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WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED PUPILS WITHOUT SPECIAL CLASSES

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WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO MEET
THE NEEDS OF THE MENTALLY RETARDED PUPILS
WITHOUT SPECIAL CLASSES

A Problem Submitted to the Graduate Division in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Science

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James William Easter

KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Pittsburg, Kansas

May, 1951

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

It is generally agreed that between one and two per cent of the school population is sufficiently retarded mentally to warrant a special method of instruction and a differentiated curriculum.

A child with retarded mental development presents a problem to the school primarily because of his inability to learn. He is a problem to the community because of his general social incompetence.

The general objectives of education of the mentally retarded do not differ materially from the general objectives for the education of all children. There is some difference, however, in the specific objectives insofar as they are related to the specific characteristics of mental retardation, and to the ultimate social and economic role of the individual with retarded mental development.

In view of these facts, it remains the responsibility of the school to give this type of child the training that will serve best his individual needs and which will make him a citizen who will serve his community according to his talents.

This study will be a proposal as to what can be done for these large number of children in the elementary school who are mentally retarded to the extent that they are unable to keep pace with the normal school program.

It is our aim to present methods and suggestions for teaching the mentally retarded in the regular classroom without separation to special classes.

Value of Study

It is the hope of the writer that this study will be of value to the teachers who are working in rural and small urban communities where no special classes are available and who must provide for exceptional children as members of their own groups of supposedly normal children.

The writer also hopes that the study will be of value to those teachers of special classes who lack constructive supervision and adequate preparation for this specialized type of education.

It is further hoped that this study will be of value to prospective teachers who are entering the teaching profession.

Method of Procedure

Library facilities were used to a great extent. Periodicals presented the most recent developments in the programs for the mentally retarded children.

Materials were secured from various departments of education. Interviews with teachers and school administrators were made to gain opinions in helping to formulate the best procedure for handling retarded children when no special classes are available.

Limitations of Study

The study is limited to the mentally retarded children who have intelligence quotients of sixty and above. No attempt was made to include the child of lower mentality. For the individuals below that level, with possibly few exceptional cases, the public school can do little.

Consideration of these lower levels must rest with administrative agencies that can assume twenty-four hours custodial care in addition to teaching performance of simple tasks and development of desirable habits.

CHAPTER II

DIFFERENTIATION WITH RESPECT TO CURRICULUM FOR MENTALLY RETARDED

Philosophies and practices of the modern school differ greatly from those of the school of yesterday. The majority of teachers now believe that a much better educational situation is obtained when children are kept in their own social age groups, and the curriculum is adjusted to the nature and needs of the individual child.¹ This is based on the fact that regardless of mental retardation, the child is better off emotionally with children of his own size and age. A better educational environment is obtained when the group is comparatively homogeneous socially, but heterogeneous academically.

The progressive school takes the point of view that there is no such thing as fifth grade arithmetic, third grade spelling, and seventh grade geography, which every one must study. Rather, the child is taken at this point of achievement and developed in the various learning areas as he is capable of progressing.² For some children the place to begin learning to read books is in the first

¹F. G. Macomber, Guiding Child Development In The Elementary School, (New York: American Book Company), p. 235.

²Ibid., p. 236.

grade, for others, the second, and third grade. Children are not failed on their ability or lack of ability to read books, or do certain specific work in a given grade, but they are promoted along with their social age group, and the curriculum is adjusted to meet the child's individual ability.

Another point of view which might be presented here states that homogeneity of children does not ever actually exist, only in respect to chronological age. They are heterogeneous in abilities, needs, and interests and achievements. As more is known about children it is discovered that no "average child" exists because children do not fit into patterns determined by norms.³ In other words, there are no grades such as the third or fourth grade because each child is different, no child has the same degree of school performance, social maturity, or manual dexterity.⁴

Taking these foregoing facts and philosophies, it is assumed that no standardized curriculum may be set up in the modern school. The curriculum must be made up of broad and varied experiences, with the children under the guidance of teachers whose chief purpose is to lead

³Kate V. Wofford, Teaching In Small Schools, (New York: MacMillian Company, 1946), p. 69.

