

AMERICAN JOURNAL
of
MENTAL DEFICIENCY

RECEIVED
16-1956

JULY, 1956

VOLUME 61

NUMBER 1

24
155

A Journal devoted to the training, care, and welfare of those who, because of mental defect existing from birth or from an early age, are incapable of profiting from ordinary schooling and/or incapable of managing themselves and their affairs with ordinary prudence.

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ON MENTAL DEFICIENCY

PUBLICATION OFFICE: 372-374 BROADWAY, ALBANY 7, N. Y.; ALBANY 4-2258

EDITORIAL OFFICE: LACONIA STATE SCHOOL, LACONIA, NEW HAMPSHIRE

BUSINESS OFFICE: P. O. BOX 96, WILLEMANTIC, CONNECTICUT

\$10.00 PER VOLUME

\$3.00 PER COPY

Entered as second class matter September, 1940, at the Post Office at Albany, N. Y.,
under the Act of August 24, 1912.

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Education

SOME ASPECTS OF THE WAYNE COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL: AN INSTITUTION FOR HIGHER GRADE AND BORDERLINE MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

THORLEIF G. HEGGE

*Editor*¹

THE INSTITUTION

THORLEIF G. HEGGE

THREE and one-half years ago, on October 5 and 6, 1951 to be exact, the Wayne County Training School celebrated its 25th Anniversary. Today our thoughts most naturally stray to that event, for then as now we held meetings in our Auditorium and then as now we had a Complimentary Luncheon in the Gymnasium. More important, in the Symposium which we conducted as part of that Anniversary Celebration, emphasis was "wholly upon

¹ From the Wayne County Training School, Northville, Michigan; Pasquale Buoniconto, M.D., Medical Superintendent; Thorleif G. Hegge, Ph.D., Director of Research and Education. The paper on "The Institution" was read at the General Session of the Seventy-Ninth Annual Meeting of the American Association on Mental Deficiency, held at the Wayne County Training School on May 26, 1955. The four papers by the Principal and three classroom teachers were prepared for a Panel Section, the case study by Lawrence Vuillemot and James E. Keller was presented at a Section for Research Papers, and the paper by Dr. Rosenblum was prepared for a Panel Section on "The Institutional Treatment and Training Program: Characteristic Procedures and Policies." All of these Sections were parts of the program offered to the visitors. The entire presentation is intended as a partial description of the problems, procedures and philosophies of the Wayne County Training School and is dedicated to Robert H. Haskell, M.D., Medical Superintendent 1926-1955. Several research papers read on the same occasion are more specialized in nature and are being published elsewhere. These papers too we dedicate to Dr. Haskell.

the side of treatment and improvement through treatment."² It is significant that the nationally known guest speakers, one half of them former members of our staff and all of them familiar with the Wayne County Training School, but otherwise representing different interests and backgrounds, should have felt that the most fitting contributions they could make to the Symposium would be to present papers implying a treatment or educational emphasis. Conscious as these speakers were of the first requisite for admission to our School, viz., that a manifest condition of mental retardation must exist, and of our fundamental setting which is that of a public institution, it is significant also that these speakers nevertheless did not limit themselves to the problems of mental deficiency and retardation. Rather, the emerging impression, taking the Symposium as a whole, was that the problems of our retardates were seen primarily as variants of the problems of school children,

² Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Administrative Board of the Wayne County Training School to the Board of Supervisors, Wayne County, Michigan, 1951, p. 6.

including children of recognized average or even superior mentality. The problems of our retardates were not seen as variants of the problems of the ineducable severely retarded who do not possess the potential for independent existence though they may be trainable in some degree. The title of the Symposium became: "Children With Mental And Emotional Disabilities."³ This emphasis on re-education, and on the affinity of the problems of our children to the problems of other school children, links the Anniversary Celebration of 1951 with today's meeting. For we are concerned today first of all with the Wayne County Training School as a specialized treatment institution which is devoted exclusively to the salvage of higher grade mentally retarded children for community usefulness.

We have another and more sentimental reason for recalling the Anniversary of 1951. Though our purpose today is that of conducting professional discussions and a professional demonstration, it is impossible to forget that, with Dr. Haskell's pending retirement after 29 years of service to the Wayne County Training School, we are rapidly approaching an even more important milestone. Having been associated with Dr. Haskell,—for 26 of those 29 years,—in this Training School adventure which he has conducted with such skill, it gives me personally the greatest of pleasure that this meeting of the American Association on Mental Deficiency should coincide with the closing days of his service as Medical Superintendent.

³ *Am. J. Ment. Deficiency*, 56, No. 4, April, 1952, pp. 665-725.

ent. That the Association should find it worth while to reserve half a day of a crowded program for a meeting at our Training School is a great honor which in the last analysis, I believe, we may accept as a tribute addressed to the Training School's first and, up to the present, its only Superintendent.

However, as I have suggested, our purpose today is exclusively that of conducting sessions of the Association's 79th Annual Meeting. We readily admit that the Gymnasium has acquired a festive look under the hands of teachers and children and, for practical reasons, most of the children are having a half holiday rather than a full school day. But, in the main, our operations go on as usual and the school children are pursuing their customary holiday activities. We are not putting on any special shows or exhibits nor are we proposing to direct your movements along prescribed routes. We recognize the special character of the first visit of the American Association on Mental Deficiency to our School. But we do feel that your scientific and professional aims are best served without special events and Cook's tours for your benefit.

We have no guest speakers,—and for the same reason. Your purpose in coming here is to get a first hand glimpse of what we are trying to do and to discuss with us some of the problems involved. You want to leave with an impression of the children, the staff, and the plant. I take this opportunity of thanking the many colleagues who have cooperated so effectively in preparing today's program. The names that appear in print represent only a

small part of the total number of participants in these preparations and I have met with good cheer and a helpful attitude everywhere.

My main reason for recalling the 25th Anniversary of 1951 has been the desire to impress you with the fact that, as institutions go, the Wayne County Training School is still very young. It did not even exist when the American Association on Mental Deficiency last met in Detroit, in the year 1923 (!). It is audacious of the young to invite evaluation by an expert group that is conducting its 79th Annual Meeting. However, our situation is unusual in the field of mental retardation and thus we are not being quite as presumptuous as in view of our extreme youth we might otherwise seem to be. In what respects is our situation unusual?

In the main, our situation is unusual in two respects already suggested in our comments on the Symposium of 1951:

First, every child is admitted with the expectation on the part of the child and his family, as well as on our part, that the program of treatment, education, and training will concentrate on preparing him for early return to the community. In carrying out this policy we have been able over the years to hold the average age of the resident population at a constant of slightly under 15.0 years. We have in other words a rapid turnover in this population of some 700-750 children, with approximately one-fourth of this group returning to the community every year and a similar number of new admissions. The average length of residence of all of the children so returned has been 3.83 years. Thus we are not selecting for

community placement children who after careful scrutiny and staff discussions are considered exceptionally good risks. To put it strongly, perhaps a bit too strongly, we are reluctantly keeping for a longer period those children who are exceptionally bad risks or who at any rate are obviously not at all ready for a try. The supervised convalescence period is regarded as an essential learning experience, a post-graduate course so to speak. To postpone it beyond absolute necessity merely delays development and produces congestions in the flow of the program. Naturally we stand ready to take the convalescent back for further training. But such returns are quite rare.

Secondly, we have the privilege of being selective in our admissions. Among the mentally retarded children who are in serious need of institutional placement, we admit only those who may be expected to be suitable for our rehabilitation program. They must be children of school age; as a matter of fact, the average age on admission is slightly under 12.0 years and no one is admitted who has reached the age of 16.0 years. They must be appraised as educable. They must be appraised as socially and occupationally trainable for independent community living. They must be appraised as physically capable of responding successfully to life at the School. In terms of IQ we may say that practically all quotients are above 50, that in fact comparatively few are under 60, and that the average lies in the vicinity of 70.

Nearly all of our children show the effects of damaging or insufficient experience. On admission, educational

retardation is frequently excessive as compared with obtainable indices of mental ability, and social maladjustment and immaturity are prevalent. The children more often than not carry with them to the Training School a state of emotional disturbance or confusion. In many instances the measures of intelligence are, at least to an extent, symptoms of psychologically retarded or temporarily depressed functioning rather than of genetically or otherwise organically determined limitations. Measures of capacities predominantly show gross discrepancies, in cross sections as well as longitudinal sections, with performance in non-verbal areas more often than not approaching and fairly often exceeding the level of the average child. The point to be made is that in spite of, or, as the case may be, because of these experiential, emotional and social factors and these evidences of variability in capacity, the children, as a rule, do possess a realizable potential for comparatively rapid growth and adjustment. The challenge to research, education and treatment is tremendous.

The picture of our unusual situation may become more clear if we draw in a few additional details. As a corollary to the two basic facts which we may term "the goal of early return" and "selective admission," life at our Training School is one of continuous movement: to new experience, from class to class, from cottage to cottage, from one vocational assignment to another, from regular program to special program and back again, with all children of school age in school and all children of vocational training age in vocational training, with recreational activities for

leisure time, with new admissions constantly producing chain reactions of movement through the group and earlier admissions continuously clamoring for a chance to try themselves in the community. Or, if you think of movement in terms of miles traversed, it is there as a prominent feature in our lives, within the institutional area of nearly a thousand acres, and between the grounds and the home and other places in the open community.

In short, our children are school children with problems akin to those occurring among other school children, be they of subnormal, average or superior ability. We can never allow ourselves to think or act otherwise. Though we must stand ready to develop methods and procedures which are specifically needed for our mentally retarded group, these methods and procedures may with suitable adaptations be applicable to brighter children as well, or may themselves be adaptations of methods and procedures used with such children.

On the other hand, in terms of the demands of the program, the kinship of our group with the severely retarded is relatively remote. In the main, methods and procedures are not adaptable from one group to the other, except in certain fringe cases with whom we inevitably find ourselves concerned. The skills required of personnel, the tempo, the goal and the outcome are different.

The individual differences in our group are so numerous and so significant as to present a more than sufficient challenge. The spirit, the self-esteem and the unity of this group, which are fundamental to our purposes, cannot be main-

tained in association with the even more unfortunate children who are so different, mentally and socially, by reason of a severe mental retardation. In passing, we refer also to another danger resulting from over-emphasis on the view that all mentally retarded individuals belong to one group, though differing in degrees of retardation: There is danger that facilities will be spread too thin and that some of the static groups will, by reason of their very slowness, tend to monopolize certain training opportunities and other essential experiences.

