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Dean
EDUCATION PROVISION FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED
CHILDREN OF THE OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

BY
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. FINDINGS AND DATA</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SOME INTERESTING CASES</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX A | 99
APPENDIX B | 107
BIBLIOGRAPHY | 112
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

No less dramatist than William Shakespeare employed the buffoon, the idiot to add zest or ribaldry for a certain group of his audience, or for the advancement of other technical schemes in his masterpieces.\(^1\)

Throughout literature, the idiot, the feeble-minded has been characterized usually as an object of derision or magnified to the proportions of a horrible monster. From the succession of foolish court jesters, feigned or otherwise, of France and Britain down through the centuries to the present-day rural bumpkin, there is a universal recognition of the existence of human beings of various conspicuous degrees of inferior mental power. Many communities and nations have pondered upon and dealt with, in divers ways, this problem of their feeble-minded citizens whether of Falstaffian stature or of the Gael's "God's Little White Fools."

In several fields of endeavor, such as religion, medicine, sociology, industry, politics, and education, many valiant attempts have been made to deal with, more and more effecttively, this grave situation of the

\(^1\)Hamlet, V, i.
mentally retarded. One of the earliest recorded attempts of comparatively modern times in the field of education was made in 1800 by Doctor Itard, medical director of the National Institute of the Deaf and Dumb in Paris. This French educator tried for five years to educate an eleven-year-old feeble-minded youth whom he had found in the forests of Avignon, wandering in the fashion of the heroes, Romulus and Remus of epic renown. Although Itard became discouraged and considered his wild boy project a failure, he nevertheless recorded faithfully his methods and the responses of the feeble-minded youth. Nor did the French Academy of Science regard Doctor Itard's experiment in such dismal terms, but pointed out the slow, patient but actual advancement the Avignon youth had made; and The Academy awarded high praise to Doctor Itard for his contributions to the science of education.

Then, in 1837, Edward Seguin, a pupil of Itard's, was so impressed by his master's patient labors with the mentally retarded that he accepted the challenge inspired by his famous teacher and began to work earnestly for the

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education of the feeble-minded. Consequently, Seguin opened a private school in Paris where he studied and educated his selected pupils, and carefully recorded his experiments. Through his writings on the problem of the mentally retarded, Seguin received considerable fame, and with the publication of a book in 1846, his renown spread to his European neighbors and to the United States. About thirty years later Seguin established private schools for the mentally deficient in New York City, and in Orange, New Jersey.

While this work of Itard's, Seguin's and others progressed in Europe, at the same time in the United States there was some attention given to the mentally deficient at institutes for the Deaf and Blind, especially at Hartford, Connecticut. Several attempts in Massachusetts and New York to secure state assistance for the feeble-minded failed but private schools were established chiefly by funds of philanthropists. In 1848, Samuel G. Howe, superintendent of the Massachusetts State Institute for the Blind, opened a section of the school for the feeble-minded. Under Howe's direction the few rooms devoted to children classed as idiots expanded and in 1851 the improvised section of the State Institute

became an independent unit.

A few short months before Howe's initial rooms for the feeble-minded, and almost simultaneous with the discovery of gold at Sutter's mill in Sacramento Valley, a young man, H. B. Wilbur, opened a private school for the feeble-minded in Barre, Massachusetts. Wilbur's institute had the distinction of the first school of its type to be opened in the United States. Howe and Wilbur, aided by Horace Mann, in the legislative field secured state charters and financial assistance for the promotion of institutes for the mentally deficient.

Horace Mann (1796-1859) has had considerable influence on American public school education. As secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, he visited annually all the districts of his state and wrote a series of Annual Reports, which supplemented by his semi-monthly publication, The Massachusetts Common School Journal, equipped him to promulgate his ideas of education. Mann's visit to Europe in 1842 in the interests of education has had an infiltration into public school methods and literature. While in Europe, Mann visited France, Switzerland, Germany and England. His was a general,

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6 Heck, op. cit., p. 345.
all-embracing interest in education, not just in the phase of the education of the mentally retarded as was Seguin's, Howe's, or Wilbur's. But it was the stimulus that Mann gave to better teacher training, to objective testing, improved supervision, state financial assistance and the establishing of legislative precedents, that indirectly benefited the education of the mentally deficient at that time. Mann was highly impressed with the systems of Europe, which were then reacting to Pestalozzi's reforms that advocated the combination of manual or industrial training with intellectual education. It was this manual or industrial phase of Pestalozzi's principles that Mann sought to incorporate into the teaching of the feeble-minded as the chief part of their education, rather than just a part of it, as was prescribed for the general public school education. Schools for the mentally deficient from their institution down to the present day have more or less adhered to this plan of teaching manual training, agriculture, and industry and allied fields as the chief school subjects for their pupils.

The cause of education for the feeble-minded was not fought alone by educators. During this same period, both in the United States and Europe, there were prison reforms, new investigations and legislation concerning
criminality and the care of the insane in the general revolution relative to these sociological problems and others, as so forcefully recorded by Dorothea Dix and other authors and reformers.

But these new considerations, this new light in aiding identification, increased the responsibility of educators to provide for their new population transferred from the pits of prisons or the attics of their ashamed relatives to a category of semi-classroom consideration. These repercussions of a sociological nature, supplemented by new discoveries, new applications of psychology, advances in medicine, the demands of industry and national expansion from 1870 until 1900, were re-echoed in the passage of compulsory school attendance of youths. And with this legislation automatically arose the problem for the state of educating the feeb-le-minded who heretofore had been either in private schools or generally excluded from public schools by request or by the force of the situation.

The educational forces of many large cities were utterly bedeviled by the chaotic decline of general scholastic competence and the staggering non-disciplined condition of some of the districts of their systems. So the

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segregation of the academic misfits to special classes or schools became the solution in many public schools. In 1896, Providence, Rhode Island, established special rooms for the feeble-minded and soon the process was repeated by Springfield and Boston, Massachusetts, in 1898; by Chicago, Illinois, in 1900; by New York, New York, in 1902; by St. Louis, Missouri, in 1908; by Los Angeles, California, in 1917; and so on in many cities of our nation.9

Parallel conditions existed in other countries besides the United States. Ontario, Canada, has developed an interesting and dignified method by which the feeble-minded are prepared for the pursuance of careers in industry, labor and agriculture.10 England, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France all faced for the half century before World War I the same educational difficulty of training, educating and providing for their mentally deficient youthful population. However, in 1905, in Paris, because of the increasing gravity of the situation, the French Minister of Public Instruction11 commissioned a

10 Alice Liljgren, Oral report given to special Teachers of the Omaha Public Schools, October 1947.
group of psychologists, physicians and educators to investigate and establish recommendations, generally for the problems of education and particularly for the plight of the mentally retarded. From this commission, because of careful research and judicious pursuit of the case, came a mass of previously applied and practical data from many lands, and at least one new idea, the biggest psychological and education boon device of many of year, the Simon-Binet Mental Scale. Histories of education will attest that the two commissioners were not the first to devise mental tests, but their scholarly, logical development and application of the intelligence test or the so-called mental scale was definitely a superior instrument to those previously invented or developed. The psychologist Alfred Binet, then director of the Laboratory of Physiological Psychology at the Sorbonne, and his friend, Thomas Simon, physician and collaborator, published the Simon-Binet Mental Scale in 1905 as a result of the commission. The two men revised the scale in 1908 and again in 1911. The latter revision is the basis of the present-day Stanford Revision of Binet. The Binet-Simon devices supersede any previous

12James Cattel of Columbia University used mental tests as early as 1890. "Mental Tests and Measurements," Mind, XV (1890), 370-80.
attempt to scientifically rate the illusive, spiritual substance of intelligence in concrete manifestations.

The growth and history of the Intelligence Test Movement is an interesting one in the annals of education and its specific use in the handling of the problem of selection and identification of the mentally retarded has deep and significant importance. Burt in England, Stern in Germany, Yerkes, Kuhlmann, Terman, Otis and a host of others from Maine to California in the United States have made multitudinous contributions to the mental testing and measurement movement in the educational field from Binet's scale of 1905-1908 to the present day.

In respect to early application of the mental scale to the mentally retarded in the United States, the psychologist Henry Goddard\(^\text{13}\) was probably one of the first to use it when, in 1911, it was applied to the pupils of The Training School, a private institution at Vineland, New Jersey. Goddard's and Vineland's influence has pervaded immeasurably a host of procedures relative to the educational solution of the nation's schools, both public and private, for the care and training of the mentally deficient.

