


6-1949

A Study of Veterans Enrolled Under Public Laws 16 & 346 at Western Kentucky State College

John Mercer

Western Kentucky University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses>

 Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mercer, John, "A Study of Veterans Enrolled Under Public Laws 16 & 346 at Western Kentucky State College" (1949). *Masters Theses & Specialist Projects*. Paper 2623.

<https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/2623>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.

Mercer,

John Y.

1949

6800

A STUDY OF VETERANS
ENROLLED UNDER PUBLIC LAWS 16 AND 346
AT
WESTERN KENTUCKY STATE COLLEGE

BY

JOHN Y. MERCER

A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

WESTERN KENTUCKY STATE COLLEGE
BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY

JUNE, 1949

Approved:-

Major Professor

and

Department of Education

Graduate Committee

Lee Francis Jones.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER

PAGE

I	AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
	Statement of the Problem.....	2
	Source of the Data.....	2
	Scope of the Study.....	3
	Limitations of the Study.....	3
	Treatment and Collection of Data.....	4
II	ENROLLMENT, LOAD, AND AVERAGE POINT STANDING.....	5
	Point Standing Compared.....	7
	Enrollment.....	8
	Departmental Failures.....	9
III	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	14
	Conclusions.....	14
	Recommendations.....	14

TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I Quarter Hours Carried, Hours Passed, and Average Point Standing by Terms, September, 1945-September, 1948.....	5
II Numerical Equivalent of Grades at Western Kentucky State College.....	6
III Per Cent of Failures by Department.....	11

PREFACE

The author of this paper wishes to express his grateful appreciation to:

Mr. E. H. Canon, Registrar of Western Kentucky State College, and his personnel of workers for the aid that they have rendered in making the material used in this study available.

Dr. Lee Francis Jones, the author's major professor, in acknowledgment of his many helpful suggestions, guidance, and wise counsel during the writing of this thesis.

Mrs. John Y. Mercer for her invaluable assistance in the collection of data and its compilation and her moral support in the writing of this paper.

CHAPTER I
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

A great deal is said about this topic, but very little is known about it in any statistical way. It is our intention to bring to light as many facts regarding veterans as our data will allow.

Veterans who take advantage of the benefits of the laws passed by Congress are divided into two groups: Public Law 16 veterans and Public Law 346 veterans. The numbers refer to the number of the bill as passed by congress.

Public Law 16, in brief, grants rehabilitation to veterans in any way disabled as a result of their service to our country. Each one is given vocational, educational, and personal guidance, and an objective is set up so that he may go to school until it is reached. They are assigned to a training officer who checks on their progress at various intervals and at all times supervises the veteran's work. They are given hospital and medical attention if needed as a result of an accident directly connected with their training.

Public Law 346 veterans are given the entitlement to attend school and are largely free to do as they choose, subject to institutional regulations. They may take a general course or train for a specific job, but no limitations

are put on them as are put upon Public Law 16 veterans. As long as their work is satisfactory to the college, they are permitted to continue their training until their entitlement terminates.

A recognition of the increase and ensuing decrease in attendance at state educational institutions makes this a timely subject. A discussion of the grades and load of veterans will be pertinent to college officials as well as interesting to the general public.

The present chapter delineates briefly the contents of the study concerning veterans at Western Kentucky State.

Statement of the Problem

The problem arising from the study of the veteran may be considered under the following phases:

1. To consider the grades, load, and total enrollment of veterans.
2. To recognize the attempts that have been made to provide an educational program suitable to both the school and veteran and to note its shortcomings.
3. To state the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the study.

Source of the Data

The data for this study were gathered from the veteran's record cards filed in the veteran's counselor's

office and from the permanent record cards in the registrar's office. Each veteran's card contains the subjects taken, the credit hours earned, and the grade received by the veteran for each semester he was in residence. Since the registrar's office keeps no record of veterans as a group, their files were used only when grades were not available or were classified as "X's" on the veteran's record card in the counselor's office.

The averages of all students in residence for the September, 1948, term were taken from a compilation by the registrar's office for that term.

Scope of the Study

This study of the veteran includes 1,633 individual veterans in attendance at Western Kentucky State College for the nine terms from September, 1946, to September, 1948.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited in some respects by certain unavoidable circumstances. It has been impossible for the author to find any previous studies on the subject to use as a basis for comparison. The libraries of Western Kentucky State College and of Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida, yielded no evidence of any similar or related studies having been made.

