to give the net attendance for each pupil during a school year.

PROCEDURE

All students of the third grade taught by Mrs. Isabel Lucas, from 1930-1935 inclusive, were used as subjects, with the following exceptions:

1. Those who enrolled after the first week of any school year.
2. Those who were dropped from the roll before the end of any school year.
3. Those for whom there were no achievement test scores for both the beginning and end of the third grade.
4. Those for whom there were no intelligence test scores at the beginning of the third grade.

These eliminations reduced the number of subjects to 24 for 1930-1931; 25 for 1931-1932; 34 for 1932-1933; 24 for 1933-1934; and 28 for 1934-1935.

In this study, the New Stanford Achievement Tests were used to determine the achievement of the pupils. Primary Form V and Advanced Form W were used for the 1930-1931 group; Primary Form W and Advanced Form X for the 1931-1932 group; Primary Form X and Advanced Form V for the 1932-1933 group; Primary Form V and Advanced Form W for the 1933-1934 group; and Primary Form X and Advanced Form X for the 1934-1935 group. The score made on the Primary form was the score for the beginning of the year, and the score made on the Advanced form the score for the end of the year.

Actual scores made by the subjects were considered. These were obtained by using the New Stanford scale for translating points made on a test into a score for that test.

The Primary Form of the New Stanford Achievement Test contains five tests. These are Paragraph Meaning; Word Meaning; Dictation, which is a spelling test; Arithmetic Reasoning; and Arithmetic Computation. The Advanced Form of the New Stanford Achievement Test contains these five and five additional tests. The total score of a test is obtained, in both cases, by adding all scores made on individual tests and finding the average.

The difference between the score made on Primary form and that made on the Advanced form is the gain, or achievement for a school year. This study is concerned with the gain made on each of the sub-tests listed above, and with the total gain made on the test as a whole.

Intelligence of the pupils was measured by the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Mental Test and the Grace Arthur Performance Test. The Pintner-Cunningham Test was used each year except 1931-1932, when the Grace Arthur Test was used. The tests were given at the time the pupils entered the third grade.

Data for each year were tabulated separately, comparing the gain made by each child on the five sub-tests, and the test as a whole, with M.A., I.Q., and attendance.

The arithmetical mean of the total gain was calculated for each year. The arithmetical mean of the days of attendance was also computed for each year.

The rank difference method of correlation was used to compute coefficients of correlation because of the small number of cases in each group. The coefficients of correlation between achievement and attendance were calculated for each year. These included six coefficients for each year--one for gain on each of the sub-tests considered, and one for the gain on the test as a whole. The correlations between attendance and M.A., and attendance and I.Q. were found, as were the correlations between achievement and M.A. and achievement and I.Q. Then, holding intelligence constant, the correlation between achievement and attendance was computed; and, with attendance constant, the correlation between intelligence and achievement was calculated for each year.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Crider, in a study based on data from Albion College, found that a student's achievement was affected by both his attendance and his percentile rank.[1] Jones, State University of Iowa, found that as the absences of freshmen and sophomore men in the College of Liberal Arts the

[1] "The Effect of Absences on Scholarship", pp.27-28.

second semester of 1927-1928 decreased their grade point averages increased.[2]

Finch and Nemzek, from the University of Minnesota, found upon examining the records of 637 students of the West High School, Minneapolis, for from three to five semesters, that a positive relation existed between achievement and attendance for both boys and girls.[3] Steiner, Supervising Principal of Ingram School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, found that there was a correlation of .48 between attendance and the percentage promoted in his school each year for the fifteen years before 1934.[4]

THE DATA

Tables I-V, inclusive, show the number of points gained by each pupil on each of the five tests considered, and on the test as a whole. They also give the M.A., the I.Q., and the number of days of attendance for each of the pupils. Each table presents these data for one year.

Figures 1-5, inclusive, show total gain and attendance. Each child is represented by a dot on the Figure at the point where the amount of gain he made on the test as a whole coincides with the number of days he attended school during a year. The red line drawn parallel to the base line

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[2]"Class Attendance and College Marks," pp.444-446.
[3]"Attendance and Achievement in High School," pp.207-208.
[4]"Attendance and Promotion," pp.153.

represents the arithmetical mean of the gain for the group. In 1930-1931 this mean gain was 13.75; in 1931-1932 it was 18.30; in 1932-1933 it was 17.06; in 1933-1934 it was 16.46; and in 1934-1935 it was 13.04.

The blue line perpendicular to the base line of each figure represents the arithmetical mean attendance for the group. In 1930-1931 it was 161.46 days; in 1931-1932 it was 167.90 days; in 1932-1933, 164.12 days; in 1933-1934, 168.50 days; and in 1934-1935, 169 days.

On Figure 3 there are two places where one dot represents two children. This happened because there were two who made total gains of fifteen points and attended school 155 days each, and two who made total gains of twenty points and attended school 175 days each.

In 1930-1931 there were fifteen out of twenty-four who attended school more than the mean number of days during the year. Of this number, eight made the mean gain, or more. Of nine who attended school less than 161 days during the year, only four made, or exceeded, the mean gain.

During the school year 1931-1932, eighteen out of twenty-five attended school the mean number of days, or more. Of this number, nine exceeded the mean gain of the group. Of the seven who attended school less than 168 days during the year, only four exceeded the mean gain of the group.

