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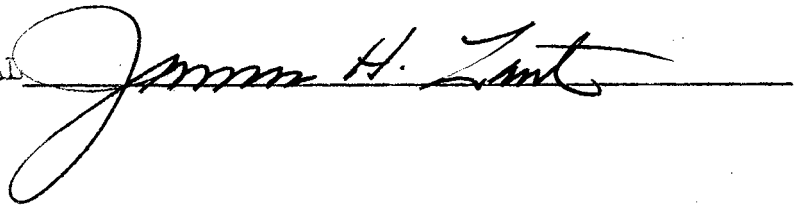
Scope of Study: The great mass of children have made such progress in school and have so well used the opportunities provided for them, that we have naturally concluded that if any child did not improve himself it was because of viciousness, laziness, or some other trait he could change if he would. We have not realized that many of these children are lacking in ability and cannot improve themselves very much academically regardless of their attitude. We must do something to separate out these students so they can compete with students of comparative ability. Promotion is a social as well as an academic problem. How we solve the problem of promotion for the mentally retarded student determines to a large extent the success we well have with all our students.

Findings and Conclusions: Promotion is not necessary, but in many cases it has helped to solve many problems. The answer to the problem seems to be in using separate or part-time integrated classrooms for the mentally retarded student. At least in this way he can compete with children of like ability and find a small measure of success. Certainly promotion under these conditions is much less of a problem. Not until all children who deviate from the normal are so examined and classified, and are taught according to their ability to take instruction, will the public-school system be doing its whole duty to all the children enrolled in the schools.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL 

PROMOTION OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENT

BY

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PROMOTION OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENT

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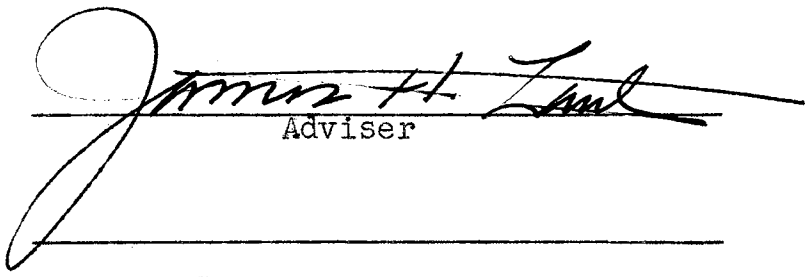

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PREFACE

The purpose of this report is to bring out some of the problems of the mentally retarded student. There is a brief overview of the mentally retarded student and his relationship to school and society. The specific problem of promotion is brought up because the retarded student is confronted with it continuously. Promotion is a sign of academic success and the mentally retarded student cannot compete with the non-retarded student. Unless the retarded student is put into ungraded classes of some sort where he can compete with students of comparative ability he is sure to fail in school. Promotion for the mentally retarded student can be a sign of success, although not necessairly a sign of academic success.

The writer wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness for the assistance of Dr. James H. Zant, Dr. Herbert L. Bruneau and Dr. Julia McHale. Their many helpful criticisms and suggestions have been of invaluable assistance in the preparation of this report.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The educable mentally retarded child has been a misfit in the schools because his slow learning ability does not allow him to keep up with the requirements of the regular classes. His intellectual level does not warrant institutionalization, yet his inability to cope with the curriculum of the elementary school makes his life and that of his teachers a trying one.

Whether these children should be kept in the public schools and there trained, or be provided for by some other method, is a phase of the problem that needs to be worked out. Earlier, many such children were sent to institutions to be trained and then returned to the community. Because of overcrowding, however, institutions gradually restricted their space to those who were more markedly mentally deficient. But whatever our opinion the fact remains that in all probability these children will remain in the public schools for a long time to come, if for no other reason than the lack of adequate machinery to provide for them elsewhere. At the turn of the century special classes for these mentally retarded children were organized in the public schools.

The usual practice of schools is to admit these children into the first grade at the age of six with other first-graders. In some school systems, if a mentally retarded child is found in the kindergarten or first grade, the parents are asked to keep him at home for a year or so until he has matured sufficiently to cope with the program. Sometimes he is allowed to fail for several years before he is examined and found to be mentally retarded. In some communities such a child is excluded from school as mentally defective and institutionalization is recommended. In some communities, where special classes have been organized, the practice is to be sure that the child has failed in the regular grades before placing him in a special class. Each school has to decide what policy will best fit the needs of all concerned.

