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**A PROPOSED APPLICATION  
OF THE NONGRADED STRUCTURE  
TO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL OF A SMALL NEW ENGLAND TOWN**

**AN ABSTRACT OF  
A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE**

**by  
Ruth Lovett  
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The American Educational experiment began over two hundred years ago when the "Ould Deluder" law was entered into the records of the Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1647.

The earliest attempt to establish a school was the "Dame School." It was succeeded by the "Lancastrian School," which was first established in Lancaster, England during the Industrial Revolution. This was an urban school and flourished at the same time that the one-room school was found in rural areas.

The Quincy Grammar School was established in Boston in 1848 by James Philbrick. It was the first attempt at a graded school in this country. Because this organizational plan seemed both reasonable and efficient, the graded school soon spread throughout the country.

In St. Louis less than twenty-five years later the attempts to solve some of the problems created by the graded concept began. From that time various methods of reorganization have been attempted. The nongraded concept is the one idea that has become widely accepted. The first nongraded school was established in 1942. The idea spread slowly during the succeeding ten years, but in the 1950's much publicity was given this concept in educational journals and many communities

all over the United States enthusiastically adopted this idea.

Numerous decisions have to be made once the nongraded concept has been accepted. Chief among these is the question of how the children shall be grouped, and what the procedure of advancement shall be as the child progresses. Other important decisions are the manner in which the public relations program will be carried out, how reports of progress will be made to parents and how the cumulative records will be kept.

One of the great advantages of the nongraded idea is its flexibility and adaptability. It can be altered to fit almost any situation. Among the towns discussed in this study one finds nongraded schools in big cities and in small towns, systems with large budgets and systems that are hampered by a small tax base. There are school systems which employ many consultants in the various fields and school systems in which no consultants are employed. Some of the schools are in areas where the population is well educated, highly articulate and successful while others are in low socio-economic areas. No two programs are exactly alike, but all are dedicated to the continuous progress idea and providing for the individual needs of the children.

W\*\*\* is a small suburban community with very little industry, so that its tax base is limited to the homes within its borders almost entirely. The population is above the national average in both educational background and income level. After voting down a proposal to build a regional high school

with a neighboring town, W\*\*\* is now preparing to build its own, badly needed, high school. When this is accomplished, reorganization will be made possible in the badly crowded elementary school.

It is planned at that time to explore the possibility of the nongraded primary school in relation to the particular needs of the town.

In this preliminary exploration two major recommendations are being made. In all of the successful nongraded primary systems studied none was attempted without a kindergarten. All the experts agreed that the kindergarten is necessary to have a successful program. Therefore, the first recommendation is for a public kindergarten. The second, and equally important, recommendation is for a well equipped and staffed school library which will be available to the students throughout the school day.

The variation of the nongraded primary structure suggested is that of the self-contained, heterogeneous classroom. Pupils will remain at a level until all the criteria indicate a transfer is needed. This transfer may occur at any time during the school year.

The reorganization of the school will be preceded by a public relations program to inform the town of the proposed changes and why they are being recommended. Informational meetings will be held after the program has been implemented for as long as needed.

It is felt that an adaptation of the nongraded primary school would be of benefit to the children of the town of W\*\*\*.