⁴Ibid., p. 70.

them into learning situations which will develop their capacities for full and rich living.

Classifying Mentally Retarded Children

Classification of students as mentally retarded is oftentimes based on the fact that because the students are unable to satisfactorily attain the goal specified for the so-called normal student, they are said to be retarded mentally and can not learn along with the other students.

There must be some definite proof or foundation for determining whether a student is retarded mentally. There may be some other cause other than mentality that is responsible for the situation.

Mild handicaps can sometimes be as serious as major ones. The child with a minor hearing defect which is uncorrected, misses much of the discussions and explanations, and is unable to profit fully as the child with normal hearing. The deficiency over a period of years becomes extremely great. A similiarity to this type of deficiency is the child with a mild vision defect. He tires easily, and can not see the written material at the front of the room.⁵

In a like manner, physical handicaps of a mild nature which go unnoticed contribute their quoto for classifying a child as retarded.

⁵Harry J. Baker, Introduction to Exceptional Children (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1944), p. 431.

Causes of mild mental and psychotic nature may also be a contributing factor toward retardation. The petit mal type of epilepsy which is not detected may be a fundamental cause.⁶

Another group of factors which may readily contribute to retardation are factors pertaining to the emotional and personality development of the child.⁷

Using the foregoing statements as some of the fundamental causes of supposedly retardation, it is the writer's opinion that there should be some definite means of discovering the mentally retarded child.

With the first step of the teacher recognition of the maladjustment of the child, the second step is the application of an intelligence test. There are two kinds of intelligence tests, that may be given--the individual test and the group test. The individual test is given to one child at a time by a teacher or one specifically trained in psychological testing. The group test may be given to an entire class at one time. No teacher should attempt to give either of these test unless he is trained, or working under proper supervision. The

⁶Harry J. Baker, Introduction To Exceptional Children (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1944), p. 433.

⁷Ibid., p. 434.

The individual test is expressed in terms of "mental age". Group tests give scores that may be converted into the mental age.⁸

This mental age shows the level of the child's intellectual ability at the time of the test, and if we divide the mental age by his chronological age at the same date, the result gives his intelligence quotient.

With the results of a test, the teacher has a sound basis upon which to establish his belief of the child if the test is in collaboration with his judgement of the retardation. If the results are negative to the judgement of the teacher, some of the previous statements concerning factors which may be contributing to retardation other than mental ability may be responsible.

The educational and cumulative records can serve as helpful data for making a more extensive exploration, and also data concerning the background of the individual pupil can be of great help.

Characteristics of the Retarded Child

The characteristics of the mentally retarded child found in either a metropolitan area or in a rural community are usually the same in composition, potentially speaking.

⁸The Forty-Ninth Yearbook of the National Society For Study of Education, Part II: The Education of Exceptional Children (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 238.

In a recent article entitled, "Teaching the Slow-Learner", by Dr. Helen Blair Sullivan,⁹ are presented a number of characteristics which characterize the slow-learning or mentally retarded child.

The following principles summarize the characteristics that may be recognizable in the retarded child:

1. Short attention and concentration span.
2. Slow reaction time.
3. Limited ability to evaluate materials for revelancy.
4. Limited powers of self-direction.
5. Limited ability to work with abstractions to generalize.
6. Slowness to form association between words and ideas.
7. Failure to recognize familiar elements in new situations.
8. Habit of learning very slowly and forgetting very easily.
9. Possession of a very local point of view.
10. Inability to set up and realize standards of workmanship.
11. Lack of originality or creativeness.

⁹Helen Blair Sullivan, "Teaching The Slow-Learner," National Education Association Journal, XL (February, 1951) pp. 115-16.

12. Inability to analyze, do problem solving, or critical thinking.
13. Lack of power to use the higher mental processes.

The preceding list of characteristics suggest, from the standpoint of the writer, the modifications that may be used as a basis for instruction for retarded individuals.