None of these various practices with educable mentally retarded children has been entirely satisfactory. Keeping the child at home until he has matured sufficiently to attend the regular grades is based on the assumption that maturation is the only factor to be considered. If, however, a lack of training in the home has retarded the child's development, keeping him at home only accentuated the effects of such factors.

Allowing the child to fail in school for the first two or three years is likewise considered unsatisfactory. Such an experience for children during their formative years may

produce inhibitions and poor attitudes toward learning when they do become ready for instruction; it may produce a distaste for school in general. School failure at this age level is considered a deterrent to good personality development.

It is hard for us as educators to admit that the failure of these children to progress in their school work is inherent in themselves. There are perhaps two reasons for this reluctance. First, we have all been brought up on the American doctrine of the equality of all men. This doctrine was originally a political one and related solely to man's position before the law. All men have equal rights to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and equal opportunities. We have in our zeal carried it over to his intellectual qualities and moral perception, and we have tacitly assumed that all men have the same capacity for intellectual development and that all have the same power of perceiving moral principles.

Secondly, we have become justly proud of our educational system. The great mass of children have made such progress, and have so well used the opportunities that we have provided for them, that we have naturally, if perhaps thoughtlessly, concluded that if any child did not improve those opportunities it was because of viciousness, laziness, or some other quality which he might change if he would.

There are still those who do not admit the doctrine of intellectual levels, which teaches that there are many levels

of intelligence, that each individual grows to his level and then stops. That while the majority attain at least to what we call the adult level, there are some who never attain a level higher than that of a child.

What we have not realized is that while a nine-year-old child might attain a mental age of nine years, if his mental development should stop there, he would never have more than nine-year judgment, no matter how long he should live. That is what happens in many cases.

The mentally retarded child who is of sufficient mentality to go to the public school not only can but will amount to something. The seriousness of the situation lies in the fact that unless he is very wisely trained, this child will amount to a criminal, a thief, a prostitute, a drunkard, or some other kind of anti-social being. No mentally retarded child is by nature any one of these, and it is almost certain that a great proportion of them can be so trained that they will never fall into any one of these groups.

HISTORICAL VIEWPOINTS

The controversy over the relative importance of nature and nuture has remained with us since the days of Aristotle. It is the old philosophical question of the relative influences of heredity and environment. Philosophers such as Descartes and his followers were considered nativists because

they believed that man was born with a mind that could think. The sensationalists or epistemologists, Locke, Berkeley, Diderot, and others, disagreed with the nativists' stand that everything was due to innate capacity. They believed that intelligence was developed through the activities and excerise of the senses.

One reason for the difficulty in settling this controversy is the contradictory results obtained by various methods of studying the problem. The different studies do not parallel each other in methods or subjects because of the difficulties involved in controlling the various factors influencing the situation. Recently the emphasis has been on evaluating specific environmental conditions, such as child-rearing practices, which lead to changes in the behavior of the individual.

CASE STUDIES

One approach to the problem has been that of studying and evaluating the hereditary and environmental influences in individual cases. Evidence both for and against the beneficial effects of training on the intellectual and social development of mentally retarded children comes from isolated case studies. The work of Itard[1] is probably the best known. In 1799 three hunters found an eleven-year-old boy

[1] J. M. G. Itard, The Wild Boy of Aveyron, (New York, 1932), p. 104.

in the forest of Aveyron, France. This boy was diagnosed by French psychiatrists as an idiot, since he seemed to be deficient in all behavior, including sensory, emotional, and intellectual development. Itard, a French physician and psychiatrist who believed in the effects of training of the senses, attempted to train the boy for a period of five years. At the conclusion of the experiment Itard felt that, while he had not changed the boy from an idiot to a normal individual some progress had been made. At the request of the French Academy of Science, he published his classical book on Victor entitled The Wild Boy of Aveyron.

There have been a number of reports of similar cases. Zingg[2] summarized some of the reports of "feral children" who had been found in the forests of India living in isolation or with animals. The reports on many of these children are inconclusive because of insufficient data, but a few of them contain adequate records. In none of the cases reported was it shown that the individuals became normal when they were taken out of the forest and placed in homes or residental institutions. It is not known whether these children were mentally defective at the outset, or whether their early isolation from other humans produced a degree of mental defectiveness which could not be changed through education and training at a later age.