Further impetus of a nation-wide scope for

\(^{13}\text{Kelly, op. cit., p. 385.}\)
appropriate measures in regard to the mentally handi-
capped was stimulated by The White House Conference in
1931.\textsuperscript{14} Humane and dignified reorganization, scientific
and judicious establishment of a truly high professional
attainment in the difficult task of educating the men-
tally retarded, is one definite result that the confer-
ence can justly be proud of, as well as its influence in
the arousing the nation to its responsibility, and an
improved attitude toward the mentally retarded.

\textsuperscript{14}White House Conference. "Special Education III
The Century Co., 1931.
CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Part I

Historical and Educational

To label interest in the education of the mentally retarded as just a fad, or the temporary expression of a coterie of educational extremists as their pet subject, can be refuted by the wide variety of literature on the topic published in many different types and sources of journals, pamphlets and bulletins. The review of a few articles appearing in recent literature constitutes the content of this chapter.

A Statistical Report

In 1928, a purely statistical report of a nationwide scope investigating the growth of the establishment of educational institutions where school classes were maintained for the subnormal and feeble-minded children was published by Phillips.\(^1\) The report covers a period of thirteen years from 1914 and including 1927. For any

year that an institute did not report, the figures for 1922 were used. During this thirteen-year period the number of students increased 78 per cent, about equally for both sexes. The report covers the field of 51 state institutions, 138 city school systems, and 30 private organizations.

As can be expected among the city schools reporting, the northern cities of large population had the largest enrollment. New York City, at the top, had in its peak year 6,641 pupils, taught by 351 instructors; Chicago had enrolled 2,570 pupils and employed 134 instructors; Boston had 2,000 students taught by 121 teachers; and Detroit employed a staff of 100 teachers for 1,970 students.

The 30 private institutions were scattered over the nation, but the northeastern section had numerous small institutions. The states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Texas favored large private institutions of this type. Perhaps the most famous private institute for the sub-normal child is The Training School at Vineland, New Jersey. Here the number of children enrolled was 607, but 122 of these were not in school classes. For this institution, there were 5 male and 12 female instructors, and 120 assistants. The plant was valued at $688,000 and equipment at $132,000. But The Seguin
private school, the same one established by the noted Frenchman, Edward Seguin at Orange, New Jersey, more than seventy years ago, has purposely kept its enrollment low. It has 25 students (7 boys and 18 girls) with 11 women instructors and 9 assistants. The plant is valued at $61,690 and the equipment at $15,546.

Several states failed to send in reports on classes for sub-normal or feeble-minded children. Some states reported two or three state supported institutes. The total number of institutes for states was 51. The range of state enrollment and instructors varied from very meager to reasonably equipped institutions. For example, Nebraska, which was not the lowest of the survey, reported that its Beatrice institute employed 7 women instructors and 19 assistants for over 800 children; while the neighboring state of Iowa for their Glenwood institution reported 28 instructors and 94 assistants for 1,769 students; 500 of these, however, were not in classes. The plant was valued at $1,333,910, and no estimate of equipment was made known.

City School System Report

As an example of a city school system's method of educating its sub-normal children, the Cleveland, Ohio, public schools is a noteworthy example. In the
report of the assistant superintendent's report for special education for Cleveland Public schools by Fintz, very definite regulations and procedures are prescribed. It has an expressed aim, regulations for admittance dependent upon psychological service including Stanford-Binet and standardized tests in Reading and Arithmetic. Appropriate centers are scattered throughout the elementary districts. Maximum enrollment per class is 25. There is a promotion system from class to class; strict records of scholarship are kept and report cards are issued four times yearly. Permanent records are filed. Carfare is provided for transportation by the Board of Education to students residing more than one and a half miles from the appointed center. Social and guidance services are maintained and work permits are issued upon request, but after investigation by a visiting teacher, supplies and materials are issued upon requisition of the teacher through the building principal, and charged to the special School Budget.

Teaching aids are specific and valuable. There is a tentative course of study for special schools with requirements for promotion; visual aids; regular radio

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2 John E. Fintz, "Division of Special Education." Report to Board of Education of Cleveland Public Schools, 1947.
lessons of selected suitability; Arithmetic Leaflet for centers and Lesson Units; specially prepared bibliography. Supervisors pay weekly visits and aid in lesson planning, etc. A 45-minute lunch and recreation period is supervised by the teacher and classes are dismissed at 2:00 P.M.

At the age of sixteen, students, if capable, may transfer to either the Thomas A. Edison Occupational School for Boys—junior division, or the Longwood Occupational School for Girls—junior division, for more advanced work of junior high type of shop or craft lessons.

Workshop Conference Report

Following the present-day trend in the educational world, a workshop type of conference on curriculum for the mentally retarded under the leadership of Ingram was held during the summer of 1947 at the Illinois State Normal University. Seventeen outstanding teachers or directors of education for the mentally retarded participated in this conference. Demonstrations, exhibitions, materials, pamphlets, devices and experiments were studied and analyzed by this group of educators. The conference published its final agreement of

what is curriculum for this special field of education. They stated their objectives and their philosophy and the recognition of the psychological implications in the accepted curriculum for the mentally retarded. They submitted Units or Centers of Interests, as guides in determining the sizes, numbers, ages and sexes for establishing classes. The conference further offered a recommended reference text list on the teaching of various subjects particularly Reading, Science, Aircraft, Audiovisual aids, Skills and Crafts, and Occupational Training. Also a detailed list of graded material suitable for Library Reading was offered.

A United States Government Report

For a general over-all explanation of the problem of the mentally retarded, the United States Office of Education has developed a pamphlet by Martens, 4 which very concretely and in a feasible way treats of the educational problem of the mentally retarded child. Based on the White House Conference 5 data, Martens approaches

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the problem from a teacher's point of view and gives specific suggestions for correction or treatment. Martens points out that for the average teacher with the usual classroom load of 30 to 40 pupils, some of these children are really different and present a problem. Some few are physically handicapped by a hearing loss, defective speech, partial sight, perhaps crippled; also some few are mentally retarded or are too large or too old for their grade and failing. Also there are those pupils who are maladjusted. Often a child, mentally retarded, is suffering from a physical debility and emotional instability in the usual classroom situation. Thus almost every teacher faces a problem of how to aid these special pupils.

The resourceful teacher realizes that he needs help from principals, supervisors, additional training and skill in dealing with exceptional children and proceeds to procure that assistance for himself and for his pupils.

Primarily, the problem of the mentally retarded must be viewed from the point that constructive aid for these pupils will circumvent the destructive forces in attitudes and actions particularly for the special pupil and perhaps for the whole classroom.

The White House Conference reports that 2 per
cent or 450,000 children of school age are mentally deficient to such a degree as to need aid. In terms of Intelligence quotients, 5 of every 100 pupils have an I.Q. between 75 to 80, and 2 of every 100 pupils are below 73 I.Q. Thus the teacher is confronted with identifying special pupils. This can be done by the use of standardized tests, by the application of the age-grade norm charts, with consideration of other factors involved, as previous periods of poor health, transients, etc. If the ordinary teacher cannot solve the problem in the normal classroom, clinical service should be obtained.

Upon identification of the mentally retarded, society has a right to know if the subject is educable; will he be wholly or partially dependent upon society or is he a potential criminal; or can he become a good citizen? Martens⁶ reminds us that learning is not just book learning, where it is conceded that the mentally retarded are truly deficient, but also learning can be social, manual, musical, etc., and in these and perhaps in other fields the higher group of mentally retarded can be educated so that many do not become dependent upon society but can contribute to the common good. The

⁶Martens, op. cit., p. 7.
chances of potential criminality can be considerably lessened by suitable education, by proper mental hygiene, vocational guidance, social adjustment and spiritual assistance.

The first objective of special education for the mentally handicapped is the establishment of "present happiness" by allowing the student to do "what he can do," and what he thinks "he would like to do," within reasonable bounds. The special teacher by an interested attitude, and patient skill can lead most pupils to situations of daily success and the sense of belonging to the group by the application of suitable activities in advancing physical fitness, cleanliness and enhanced personal appearance, by social and moral attitudes and habits through the medium of games, stories, sports, activities in industrial and practical skills, in the field of art, music, dancing and dramatics, for those so talented. The second objective is to establish effective vocational guidance contacts, and the third objective is to tactfully aid the parent in understanding the child's problems.

In conclusion, Martens gives a list of materials and suggestions and their use in many projects for the mentally handicapped; a list of outside of school agencies and assistance bureaus; a bibliography for
classroom activities and a suggested Reading List for teachers.

