

THE WAYNE COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL PROGRAM *

THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN

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I. PROGRAM

ANY program in the Wayne County Training School must be considered in the light of the broad objectives of the school itself and the general characteristics of its children.

A. The main purpose of the school is to rehabilitate higher grade mentally defective children through training and guidance for their return to the community. In operation, the practice of making many community replacements and receiving many new children, has produced a very low and constant average chronological age. The present average age of 14 years, 8 months, has never varied more than 10 months. This fundamental aim of aiding the individual child to find his place and to make his way in society permeates all program planning.

B. The characteristics of the children may be expressed in terms of a variety of abilities and handicaps.

1. Many of our children have attitudes and personal, social habits which are not acceptable to society, i.e., in the

home, in the school and in the community.

2. Some show the effects of having been exposed to extremely inferior and adverse environments.
3. The majority have Stanford Binet I.Q.'s between 60 and 75. A few have higher I.Q.'s and some others have I.Q.'s between 50 and 60.

The above grouping is not meant to represent character types but is merely an enumeration of the outstanding traits found in our children. It is to be emphasized that intelligence as expressed by tests is considered to be an important factor and is still a principal consideration when planning a program for efficient learning, particularly in the academic field.

II. STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CENTRAL SCHOOL

Let us first consider the structure and organization of the Central School, or the school organization within the Training School. The regular school day consists of classes in handicrafts, academic subjects, homemaking, shops and special subjects. Each is considered vital and of equal importance in the training plan. The several programs fit into a total scheme, each making its special contribution to an over-all educational plan.

* From the Wayne County Training School, Northville, Michigan. Robert H. Haskell, M.D., Medical Superintendent; Thorleif G. Hegge, Ph.D., Director of Research and Education. Presented in the Section on "Educational Programs in Residential Schools," 70th Annual Meeting of the American Association on Mental Deficiency, Montreal, Canada, October 2-5, 1946.

- A. The pupil's time is divided equally between academic and manual activity classes on the basis of a four period day. At fifteen a boy or girl may take advantage of vocational training on a part time basis, if it is felt that such a program would be beneficial. At the age of sixteen an opportunity is given for full time vocational training in the operation and maintenance areas of the school, such as the kitchen, carpenter shop and bakery.
- B. The school year is divided into three terms and a reception class established for new entrants. Changes are made and classes re-organized at the end of each term. These features were installed to meet the problem of high pupil turnover.
- C. Three means are available for the educational evaluation of children.
1. An annual testing program is administered in May and provides a complete and uniform measure of academic achievement. The Metropolitan Achievement Tests are used for this purpose. In evaluating results interest is in paragraph reading and computation. The former, which we believe is the essence of reading skill, requires word recognition, skill in attacking unknown words and comprehension of the text. The latter requires number concepts and an understanding of the fundamental processes in arithmetic.
 2. Semi-annual reports by the teachers are made on each child. These are descriptive reports for the clinical record and adjustment ratings by means of the Wayne County Training School Rating Scales for Adjustment.
 3. Special reports from the teachers and from other departments, together with numerous psychological and diagnostic tests and inventories covering the main areas of child growth and development, provide additional material for the educational evaluation of individual children.
- D. In order to obtain fairly homogeneous groups, academic classes are organized after studied attention of each child's record in the light of several factors, namely:
1. The present level of accomplishment;
 2. Composition of the present and the potential class;
 3. The pupils ability as well as past performance or gains;
 4. The chronological age;
 5. Individual factors such as personality traits and maturity.
- Principles followed in the organization of shop classes are different from those just mentioned; enrollment is based principally upon chronological age.
- E. The objective of the curriculum in academic classes is based upon the broad concept of all educational experiences, which we may refer to as "growth of the whole child." We are aware of the pupil's need to be given oppor-

tunities in which he may explore topics individually, work cooperatively with his classmates, utilize his skills, etc. The specific aim of this curriculum is two-fold:

1. To develop skill in the tool subjects: reading, arithmetic, spelling and writing.
2. To impart general and practical information.