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[2]R. M. Zingg, "Feral Man and Extreme Cases of Isolation," American Journal Psychology, Vol. 53, (1940), pp. 487-517.

A few cases of severe early neglect have been reported in this country. One reported by Martz[3] was an infant who had been neglected both medically and psychologically. At the age of 19 months the child had a Kuhlman-Binet I.Q. of 29. Following institutional care and training the I.Q. went up steadily, reaching 97 by the age of six. This case indicates that training has some effect on a neglected child. On the other hand, Davis[4] described the case of Anna, who had spent the first five years of her life in an attic. At the age of five she was removed to a favorable environment. The additional nutrition and care increased her physical size, but when she died at the age of 10 she was still an idiot.

It will be seen that it is difficult to draw any conclusions or make generalizations from isolated case studies such as are given above. Generalizations become difficult unless the factors are consistent in one case after another.

FOSTER HOMES

There have been a number of reports on the effects of foster home placement on intelligence. With respect to the research concerning children placed in foster homes the fol-

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[3]E.W. Martz, "A Nominal Spurt of Mental Development in a Young Child," Psychiatric Quarterly, Vol. 19, (1945), pp. 52-59.

[4]K. Davis, "Final Note on a Case of Extreme Isolation," American Journal Sociology, Vol. 92, (1947), pp. 432-437.

lowing conclusions have been drawn by Anastasi and Foley[5].

First, all investigators agree in finding that intellectual development is affected, to a greater or lesser degree, by the type of home environment in which the child is reared. Secondly, the existing conditions of adoption make a more precise analysis of contributing factors impossible. There are too many unknown or uncontrolled variables whose influence cannot be isolated. Thirdly, the study of foster children is not--as has been implied--a technique for comparing means of investigating the influence of one phase of environment, namely, the type of home in which the individual has lived for a certain number of years.

MENTAL RETARDATION VERSUS ENVIRONMENTAL DEPRIVATION

There has been considerable controversy regarding the inheritance of mental retardation versus the effects of environmental deprivation. It has become fruitless to discuss this problem because it is difficult to classify all cases of mental deficiency into one category. It appears that the lower grades of mental retardation occur in all classes of society. These cases are usually organic. The majority of the higher grade or borderline groups appear to come from parents of lower soci-economic status. Bradway[6] found that the distribution of parental occupations for the endogenous group was skewed toward the lowest occupational class, and that the curve of distribution for the exogenous group was symmetrical and resembled a random sample of adult

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[5]Anne Anastasi and J. P. Foley Jr., Differential Psychology, (New York, 1949), p. 361.

[6]K. P. Bradway, "Paternal Occupational Intelligence and Mental Deficiency," Journal Applied Psychology, Vol. 19, (1935), pp. 527-542.

males. Paterson and Rundquist[7] obtained the same type of results. They found a definite negative relationship between the I.Q.'s of mentally deficient individuals and the occupational level of the parents. The occupations of fathers of idiots tended to be representative of the general occupational distribution, whereas the occupations of the fathers of higher grades of mental defectives were confined largely to semi-skilled levels.

ENVIRONMENT ENRICHMENT

A most impressive study of young mentally defective children was reported by Skeels and Dye[8]. They transferred 13 children under three years of age from an orphanage to an institution for mental defectives. Initially, the average I.Q. of these children on the Kuhlmann test was 64. These youngsters were placed with older patients in different wards of an institution for the feebleminded, and each received a great deal of individual attention from the older girls and attendants on the ward. After a year and a half the I.Q.'s of these children had increased 27.5 points. In contrast, a group of children who remained in the orphanage, but who initially had higher I.Q.'s dropped 26.0 points during the same period.

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[7]D. G. Paterson and E. A. Rundquist, "The Occupational Background of Feeblemindedness," American Journal Psychology, Vol. 45, (1933), pp. 118-24.

[8]H. M. Skeels and H. B. Dye, "A Study of the Effects of Differential Stimulation of Children," Proc. Amer. Assoc. Ment. Def., Vol. 44, No. 1, (1939), pp. 114-36.