Part II

Industrial Reports

Employment of Mentally Deficient Boys and Girls

As to what happens to the pupils after leaving special rooms and their retreat into the work-a-day world has been somewhat of a speculative nature. But Channing gives a report on the follow-up of 1,172 boys and girls who left special rooms during a three-year period, 1916-1919; the cities represented were Newark, New Jersey; Rochester, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Cincinnati, Ohio; Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland, California. Of these 1,172 cases over a four-year follow-up period, 949 were employed either part time or steadily. The remaining numbers were either referred to other schools for more advanced training, committed to feeble-minded institutions, or simply stayed at home. Nor were they employed during this four-year study.

The instruction given all pupils was somewhat similar. In academic studies the chief subjects were Reading, Spelling, Arithmetic, Penmanship, and English. Handcraft included chiefly beadwork, clay modeling, basketry, woodwork, sewing, cooking, weaving and brush making. In some localities more advanced woodwork, printing, cobbling, metal work, and automobile repair work were offered.

Of this group 603 were boys and 346 were girls, ranging in ages 11 to 17, during the training period. Seventy-five per cent were native born whites and 6 per cent were colored, and the remaining percentage were either foreign born or their fathers were foreign born. Also three-fifths of the foreign born were Italians, Poles, Germans or Austrians in nationality.

The economic status of the homes of these pupils of this study included the gamut of descriptions. The fathers of three-fifths of the students were engaged, mostly steadily, in manufacturing and industrial jobs; one fourth of the mothers of these students were gainfully employed. In Detroit, 18 per cent of the mothers were employed, and the city to report the highest employment of mothers of special room students in this study was Rochester, New York, with 39 per cent.
These special room students seemed to have the usual count of physical stamina, as 85 per cent had no prominent physical defects. The remaining per cent included 6 per cent crippled, and the others suffering from auditory or visual handicaps, chiefly. Also 77 per cent of the group ranged between 50 to 70 in intelligence quotient. The delinquency record included 20 per cent of the boys and 6 per cent of the girls.

The ages of this group upon entrance to working life was 14 to 16, and some few cases before. The chief exception was for girls in Oakland, California, where the age of 18 years was required before issuance of work permits, except in domestic service.

The continuity of employment has its reflective significance. More than 50 per cent of the group retained their first jobs less than six months, and almost all of them changed positions before the first twelve months of employment. Less than 4 per cent had steady work or retained the same job for the four years of this follow-up study. Boston presented the exceptional note in the shoe manufacturing industry in which "slightly" subnormal girls were retained in the same jobs or similar jobs for a two-year period and superseded normal girls in like jobs for time length of retention of work.
For all, the reasons given for leaving their jobs were that they were seeking better jobs or better working conditions. Contemplated marriage was given by the girls, also as reasons for leaving their jobs. Employers gave the chief reasons for dismissals as unfavorable personality traits (which was on a par with normal employees) and inferior workmanship. Also the quality of handiwork for this group was designated by employers as 58 per cent good, 34 per cent fair, and 8 per cent poor.

The kinds of occupations for these persons were somewhat limited, however. Agriculture was the choice of 24 per cent, and 63 per cent were employed as laborers, and the remaining 13 per cent became apprentices for semi-skilled jobs. In one city, perhaps representative, the kind of jobs held by its special room students of this report were: button factory, 5; clothing manufacturing, 10; electric supplies, 8; food industry, 19; lumber and furniture business industry, 31; metal work and automobile repair, 105; paper box factory, 5; shoe manufacturing, 18; all others including teamsters, truck drivers, errand boys and girls, stock room helpers or news vendors, 43; for girls from the special rooms, 6 per cent were employed in sales work; 6 per cent in clerical work; and the remaining per cent
in domestic or personal services or allied work of a domestic nature.

**Part III**

**Medical Reports**

**Effects of Glutamic Acid on Mentality**

The use of drugs to change the temporary behavior of persons was well known and recognized long before the days of the old wives' tales. Modern use of drugs in their therapeutic application ranges from the deepest anesthesia to the almost universal and frequent stimulance of a cup of coffee. Scientists of this modern age are alert to any factor that manifests even minute advance in the well-being of humanity from the frailest impulse of a deep-set neuron to the most violent overt act.

Among these scientists is one, Zimmerman, and his associates, who observed the improved time and accuracy of scores of white rats in running a simple maze when the drug glutamic acid was included in the diet of these rats. Zimmerman was familiar with the apparent

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*Frederick J. Zimmerman, "Effect of Glutamic Acid on Mental Functioning in Children and Adolescents," Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, LVI (November, 1946), 489-506.*
success of glutamic acid used by Price in the treatment of epilepsy. So Zimmerman began his experiments on humans with the intention of ascertaining, if any, the effects of glutamic acid on the improved functioning of mentality.

In Zimmerman's experiment conducted for six months, nine children of both sexes, ranging in age from 5 to 17 years, were used. Four of this group were suffering from petit mal and one from grand mal. The other four were non-convulsive patients. Seven of the nine were mentally retarded according to the test given at the beginning of the experiment. Glutamic acid was included in the diet of these persons. Dosage was increased daily until increased motor activity resulted. The dosage varied for different persons from 6 to 24 grams daily, but the average dose was 12 grams per day. The point of tolerance in each case was entirely individual.

At the end of the six-month period mental re-tests were given. The highest points increase was fifteen and the lowest increase was five on the Stanford-Binet. The periodic mental tests following the six

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months' experiment revealed that the time limit without glutamic acid for the continued raised mental improvement before reversion to pre-experiment status was eleven months for the lowest and five years for the highest. In the Arthur\textsuperscript{10} performance tests motor performance and personality improvement were more marked than gain in mental functioning. Zimmerman comments that the effect of bromide and phenobarbital in epilepsy had about this same results in motor performance and personality improvement as glutamic acid, but the former had little change in mental functioning proper. Further comment reveals that glutamic acid has a peculiar relation to cerebral metabolism and has a striking chemical reaction when poured directly on slices of cerebral tissue. Nachmansohn\textsuperscript{11} states that glutamic acid releases certain chemicals connected with electric changes during nerve activity. The rate and precise mechanism of glutamic acid on nerve activity is still in experimentation.

Zimmerman and his associates are cooperating with several groups of research workers in the use, to a further degree, of glutamic acid in its application to the


improved functioning of the mentally retarded, and other fields of medicine.

Part IV

Recent Experiment Reports

Bernadine G. Schmidt

The name of Bernadine Schmidt is included in the litany of many a parent of mentally retarded children in the city of Chicago. But most educators condemn her publications as the greatest educational hoax of the decade. Nevertheless, Schmidt has unselfishly devoted most of her teaching years to the advancement of the mentally retarded. Her experiments and successes became somewhat sensational and she was considered, for a time at least, as the outstanding leader and teacher in the field of the mentally retarded. After a score or more of years in the Chicago schools, Schmidt became Director of Special Education of Indiana State Teachers' College at Terre Haute. She is at present Professor of Education at the University of Mississippi.

In early 1947, there appeared an interesting

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12 Edith K. Hall, "Bernadine Schmidt." An oral report given for the Special Teachers of Bancroft and Comenius Schools, Omaha, Nebraska, October, 1946.
article in *The Reader's Digest*, wherein an apt journalist extolled the manner in which Schmidt improved the mentality of many of her feeble-minded students. Some time later, stern used the Schmidt experiments as a basis for an article, "Feeblemindedness Can Be Cured," which appeared in a popular magazine.

Then in December 1947 Schmidt published the monograph which caused much furore in an education journal of repute and was re-echoed in the educational world. The argument of the monograph explains an experiment which was begun in the Chicago Schools in 1935, where an investigation was made by Schmidt to determine the nature and degree of favorable changes of properly designated feeble-minded children, under a controlled educational training regimen; and if changes do occur due to special education, do these favorable changes continue to be present after leaving school. The training period was of three years duration, and the follow-up check was made five years after the special students left training.

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The results of the experiments were gratifying, and the degree of adjustment and approach toward normal for the experiment group under the especially planned program were so overwhelmingly favorable that the method a la. Schmidt seems almost like magic. The few cases that produced little or no changes were less than 35 per cent of the group. The remaining percentage made many favorable changes. One case alone advanced 22 points in Intelligence Quotient. Many cases made social and work-a-day adjustments of prodigious proportions. The Schmidt experiment has made sufficient impression that the two cities of Baltimore and Terre Haute have begun duplicate programs as continued research in this same study, according to the monograph.

Arthur S. Hill

Seemingly as a rebuttal to the Schmidt article, and a subtle implication of impartiality, there appeared in April 1948 in the same journal, another article as

16 Arthur S. Hill, "Does Special Education Result in Improved Intelligence?" Journal of Exceptional Children, April 1948.
a refutation of the Schmidt experiment by Hill.

