A STUDY OF THE ATYPICAL CHILD AND HIS STATUS

IN THE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES OF TEXAS

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THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North
Texas State Teachers College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Dallas, Texas
August, 1948
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is:

1. To consider characteristic qualities and differences determining the atypical child.

2. To emphasize the desirability of providing additional opportunities and enriched experiences in leadership training and responsibilities for children possessing superior intelligence.

3. To determine what provisions are being made for the educational development of the superior or gifted child in Texas.

4. To determine what provisions are being made for the mentally retarded child in Texas.

5. To discover what utilization is being made of the added capabilities of superior children.

Purpose of the Study

1. To study child differentiations in their relation to educational growth.

2. To emphasize a greater need, on the part of today's teachers, for constant study of the atypical child in order to determine his developmental needs.
3. To emphasize the importance and desirability of utilizing the talents of the highly endowed pupil,

4. To consider current educational practices in their relation to the added capabilities of superior children,

5. To emphasize the importance of developing whatever desirable social qualities the mentally retarded child may possess.

Origin of the Problem

This investigation grew out of an interest in the exceptionally bright child encountered in various elementary school classes, and a desire to discover what is being done for their optimum development.

In our democracy each child is entitled to develop himself to the limit of his potentialities, and to be assisted educationally in the process. This includes both the slow child and the superior child as well. Indications are that many school curriculums fail to provide for these greatly varying pupil capacities and limitations.

Interest in the plight of the bright child, often termed educationally the most neglected child, led to this study of the atypical child and current practices in his curriculum.

Source of Data

Data in this study of the atypical child were collected from primary sources, particularly from the administration of a questionnaire or interview sheet compiled by the writer.
Other sources of information consisted of personal interviews with elementary school teachers and principals, and extensive reading of educational books, bulletins, and periodicals in order to provide the writer with a better understanding of the problem.

Scope of the Study

This is primarily a study of the above normal or mentally bright child termed the "superior" child. The study also includes the mentally dull or below normal child with an educable mind, and the normal child for comparable purposes only.

Definition of Terms

In this study the terms "superior child" or "gifted child" are to be thought of as denoting a child possessing a higher quality of intelligence or a greater degree of capability. Although these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, "superior," in this study, may mean one who is very much above the average in general intelligence, with abilities lying in more than one direction, while a "gifted" child may possess a specific talent or faculty.

The term "retarded," as applied to the child, indicates one who possesses an educable mind but who progresses slowly. He may at times be classified as a "slow-normal" yet not be termed feeble-minded.

"Atypical" signifies a type or pattern not normal. This may mean a tendency to deviate in either direction "away from"
that ordinarily considered normal. In this study it is used to designate children mentally above normal and children mentally retarded.

Organization

Chapter I presents the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the origin of the problem, the source of data, the scope of the study, the definition of terms and the organization.

Chapter II presents educational aspects of the atypical child.

In Chapter III will be found a study of curricular practices in the State of Texas as regards the education of the atypical child.

Chapter IV includes the summary, and states conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER II

EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE ATYPICAL CHILD

Need for Leadership Training

Life in the atomic age of today is a constant challenge. These are critical times, and the world of today, as ever, is in need of superior leadership.

It is generally conceded that desirable leadership necessitates more than a high level of intelligence. Pressing economic and social problems demand not only clear, critical thinking, but an understanding of, and a consideration for people. A leader must weigh an intricate problem in its relation to many people. Initiative must be coupled with creative ability in order that forcefulness be given direction provided by vision.

... qualified leadership proceeds from "gifted" children and youth who are adequately trained. They are the children and youth whose superior endowments of body and mind, and whose training, in the schools, for efficient and effective citizenship are the standard hope of man. Superior children are society's potential investment, and humanity's best contribution to the advancement of mankind.¹

Whether leadership is the result of intelligence plus training, or whether it is primarily native ability, successful leadership is dependent upon rich experiences providing

¹John Edward Bentley, Superior Children, p. vii.
sufficient opportunity in accepting responsibility. Contrary to former belief, leadership does not suddenly manifest itself through its own peculiar qualities. Educators, although recognizing the significance of leadership in our democracy, have neglected to provide proper developmental opportunities for the bright child beyond the usual extracurricular activities.

Individual differences, particularly in the range of intelligence, have always been recognized to some degree. The formalized, subject-matter educational set-up of the previous age strove to have all school children conform to the same pattern. Today the field of education is recognizing the need of continuous child study in order that the problems of the child may be determined, and the individual aided in satisfactory self-adjustment in his present life.