Another limitation of the study is the fact that it was impossible to locate the grades of some veterans for certain terms, although their files were otherwise complete. These terms were omitted, but they would not exceed a total of 75 terms out of the total number of cases studied, 6,647 terms, or slightly more than 1 per cent.

A further limitation is the fact that data were available for the entire student body for only one term. This made it impossible to make a similar comparison for the other eight terms.

Treatment and Collection of Data

The data used in this study are treated from a comparative, analytical, and statistical standpoint wherever possible.

CHAPTER II
ENROLLMENT, LOAD, AND AVERAGE
POINT STANDING

Let us first consider the first part of our problem as stated in Chapter I: To consider the grades, load, and total enrollment of veterans.

To facilitate this discussion, Table I has been inserted.

TABLE I
QUARTER HOURS CARRIED, HOURS PASSED AND AVERAGE
POINT STANDING BY TERMS

September, 1946-September, 1948

DATE TERM BEGAN	NUMBER OF CASES	AVERAGE NO. HOURS CARRIED	AVERAGE NO. HOURS PASSED	AVERAGE POINT STANDING
Sept., '46	717	15.56	14.34	1.47
Jan., '47	740	15.85	14.81	1.54
Mar., '47	789	15.48	14.47	1.51
June, '47	614	12.86	12.26	1.62
Sept., '47	823	15.52	13.90	1.41
Jan., '48	818	15.85	14.84	1.49
Mar., '48	796	15.80	14.83	1.55
June, '48	611	15.08	14.50	1.64
Sept., '48	667	23.08*	21.28**	1.65
Average for All Terms	731	16.12	15.03	1.54

* 15.59 Semester Hours

** 14.19 Semester Hours

To collect these data, a master data sheet was used. This sheet was divided into ten columns, one for each term

and one for the veteran's number or name (averages were not designated by name except when "X's" occurred or grades were omitted.) The total number of hours taken by the veteran, his average grade, and department hours failed, if any, were recorded under the appropriate term in the order named. At the bottom of the last sheet, the total hours and average hours carried, total hours, and average hours failed, total points and average points were listed for each term. These were in turn totaled and the average grade and load computed for the entire period. Average hours failed were subtracted from the average hours carried to find the average number of hours passed.

The equivalents quoted in Table II are those used to compute numerical standings used in Table I and are those used by the registrar's office to determine the averages for the entire school.

TABLE II

NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT OF GRADES AT
WESTERN KENTUCKY STATE COLLEGE

GRADE	NUMERICAL EQUIVALENT
A	3
B	2
C	1
D	0
F	0

Point Standings Compared

For the term beginning September, 1948, the following data for the entire school have been compiled:

Average grade: 1.43

Average hours carried: 15.00

Attention should be called to the fact that the veteran's average for the same term was 1.65 or .22 points better than the average for the whole school. It may be added that if the veteran's standings had not been included in the total group, the difference would have been even greater. That is, non-veterans would have had a considerably lower average than veterans.

This leads to the conclusion that many were correct in thinking that veterans in the main are making better-than-average students.

There may be many reasons for their superior grades rather than their superior mentality. This superiority is highly doubtful, but this idea is purely supposition on the part of the author. Only further study could prove or disprove the theory.

The most probable explanation for their higher grades would be that they are older and more mature, are fully aware of the responsibility resting on their shoulders, and buckle down to the task of studying, since they have an incentive and a desire to make good grades.

As far as the load is concerned, the difference is slight, since veterans on the average carried .39 hours more than the school average of fifteen semester hours. Therefore, we cannot say that non-veterans carried more hours and hence were hindered by the amount of time they could spend studying on each subject. On the contrary, many of the veterans are married, and since they experience some difficulty in supporting a family on \$105 per month, they must supplement it with wage earning of some sort, which at best is time-consuming. On the other hand, the married veterans are motivated by their wives to do their best.

Enrollment

A look at the "Number of Cases" column of Table II indicates that enrollment was on the increase from September, 1946, to September, 1947, and on a decrease from September, 1947, to September, 1948. We shall make exceptions of the two June terms on the grounds that they are not regular terms, and total enrollment for the school drops off correspondingly during summer school sessions. We do note, however, in June, 1948, the enrollment for veterans was slightly lower than for the corresponding period in 1947.