The Hill discussion explains that the identical situations, case by case, were selected in his Des Moines, Iowa, experiment. The same conditions, the same type of superior teaching methods, the same equipment and preliminary testing were duplicated as explained in the Schmidt experiment. Furthermore, Hill publishes the tables of the tests results in respect to many statistical viewpoints, and he concludes that the computations, testing and analyses of the Schmidt case were faulty. The Hill experiment further found that I.Q.'s for 72 percent of the cases remained static. A few cases showed a loss and the highest gain was 7 points and that was for only one student.

Hill inferred that Schmidt is mistaken in her mathematical calculations and that only she could obtain such results by her own unduplicable superior teaching which to date she has not patented.

Samuel A. Kirk

Hill's disagreement with Schmidt is chiefly on the miscalculation and improper implications and statistical analysis. But another author, Kirk, refutes

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17 Samuel A. Kirk, "An Evaluation of the Study of Bernadine G. Schmidt Entitled 'Changes in Behavior of
violently the Schmidt story as a hoax. The Kirk article was published in 1948 and it states that the author himself and his staff made an investigation of the Schmidt experiment. Kirk was given permission and use of all clinical materials, school records, registers, information cards and all filed materials by the officials of the Chicago schools. In the best interests of the Chicago schools in particular, and educational research in general, an expose of the Schmidt over-enthusiastic and no doubt well intended but nonetheless vicious experiment was made. Kirk exposed the Schmidt study step by step, all the time mindful of true professional ethics and established legal considerations.

In his introduction Kirk gives a resume of Schmidt's article; i.e., in an eight year study, 3 in training and 5 in post school situations, the following facts were stated:

1. That 254 children of the Schmidt study were tested by the Chicago Bureau of Child Study.

2. Initial tests of that group averaged an I.Q. of 52.1.

3. After 3 years' training the I.Q. average was

4. Five years post school the average I.Q. was raised to 89.3.

5. Social maturity showed even a greater improvement.

6. Twenty-seven per cent completed four years in high school, and 5.1 per cent of that group had been enrolled in college.

7. Employment and social adjustment were highly similar.

Kirk maintains at the outset that statements 3 and 4 of the Schmidt study are highly controversial and in contrast to current professional opinions as compiled from doctoral theses in the School of Education at Northwestern University.

The following procedure of evaluation was used by Kirk:

1. He checked with Chicago school authorities for agreement of statistical data.

2. He checked with the Chicago Bureau of Child Study and noted the discrepancy of the pupil I.Q. referred for special training to have a mean I.Q. of 69 for the Chicago report and a mean I.Q. of 52.1 for the Schmidt report.
3. It was concluded as unlikely that Schmidt would receive in her classrooms the lower group of these special students.

Schmidt refused to give the names of students in her study to Kirk; he maintains that if she were forthright in her claims there would be no question of ethics of giving the names of students for further educational research.

With permission of the school officials, and protected by the legal ramifications of an investigator, Kirk examined Schmidt's school records with these resultant data:

1. Miss Schmidt was assigned to Lafayette School (Chicago) from 1936 to 1941.

2. Chicago reorganized its department for the mentally handicapped in 1938, and that there was no head teacher as Schmidt often refers to in her article, and no such centers at any time as A-B-C-D-E-F, as recorded by Schmidt.

3. The names of the students on the Schmidt school register for the years she was employed by the Chicago system were secured and these pupils' I.Q.'s were compared with their referral cards from the Bureau of Child study. The final I.Q.'s as given by Schmidt in her experiment retest after three years' training
with a mean average of 71.6 resembles the initial test of the Bureau of Child Study, Chicago.

4. Schmidt included in her experiment the pupils of Miss X, another teacher at the same school, viz., Lafayette, at the same time of Schmidt's own employment there. According to Kirk's investigation of Miss X's pupils from registers and referral cards of the Chicago Bureau of Child Study, a room having a mean I.Q. of 64 with a range of 41-85; truly a typical room for the mentally retarded. But the same records give Miss Schmidt's class as having a mean I.Q. of 69, with a range of 27-92. Further perusal of the register revealed that the one student of the 27 I.Q. had attended school only 41 days. The referral card for the 92 I.Q. case stated that he was an emotional problem, who when adjusted could with diligent study complete four years of high school and enroll in some type of a college.

There seems to be insufficient evidence for Schmidt's prodigious claims, in Kirk's opinion.

In Schmidt's public statement given after the Kirk expose, the reasons for her position were nonconvincing.
Part V

Local Reports

Philosophy of Education for the Omaha Public Schools

The philosophy of the Omaha Public School system as organized by the curriculum department, under the direction of Superintendent Burke, is summed up under these five headings:

1. **Education and Democracy.**

   Since the public schools are agencies of democracy, it is their obligation to promote and preserve equal educational opportunities for all children under its jurisdiction.

2. **Purposes of Education.**

   The purposes of education are to develop the potentialities of each individual consistent with the ideals of democracy by the following strategy:

   a. To develop wholesome ideals of mental and physical health and their attainment if possible.

   b. To develop a personal philosophy which will give direction in home, family and community relationships, a rich and interesting social life, respect for law and order, recognition of spiritual values and freedom from fears and prejudices.

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18 Harry A. Burke, Superintendent's Bulletins, Nos. 19 and 20, January 22 and 27, 1947, Omaha, Nebraska, Public schools.
c. To develop the effective use of the skills of learning.

d. To develop the ability to think critically, and to evaluate policies.

e. To develop abilities and attitudes toward vocational and economic competence.

f. To develop an appreciation for the conservation of resources; for creative expression of art; the effect of science on human life; the beauties of nature; the significance of the importance of the family both for the individual and for society.

g. To understand and exercise his rights and duties as a citizen of a democracy.

3. Concept of the Curriculum.

The purposes of education are realized by medium of the curriculum which includes all the learning experiences of a child for which the school is responsible, that is the course of study plus the extra-curricular activities which serve to enrich the ideals and experiences of the child by the establishment of proper behavior patterns and attitudes in relationships of pupils with pupils, with teachers, parents, supervisors, custodians, special personnel assistants and advisors in all community contacts.

4. Learning and Child Growth.

In its regard or attitude toward the individual, the theory of monism is accepted by the system, and therefore education is so directed for the development
of the total personality of the child, and the curriculum is so integrated in its practices toward that aim.

The pupil learns through his own experiences as he rises on the various stages toward maturation, and thus the outcomes of learning are expressed in terms of changed behavior, attitudes, knowledge, skills, appreciations and insights.

5. Evaluation and Appraisals.

There should be a constant evaluation of curricular materials and activities, instruction, records, tests, etc. in continuous effort to achieve comprehensive appraisal of child growth and learning.

The Work of the Child Study Service

The work of the Child Study Service is briefly described in a pamphlet by Edwards, the chief examiner of the clinic. Edwards explains that the clinic was established in 1937 by Superintendent Anderson.

Upon request of elementary school principals, children are admitted to the clinic. The referral blank sent by the school to the clinic contains the case history of the subject to be examined. A complete battery of standardized tests is administered in an attempt

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to discover the true difficulties and their causes, and recommendations for their remedy is given.

Academic failure often breeds insecurity and other emotional and social problems which usually result in some type of escapism such as day dreaming and lying, truancy or stealing. Mentally superior children, too, sometimes present problems of maladjustment, chiefly emotional in nature.

Frequently, the problem children presented to the Child Study Service require more than educational assistance alone, and outside agencies that contribute toward the whole welfare of the child are recommended to the parents for further helps for the child.

Special Education in Omaha

There is seldom a class in which there is not a child who is visually handicapped, mentally retarded, or a child with a hearing loss, or more particularly, an emotionally unstable child. The degrees of handicap vary, but their needs are special.20

Upon this premise Warner implies that particularly skillful and well trained teachers can, in their own classrooms, cope successfully and advantageously so, with these deviants when they are retained in their own

20Don Warner, "Special Education in Omaha,” Omaha Education Association Quarterly, May 1948.
neighborhood. But too few teachers of the above type are available. Furthermore, removal of some pupils to a new environment often helps to alleviate some of their problems both in and out of school, thereby justifying segregation to special schools.

The provisions for special education which have proven successful in the Omaha system are in these three classes:

1. The homebound classes.

2. The centers, The Doctor Lord Room at Field School, and the Hattie B. Munroe Home for Convalescent Children, care for the physically handicapped.

3. There are four centers for the non-academically minded.

Speech correction aid is given to all these special units by a corps of visiting teachers.

