GROUPING FIRST GRADERS IN GAINESVILLE SCHOOLS

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GROUPING FIRST GRADERS IN GAINESVILLE SCHOOLS

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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Gainesville, Texas
June, 1949
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

It is probable that the number one problem in the primary grades today is that of grouping. Teachers, supervisors and administrators are baffled over the need for something to prepare the public schools better for receiving the 200,000 new first graders in Texas in 1953.  

The modern educator is interested in finding a basis for grouping which facilitates the objectives he has in mind as constituting education. Since objectives have altered from time to time, a backward look reveals a series of changes in ways of grouping. Trends appear and disappear as teachers continue to gain further insight into the process of development in the individual.  

What is the conception of purpose in grouping now held by the vanguard of those who seriously study the development of children? The purpose appears to be threefold: (1) to give a setting in which the many potentialities of the individual will tend to be used in meeting the natural situations arising, (2) to provide the child with many experiences in spontaneously adjusting to his peers and (3) to foster attitudes and powers which will enable the person through life to provide settings and experiences that will give to self and to others continuation in development.  

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3Ibid., p. 252.
This problem developed in Gainesville through a transition in the primary grades from heterogeneous to homogeneous grouping. This study will seek to answer the following questions: What are the most successful criteria for grouping children upon their entrance into the first grade? Do children need to be grouped in small groups within large classroom groups? What facts should be considered in grouping? How does homogeneous grouping affect the curriculum? Is the heart and core of it the whole child or subject matter? Is homogeneous grouping democratic? Through the answers to these questions the supervisor hopes to find a plan for Gainesville.

Background

In September, 1946, the principal and first grade teachers of McMurray School felt that the needs of the first grade children were not being met adequately. Both principal and teachers had had recent courses in education and felt that more effort and study should be put forth. A conference with the superintendent was held and his permission to try a new plan was obtained, with the understanding that no more first grade teachers could be employed and that there could be no high and low division in the grades. The plan was to group first grade children according to findings from Reading Readiness tests and
Intelligence tests. From the Guidebook this suggestion was found:

Experience shows that mental tests for young children are also of distinct value in determining which pupils are ready for reading. They predict with fair accuracy the progress which children will make in learning to read. 4

With this in mind the educators chose to administer the Detroit Beginning First Grade Test. They had learned from recent education courses that the child should have a mental age of six years and six months before he is ready to read. It was then agreed that the child must have attained the mental age of six years and six months before formal reading should be presented.

Furthermore a number of reading readiness tests have been developed and are now used widely. They aim to measure a series of abilities and attainments that collectively makes for reading readiness. As a rule such tests are more analytical and diagnostic than a general Intelligence test. 5

A number of reading readiness tests were investigated before selecting the Metropolitan Readiness Test. After this test was administered to approximately fifty first graders the median score was found to be seventy. Thus the division

4 William S. Gray, et al., Guidebook for the Pre-Primer Program of the Basic Readers, Curriculum Foundation Series, p. 22.

5 Ibid., p. 22.
for grouping first grade children was made on the Reading Readiness score of seventy and the mental age of six years and six months. Much thought and effort was given to the plan in McMurray School by the principal and the two first grade teachers. A meeting of the first grade mothers was called and the plan carefully explained to them. The mothers were enthusiastic; however, the principal estimated ten per cent of the mothers present did not comprehend the proposed undertaking. Eventually the tests were given and the children were grouped accordingly. McMurray patrons told patrons in other schools who, in turn, inquired as to the plan. During the year, the plan was extended to the other three ward schools in Gainesville although a common philosophy and understanding seemed to be lacking. The beginning of the third year found teachers, principals, and supervisor more perplexed by the problems arising from this method of homogeneous grouping.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is an attempt to define the needs in the primary grades in Gainesville, to find the most successful criteria used for grouping children upon their entrance into the first grade, and to find the best plan for primary grades in Gainesville schools.

Sources of Data

The data for this study were obtained by securing
information from other schools in Texas concerning methods of grouping in the primary grades, from books written by authorities on the subject, from recent courses in education, and from educational bulletins and journals.

Definition of Terms

"Grouping", as referred to in this study, is defined as

The placement of each individual with a group in which he will work better, where he will have a sense of belonging and status, where his mental health will be safeguarded and improved.

"Homogeneous grouping":

Socalled 'homogeneous grouping' is an attempt to bring together into convenient-sized groups or classes of children who are similar in ability, age, industry, previous experience, and other factors which affect learning.

The Background in Chapter I describes the extent to which homogeneous grouping is practiced in the Gainesville schools.

"Heterogeneous grouping:" In this study heterogeneous grouping means natural grouping. This may be accomplished by dividing the enrollment cards alphabetically, "throwing the cards," or by other administrative devices which do not include ability rating.


Elsbree, in discussing administrative devices for grouping children, says:

As was pointed out earlier, the best arrangement, therefore, is to classify pupils according to chronological age and, in assigning them to specific teachers, to take account of the preferences expressed by pupils, together with their known interest. It is also probable that some provision might well be made for pupils to assemble and work together in areas of the curriculum in which they have either excelled or in which they need special help. A flexible program will permit this practice of classification as proposed earlier.8

Heterogeneous grouping may further be defined as the antithesis of homogeneous grouping, or grouping children of dissimilar abilities.

Related Studies

Numerous investigations have been made which deal with problems of grouping children for different purposes. Andrew B. Swenson has made a study of homogeneous grouping as is practiced in Stonewall Jackson Junior High School in Houston, Texas. His purpose in making this study was to ascertain whether or not homogeneous grouping afforded a desirable framework within which democracy could be


reasonably expected to operate and thus be promoted. The investigatory program consisted of a testing program of two groups of Junior high school students. The low sixth grade, whose members had just come to junior high school from the elementary schools, and who had, therefore, little acquaintance with grouping was selected to be compared with the high eighth grade, whose members had been grouped for almost three years. Further limitations for selection of groups within these two half grades was that the two highest-ranking sections be compared with the two lowest-ranking sections. The used groups were compared as to attitude, social economics and intelligence quotients. Through study and comparison of the two groups, Swenson arrives at these conclusions:

In the light of the foregoing conclusions it must be stated that there seems to be little evidence in favor of the retention of homogeneous grouping in the school situation. The statement, 'No amount of gain in academic learning can offset damage to individuals and to our type of social order by fixing undesirable mental complexes or by stimulating recognition of social classes,' places the stress on a different criteria for measuring homogeneous grouping than has been ordinarily applied. Consideration was not given in the present study to gains made in academic achievement, but if the quotation above can be accepted at its face value, sufficient evidence is at hand to obtain a conviction for homogeneous grouping. Therefore, it must be recommended that homogeneous grouping as it has been practiced in Stonewall Jackson Junior High School be eliminated. The evidence does not indicate the adaptability of homogeneous grouping for the purposes of education in a dynamic democracy.
In Elsbree's research on homogeneous grouping he reports findings from many comprehensive studies in this field. Among them is a study by McGoughy who has made and sponsored many investigations of this problem. He has proposed the following reasons for rejecting homogeneous grouping:

1. It fails in respect for personality, one of the primary considerations in the modern school.
2. The social and psychological effects of ability grouping on both the slow learners and the bright children are bad.
3. Homogeneous grouping is not in harmony with the principle that schools should be organized on a basis as near as possible to the desirable life.