Twenty out of thirty-four pupils attended school 164, or more, days during 1932-1933. Twelve of these exceeded

the mean gain of the group.

In 1933-1934 sixteen out of twenty-four pupils attended school more than the mean number of days for the group. Ten of these exceeded the mean gain of the group. Of the eight who attended school less than 168.50 days, only three made, or exceeded, the mean gain of the group.

Twenty out of twenty-eight pupils attended school 169 days, or more, during 1934-1935. Ten of them exceeded the mean gain of the group. Four out of eight who attended school less than the mean number of days exceeded the mean gain of the group.

Table VI gives the coefficient of correlation between attendance and the gain made on each of the five tests considered, and between attendance and the gain made on the test as a whole. All but one of the thirty coefficients of correlation are positive; but most of them are small. The correlation for total gain with attendance for the year 1933-1934 is the only one that is large enough to be considered significant. All the correlations, in the light of their probable errors, are so small as to do nothing more than indicate that there is a relationship between school attendance and achievement.

As Table VII shows, in four out of five years, the relation between attendance and I.Q. is positive; while in only one year of the five is the relation between M.A. and attendance positive. The negative correlation between I.Q.

and attendance for the year 1931-1932 may be accounted for by the fact that the intelligence test used that year is not as reliable as the test used the other four years. That is the only year in which the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Mental Test was not used. The Grace Arthur Performance Test was used instead.

Table VIII shows that there is a positive correlation between achievement and I.Q., and between achievement and M.A., for four out of five years. In 1930-1931 there is a negative correlation between achievement and I.Q., while in 1934-1935 there is a negative correlation between achievement and M.A. In one year the correlation between achievement and M.A. is larger than the correlation between achievement and I.Q.; in one year it is the same; and in three years it is smaller.

In order to rule out the intelligence factor when dealing with the relation between attendance and achievement, partial correlations between attendance and achievement, with I.Q. held constant, and between attendance and achievement, with M.A. held constant, were computed for each of the five years. Table IX gives the results of these correlations. The coefficients are all positive, but all except one are small. The correlation between attendance and achievement with M.A. constant, for the year 1933-1934, is .576.

When partial correlations between achievement and I.Q., and achievement and M.A., with attendance held constant, were calculated, it was found that for only one year were they larger than the correlations between attendance and achievement with intelligence held constant. The other four years the coefficients are smaller. These are shown in Table X.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT WITH ATTENDANCE AND INTELLIGENCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1930-1931

	Gain[1]								
Pupil No.	Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning	Dictation	Arithmetic Reasoning	Arithmetic Computation	Total[2]	M.A.	I.Q.	Days of Attendance
1	18	7	11	5	- 1	17	7-5	68	124
2	11	15	18	3	7	9	9-0	71	135.5
3	0	16	1	-19	-16	1	6-6	54	143
4	4	8	8	1	12	10	4-7	36	143.5
5	0	31	5	19	8	17	8-9	71	143.5
6	11	26	7	17	9	11	9-4	74	147
7	2	20	6	1	25	9	6-10	71	158
8	12	21	10	11	9	18	7-3	56	159.5
9	21	41	4	30	36	20	8-11	67	160.5
10	10	24	1	20	10	10	6-9	70	162
11	14	6	9	4	10	18	9-4	77	162
12	9	50	12	- 7	10	9	5-10	48	162.5
13	23	28	18	1	18	19	6-10	61	163.5
14	14	31	11	- 4	12	18	8-2	89	164
15	42	31	19	1	9	19	7-9	85	167.5
16	9	23	13	- 7	- 5	3	8-0	80	169.5
17	15	37	6	16	10	18	6-11	65	171
18	22	13	28	21	33	23	8-6	82	171
19	8	2	10	-12	20	12	7-7	66	172.5
20	23	43	25	30	4	27	5-5	69	177
21	0	30	19	9	3	11	6-6	71	177.5
22	12	32	6	- 9	18	9	7-10	66	179.5
23	3	36	11	1	17	11	7-5	75	180
24	23	37	25	27	20	14	7-7	86	180

[1]The gain represents the difference between the score made on the Primary form and that on the Advanced form of the New Stanford Achievement Test.

[2]The total score of a test is obtained by adding and averaging scores of sub-tests. The total gain represents the difference between such a score of a Primary form and an Advanced form.