The blind and deaf are provided for by special facilities of the state.
CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM

For the thirty years prior to 1929, there were in the Omaha public school system many attempts to screen and educate, or adjust to the school situation, many children who were regarded as mentally backward or severe discipline problems. However, these attempts were only half-heartedly sanctioned by the administrators. Yet, many principals of the elementary schools, aroused by the desire to do something for the truant, the delinquent, or the maladjusted, created in their schools special rooms and began an honest effort to help these unfortunate children. Gradually, due to many factors, insufficient appropriate materials and facilities, untrained teachers, improper screening of pupils, legal involvements, and an unsympathetic public, unpopularity and stigma were the natural results, and thus there special rooms were totally abandoned by 1923.¹

¹Historical dates and facts in this chapter relative to the growth of the Individual Progress Department were supplied by Mrs. Marie Mead, who has been an outstanding teacher in the department since 1929. Additional facts were supplied to the writer in July 1946 in a personal interview with the late Miss Belle M. Ryan, then Assistant Superintendent of the Omaha Public Schools; and in two personal interviews, one in July 1946 and the other in June 1949, with Mr. Don Warner, Director of
Then, for the next six years, the assistant superintendent systematically studied this problem of the mentally retarded and the delinquent as related to education in this city. Utilizing many improved methods, experiments, and findings of other school systems, a special room was created in 1929. The establishment of this one key room had auspicious significance in "The Adjustment Program," as the department then was called. An unused room, in a poor district of the city, under the guidance of a tactful principal, a teacher, versatile, vivacious, mature, of both rural and urban teaching experience, but new to the Omaha system, were selected by the assistant superintendent for the experiment. With seven boys as the nucleus, the revival of a modern, scientific educational project for educating the mentally handicapped was inaugurated. At the end of the first year the enrollment had increased to twenty boys and a craftsman of carpentry and related woodwork was added to the staff. This carefully nurtured project attained the high aspirations of the assistant superintendent.

Child welfare under whose direction the individual Progress Department has operated since 1944. These statements gleaned from personal interviews are offered in lieu of published material as there has been no Superintendent's Annual Report published since 1914. True testing and screening in the modern, scientific meaning began in 1938 with the establishment of the Child Study Service.
and this key room became the model for the establishment of similar special rooms at strategic locations in the city's elementary schools. Slowly, quietly, favorable public relations were wooed, financial assistance obtained, and proper impressions were promulgated among the general teaching force as well as among the parents of the mentally retarded children, the delinquent, and local juvenile legal authorities. Because the situation was so wisely controlled by the assistant superintendent, the well balanced adjustment program progressed cautiously but successfully from that initial beginning in 1929 until the year 1940.

Due to the discoveries, pressure and unrest of our changing world of 1940-41, a director or supervisor was sought to wield this enlarging and now increasingly important department. But not until 1944 was this effected, when a Department of Special Education was established under a new full-time director, who judiciously unified and developed all special departments into the present interlocking and comparatively efficient status. Also, the adjustment program received a new name, "The Individual Progress Department," wherein "adjustment" is only one, albeit, a mighty important factor in the education of the mentally handicapped, maladjusted, crippled or spastic youth.
**Specific Problems**

In the Individual Progress Department, due to its nature there are many specific problems involved.

The first is, obviously, that of identification, or discovering just definitely who are the mentally retarded or which persons of that group can avail for themselves, any progress or advancement in the department as it now exists. Therefore, identification, screening, or selection is the initial problem of the department.

When these pupils have been specifically identified, where shall they be educated—in their own communities, or should there be a special school? What then is the most advantageous location for the education of these youths? Therefore, the second problem of the department is the selection of physical plants, their location and facilities, and sub-secondary consideration of transportation and other attendant conveniences.

The third specific problem flows from the first. What shall these mentally retarded children be taught? What curriculum shall be established as the profitable, harmonious means of developing the best abilities of these youths?

And as a fourth specific problem, which by nature stems from the third, by what methods shall these mentally deficient children be taught, by what means
will they be instructed, how will discipline be handled and how will these persons benefit from adherence to a guidance program, and just how will social, economic, physical and spiritual adjustment be effected?

Selection of personnel is the next vital specific concern of this department. What personnel is necessary for the establishment and enforcement of the accepted program? What are the numbers and qualifications of the personnel from the director, at top, down through the list of supervisors, principals, classroom teachers, nurses, craftsmen, technicians, consultants, or any personnel responsible in any way for the care and education of these mentally retarded children?

Maintenance and cost constitutes the fifth specific problem, and the sixth consideration is the "follow-up," or the attempt to prove the success or justification of the Individual progress department.

Procedure

In an attempt to answer the six specific problems given, the writer has used the following procedures. First, the director was contacted and interviewed as to the history and the locations of the special schools, the qualifications and numbers of personnel, cost, maintenance, follow-up, and many other problems relevant to
the situation. During the two school years of 1946-47 and 1947-48, all the special schools of this, The Individual Progress Department, were personally visited several times. A majority of the personnel was interviewed and classrooms, shops and special activities and programs were visited and observed many times. Further, the writer has attended medical clinics, welfare organizations, guidance and counsel sessions with many of the individual pupils of the department. Such records as the official initial Stanford-Binet tests, cumulative records, census records, welfare and juvenile records, official public schools general health and information cards, and the speech correction department record cards have been examined and tabulated for one hundred boys at the Bancroft Special School for the mentally retarded for the same two year period.

In addition, the writer has also personally administered in one classroom, Diagnostic Tests, such as The Unit Scale of Attainment, Primary Forms I and II, The Witty Interest Sheet, and conducted a four and one-half month Remedial Reading Program for sixteen boys at Bancroft center. Other tests and devices were observed but all seemed to verify the findings secured from the proceeding investigation.
since 1944, at the time of the appointment of a full-time director and co-ordinator of special education to the administrative staff of the Omaha Public School System, the following policies and procedures have been more or less adopted for the Individual Progress Department-division for the mentally retarded. It must be understood that certain phases of these policies are the outgrowth of some of the best direction and endeavors of many persons, who have contributed to the program prior to 1944, several of whom are still devoting their professional careers to the advancement of the department. Moreover, the principles involved are in accordance with the highest type of dignified philosophy, and are in practice, a natural, logical but flexible enough for individual needs, solution for the local situation relative to the education of the mentally retarded. The smooth, efficient dovetailing of facilities of one department or section with another is definitely a commendable performance only possible under competent administration as the following discourse ought to reveal.
Identification and Admission

Before a child is admitted to the special education department of the Individual Progress, he is usually detected in the normal course of events early in school life by the regular classroom teacher, who in turn brings such conditions to the notice of the principal. Then upon persistent academic failure, constant misbehavior, truancy, delinquency, or general maladjustment of the child in his primary grades and still existing in the early stage of the intermediate grades, the principal arranges with the Director of Child Welfare for an individual test for the failing pupil. The pupil is tested at the Child Study Service, a cooperative institution of the Omaha Public School system and the University of Omaha's complete and adequate clinical psychological testing laboratory. The Stanford Revision of Binet-Simon Test is administered, followed by a complete battery of tests, such as personality tests, reading readiness, aptitude tests or whatever type of tests are indicated. The Speech Correction Department administers their tests, and the audiometer and visual tests are jointly administered by the Speech Correction Department and the Nurses' Association of the school system. The parents are urged to have their child submit to a complete physical check-up by the family physician, or if
not, to give parental permission for the physical examination of the child at either the Creighton University or the University of Nebraska medical clinics, or by a city health department physician. The Director will arrange for these examinations. If psychiatric symptoms are indicated, further examinations are given, and sometimes treatment is arranged.

The complete findings of all these examinations, and recommendations from each department involved, are recorded and filed in the office of the Director. Duplicates are sent to the special school where the child is assigned. Furthermore, all findings are interpreted to the special teacher in charge of the child, by the heads of the examining departments, with recommendations, suggestions, and hints as to their classroom significance. As for example, the school nurse assigned to a special school explains to the teacher the degree of auditory or visual defect a child has and just what can be the expected response. The nurse further warns the teacher of cases of extreme nervousness, emotional upsets, habits of fainting, thyroid condition, or other glandular disturbances, epilepsy or any other seizures or any defect of a physical basis that will require cautious treatment or particular consideration on the part of the classroom teacher.
Also the Director visits the home of each child, tactfully ascertaining any data that might be beneficial to the staff in the training of the child or for other facts in directing improved well-being of the pupil. In cases where welfare assistance is needed, the proper authorities are contacted by the Director. Information thus gained is not recorded, but discussed privately by the Director and the special teacher in the strictest of ethical confidence. Then, too, these families needing welfare assistance are placed on the school nurses' "home visiting list" so as to continue to help in concrete ways, and tactfully advise the parents relative to improved welfare of the child and the home. Incidentally, 85 per cent of the homes are described as "adverse" by the nurse and the Director. The teacher does not visit the home but encourages the parents to visit the school at any time and to investigate the excellent care and direction given their child. Visits to the school, written notes, and phone calls between the parents and teachers are recorded only as to date and number, but not as to content except unless the information has any lasting significance in the future adjustment or the protection of the child. Juvenile court check-ups and attendance officers' reports are similarly handled.