In an unselected group of people, the greater number cluster around a mid-point of intelligence and are spoken of as being average or normal individuals. From this group, average in intelligence, comes our large class of business people, ranging from professional people to skilled workers. It is with those who fall immediately below, or rank above the average that this study of the atypical child is concerned.

Educators are familiar with the slow-normal and the dull-normal child who later becomes the semi-skilled or the unskilled worker. From the ranks of the generally bright child, the superior, and the gifted come the future scientists,
industrialists, artists, and leaders that are of such great importance today.

To lead is to guide. Upon educators, leaders themselves, rests the responsibility of training our future leaders in the understanding that the optimum success of our democratic way of life depends not upon dominating leadership, but upon a wise and skilful welding of the whole, wherein an individual realizes his maximum potentialities in relation to the common good of society.

Determining the Atypical Child

According to Lewis M. Terman, a child whose intelligence quotient ranges from 90 to 110 is of normal or average intelligence. An I. Q. above 120 signifies superior intelligence, while an I. Q. within the range of 80 to 90 indicates dullness. ²

The term "gifted" child connotes one with high intelligence. The child may possess some special talent or he may be generally endowed with superior abilities. Because of his ease of scholastic attainment, the highly intelligent or superior child is often overlooked, while the mentally slow child is readily identified through his inability to meet certain levels of scholastic achievement set up for the normal child.

Just as the slow child is considered retarded in comparison with the mental ability of normal children, so may

²Lewis M. Terman, The Measurement of Intelligence, p. 79.
the superior child be retarded in comparison with his own potentialities. Unless the curriculum meets the needs of these atypical children or deviates at the opposite ends of the scale of intelligence, as well as those of the normal child, it is not providing each child with the opportunity to which he is entitled, that of developing himself to his highest level of ability. Bentley says, "Superior children should be discovered before they have had time to settle down and before improper school habits have had time to form." 3

Physically, there is little to distinguish the mentally exceptional child from the normal. In fact, the mentally superior child is often said to be healthier than others of his chronological age. Acceleration sometimes causes him to appear physically smaller than his classmates. This is due to the fact that although he has been placed with his mental equals, he is chronologically younger.

Study of the bright child at play indicates his preference for games or sports involving mental activity or judgment rather than purely physical skill. In this way he differs greatly from the mentally retarded child. The mentally dull child prefers socialized play and motor activities confident that he can more nearly compete with normal children on a common level, thus restoring the feeling of success he does not experience in the classroom.

3Bentley, op. cit., p. 105.
The exceptionally bright child is an avid reader. Alertness, eager interest, and ease of comprehension characterize his mental ability as inadequacy typifies the mentally retarded. His depth of concentration and keen insight tend toward the use of abstractions and generalizations while the mentally retarded child, slow in activities involving thinking and reasoning, is concerned with concrete activities.

Both the atypically bright and the atypically dull child are in danger of becoming maladjusted educationally and socially. The dull child, a slow reader, lacking in powers of concentration, sensing his inability to succeed in activities involving mental aptitude, soon loses interest. So, too, does the bright child lose interest and sometimes set up a defense mechanism of withdrawal unless his creative ability and general initiative is given freedom of expansion. Educational adjustment is but one point in overcoming maladjustment. Adequate adjustment socially, physically, and educationally demands continuous study of each child and his particular problem.

Educational Responsibility

It appears that upon the shoulders of educators rests the problem of democracy, that of encouraging in individuals a maximum development meanwhile realizing his responsibility to society. If each child is to have equal opportunity in self-growth, then the curriculum must provide not only for the normal child but for the atypical child as well.
The physically handicapped child, with his appeal to the observer's emotions, is relatively easy to discover in the classroom. So, too, may the inefficiencies of the slow learner be noted while the capacities of a superior child may not be discovered. Constant observation and continuous study of the child, his habits and characteristics, his limitations, as well as his capabilities, will provide the teacher a basis of understanding of the child and of his needs.

Studies have shown that in attempting to locate superior children teachers are prone to overestimate intellectual ability on the basis of purely educational achievement and to underestimate the importance of other factors such as the age of the child. Timidity may be another important factor in the discovery of the atypical child. On the basis of scholastic attainment alone many maladjusted superior children may not be discovered. Therefore, teacher opinion as such should not enter into the selection.

School records prove valuable aids, not only in locating the bright and the dull child, but also in assisting in the diagnosis and analysis of his needs. These, together with proper mental tests, provide the educator a means of evaluating the child's capabilities, determining his interests, and making adjustments in accordance with his needs.

Curricular provisions for individuals involves more than reducing the normal amount of work for the mentally retarded and increasing the normal amount for the rapid learner. Each
child needs to feel secure and successful at his own level of ability in order to be a happy, useful citizen.