Goals and General Attainments of the Mentally Retarded

The goals for the education of the mentally retarded must be clear and meaningful. The school must give these children those things which will best fit them to function effectively, usefully, and happily in the situation in which they will find themselves, and to reduce as greatly as possible the number who will become public charges.¹⁰

First, certain of these goals will differ in nature from the goals of normal children because the future for each will be different. Second, a difference in emphasis is placed on common goals. Third, the degree of complexity

¹⁰Harold C. Smith, "Techniques in Attaining Goals For the Education of the Mentally Retarded," Journal of Exceptional Children, XIII (October, 1946) p. 10.

and difficulty of achievement differ so markedly. Fourth, these goals are set forth in terms of attitudes, skills, and behavior.¹¹

In close connection with these specific goals, specific attainments of what these mentally retarded children may reasonably be expected to achieve during their elementary school years must also be set up before planning a definite program.

The following table is a suggestive list of goals and general attainments on the primary level upon which the teacher may partially base the instructive procedures for the retarded child.

¹¹Office of Education: Curriculum Adjustments for the Mentally Retarded, Else H. Martens (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1950) p. 20.

TABLE I

GOALS AND GENERAL ATTAINMENTS OF MENTALLY RETARDED
DURING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Health, Physical, and Mental	Motor Skills and Working Knowledge of Tool Subjects
<p>Use of and regard for simple health habits and safety rules; some sense of responsibility for carrying out some of the simple health habits and safety rules; a feeling of friendliness towards nurses and doctors.</p> <p>Development of habits and attitudes of obedience, honesty, self control, thrift, orderliness, industry, and perserverence, cooperation, cheerfulness, courtesy, unselfishness, punctuality, reliability in home and school situations.</p> <p>Cleanliness strongly emphasized.</p> <p>Good habits in development of teeth, hair, skin, nails, should be firmly established.</p>	<p>Every opportunity should be given to the development of motor coordination.</p> <p>Power to express meanings and desires in words and through concrete materials--listening, talking, playing, drawings, constructing, and writing.</p> <p>A desire to learn to read; an interest in books; the establishment of beginning reading foundation.</p> <p>Interest in numbers and its uses: counting, and use of simple combination and subtraction facts.</p>

TABLE I
(Continued)

Family and Vocational Life	Community Life	Use of Leisure
<p>Use of such mediums as paper, clay, wood, and cloth; to carry out activities; simple hand skills in the use of tools and materials.</p> <p>Beginning appreciation of members of family and ways to help in home.</p> <p>Protection of the weak and helpful.</p> <p>Respect for law and order.</p> <p>Practice of Golden Rule.</p>	<p>Participation and enjoyment of experiences in the immediate environment--with groups in the home, school, and neighborhood; a beginning appreciation of people who help us.</p> <p>Privileges and responsibilities of citizens.</p> <p>Learn to appreciate good music, art, beautiful paintings, good movies, and other artistic creations.</p>	<p>Participation and enjoyment in games, poetry, stories, songs and rhymes.</p>

The preceding table suggests possible goals and attainments that the school and teacher might use in planning the curriculum to include the mentally retarded in the regular classroom. It is evident that numerous experiences and specific learnings must take place in order to realize these goals and attainments.

No specific method has been accepted that best fits the mentally retarded in the regular classroom, however, the writer is of the opinion that the most effective method to be used in the regular classroom is that of the development of units of experience to fit the entire group, whenever possible, and the process of grouping of the students for instruction of the fundamental tool subjects.