Methods of Procedure

Chapter I sets forth the problem existing in Gainesville schools at present. In order for the reader to know something about the place where this study was made, it was necessary to give the background and criteria for grouping children upon their entrance in the first grade.

Chapter II deals with present conditions in Gainesville, the barriers to be overcome, and a description of the physical arrangement, and how grouping methods stand in the light of democratic principles.

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Chapter III gives the problems of other schools obtained by a questionnaire sent to one hundred schools as nearly as possible the size of Gainesville, and what they are doing about it. This chapter also includes findings and interpretations from the questionnaire.

Chapter IV relates what pioneer thinkers recommend.

Conclusions and a plan for Gainesville are found in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

PRESENT STATUS OF GAINESVILLE SCHOOLS

Physical Arrangement

When school opened in September, 1948, the two hundred fifty-five first graders were tested and grouped according to the plan set forth in the "Background." With the reading readiness and intelligence tests as the only criteria the children were placed in rooms designated (by teachers only) as "Junior First" and "First Grade." To the children they were "Miss G.'s room" or "Miss H's room."

In each grade school in Gainesville there are two first grade teachers. The teacher of the readiness group, or "Junior First," and the teacher of the group with a mental age of six years and six months and a grade norm of seventy, or "First Grade."

The two first grade rooms in each building are located on the first floor, affording opportunity for much group planning between the rooms under any grouping plan other than the one now being used. The equipment, library books and physical arrangements of the rooms are very similar, except for small additions which give personality to the rooms.

In September, 1948, the new supervisor proceeded with
the same plan as had been used the two preceding years although this year the children who had been carefully grouped in the First Grade and advanced by groups were ready for the third grade. There was also the Junior First group who started in 1946 but spent one half of the year in readiness, now ready for the second half of the second year. Since, under the present setup the school system cannot provide for high and low grades, there arose the question: "Where do they belong?" The original answer to this question was that the grouping would "level off" in the third grade and the children could be advanced by grades thereafter. That question is still unanswered.

Barriers to Overcome

The disapproval of parents and the form in which it manifests itself frequently creates an impossible barrier between patrons and school. More often the barrier is built up between the neighborhood children of the same chronological age, and of the same social and economic status who are placed in different groups when they enter school. Mothers ask such questions as: "Why is Johnny in the baby group?" or, "Why doesn't Don have a reader like Joe's?" One mother says, "Betty and Jean have always played together until they started to school. Now that they are in different rooms Betty acts superior." These are a few of the many questions that were asked by mothers. Then there were
problems from the bewildered teachers. Miss X said, "I don't want to teach the babies!" and another, "Just let me have one reading group," and still another, "Jane lacked only two points making seventy on her test and her mother would like for her to be in the same room with her little sister." Teachers, principals, and supervisors hope to find the answers to the many questions. They want the situation to provide a happy, cheerful environment for the child, where he will be free from strain and fear; and where he will develop emotional stability along with the skills he needs.

How Grouping Methods Stand in the Light of Democratic Principles

Educators in the field of primary education in Gainesville feel that the plan for grouping first graders should be democratic -- and in a democracy the weak help the strong and the strong help the weak. If this is true, then teachers need to help children find their strength.

Alice V. Keliher gives this setting for a democratic atmosphere in school:

School life genuinely builds personality for democracy if: (1) The child feels welcome and at home in a warm, friendly atmosphere. He is accepted as he is. (2) He knows he belongs to his group. No administrative or teaching devices are used to make him feel different and isolated. His differences are respected and put to use in service of the group.1

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Arthur T. Jersild further emphasizes the importance of child-development by recognizing all the forces which affect human growth and behavior. He says:

The child development approach is many-sided. It sees the child not simply as a mind to be trained or a body to be kept in good repair, or a bundle of emotions to be studied. Rather it sees the child as embodying many characteristics which interlock and interact upon one another in countless ways.

By reason of his concern about the interplay of many forces in human growth and behavior, the student of child development recognizes, for example, that it is important for the child to master intellectual skills, such as reading and arithmetic. But he recognizes also the importance of the child's mastery of everyday manual and bodily skills. He further emphasizes the importance of the child's emotional well-being, which not only is crucial to his happiness as a person but also plays a decisive role in determining his moral conduct and his behavior as a citizen. 2

Educators are often confronted in the classroom by this question: Is it democratic? When attempting to find a means of grouping first grade children the question must be answered. Warren W. Coxe has this to say concerning grouping and its effect upon the democratic social order:

If we are serious in a desire to interpret democracy in present day terms, education must offer not the same program to all, but an equal opportunity for all varieties of interests and abilities to find and develop their potentialities. This interpretation does not imply that the school should decide the destination of pupils; it is the responsibility of the pupil to find his place under

guidance in a wide variety of offerings. The school must help all levels to work together harmoniously, realizing that each level and each individual is but part of a great social organization. Groups so organized that pupils can work together within them, and at the same time develop the techniques of group interaction, can have a definite part in building up this kind of democratic social order. 3

In recent literature much stress is placed upon "belongingness." It ranks high among the needs of small children. Then if a child enters the first grade with high hopes of belonging to a group of neighboring children of the same chronological age and suddenly finds himself in a strange group, separated from friends and acquaintances, he is certain to feel that he is rejected and isolated. The present plan of grouping first graders in the Gainesville schools fails to provide for that feeling of belongingness when they are segregated according to findings from standardized test scores. This same observation has been made of other schools. Lura Oak-Bruce gives the overall picture. 4

In most first grades across the country the teacher's objective is definitely to begin the teaching of reading soon after the children arrive. Before very long she finds that only a part of her


4 Lura Oak-Bruce, "What Do We Know... for Sure?", Childhood Education, XXIV (March, 1948), 313-314.
class is prepared to follow the reading work as she believes they should. Soon there are class divisions and the "low group" builds up its membership as the vanguard moves ahead at a pace too fast for all to follow. The slow learners, from whatever causes, are segregated and inner tensions begin to take their toll of self-respect and the sense of well-being so essential to wholesome growth.