ANIMAL STUDIES

Because of the great difficulties involved in determining environmental experiences of children, some individuals have resorted to studies of animals. These studies are recorded here as items of interest with no reference to their application to human development. Hymovitch[9] blinded a group of rats in early life and reared some in a free environment and some in normal isolated cages. On a close field test at maturity, the free-environment rats were significantly superior to the normal caged groups. In another part of the experiment Hymovitch reared rats in different kinds of cages. He found that rats reared in meshed cages and in free environments were clearly superior to rats reared in other cages.

Forgays and Forgays[10] reared young male rats under various environmental conditions. Some were reared in layers of a large four-story box, some with and some without playthings: Another group was placed in mesh cages within layers of this box; and others in small laboratory cages. At maturity they were kept together in ordinary cages and tested with a test of "rat intelligence." The "free-environment rats" without playthings were also better than the restricted and mesh cage

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[9] B. Hymovitch, "The Effects of Experimental Variations in Problem-Solving in the Rat," Journal Comp. Physiol. Psychol., Vol. 45, (1952), pp. 313-21.

[10] D. Forgays and J. W. Forgays, "The Nature of the Effect of Free Environmental Experiences in the Rat," Journal Comp. Physiol. Psychol., Vol. 45, (1952), pp. 322-28.

groups. The groups of rats who were raised in layers of boxes without playthings appeared inferior to the other groups.

The experiments on animals seem to indicate that the ability of the animal is increased if, at an early age, he is given a free environment which will allow him to explore and investigate. Designs of experiments with animals can be made much more rigid than those with humans, but it is not known whether inferences from the results are applicable to humans in a natural environment.

CHAPTER II

CHANGING TERMINOLOGY

Traditionally, in the history of the scientific study of mental deficiency or mental retardation, the groupings have been based on real differences in the ultimate levels of development reached by members of the group. The "idiot" group was the lowest, distinguished by lack of sufficient ability to acquire useful language or to be independent in self-care. In I.Q. terms, this lowest group included individuals whose mental ages at adulthood were under three years and whose I.Q. scores ranged from 0 to about 25. The imbecile group, the next highest, generally acquired some language of perhaps a rudimentary level; almost universally, this group showed defective speech. Members of the imbecile category were able to acquire basic routine habits of self-care and to perform some useful work, but under the close supervision of a home or institution, never independently; they could not make progress with ordinary academic learning. The final mental age reached by the imbecile category ranged between three years and about seven to seven and one-half years; the I.Q. range was from about 25 to 50. The next category of retarded

persons was known as the "moron" level. These individuals were able to acquire language, routine habits, and to learn to perform more, and more difficult tasks with less supervision but still requiring some supervision. They could learn academic work at the level of difficulty expected from about the second grade to about the fifth grade. Their chief sphere of intellectual limitation was the inability to carry on abstract thought, and their greater need, in learning, for more concrete experiences and specific teaching. Although they were able to acquire some academic information, they did this at the level of their mental ages rather than their actual ages, so that school attainments did not reach their final levels until the individuals were fifteen or sixteen, or sometimes older.[12]

Ingram[13] states that the term "mentally retarded" should be applied.....to slow-learning children with intelligence quotients ranging from 50 to 75 and with mental ages ranging from three to ten or eleven years, all factors considered. This constitutes the most seriously handicapped group for whom the public schools must provide.

More recently, changes in terminology have been sought, particularly by the parent associations. Standard terms, such as mental deficiency, feeblemindedness, idiot, imbecile, and moron, seemed distasteful to many.

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[12]Harriet E. Blodgett and Grace J. Warfield, Understanding Mentally Retarded Children, (New York, 1959), p. 28.

[13]Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child, (New York, 1953), p. 6.

Newer terminology most often substitutes the term mental retardation for mental deficiency and the moron group becomes the educable group. The imbecile group is called the trainable group and the idiot group is generally known as the total care group. The newer terms, once people are familiar with their significance, do succeed in relating the level of ability of the child to the educational objectives reasonable for him. In Minnesota, classification by the State Department of Education considers classes for the educable as Group I classes, and classes for the trainable as Group II classes.[14]

According to Cruickshank and Johnson[15] the mentally retarded are defined as those children who are so intellectually retarded that it is impossible for them to be adequately educated in the regular classroom. They are, however, educable in the sense that they can acquire sufficient knowledge and ability in the academic areas that the skills can and will become useful and useable tools.