The problem is not so much one of segregation as one of enrichment; basic training in fundamentals for the slow learner plus more and varied appeals to his narrow range of interests, greater challenge to the creative ability and initiative of the superior lest they become mentally lazy. Demands of the curriculum should be made upon the child in accordance with his ability. Only then may he attain optimum development.

Special Education for Exceptional Children

It has been estimated that approximately ten per cent of the school enrollment comprises bright and superior children. Among the top two per cent are found the gifted and the near-genius children. At the lower level of the scale of intelligence are the two per cent whose mental deficiency is one of the greatest of school problems. These children, the bright and the dull, are usually classified in special education among the "exceptional," but have yet to be fully provided for as recognized curriculum problems.

The Committee on Special Classes of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection defines exceptional children as follows:

The term "exceptional children" includes both the handicapped and the gifted, or children who deviate from the average to such an extent as to require special treatment or training in order to make the most of their possibilities. It includes: the crippled; the blind and
the partially seeing; the deaf and the hard of hearing; the defective in speech; children of lowered vitality; the mentally retarded; children with behavior problems (the nervous, the emotionally unstable, and the delinquent); the gifted."

Special Education in the State of Texas had its beginnings in the year of 1945. A strong educational movement led by S. H. Whitley, President of East Texas State Teachers College, and promoted by G. C. Morris, State Senator from Greenville, Hunt County, Texas, resulted in the passing of Senate Bill Number 38. This bill provides special educational services for exceptional children between the ages of six and seventeen "for whom the regular school facilities are inadequate or not available." 5

The law further defines the term "exceptional children" as including "any child of educable mind, whose bodily functions or members are so impaired that he cannot be safely or adequately educated in the regular classes of the public schools without the provision of special services." 6

Special education in Texas concerns itself primarily with the problems of physically handicapped children, such as those with defective vision, defective hearing, defective speech, orthopedic handicaps, lowered vitality, and nervous disorders. State appropriations are used to pay the cost of maintaining these classes.

5 Public School Laws of Texas, Article I, Section 1.
6 Ibid., Article I, Section 2.
The University estimated as follows the number of children in each of the six classes for which state subsidy is provided:

- Blind, partially seeing: 2,523
- Deaf, hard of hearing: 18,923
- Crippled: 12,615
- Lowered vitality: 18,923
- Defective speech: 18,923
- Nervous (epilepsy): 2,523

There are five categories for which state subsidy is not provided. The numbers are estimated by the University of Texas as follows:

- Mentally retarded: 25,230
- Gifted: 25,230
- Socially mal-adjusted: 31,539
- Latin-American scholastics: 260,759
- Economic handicaps: 19,643

Approximately two per cent of the children in a given community are mentally retarded, and approximately two per cent are gifted. According to the White House Conference, "out of the 25,000,000 school children in the United States, approximately 1,500,000 require special treatment in order to make the most of their superior endowments." This comprises about six per cent of the school population.

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7University of Texas Publication, Handbook for Teachers of Exceptional Children, p. 10.
8Ibid., p. 10.
9Ibid., p. 11.
10White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, op. cit., p. 537.
There are programs for sight conservation for the partially seeing child, special educational adjustments for those whose vision is so poor as to render the child incapable of normal work in the classroom, and educational adjustments for children suffering from hearing losses.

New educational opportunities have been promised orthopedically impaired children, and are being fulfilled. Special attention is being paid to lighting, and special equipment of various kinds is being added to aid handicapped children.

Corrective measures are advocated for speech defects, health routines of work, rest, and proper food are advocated for children with lowered vitality. Abnormal behaviors are traced to their sources in order to determine possible nervous disorders. All this is done in the light of helping the child make the best use of his abilities physically, mentally, and socially.

Local clubs and agencies have become interested in this problem and furnish material aid to the handicapped. Eyeglasses, leg braces, additional books and materials are being provided so that these exceptional children may have educational opportunities comparable with those of normal children.

If there is equality of opportunity in our educational set-up, the mentally retarded should have sufficient opportunity to learn to do things that will most nearly aid them in becoming law-abiding, self-sustaining citizens, and the highly intelligent child should have equal opportunity in
attaining maximum growth. If democracy is concerned with the
development of the individual and the welfare of the group,
it behooves leaders in the educational field to adjust the
curriculum to the needs of each and every child.
CHAPTER III

PRESENT PRACTICES IN THE EDUCATION OF SUPERIOR AND MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

In order to secure curricular information regarding the education of the mentally superior and the mentally retarded child a questionnaire, composed by the writer, was sent to 275 elementary schools in the cities of Texas. Seventeen cities took part in this survey. Seven of the cities have a population over 100,000 and are spoken of as belonging to Level I. Ten of the cities range from 25,000 to 100,000 in population and are classified as Level II.