III. METHODS EMPLOYED IN ACADEMIC CLASSES

A. Activity. It is felt that children working together on activities of general interest grow in initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, cooperation and other desirable traits. Social studies and science topics are rich in activity possibilities. The content of the basic reading material was selected in terms of these subjects.

B. Systematic Presentation. Systematic presentation is the chief concern of the authors of textbooks, workbooks, and manuals. Judicious choice of these materials is made to see that they:

1. Present interesting practical material;
2. Present vocabulary and fundamentals in logical sequence;
3. Present attacks and cues for new material as a part of the regular program;
4. Provide for repetition and supplementary aids.

C. The Unit System. The unit system is a device which divides the essential subject matter into progressive units of work. This makes possible small, easily obtainable

learning goals. A child's present standing in terms of units is determined and his expected progress for the coming term is indicated by a goal. Setting the number of units as the goal expected of a pupil for the coming term is based upon factors which determine the individual's educational prognosis. Establishing individual achievement goals will be recognized as a device for stimulating self competition and for taking individual differences into account. Goals are set so that they are always within the child's range of ability.

Recognition of work well done is sound practice from both the pedagogical and mental hygiene points of view. Recognition of school achievement is contingent upon a child meeting or beating the goals set at the beginning of each term. When a child meets or beats his goals, he is given encouragement by receiving a certificate of accomplishment in a general assembly and by having his name included on the honor roll posted in the main school hall and on the cottage bulletin boards.

IV. MANUAL ACTIVITIES

As has been mentioned, pupils spend half of the school day in academic classes and half in manual activity classes. For girls the latter includes domestic activities such as handicraft, sewing, cooking and the like; for the boys, they comprise shop programs in miscellaneous handwork, general shop, wood shop, print shop, sheet metal shop, and machine shop. Such courses

serve as a preparation for vocational training and are considered an additional medium for the adjustment of the children.

V. FEATURES TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND TO WHICH WE ARE GIVING FURTHER PLANNING AND ATTENTION

A. The Reception Class. The organizational purpose of this class is to accept new pupils as they enter the Training School, in order to avoid any regrouping of other sections, during the school terms. New entrants remain in this class until the beginning of the next term, at which time they are placed in appropriate classes. The necessity and the value of such a class is apparent, when one considers the turnover in population. During the past school year, for example, we found a turnover of 271 pupils, 126 pupils leaving and 145 entering. This is rather typical of what has taken place in previous years. The teaching aims of the reception class are to:

1. Eradicate unwholesome attitudes related to attending and advancing in school, at the same time establishing acceptable classroom behavior.
2. Evaluate the present accomplishment and to begin instruction at the level of achievement.
3. Provide an opportunity for the child to become acquainted with the school system, the equipment, the teachers and activities.

B. A Functional Course for the

Lower Ability Group. We will not give an account of this course at this time, except to call attention to its place in the educational scheme. The program will be described in full by the teacher in charge in another publication.

C. Writing Course. With a group of girls of young mental age we are exploring ways in teaching writing. Three features are felt to be important: visual, kinaesthetic and verbal. Visually, by seeing the letter in several ways as in variety of colors, media (chalf, ink, etc.) and sizes (broad, thin, large, small); kinaesthetically, through the use of sandpaper letters which the child may trace with his finger; verbally, by describing or repeating the strokes orally as the letter is written. The introduction of learning the formation of the letters of the alphabet would be preceded by specific directions in drawing. Letters would be presented in groups having similar characteristics and the name and sound associated with the symbol.

D. Homemaking Course. Classes are scheduled to give girls intensive instruction in housekeeping and related activities. The group is composed of girls approaching vocational training and are chosen according to their ability, interests and aptitudes. The activities may be outlined as follows:

1. Personal factors which constitute homemaking: (a) the individual's place in the home as a member of the family or

- employee; (b) self development through the appreciation and practice of improved manner and personal appearance; (c) profitable and enjoyable use of leisure time; (d) entertaining, assisting an employer, acceptable ways of answering the door or telephone and of meeting guests; (e) importance of good social habits; (f) budgeting personal and family incomes.
2. Housekeeping. Parallel to the above, practical applications of housekeeping tasks are included as learned through the care and cleaning of furniture, stoves, silver, glassware, cooking utensils, and all household equipment.
 3. Meal Planning. This covers menus, table setting, marketing, storing foods, preparing and serving ordinary family and some special meals.
 4. Laundering. Both hand and machine methods in laundering household articles of rayon, wool, cotton, work clothes; removing stains and proper methods of hanging and drying. These are followed by instructions in the most suitable manner of ironing laces, embroidery, seams, hems; sponging and pressing as well as folding, mending and repairing garments.
 5. Interior Decoration as utilized in making curtains and draperies, household linens, painting walls and furniture, placing pictures and mirrors, arranging closets and cupboards.
- E. Remedial Reading. It was apparent many years ago that individualized remedial reading procedures should be an integral part of our educational program. For this purpose of individual analysis, our teacher is particularly fortunate in having the clinical records, which give a comprehensive overview of each child referred for aid and include such special examinations and directions as may have been requested. With this information, plus her own skills, she is well able to discern the causes of reading retardation. Once analysis is accomplished, the following retraining steps are followed:
1. Establishing the lowest points at which reading facility is apparent, for it is only by beginning at the most solid part of the foundation that weaknesses can be strengthened and faulty habits corrected.
 2. By building, if necessary, a sight vocabulary through association by illustration or by placement.
 3. By developing independence in word approach by acquiring skill in the use of phonetics. The Hegge-Kirk Drills form the basis of this approach, supplemented by other methods as the case may indicate to be beneficial.
 4. By gaining ease and facility in the use of the mechanics of

reading in the comprehension of suitable reading matter.

F. Course in the Introduction to Occupations. This course, which is based upon the practical needs of older boys, is now in the process of development. Certain boys now receiving some vocational training are continuing with further academic instruction plus this course in occupational education. The objectives of this course are:

1. To acquaint boys with a variety of jobs in the community which may be suitable for their interests and abilities.
2. To acquaint them with the sources of employment and a manner in which application may be made.
3. To acquaint the boys with situations which are a part of independent community living as transportation, buying, saving, sickness and entertainment.
4. To review requirements which may be demanded other than skill in performance — more specifically: health requirements in food handling jobs, requirements as to appearance and manner in service jobs, reliability, steadiness, punctuality, and the like.
5. To give an appreciation of compensation which might be expected and items which it will be required to cover.

The activities, which will best accomplish these ends are not yet determined, but it is expected that a combination of visiting, reporting on various aspects of

the present vocational assignment, reading, pertinent information furnished by the teacher and other concrete methods will best suit the purpose. The aim of the venture was most simply and adequately expressed by one of the pupils who responded to a former teacher's query regarding his school work. Chancing to meet on the sidewalk one afternoon, they walked along together and she asked, "What are you having in school this year, Robert?" His reply was all inclusive; "I'm getting along pretty well in my reading and arithmetic; I'm learning how to do things in a bakery, and my teacher is teaching us what we need to know to keep a job after we learn how to do it." This is a boy's understanding of the important part of the occupational education.

G. For several years we have had an academic class for brain-crippled children. This has been developed under the direction of Dr. Alfred A. Strauss. The Prolonged Pre-academic Program has been in operation for ten years under the direction of a psychologist. The shop and vocational training program is a part of the educational plan and is directed by the vocational supervisor and associates. These units are all broad subjects and deserving of separate presentation. As a matter of fact, they have been described in the literature by these special supervisors and their associates.

We have reviewed the school program quite extensively and have seen how this is but one aspect of the total Training School program. There are

two other sections in the educational plan which we wish to outline, namely, the recreation program and religious education.

VI. RECREATION PROGRAM

This section includes:

- A. Classes in physical education emphasizing instruction in games, sports, dancing, some calisthenics and swimming. Each child is scheduled for at least one class per week.
- B. Activities during leisure hours, which comprise participation in seasonal games, music, handicraft, hobbies, tournaments, competitive games, programs and the like.
- C. Organizations and clubs, having membership based on individual choice or need and the formal requirements. Activities are in accord with the general plan of each organization.
- D. Programs. Each holiday lends itself to special celebration with observance in accord with the meaning and customs built around the day. Certain occasions call for planned presentations as at Christmas, patriotic holidays, Children's Day and similar holidays. These programs are exceptional because only those activities which are within the children's ability are attempted. Music and rhythmic make up the major portion and when combined with a simple setting and colorful costumes provide a charming and effective presentation.
- E. Vacation Program. During the summer vacation period of two

months a staff of workers conducts a total recreation program. An effort is made to secure the services of workers whose specialties are varied.