Highly valuable in the actual teaching of the
child are the written communications of the outcomes of the psychological tests. For example, the knowledge of the mental age of the child, his actual grade or place in Reading particularly and his other academic abilities indicates the likelihood of successful grouping. Also the aptitude tests results aid greatly in arranging suitable types of craft work as well as other factors in judicious placement and harmonious adjustment.

The actual placement of the special school or under the care of which special teacher is determined by the Director based upon the results of this multitudinous data, and influenced by the principal of the special school in relation to administrative conditions.

As for the child himself, he is accompanied by parents or a relative if possible or by the Director personally. The pupil is received by the principal, is shown the school setup, and introduced into the room where he is assigned. Every possible gesture to make a friendly impression on this new pupil is extended by the staff and the students. As a matter of policy, the staff considers friendliness one of the important features in the rehabilitation of their maladjusted charges.
Location of Special Schools

There are at present four centers for the non-academic minded child. They are located at Howard Kennedy School where there is a two-room unit for colored children. Boys and girls are not separated, but are placed according to size and ability. A second center is placed at Comenius School where boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 12 are instructed in a single room unit. At Edward Rosewater School girls between the ages of 12 and 16 are grouped in a two-room unit. At Bancroft Center there is a five-room unit for mentally retarded boys of the 12 to 16 age group. The teaching load for each of these ten special rooms ranges from 20 to 23 pupils.

The special centers have been so located for divers reasons. The Howard Kennedy is the best equipped and the most advantageous district for the colored people, and the idea of special education is well received in the community for the benefit of their own defective children as well as for the near-by colored districts of Long, Lake and Lothrop Schools. The one-room unit at Comenius is the remnant of a former time when the school housed all the special rooms for the mentally retarded just prior to 1923. The Edward Rosewater and Bancroft centers are so located because of the dwindling
population of these communities and the existence of two such well established districts whose excellent plants would otherwise be partially vacant. Beside this factor, there are many other conditions such as excellent transportation facilities, adequate playground, bordering on beautiful parks, and other features which influence the location of these special units at these two respective centers.

Curriculum

The very capacities and limitations of the individual pupils themselves indicate what might be profitably offered in the Individual Progress Department as curriculum, by what methods these subjects and activities be taught, and in what way these factors contribute to good mental hygiene, general adjustment to society, improved physical well-being, possible future self-maintenance and a degree of spiritual serenity for each student. No teacher is bound by any regular curriculum or academic course of study in the special classrooms, but she determines what to arrange or offer, depending upon the individual abilities or aspirations of the pupils assigned to the room.

At the Bancroft Center, the teacher is responsible for all academic subjects, craft work, and wood
shop work for her group, but additional assistance is supplied for such activities as Physical Education, Special Music or Art, Speech Correction, Vocational Subjects, Guidance and Counselling.

Functional Arithmetic and English, Word Study, Penmanship and Drawing resemble the course of study of any primary curriculum. Remedial Reading is the chief academic subject. Considerable time is devoted to health promoting activities such as cleanliness and physical education; games, use of leisure time, good health habits, etiquette, good citizenship and character training are given a place of importance and interwoven as much as possible into all activities. Elementary Music and Art are taught by a traveling teacher to the regular grade classes. Any student in special education who has abilities or a particular desire to join these classes may avail himself of this additional instruction.

Handcraft subjects are as varied as the individual pupil's abilities and the classroom teacher's versatility. In any special classroom a visitor may see examples from very poor to skillfully executed samples of wood carving and figurines, leather work, plastic articles and gadgets, pottery and clay modeling, jewelry repair and beading, basketry, raffia craft, metal craft, building of model planes, ships or toys, and endless
types and stages of drawing in various media.

At Bancroft, vocational subjects include wood shop work such as carpentry, cabinet making, furniture repair and finishing, and interior painting; shoe-making and repair and allied leather work as making purses, cigarette cases, camera cases, and belts; cafeteria work which includes food preparation, serving, dishwashing and cleaning up, and for the more advanced or stronger students, cooking and ordering; building maintenance which includes cleaning of large institutions or office buildings, interior painting, window washing and minor repairs, and all phases of custodian work except stationary engineering.

Much the same type of curriculum is offered at Howard Kennedy except shoe repair work and carpentry. Here, both boys and girls are taught cooking in addition to the other features of cafeteria work mentioned. Girls are taught how to serve as matrons for clubs, hotels and hospitals.

At Rosewater Center for girls ages 12-16, academic and craft work follows the same plan as at Howard Kennedy and at Bancroft schools. Vocational work here includes all phases of the cafeteria work, a class in beautician work is offered, and all types of domestic
work are taught with emphasis on cooking, sewing, laundry work and infant care as applicable to homes rather than to institutional work as stressed at Bancroft and Howard Kennedy.

The Comenius Center serves boys and girls aged 9 to 12 who for grave reasons cannot be retained in the primary grades of their own district until they are approximately old enough to attend some of the other centers. Often, too, some of the pupils at Comenius are so placed temporarily before transfer to institutions of a true custodial nature. Some academic work is offered to any child whose official tests reveal such ability. For the most part, simple crafts, health promoting play, games and dances, habits of cleanliness, good manners and patterns of correct speech are the chief endeavors of the teacher in charge. Also, these children, ability permitting, are taught how to go on errands such as to the local grocery, involving the knowledge of making change, school messengers, ushers for school programs or similar activities that promote improved social adjustment, good citizenship, or a feeling of worth or importance for the child.
Methods

Teaching methods in each of the special classrooms are highly diversified. Simply because of the individual nature of the instruction, the deplorable state of maladjustment of most of the pupils, the aim of the department and of each teacher is to instruct the pupil to aspire to a reasonable attainment commensurate with that individual's ability, and modified by physical handicaps or other conditions involved. Also the very nature of the craft or vocational work determines the method of instruction, as the pupil readily comprehends good or poor results in concrete material such as wood, leather, plastic, or a pudding. Each teacher employs whatever method she finds successful in academic instruction. Frequently in Remedial Reading one may observe a combination of the Kottmeyer System and the Durrell-Sullivan method.¹ All teachers are highly resourceful and revert to any legitimate means to successfully convey proper attitudes, establish habits of skill and impart as much practical information as their charges can seemingly absorb.

Since there are as yet no "best or required methods" established by the department, the success of

the teacher and her room depend entirely upon her own enthusiasm, skill, or whatever personal or pedagogical principles guide her. One observer noted after a comparative eight-week study of the Individual Progress rooms and all the other regular classrooms of both Bancroft and Rosewater Schools that he saw more different and diverse methods initiated in any two or three special rooms than in all the regular grades from first grade through the eighth in both schools. Further observation and investigation by this same group resulted in a composite impression that

The special room teachers were more alert to new and constantly improving hints of teaching and scientific methods, more avid in search of fascinating ways of presentation and highly imbued with a truly professional spirit of giving to each other the results and means of their discoveries and successful experiments.²

As most of the groups are of a heterogeneous nature, strict adherence to a set method is obviously unworkable. In most classrooms two or three children worked in groups and there was the natural unrestricted movement among these children as all of them participated freely in their group activity. One teacher used considerably the method of pupil-leader for each small group usually composed of five children. Another teacher used what she called "The Buddy System," where each boy was teamed with

²University of Omaha, Observation of special Teaching Methods Class, April and May 1948.
a congenial partner of somewhat equal age, ability and interests, and they worked out their tasks and assignments together. From the standpoint of mental hygiene alone, this friendly cooperative method develops a sense of belonging to some group, and a sharing in success, and no doubt other characteristics previously frustrated in their former educational environment.

Methods, based on sound principles and the findings of scientific research, were observed to be used by most of the teachers in these special rooms. The actual success of the teacher and her charges depends upon her personal acumen and resourcefulness in presenting skillfully and effectively, clever devices and methods founded on a basic, true, complete philosophy.

**Discipline and Guidance**

Discipline and guidance are of ultra importance in the Individual Progress Department. Usually the youths of 65 to 85 I.Q. are forcefully aware of their school and social failures and have often acutely suffered from the tacit insinuations of instructors, the open jibes of companions, plus harsh treatment by cruel or bewildered parents. Consequently these young people have reverted to the hyper-egotistical manifestations of revengefully disrupting to various degrees the legitimate
procedures of classrooms and assemblies, or these youngsters have resorted to the escape mechanisms of truancy or delinquency. Every classroom teacher will attest that this type of child presents a high proportion of her discipline problems. It is, therefore, one of the prime policies of the Individual Progress Department to circumvent as far as possible the attendant occasions for these adverse disciplinary manifestations and by remedial procedures accord to these really soul-sick youths their rights to dignified, just, and humane treatment. From the initial contact with the Director of Child Welfare until the youth leaves the department, every effort is extended to eradicate the scars of maladjustment and provide situations favorable to rehabilitation.