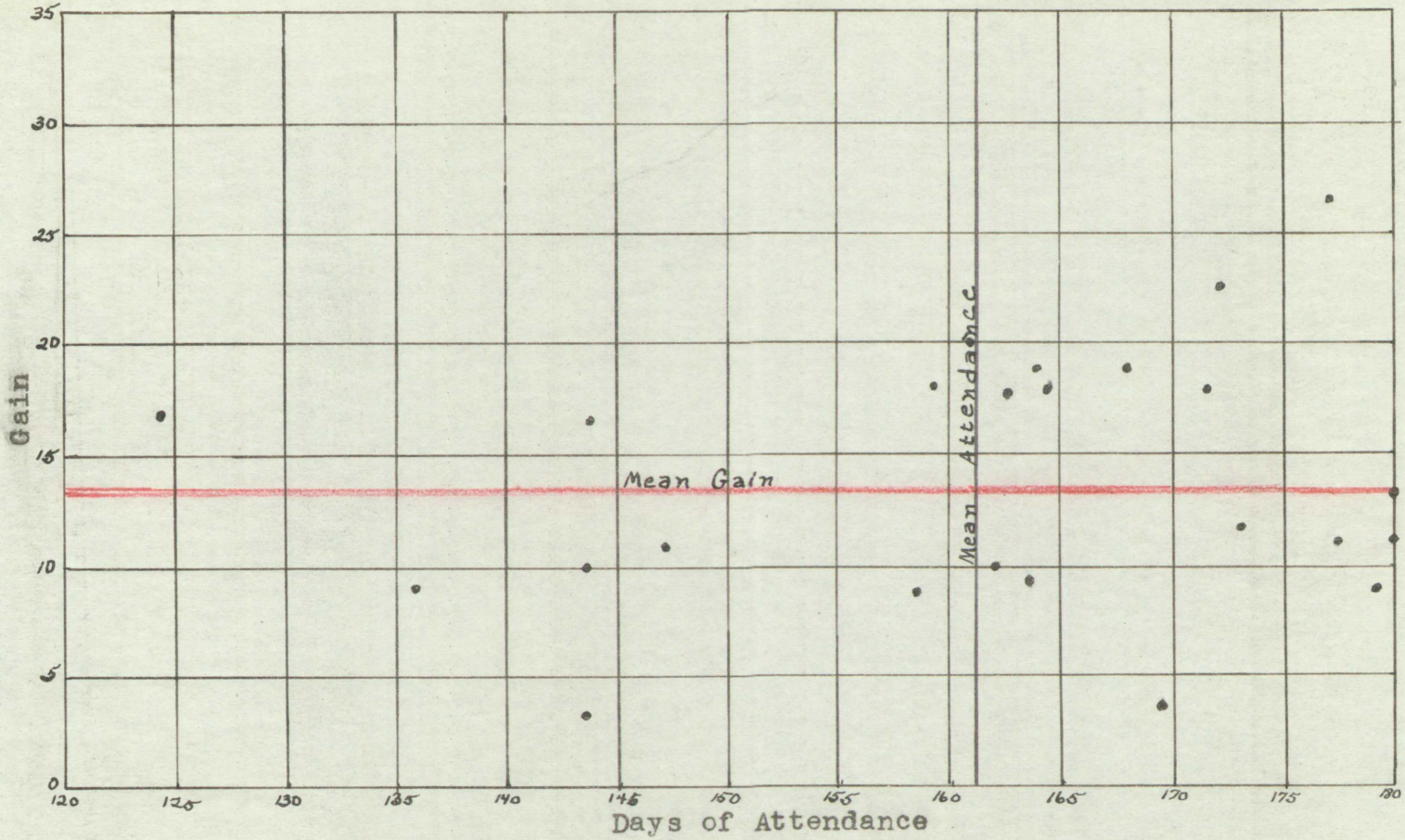

Figure 1. Comparison of Attendance and Achievement of San Jose Third Grade Pupils in 1930-1931.

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT WITH ATTENDANCE AND INTELLIGENCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1931-1932

Pupil No.	Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning	Dictation	Gain Arithmetic Reasoning	Arithmetic Computation	Total	M.A.	I.Q.	Days of Attendance
1	11	- 2	0	16	18	14	8-6	121	144
2	12	23	19	31	31	21	9-6	103	148.5
3	27	27	9	- 6	19	10	9-2	94	149
4	14	- 1	1	4	19	20	9-6	71	156
5	14	26	12	38	3	26	7-7	97	158
6	16	18	7	16	28	17	8-1	101	165
7	19	16	16	15	28	21	6-4	92	165.5
8	10	8	13	1	28	14	7-0	66	168
9	10	26	9	21	46	17	6-8	79	169
10	19	22	24	26	20	20	7-4	92	169
11	26	35	11	23	12	25	8-9	85	169.5
12	20	24	12	21	36	17	7-5	87	170
13	20	8	3	0	14	16	6-1	74	170
14	25	20	7	16	26	20	7-5	82	170.5
15	19	27	3	- 3	13	14	9-4	82	173
16	14	20	28	26	9	18	8-1	86	173
17	14	24	2	3	23	16	9-3	112	175
18	2	28	19	16	25	12	8-7	92	176
19	23	17	6	9	23	23	9-9	101	177.5
20	33	16	7	9	5	9	7-7	75	178
21	16	11	15	26	26	21	8-7	77	178
22	24	25	6	9	26	17	7-11	106	178.5
23	16	14	18	21	33	18	8-0	82	179
24	22	8	16	31	49	23	7-10	86	179.5
25	23	18	24	37	16	23	8-1	92	180