Do not suppose that these youngest children have not already learned to value their self-respect and that they are not inwardly troubled by evidences of an inferiority noticeable to all their classmates. Do not be surprised that, as this evidence of inadequacy becomes deeper, so also becomes the child's emotional disturbance which may cause him to be morose or unduly noisy, sullen or rude, and boastful.

By the end of one year of frustration and embarrassment a group of several defeated children are further bewildered by a final report card which advises their parents that they must repeat the grade. To repeat the first grade means to stay in the room the others leave and to be joined by mere "babies" just fresh from home for whom an older child can have nothing but scorn! Added to the ignominy of having to be in class with babies, the repeater must endure the boredom of the old routine with its memories of failure at many points.

In spite of such adverse conditions, however, repeating a grade may be the lesser of the two evils. Emotional strains of continued failure among a group of one's peers are often harder to bear than a humiliating association with one's "inferiors" since compensations arise in the latter situation through successes of various kinds.

Until the schools have ceased to "fail" these young children they will be troubled by this group of unhappy children who have found embarrassment, defeat and discouragement through no fault of their own. We adults do not escape responsibility by saying merely that these children were too immature or were unready for school.

John Dewey expresses this idea in stating the place of democracy in education:
The snobbery of the snobbish, who call themselves aristocrats, is nowhere as evident as in their neglect of the superior gifts and attainments of the humble of the earth in these respects. No contact of this human sort is replaceable; with reference to it all are equal because all are incommensurable, infinite. Democracy will not be democracy until education makes it its chief concern to release distinctive aptitudes in art, thought and companionship. At present the intellectual obstacle in the way is the habit of classification and quantitative comparisons. Our pseudo-aristocrats with their flourishing of abstract and uniform superiority and inferiority are now the main defendants of a concept of classes which means only the mass divided into smaller portions. 5

Very small children must be taught that democracy is a way of life or a process. It must be a foundation for wholesome school living and planning. If teachers are the builders of democracy, then the child will identify himself with the concepts and values set before him. If schools are to tell the story of democracy, they must begin with the child as he enters the first grade. He must be given opportunities for democratic living. These are some goals for democratic values set up by the 1949 Yearbook Committee of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Historically, the American people have had faith in education as a means of more nearly realizing democratic values. In a democracy two things are prized: the uniqueness of the

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individual and the method of intelligence as an individual, and group means of fostering that uniqueness and of providing an optimum environment for all. Because there has been faith that the individual is worth improving and confidence that man is improvable, a basic consideration in the whole educative process in a democracy is the individual and his role in the group.

Persons holding democratic values should covet for each individual the conditions of maturing and learning that will help him utilize the potential that is so often undeveloped and, therefore, wasted. Even if it is true that each individual has certain inherent limits to his abilities, it is probable that with proper nurture he may be able to achieve a degree of growth which is, at present, undreamed of. The schools have an obligation to foster that growth.

Persons holding democratic values should also desire abundant opportunities for pupils in schools to experience the satisfactions coming from high level cooperation and to exercise self-direction in both individual and group enterprises. 6

In the light of the foregoing conclusions on the place of democracy in public schools there is much opportunity in the first grades of the Gainesville schools to adopt a more democratic method of grouping first graders upon their entrance into school.

Alice Keliber has given some specific guideposts for a democratic approach to education:

Learning is an active process. When a student learns something it is because he himself has done something. He has changed. He has experienced something. Therefore, the role of the

6 Toward Better Teaching, 1949 Yearbook, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, of the National Education Association, pp. 1-2.
teacher is to so arrange things that the student
is challenged and free to learn.

Each student has a different tempo and
differing techniques of learning. Therefore,
the teacher plans with the group a variety of
activities in which each may function best.

Students learn much from each other. Often-
times they teach each other from a richness of
experience the teacher does not have and they
share problems fruitfully. Therefore, the teach-
er makes many opportunities for students to know
each other well and share with each other.

Students learn best when they are doing
something real.

And they carry into their own work optimism
and determination as well as techniques when they
feel they have been party to a job well done.7

In conclusion, it is apparent that the present
status of the Gainesville schools is not meeting the needs
of first graders from the standpoint of the whole child.

Teachers and administrators recognize the problem and
are meeting it with much caution and study, realizing that
changes are made gradually. Many barriers exist and these
must be broken down. This problem must be met with under-
standing and cooperation between school and parents. The
physical arrangements in the four ward schools in Gaines-
ville provide adequate opportunities for a more democratic
type of grouping and group participation between the two
first grades in each building. Some adjustments in the

7

Alice V. Kelicer, "Teacher Education Gets a Real
p. 212.
curriculum to provide for more flexible grouping would afford more opportunities for teaching the democratic way of life. In a democracy schools must teach this way of life if they are to serve one of their chief functions to society.
CHAPTER III

WHAT OTHER SCHOOLS ARE DOING ABOUT GROUPING

Do They Recognize It as a Problem?

The situation in the Gainesville schools, though it demands much study and planning, is not unique. In a survey made of seventy-four Texas schools the writer found that administrators are eager for more information concerning the problem of grouping first grade children. This interest was evidenced by the answers to the last question in the questionnaire: "If you would like a summary of the findings of this survey, please indicate by checking Yes._._._." These are some of the indications:

"I am interested in your findings. There is a lot of work that needs to be done along these lines."

"Will be very interested in knowing what you find out. Be sure to let me know."

"By all means! This problem is confronting us also."

"I am so glad to give the data, for such surveys are so helpful in determining what trends are in the making."

"We are making a study at the present of grouping, promotions, markings, testing, and cumulative records. For
this reason, most of our policies on the above question (questionnaire) are in transition."

"We are in the state of transition."

"This method of grouping used in experimental groups only."

"Our school is very informal, giving much attention to individual need, but not in groups for 'slow' or 're-tarded' pupils."

"At the request of the superintendent I am filling out the enclosed questionnaire concerning the problem of the primary grades. This survey should provide some valuable data, and we should be very happy to receive a copy of the results."

Many other notes are incorporated in Table 1.

Of the seventy-four replies received there were seventy-four requests for findings from this study. This percentage of requests indicates that educators are cognizant of the fact that the problem of grouping first graders is common to schools over the entire state of Texas.