The mental retardation of our group is, nevertheless, a fundamental fact. It differentiates us from the general field of residential treatment and training. For, while our children can certainly not associate and function effectively with ineducable and severely retarded children, they also suffer in association with children of significantly higher mentality.

We need not enlarge on the need of educable mentally retarded children for an intensive practical education and training program of their own, designed to prepare them for community responsibility. Nor do we need to belabor the contention that life, even in a training school, is competitive and that competition, in order to be fruitful, should give everyone a chance. Life also imposes the relationship of leader and follower. But the child who is a follower in association with others of greater ability might himself become more spontaneous and develop a new self-image, new abilities, in association with his peers.

As for extreme problems of personality and behavior, associated with a

degree of measured mental retardation which we can accept, it is evident that prior to admission most of our children have presented such problems. Our ability to obtain results with a variety of patterns of emotional disturbance and maladaptive behavior is in fact our *raison d'être*. There are naturally limits imposed by the nature of our group and its program. But to apply these limits on the basis of the pre-admission picture is not a simple matter. As a rule, the children are soon on their way to better functioning and there seems to be little relation between the degree of difficulty one might expect on the basis of the pre-admission picture and the difficulty actually experienced here. Even some of those who do remain severely disturbed for relatively long periods of residence eventually learn to function in our group and later do well in the community. The impact of the change in environment and program is so remarkable that one is hard put to deny any otherwise eligible mentally retarded child a chance.

To meet our unusual situation we have a program of large scale achievement and milieu therapy, education and training, supported by clinical features such as remedial reading, individual clinical instruction, playtherapy and psychological interview, as well as by placements in special groups. The clinical and special group features are, of course, adjuvants only. They operate concurrently with the general program. This program assumes that the children can learn to appreciate the security of orderly living, to relate, to have fun and to achieve. The child who is to be successful in comparatively large groups,

or in the work training situations, must have the potential to function well with peers and adults and to proceed on his own to a considerable extent. This at the same time provides the experience which prepares him for the community. Self determination and problem solving are goals and methods which we pursue successfully.

Seldom, if ever, do we reach with any particular child the high level of clinically directed continuous manipulation of all environmental impacts that are the hallmark of the small and heavily staffed treatment center. I question that such a method is possible in our present situation and our experience suggests that many children, who might seem to the clinically prejudiced to require such intensive treatment, do very well without it. This training institution has its own place in the scheme of things.

In a large measure the requisite therapeutic climate is developed and maintained by cottage personnel and teachers.

Our cottage personnel are a highly selected group and take a justified pride in their important calling. They conduct the daily living and recreation of these active children outside of school and vocational training hours. You will gain impression of these activities by visiting the cottages and recreation areas and asking questions wherever you go.

In Section A you are invited to ask questions about characteristic procedures and policies of the institution as a whole, including not only the Cottage Division but also vocational training, social and psychological services. At

3:00 o'clock you may attend a presentation by the Child Care Director of pictures of various activities of our children.

We are fortunate in having a teaching staff of high professional qualifications. And you are invited in Section B to ask a panel, consisting of the Principal and three teachers, questions about our school as an instrument of education and treatment for social competence and mental health. You are cordially invited to visit the School where the teachers will be at their stations at 3:00 P.M.

In closing, I should add a few words about research. One might well say that the Wayne County Training School is itself an experiment. Specific research at the School must, therefore, relate itself to this larger responsibility if it is to be effective. Beyond this, the stimulus and prestige value of research, and the opportunity which it offers to the ambitious, are of inestimable value. Some research or exploration must be assigned because it is of programmatic import and imbedded in, or intimately related to, the functions and prime purposes of the organization. But it is also important to preserve the opportunity for individual adventure. The cooperation of staff not charged with research responsibilities is an especially important feature and our record is one of widespread participation. The program of this meeting would scarcely have been possible without such a tradition.

A Research Department has been maintained practically from the beginning and has always been considered a cardinal activity. We have published

a great many papers based on experiment and research design. A great many others are of a descriptive and clinical type. Much of what we have had to do in studying children's learning and adjustment difficulties, finding ways to overcome them, developing new materials, methods, and programs, evaluating them, formulating our thinking, could never have been reduced to stringent designs without entering upon an enormously enlarged scope of activity, based on the freedom to spend a fortune. Over the years we have been indebted to a great number of research workers for their ingenious and faithful work. We have offered them a particular kind of experience and we take great satisfaction in their subsequent careers.

It is obviously out of the question for me to discuss all the ramifications of our

research, even if I were to limit myself to the present and the immediate future. Section C presents reports on some of our present efforts. In our printed program you will also find, on the last page, reference to a number of activities that you may visit if you wish. Several of these are, or have been, research projects, at least in the sense of having contributed new experience or methods, resulting in publications.

We have made it a point to offer opportunities for discussing questions that may be of special interest to you, and you may do this not only in the scheduled meetings but also in individual conferences. I have no wish to detain you any longer. You have demonstrated a very remarkable capacity for sustained attention and very praiseworthy assembly behavior, and I thank you.

THE SCHOOL

MARCELLA E. DOUGLAS

IF one has never lived in a "child-centered" community, it may be difficult to imagine the stimulation, the rapid change, the aliveness and the ever present activity which characterize such a community. We know and feel these things daily, for our population is young and capable, though fraught with certain handicaps which make necessary their residence in a special institutional school for mentally retarded children. Were they to be in a society with average children, whom they resemble much more than those at the lower end of the scale, the competition would be unfair. Were they to be in a society

with severely mentally retarded, there would be, undoubtedly, a sinking of effort in every direction. Either combination would be unfortunate.

In this "small town" of children, the citizens are sufficiently similar to be able to associate together successfully. Hence, there develops a total group feeling of unity and purpose, resulting in hopefulness, anticipation and a strong positive morale. The children know they have come to "learn" and expect to leave when they have "learned." All of the school age children under fifteen years have a full time school program, just as they would were they in their

own homes. The fifteen year olds have half-time school and half-time vocational training or full-time school. The balance of the population, being sixteen and older, are engaged in full-time vocational training. These school children are eager, active and busy. Much of our effort consists in seeing that they are eager about the right things, active in constructive enterprises and busy in the proper activities. With a student body of five hundred, one is able to have the composition of individual classes comparatively homogenous. Since all of the children are educable and more than 90 per cent of the school enrollment ranges in chronological age from eleven up to sixteen years, better grouping can be managed and widely diversified activities are possible.

The Prolonged Pre-Academic Program for the youngest children ranging in age from seven to eleven years, chronologically, is a unit of three classes. Above this age level there are twenty-two classes where the primary emphasis is placed upon learning the academic tool subjects (reading, writing and numbers). The majority of pupils make measurable academic gains; thus the survey for the school year 1953-54 showed an average gain of .59 grades in Paragraph Reading and .59 grades in the Fundamentals of Arithmetic. Of this number 21 per cent showed a gain of one grade or more in Paragraph Reading and 19 per cent in the Fundamentals of Arithmetic. Most of the pupils obtain a foundation which is sufficiently solid to be of practical use in their later lives.

Of the twenty-two classes referred to above, twelve (eight for boys and four

for girls) represent a sequence of levels of academic instruction ranging up to sixth grade work. In this sequence a pupil may progress rapidly from one group to the next.

As a counterpart of this there are, above the Pre-Academic level, twenty-five manual activities classes. These are intended as "orientation centers," where a pupil may become familiar with a variety of materials and procedures, may have satisfying experiences and learn a number of skills.

Under such conditions a child cannot stand still. There is steady change and movement from one level to another and from one type of manual activity to the next. Each new placement brings with it an opportunity to know and work in a different classroom climate, all of which brings new challenges and new experiences.

The physical, mental and educational growth and the associated turnover in the course of a school year (in 1953-54, 112 children left for vocational training or for the community and 139 children entered school from the community) are indicative of the necessity for continued re-evaluation of the status quo and re-arranging. It is essential to remember in this connection, that children arrive and leave throughout the year and that though the average age on admission is slightly under twelve, more children are admitted at fourteen than at any other age. To meet the resulting organizational problem the school year is divided into three terms. The boys forming the majority of the total group, compose the larger number of "lefts" and "entries." In order that each new boy enrolled may have a

special welcome and usually a little more personal attention, a *Reception Class*, with a beginning nucleus, accepts him when he arrives. It has, as well, been a benefit organizationally by allowing constant enrollment in the other classes whereby the members can weld themselves into a social unit without undue disruption. For the girls it has not been possible to form a class solely for this purpose. We have found in the past year that our Functional Class has served this purpose quite well. The fact that advanced academic work is not stressed has helped relieve some of the antagonism in this area and we have found the girls with a readiness to work at their level upon transfer a short time hence. The handicraft program, a corollary to this class, captures interest quickly for the processes are not too difficult and the articles are finished quickly.

In any group setting, the rapport which exists between the various members is significant. Particularly is this true of the oldest, most experienced and responsible person and each individual under his guidance. In a school class, this is the tone of regard which exists between the teacher and each individual pupil.

"There must be mutuality of regard between the teacher, who is the one who holds the most potential influence in the class and each individual child, as well as the total group. One frequently overlooks the fact that the teacher is also a *member* of the group, not an entity apart from it. Rapport is the balance between the child's trust and confidence in the teacher and her faith in him, her fairness, regard, support."⁴

Next in importance is motivation. This is the most persistent and challenging problem confronting teachers. It looms with particular significance since most of our children have experienced long periods of school failures and frustrations. As a consequence many have developed a negative attitude toward academic learning, for in the past they have gained little or no satisfaction from their efforts in similar situations. In an attempt to cope more effectively with the double edged problem of educability and frustration, we have found a system of recognition effective. An attainable goal for the coming term is set for each pupil. A group record of the expected progress and that made to date is kept. When a child meets or beats his goals he is given encouragement by receiving recognition in a general assembly, by having his name placed on the Honor Roll in the school hall and on the cottage bulletin board, as well as in other informal ways. This plan is merely a device to stimulate an interest in and provide an incentive for learning. The recognition of work well done is sound practice from both the pedagogical and mental hygiene points of view.

The three points reviewed above—the opportunity to move ahead, the climate of the classroom (which is the result of teacher-pupil rapport) and the incentive system are essential elements in a school devoted to capable, educable children. The guiding principle is "We know what the child *cannot* do, now let us try to find out what he *can* do."