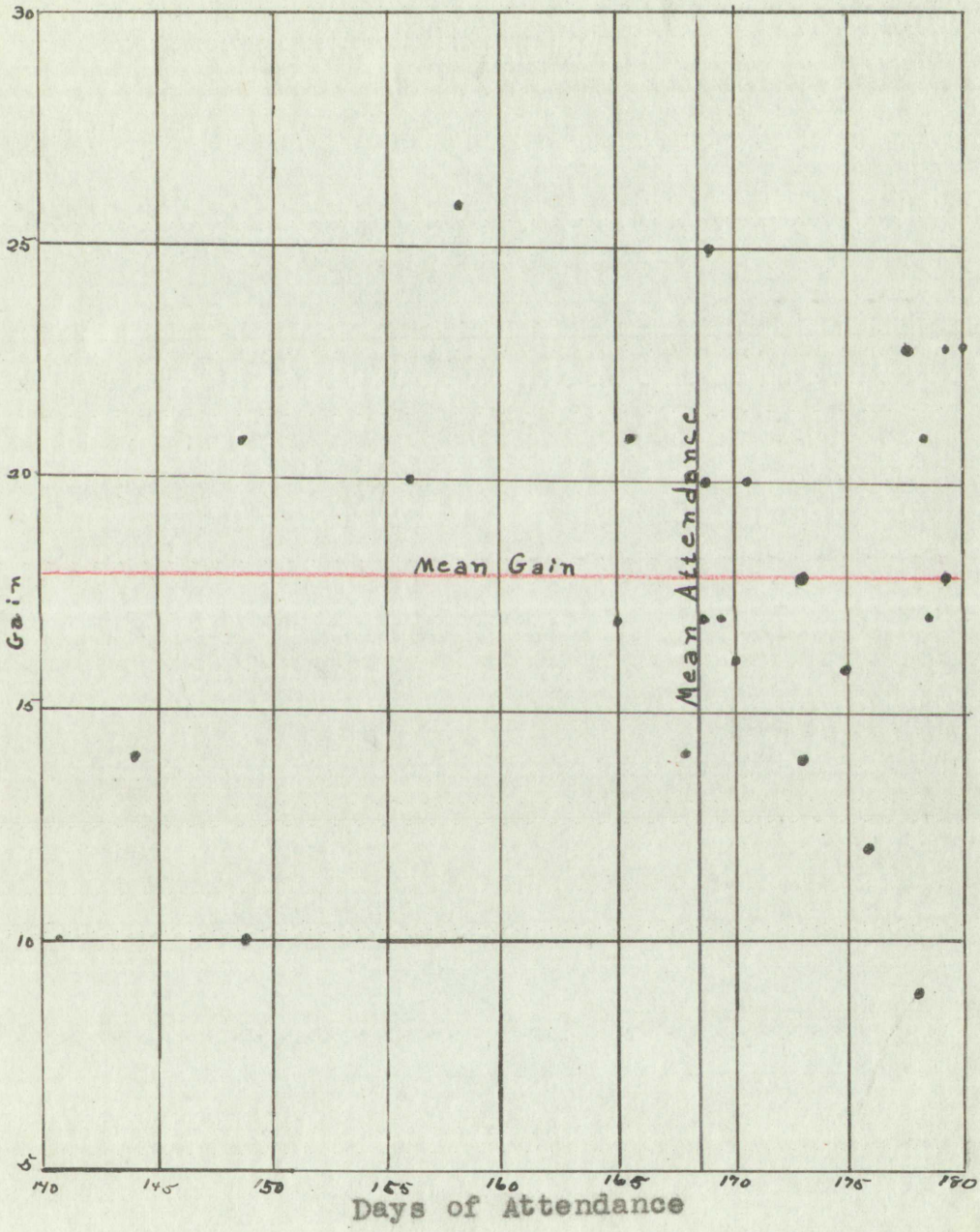

Figure 2. Comparison of Attendance and Achievement of San Jose Third Grade Pupils in 1931-1932.

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT WITH ATTENDANCE AND INTELLIGENCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1932-1933

Pupil No.	Gain: Paragraph Meaning	Gain: Word Meaning	Gain: Dictation	Gain: Arithmetic Reasoning	Gain: Arithmetic Computation	Gain: Total	M.A.	I.Q.	Days of Attendance
1	10	25	29	17	26	15	8-5	86	135.5
2	16	30	21	13	34	16	8-10	78	138
3	8	16	4	3	15	10	8-5	89	141
4	11	6	13	- 3	15	9	8-6	81	143.5
5	2	24	8	11	- 8	12	7-1	71	145
6	8	14	0	36	28	17	8-5	72	147.5
7	2	8	15	33	13	12	8-7	86	149.5
8	12	17	14	22	13	10	7-6	81	151.5
9	2	2	15	4	31	15	7-1	71	155
10	7	11	15	27	29	15	6-9	75	155
11	10	20	10	9	5	22	5-10	73	159.5
12	6	16	14	17	11	16	7-10	86	161.5
13	18	24	15	38	33	23	8-5	77	161.5
14	6	24	14	20	18	17	9-4	123	162
15	7	17	24	8	36	20	8-7	90	164
16	2	8	0	11	4	14	7-6	90	164.5
17	17	18	25	12	5	36	8-2	88	169
18	- 1	6	15	17	13	15	7-3	78	169.5
19	4	23	12	8	16	20	9-2	81	169.5
20	13	15	16	28	29	19	8-11	96	170
21	2	7	23	23	22	15	7-3	90	170.5
22	24	24	28	11	20	19	6-10	88	171.5
23	22	24	15	19	36	22	8-2	114	171.5
24	4	16	0	17	33	15	7-10	82	173.5
25	24	18	17	38	24	17	7-9	82	173.5
26	32	24	18	33	21	18	8-6	112	174.5
27	4	17	11	14	21	10	8-7	96	175
28	27	4	0	22	21	20	8-3	96	175
29	35	26	37	9	41	20	8-9	98	175
30	20	11	19	17	14	11	6-11	66	176
31	12	12	16	17	23	19	8-0	96	176.5
32	7	19	24	30	22	19	8-7	116	177.5
33	0	27	0	4	23	9	7-0	70	180
34	16	14	27	13	8	12	8-6	102	180