The Questionnaire

In September, 1948, a questionnaire was sent to one hundred schools in Texas. The schools selected ranged in size from two first grades in one system to fifty-four schools in one system. The survey was sent to schools in independent districts only because the school under study
is in an independent district.

Realizing the weaknesses of questionnaires and the reluctance of some educators and statisticians to accept information gained from them, the questionnaire was made very brief and concise. The five questions listed below comprise the contents of the questionnaire:

1. Number of grade schools in town?
2. Number of pre-first grade teachers per school?
3. Number of first grade teachers per school?
4. Are first grade pupils grouped?
5. Criteria used for grouping -- check.

A. Testing - Name of tests used
   Reading Readiness
   I. Q.
   M. A.
   Other -- Explain.

B. Chronological age

C. Teacher judgment

Table 1, which begins on the following page, gives an over-all picture of the methods of grouping in the seventy-four selected independent schools in Texas. These answers were given with many explanations and combinations of methods.

Of the seventy-four schools answering question I in the Table, "Are first graders grouped by rooms?" thirty-one answered, "No;" forty answered, "Yes;" one school answered, "partially;" one reply was, "for experimental purposes only," and one reply stated that "each school has its own plan."
### TABLE 1
HOW TEXAS SCHOOLS ARE GROUPING FIRST GRADERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>I By rooms</th>
<th>II Within the room</th>
<th>III R.R.</th>
<th>IV M.A.</th>
<th>V C.A.</th>
<th>VI T.J.</th>
<th>VII Other Methods</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>No By T.J. and M.A.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Each school has own plan</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>One school for experimental purposes only</td>
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<td>II Within the room</td>
<td>III R.R.</td>
<td>IV M.A.²</td>
<td>V C.A.³</td>
<td>VI T.J.⁴</td>
<td>VII Other Methods</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R.R. &amp; T.J.</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>T.J.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>R.R. According to needs</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>At times. Interests, choice of pursuits, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Only for activities in form of committees</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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1 Reading Readiness
2 M.A. Mental Age
3 C.A. Chronological Age
4 T. J. Teacher Judgment

From the thirty-one schools answering "No" in Column I nineteen say they are grouping within the room. Much of the criteria for grouping within the room is found in Column II. School 19 groups "at times, 'Interests and choice of pursuits,' and the like. School 20 groups "only for activities in the form of committees." School 26 groups "for reading based on teacher judgment and testing." School 28 states
that grouping is "solely on teacher judgment." School 37 chooses this criterion, "teacher judgment, mental maturity, and reading readiness." School 65 groups for "certain activities." School 50 selects "reading readiness" only. School 74 uses mental and chronological ages with teacher judgment as the "deciding factor." Seven schools do not attempt grouping by the room nor within the room.

Of the forty schools grouping by rooms School 23 does "further grouping by teacher." School 32 does further grouping within the room according to "physical adjustment and social adjustment."

From the same forty schools grouping by rooms, only one school, number 57, used reading readiness tests as a single basis for grouping. In five experimental groups in the same system, chronological age was used. Three schools used reading readiness and intelligence tests as bases for grouping. These schools were numbers 11, 16, and 30. Twenty-four schools included intelligence tests, and thirteen checked chronological age. Fourteen schools supplied additional methods found under Column VII, "Other Methods." These methods are: number 1, "By chance"; number 15, "Heterogeneously"; number 18, "reading readiness according to needs;" number 21, "Reading aptitude;" number 25, "Combination of all;" number 35, "Flexible objective data, subjective evaluation;" number 43, "Classification tests;"
number 45, "Progress of the child"; number 46, "Alphabetical order, throwing the cards etc."; number 47, "Social maturity and physical growth"; number 48, "Maturity"; number 52, "Shuffle cards and draw sections"; number 54, "Chronological age plus teacher judgment"; and number 55, "Alphabetical order."

In conclusion, it seems evident that schools are striving for a method of grouping that will meet the individual needs of first grade children. In some cases schools are in periods of transition. Administrators are intent on placing the child where he will have a feeling of acceptance and self-respect and where conditions permit freedom of growth and development.

Case History

Further evidence of the modern trend of grouping comes from a director of elementary education in a Texas city. He presents the plan practiced in his school as follows:

To place each child in an environment providing the best opportunity for self-realization in a democratic society is the aim of the grouping plan in all of our nine elementary schools. The principles basic to the plan are (1) harmonious adjustment of each child in all phases of his development, (2) sufficient differences in groups to insure complexities, (3) enough likenesses to have a similarity of needs, (4) opportunities to live in mutual satisfaction with his neighbors and to live happily with himself, (5) success on the part of every child and yet opportunities to be excelled, (6) opportunities for academic and mental development, (7) similarities in chronological age, physical development and social maturity, (8)
discouragement of the idea of 'low' or 'high' ability ratings, and (9) flexibility to permit needed changes.

Immediately following enrollment, temporary groups are set up. Criteria for assigning a child to a temporary group come from recorded data and the enrollment interview. Actual grouping occurs as the teachers become familiar with each child and apply the nine-point criteria summarized above. Not many changes are found necessary but those advisable are made with the consent of all parties concerned. The final determinant is: Is this the group most individually challenging and stimulating to him, the one in which he can work best, and the one to which he can make the most worthwhile contributions? ¹

In the light of the responses received from the questionnaire, it seems that ample evidence is given that educators over the State of Texas are fully aware that grouping first graders does present a problem. It is common to school systems, both large and small, and much research and study is being given to the problem. If the information gathered here, helps educators become more sensitive to the problem of grouping, then one step has been taken toward the solution of the problem.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES RECOMMEND

Findings from Recent Readings

The purpose of this chapter is to present some aspects of grouping young children as found in modern educational literature. Authorities seem to agree that the whole child is to be given first consideration in any learning situation. It has been said that the child is the reason for the school. If this is true, then the child has a right to succeed. Unless the biology -- or whole child formula -- is used, the individual has less opportunity to develop physically, emotionally, socially, and mentally. A prerequisite of child development is a favorable environment. To a child this means a feeling of security and belonging. Let us examine the following quotations for criteria which provide for the development of the whole child.

The techniques of grouping do not constitute the most important problem. The critical question is how the children, teachers, and parents feel about it. Grouping must be acceptable to parents and teachers, known and understood by them. It must be administered by a high sensitiveness of how people, little and big, feel about any aspect of the program. It must be developed slowly and through cooperative planning with the pupils, moving toward the democratic ideals of respect for persons, faith in intelligence, and cooperative
solution of common problems.¹

In a wire recording of an informal discussion of grouping, in which Stephen M. Corey, Robert J. Havighurst, and Daniel A. Prescott, of the School of Education, University of Chicago, participated this was a part of the discussion:

Havighurst: What we might call the classical problem of homogeneous grouping is really a school-wide problem. Whether or not pupils should be segregated into groups of intelligence or school grades is a discussion that is made primarily by the principal and is usually characteristic of the entire school. One teacher alone rarely makes that kind of decision.