We turn now to a review of classes and activities that do not form part of the above mentioned sequence of academic classes.

⁴ Elizabeth Etz. *Teacher-Pupil Rapport*.

The brief reference to rapport and climate, motivation and goals leads us to the even more intangible, psychotherapeutic implications of our task. Not the least of the children's handicaps is the emotional disturbance which is found more often than not. The child's future hinges on two main developments: the skills, knowledge and judgment which he is able to acquire in subject matter and social areas are fundamental and the emotional adjustments which he is capable of developing are equally fundamental. These two fundamentals are, in fact, inseparable. The media, procedures and socio-emotional climate of the school, looked at from the view point of emotional adjustment must, therefore, be regarded as *achievement* and *milieu therapy* and as a major instrument in emotional re-education.

Clinical Remedial Instruction, especially in reading, is perhaps the most striking illustration of the dual functions of the school program. Over and above its purely instructional function it serves as one of our most important adjuvants in personality therapy and re-education. Often children who have been "at odds" with school prior to admission, blossom in a short time with classroom help alone, but there are, in our population, others who do not respond through the regular class program. For various reasons they require more than the usual instructional methods, for their problems may be so obscure that intensive study followed by specific techniques are required. One teacher is assigned to this phase of the teaching program. From the pupils referred, he evaluates the individual problems,

recommends the selection of the load based upon those of good prognosis who are in most urgent need, gives the daily remedial instruction, describes the progress and finally summarizes the case in the clinical record.

There are two *Functional Classes*, one for boys and one for girls with Intelligence Quotients around 60. These children, who find it difficult to keep up with their faster moving mates and are appraised as being too handicapped to profit significantly from individual remedial instruction, do well without stress and with a minimum of discrimination in a class devoted to simple, practical accomplishments such as writing one's name and mastering a sight vocabulary of common words. Its counterpart in handicraft is scaled to the abilities and the deficiencies of these pupils with units in hand sewing, knitting, crocheting and other repetitive processes.

There are children who have good academic and social potential in terms of the goals and framework governing our program but who because of probable brain injury or for other reasons require a more individual and specialized type of training in the *Exogenous Classes*. The enrollment in two classes for these children is limited to twelve children each. A thorough exploration of each child's problems and deficiencies is made and appropriate methods in the presentation of the academic materials are devised.

One of the vital needs in the education of teen-agers is that of providing experiences which prepare them for independent living. Formerly this was referred to in public schools as "prepar-

ing for life." School people now on the whole object to the idea that school prepares children for life—because it is felt that each stage of development should progress naturally to the next stage, that school participation is life and not a process toward life. To this extent we agree, but it will not be long before our boys and girls of fifteen will be faced with the necessity of earning their own livelihood. In this connection they will be dealing with situations which present problems for them, though they are usually common place to the average child of their age. It is important that our children have some realization of these matters and to that end a course of *Occupational Education* for several classes of fifteen year olds has been developed. Such topics as Money Matters, Traffic Safety and Industry In Our Town are a part of this series.

Music has great appeal. It is enjoyed in some form by everyone, but the greatest benefit is derived when one can actually participate in producing music. In the *Music Classes*, singing is the medium employed, although harmonica groups have been successful, also. Aside from a regular period with members of his class, a pupil may be a member of one or more different choruses or choirs. Time is given to prepare two church choirs and for the preparation of public presentation of two musical plays each year.

Spending but half of the school day in classes devoted to learning in the academic area provides an opportunity for work in the manual field. There is a real unexplained value in creating with one's hands. There is a glow of

pride, a sense of worth, a feeling of confidence and an intangible self-importance when one views the object which one has fashioned. This is probably the most important outcome of the various manual activities but there is, also, the variety of skills learned; the sharing by making things for others, for some special purpose or group projects; the work habits developed; the care of tools and equipment learned; and the safety rules practiced.

Though *Art Instruction* is not delegated to any one room, artistic aptitude finds expression in many classes, both academic and otherwise and is amply utilized in projects and events. Above the pre-academic level we have the following manual School centers:

1. *Primary Activities* which presents a variety of materials and occupations for young children, paper, paints, clay, simple weaving, sewing, puppets, nature interests, etc.
2. The *General Shop* program uses wood, metal, paints, clay and other materials. The finished projects are eye catching and of definite toy type interest or useful to the individual.
3. In the *Wood Shop* program, boys make articles somewhat more intricate, larger and practical. They are not completed too quickly and require more planning and perseverance. Finishing is, likewise, stressed so that the finished article stands out as an article which has taken care and patience to complete.
4. *Printing* offers many skills—matching letters in sorting type, operating the printing press, counting, padding and cutting blocks to name only a few.
5. The daily use for sheet metal articles provides importance to the boy workman who completes pails, cans, dust pans, waste baskets and the like in the *Steel Metal Shop*. The steps involved in any one of these, from the laying on of a template to the soldering, are

- practical skills for a boy to carry with him into any occupation.
6. A shop room filled with machinery, such as lathes, shapers, etc. immediately suggests the type of exercise a boy receives in the *Machine Shop*.
 7. The *Remedial Shop* is a clinical and experimental venture, enrolling two classes of six boys each. It is devoted to development of independence in planning, measuring and executing wood shop projects.
 8. *Handicraft* includes a number of processes from simple sewing stitches to knitting sweaters. This course is fashioned on a progressive basis so that a pupil may build on the foundation of each skill learned. There is a wide variety in spool knitting, making cloth toys, crocheting, leather craft and knitting.
 9. The aims of the *Clothing Classes* are to teach the girls to make clothes for themselves; to repair dresses and other articles of clothing (making repairs and minor alterations will probably be the skill most practiced by the girls in later life); to teach the basic facts about personal grooming and to promote consciousness of good grooming practices; to provide basic information and experience in the wise purchase and care of clothing. In learning clothing construction a girl will:

- (1) continue to learn to operate a sewing machine even more satisfactorily
- (2) be cutting with the proper long even strokes with a shears
- (3) be expected to select both her pattern and her material
- (4) be learning to interpret from her pattern which pieces are needed for her particular garment
- (5) be learning to transfer the proper markings from the commercial pattern to her own brown paper pattern and finally on her material
- (6) from her previous knowledge

- of clothing construction, have learned with which step to start a skirt or blouse and how to continue, thereby being able to follow the instruction sheet
- (7) from her past experience with clothing construction, know that pressing after stitching each seam is a necessary step
 - (8) have learned that it is necessary to fit both her pattern and her partially made garment
 - (9) as a final step, be asked to figure the cost and the value of her newly made garment
 - (10) at the close of the school term, be asked to model her garment in a dress revue"⁵

10. In five complete *Kitchens* there is opportunity for girls to learn to prepare foods under conditions common to a household. They have an opportunity to market vicariously; study a recipe; cook or bake an individual dish or part of a meal; calculate the cost of a given shopping list or meal; set a family table and serve.

Many people seem to believe that institutions, of necessity, are places where opportunities for new experiences, new situations or new challenges are severely restricted. It is not our purpose here to examine this problem in all its aspects, but to look again at the school program from this particular angle. The patterns discussed above should already have left the impression of rich, vigorous and forward moving living. Let us look briefly at some recurrent events and procedures and at the same time highlight, a little better, the social aspects of the program.

Excursions. One of the most popular techniques employed by the Elementary School

⁵ E. Twyla Hartley. *Clothing Construction and Good Grooming*.

in the past years has been excursions. The objective is usually to gather information, create interest and provide purposeful and common experiences upon which to base the classroom activities and lessons. Indeed much of the latter is often an outgrowth of such excursions. As with all techniques the value is in the usage. It might be felt that in a residential school such opportunities are rare. Actually, our children are offered many experiences not easily accessible to community children. How many school age children have visited a bakery and watched their friends knead the loaves of bread which they would eat for supper? Seen the dinner's pudding taken from the oven? Seen the casing being filled with their breakfast sausage? Felt the "cold" of the refrigerated room which held rows of beef and other meats? We have, for these have been planned trips within our domain. We are, however, not confined to the Training School for new and different experiences. Our young ladies make planned trips to our neighboring towns to look for and study various things—such as wardrobe costs and types and varieties of materials. How many boys have sat in the cab of an electric engine and gone for a ride? Some of our classes have visited the local round-house and gained an immense amount of information regarding this vital means of transportation. We could mention many other such activities but it seems unnecessary. It is the judicious and prudent use of such opportunities that fill the void and provide stimulation.

Assemblies. Two classes always cooperate to provide one of the regular assembly programs. The topics and the manner in which they are developed are a means of giving information, depicting facts of value and offering opportunities for active participation and for additional satisfaction. Such topics as these found interest: The Story of Christopher Columbus, The Meaning of America the Beautiful, The Migration of the Birds, Abraham Lincoln, Safety Practices, The Birds We See in Spring.

Visual Education. The world grows smaller by the day. A journey now is merely a day's hop. It is desirable that we be familiar with distant scenes and places. Our modern liv-

ing with new methods of merchandizing is a marvel with which we should be familiar, also. The manner of processing foods and fabrics and materials of all sorts should not be overlooked in bringing things to the classroom. Phenomena of nature, the wonders of the glacier, the habits of our common birds, the glories of the clouds and heavenly bodies, the beauties of our country's mountains should not be omitted. Using selected films gives the teacher an opportunity to bring an illustration and explanation of these things to the classroom. Certain vicarious experiences can be more thorough than a hasty visit to the scene.

When we stop long enough to think of the responsibility which we place upon children, such as a messenger assignment and membership on the Safety Patrol, we realize how important are the checks and balances which we use to guarantee the reduction of problems and the proper performance of the obligations entrusted to them. Responsibility aids growth, for children as well as for adults, and obligations not beyond their ability help boys and girls for they know our adults have confidence in our children's natural desire to "measure up" and the children know when trust is being placed in them.

Messengers. Without hesitation we solicit the assistance of school children to act as messengers. These are young boys about thirteen who come to the School Office for one or two periods each day to be ready for errands. Their assignment in this capacity is short,—a week or two. The things they are asked to do range from delivering a message to a nearby classroom to carrying important papers or accompanying another child to a clinic. As needed, girls are used as messengers, also.