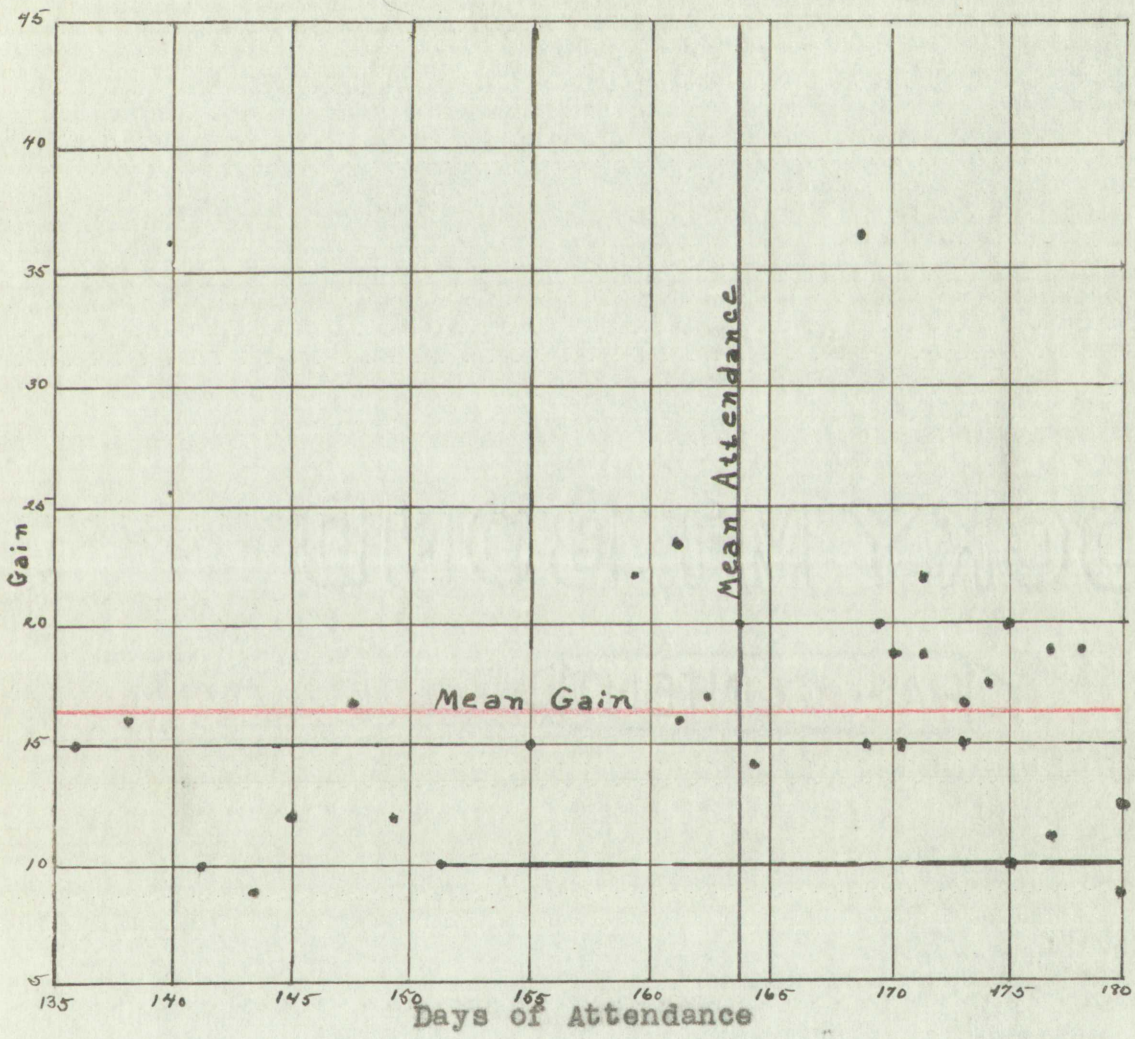

Figure 3. Comparison of Attendance and Achievement of San Jose Third Grade Pupils in 1932-1933.

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT WITH ATTENDANCE AND INTELLIGENCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1933-1934

	Gain								
Pupil No.	Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning	Dictation	Arithmetic Reasoning	Arithmetic Computation	Total	M.A.	I.Q.	Days of Attendance
1	7	- 2	19	1	18	10	7-1	70	133
2	9	- 2	24	- 4	14	10	8-3	91	146
3	14	13	8	22	2	9	8-4	75	146.5
4	32	24	24	21	21	17	6-9	65	150
5	10	17	10	9	5	13	6-11	73	156.5
6	6	18	7	18	6	15	7-1	96	156.5
7	16	32	22	31	33	27	8-0	96	165
8	9	18	13	19	14	16	8-0	95	167
9	9	11	12	16	15	7	9-3	122	172
10	16	12	20	- 9	4	17	6-1	92	174
11	20	28	22	3	24	18	8-5	81	174
12	27	12	17	43	31	21	8-2	102	174
13	26	- 2	29	37	18	17	8-7	90	174.5
14	7	10	20	18	23	12	6-3	74	175.5
15	17	12	22	1	7	8	7-10	85	176.5
16	3	16	1	9	40	12	9-2	107	176.5
17	12	24	9	- 7	4	11	7-11	78	177
18	18	10	11	19	30	14	8-7	102	177
19	22	37	22	31	24	19	8-7	78	177.5
20	19	25	26	18	20	17	7-11	92	178
21	28	19	15	29	18	24	8-3	105	178
22	36	31	20	16	21	29	7-3	97	178
23	18	26	25	11	18	18	8-6	101	179
24	18	24	20	32	27	25	8-9	92	179