Corey: There has been a great deal of criticism about homogeneous grouping, but I have always thought that it represents at least a rational attempt to group boys and girls so that certain kinds of learning can be enhanced. Do you think that is true, Prescott?

Prescott: Not altogether. Learning depends on a lot of things besides I. Q. It depends upon the physical maturity of the child, his emotional security, his home situation, his relationships to other children in his social group, his cultural background, and the experiences he has had that motivate him or do not motivate him for a particular kind of learning.

Corey: Even though the expression "homogeneous grouping" does not necessarily mean grouping in terms of a particular criterion, it has come to imply grouping based primarily upon intelligence or achievement tests results.

Havighurst: Let me say a word about homogeneous grouping in terms of one criterion. I presume in ninety per cent of the cases of homogeneous

grouping one criterion is used or at most two --
either I. Q., or a combination of I. Q. and school
grades. I would say flatly that grouping which
puts children into groups for the entire day based
only on these two criteria will actually defeat
its purpose of promoting maximum academic learning,
to say nothing of its effects upon social learning.

Prescott: In fact in content subjects like
social studies, variety in background and variations
in ability produce very educative differences of
opinion and attitude, and very stimulating social
interaction. In activity programs children with
a very wide range of academic abilities can make
contributions in construction, dramatic play, or
painting.

Corey: Would you say that putting youngsters
in a certain grade because they have reached the
same chronological age is better than employing
the criterion of I. Q. for grouping?

Havighurst: I'm almost tempted to say so,
because if all the children of one age are put
into a certain grade then the teacher must cope
with the problem. But if she believes that homo-
genous grouping has been achieved, she may think
that the problem is solved.

Prescott: The phony idea in connection with
homogeneous grouping is that when you classify
children with respect to one or two factors, you
will get similar basic learning from all of them.
This is simply not true. Nothing can take the place
of a knowledge of the factors that motivate the
learning of the individual child. If I were forced
to classify on just one basis, I would use chrono-
logical age.2

The following questions and answers offer criteria for

grouping:

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2 Stephen M. Corey, Robert J. Havighurst, Daniel A. Pres-
cott, "Grouping Children: A Discussion," Educational Leader-
ship, Journal of the Association for Supervision and Curric-
What purpose do principals and teachers have in mind when they assign a child to a particular classroom?

To place the child
Where he can be among friends and have a feeling of belonging.
Where he can grow with confidence and satisfaction through his work and play with his peers.
Where his abilities are challenged to their capacity.
Where he may have many satisfying experiences solving problems of social adjustment.
Where he can develop habits, attitudes and skills that will be useful to him throughout his lifetime.

What are some of the elements that make for successful classroom living?

A classroom organization which makes possible social living; small spontaneous groups as well as small groups called and guided by the teacher. This may be achieved by the arrangement of the room and equipment into centers which foster small groups.

A feeling of belongingness which is shown by the way in which a child enters a room and uses it and is fostered by the manner in which the teacher greets the children, by the set-up of the room as a child's room, and by the opportunities and responsibilities which the teacher gives the children.

A classroom spirit fostered and developed by working on common purposes, by a growing ability to think and plan for the group to work together, to plan effectively and to evaluate efforts.

Do children need small groups within the large social classroom group?

Good classroom organization calls for opportunity for children to get together in social groups spontaneously or on call whenever:
A new process is to be viewed in common.
A particular skill needs to be practiced for mastery.
An interest needs to be explored.
A background of facts needs to be acquired and used.
A certain organization needs to be experienced. Particular media for expression needs to be manipulated.
Children meet in groups for purposes which they understand; they enter into the planning and achieving, and part to meet again in other variously organized groups when they have a wholesome attitude toward their own needs and know what these are. Are interested in their own progress.

How can a teacher give children help they need in academic skills in a room where the social grouping presents a wide range of abilities in reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic?

By planning with the children social experiences that use reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic skills.

By ascertaining each child's specific needs through observation and informal or standardized tests.

By forming small flexible groups to meet specific needs.

By helping children learn to work independently so that they are profitably employed when now under her direct supervision. 3

In Inga Olla Helseth's article, "On Grouping Children in School," she stresses the importance of flexible grouping:

The concept of group acceptable to the student who is studying growth in persons implies the process of flexible interaction. Intelligent study of classrooms and gang life has revealed that readiness has to be developed at any level for any type of learning if the experience of the individual has been meager in that particular area. Failure to do this merely brings parrot-like verbalism and not modification in the individual's thinking and doing throughout the twenty-four hours of his day. To permit each child to achieve readiness within implies that flexibility in the classroom which permits the natural gathering of the children into small groups

3

"Grouping Can Foster Growth," Leaflet No. 9, Portfolio for Primary Teachers.
that in turn unite to form the larger class group. 4

Miss Helseth continues to say that, in working out a program of growth, equality in mastering new skills is less important than living together as a family, and influencing each other's needs and acts toward ideals felt:

There is of necessity much guidance of the individuals and of the small sub-groups who are active in initiating and organizing thoughtfully. . . .

Out of such experiences as are here implied the teacher evolves a certain conception of groups. Each child has the dignity of a person. His status at the moment is but the point from which to move nearer to his potential self. The matter of flex-

ibility becomes real. Members meet for a purpose, enter into planning and achieving, and part to meet again in variously organized groups. Groups form whenever in common a new process is to be viewed, a particular needed skill is to be practiced for mastery, an interest to be explored, a back-
ground of facts, is to be acquired and used, a partic-
ular media for expression is to be manipulated or a certain manner of organization is to be experienced. Instead of merely suffering placement by others in one group only, learners themselves become con-
stantly active reorganizers within the room and even across a number of classrooms, toward ends that they openly defend among their fellows. The process of grouping is thus itself subject matter for the growing person. 5

Educators who are concerned with the problem of modern grouping have many hurdles to cross. Olla Helseth formulates some of the questions frequently asked:


5 Ibid., p. 253.
What type of problems do teachers consider while they work with the idea of flexible grouping? How to give security to the timid, how the aggressive may get attention through fine contributing, how leadership expresses itself legitimately, how depth and breadth may come under self-leadership, how guidance—as differing from direction—functions, what factors the guide considers in placing a given child in a group? These are but a few of the many problems.