From this it is logical to suppose that the peak was reached in September, 1947, and that any further changes in enrollment will be in the way of a decrease. This bears out predictions made by the Veterans Administration to the effect that 1947-1948 would be the peak year of enrollment and after that colleges could expect a decline.

For this reason Western as well as other colleges throughout the nation must look for other means of maintaining their present enrollment. In all probability this serious drop in enrollment could spell disaster for some of the smaller colleges and hinder the larger ones from expanding their program as they have been doing in recent years.

Departmental Failures

The second part of our problem was to recognize the attempts that have been made to provide an educational program agreeable to both the school and the veteran and note its shortcomings.

A great many of the veterans came to college, "to get a college education," not because they wanted to become engineers, doctors, veterinarians, mathematicians, and the like. For that reason, many of them enrolled in courses such as College Algebra, chemistry, Zoology, history, and English to get a fundamental knowledge of those subjects

in order to be a better-rounded individual or because the college required it, not to become masters of the fields. Some of them took Introductory College Algebra once, twice, or three times, and one student took it four times before he finally earned credit for the course. This case is the exception, but it seems that such repetition is a waste of time and could be avoided.

This compilation of Department failures was made by using the master-sheet method. This sheet was divided into the various departments, which in turn were divided into courses. Each failure was entered in the proper place, these totaled, and the percentage of total semester or quarter failures per department and per course were then computed. These semester percentages were then averaged and the departments listed in Table III in order of largest to smallest aggregate average.

Although not specifically studied in this paper, "D's" in subjects were also high in some departments. These "D's" had the same effect as failures, since in many cases they prohibited the student from continuing that particular study. They also were counted on the same basis as failures in the averaging of grades.

TABLE III

PER CENT OF FAILURES BY DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT	SEPT. 1946	JAN. 1947	MAR. 1947	JUNE 1947	SEPT. 1947	JAN. 1948	MAR. 1948	JUNE 1948	SEPT. 1948	AGGREGATE AVERAGE
1. Math.	28.00	16.75	19.28	24.32	22.91	18.71	16.48	27.81	15.57	21.09
2. Chemistry	28.57	27.70	22.05	14.05	18.61	12.04	9.47	4.49	15.07	16.88
3. English	8.69	10.09	9.45	13.51	16.93	14.00	13.24	20.23	17.56	13.74
4. History	7.31	10.19	13.99	12.97	12.41	12.55	15.70	11.23	11.21	11.95
5. Biology	6.06	8.18	8.59	14.86	7.95	7.97	9.47	18.57	10.09	10.19
6. Psychology	2.29	5.28	8.09	4.22	5.18	8.09	7.27	3.37	6.60	5.62
7. Ind. Arts	7.89	8.18	4.14	2.16	3.68	6.16	3.76	2.81	3.86	4.74
8. Physics	2.29	5.19	1.11	1.08	1.82	3.88	4.77	5.62	3.48	3.25
9. Agriculture	0.00	0.00	2.51	1.08	0.62	6.28	1.04	3.37	3.86	2.08
10. Geology	0.00	1.56	2.02	4.24	1.82	1.45	4.15	0.00	0.75	1.78
11. French	5.49	1.04	0.50	1.08	1.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.29
12. Economics	0.34	1.04	0.63	0.00	0.00	2.54	3.89	0.00	0.75	1.02
13. Geography	0.91	0.00	0.00	1.08	1.24	0.49	1.79	1.41	1.74	0.96
14. Spanish	0.46	0.00	1.51	1.08	0.90	0.97	1.04	0.00	1.87	0.87
15. Art	0.34	1.56	2.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.73	0.00	0.00	0.84
16. German	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.40	0.49	0.00	0.00	3.11	0.67
17. Sociology	1.03	2.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.21	1.17	0.00	0.00	0.64
18. Music	0.11	0.00	0.50	0.00	1.28	2.05	1.17	0.28	0.37	0.64
19. Phys. Educ.	0.23	0.00	0.32	1.62	0.34	0.54	0.19	0.56	1.00	0.53
20. Education	0.00	0.00	1.01	0.00	0.31	0.36	2.08	0.00	0.87	0.51
21. Penmanship	0.00	0.78	1.33	0.81	0.00	0.36	0.79	0.28	0.00	0.48
22. Mil. Sc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
Total Per Cent	100.01	100.03	99.92	98.26	99.90	100.14	100.20	100.03	100.00	99.80