Throughout the education of retarded children, it must be remembered that the more concrete the work and the more interested the pupil, the greater chance there is for him to profit by the activities of the classroom. The retarded child does not think in terms of generalities, he learns essentially by doing, therefore, it will be beneficial if all of the subjects to be presented will be in collaboration with certain experiences.¹²

As in other programs, there is a time in a child's life when certain aspects have more color and meaning than

¹²Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child. (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1935), p. 167.

at other times. The unit of experience is introduced to facilitate the organization of experiences at levels at which they are most helpful in the child's living. It is based on the concept that education should consist of rich and varied experiences in the performance of the basic functions of social living rather than the mastery of certain skills and the learning of a body of conventional subject matter.¹³

The unit of experience, according to the majority of educators, accomplished best the goals and attainments of the retarded child, by permitting him to experience day by day the skills that are necessary for carrying out in reality the activities of daily life. The unit of experience can be adapted to correlate with practically every subject in the curriculum.¹⁴

Units of experience may vary with every group of children, but there are three basic principles to keep in mind which give to a well developed unit of experience, and its value. First, the experience or activity must be real, and not imaginary. Second, the experience must provide for cooperative living, and third, the results

¹³Office of Education: Curriculum Adjustments for the Mentally Retarded, Else H. Martens, (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1950) p. 19.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 20.

should be emotionally, physically + mentally satisfying to the ch.

should be emotionally, physically, and mentally satisfying to the child.

To illustrate the principles underlying units of experience, the writer has made an attempt to develop three units of experience for a first or second grade class.

It is the writer's aim to show how one unit of experience may lead to other similar units. The following illustrative units of experience consist of a unit on "Pets", a unit on "Farm Animals and Farm Life", and a unit on "The Home".

As it has been previously stated some units lead to the development of units of related nature. In this case, the unit on "Pets" led to the development of the unit on "Farm Animals and Farm Life" which in turn lead to the development of the unit on "The Home".

Experience Unit on Pets

Interest may be stimulated first by numerous pictures of pets around on the walls, and books with pictures about pets. Stories may also be read to the children about pets each having an opportunity to tell about their pet at home.

Encourage the children to bring their pets to school. This may arouse such enthusiasm and interest that a Pet Show would be arranged and presented by the class.

Records on the unit are to be maintained on each phase of activity by the teacher for the purpose of review of what has been accomplished.

Arrangements may be made to have the children make visits to various places, for an example, to the rabbitry to learn the stages of development of rabbits, and secure information on the care of rabbits. Further development in the unit on pets may be the keeping of pets at school. Activities in the construction of pens for pets, the feeding, and the necessity of sanitary conditions will be a further worthwhile project in the unit.

Scrapbooks, paintings, models, charts, and dramatizations made of pets will also serve as illuminating experiences. Through the creation of the unit on pets, the interest in animals found on the farm, and farm life could readily be accomplished.

Unit on Farm Animals and Farm Life

A visit to a large farm can be arranged after gaining permission from the parents, and securing transportation. The children will show a great amount of enthusiasm and eagerness to make such a trip.

Through a discussion as to why they will visit the farm, the teacher may suggest finding the answers to these questions: What Animals Live on the Farm? What Kinds of Shelter they Have? What They Eat? What people Live There? The children, after the visit should be

encouraged to place emphasis on the following: (1) Chickens and Farm Animals, (2) Knowledge about the Source of Milk, (3) Learning About the Silo, (4) The Tool House, and (5) The Farmer's House.

After the visit to the farm, the children will have enjoyed the trip so much that some will perhaps offer the suggestion that they make a Farm Book, which in turn will lead to building a farm house. Each child will be engaged in some activity which will contribute to the Farm House, whether it is large or small, relying on what impressed each individual most on his visit to the farm.

Associated with the development of the "Farm Unit" will be the difference between farm life and home life among the children in class, thus, this unit helped in developing a Home Unit.

Home Unit

Building a house may be the first step in the unit. The children may be encouraged to watch the construction of a house. Discussions on certain problems will be made by the classes. Suggestions as to the type of house, how many windows, doors, etc., will have to be decided.

Upon the completion of the building of the house, the next suggestion in the unit will be the furniture. Many ideas and suggestions will be made regarding furniture. Some will make tables, chairs, others will make beds, cupboards, etc.

The discussion of many points of interest will be learned after the completion of the house, the children may be allowed to dramatize plays on stories of which they are familiar.

Playing house will be one of the most outstanding activities which the children will want to engage in when the playhouse is completed. This activity will develop the actual home living of the child. Through discussion children may be encouraged to give the activities of the home which the mother engages. The teacher might encourage the children to bring pictures of mother's activities, father's work should also be discussed.