Safety Patrol. This organization is a large venture. It was instituted several years ago, in connection with children coming to and going from school without employee escorts. This arrangement has allowed children the opportunity to move freely and naturally, lessening the points of possible frustrations which are bound to arise in a complicated plan for the transfer of custody. From the safety point of view, it permits speedier evacuation of the building and serves as a daily

practice for emergency purposes. In formulating this plan, we were aware of the potential problems such a program presented but felt they were over-balanced by the advantages which would accrue. The constant vigilance in avoiding any infractions to develop into major problems, together with necessary modifications to improve procedures, has made for the successful operation of the plan.

We have reviewed our concern with and the plan adopted to stimulate mental growth and social competence and would like, now, to present the program of *Religious Education*. Arranging for spiritual guidance is, we believe, the responsibility of the residential school, but providing it formally is the responsibility of the religious groups concerned. These arrangements cover the provision of suitable accommodations, necessary materials, assurance of the children's regular attendance and encouragement given to them in their religious practices and activities. There are four major groups for whom religious activities are arranged with a chaplain for each. Each chaplain conducts Divine Services on Sunday and ministers to the individual or group spiritual needs of his "flock" as he may deem necessary. Chaplains are usually procured through the governing or representative organization of that faith, in this area. In temperament, interest and training our chaplains are well suited to work with our boys and girls. The first two characteristics are extremely important, for the ministerial background can work through to the children only when presented by one who has a genuine interest in and a deep understanding of these young folk and their aspirations and problems in

the growing up process. Many of our young people have been neglected in all phases of care and training and devoid of the ordinary accepted standards. Dealing with this is a matter of retraining in which religious education is often a tremendous force. Religion fills an innate need of each human being for something better and something higher. This is a mental health need, as well, which William Burnham includes in his twelve conditions of healthful mental activity as "a normal sense of dependence." "This," he explains, "perhaps, is the essential psychological element in religion—a sense of dependence on a supreme being. . . ." ⁶

The Protestant Service has a congregation of about four hundred boys and girls and is a worship service, conducted by a trained religious education worker who has insight into and experience with the needs of our children and is devoted to their growth in upright living. Children participate as members of the choir, act as ushers, assist in conducting the service by announcing the hymns and reading the scripture lesson.

Sunday Mass for approximately two hundred and fifty Roman Catholic children is read by the priest, assigned by the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit, who is well acquainted with institutional work and has had wide experience with boys from underprivileged areas of the city. He ministers to all of their spiritual needs, hearing confessions, arranging for teaching sisters and seminarians to conduct catechism instruction classes, preparing

⁶ William Burnham, *The Normal Mind*. D. Appleton & Co., p. 667.

the children for First Holy Communion and for Confirmation.

The chaplain for about thirty Lutheran children conducts a Worship Service followed by Sunday School instruction.

Approximately fifteen Hebrew children are taught the tenets of their Faith in a combined worship and Church School Service conducted by a trained worker in the Jewish religion.

In the meeting place for each of the four groups, the appropriate symbols and liturgical representations are properly placed. There is a rostrum from which the chaplain speaks, an especially made altar with candles, missal, statues and the like for the Mass; a table altar with flowers, cross, Bible and other religious appointments for the Protes-

tant services and the Star of David for the Hebrew service. These are placed in readiness for each service so that the atmosphere will stimulate a devotional and prayerful attitude on the part of the children.

In summary, we can only reiterate that there is no one or two activities which would satisfy or properly train an active, eager student body. Therefore the range and scope of possibilities are wide and diversified and thus offers opportunities for growth. As developed at the beginning of this paper, the children of our community are sufficiently similar and capable so that they may associate together successfully, possess a total group feeling, aspire to certain goals, and learn to qualify for independent community living.

PRE-ADOLESCENT BOYS IN AN ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

MAXINE M. LEMLER

I. HE IS A PERSON

THE mentally retarded child is not a stereotyped person who can be labelled, grouped with others wearing the same tag, and dismissed from mind. He is an individual whose feelings are those inherent in any child. He may look, act, and respond like an average child in some situations and may differ only in his rate, time, kind, and degree of reaction in certain areas. He has known discouragement and failure time and again and has responded defensively to the demands of his environment in the only ways known to him.

One cannot take any group of children and expect them to grow, respond, and progress at the same rate and time. Each child develops in his own way at his own time and rate of speed when ready. Trouble begins when expectations and demands in his environment are constantly timed too soon for his own rate of response. Many children feel discouragement and frustration at home and in school. The mentally retarded child frequently knows little else quite early in life and his burdens become almost unbearable at times. When pressures and obstacles are removed, the child once more finds ways of giving favorable response to his en-

vironment, and to the learning situations he finds there, and he is able to move ahead.

To a casual observer a group of mentally retarded children might seem to be like many common little pebbles gathered from a roadside. No sparkle can be seen among the pebbles, just dull, rough, bumpy surfaces and odd shapes with little to attract the eye. Even after washings and scrubbing the pebbles still have little to make the observer feel that any real value lies within them. Yet in the lapidary no stone can fail to arouse some curiosity as to what exists just under the surface. What can be found with just a little grinding, a little polishing, and a little buffing? What intricate designs and grains lie hidden under the dingy, dull surfaces to be revealed only through the skillful craftsmanship of the lapidary?

To the teacher the mentally retarded child offers the same challenge and he creates the same searching desires in the heart of his teacher as does the unknown pebble in the lapidary. The satisfactory progress a child makes in developing his own potential is the great reward that comes to all who work with these children. The mentally retarded child seems to respond to skillful teaching with all the fascinating potentials within his capacity when properly stimulated. As the child awakens and unfolds under the watchful eyes of his guiding teacher he finds his own unique place in the world in which he lives. This awakening and unfolding may come easily with one child but very slowly and reluctantly with another. How can one recognize

the specific needs of each child? How can one bring this awakening, this unfolding about?

How do some of these children with problems look? What kinds of personalities do they have? Let us visualize a few through the eyes of their teachers:

A. is the new, small, dark-haired, dark-eyed little boy who is brought to your room with tears dammed up in his eyelids ready to spill at any moment. He tries to cooperate and do some part of whatever work is assigned to him. He is the little boy whose head drops down for a quiet cry some part of each day that first week.

Afterwards he becomes acquainted with his classmates and his cottage mates and swings into the extrovert behavior that brought him to us. He is the sauciest, cockiest, loudest, liveliest boy seen yet, with a swagger and a strut and a constant stream of loud chattering about anything and everything. He sings, whistles to himself, twists, wiggles, interrupts everyone, yet fails to sing his favorite songs with others at regular music period. He loves to clown, dramatize, be the center of attention. He is the boy who wants to hit, fight, talk back, use vulgar language to the walls if necessary in order to release the extreme tensions within himself. He is bright enough to do good class work but is poor in motor coordination for handwriting and drawing.

He responds to reason and fair play and gradually is learning to listen and try to take turns. He realizes that he needs some steady type of work to keep himself busy in order to keep

out of mischief. He can help his classmates when he remembers to talk quietly, not shout; to go slowly, not like a steam roller. He is the boy who seems at heart to want to improve and gain the love and respect of his teachers and friends. Yet at times he cannot seem to find any way to check his hyperactive impulses for noise and constant physical activity.

What keys are used to help this child unfold and respond? Timely recognition, quiet reminders when he forgets, chances for leadership, frequent changes in simple activities when needed, all help this child find his own means for control and response.

B. is the small elfin-like child with almost primitive impulses of reaction to frustrations. He is the child who has used violent temper tantrums as a weapon of defense and attack against all of his frustrating situations. He is the extremely disturbed child who suspects, rejects before contact anything that might seem attractive or fun for a boy; who cannot answer "yes" directly but who looks at the world with head tilted to the side with a suspicious, half-distrustful, mischievous gleam in his eye.

Nevertheless he tries to show by his behavior that he appreciates kindness and understanding given him by adults. He is the child with creative ideas who has a zero tolerance of frustration when he cannot have exactly the quantity and quality of work materials he feels he needs at a given moment. He usually works by himself but is learning to work with a few other children at one time. He has a keen sense of rhythm and dramatics and can become com-

pletely absorbed in his interpretive response to a music or dramatic stimulus. He constantly demands help in making puppets from any or all types of materials. He gains security from carrying his puppets with him everywhere he goes.

Sincerity, patience, genuine understanding, anticipation of his needs, participation and sharing of interests in puppets were keys to helping this child find his place as a member of a group.

C. is the highly emotional child who though young reads at a 5th grade level but who has little or no control of his unpredictable emotional outbursts. He comes with a history of rejection, severe home punishment, sibling rivalry. He is the child labeled "pick-pocket" by his classmates his first day, yet he finds the courage to admit a mistake openly in class. He is rewarded with genuine praise for that courage and given sympathetic understanding of his problem. He is the child who takes great pride from that moment and manages never to make that mistake again in that room. He cannot yet control his tendencies elsewhere but one strong step in the right direction was made.

Rapport was gained through this episode that proved to be a vital key in handling this child. Fair play, recognition for work well done, opportunities for using and developing his talents for leadership, dramatics and rhythmic expression helped this boy find reasons for wanting to become an acceptable member of the group.

D. is the attractive, young boy who resists doing anything with the group,

who calmly states that the only reason he is "here" is because he "could not get along with other kids." He is the child who says "I'll do some of your work but I won't write. At my other schools when I wrote, they wanted me to print, and when I printed they wanted me to write. So, I made up my mind I wouldn't do either." He is the same boy who was willing to help trace some dim words on a class paper as a helper and who gradually assumed some writing lessons. Later returning for a visit after having moved to another class, he asked to write the class letter, in preference to other attractive choices of activities.

Recognition of the child's reasons for refusing certain tasks, never forcing but through reasonable demands helping him feel that he had a voice in determining his activities, opened the door for favorable response.

One could go on indefinitely describing such children with problems. Each lives in the memory of his teacher as a distinct personality whose blossoming came only after the investment of much time, energy, and love. Yet each has his or her place in that treasure chest of memories.

II. ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Perhaps you may wonder what kind of atmosphere seems most conducive to stimulating the mentally retarded child to favorable response? What type of educational program seems best to meet the needs of these children?

An activities type of program can offer a very flexible curriculum structure with which to meet the wide vari-

ety of individual differences and needs to be found with a group of mentally retarded children. In such a structure the interests of individual children become the basis for activities and the timing and pacing so necessary to make any program effective are more easily controlled. The activities curriculum is especially effective with retarded children because it can be kept within the scope of each child through problem motivated class work.