The Florida State Board Regulations read:

> A slow-learning (mentally retarded) child is defined as an educable child or youth who because of intellectual retardation is unable to be adequately educated in the public schools without provision of special educational facilities and services...Each child must be recommended by a psychologist for entry in a unit for children who learn slowly. The intelligence quotient of children...will range approximately fron 50 to 75. The recommendations for entry will be based upon a

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[14]Harriet E. Blodgett and Grace J. Warfield, Understanding Mentally Retarded Children, (New York, 1959), p. 30.

[15]William M. Cruickshank and G. Orville Johnson, Education of Exceptional Children and Youth, (New Jersey, 1958), p. 190.

complete study of all factors, physical, social, mental, and educational.[16]

It should be noted that more than just an intelligence quotient is needed to determine whether or not a child is mentally retarded. Hutt and Gibby[17] point out that the intelligence test score is representative of a single sample of the behavior of a child at a particular time, and that this sample may be highly biased and subject to considerable flucuation from one time to another. Two children may recieve precisely the same test score and yet be of widely separated intellectual levels.

California and Illinois have laws which place the responsibility for determining whether or not a student is mentally retarded on a psychologist who is certified by the state board of education.

MULTIPROFESSIONAL VIEWPOINTS

There are some differences between the educational, the psychological, and the legal definitions of mental retardation which should be understood.

The educational view concerns itself with meeting the educational needs of the children. Theoretically, most children

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[16] Developing a Program for Education of Exceptional Children in Florida, Bulletin No. 55 (Tallahassee, Fla.: State Department of Education, 1948), p. 95, quoted in Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child, (New York, 1953), p. 5.

[17] Max L. Hutt and Robert G. Gibby, The Mentally Retarded Child, (Boston, 1958), p. 20.

in the educable group, which includes the I.Q. range of 50 to 80, benefit by school programs designed to match their mental-growth rates and to protect them from the continual academic failure and the consequent social problems of the regular classroom.[18].

Anderson[19] reminds us that while we speak of a defective child having a given mentality, it by no means follows that the defective can compete in all things with a normal child of the same mentality. The advantage is always with the normal child.

Typically, as special-class children in the educable group move into junior high and high school special programs, efforts are made to broaden their social experience. This is accomplished by organizing classes in which special-class youngsters are "integrated" with youngsters in regular classes. These courses are apt to include manual training, physical education, arts and crafts, and music. Areas where intellectual ability is not as heavily stressed as it is, of necessity, in mathematics, science, english, languages, social studies, and the like. Schools, as public service agencies, are not directly concerned with the supervision of mentally retarded adults. Their interest is in the child's total development and adjustment, and of course specifically in his learning progress.

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[18]Harriet E. Blodgett and Grace J. Warfield, Understanding Mentally Retarded Children, (New York, 1959), p. 30.

[19]Meta L. Anderson, Education of Defectives in the Public Schools, (New York, 1922), p. 4.

The psychological view of mental retardation has in the past been directed primarily at mental measurement and careful study of ability differences. Also the scientific problems of prediction of mental growth and final ability level, developing more adequate measurement devices, and analyzing learning difficulties. More recently, the professional workers interested in mental retardation have broadened their concern until now professional workers are trying more and more to combine their resources and to study, understand, and help the "total child."

The legal view is based on a broader societal definition of mental retardation. Definitions of mental deficiencey used in state-guardianship proceedings, for example, stress the social inadequacy of the individual. They define a mentally defective person as one who, from birth or from an early age, has had a mental defect sufficiently severe to prevent him from being able or becoming able to handle his own affairs with ordinary prudence. In other wordsm society's concern is for the protection, by law of the inadequate person who is unable to meet life's day-to-day problems in our social world.