It is interesting to note that the mathematics, chemistry, English, history, and biology departments were responsible for nearly three-fourths (73.85 per cent) of all the failures. All other departments accounted for the remaining one fourth, each having less than 10 per cent per department. The last ten departments had less than 1 per cent each. These totaled only approximately 6 per cent. All departments from number nine to number twenty-two had one or more semesters when no failures occurred. Whether or not the lower percentage departments are to be commended is a matter of opinion, but it does seem that the others are a little high.

In all fairness to the first five departments mentioned above, let us say that these are the departments which offer the courses required of freshmen for graduation. But even so, it seems that this is an unduly large percentage of failures for these departments taken collectively or singly.

This would suggest the necessity for flexible standards within the departments. Such standards would allow credit to the student who does not intend to major in these departments. It also suggests the possibility for more nearly uniform standards between the departments, which would reduce the great difference between the high and low percentage departments. At present it seems that the high

percentage departments are defeating the purpose of the veteran since a small number intend to become masters in that particular subject. We shall have more to say regarding cures for this situation in Chapter III.

It is interesting to note that 84.0 per cent of the biology failures, 95.0 per cent of the history, 97.1 per cent of the English, 88.8 per cent of the mathematics, and 94.2 per cent of the chemistry failures were in freshman courses.

Percentage of English, history, and biology failures generally increased over the period, whereas chemistry and mathematics generally declined.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has brought to light several interesting and important findings.

Conclusions

1. For the September, 1948, term, veterans had a higher point standing than the school average and for the entire period studied had an average which presents them in a rather favorable light.
2. For the September, 1948, term, veterans carried a slightly heavier load than the school average and failed on the average only one hour per veteran per term.
3. The peak enrollment was reached with the September, 1947, term, and since then enrollment has been declining.
4. Mathematics, chemistry, English, history, and biology departments accounted for the majority of failures and did so in the order named.

Recommendations

The mathematics department is to be commended for attempting to remedy a rather unsatisfactory situation by

instituting a preliminary algebra course to care for those who lack adequate preparation. This course is designed to give students a general algebra review and also give them an insight into college mathematics. It seems that this has had a rather beneficial effect on the percentage of failures in that department since the percentage has been on a gradual decline for the period studied. If the policy were adhered to rather closely, it is probable that more failures could be avoided, for the situation is far from perfect at present. If this course could satisfy the requirements of a freshman elective and yet convince the incapable student that mathematics is not his field for specialization, the course would by all means be adequate. Of course this is a big order for any one course to fill, but at present this seems to be the best solution to the problem at hand.

Since it has helped remedy the mathematics situation, it is logical to suppose that similar courses could be arranged for the other departments to lower their percentage of failures and yet satisfy the requirements of the college and the various departments for graduation. Such courses could give the student a foundation in the field and decrease the mortality rate of the student in the more advanced courses.

It is recognized that the chemistry department of Western Kentucky State College is one of the best in the state and we are not suggesting a lowering of standards, but we would like to see a flexibility of standards which would permit credit to be granted those who do not intend to major in chemistry or the sciences.

The same could be true for the history and biology departments and to a certain extent for the English department. The English department may be considered from a slightly different point of view, however, since there is little excuse for a student not mastering the mechanics of his native tongue. Certain attempts have been made previously in the English department to lower the amount of failures and probably could be used to good advantage again. One method used is that of having individual conferences to bring the lower students even with the class. Another method was to segregate the extremely low students and have them meet a three-hour class five times a week. This method did not work a hardship on the students, for they covered the same amount of material at a slower rate of speed.

Another possible solution to these problems would be to increase the number of times each class is offered during a term and limit the enrollment in each class.

By so doing, a little more personal acquaintance with the student and also some remedial work of a small group or individual nature could be added. In this way many capable students could be encouraged rather than discouraged.

Departments should investigate to determine the causes for the large number of failures. Such a study would be the basis for a program and would set up criteria for guiding certain students into the fields best suited for them.