A cooking activity will add more interest to the unit. The children will have the opportunity to decide the menu for a luncheon. A note should be sent home explaining to the parent the activity and ask that the children bring a five cents or ten cents to purchase the groceries for the activity.

A trip to the grocery store is the next step, the visit to the grocery store, having been previously arranged by the teacher.

Valuable knowledge will be obtained from the unit in purchasing groceries. Children will have a general idea of weights, and amounts.

The next problem is to find out how to prepare the things purchased for the luncheon. Receipes will be developed by the teacher and children.

If no stove is available for the cooking in the classroom, the teacher may arrange to use the school cafeteria. Children may choose various committees on which to work.

The Parent-Teachers' Association Room Mothers may be invited to serve the luncheon when the preparations are completed. The dishwashing and cleaning up can also be an enjoyable part as many children enjoy performing these tasks.

The unit of work on the home stimulates many vital and interesting experiences for the child. These experiences result in definite outcomes in terms of understandings, attitudes and appreciations, and essential abilities.

By the development of units of this type, the retarded child has an actual place in the program. Any type of activity assigned to him will have an essential place in the development of the unit, and the outcomes are of vast importance in his daily life.

If units of experiences are arranged throughout the year and all of the children are allowed to participate together, grouping for the fundalmental skills will be less noticeable.

Teaching Fundamental Skills

Long involved sentences, abstract words, and abstract number ideas are usually beyond the comprehension of mentally retarded children. Only those skills which are instrumental in the development of a useful adult life, as well as a happy childhood should be attempted.

Reading

The teaching of reading to the mentally retarded child presents a different picture from teaching reading to the normal child. Characteristics of the mentally retarded should be studied, differences between the two groups should be noted, and the materials and instructions should be adapted to the child's capacity.

The program of reading for the mentally retarded should include: (1) a pre-reading period; (2) a prolonged beginning reading period; and (3) definite guidance in increasing the efficiency of reading.¹⁵

It has been suggested by many authors that reading for the mentally retarded child should not be taught until sufficient mental maturity has been allowed. The following principles will help to supplement reading readiness: (1) Develop language ability; (2) Practice on sentences; (3) Develop visual memory and visual discrimination;

¹⁵Samuel A. Kirk, "A Reading Program For the Mentally Retarded Children", Journal of Exceptional Children, (November, 1939) p. 75.

(4) Develop auditory memory; (5) Develop correct pronunciation; and (6) Develop eagerness to learn to read.¹⁶

In teaching reading to the retarded child the utilization of stories from the child's own experience are used, and may be written on the board. The next day, the story may be put on a chart, and also in various other settings. The method most applicable to the mentally retarded in reading to meet their learning ability is fewer words introduced and more repetitions are given.

Many more presentations of words in sentences must be made, pointing out the similarities and differences in words, writing out sentences in charts, and having the children to reconstruct the story from sentences, making it into their own individual words.

After the child has acquired a sight vocabulary, the introduction of easy books may be made. Silent reading should not be introduced too soon.

Mathematics

The ability to understand and apply mathematical concepts and processes in the solution of problems of social living is one of the most important aims of education.

The minimum every day demands of arithmetic in adult life are few. Many of them involve the use of money and

¹⁶Samuel A. Kirk, "A Reading Program For the Mentally Retarded Children," Journal of Exceptional Children, (November, 1939) p. 77.

making change.¹⁷ The mentally retarded child needs many meaningful experiences with numbers before he is ready to handle simple problems. Every classroom activity in which a number situation arises can be made part of his experience. His ideas of number values should be systematically built up out of his immediate environment and should be based upon objects which he can handle representations of objects through pictures.