One hundred and ninety-nine questionnaires were mailed to elementary schools in Level I and seventy-six to elementary schools in Level II. From the resulting 119 replies, 103 answers qualified for this study. The 62,675 pupils involved in the study were enrolled from the first through the eighth grades.

The size of the school and the number of pupils enrolled is an important consideration in special education. In every school will be found superior children, mentally retarded children, and those who are handicapped to some degree. Only in the larger school systems is the number of exceptional children great enough to create a definite demand for special
educational facilities. These children are usually taken care of in the regular classrooms.

Of 103 schools reporting, 13 had an enrollment totaling more than 1,000 pupils, 52 schools enrolled between 500 and 1,000 pupils, and 38 schools enrolled fewer than 500. The range in enrollment varied from 59 to 1,919 pupils.

When asked to give the approximate total of superior children in school, 82 schools, with an enrollment of 50,621 pupils in grades 1 to 8 inclusive, replied. Table 1 gives the approximate total of superior boys and girls in these schools. In some cases the estimates include children designated by tests, in others the children were rated by educators.

**TABLE 1**

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SUPERIOR BOYS AND SUPERIOR GIRLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Superior Boys</th>
<th>Superior Girls</th>
<th>Superior Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>2,031</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>4,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>2,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,074</td>
<td>3,404</td>
<td>6,478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the total enrollment of 50,621 pupils reported in these schools, the number of superior pupils was estimated at 12.7 per cent.

In reporting the number of superior pupils enrolled, the majority of schools reported a larger number of superior girls than of boys. This is shown in Table 2.
TABLE 2

THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING A GREATER NUMBER OF SUPERIOR GIRLS, GREATER NUMBER OF SUPERIOR BOYS, AND EQUAL NUMBERS OF SUPERIOR GIRLS AND BOYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Level I</th>
<th>Level II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools reporting superior pupils</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Schools reporting a larger number of superior girls than superior boys</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools reporting a larger number of superior boys than superior girls</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools reporting equal numbers of superior girls and superior boys</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 52 schools reporting, 51 schools reported a larger number of superior girls than of superior boys, 12 schools reported a greater number of superior boys than superior girls, 19 schools reported equal numbers of superior girls and boys. The difference in total numbers of superior girls and boys is shown in Table 1.

The question of segregating superior children either for part-time or full-time work is an important one today when considering the problem of enrichment. The replies of 16 favored segregation of the superior, while 85 voted against it.
A variety of replies and much discussion centered around the term "segregation" of the superior. Although few favored segregation of the superior, there was a definite consensus of opinion in favor of "grouping" children into fast and slow-moving groups. The majority of replies preferred the use of the word "grouping" and indicated the need of grouping children according to ability. One writer believed that segregation into at least three groups of superior, average and slow tended to eliminate superiority and inferiority complexes developed in the classroom.

There was a great difference of opinion as to the grade level at which the selecting or grouping of the brighter children should take place. Three replies offered fourth grade as the first definite level at which selection or re-grouping might profitably take place. The reason stated was that intelligence tests, first given in that grade, could then be utilized, while grouping in the primary grades depended upon some few first grades being given reading readiness tests or depended entirely upon the teacher's rating of the children. Sixteen replies favored grouping in the primary grades, particularly in the first grade, while four definitely selected grades 7 to 9 or junior high school as the level at which grouping should take place. Four replies stated that grouping should take place through all of the elementary grades.
In notes attached to many of the information sheets that were returned educators expressed themselves as believing that grouping should occur in any grade; that adjustment is a constant process; that, even in groups, there are groups within groups that each teacher must recognize; that although each child should be working according to his capacity, he must learn as an individual that there should be a harmonious whole of sympathetic co-workers; that regardless of mental ability, each individual has an important contribution to make to the group in which he functions.

In designating the basis of selection of bright children scholastic achievement ranked first in usage. Table 3 shows the bases of selection as ranked by the replies.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis of Selection</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic Achievement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Rating</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence Tests</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronological Age</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scholastic achievement was given nearly twice as high a rating as that of chronological age. One reply emphasized the importance of considering chronological age in any grouping or selecting, suggesting that its value and importance were greatly underestimated.
Although scholastic achievement ranked first according to usage, and teacher’s rating ranked a close second, replies showed a comparatively high rating of the use of intelligence tests as a basis of selection or grouping. A few replies called attention to the comparatively new use of intelligence tests in their schools.