What questions may the school ask in its efforts to locate a given child in a classroom? How old is the child chronologically? Is he large or small in body? At what stage of development is he physically? What is his mental age? What is his I. Q.? Is he fast or slow grower? What is his type of intelligence—abstract, artistic, mechanical, social? What contacts has he in the community? What are his responsibilities? What are the parents' attitudes toward child, school, education, community, and life? What are the attitudes and ways of the teachers available?

In the organization of the Primary School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, an experiment with grouping kindergarten children was tried. From the kindergarten they progressed through six or more semesters before fourth grade. An attempt was made to keep the children unaware of grades or social achievement segregation. This is said of grouping:

When administratively possible, children of similar chronological age and emotional and social maturity are kept together in one group and proceeded through six or more semesters above kindergarten. The bright child may evidence adequate mental growth in less than six semesters but for social reasons is rarely accelerated. He is kept

Ibid., p. 259.
within his own group to preserve his social stability and is given experiences to enrich his intellectual development.\textsuperscript{7}

In the Teacher's Edition of \textit{My Weekly Reader} there is this admonition to teachers:

For years, schools grouped children by age or grade level. This grouping was based on the theory that, at a certain age, children's abilities and needs were much the same. This theory has been proved entirely false. Today recognize the fact that there is a wide range of abilities and needs of children in any one class and at any certain age.

Grouping children according to reading abilities or other needs gives the teacher an opportunity to work with small numbers of children at a time and to provide for the individual needs of each child.\textsuperscript{8}

Furthermore, Dr. Betts lists the following reasons for flexible grouping:

1. Activities in an interesting classroom vary from day to day and necessitate different types of contributions and different opportunities for achieving.

2. Flexible grouping builds harmonious relationships and provides opportunities for socialization between members of the class.

3. Flexible grouping provides equal learning opportunities in all classroom activities.\textsuperscript{9}

In grouping children for reading, Roma Cans says:

Pupils should be guided to take an interest in the successes of others and be eager to help them get along satisfactorily. Once this helpful


\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Ibid.}
attitude is established, slow learners will get sympathetic aid from other pupils who often sense quite accurately their specific problems and demonstrate good judgment in helping them—in order to build cooperative relationships in an entire group slow readers should work with individuals who are their reading assistants on some enterprises in which they are evenly matched or in which the slow reader may even excel.

One factor contributing to a narrow appraisal of reading is the nature of the standardized tests which are available. Many of these tests follow the techniques established when the testing movement began. However, this movement is now passing into newer phases as a result of recent emphases upon a functional curriculum based upon pupil experiences. Already tests are being constructed which aim to measure broader functions of the reading program.

Some of the value which teachers can secure from standardized tests scores is often lost because of the emphasis placed on the record a class makes as a whole. If a group is found to have an average score above the grade norm of the test, general approval is registered and perhaps little study of the record of individual pupils follows. If a group falls below the norm, emphasis upon improving the teaching and upon urging pupils to do better in general is the result. Without the teacher's knowledge of the kinds of errors and correct responses made by a pupil, the full value of the test cannot be realized. Even the total score of the pupil obscures the specific type of ability and disability which he reveals on the test. Consistent emphasis on the group and total scores prevents the full personal understanding of each pupil which is essential in good teaching of reading, and therefore results in what may rightfully be considered wasteful practice.

Because of the difficulty of constructing a reading test which is suitable for young readers, the use of standardized tests before the end of the second grade often yields little information.

10 Roma Gans, Building Children's Reading Through Experiences, p. 73.
Ruth K. Webb stresses the importance of the task that teachers face in recognizing the developmental processes children achieve in growing up. She says that without certain knowledge concerning the child the teacher is unable to determine achievement in relation to capacity. She further states:

Research shows that children exhibit in their growth patterns every conceivable combination and variation. Many children grow rapidly both mentally and physically; others grow rapidly physically and slow mentally; while still others reach rapid mental maturity but grow slowly socially, remaining emotionally infantile even as adults.

Since it is known that no two children are alike, chronological age and grade placement do not have the former significance. Chronological age, grade placement, readiness to learn, and maturity levels in various areas of the child's growth pattern are in no way synonymous.

Since no two children will grow in the same ways or at the same rates, teachers cannot possibly say that a given child is ready for selected experiences which schools have presented to his age or grade for mastery. Experience has shown teachers that a given group of children will not include even a small number of individuals who are achieving standards set for that group. Many will be retarded; some will be advanced; none will be at the same level of readiness for all the experiences provided.

The teacher will find her work with children more effective if she will recognize that there is an orderliness of growth, a succession of stages of development, dependent one upon the other, through which all children pass. If she will become familiar with the research now available in professional magazines, if she will endeavor to recognize the stages through which individuals are passing at a given time, she will eliminate much of the confusion, strain, waste, and discouragement from her work with children. Instead, she finds herself substituting for these frustrating forces positive, dynamic action in terms of planning experiences with and for children regardless
of their chronological age, physical development, or grade placement, which will help them to reach the next higher level of development. 11

Following this trend of thought that child development is an individual process, Sharp, Young, and Storm have expressed this solution for meeting group needs:

No two groups, as individuals, will be exactly alike, will have the same needs, the same difficulties. And it is for this reason that a variety of activities is included. The activities are to be adapted to the needs of each group. There should be a marked difference, however, in the method of working with the extremes represented by the highest and lowest groups. This difference is especially apparent in:

1. the length of assignment
2. the amount of guided reading
3. the amount of independent reading or related activities
4. the kind of reports to be shared
5. the initiative expected in application of suggestions
6. the types of reactions.

In almost every normal class of twenty-five to thirty-five children there are five to ten children who seemingly have no difficulties in acquiring the reading skills needed at each level and who steadily progress far beyond normal for their age levels. These children are bored if they are forced to go through the routine, introductory procedures as a new story is presented. One young fellow remarked to his teacher, 'Do we have to go through all this foolishness? Why can't we just read?' It was obvious that this pupil did not need much guidance.

In this same normal class of twenty-five to thirty-five children there is likely to be a similar group of children who will not consider

the readiness period 'foolishness.' They will need both general and specific questions to help them comprehend more reading.

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Between these two groups there may be two, three, or more groups varying in interests, achievements, and abilities, but all having reading potentialities to be developed. . . . This middle group may need almost as much help during guided reading and recognition of new words and phrases as does the lowest group. At the same time, the same group may be especially responsive to the actions, humor, or pathos of a situation or to the whimsies of certain characters.