Because society's expectations of people vary at different ages, there will be some shifting of individuals from one category to another during their lifetime. A child may be viewed as mentally retarded from both the educational and psychological points of view; he may need special education

from the beginning of his school attendance. Let us assume that he has an I.Q. of 60; when he is six years old, his mental age is about three and one-half years; he reaches a mental age somewhere around nine years. Some helpful characteristics would be a stable family background, understanding parents, good health, and a pleasant, co-operative personality. If he has some economic "good luck" in finding a routine sort of job with adequate supervision, he may move into adult life as quite a self-sufficient person. If he does not meet too frequent crises (such as losing his job, or assuming responsibilities he cannot successfully carry), he may not be included in society's legal definition of a person in need of protection. Even though he seems to have shifted from a "protected" to an unprotected classification, it must be kept in mind that basically he is limited in his ability to cope with social living, and his status of being adequate is partly a function of the adequate situation in which he is living. A shift in the situation might very well shift society's view of him.

CHAPTER III

PROMOTION

Promotion would seem to most people to be the moving of a student to the next higher grade classification. Actually much more is involved than the physical movement of a student from one room to another.

There are in general three policies of promotion which pertain to the student. The first of these is the subject matter promotion policy. According to this, a pupil is promoted only when he has completed the work of a grade and can pass an examination on it. Schools which try to follow this policy find that the slow learners are retained over and over again.

The second general policy is social promotion. By this policy, every child is promoted every year. This plan is intended to keep children in "natural age groups". It assumes that social adjustment is more important than anything else, and assumes that yearly promotion of everybody secures this social adjustment. But this plan piles up reading disabilities in the upper grades. Non-readers reach the upper grades and are even sent to high school. Teachers and children may cease to worry about learning, since promotion no longer

depends on learning, and therefore learning may slow down to an alarming degree.

The third plan is the individual adjustment plan. By this plan, promotion is first, last, and all the time a question of what is best for the individual child. Sometimes his social adjustment seems to be the main thing, and in other cases it does not appear to be so important. Children differ greatly in the degree to which they are sensitive to the group they are in. Sometimes the child can be socially adjusted by promotion, and sometimes the child's social adjustment requires that he be retained. This is often true of slow learners. Children tend to play with others of their own mental age. If a child is of low mental age, putting him back may place him in the group where he belongs. In short, the individual adjustment plan does just what it says; it tries to adjust school and home and child in such a way as to keep things in the best possible learning situation all around.

Promotion at best is a complicated process and school success involves not just increasing skill in the performance of simple tasks but continuous progress from the simple to the more complex. In arithmetic, for example, we are not content to have children practice, year after year, the simple addition of two-place numbers. If we were, we should probably find that the dull child showed as much improvement as his brilliant classmate. But what we do in our schools is to lead students on from addition to substraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals, and square root. The more rapidly

a child's mental capacity is growing the better he is able to keep up with the constantly increasing complexity of what is to be learned. The child with an I.Q. of 80 is handicapped all through life not because he is slow or inept at learning things which are within the capacity of all the children of his age level, but because he is never ready to grasp new and more complex ideas at the time when they are ordinarily presented to children of his age.[20]

There have been many attempts to solve the problem of training and educating the mentally retarded student. Some of the programs currently in progress will be described in order to give the reader a better understanding of what is being done to help these students. These programs operate under the individual adjustment plan to help the student to advance according to his ability. This "advancement" may seem quite trivial to the normal individual but means a great deal to the retarded child.

Dr. G. A. Barber,[21] assistant superintendent of schools, Erie, Pennsylvania reports on the program for the mentally retarded students in the Erie schools:

> Our school system has a Special Education Department devoted to secondary students who are classified as the educable retarded. Under this program, students attend school part of the day and during off-school hours receive training for jobs that require little special skill--seasonal farm work and employment at gas stations, car-wash centers, and laundries.

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[20]Leona E. Tyler, The Psychology of Human Differences, (New York, 1956), p. 90.

[21]G. A. Barber, "Guiding the Low-Ability Student," NEA Journal, Vol. 50, (1961), pp. 38-9.

Our Special Education Department is aided by the sheltered workshop maintained by the state Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. In this workshop, through subcontract arrangements with local industries, secluded working stations are provided where individual physical and mental shortcomings are not exposed to general view and where people can work under special supervision and with special safety precautions.

Generally speaking, workshop jobs must have a real place in industrial economy and should provide routinized tasks as well as more complex operations in which change of motion and pace occur regularly. Typical workshop activities are garment making, involving cutting, marking, use and repair of sewing machines, pressing, and the like; clerical jobs; and such light carpentry as the making of picture frames.