As is seen in Table 4, 77.6 per cent of the schools used heterogeneous grouping while only 27.1 per cent used some form of homogeneous grouping.

**TABLE 4**

**PER CENT OF SCHOOLS EMPLOYING HETEROGENEOUS OR HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Per Cent of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have heterogeneous grouping?</td>
<td>Yes: 77.6 / No: 19.4 / Other Answers: 2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have homogeneous grouping such as X-Y-Z sections?</td>
<td>Yes: 27.1 / No: 64.0 / Other Answers: 3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statements called attention to the fact that homogeneous grouping, when used, was not employed for the purpose of segregating bright children. When enrollment numbers necessitated division of a particular grade level homogeneous grouping, as used, merely enabled them to secure a heterogeneous grouping wherein slow-learning children worked to capacity with others of somewhat similar ability. Then, too,
it facilitated instruction. In no way were the groups to be identified as strictly bright, average, and dull groups, or fast-moving, normal, and slow-moving groups. Individual instruction was advocated but proper results were minimized due to crowded conditions.

According to 99 replies, there were no special classes for the superior. The nearest approach, stated four replies, was found in the homogeneous groupings.

The replies of 28 schools, or only 27.1 per cent, stated that they had teachers particularly qualified to work with superior children. The replies of 75, or 72.8 per cent, stated that no teacher in their school was specifically trained in working with superior children.

Curricular provisions for bright children emphasized the use of enrichment in 72.8 per cent of the schools while only 16.5 per cent employed rapid promotion. One reply stated that when justified, special promotions were made through the use of summer school where the child studied only the major subjects. In this way important material in the major subjects was not omitted.

As to the enrichment of the program of the superior child, the chief means was through the use of extra library reading. This is shown in Table 5.
TABLE 5
MEANS OF PROGRAM ENRICHMENT AND THE NUMBER AND PER CENT OF SCHOOLS EMPLOYING EACH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra library reading</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual assignments such as special reports and problems</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite training in leadership</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to do creative writing</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips to museums, factories, and community centers</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature study trips under guidance</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special courses in music, art, drawing, speech</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special training in athletics</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More than 95 per cent of the schools used extra library reading as their chief means of program enrichment. Individual assignments, such as special reports or problems, 90.2 per cent, was another important form of enrichment, while in third place, with 87.3 per cent, ranked definite training in leadership.

Leadership training was experienced through the use of group projects, committee work, or holding offices in clubs and societies. In some of the schools the bright child obtained leadership experience in such groups as student council,
fire patrol, and safety patrol organizations. In other schools the superior child was sometimes allowed to serve as tutor in individual cases, or as group leader where he was held responsible for a certain amount of work to be done.

One large school evidently emphasized employment of superior mental capacity in point of service to the group. Superior pupils offered special help to members of student council and patrol. At times, serving as leaders or holding offices in various clubs, the superior pupils also served their school in other ways, such as through the administrative office, through the care and use of school equipment, and in honoring the members of the graduating class.

Other means of program enrichment, shown by the replies, ranked on a much lower level from the standpoint of usage. Apparently there were opportunities to do creative writing such as plays, poetry, school paper, and literary club, but such creative work was not emphasized to any great extent. There were few field trips to museums, factories, or community centers, and very few guided nature study trips.

Superior children were given no special training in music, art, speech, nor in any form of athletics. Replies stated that these advantages were offered equally to all children. There were no extra-curricular activities for superior children only.
When asked what changes had been made in the curriculum to enable the child with special talent to obtain added training or guidance, 59 out of a possible 103 replied that they used the flexible period. Twenty-three stated no use of a flexible period. Twenty-two schools excused the talented child from class, at regular intervals, for added training, thirty-five schools signified "other plans" but did not explain them.

The last question concerning the superior child inquired as to means by which instruction was modified for him in a heterogeneous classroom. Table 6 shows these ways ranked according to usage.

**TABLE 6**

**WAYS OF MODIFYING INSTRUCTION FOR SUPERIOR CHILDREN IN A HETEROGENEOUS CLASSROOM RANKED ACCORDING TO USAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The superior child is given more opportunity to develop logical thinking and use of abstract knowledge through problem-solving work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less formal drill required for superior children</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer teaching illustrations used for gifted children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized instruction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of problem-solving work to develop logical thinking and use of abstract knowledge was rated highest among the means of modifying instruction for the superior child. Second in rank was the means of requiring less formal
drill for the superior than for the average child. Much below this ranked the use of fewer teaching illustrations for the gifted or superior, while individualized instruction rated a very low level of usage.