The child should learn in doing things that the "and" relation means addition; and the "difference" how much more; "lost" or "gave" means subtraction. He is not ready for written problems until these terms are part of his speaking vocabulary and are recognized as "cues" for the solution of oral problems. A working vocabulary of arithmetical terms that are commonly met in every day life, terms relating to time, space, or quantity, measurement, and commercial terms should be acquired.¹⁸

Language and Spelling

Oral expression is the chief aim of language for the mentally retarded. As adults they should have clear distinct speech, be able to express their thoughts in simple sentences, and to ask for, and give simple directions.

In the classroom the child's facility with language will grow under proper guidance as his field of life

¹⁷Mildred Rasmus, "The Use of Multi-Sensory Aids in Building the Slow-Learning Pupil in the Understanding of Arithmetic," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, LI (October, 1946) p. 10.

¹⁸Lorena B. Stretch, The Curriculum and the Child. (Mineapolis: Educational Publishers, Inc., 1939) p. 225.

experience enlarges. His speaking vocabulary should increase, and he should learn to speak clearly and to express complete thoughts.

A check list should be used constantly because language is so general a subject.

Written language grows out of the use of oral language. The pupil should be able to say first that he wishes to write. Among the common activities for which the retarded pupil will need to have knowledge of written expression will be: A application for a job; ordering goods from a mail order house; writing letters to relatives or friends; and other experiences that may be peculiar to his own social environment.¹⁹

Spelling should be thought of as a necessary aid to written language and not as a separate subject. Numerous standardized spelling books have been published which may be used as basic check lists. The limit of progress should be determined only by the child's ability to master the mechanics of the spelling of words common to his needs.

The basis for introducing new words should be in relation to activities carried on in the classroom. Words so derived will be meaningful to the child. The spelling should not stop with the so-called spelling lesson, but should be part of every writing activity in which the child engages.

¹⁹Office of Education: Curriculum Adjustments for the Mentally Retarded, Else Martens, (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1950) p. 47.

Spelling methods require attention to the fact that spelling involves motor activity and the child must attend closely to the writing of words he learns. The following is a suggestive outline that may be used in the cultivation of sound spelling habits.²⁰

1. Look at the word and say it distinctly by syllables.
2. Spell it by syllables.
3. Close the eyes and try to see each syllable as you say it.
4. Open the eyes to see if it is right.
5. If not, pronounce it in syllables. Spell it, letter by letter.
6. When right, write the word.
7. Look again to see if it is right.
8. Write the word three times without copying from yourself.

Penmanship

Legibility is the chief goal of instruction in penmanship. No one system of penmanship can be recommended as better than another for the mentally retarded. As studies of handwriting indicate that a majority of persons use a combination of arm and finger movements, it is safe to assume that this fact should be recognized in teaching this group. Habits in writing, as in other activities of the retarded should be formed through much repetition.

²⁰Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child, (New York: World Book Company, 1935) p. 356.

Arts

In the field of art, both practical and fine arts, the retarded child plays an important role. Music, dancing, dramatization, poetry, various types of play activity, drawing, painting, stenciling, modeling, household arts, pottery, metal work, leather tooling, and other handicrafts all stand side by side in offering abundant opportunity for both appreciation and creative expression. Interest and ability in these fields are among the strongest assets which retarded children possess.

Singing is enjoyed by most mentally retarded children even though some may be limited to humming a tune. The child's ability in this field usually excels his academic accomplishments. Harmonica bands, toy orchestras, and other instrumental means have been used to develop in the children the joy of creating music and rhythm. Wind instruments can be played by some children who are intellectually quite deficient.

All types of rhythm have an important place in the lives of retarded children since they afford a means of releasing activities that have not been possible because of faulty coordination. The child's own natural degree of rhythm should be the starting point of the activity, and proceed by fitting the music to the child's degree of rhythm. After the child has developed some skill in coordination, the correct tempo of the music may be used.

It is usually advisable to combine the teaching of rhythm with an interesting game.

Dramatics may be made an enjoyable part of the recreation of the retarded child. Plays with many characters and major roles, each requiring few lines, but much movement, seem to be the most acceptable.

Another form of dramatic play for the retarded child is the puppet show. Not only can enjoyment be gotten from making puppets, but it can also be created in constructing and operating them.