When properly planned and executed an activity program provides good balance and variety for the retarded child who needs extra drill and training in the fundamental skill subjects. It can stimulate, create, and fan sparks of interest that can be carried over into the academic skill subjects essential to school progress. Some children's interests can be fleeting and insignificant while others can be so dominant as to crowd out all other stimuli. As a guide the teacher must be able to keep in mind common basic educational goals and see that no major interest area is neglected while utilizing learning situations that develop. Some causes of tension, anxiety, and frustration such as: required assignments for all, time limits, competition, etc., can be removed from the classroom atmosphere in the activities program. Reasonable requirements can be used to gain the same goals in an acceptable manner.

Some major interest themes which have become an established part of our pre-adolescent activities room program include:

1. Nature Study—Elementary Science
 - a. weather study
 - b. the seasons

- c. bird study (year round projects)
- d. plants
- e. common animals
- f. care of pets
- 2. Language Activities
 - a. oral language experience
 - b. class weekly newspaper
 - c. weekly class letter
 - d. news reports
- 3. Dramatization
 - a. puppets (group and individual projects are valuable tools for utilizing play interests and releasing tensions, aggressions, etc.)
 - b. role playing, impromptu and pre-planned
 - c. craft work related to construction of puppets, stage, necessary props
 - d. imaginary stories dramatized
- 4. Health and Social Studies topics (related to basic needs in food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness and woven into other activities)
- 5. Music, Rhythmic Work
 - a. interrelation with dramatization and puppets
 - b. free expression in both vocal and rhythm work
- 6. Arts and Crafts Work
 - a. some projects sustaining within themselves as simple skill tasks
 - b. other projects related to specific units studied
- 7. Special Class Projects

Activities fair, circus, original puppet plays, western ranch play, dramatization of favorite children's stories.

Constant and alert evaluation of units developed and studied in the activities program makes it possible to maintain good continuity and to prevent gaps in basic skill experiences. Children's play interests are utilized in a constructive fashion. Powers of observation and expression are encouraged and strengthened. Wholesome group experiences in group interaction result and individual and group progress are obtained.

TEACHER-PUPIL RAPPORT

ELIZABETH ETZ

ONE of the criteria for admitting a child to the Wayne County Training School is his inability to adjust and progress in school. Thus, in dealing with a new pupil, the most outstanding factor is his experience with constant failure: failure in the school program because academic competition has been too great; failure on the playground because being unsuccessful in social groups he was emotionally and socially unable to take part in the activities of children his own age; failure in the home because he could neither read nor figure as well as others and this brought parental displeasure, pressure or disdain.

Since he did not have the mental ability and emotional stability to cope adequately with these many situations, the child was forced to compete in a world of frustrations. He developed a chronic feeling of frustration because school standards were set too high for his ability. Such procedure can only build false goals for the child and his family, causing them to aspire to the unattainable.

Taken from whatever security he has known, the child is brought to the Training School and within the first twenty four hours he must, of necessity, contact many adults who are

strangers and from 45 to 50 children of his own age. The teachers are probably the last of the new faces he encounters. The prospect is not always a pleasant thought.

"Who wants to meet a teacher anyway! That last one I had hated me and only gave me D's! And I hate school anyway." Thus may he enter the classroom and a teacher-pupil relationship has begun.

We fully believe that in the first encounter in the classroom the teacher can give the new student a feeling of belonging which will begin to offset the fear and trepidation that are already present. It is sometimes a long and difficult process to build security but unless it is begun immediately much valuable time is wasted.

A friendly greeting to the child, a new pencil with his name printed on it and an assignment which we feel can be accomplished easily are some of the overtures of approach that help establish a positive attitude on the part of the pupil.

He will soon feel the friendliness displayed in this new classroom in which he finds himself, and the wise teacher knows when to intervene and when to leave "hands off" until the child sees for himself the workings of the class. In the great majority of cases the feeling of belonging will soon be a part of the newcomer and he will be ready for the next step.

Our society has placed a premium upon schooling and the child recognizes early the importance which is placed upon proficiency in the tool subjects. The harm has been done by expecting too much, too soon. The teacher must

appreciate the things of which the child is capable. His incompetence may frequently far overbalance his accomplishments but one must never lose sight of the areas in which the child is successful. Realizing this the teacher must make her assignments well within the limits of the pupil's capacity, set his tasks, whether they are concrete or personal, well within possible accomplishment. A taste of daily success is a tonic which brings renewed effort and interest.

There are many milestones along our road of life. Entering a new school or class can be a milestone for the child if the teacher subtly emphasizes that this is an opportunity for a clean start—a fresh beginning. Most children quickly realize that with a new situation there is also new hope and they are eager for the next step.

What is that next step? It is the continuation of efforts to build a solid relationship for and with the child. There must be mutuality of regard between the teacher, who is the one who holds the most potential influence in the class, and each individual child, as well as the total group. One frequently overlooks the fact that the teacher is also a *member* of the group, not an entity apart from it. Rapport is the balance between the child's trust and confidence in the teacher and her faith in him, her fairness, regard and support. This may be accomplished to varying degrees; admittedly the perfect balance is not always possible.

During the course of time, in her efforts to guide and train a child in the right direction, the teacher will feel the need for discipline. Securing the child's

trust and confidence as soon as possible is the best means of avoiding this problem. Respecting the children and their wishes is a means of promoting the classroom spirit which is conducive to children being self-disciplined and *that* is what we are striving for.

"Discipline" has many connotations. The most popular is "punishment" for "misdemeanor"—a retaliatory device. This is a narrow and limited concept of such a constant and vital force in our lives, a force which is needed in all human development. Who can live successfully without *real* discipline, whether outwardly regulated or self-imposed? Discipline is imposed upon an individual from an outside source or implemented from within—but the former must precede the latter. It may be a positive technique or it may be developed by negative means. Each has its place in the guidance scheme. Building a stimulating program, offering opportunities for success, and giving the satisfactions in having the approval of the group (of which the teacher is a member) are among the positive approaches. The negative or deterring approaches are equally important—the reasons they have been so frowned upon are: first, frequently they have been made to supplant the positive approach; secondly, they have been used to excess and harshly; thirdly, they have been administered in a retaliatory spirit.

Before either positive or negative techniques are considered there must be some standard whereby an act may be judged. This standard should be well understood and adhered to. It must be set by the group, always remembering that the pupils are *children* and the

teacher an *adult* whose life experience should hold great weight and influence in this determination, which cannot be one-sided. Children want and take pride in a well ordered atmosphere, and it is the teacher's obligation to see that a wholesome climate exists, for children will not thrive where there is indecision or license. It is not enough for the child to know he should be "good," he must know what "good" means for him and for him in this particular situation. He must appreciate that cooperation is doing his share of the clean-up tasks; that fairness means taking his turn. Willful disregard of the standards for these and other equally understandable phases of living together would be considered an infraction.

Marion Stevens⁷ has given the Ten Commandments of Discipline which condenses much advice to a few words:

1. "*Begin right.*" We have mentioned previously the importance of assisting the new pupil to adjust and making him feel that the teacher is friendly and is certain and definite about what she does.
2. "*Avoid as many chances as possible for disorder.*" Preparedness is the simple explanation for this. The teacher who does not have the materials in readiness and has not arrived in time to compose herself and be "set" for the day can expect trouble.
3. "*Don't let little things go.*" It is poor policy to let little things get "out of hand" with the result that an emergency type of handling becomes necessary. Check the individual—check the first step away from the standard, correction may then require only a positive suggestion.

⁷ Marion Stevens. *The Activities Curriculum in the Primary Grades*. D. C. Heath and Company.

4. *"Be tactful."* This is difficult to explain but we know when the situation is *not* handled with tact. We agree with Miss Stevens when she says, "Real tact is even more important in dealing with children than it is in adult relationships."
5. *"Be good-natured."* Good humor among teachers should be taken for granted. Look back on the "good old days" and see things at the child's level! Whatever the act, it is never to be taken as an affront against the teacher as a person. The offense is a rebellion against the situation and therefore against the group and should be handled with personal feelings omitted.
6. *"Be just."* Children value fairness above all else. They accept what is necessary if they know it has been justly handled.
7. *"Be persistent."* If it was important once it is important enough to stick to. Do not give up. Keep on trying to make the situation better.
8. *"Be consistent."* If the standard is correct there is no reason for inconsistency, for it will hold true every day, all day and no departure from it is in order. This does not preclude the alteration of the set standard for definite reasons.
9. *"Have decision."* A hesitant and vacillating manner will lose the day. It is better to "do something" than appear bewildered and "at sea." Clear cut, decisive action makes for certainty and builds confidence.
10. *"Avoid conflicts."* Conflicts often arise when the teacher becomes emotionally involved and sets out to win her point. This may be a personal triumph but is of no benefit to the learner. When a child is upset, allowing himself to become tense and unyielding, the teacher may have to wait to make her point until he can "save face."

In the whole learning process nothing is so important as the relationship which exists between the teacher and the class. The program, the materials, the methods, the schedule, all are dependent upon this very intangible harmony-rapport. Nothing is more satisfying than helping a child develop toward his highest potential and this is best accomplished in a climate of mutuality of regard—the child's trust and confidence in the teacher and her regard for and faith in him. From this comes the teacher's greatest rewards.

CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION AND GOOD GROOMING

E. TWYLA HARTLEY

TO appreciate the philosophy which guides the planning and conduct of the clothing classes it is necessary first to understand the needs of the teen-age girls who are enrolled in these classes. Two traits which characterize the majority of these girls needs to be especially considered: first, because of past difficulties in learning situations the girls have become very sensitive to

failure. And these repeated failures have led to chronic self-defeating attitudes and habit-patterns observable in such behaviors as compensatory attention-seeking, refusal to attempt to learn, failure to complete projects, etc. Secondly, apart from these emotional reactions which stem from their intellectual weaknesses there are present in many of the girls strong conflict patterns

based on disturbed family relationships. Frequently an emotional flare up in class will be found to have had its origin not in the classroom but in a lingering disappointment arising from news in a letter from home, or in some incident which has irritated a chronic emotional sore spot. These two types of unfavorable emotional reaction play such an important part in the adjustment of these girls that they must become major considerations in the design of the clothing course. In the following discussion of aims and methods we shall attempt to show how these unfortunate reaction patterns are combatted.