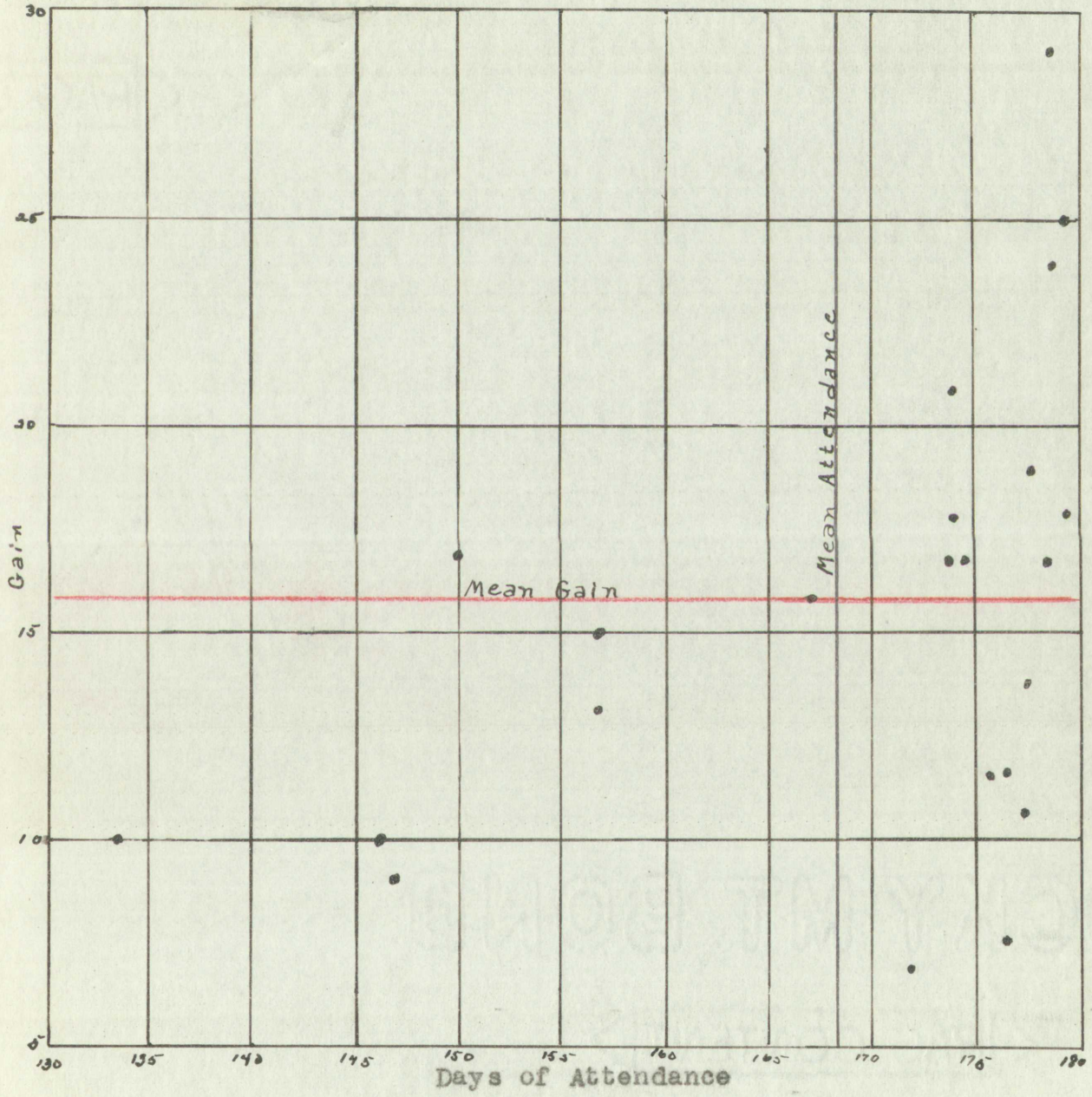

Figure 4. Comparison of Attendance and Achievement of San Jose Third Grade Pupils in 1933-1934.