The unrestricted, informal methods employed in many of the special classrooms plus a wide variety of projects suitable to the abilities, health and preferences of the students, are the chief means of eradicating misbehavior. At all times the staff seeks to promote cheerful and courteous relationship with the pupils, and at no time is a child permitted to suffer for any of his discrepancies by reflections of a derogatory nature if it can be so deflected by any of the personnel of the department. By vigilance and close contact with each child, the department by its teaching methods, by a suitable
curriculum, by the power of its carefully selected personnel, backed by the sound philosophy of the dignity of the individual, aided by excellent guidance consultants, and child welfare groups, attempts to prove to each of its students and his world that he can and must attain his rightful, responsible place in life.

Despite all normal ways to circumvent adverse, provocative behavior, there are and always will be mishaps that need the concrete touch of punishment, disguised or otherwise. Loss of earned privileges, banishment from the group, not permitted to compete in a favorite activity, obliged to do all of an unpleasant duty usually shared by all the class, are just a few of the devices meted out by a teacher or principal to re-enforce subtle methods of maintaining good order. But over and above these problems, severe deviations, as profanity, theft, sex offenses, vandalism, and assault, cannot be handled by circumlocutative methods but require direct and forceful measures to prevent repetition and to make amends for depredations incurred by rash conduct.

In these situations, guidance and counsel assistants and other officers are supplied by the department to supplement the special teachers and the principal. A highly competent, trained colored guidance consultant devotes her full time to the adjustment of these kinds of
problems for the colored children of Howard Kennedy Center and the neighboring districts of Lake and Long and for a few of the colored children at Technical High School. The Director of Child Welfare acts as chief consultant directly for Edward Rosewater and Comenius Schools, but a member of the local juvenile court acts as a manager of the "Behavior Clinic" so called at Bancroft Center.

Personnel

At the head of the Individual Progress Department, by the very nature of his position, is the Superintendent of the Omaha Public School System. He in turn appoints the chief personnel officer, whose title is the Director of Child Welfare, and under whose direction and supervision are all the special activities of the school system, as the departments for the physical and mentally handicapped, nurses and health association, the audio-visual department, the Child Study Service and Testing Bureau, and other numerous special activities, some of which are highly organized under their own sub-director or supervisor. This unification of activities under one authorized leader has promoted increased efficiency, economy, flexibility and intelligent utilization of the system's interlocking resources for the common good. Immediately under the director in rank are the principals of the
various schools where the special units of the Individual progress are located. All other personnel are subordinate and directly responsible to that principal, but are free to recourse with the chief director, or the supervisor of their own department, if one so exists. However, in the Individual Progress Department, both divisions, viz., for the mentally retarded and the physically handicapped, since there exists no such sub-director, supervision is jointly exercised by the director of Child Welfare and the principal of the special school.

Third in rank is the classroom teacher, upon whom actually depends the success of the adjustment program. Cooperating with the teacher who in locis parentis is directly responsible for the pupils assigned to her room, are a host of assistants such as craftsmen, cafeteria and maintenance technicians, special teachers of art, music, speech correction and physical education, nurses and welfare case workers, guidance consultants and attendance officers. The supervisors of elementary education, both the primary and intermediate, perform only in an advisory capacity directly to the special teacher of the mentally retarded children, and in no way regulate methods or curriculum as they normally do in regular or ordinary class-rooms. However, because of the friendly though non-regulatory situation the teachers of the special rooms, if
not contrary to basic principles, often try out novel devices or controversial procedures in this proving ground. All personnel is selected by the Director of Child Welfare, subject to approval of the assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education, for adherence to normal school regulations such as certification, etc.

**Cost and Maintenance**

The cost for the Individual Progress Department is recorded as elementary education and as such is not broken down into the exact monetary cost for the Department. The one item of teachers' salaries, because of the smaller teacher load in actual number of pupils, is about double that of the regular cost per classroom in Omaha. All items are financed from the general fund, and contributions or financial gifts, although designated for a special purpose, are dispensed from the general school fund. For example, for several years past, the Down Town Kiwanis Club have, for one of their aid-to-boys club activities, arranged for the financing of part of the Shoe Repair Classes by donating machines, tools, leather and similar assistance. The Kiwanians have distributed most of the material output of these shoe repair classes to charity. Moreover, as other divisions or departments of
the school system have benefited from similar contributions from other outside school organizations and agencies, therefore the gifts are distributed through a general fund and not regarded as the property of any one department, and as such only are they accepted by the school authorities. Then, too, there is considerable over-lapping in use of materials, equipment and personnel in so many of the departments that it is almost impossible to estimate the value in a monetary arrangement of these features for the Individual Progress Department alone. Furthermore, at the present time, there is no particular purpose or value in so doing.

The per capita cost for elementary education in the Omaha Public School System for the year 1948-49 was $190.00.

Follow-up

At present there is no official follow-up procedure to prove the worth of the Individual Progress Department. Monetary reasons are given as the chief difficulty. There is, however, as an outgrowth of the policy of friendliness, special guidance, and genuine interest of the staff in each individual, a precedent that the ex-students visit annually their former school and teachers and discuss with the latter, the student's
present whereabouts, employment and marital status.

**Future**

Due to the passage of L.B. 79 during the early spring of 1949, an allotment annually of $100 per pupil in the mentally handicapped division of the Individual Progress Department is allowed from state funds to be effective September 1949. Part of this money is to be used in the Omaha System to begin initial steps in a follow-up plan of evaluation of the Individual Progress Department.

Also during the school year 1948-1949, because of condemnation of the Comenius School, its unit was divided between the Bancroft and Rosewater Centers. Immediate future plans to set up two or three single units for the 9-12 age group at other strategical locations are now under consideration. The hiring of a visiting teacher to augment the Director's home visits to special students' homes was enacted during the past school year. There is a possibility of another teacher of this same type being added to the attendance department.

Plans for establishing an outline of teacher helps as an implement for curriculum are being prepared for future use. Negotiations have been made for future assistance by the United States Employment Service in job
placement for these handicapped youths. Help and suggestions for requirements of available jobs are to be supplied to the Individual Progress Department so that teachers may advise and somewhat prepare its likely students for these jobs.
CHAPTER V

SOME INTERESTING CASES

Jerry R.

Jerry is the only child of a pair of sensible parents. This boy was born on a farm in Kansas where he lived with his parents until he was twelve years of age. During those twelve years Jerry's life was normal in every respect except that he had a squint which the family decided needed correction when the boy was about nine years old. Glasses were secured for the boy and life proceeded as before. Jerry did moderately well in his school work at the one room rural school. He was particularly interested in Music and liked to sing. His mother played the piano. When Jerry was eleven years old he received a trombone as a birthday gift. Soon lessons were arranged for, and the lad enjoyed his new world immensely. However, about this same time Jerry began to have severe headaches and often begged his mother to let him stay home from school. The parents thought that the boy's difficulties would soon pass away and did not attach much importance to what they considered the early approach of adolescence.

Jerry grew rapidly and gained in height and weight, but he also became less active and did not want
to help his father do the ordinary chores that most farm
boys are accustomed to do.

Late in the following summer, the farm where
Jerry had always lived was sold, so his parents decided
to move to Omaha. The father secured a satisfactory po-
sition, a nice home was established and Jerry was en-
rolled in an Omaha school in a middle class district as
a seventh grade pupil. The boy was happy; he was well
liked by his companions as he was by nature a kind and
tactful person; he joined the school orchestra and en-
joyed the social side of school life. He only did mod-
erately well in his school work and the headaches in-
creased but he did not tell his family as he now wished
to go to school.

One day Jerry had a fainting spell at school.
The school nurse convinced the parents that Jerry needed
medical attention badly. The discovery of a severe
visual malady resulted in two unsuccessful operations
that were attempted to forestall sure and eventually
complete blindness. Such a tragedy unnerved the whole
family for several months. Medical authorities assured
Jerry that he would have partial sight for two or three
years and to prepare himself for the time when complete
blindness would occur.

The school authorities transferred Jerry to
Bancroft school where he was taught to work with his hands. He became skillful in making leather articles and developed two or three original models of ashtrays and serving trays in metal craft. It required about one year to adjust Jerry to his fate. He is classed as a graduate of the Individual Progress Department.