It follows from the preceding that the most general aim of the clothing course is to build up feelings of confidence and individual worth. The content of the course, clothing construction, is well suited to this objective because of the fact that very rarely have the girls had a chance to try making skirts, blouses or dresses or to operate a sewing machine for other uses. Therefore these girls do not have learning histories of failure in regard to this specific task. Our job is to help prevent the generalizing of past failure to this new situation. Their interest and enthusiasm for this type of activity is our strongest ally. Their mental handicap has given them no immunity to the enticements of advertising; they are as desirous of approximating the American ideal of the beautiful, well-dressed woman as are average teen-age girls. Clothing construction appears to them as one way to this goal. A second motivating force is the fact that the end-product of their activity is a tangible object—skirt, blouse or dress—instead of an intangible, such

as mastery of an arithmetic process. These teen-agers can demonstrate their learning to others by showing them their garments or, very often, by making a skirt or a blouse for a friend or a younger sister. Finally, comes the drive to manipulate the sewing machine, to them a fascinating toy with which these girls can hardly wait to play.

These natural interests are borne in mind in planning the course. Logically, from an adult point of view, it might be more orderly to start girls with hand-sewing prior to machine-sewing, but we have found that, because of the drive to manipulate the sewing machine, it is best to permit the girls to operate the machine from the beginning. During the first week of their enrollment girls with no previous experience will often be learning to thread a sewing machine and to stitch on penciled lines on paper. Gradually as the girls become sufficiently skilled more complex operations are introduced.

Naturally, every opportunity for the girls to gain recognition for their work is utilized. This happens very easily when they make garments which can be worn soon after their completion either in their regular living or for some special dress-up occasion. Special exhibits of their work also provide opportunities for approval and the resulting sense of personal growth.

Another effective method of helping the young lady to gain recognition is by encouraging her to make a piece of clothing for some one else who is not enrolled in the class. This provides her with an opportunity to select the pattern and materials and to fit the newly-made garment for another child. More im-

portant, however, are the feelings of prestige and self confidence which they seem to derive from helping a, perhaps, younger or less capable friend.

In addition to making something for one particular friend, much emphasis is placed upon the idea of doing something for other school departments. Towels, aprons and potholders are supplied for the School Department kitchens; choir robes and accessories are renovated and pressed. Twice each school term girls are asked to volunteer their services for making, altering and repairing costumes for the annual programs by the music classes. As many as two hundred pieces for costumes may be required for one of these productions. There is much enthusiasm for this special project and the girls work diligently toward each big event. They seem to feel as much pride in helping with costumes as in being in the program itself. As additional incentive, points are awarded for each hour of service rendered. As many as 63 hours of work have been recorded by one class member. Small prizes are presented to those who have earned the title "costume girl."

We believe that to establish feelings of confidence there is a special value in providing opportunity for initiative and creative ability. Although we constantly encourage individuality in the larger clothing construction projects we can give most freedom for initiative in the little projects made from so-called "waste materials." No part of our classroom gives more confidence and security to those girls who have some capacity and drive for originality than the wealth of scraps in our scrap bins. Because

these bins are never empty, there is always a small piece of cotton material out of which can be fashioned a beanie, a bag, a dress collar, a potholder, or perhaps our very popular bean bag clown, a stuffed toy or a doll's dress for a little friend. When the girls need a larger piece of material there is the remnant drawer with just the right piece of material for trimming a new dress or for making an apron for a Christmas gift.

For girls in whom initiative is more deeply stifled special teaching techniques are in order. It is quite obvious that many of them have not been in the habit of making choices and consequently beg for the teacher's consent or approval for each new move they make. These habit-patterns are combatted by a mixture of support combined with a subtle steady insistence that each girl make her own decision. A second general approach is to stimulate girls of this type to give their opinions about the work of others. With continued attention to this factor the teacher can promote a tremendous amount of growth in independent decision-making and consequently in self-confidence.

Their sensitivity to failure means of course that when they make errors in assembling their projects the teacher must be very tactful in calling these to the girls' attention. The general approach which seems to work most effectively is to help the child see how that step in construction is wrong and to do this in such a way that she will perceive what must be done to correct the error and will spontaneously suggest the correction herself. Often times it proves enlightening to make compari-

sons with other garments in the same stage of construction. Telling her directly that she must, for example, rip out a seam might frequently lead to abandonment or destruction of the garment. Consequently the teacher frequently suggests that she put her work away until the next day when it will be easier to do.

A second general aim of this clothing class is training in constructive habits of social living. To a great extent improvement in social living habits will occur as the first objective mentioned above is attained. That is, as the girls gain confidence many attitudes and reactions which have prevented their cooperation with others will disappear. However, clothing construction classes provide many opportunities for a direct attack on the problem. Again the activity of sewing provides opportunities not present generally in the academic situation. Sharing, cooperation, patience and helpfulness are all required in a situation in which there are necessarily limited supplies and equipment. Whereas in most academic settings each girl can, if she wishes, work quite independently of others, here she must constantly integrate her activity with that of her classmates. Sharing one another's sewing machine takes endless emotional fortitude when the second participant may tangle the thread because she has not mastered machine stitching. At this point it is usually necessary for the teacher to enter the picture to untangle the machine as well as the nerves of the girls involved. In our clothing classes each girl shares her scissors, shears, materials, patterns, sewing notions, ironing equipment, and in fact everything with

the exception of her sewing box and its contents, with her classmates. To promote the growth of cooperation, emphasis is placed on calling sewing equipment "our" patterns and "the" pinking shears. But while a girl is using a particular piece of equipment it may be called "my" needle or "my" pins. If a classmate chooses to use the same equipment she asks to borrow it. Likewise we take turns in using single pieces of equipment such as the tracing wheel, steam iron and pinking shears. To further instill in these teen-agers' minds that we must cooperate, girls are given the job of "handing out" and collecting all pieces of small equipment which are for general classroom use.

A third aim of the program is to stimulate the use and improvement of reading and number skills. The many ways in which this can be done are readily apparent and need no detailing. However, two considerations govern our introduction of reading materials. First, an effort is made in so far as possible to introduce reading as an aid in the solving of a problem toward which the girls are highly motivated. This provides a genuine immediate drive to read and to understand which is so difficult in the academic classroom. Secondly, an effort is made to introduce reading into situations that are fairly well understood, so that the context clues are abundant and will support the effort to read. For example, reading the directions for assembling a garment is not required until the young lady has had previous experience in performing similar operations. Most everything she reads from the printed pattern will thus make sense in terms of her own recent

experiences. If she happens to be a non-reader she will learn to interpret the pictures, thereby following the directions without actually reading the words.

A fourth aim of the course in clothing is to teach the girls basic facts about personal grooming. This includes both good taste in clothing and care of clothing and body. Regarding the first of these, learning to select materials of proper color and design helps make our girls conscious of the need for attention to esthetics. It takes much tact to teach a class that two different prints are not to be worn together. This becomes especially difficult when a fond parent or relative may have brought a package containing garments which exemplify poor taste. Girls are encouraged to make proper choices by draping materials around themselves and then observing the effect in the mirror. They are also encouraged to seek the opinions of classmates. Over and over again the teacher will ask such questions as "With what do you expect to wear your new skirt?" or "What is the color of the blouse your people gave you?"

To promote consciousness of good grooming practices, every Friday is called "Good Grooming Day" and we try to follow our motto "It's nice to look at you and it's nice to be near you." Hands, nails, hair, skin and posture receive special care on that day. Sometimes an educational film emphasizing personal grooming is presented during that class period. Likewise special attention is placed on mending, washing and pressing wearing apparel. As a result of these emphases, questions such as the following are frequently heard in the classroom: "How should I

wear my hair?", "Is this color right for me?", "How am I supposed to stoop to pick up pins?", "May I press my skirt?" and "Which way do I dry my hands so that the cuticle will stay back?" As is well known the child who asks the questions is the one who is improving her own attitudes toward herself.

A fifth aim of the course is to provide basic information and experience in the wise purchasing and care of clothing. Throughout the school term household magazines are regularly received. "Seventeen," "American Girl" and "McCall's" are most popular with our classes in clothing. The girls gain much information about present day styles and colors from these magazines. Likewise educational films depicting types of durable and suitable materials make a great impression on the minds of all class members. It is assumed that by and large the girls will purchase rather than make most of their clothing in the future, and this objective of the course therefore is one of the most practical. Twice each school term the advanced classes prepare to take a field trip to a clothing store. Here the manager most graciously explains the difference between a very inexpensive coat and one more moderately priced. He shows garments which will go well together in a wardrobe. Before his talk is complete he has told the girls how important it is to take care of ready to wear garments if they are expected to last.

Finally, of course, one aim of the course is to teach girls to make and to repair dresses, jumpers, blouses, skirts and other articles of clothing. The latter function, making repairs and

minor alterations, will probably be the most practiced by them in later life. The making of a complete dress is of course very good training for this skill since it gives them close acquaintance with every necessary stage of the garment making process.

In teaching clothing construction to our girls the following steps will be recognized:

1. She will continue to learn to operate a sewing machine even more satisfactorily.
2. She will be cutting with the proper long even strokes with a shears.
3. She will be expected to select both her pattern and her material.
4. She will be learning to interpret from her pattern which pieces are needed for her particular garment.
5. She will be learning to transfer the proper markings from the commercial pattern to her own brown paper pattern and finally on her material.
6. From her previous knowledge of clothing construction, she will have learned with which step to start a skirt or blouse and how to continue, thereby being able to follow her instruction sheet.
7. From her past experience with clothing construction she will know that pressing after stitching each seam is a necessary step.
8. She will have learned that it is necessary to fit both her pattern and her partially made garment.
9. As a final step she will be asked to figure the cost and the value of her newly made garment.
10. At the close of the school term she may be asked to model her garment in a dress revue.

AN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND READING FAILURE IN A MENTALLY HANDICAPPED BOY—A CASE STUDY

LAWRENCE VUILLEMOT AND JAMES E. KELLER

IT has been our experience at the Training School that, with few exceptions, children referred for individual remedial reading treatment because of failure to improve in the regular classrooms show appreciable reading gains. The rate of growth during this treatment generally exceeds the average for our population. This success is due in part, of course, to the fact that children are not referred for individual instruction unless it is felt they have the ability to profit from special attention. We are particularly interested, then, in cases which fail to respond, for the light which these cases may throw on the reading problems of the retarded. This paper

reports a special remedial program devised for one boy, Robert, who did not respond to standard individual remedial procedures. We can report at the outset that it is not a success story. Robert is still essentially a non-reader. And we have not succeeded to our own satisfaction in delineating clearly the origins of his reading failure. But it is our feeling that there is something to be learned by a careful analysis of the exact nature of his failures and by a scrutiny of relationships between his reading behavior and relevant personality and intellectual characteristics.