TABLE V

COMPARISON OF ACHIEVEMENT WITH ATTENDANCE AND INTELLIGENCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 1934-1935

Pupil No.	Gain: Paragraph Meaning	Gain: Word Meaning	Gain: Dictation	Gain: Arithmetic Reasoning	Gain: Arithmetic Computation	Gain: Total	M.A.	I.Q.	Days of Attendance
1	14	15	7	15	- 4	12	7-8	92	147
2	11	18	7	- 1	26	17	9-0	98	150
3	16	2	11	9	24	18	8-6	79	153.5
4	4	3	17	7	3	3	9-7	89	161
5	16	10	2	8	1	13	8-5	76	162
6	22	0	4	18	0	7	8-9	89	163
7	20	15	5	34	24	21	6-9	65	166
8	16	17	- 4	3	10	12	7-8	87	168.5
9	6	12	0	12	15	5	10-1	85	169
10	18	- 2	11	11	4	9	7-8	90	169.5
11	8	1	12	21	14	7	7-7	71	170
12	6	12	11	- 1	15	16	8-11	73	170
13	20	12	8	3	4	18	8-11	102	170
14	15	21	7	0	5	5	10-3	110	171
15	4	24	6	-10	12	13	7-10	114	171.5
16	14	10	13	21	22	19	8-6	90	171.5
17	4	2	3	32	8	4	7-10	84	173
18	2	16	11	15	8	12	8-9	90	174
19	22	10	6	32	10	19	9-0	94	174
20	11	4	13	5	15	10	9-6	97	174.5
21	21	17	14	31	9	14	10-1	109	174.5
22	2	- 1	10	20	3	10	8-2	78	175.5
23	31	20	18	5	13	24	8-10	84	177
24	5	- 8	-10	20	6	5	8-9	95	178
25	22	6	19	20	- 2	17	8-5	96	178.5
26	- 3	2	11	7	13	10	10-3	106	179
27	23	24	8	20	28	17	9-5	109	179
28	18	20	10	23	12	15	9-10	86	179.5

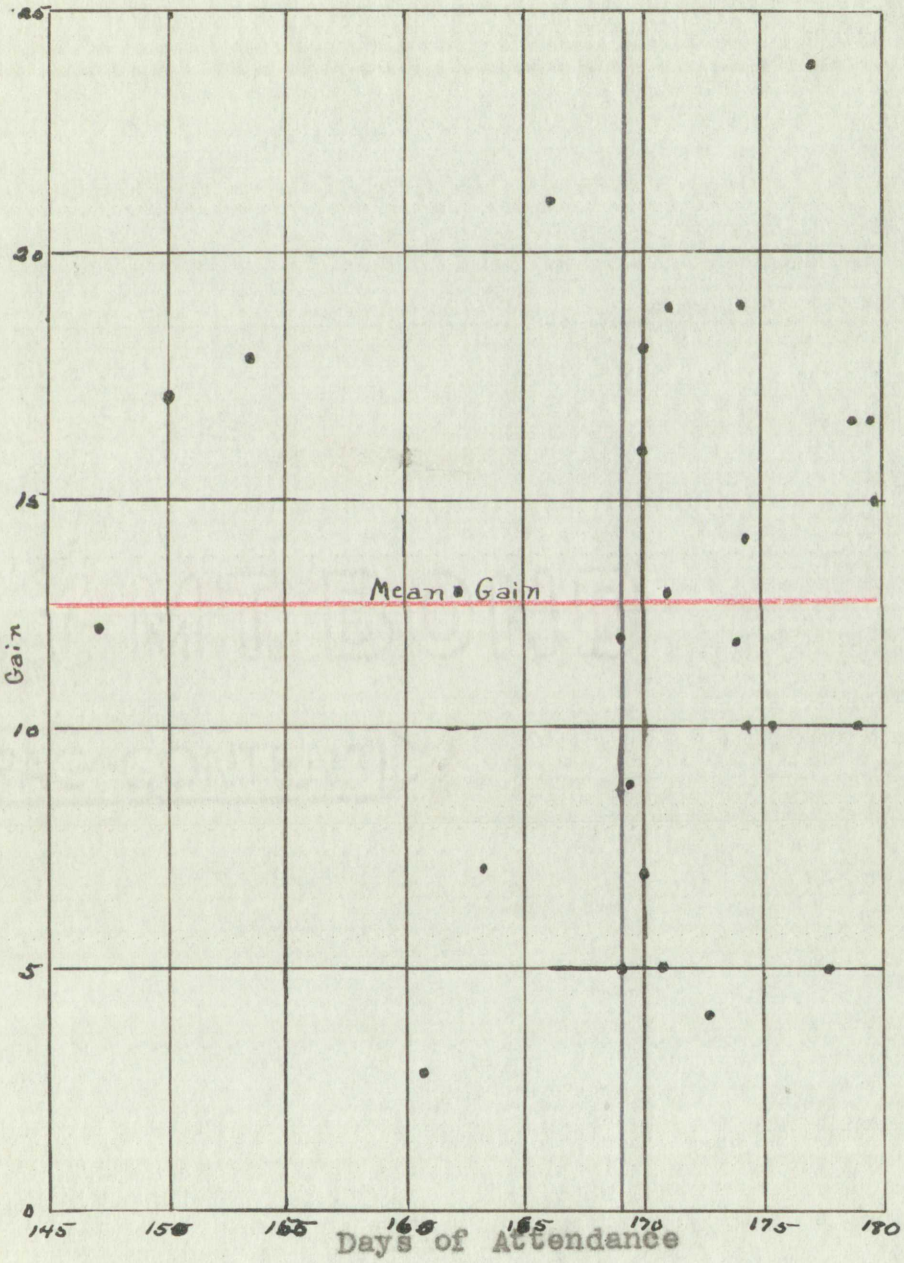

Figure 5. Comparison of Attendance and Achievement of San Jose Third Grade Pupils in 1934-1935.

