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RETENTION OF CERTAIN LATIN SYNTACTICAL
PRINCIPLES BY FIRST AND SECOND
YEAR LATIN STUDENTS AF-
TER VARIOUS TIME
INTERVALS

By

LEO RAYMOND KENNEDY

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
in partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Educational Psychology
and Measurements

Lincoln, Nebraska

July 3, 1930

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July 3, 1930.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The general plan of the investigation presented in this dissertation is as follows. All the Latin 2 students (those in the second semester of first year Latin) and all the Latin 4 students (those in the second semester of second year Latin) were given the Pressey Latin Syntax test on May 22, 1929. On September 9, 1929, the opening day of school, all of those pupils who had taken the pre-vacation test, and who were continuing the study of Latin, were re-tested with the same form of the Pressey test.¹ Hereinafter in this study this class is spoken of as CONTINUATION group students. It was intended that those students who had taken the test the previous May and who were registered for school in September, but who were not continuing Latin, should also be tested on the opening day of school in September. Certain administrative difficulties made this impossible of complete realization; however, about one-half of such students took the test at that time. Three weeks later the remaining number of these students took the test. The

¹There is only one form of this test.

reliability of the difference¹ between the means of these two groups--those who took the test on September 9th and those who took it three weeks later--was less than 0.40, thus indicating no significant difference between them. In view of this fact the whole group of such students was considered, for purposes of this study, to have taken the test on the opening day of school. These pupils who took the May 1929 test and the September test, and who were NOT registered for Latin during the school year of 1929 to 1930, are hereinafter termed STOP group pupils. It is essential that the reader keep in mind the difference between the continuation groups and the stop groups.

The continuation group students--both Latin 2 and Latin 4²--were tested for the third time one month after the opening of school in the fall (October 9th). The general purpose of administering the test at this time was to learn if pupils had, during one month of study in the fall, regained the level of their May 1929 achievement.

¹The R.D. has to be at least 3 in order to be significant. See Chapter 10

²In the interest of clarity the terms Latin 2 and Latin 4, as applied to the continuation groups, are retained throughout this study, although during the school year 1929-30 they became respectively Latin (3, 4) and Latin (5, 6). The integers refer to the semester of Latin.

The stop group pupils of both Latin 2 and Latin 4 were given their third test on May 7, 1930.

The following Table gives the number of students of each group taking the Pressey test on each occasion.

TABLE I

SAME PUPILS TAKING SYNTAX TEST AT VARIOUS INTERVALS

	May 1929	May 1929 Sept. 1929	May 1929 Sept. 1929 Oct. 1929	May 1929 Sept. 1929 May 1930
Latin 2 Cont. Group.....	115	115	115	
Latin 2 Stop Group.....	22	22	22	
Latin 2 Stop Group.....	95	68		44
Latin 4 Stop Group.....	102	78		63
Total.....	334	283	137	107

Of the 44 Latin 2 stop group students and 63 Latin 4 stop group students, but 39 and 58 were found of use in this study. Mental test data were lacking on those not employed. Only those students who participated in each of the three tests were considered in this study.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM

Although a monumental amount of experimental work has been done in the field of learning and retention since Ebbinghaus (14) derived his curve of forgetting, yet it has been only in relatively recent years that investigators have directed their attention to the quantitative study of classroom learning and retention. The layman's concept of the rate of forgetting probably corresponds rather closely to the Ebbinghaus curve. Even among educators one not infrequently hears such statements as "they (the students) will forget all they have learned about the subject, anyway, before September". Some even shorten the time interval. The study of the literature also tends to give one the impression that even psychologists, for a long period following the work of Ebbinghaus, thought that his curve of forgetting was typically characteristic of all materials once known. Perhaps respect for the work of this great scientist, combined with a certain amount of inertia, account in part for this situation.

It seems obvious that a more complete knowledge of