Robert is a white boy, now 15 years old, who was admitted to the Training

School at the age of eight with a post-admission Binet IQ of 76. Binet IQ on four tests during residence has fluctuated in the range from 67 to 76. His overall adjustment to the Training School has not been particularly unusual. However, in three respects he is somewhat deviant for this population: there are unusual discrepancies in his intelligence test performances, he shows marked social-emotional immaturity, and he has failed to learn to read at a third or fourth grade level as might be expected, at least where individual remedial treatment is offered.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING

Robert shows widespread deficiencies in verbal skills. These are evidenced by the following:

(1) *Wide Test Scatter*

On a recent Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) he earned a verbal quotient of 62 and a performance quotient of 111, a discrepancy of 49 points. Similarly, at the chronological

age of 14 years, 8 months he earned an Arthur performance quotient of 107, and a Binet IQ of only 67, a discrepancy of 40 points. His subtest profiles for the two performance tests are presented in Table I. It is noteworthy that among the WISC performance items he did best on the Block Design test, a test that presumably makes heavy demands on abstract thinking capacity.

(2) *Limited Vocabulary*

Very noticeable in conversation as well as in test results is Robert's limited vocabulary. Over a period of six years he shows a gain of only two new words on the Binet vocabulary test. On the Primary Mental Abilities picture subtest—a picture vocabulary test—he was exceedingly weak, scoring below the norms. By extrapolation his vocabulary age based on this test would be at about the 6 or 7 year level.

This poor level of vocabulary growth could be attributed to his institutionalization and to deficit caused by inability to read. While these factors may have played a part other verbal deficiencies

TABLE I
WISC AND ARTHUR PERFORMANCE TEST SCORES

WISC (CA = 14-10)		Arthur Performance (CA = 14-8)	
	Scaled Score		Age Equivalent
Information	4	Knox cube	12.5
Comprehension	5	Seguin	14.5
Arithmetic	0	Casist	15.5
Similarities	6	Feature profile	15.5
Vocabulary	5	Mare & foal	15.5
Picture completion	10	Healy	9.0
Picture arrangement	13	Kohs	15.0
Block design	16		
Object assembly	12		
Coding	7		
Verbal quotient	62	Performance quotient	107
Performance quotient	111		
Full scale	84		

suggest that these weaknesses may not be merely the effects of understimulation.

(3) *Speech Defect*

Robert has a speech defect, another aspect of his verbal handicap. He is at first quite difficult to understand. His speech is characterized primarily by the omission of consonant sounds. "Speaker" becomes peaka, "food" becomes "foo," etc. When prompted he is able to produce all sounds adequately but he has child-like difficulty getting the sounds into correct order. "Ask" becomes "aks," "first," originally pronounced "fur," becomes "furz," or "firts." Because of this defect he was referred for audiometric examination. The neurologist's report included the statement that Robert's audiogram was "within normal range (in every hearing frequency) and should give no symptoms of hearing loss."

(4) *Other Language Deficiencies*

Finally, we have observed a variety of deficiencies in the verbal area which we group together, rather loosely, under two categories.

(a) *Difficulties in the Production of Language*

Lack of spontaneity in the production of language was observed in his extreme difficulty in making up a sentence around a given word. This weakness was discovered accidentally in the course of reading instruction when he was asked to use a word in a sentence. It was observed that he was almost totally unable to do so. If the teacher gave an example, Robert's response would be identical to, or only minimally different from, the model pro-

vided. Very similar in character was his performance on the Binet "Word Naming" item at the 10 year level. When 14 years old he could produce only 16 words, instead of the required 28, during a one minute period. He was similarly blocked when asked to provide words beginning or ending with the same sound as a given word. During phonic training he was asked to give words ending with "ing." As a model he was given the word "thing." His first response was "think." This was not merely a matter of misunderstanding because his skill at rhyming did not improve with practice.

Finally, he seemed, to an unusual degree, to lack retention of recent verbalizations. For example, in reading training with a kinesthetic method he was asked to choose several words that he wished to learn. He practiced writing these words in large script on a blackboard for 10 or 15 minutes. Following this there were a few minutes of intervening activity. Then he was asked just to *name* the words he had been practicing. He could not remember them in spite of the fact that they were words which he had said he particularly wished to learn. This unusual failure of memory for verbal material was observed on many occasions.

(b) *Reversals and Other Confusions in Reproducing Auditory Stimuli*

Very noticeable was Robert's great difficulty in keeping straight the *order* of sounds. (We have already observed this in his speech difficulty.) This weakness seems also to account in part for his failure in blending tasks. On a blending test from the Gates tests for reading diagnosis he responded to the

sounds of the word "up" with "by," to the sounds of "fly" with "fan," and to the sounds of "end" with "and."

His failures in reproducing auditory stimuli were revealed by his difficulty with memory span items. On a digit span test he achieved a final score of 4 digits forward and 5 reversed. However, he failed individual trials of all series except 3 digits forward and 2 digits reversed. And when he failed, his errors were gross: adding extra digits, substituting digits that had not been mentioned, and erring grossly in the order of reproducing them.

READING BEHAVIOR

Since Robert had had little training in reading before admission to the Training School we have access to information concerning his entire reading history. During the first two years in residence, during his 9th and 10 years, he was in the pre-academic program the aim of which is to prepare children for reading and arithmetic. According to the final evaluation report "Robert did very well in the pre-academic program . . . he has the capacity for doing good work in the general program." This prediction was not borne out; his most recent Metropolitan Achievement test average reading grade is only 1.7. This error in prediction probably resulted from the fact that, as we have seen, Robert does well in certain types of visuo-motor tasks. Furthermore, we learned during remedial treatment that he learns letters and sounds easily, his difficulties occurring only in later phases requiring integration. Thus, he probably performed well in reading readiness drills.

Prior to the present study Robert had had approximately four years of classroom instruction in reading. He was referred during this period to a special small class where more individual attention could be given and subsequently to a remedial reading teacher for individual treatment. Both of these special programs were unsuccessful. A variety of remedial approaches were used by these special teachers including the systematic phonic method of the Hegge-Kirk drills,⁸ a modified Fernald kinesthetic approach, and a method which followed in philosophy the "systematic experience method" described by Kirk.⁹

Finally, for research purposes a prolonged remedial reading program was set up. In the first phase, which covered approximately a four month period, the remedial reading teacher systematically varied the method of teaching in order to attempt to clarify the nature and sources of errors. The various approaches were designed to enable the teacher to observe Robert's capacities for visual discrimination, his ability to profit from the kinesthetic approach, and his success in utilizing phonic and context cues in attacking new words. Motivation seemed excellent during this phase of treatment except that it was felt that he was working for extrinsic rewards only: getting out of a classroom he did not like, having the teacher's undivided attention, playing word games, etc.

During the second phase of treatment

⁸ Hegge, T. G., Kirk, S. A., and Kirk, W. D. *Remedial Reading Drills*. George Wahr, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1936.

⁹ Kirk, S. A., and Johnson, G. O. *Educating the Retarded Child*. Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1951.

attempts were made to raise the level of motivation in two ways: (1) by giving money rewards for excellence of attack on words, and (2) by focusing all reading in a shop book, a book which seemed of some interest to him. It was felt that motivation was heightened, that his retention improved slightly, but that his basic reading difficulties, to be enumerated below, were not overcome.

Following are the generalizations about his reading behavior which seem fairly well established on the basis of this experimental remedial experience. (1) His reading difficulties do not appear to result from peripheral sensory disturbances. As stated above there was no evidence of hearing impairment. Nor has he any gross visual defects. Word discrimination was excellent in the following test exercise: he was shown a word such as "always," it was removed and then a series of three-word sets were presented—the original word and two "distractors." He was very seldom misled in selecting the correct word even though the distractors might differ by only one letter, or by a deceptive inversion of two letters. It was concluded that his reading difficulties must originate in central, integrative mechanisms.

(2) He failed to accumulate a consistent basic sight vocabulary. At the beginning of training he was found to know 43 of the words in Dolch's basic sight word list. At five different times during this period he was retested on these 43 words. Only 24 of these words were always read correctly. This lack of retention was strikingly present even over short periods of time. This is illus-

trated in the following type of incident. In his shop book each page was organized around one aspect of shop. At the top of the page there was a picture of a carpenter's square with the word "square" underneath. Then followed a series of simple sentences about squares. He saw the picture and understood it, was helped to read the word, and then read it successfully in several of the sentences. But by the 4th or 5th sentence he seemed completely baffled when the word occurred again. No amount of struggling enabled him to work out the meaning of the word.

(3) He has great difficulty in phonic analysis and blending. It will be remembered that he did very poorly in the Gates tests of this ability. He knows the sounds in isolation but when confronted with them in words he seems to have difficulty in arranging the sounds in proper sequence and blending them. The remedial teacher at one time had success in getting him to blend a series of sounds into progressively longer nonsense words until he was successfully producing seven-syllable nonsense words. But this was an isolated success. This success was probably due to the fact that he did not have to integrate meaning. For him, the difficulty of the task is increased tremendously when an additional factor must be borne in mind, that is, when attention to meaning is added to the simple task of making phonic associations.

When reading he seemed to have the greatest difficulty in using phonic cues. His only partial success in this matter is the fact that he frequently produced first sounds correctly. For example, a

simple word like "it" he might call "ig" on the first encounter, "if" on the second. The blending difficulty is illustrated by the following: He had read or been given all of the sentence, "This is a scout axe"—except the word "scout." This word with help he worked out as "sk-out." The teacher had him read the whole sentence and speed up the saying of "sk-out." But he was unable to perceive the word "scout" although it was later determined that he knew what a scout axe was. Repeated blending failures of this type were very striking.