TABLE VI

CORRELATION BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTENDANCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS
1930-1935, INCLUSIVE[1]

Year	No. of Pupils	Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning	Dictation	Arithmetic Reasoning	Arithmetic Computation	Total
1930-1931	24						
r		.40	.42	.47	.13	.44	.22
$P.E._r$		.12	.12	.11	.14	.12	.06
1931-1932	25						
r		.36	-.04	.22	.15	.03	.10
$P.E._r$		.12	.12	.13	.14	.14	.14
1932-1933	34						
r		.25	.07	.20	.13	.08	.17
$P.E._r$		.11	.12	.12	.12	.12	.12
1933-1934	24						
r		.46	.43	.21	.25	.41	.49
$P.E._r$		.11	.13	.13	.14	.12	.11
1934-1935	28						
r		.09	.04	.30	.30	.15	.09
$P.E._r$		.13	.13	.12	.12	.13	.13

[1] All correlations have been computed by the rank difference method.

TABLE VII

CORRELATION BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND ATTENDANCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS
1930-1935, INCLUSIVE[1]

Year	Between I.Q. and Attendance	Between M.A. and Attendance
1930-1931	.51	-.17
1931-1932	-.10	-.01
1932-1933	.44	-.02
1933-1934	.43	.36
1934-1935	.37	.29

[1]All coefficients have been computed by the rank difference method.

TABLE VIII

CORRELATION BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS
1930-1935, INCLUSIVE

Year	Between I.Q. and Achievement	Between M.A. and Achievement
1930-1931	-.05	.20
1931-1932	.07	.07
1932-1933	.31	.23
1933-1934	.16	.06
1934-1935	.04	-.12

TABLE XI

CORRELATION BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT,
WITH INTELLIGENCE HELD CONSTANT,
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS
1930-1935, INCLUSIVE

Year	With I.Q. Constant	With M.A. Constant
1930-1931	.262	.266
1931-1932	.107	.102
1932-1933	.036	.182
1933-1934	.444	.576
1934-1935	.078	.035

TABLE X

CORRELATION BETWEEN ACHIEVEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE,
WITH ATTENDANCE HELD CONSTANT,
OF SAN JOSE THIRD GRADE PUPILS
FOR THE SCHOOL YEARS
1930-1935, INCLUSIVE

Year	Between I.Q. and Achievement	Between M.A. and Achievement
1930-1931	-.198	.247
1931-1932	.081	.071
1932-1933	.266	.237
1933-1934	.064	-.147
1934-1935	.007	-.153

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data presented in the foregoing pages, the following conclusions are made:

1. There is a positive relation between intelligence, as expressed in terms of I.Q.'s, and attendance. Three out of five coefficients of correlation are large enough to be significant. The brighter children, in the several third grades considered, attend school more regularly than do the duller.
2. The relation between intelligence, in terms of M.A.'s, and attendance is slight, ranging from -.02 to .29. None of these is significant.
3. The relation between achievement and attendance is positive each year of the five considered. In all but one year the correlations are small. They range from .09 to .49. None is significant, and only one is large enough to be indicative.
4. That achievement is affected very little by intelligence is shown by the fact that for three out of five years the coefficient of partial correlation, with M.A. constant, is only slightly larger than the correlation between attendance and achievement when M.A. is allowed to vary.
5. That the attendance of these children affected their achievement only slightly is shown by the fact that only two out of five correlations between achievement and M.A. are raised when attendance is held constant.

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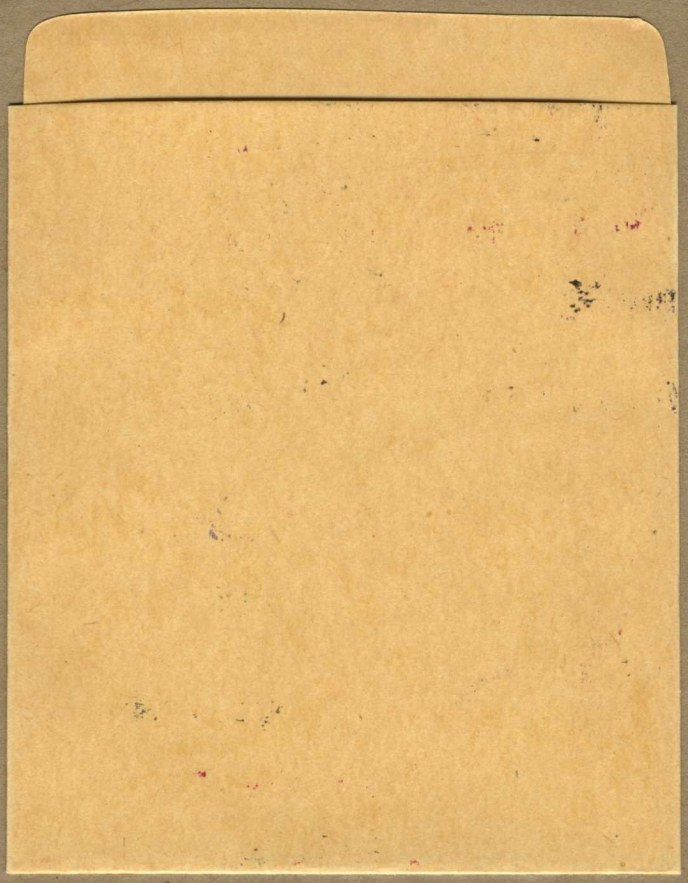

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