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All grouping should be flexible. The in-betweeners can become either as good as the best in the room or they can drop to a plateau of discouragement and do very little. No grouping should become fixed. Watch the learners, make adjustments as often as need indicates. Each fellow should be in that group in which he can have a chance to excel and to be excelled.12

Basic principles of grouping are arrived at only after much study, discussion, and the development of a common philosophy. Many studies have been made on the problem of grouping children. The following excerpt is taken from a report of a Springfield, Massachusetts, committee. This is the question the committee was trying to answer: "What factors of pupil growth and development shall be the determining basis for the grouping of children?"13

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13 Willards S. Elsbree, Pupil Progress in the Elementary School, p. 46.
Springfield Progress Report

The child is a growing complex organism. Physical, mental, emotional, and social growth are essential to wholesome development. A survey of these four growth factors for each individual child must play a determining part in providing grade placement and developing a plan for individual pupil progress.

The committee has made studies of these phases of child growth as they relate to the life of the child in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Growth of the Child</th>
<th>Bearing upon School Living</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The child as a social being</td>
<td>Opportunity to become a personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Development as an individual in a world of people</td>
<td>Recognition of individual abilities and capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision made for the development of individual interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Social behavior acceptable not only to himself, but to other individuals and groups with whom he lives and works.</td>
<td>Opportunity to participate in democratic group living and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. A growing sensitiveness to other personalities and an awareness of his own social needs and the social needs of others.</td>
<td>Opportunity to develop social values, social appreciations, and social insights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of an opportunity to participate in social and civic organizations as: Red Cross, Community Chest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. A child's social development is determined by

| a. Home and community environment | Teacher awareness of the home background and experiences |
| b. Past social experiences | School security |
| | A belonging to the group |
| | Establishment of favorable attitude toward the school |
c. His relation to the school group

Knowledge of socially acceptable patterns of behavior

d. Specific social behavior patterns at each age level

Provision for social experiences in group living

Physical Growth of the Child (Primary Level)

1. Development of body growth

Bearing upon School Living

a. Nourishment

School furniture adapted to growing child

Systematic weighing and measuring
Systematic medical inspection
Moderation in physical activity
Much fresh air
Opportunity for mid-morning lunches

b. Eyes in developmental stage

Care in selecting books with suitable type, spacing, and paper

Delayed arrival of first molars may indicate immaturity in body

c. Teeth

2. Muscular development

Freedom and space in which to move
Muscular relaxation taught readily

a. Muscles crave exercise

b. Posture

Recognition of posture

3. Motor coordination

No activity demanding a high degree of muscular control

a. Poor in kindergarten and first grade

Large tools and playthings
Much opportunity for hand work and the use of tools

4. Avoidance of nervous tension and fatigue

Calm school atmosphere
A. Causes

Avoidance of confusion, excitement
Period of relaxation

Poor relationship to other personalities
Complexity of life outside school

Alice Keliher has made an extensive study of homogeneous grouping. In the light of much evidence and critical analysis she arrives at this conclusion:

Homogeneous grouping, as we now have it, appears undesirable. The measurement bases requisite for such grouping presuppose its major concern with the partial, academic phases of life. Acceptance of the philosophy that education is to concern itself with the whole child means rejection of a device which selects for consideration only certain of the individual's abilities and traits. In the light of a sound theory and science of education homogeneous grouping should not be employed. In the light of the evidence concerning the results proposed for grouping, it does not achieve those results. Therefore, the major conclusion is that homogeneous grouping is not desirable in our elementary schools.

She makes some further speculations concerning probable consequences of this type of grouping:

The use of the present bases for grouping forces disproportionate attention to the scholastic attainments of individuals. Education should concern itself with the desirable dispositions necessary for a complete and good life in society. Under the testing-group regime, the academic skills are placed first and these other values which are of great importance second. It would seem a better plan to strive first for the desirable dispositions

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14 Ibid.

15 Alice V. Kehiler, A Critical Study of Homogeneous Grouping, p. 162.
and controls, and in their acquisition let the academic skills find their meaningful place.

The writer does not wish to dispense with the learning of these skills, but she does desire that they be learned in an optimum manner. With the emphasis on education as a life and the concomitant stressing of necessary and important life attitudes, learnings are attached with meanings and should be expected better to transfer to out-of-school life situations.

Consistent school segregation for twelve years of life may have its effects in the restriction of free social intercourse and cooperation in society when these children who have been so segregated reach adult life.

Further speculations as to outcomes point to the possible and probable effects of hurtful attitudes on the development of individual potentialities, and, consequently, on the elevation of society.16

In addressing a meeting of special education teachers in a meeting in Chicago, Howard A. Lane made this statement:

By putting children together of the same age and I.Q., there is no way they can be important to each other. Petty differences are exaggerated. If you and I were just the same, you couldn't help me do much -- except maybe move a piano. Democracy thrives on differences, not on similarities.17

The preceding quotations from educational authorities give a broader scope of the problem of grouping and the general trend held by educators, who have studied this

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16 Ibid., p. 162.

17 Howard A. Lane, "Schools Miss Grade Boat, Teachers Told," The Daily Times Herald (November 15, 1948), p. 4.
problem. As the child-centered school replaces the book-centered school, more attention is given to the individual. The consensus of opinion seems to point toward developing the whole child -- giving him a sense of belonging, security, and opportunity to grow in social relationships. If these criteria are to be considered in developing the type of curriculum which provides for the whole child, then our schools must be geared to meet the lower-status pupils, who are often neglected. The traditional device of homogeneous grouping has placed these pupils together rather than offering them the democratic privilege of mingling with the group. If the status of the underprivileged is ever to change from that of birth, it must be done through the public schools.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

With grouping undergoing so great a change, no finality can be reached as to the type best suited for all schools. This study is a contribution toward obtaining the best criteria for grouping first graders in public schools. The general trend, expressed in the replies to the questionnaire and in the literature of modern educators, seems to indicate that traditional methods of grouping are being replaced by methods which meet the needs of the whole child. Administrators and teachers show a tendency to a greater sensitivity of the many phases of child development. A change from traditional methods to modern methods of grouping will necessitate some changes in administrative techniques; it will provide some opportunity for curriculum enrichment, and it will provide a foundation for democratic living in school.

Chapter III is a composite of responses from administrators over the State of Texas. Chapter IV presents the concepts of grouping found in recent literature. In the
light of subjective judgment, it seems that homogeneous grouping has no place in a democratic society.