Sheltered workshops are becoming quite common all over the country. Benton, McHale, and Whitmore[22] also help to define the sheltered workshop and its place in training the mentally retarded student.

Current thinking favors the use of sheltered workshops for both the trainable(approximately 30 to 50 I.Q.) and the educable (50 to 75 I.Q.). For some individuals this kind of employment is ultimate--it is the best adjustment they can find to a working situation. For many it can be used as a training center--a jumping off place. For these, jobs can be found in industry and in service trades.

A sheltered workshop is a place where the handicapped individual can work and learn at his own pace and without competition from others more capable than himself. It gives the slow, retarded worker a chance to build his skills high enough so that he can be accepted on the regular labor market. Without his training in the workshop, he may fail at making any kind of living.

These workshops are often helped by state and federal grants. There is the McDonald Center in Florida; the Opportunity Center in New Jersey; the AHRC workshop in New York City and hundreds more, less well known because of their recent establishment. Some of these workshops specialize in packaging jobs--such as putting poker chips in a cylindrical box; or stuffing toys into Christmas stockings, or threading

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[22]Paul C. Benton, Julia McHale, and Lillian Whitmore, "Habilitation of Mentally Retarded," Journal of the Oklahoma State Medical Association, (1958), pp. 300-322.

screws on locks. Others manufacture small items such as red danger flags, or hand waxers or simple toys.

In every successful workshop the formula appears to be the same. First, comes a complete evaluation of the trainee; his mental level, manual abilities, social skills and personal qualities. If he is considered suitable, he then enters the long period of repetitious training that he will need in order to learn how to work. For six months to a year he will serve without pay. At the end of this time, he will be put on a small stipend and considered an apprentice. Then according to his level of performance and his speed of learning, he may be advanced to regular job status, and when he is ready, moved into a job outside of the workshop. All the time he has been learning, he has been receiving counseling, and his counselor has been looking for the right job for him.

The old institution with its isolated location, understaffing, and lack of research facilities will in the future give way to Mental Retardation Centers which will be located in the more populous areas of the state, in order to bring to them the best type of professional staff and to utilize existing medical and educational facilities. The new institutions will have an evaluation center, a day school, research laboratories, sheltered workshops and training facilities. A child may be diagnosed, attend school, and get his vocational training all at this one center. Later perhaps, he will move into the institution, going home weekends and working as a part of the institution staff.

Heilman[23] reports on the use of the classroom suite in elementary school where there is some integration of the educable mentally retarded students in the regular graded classroom.

The classroom suite is for the educable mentally retarded children who are integrated into a regular elementary school. The normal capacity of each room is 18 to 20 pupils. The suite is useful in two situations. The first is that in which one teacher has one elementary school group of children in the age range from about seven to 14 years. While it is not uncommon to find a single unit, wide-age-range class housed in

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[23]H. L. Heilman, "A Suite for Educable Mentally Retarded Children in Elementary School," Exceptional Children, Vol. 21, (1955), p. 289.

one classroom, it is our experience that the two-room suite offers more scope for varied educational offerings. The second situation in which the entire suite is useful is where there are two teachers and two groups of children, with the children divided by age so that one group is approximately seven to 10 and the other about 11 to 14. In the first situation the teacher uses both rooms. In the second, the classes alone or both teachers and classes may move from one room to another.

In all cases it is understood that some of the retarded children spend part of their school time with regular grade children in other rooms, chiefly in physical education, music, art or auditorium activities.

Most of the larger school systems in the state of Oklahoma have some sort of program for the educable mentally retarded. In the Stillwater school system a program was initiated in 1960. The program, at the present time, includes only the trainable group.[24]

There are three institutions in the state of Oklahoma to care for the mentally retarded. At the Enid State School, Enid, Oklahoma educable pupils attend academic school classes. Classes are ungraded and pupils receive citations for "improvement" at the end of the school term. Pupils are allowed to remain in class until they have reached their potential learning ability.[25]

The other institutions are located at Pauls Valley and Bowley, Oklahoma.

Promotion at best is a complicated process. The criteria for graduation from high school was not set up for the men-

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[24]Stillwater News-Press, March 6, 1961, p. 10.