It would appear from these replies that many educators recognize the need of giving the superior child experiences in critical thinking dealing with abstractions. The low ranking given individualized instruction seems to show that in actual practice the superior child is not given these individualized opportunities. As one reply stated the problem, educators may recognize the need for individualized instruction but in actual situations it is impractical due to crowded classrooms and present curriculum.

Schools totaling 46,963 in enrollment reported approximately 4,366 mentally retarded or below normal pupils. This places the estimate at 9.2 per cent of the total enrollment as compared with the 12.7 per cent estimate of superior pupils. Table 7 shows the approximate number of mentally retarded boys and girls.

**TABLE 7**

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF MENTALLY RETARDED BOYS AND GIRLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mentally Retarded Boys</th>
<th>Mentally Retarded Girls</th>
<th>Mentally Retarded Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>1,579</td>
<td>1,275</td>
<td>2,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>1,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,395</td>
<td>1,971</td>
<td>4,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This estimate of approximately 2,395 mentally retarded or below normal boys and 1,971 mentally retarded girls includes pupils selected by tests and pupils rated "below normal" by educators.

The question of whether mentally retarded children should be segregated brought almost an even number of affirmative and negative responses with a slight majority of negative responses. When the same question was asked concerning superior children, only a few replies expressed approval of part-time or full-time segregation, and more than five times as many replies expressed disapproval of segregation of the superior.

Replies differed greatly as to the grade level at which selection or segregation of the mentally retarded should take place. Nearly one-half of the replies stated that segregation of the retarded should not take place at all. The majority of replies indicated that selection or grouping of some form should take place in the primary grades, preferably in the first grade. Only three responses suggested that segregation of slow learners or retarded pupils should take place in the intermediate grades, but a large number definitely chose junior high school as the desirable level for such selecting or grouping.

As in the grouping or selecting of bright children, scholastic achievement was again the most commonly used basis of selection. At nearly the same level ranked the teacher's
rating or estimate as a basis of selection. Table 8 shows the bases of selection ranked according to usage as indicated by replies.

**TABLE 8**

**RATING OF BASES OF SELECTION OF MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN BY SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT, TEACHER'S RATING, INTELLIGENCE TESTS, AND CHRONOLOGICAL AGE AS INDICATED BY REPLIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Scholastic achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teacher's rating or estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Intelligence tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chronological age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of intelligence tests ranked third as a basis of selection of retarded children, and chronological age, an important factor to consider, rated a low fourth place. It was noted that although schools in both Level I and Level II rated scholastic achievement as a highly important basis of selection, the use of intelligence tests in schools in Level I, cities over 100,000 population, was much greater than their use in schools in cities in Level II, cities 25,000 to 100,000 population.

A few schools had one or more teachers particularly qualified to work with the mentally retarded child. More than three times that number had no teacher specifically trained to work in that field. Several replies stated that it was a matter of teacher adjustment.
Seventy-eight replies, or 75.7 per cent, stated that their school had no special class for retarded children, nor was one available. In a number of replies attention was called to a special grouping within their own group or section. Sixteen replied that part-time or full-time special classes had been organized in their school or within their district. Several replies suggested the advisability of part-time coaching classes for remedial reading and speech correction. The children then returned to their age-group for other classes. One reply stated that mentally retarded children should be segregated for skill subjects. A few said that they did not have the room nor the special facilities necessary for that type of work.

A wide range of chronological ages was evident in the special classes for retarded children. One large school had classes of three different age-groups, placing young children together and older ones together. Social adjustment was carefully considered and cooperation of parents solicited. Other schools had two age-groups, one of primary pupils and another of older children. Table 9 gives the range in age-groups and the number of replies indicating employment of this age-group in their special classes for slow learners or retarded pupils.
As is shown in Table 9, eleven of the classes for retarded pupils have primary grades as the minimum age limit for their classes, while eight confine their lower age limit to that of children nine to fifteen years of age. The upper limit of the age-range was placed at fifteen years by nine of the replies. Five replies placed the upper limit of the age-range at sixteen years, while six replies included pupils over sixteen years of age. The average age-range of children in special classes for mentally retarded pupils was found to be that of seven to fifteen years inclusive.

According to the evidence, the manner of promoting retarded pupils no longer was the traditional promotion based upon definite levels of achievement. Chronological age and social adjustment, stated the replies, were important points under consideration. A form of "special promotion" was used in many cases instead of the definite grade to grade type of promotion.
Seventy replies, or 67.9 per cent, relating to the instruction of the slow-learning or retarded child emphasized acquisition of fundamental knowledge and skills. The extent of this emphasis was not determined, but the rating in usage was much higher than that of the second point of emphasis, that of closely associating elementary academic work with handwork. Table 10 ranks the different types of instruction according to their use.

