Student reasoning ability lower

Buff the nation's college students the intellectual reasoning abilmeet course standards the way were taught just a few years a Texas A&M University study

sults of psychological tests 736 Texas A&M student volers were consistent with findof many nationwide studies that

of another major recession,

Texas A&M University

monists warned Wednesday.

Dr. Gene Uselton and Dr. S.

Larles Maurice agreed with a re
at report of the Joint Economic

littee of Congress which

ed the growth of productivity in

country the, "economic linchpin the 1980s," and pointed out this preconomic indicator is slipping

We have had an increase in

mment-caused uncertainty in ess," Maurice said, head of the

nics department at Texas

, "which has reduced innovaproductivity and capital forma-

slightly better prepared mentally than non-science majors, said physicist Dr. Laura Bergmasco Osborne, who administered the tests.

Fifty-three percent of Texas A&M's science students were at a level required of "conventional" courses, compared to 38 percent of the non-science majors, revealed Osborne, a visiting associate profes-

wer Americans may be able to tion. It has become easier to put a the necessities of life in the firm out of business or into the red Center for Education and Research

tainty and less production."

Maurice said decreased growth of productivity is often used as a definition of recession and could mean a away more than they give back.

because of government regulations

- resulting in increased uncer-

lower standard of living as fewer

goods like homes and automobiles

rate of more than 5 percent in the

second quarter, the largest quar-

terly decline ever recored by the U.S. Labor Department since it

began keeping statistics in 1947.

In the first half of 1979 output per

man-hour in the private business sector decreased by an annual rate of 3.3 percent and fell at an annual years.

Lower living standard

predicted for 1980s

are produced.

She described conventional classes as those which stress the ability to reason and present answers in a coherent way, standard requirements in most courses until

recently, she said. The study further disclosed that going to college longer is no cure, either. Students over age 22 who had been attending college more than four years did not particularly

in Free Enterprise, also blamed the

decline on government regulations.

More and more people are engaged in doing things that are nonproduc-

tive. For example, General Motors alone employs 23,000 people just to

fill out government forms, and that has occurred only in the last 10-15

duction must be addressed of the

average American is likely to see his

standard of living decline in the

benefit from the extra time, Osborne noted. The overall results agree with

national averages," she said of the Piaget tests that measure a student's ability to solve problems by reason-

Even more pessimistic conclusions, said Osborne, are drawn in a new book, "American Higher Education in Decline," written by Texas' Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Kenneth Ashworth.
"The fact that science students

scored higher may give us science teachers momentary pleasure, but we must not forget that even among science students, the level was only 50 percent. We live in a society affected by the preformce of all its members," she remarked.

Osborne suggests the modern dearth of classical and humanistic courses such as Latin, Greek and philosophy may work against mental development of non-science stu-

Changing the attitudes of teachers and adults who "waste the most precious and formative years of students by dulling their minds in the search for easy popularity and less strenuous work," is the only real answer to the dilemma, she ar-

"It is unfair to the youngsters to cheat them out of the kind of early The congressional mid-year analysis of the economy warned that tax and regulatory barriers to propreparation, starting in grammer school, that will allow them to cope successfully with reality," Osborne

> She thinks lowering the reasoning level required by convintional col-

grading are doing more harm than

"Curve grading appears to help students not yet at that needed mental level to gain better grades, possible creating a false sense of se-curity," said the Texas A&M scien-

'If a course is kept at a very low level, it will not be unusual to find several bright, intellecturally developed students making lower grades because they are bored.

'Grading on a curve often increases the grades of poor students by several points while leaving al-most unaffected the grades of good students already performing at the higher levels in their classes," she



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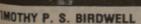
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