**Recommendations**

In the light of the findings from this study the following recommendations are offered for the Gainesville schools:

1. That traditional grouping be discontinued
2. That the purpose of tests be for guidance and grouping within the classroom
3. That the curriculum be enriched to meet the needs of the bright child's intellectual development and to provide help and remedial measures necessary for the slow child.
4. It should be remembered that the welfare of children comes before parents and teachers in a school situation.
5. That the job to be accomplished determines the kind of grouping.
6. It should be remembered that each individual is unique and has a right to succeed.
7. A rich environment should be provided which leads the child to (1) social acceptance, (2) physical welfare, (3) emotional stability, (4) the information and skills which he needs, (5) his economic competence, and (6) a
feeling of belonging.

8. That a study of the whole child -- information from and about his home, his own judgment, results of testing for achievement, mental ability, personality and teacher judgment -- should provide the teacher with sufficient criteria for placing him in the group in which he can work best within the room.

9. That the school should provide opportunities for children to live democratically.

10. Flexible grouping within the classroom which encourages whole-child development should be used.

A Plan for Gainesville

The State Elementary Advisory Committee has set forth some features and procedures representing different levels between present practices and the best educational thought of today. Level I contains the minimum of acceptable practices in Texas schools. Level V represents the "ideal" as reflected by modern literature on elementary education. Levels II, III, and IV represent the evolutionary stages between the extremes, or steps leading to the improvement of school practices. The five levels of "Classification and Promotion of Pupils" represent goals toward which we may strive in grouping first graders:

1. Composition of class groups:
Level I

Except for admission to the first grade, class groups are formed almost wholly on the basis of achievement in subject matter as determined by teachers’ subjective judgments, and marks on factual material in informal tests and examinations.

Pupils are promoted or retarded at regular intervals on the basis of their achievement. Class groups so constituted are extremely heterogeneous in terms of chronological age, mental age, and social and physical development. In schools rated at Level I it is not uncommon to find first grade children ranging in ages from six to twelve or sixth graders from ten to as much as twenty-one. In each grade are found the mentally slow and the mentally alert, the tall and the short.

Level II

Same as Level I except that standardized tests are given occasionally to supplement teachers’ informal judgments, and some steps are taken to reduce the heterogeneity of class groups.

Level III

Standardized achievement and intelligence test results are considered along with teachers’ judgment and marks in determining the grouping of children. Standardized tests, teachers’ judgments, and informal tests are used in deciding on the promotion, acceleration, or retardation of pupils. In schools rated at Level III deliberate steps are taken to keep the age-range for each grade within reasonable limits; for example, in the first grade the age-range is kept between six and nine years and in the sixth grade the age-range is kept between ten and fifteen years. Only in rare instances is a child kept in the same grade more than two years.

Level IV

Schools rated at this level are characterized by the following or similar practices: (a) the age-range for each grade is kept within definite limits; for example, in the first grade the age-range is
kept between six and eight years and for the sixth grade between ten and thirteen; (b) over-age children in the upper elementary grades are promoted to the secondary school regardless of academic attainments and the secondary school makes at least reasonably satisfactory provisions for all its pupils; (c) pupils who do not start school until age eight or over are placed in class groups in which the ages of the pupils are comparable with those of the late entrants; (d) teachers at all grade levels are provided with differentiated instructional materials to enable them to meet the varying instructional needs of pupils; (e) the percentage of retarded pupils is kept comparable to the percentage of accelerated pupils; (f) non-English speaking beginners are given at least one semester of instruction in learning English before instruction in reading is begun; (g) individual classes are shifted from one grade to another at any time during the year if it seems clear that the child's best interests would be served thereby; (h) evaluation of pupil development is on a broad basis, including physical growth, mental, social, and emotional development as determined by objective measures of various kinds interpreted and supplemented by careful observation and case study by teachers; (i) elementary school and high school objectives, curricula, and promotional policies have been coordinated to facilitate well-articulated progress for the pupils; (j) the philosophy of the elementary school definitely tends toward optimum development for each child in accordance with his ability during the time he spends in the elementary school and when he reaches age twelve or thirteen (in a six-year elementary school) to send him on so he may have the advantage of the secondary school offering more suited to his adolescent needs.

Level V

Schools rated at this level are characterized by the following or similar practices: (a) class groups are formed on the basis of extensive objective and observational data covering physical, mental, social, and emotional development of all pupils so that the composition of each class group will be such as to provide each child with a feeling of being "wanted" or "belonging," that
each child will have some opportunity each day to excel in something, that there are no "unwanted" children in the group, and that each child finds attainable challenges in the group and individual activities; (b) class groups formed on the bases just indicated will be organized so as to secure "harmoniously working groups" with instruction adapted to their group and individual needs rather than class groups formed solely in terms of the degree to which their academic development coincides with allocation of materials in a course of study; (c) grouping for educational purposes is considered in multiple fashion so that all pupils are placed at different times in groups of various sizes (individual work, small committees, the class groups, the larger assembly group) to serve various educational objectives and needs of the pupils; (d) all the characteristics listed for Level IV also prevail at Level V with each related practice coordinated with the basic viewpoints and procedures as implied in items (a), (b), and (c) in Level IV; conventional promotions at stated intervals have been replaced by a plan of "continuous grouping;" conventional marks have been replaced by cumulative objective developmental data and motivation for school activities is secured through purposeful enterprises rather than through threat of failure or competition for marks.  

This plan, with a few modifications, is recommended for the Gainesville schools. In Level IV (b) the problem is not one belonging to the primary school. Section (f) of the same level is not applicable to our school system. Sections (i) and (j) do not apply to the primary field; therefore, they must be omitted. In Level V, section (a) this clarification is suggested: That all grouping be

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done within the room rather than by the room. Aside from the above suggestions, Gainesville primary grades should begin an evaluation program which should continue until the goals set forth in Level V are attained.

Planning a school program requires the cooperation of administrators and teachers. However, there are certain duties delegated to each. In this particular situation it seems that the actual process of grouping first grade children heterogeneously, by rooms, is an administrative technique which each principal should work out to fit the requirements of his particular building. However, these devices, obtained from the questionnaire, are listed as suggestions only:

1. By chance
2. Alphabetical order
3. Throwing cards
4. Chronological age
5. Interests
6. Choice of pursuits
7. Shuffle cards and draw sections

This study was concerned with one problem of the primary school -- that of grouping first graders upon their entrance into school. Other pertinent problems confronting first grade teachers and administrators are: How to report pupil progress to parents? When should formal reading begin? When
should cursive writing begin? Where does phonics belong? What health requirements should be made? These and numerous other problems need further investigation. Since the scope of primary education embraces the whole child, research in any of the areas mentioned above would be invaluable.
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