TABLE 10
TYPES OF INSTRUCTION FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN RANKED ACCORDING TO THEIR USE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Instruction</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of fundamental knowledge and skills</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary academic work closely associated with handwork</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational or vocational activities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparatively little emphasis, 26.2 per cent, was placed upon occupational or vocational activities for mentally retarded children. More than two and one-half times as much emphasis was placed on the acquisition of fundamental knowledge and skills as on occupational or vocational activities. The explanation might be the fact that there were said to be very few special classes for the mentally retarded. Thus, in a heterogeneous classroom, instruction for the mentally retarded child probably necessitated remedial work in reading,
whereas an emphasis on occupational or vocational activities for slow learners would most likely be found in a curriculum including a part-time or full-time special class.

The problem of adapting instruction to the needs of the mentally retarded child is a difficult one. Seventy-four replies showed that dominant emphasis was placed upon individualized instruction. In modifying instruction for the superior child, individualized instruction was ranked in fourth place. Perhaps again the explanation involved remedial work for the slow-learning child requiring individual aid. Table 11 ranks the ways of adapting instruction to the needs of mentally retarded children as indicated by usage.

**TABLE 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualized instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only minimum learning exercises assigned</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungraded levels of learning experiences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop type of instruction used</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strong emphasis was also placed upon the need of assigning only minimum learning exercises to mentally retarded pupils. Adapting ungraded levels of learning experiences to the needs of the retarded child was only moderately emphasized, while the workshop type of instruction found a relatively
unimportant place in the child's curriculum. The latter seems to indicate the use of the more traditional type of instruction although it appears from Table 11 that educators realize the need of individualized instruction, particularly for the retarded child.

In 76.6 per cent of the cases, materials were said to be adapted to the needs and abilities of the mentally retarded child whenever possible. Replies stated definitely that there were no activities or supervised sports and games designed especially for the retarded child. He was given the opportunity of going on field trips, of taking part in athletics, clubs, or any of the extra-curricular activities if he so desired. In short, the mentally retarded child and the other children were offered similar participation privileges in various school activities.

Notes added to replies stated that in several instances the school had no special classes, but that retarded children were segregated for coaching periods, then were returned to their own age-group for classes. One reply stated that only in extreme cases were retarded children sent to special classes. Another described a school with special classes well organized, with trained teachers and an individualized, not a workshop, type of instruction. One letter stated simply that retarded and superior children needed to remain in a heterogeneous group.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Evidence in this study showed that the traditional form of instruction still predominated in the classroom, and that classroom progress was paced by the "normal" child.

Facts in the study further revealed that methods of instruction were not modified sufficiently to meet the needs of individual differences.

Additional data showed that the curriculum provided little opportunity for the bright child to utilize his superior endowments or to develop leadership ability.

Further evidence revealed the need for capitalizing on whatever abilities the retarded child may possess, and a need for more individualized instruction for both the mentally retarded and the mentally superior child.

Facts in the survey also showed that teachers are incapable of recognizing mentally superior children, or of adequately judging the ability of mentally retarded children, without basing their opinions upon approved tests and records.

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Conclusions

The following conclusions have been reached:

1. Teachers fail to recognize characteristics typifying superior children.

2. Variations in the abilities of the child necessitate continuous study on the part of the teacher in order that she may deal adequately with varying needs.

3. The educational system of Texas is not generally in keeping with the democratic ideals providing for the child's optimum development.

4. Individual child growth could be greatly motivated and stimulated by the use of more and varied interests, and by meaningful activity.

5. Present classroom conditions tend to focus teacher-attention on the average child, and tend to hinder the use of individualized instruction.

6. Both superior children and retarded children are in need of more sympathetic guidance and more satisfactory adjustment in their school environment.

7. The trend toward an enriched curriculum demands more highly qualified teachers.

Recommendations

These recommendations are offered:

1. Each teacher should study the principles of child psychology.
2. Teachers should have training in recognizing superior children and in understanding their needs.

3. There should be more challenging educational responsibilities for the superior child and more developmental opportunities for the retarded child.

4. More emphasis should be placed upon the retarded child's desirable qualities and less attention focused upon his inefficiencies.

5. Instruction should meet the needs of the superior child as well as those of the retarded and should enable each child to feel success.

6. Each child should be provided sufficient opportunity to participate in meaningful activity and to contribute on the level of his ability.