[25]Annual Report of Enid State School, Enid, Oklahoma, ed. A. T. Scruggs, (Enid, 1959-60), p. 18.

ally retarded student, but for the average and above average student. Since this is true, we should not compare the mentally retarded student with anyone except others of his own mental capacity. Each year teachers and administrators or psychologists face the difficult task of deciding who shall be promoted.

WHAT DOES PROMOTION MEAN TO THE RETARDED STUDENT?

It is very healthful for all children to realize that no one can be good in everything. Everyone has his good and weak points. It is very necessary for the poor student to have something at which he "shines" and that he can be proud of. Many times the only thing a slow-learner can find to be proud of is promotion to the next higher grade. Provided he is able, by some means, to secure his promotion. We must find something for the slow learner to be proud of if he is ever to become a useful citizen.

As a child is retained in a grade it becomes more difficult for him to adjust to his own age group. Retention means failure, which will have accompanying social and emotional effects that will do more harm than the retention can ever accomplish academically. Retention usually effects little positive in the academic accomplishment of the person being retained. Some would disagree with this point of view.

Shane[26] has stated that there is practically no disagreement that as one of its ends a body of good promotion policies should insure that children leaving the school are literate in a broad sense of the term; that they are intellectually alert, well informed, equipped with a good set of personal values, and emotionally well balanced. The disagreement seems to be over the fact of whether all children should be held up to meeting a certain standard of accomplishment at each level.

IS PROMOTION NECESSARY?

For each slow learner we must think of his adjustment with other children, his possible adjustment next year if passed on or retained, the probable reaction of parents and other family members to either situation, and finally his own understanding of the situation. Promotion is not necessary, but in many cases it has helped to solve many problems. The answer to the problem seems to be in using separate or part-time integrated classrooms for the mentally retarded student. At least in this way he can compete with children of like ability and find a small measure of success. Certainly promotion under these conditions is much less of a problem.

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[26]Harold G. Shane, "Promotion Policy Dilemma," NEA Journal, Vol. 42, (1953) pp. 411-12.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

What objectives should the school set up for the education of the slow-learners? In general, these objectives should grow out of the ideal aim of all education--the development of the individual's capacity to enjoy, to share in, and to contribute to the worth-while activities of life. For although limited in their capacities, most mentally retarded children have the potential capacity to share to some degree in carrying on the normal activities of life. The majority of them can, acquire social habits and attitudes, skill of hand, and working habits that will make for satisfactory adjustment in the home, in the community, and in the working world.[27]

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[27]Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child, (New York, 1953), p. 58.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The slow learners must not be branded as failures, nor must they be taught to sit and do nothing. Retention certainly brands a student as a failure. The slow learners must be enabled to have pride and self respect such as any citizen must have. Each slow learner is entitled to be developed into the best and most worthwhile individual he is capable of becoming.

The slow learner will be more capable in some things than others, and whatever special abilities he has should be emphasized for the sake of his self-respect. All other subjects can be made to grow out of the one in which he succeeds. Such special abilities as the children reveal should be developed to a maximum degree in order to make the children useful members of society.[28]

The mentally retarded person cannot achieve so many and so varied adjustments, he cannot contribute to or participate in life so fully, he cannot live at so high a level as the normal; but according to his measure, he can achieve the adjustments within his reach. He can contribute his share to

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[28]Knute O. Broady, "School Provisions for Individual Differences," Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia, University, (1930), p. 7.

the accomplishment of the tasks of life, and he can enjoy life at his own level of interest and accomplishment. He cannot be expected to understand the complexities of the social order, or to contribute to the solution of its problems. He will only be a follower. In so far as he is a well-adjusted, self-respecting, cooperative member of the home and community, contributing as much as he is able toward his self-support, he is doing his share.[29]

For the slow learner, individual adjustment promotion must be used, since he does not fit either the policy of achievement promotion or social promotion. All the factors of social development, physical development, home, and subject matter ability must be studied and the best solution for the individual case arrived at.

Wherever possible the slow learners should be promoted for the small measure of success it can bring. Much is being done in raising the level of the lesser ability groups and the prevention of delinquency and other trouble by a thoughtful effort to help the slower learner to success in school.

The first aim of all education should be to help the child react efficiently as a growing child to situations both in and out of school and to establish habits and attitudes that will continue to operate as life goes on.

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[29]Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child, (New York, 1953), p. 61.

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