- F. Music. Music is considered an unusually desirable aspect of our total plan and is given a prominent place. Every child has at least one period of music instruction with his class each week. Other music groups are formed on the basis of aptitude and interest. There are several such groups, as: Girls' Glee Club, Junior and Senior Choruses, Church Choirs, Plantation Singers and Solo Preparation class. Emphasis in music instruction is placed upon singing, since this activity is within the ability of our group, has particular value in its carry-over to possible post-school experience, and is of therapeutic importance in giving emotional release. Some rhythmic training is given through the use of rhythm bands and in conjunction with physical education activities.

VII. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

When a child is removed from his home, there are responsibilities placed upon the residence school, as a parent surrogate, which other agencies need not assume and may indeed ignore. We refer to spiritual or moral guidance. Theoretically, acceptable moral standards would be expected to evolve from growth in social consciousness and behavior. Our civilization has found it desirable and expedient to attain this standard through the teachings of the

church. Therefore, continuing and fostering these teachings is incumbent upon the agency caring for the child who is separated from his family. Respect for the family choice is imperative. Arranging for spiritual guidance is the responsibility of the resident school, but providing it formally is the responsibility of the religious groups concerned. These arrangements cover provision of suitable accommodations, necessary materials, assurance of the children's regular attendance, and encouragement given to them in their religious practices and activities. The Wayne County Training School has three major groups for whom religious activities are conducted:

A. The Jewish Faith. The local Temple or Council sends one of their religious education teachers to hold the meetings with the children of this faith. The method is entirely in the hands of this person who adapts or presents the material according to his own discretion.

B. The Roman Catholic Faith. The spiritual needs of Catholic children are ministered to by a Catholic Priest appointed by the Archbishop. In his duties as Chaplain he reads the Sunday Mass, hears weekly confessions, arranges for First Holy Communion classes and administers the Sacraments.

The Chancery office also provides for catechism instruction for all children of school age. Sisters from a teaching order, stationed in one of the nearby parishes, come once each week to hold these classes.

C. The Protestant Faiths. Chapel service on Sunday is conducted by an ordained minister or trained religious education worker. The following review is taken from the chaplain's recent report.

The type of service found most desirable is a worship service common to most denominations. The various elements of a worship service (music, scripture reading, sermon, etc.) are woven into a pattern of ritual which varies weekly only in content.

The choice of material requires thought and discrimination with selections based primarily upon the wide and popular use in many different denominations. Active participation by the congregation is necessary and stimulates individual and group inspiration. In order not to hamper ease in participation, the order of procedure is consistent and an opportunity is provided to learn many new hymns, readings and the like. Preliminary teaching adds correspondingly in meaning and devotion to the worship service.

Sermons are artfully simple and concise stories carrying the message and the theme being emphasized. In an effort to retain the flavor of the Biblical writings, only necessary substitutions are made in terms ordinarily associated with this literature. In a review of subjects and themes covering a two year period, one senses the logical and comprehensive sequence of the Biblical material presented.

The carry-over of any moral teachings is slow and unmeasurable. The contribution of the special robed choir and the aid of staff members in setting an example and encouraging the children in religious practices are invaluable.

The aims have been approximated through the development of:

1. An interest and satisfaction in regular church attendance.
2. A growing spirit of worship.
3. Acquaintance with the elements of worship used in Protestant churches.

4. An understanding of stories in the Bible, their moral implication, and meaning in our present day.
5. Steps toward the acceptance of the principle that upright character evolves through the application of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The foregoing has sketched the main aspects of the educational division.

These seemingly separate and distinct educational sections which have just been reviewed are not isolated pieces. On the contrary, they are all designs which form a mosaic, fitting neatly into the educational pattern.