This last example, and the "square" example above, illustrate another generalization which can be made regarding his failures: (4) he has tremendous difficulties in utilizing context cues in attacking new words. The mechanics of reading a sentence and its meaning appear frequently to be on two different levels which he has great difficulty integrating. Following is an unusual example of his failure to unify his experience in a manner that would make possible the use of context cues. He was having difficulty with the word "drive" in the sentence, "A hammer is used to drive nails." With help he finally succeeded and read the sentence several times correctly. Immediately the teacher asked him, "A hammer is used for what?" naturally expecting him to say, "to drive nails," but he replied, "for poundin' nails in."

(5) The use of procedures to integrate kinesthetic cues with the reading process did not appear to help Robert. One reason for failure was his tendency to attempt to spell the word rather than to grasp the total gestalt. While writ-

ing a word from memory he would whisper the letters. He unwittingly turned the task into one of auditory memory span. It seems likely that he spelled because he was unable to make the type of integration which this method is supposed to promote.

(6) One very peculiar aspect of his reading behavior was a tendency, on occasion, to perseverate bizarre errors or unusual responses. For example: the teacher once pronounced the word "small" in two parts when helping him to attack it phonetically—thus, "sum-all." Thereafter, whenever he saw the word he pronounced it exactly in this way, but without comprehension of its meaning. He would repeat this three or four times with puzzlement and usually arrive finally at the word "small." The peculiar feature of his performance was that he always recognized immediately that he was wrong, but never managed to eliminate the intermediate "sum-all" repetitions. This occurred even after a lapse of five weeks. Similarly, imitating the teacher in some long past tutoring session, he always pronounced the "k" sound in the word "make" with an explosive emphasis. The "k's" in other words were not given this special treatment. The word "have" he can respond to correctly at least half of the time, but the rest of the time he reads it as "havery" and is unable to correct himself. (This mistake began in a lesson in which he confused "have and every"). The unusual feature in this performance is the inconsistent alternation of correct and incorrect response, and the prolonged *perseveration of a nonsense word as a response*.

Sears¹⁰ has described a boy who showed a remarkably similar type of error perseveration. Describing this phenomenon he states, "One day he read *luck* as *lunck*, reading—for him—rather hastily. He had previously been able to read this word correctly and had not shown any tendency to insert *n* in the other words. However, once he had made the mistake, he seemed utterly unable to correct himself. He sounded the word slowly l-u-k, several times, but immediately afterwards would read it as *lunck*."

In general, it was difficult to systematize Robert's reading errors in a search for consistent patterns that could provide a starting point for training. His response to an unknown word was usually either a "don't know" or a wild guess based frequently, but not always, on the sound of the first letter. Typical responses are the following: "ig" for "his," "an" for "did," "way" for "white," "tariff" for "tell."

Robert seldom was able to read a word which he did not know immediately; he did not have a usable method of word attack. Furthermore, he never displayed any evidence of sudden insights into relationships between words or word parts. Growth occurred by the very slow, non-insightful accretion of rote learnings.

ETIOLOGICAL POSSIBILITIES

In attempting exploration of the causes for Robert's reading difficulties it is obvious that we must also consider his other verbal difficulties, since they

must be intimately related to the reading problem. In view of his very adequate functioning on performance tests and a verbal IQ adequate for some reading achievement, simply attributing his difficulties to "mental deficiency" would be a very unsatisfying explanation. Some pathological factors must be disturbing certain functions while leaving others unimpaired. Very roughly, his difficulties may be assumed to be psychogenic, somatogenic, or a combination of the two.

What are the evidences, first, that his reading difficulties are due to gross social-emotional immaturity? While his childhood environment was far from ideal we do not know enough about his early relationships to speculate profitably about their importance. We do, know something of his personality patterns during his residence at the Training School. His apparent motivation for learning has often seemed very poor. One teacher summarized a report on his progress with the statement, "It has been impossible to create any desire in the boy to learn to read, spell, work arithmetic, or anything else." This rather desperate comment well expresses the feelings of frustration one experiences in working with him. Similarly, a psychologist described his reactions in another learning situation as follows: "His thinking appears to be disrupted by associations irrelevant to the problem to be solved. He acts as if he is primarily concerned with his relationship to the teacher at the expense of his relationship to the materials with which he is working. In an endless number of ways he shows his

¹⁰ Sears, R. Characteristics and Trainability of a Case of Special Reading Disability at the Moron Level," *J. of Inv. Res.*, 1935, 19, 135-145.

lack of concern for accomplishment *per se*."

He has always seemed a relatively immature and passive child. He sucked his finger or hand frequently as late as his 13th year. The following series of comments from his cottage parents covering a six year period consistently describe an affect hungry and passive child: "(Robert) . . . hangs around employees as much as he can . . . very little good on any job. . . . He does not appear to try to learn anything, all he wants to do is look sweet and do nothing . . . (Robert) has to be encouraged to take part in group play. . . . He'd much rather be around employees where he can visit and talk." At present at the age of 15 he is quite immature. His interpersonal relationships seem to be limited to the level of childish self-seeking and dependence; it is difficult to imagine him in the outside world assuming responsibility for himself.

However, before concluding that his present emotional situation is adequate to account for his reading disturbance two factors should be considered. First, it is plausible, and even likely, that a serious *primary* learning difficulty could account for this immaturity. The emotional immaturity may be result instead of cause. Secondly, since all verbal learning seems seriously impaired, any psychogenic explanation must be prepared to account for this fact as well as for his reading retardation. Even if psychotherapy were regarded as the treatment of choice, it would seem obvious that an intensive and prolonged re-training in verbal skills would also be necessary to make up for past de-

velopmental losses, if indeed that is possible at all.

On the other hand, the breadth of his verbal deficiencies may indicate an aphasia-like handicap based on some type of cerebral anomaly or injury. However, there are no case history data clearly supporting this assumption. An EEG record taken recently during this study offers some very meagre, but certainly inclusive, support for this hypothesis. Following is a short excerpt from the report:

"EEG record is borderline to mildly abnormal and non-specific in character . . . no focus of abnormality on or near the surface of the brain, no evidence of temporal lobe focus and no true abortive generalized three per second spike-wave discharges occur."

There are reported in the history none of the trauma or symptoms customarily assembled to support a diagnosis of brain-injury. One peculiarity in his hereditary background deserves mention: he is the product of incest, his father being also his maternal grandfather. It is known that his mother had difficulty in school and was eventually placed in special classes. Perhaps weaknesses present in the mother and grandfather have been compounded to produce in him an atypical pattern of abilities. However, it should be noted that the mother's home was broken early in her life and that she spend most of her childhood in an orphanage; thus the etiology of her school difficulties is also open to question.

Finally, it is possible, of course, that both emotional and organic factors have been present from the first and

that the interaction of the two has been necessary to produce the unusual discrepancies in Robert's performance. In evaluating the total picture we are inclined to the view that some type of integration defect of organic origin

is of primary importance. What the specific pathology may be we are in no position to judge, but the wide scatter on tests of intelligence would suggest some localized brain dysfunction.

THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AT WAYNE COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL

SIDNEY ROSENBLUM

CHILDREN selected for the Training School are those for whom the prognostic picture is considered positive. They are children for whom community and school experiences have been difficult and non-rewarding in the past, and for whom the opportunity for psycho-educational rehabilitation in the setting of a treatment institution is deemed urgent so that salvage can be effected of what are potentially socially and economically adequate human beings. These children carry with them a label of "mental retardation" upon entering the School, but each child is approached with the anticipation that *real* changes, in a positive direction, will result in many spheres after a relatively brief period of re-education and training.

It is precisely this thesis—that intellectual and personality growth are to be expected from our population—that determines the nature and scope of services offered by the Department of Psychology. Our purpose is twofold: first, we maintain comprehensive checks on this growth through psychological techniques calculated to gauge

anticipated progress. Specifically, this involves the *continual* assessment of a child's intellectual, academic, and personality development through tests and measurements for as long as he remains in residence. Second, we aim to help our children, through specialized counseling and playtherapy contacts, to effect a psychologically satisfying adjustment to Training School life, and, more important, to develop the necessary social skills and techniques that will aid materially in their successful personality adjustment once they return to the community. In most cases, potential candidates for such specialized contacts are screened as a function of the initial and continuing psychological evaluations administered to each child during his residence.

The above-stated objectives require two fundamental prerequisites if they are to be achieved satisfactorily. First, the Department must be staffed with sufficient numbers of qualified psychologists who are not mere "IQ testers" but sensitive, objective clinicians well-grounded in current knowledge concerning all phases of child development

and personality theory, competently trained in the use of a variety of technical instruments specific to their profession, and practised in the techniques utilized in the process of emotional re-education of young children. They must also have an experiential background of work with the special type of subject with whom we deal—the educable, high-grade mentally retarded child, who more closely resembles his average-intelligence peer than the low-grade, custodial-clinical-type child or adult with whom he is grouped, oftentimes indiscriminately, under the rubric, "feeble-minded."

The other prerequisite is that the School must have the right to refuse to accept children who are incapable of responding adequately to the rehabilitation program. It must limit the numbers of children accepted for placement so that effective, continual psychological service can be guaranteed to those admitted. Assigned the additional task of assessing and serving great numbers of low-grade, custodial mental defectives with poor prognostic pictures would constitute gross mismanagement of the psychologist's time and efforts. This is not to imply that custodial cases do not need and deserve the benefits of competent psychological service. What is meant is that the special type of child we have in residence at the Training School would suffer unduly if placed in a situation requiring him to compete for adequate psychological attention with great numbers of custodial-clinical-type cases for whom, it is agreed, not as much can

be done in the way of psycho-educational rehabilitation.

In addition to providing service for our own student population, the Department of Psychology is concerned with the evaluation and study of children from the villages and rural areas of Wayne County where psychological service is not otherwise provided. Most of these children are referred at the request of the Visiting Teacher; some come through public agencies where a question of admission is involved. Conferences with one or both parents before and after the child is seen provide important supplemental information and the opportunity to present findings and recommendations directly in a therapeutic atmosphere.

In sum, then, the Department of Psychology functions, in the main, as a unit of professional specialists providing a population of high-grade mentally retarded children who learn and mature in predictable fashion, with early and continuing diagnostic-prognostic evaluations, and, for those most in need, specialized treatment programs of emotional re-education. Because of the rapid turnover in population, these services have been administered to large numbers of children over the years, and have constituted one contribution, among the many afforded by the Training School, to the ultimate personal and social salvage of potentially useful and worthwhile human beings. In addition, services are provided to a large group of non-resident children who are referred on an out-patient basis for intensive psychodiagnostic evaluation.