Drawing can be made a practical help. So often the child lacks suitable words for describing certain activities which may be expressed in the form of a drawing.

Manual and Occupational Activities

Sheer joy in making things help to bring much enjoyment to the mentally retarded child, and is a real advantage in their educational progress.

In the elementary division, when the children, growing gradually into the knowledge of the construction of things, woodwork is practically an activity of simple hammering, sawing, and nailing. The aim is to have the results only as good as the ability and interest of the children warrant.

For the children who want merely to be active and to make a noise, there are hammers and nails. Just hammering nails into a block of wood gives the young and mentally low-grade

child much fun and at the same time leads to improvement in muscle coordination. By the time the child loses interest in this aimless activity, the teacher may have ready pieces of wood of proper size for the child to construct a box, after completion, he realizes that he has actually "made" something.

The writer has made an effort to make a presentation of the essentials underlying the teaching of the mentally retarded in each of the fundamental skills.

In those subjects in which units of experience may be developed greater opportunity is given for individual development than does a subject-matter curriculum. As children participate in common purposes and work out activities together, they have a chance to make individual contributions according to their individual abilities. Under proper guidance, each child, even the slowest, can make some contribution to the whole. It is commonly believed that where a grade is made up of children of varying abilities that the program organized should be centered around units of experience rather than subject matter. It offers incentive for individual effort and reduces comparison of accomplishments of the retarded and above average.

It is the opinion of the author that in the fundamental tool subjects, such as reading, spelling,

penmanship, mathematics, and language, it would perhaps be of more value to the retarded if special principles in the learning of certain phases of these subjects are used, those that will perhaps be of more benefit to him in his adult life.

When the school comes to the full realization that the understanding of children is of prime importance, and that subject matter is secondary, then and only then, shall we help each child to realize his own potentialities rather than to struggle for impossible attainment set up by a system of education.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to give the classifications, characteristics, causes, and goals or attainments of the mentally retarded child, and to present suggestions and methods for educating the mental retarded child without the aid of special classes.

The writer hopes that the teachers who read this study will use some of these suggestions and techniques in their handling of retarded children in the regular classroom. The suggested activities have no limit as to variability and application. Teachers are urged to study them carefully enough that they may develop valuable aids in the use of techniques and activities.

It is also hoped that this study will encourage teachers to give more attention to the needs of the retarded child.

From this study the writer concludes that it should be the objective of every educational system to provide for the education of the retarded child either through means of special education or within the regular classroom.

It is generally assumed that approximately between one and two per cent of the total school population warrant the setting up of a differentiated curriculum in order to secure the full individual value of education.

29% of school population

Some definite basis for classifying a child as being mentally retarded must be made. The child, who is not able to attain the specified goals set up for the so-called normal child may be due to some other cause than mental. Mild handicaps, such as sight, hearing, and other minor disabilities may be the cause.

To definitely determine retardation a child must be given an intelligence test by a qualified person. The intelligence test by a qualified person. The intelligence test will give the teacher a sound basis to establish the belief that a child is mentally retarded. The educational and cumulative records are of valuable assistance in helping to determine the mental ability.

Mentally retarded children usually possess certain characteristics. They have limited interest, and fail to form various associations and ideas readily.

Goals and attainments must be clear and also meaningful. It is the responsibility of the school to give this type of child situations which have specific associations to his daily living. The retarded child does not learn in terms of generalities, he learns essentially by doing, therefore, the curriculum should be planned on the basis of letting the child learn through experiences in relation to the subject matter.

A better situation for the retarded child, if he is within the regular school classroom, is maintained if he is allowed to stay in his own age group, even though he does not keep the same pace with the normal child. The instructor should make provisions in classroom situations by developing learning abilities through organizing subject matter into experience units, where the child may actually experience the situation in a real experience situation.

The writer concludes that the grouping plan in instruction best suits the mentally retarded child in the fundamental skills such as reading, mathematics, language, and spelling, due to certain basic principles that must be used in the teaching of these subjects to this type of child.

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