7. Education should develop more qualitative habits of thinking, judging, and doing through the means of an enriched curriculum.

8. Teachers should be encouraged to discover each child's personality, diagnose his needs, and develop his greatest potentialities.

9. Each child should be given a feeling of security through genuine love and understanding.
APPENDIX
(INTERVIEW SHEET)

THE SUPERIOR OR GIFTED CHILD

YOUR NAME: ________________________________________________

SCHOOL: _____________________________________ CITY: __________

1. What is the total number of pupils enrolled in your school, grades 1 through 8?

2. What is the approximate total of superior children in your school, grades 1 through 8? _______Boys _______Girls

3. Do you believe that children of superior ability should be segregated? Yes_______ No._______

4. At what grade level does selection or segregation of the superior take place? ______________________________________

5. What is the basis of selection? (Please check those used),
   (a) Intelligence tests ________ Yes_______ No_______
   (b) Scholastic Achievement ________ Yes_______ No_______
   (c) Teacher’s rating ________ Yes_______ No_______
   (d) Chronological age ________ Yes_______ No_______

6. Do you have heterogeneous grouping? Yes_______ No_______

7. Do you have homogeneous grouping such as X-Y-Z sections? Yes_______ No_______

8. Do you have special classes for the superior? Yes_______ No_______

9. Do you have teachers specially qualified to work with the superior child? Yes_______ No_______

10. In providing for the gifted or superior child which does your curriculum emphasize:
    (a) Rapid promotion ________ Yes_______ No_______
    (b) Enrichment ________ Yes_______ No_______

11. Through what means is the program of the superior child enriched?
    (a) Extra library reading ________ Yes_______ No_______
    (b) Individual assignments such as special reports, more difficult problems ________ Yes_______ No_______
    (c) Definite training in leadership through group projects, committee work, holding offices in clubs or societies ________ Yes_______ No_______
(d) Field trips to museums, factories, community centers, etc. Yes  No
(e) Nature study trips under guidance Yes  No
(f) Special courses in music, art, drawing, speech Yes  No
(g) Opportunity to do creative writing such as stories, plays, poetry, school paper, literary club Yes  No
(h) Special training in games, athletics? Yes  No

12. Do you have any extra-curricular activities for superior children only? Yes  No

13. What changes have been made in the curriculum to enable the child with special talent to obtain added training or guidance?
   (a) Flexible period Yes  No
   (b) Excused from class at regular intervals Yes  No
   (c) Other plans Yes  No

14. In a heterogeneous class room, how is instruction modified for the superior child?
   (a) Less formal drill required for the superior child than for the average child Yes  No
   (b) Fewer teaching illustrations are used for the gifted than for the average child Yes  No
   (c) The superior child is given more opportunity to develop logical thinking and use of abstract knowledge through more problem-solving work Yes  No
   (d) Individualized instruction Yes  No

15. Any additional information:

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
1. What is the approximate total of mentally retarded children in your school, grades 1 through 8? Boys___ Girls___

2. Do you believe that mentally retarded children should be segregated? Yes___ No___

3. At what grade level does selection or segregation of the mentally retarded take place?__________________________

4. What is the basis of selection?
   (a) Intelligence tests Yes___ No___
   (b) Scholastic achievements Yes___ No___
   (c) Teacher's rating or estimate Yes___ No___
   (d) Chronological age Yes___ No___

5. Do you have teachers specially trained in working with the mentally retarded or the slow learner? Yes___ No___

6. Do you have special classes for the mentally retarded? Yes___ No___

7. If your school has a special class for the mentally retarded, what is the range of chronological age? From age___ to and including age__________

8. Does he proceed from grade to grade with promotion based upon definite levels of achievement as in the traditional manner? Yes___ No___

9. Does the curriculum offer the retarded child supervised activities as in games, sports, contests? Yes___ No___

10. Does instruction emphasize:
    (a) Acquisition of fundamental knowledge and skills Yes___ No___
    (b) Occupational or vocational activities Yes___ No___
    (c) Elementary academic work closely associated with handwork Yes___ No___

11. How is instruction adapted to the needs of the mentally retarded?
    (a) Only minimum learning exercises assigned Yes___ No___
    (b) Workshop type of instruction used Yes___ No___
    (c) Individualized instruction Yes___ No___
    (d) Ungraded levels of learning experiences Yes___ No___
12. Is the material adapted to his needs and abilities?  Yes____  No____

13. Is the mentally retarded child given the opportunity of taking part in extracurricular activities?  Yes____  No____

14. Is the mentally retarded child taken on field trips?  Yes____  No____
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Public Documents