It must be remembered that Jerry is not mentally retarded. He has an I.Q. of 104, and has no other physical defects except some thyroid disturbance which is in no way connected with his blindness. He now has a shop in his own home where he makes leather and metal articles and sells them to an eastern concern. Jerry is able to provide for himself financially. His mother, too, has taken a position and is saving her money for the establishment of a trust fund for some future day for Jerry.

David B.

David is one of eight children, six of whom are truly feeble-minded, and the other two are dull normals. The six feeble-minded children and the mother are victims of such gross oral malformation that speech is almost unintelligible. The family has been the recipients of state support since 1929 and the father and two older sons have been in and out of jail numerous times for
petty thievery and minor offenses. At present the two older sons are not living at home. Both were beyond compulsory school age several years ago, but were classed as feeble-minded from their school records of another district. The third child, a daughter, is a true idiot and has never attended school. She is now over eighteen years old, small of stature but has no obvious physical defects except oral malformation. And with apology to La Bacall, this girl has "the look."

David, the subject of this case study, is the fourth child of the family. Just prior to David's placement in one of the special centers for the mentally retarded, his family, consisting of parents, David, three other sons and two daughters, had been living in a combination sod-house-cave-like home in the hills of Florence. Welfare authorities forced the family's removal to a shack within the city limits, and David thus came under the jurisdiction of the Omaha Public Schools. From his own district, the boy was transferred to the care of the system's Child Welfare Director. The lad received the usual examinations prescribed for entry into one of the special centers. The psychological report from the Child Study Service was an interesting review. David had an I.Q. of 50 at the age of fifteen. He was unable to do any school work except write his name, copy the date,
write figures 1 to 10, and he could add two numbers if the answer did not exceed 19. He was unable to read, due chiefly to his unintelligible mouthings and grunts that served as language. Vision was normal but he did have some slight hearing loss. Dentition was nearly normal, but the palate and back of his mouth were distorted, his tongue was somewhat short and the upper lip slightly malformed, but not to the extent of hair-lip condition. Coupled with his terrific speech defect, David was afflicted with a grotesque body of Neanderthaloid appearance, thick, stubby trunk and limbs, sunken chest and bent shoulders, topped by a bony head, thatched with coarse, pale, straw-like hair from under which peeped two huge eyes of placid, celestial blue. There were other evidences of glandular disturbances and malnutrition, but strangely no indication of rickets. In spirit, David was sorely abashed by the jibes of his companions, the stares of strangers and the cruel abuses of his own father upon this hapless son.

David was shy when first enrolled at the special center and for a time resented the precise treatment the Director, himself, prescribed for the lad. Every morning when David arrived at school, he was thoroughly scrubbed and groomed by an attendant and dressed in clean clothing selected to enhance the boy's appearance, and in the
prevailing sport style worn by the other boys; then he was fed a well balanced breakfast plus proper vitamin dosage prescribed by a qualified physician. Likewise at noon and before he left for home at the end of the afternoon session, David was fed. Daily the lad was given two quarts of milk and a minimum of 3200 calories properly proportioned. If David consumed the food allotted, and he still wished more he could have it, especially a dish of ice cream or a candy bar to tuck into his pocket. David grew four inches and gained almost fifty pounds, held his head erect, and generally improved his posture and appearance with such a regime for the twelve months he was enrolled in the Individual Progress Department. Incidentally David never missed a day of school nor required reprimand for any misdemeanor during his entire enrollment.

With his improved physical well-being and appearance came repose and a happy disposition and the place where his re-education began. Extra special care was given David simply because he needed it. For the last three months of the school year of 1945-46, and the nine months of the year 1946-47, David followed a program like this:

Daily he was fed and groomed, taught table manners, how to clean himself, how to wash, press, and
repair minor damage to his clothing. If he did well he was given a package of gum, something he never before had in his life and which he expressed as wanting the most. Weekly he was examined by the school nurse and was given some medical treatment at the Creighton Clinic on two or three occasions when so indicated by the nurse: One occasion was for the setting of a fractured arm. He had a weekly half-hour counsel session with the Director or one of the male guidance consultants. In order to improve David's speech he was given weekly, two periods of half-hour each, private instruction from the speech correction specialist, plus instructions for drill for further daily practice under the direction of his home-room teacher.

With the purpose of further establishing and maintaining good health and a friendly attitude toward his fellows, David was required to participate in the divisions of the physical education program incorporated into the curriculum. One-half hour daily is devoted to calisthenics and organized intra-mural games as baseball, basketball, volley ball, track, and other less strenuous games, such as competition in the marble tournament. Extra time after school may be devoted to this part of the physical education program which is taught by a special teacher who serves her entire school time teaching this type of classes.
The second phase of the program is a daily half-hour out-of-doors under the direction of the shop men and crafts instructors. In this period the pupils are encouraged to organize their own games and play as they would in normal surroundings. This is one of the prime purposes of this play period plus the salubrious effects of the out-of-doors. It is also an opportune time to advise directly and encourage the lads in need, in an informal way.

The third daily half-hour physical education period is directed and supervised by the classroom teacher. This time is devoted to the teaching and playing of games for the proper use of leisure time and adjustment to social life. Checkers, dominoes, bingo and such types of games suitable to the pupil's limited capacities, are taught. Often a picnic or an excursion is planned, or there is group singing of popular songs, guessing riddles, and several other similar activities.

Except for the calisthenics, David did not enter into any of these activities with much gusto, but he enjoyed being a spectator, and would serve as a substitute if really needed and so encouraged by his companions or teacher.

The most interesting phase of David's education was, perhaps, his instruction in academic work.
Physicians indicated the futility of surgery for David's oral malformation, nor would the parents ever consent. In view of this, several words and phrases thought to be the most limited for future use were selected and taught to the boy by his instructor. Here is a partial list upon which the boy was drilled orally:

- please
- pass
- thanks
- tread
- excuse me
- transfer
- no
- left
- yes
- right
- good
- sick
- stop
- meat
- close the window; door
- open the window; door

Even after much drill by the child and his teacher, it required strict attention on the part of a listener to distinguish these sound combinations.

David was, however, taught to read silently. He would point out a group of words to his teacher if read orally by another person, or he would find words or phrases from texts, flash cards, or lists on the blackboard when read orally by other children or the teacher. After David had thus gained a sight vocabulary of fifty or more words, he was given exercises familiar to
primary instructors of matching with word cards or blank filling on charts or workbooks. He was also given training with performance cards which his teacher devised for him as a test of his comprehension for following written instructions as:

- Close the door.
- Put the tools in the cabinet.
- Touch Jack on the arm.
- Sharpen the red pencils.

Before David left school he could read some of the directions for his craft work. When he found unfamiliar phrases, he soon learned to go to the more advanced students, point to the word or phrase and listen closely to their response. In this way he learned many expressions. But by actual standardized tests David did not advance much beyond first grade reading for the twelve months of instruction given him.

In Arithmetic David never advanced beyond the point discovered in the tests administered at the Child
Study service. By constant explanation, he learned to note the positions of the hands of the clock when it was time for class changes. He also learned to make change for a dollar, but slowly and often incorrectly. In shop and craft work the boy was also limited. He was not at all interested in small items as beginning students usually like. He did like to do interior painting and learned how to mix paints and to do varnishing and finishing of furniture. He could assist in carpentry but was unable to measure so he could never be anything but just a helper.

When David was sixteen years old and beyond compulsory school age, his father withdrew the boy from school. To this day David helps his father doing odd jobs and hauling rubbish. The case of educating David does present provocative speculations.

Robert S.

Robert S. was a large boy for his fourteen years when he entered one of the special rooms of the Individual Progress Department. He was a gay, bold lad, clean, impeccably dressed, polite and gracious of manner, and he had a stock of witty phrases and sayings and had acquired generally the necessary jargon of the high school crowd in order to be "in the groove." He could drive a car,
knew how to dance, and could justify the merits of his favorite brand of cigarettes. Further, he was willing to take part in any sport event or school program in which he had any ability. He would often entertain others with his magician’s show. And, too, he knew how to play many kinds of games in which he was a delightful partner, a square-shooting competitor, a non-boastful winner, and a gracious loser. Withal it was difficult to believe in many instances that Robert was mentally retarded.

A peek at Robert’s family background, though, will uncover many of his difficulties. His family consisted of, first, three daughters, then a son, then Robert, followed by another brother. His father had a position of sufficient income to provide his family with the ordinary necessities of average good living, and the family as a whole were healthy. But the parents quarreled constantly, and the household was perpetually in turmoil and tears, and the children were frequently huddled behind doors or in hideouts to avoid paternal rage or disfavor or to escape their mother’s whining and nagging. Besides this, Robert was afraid of the dark and his misguided and distraught elders had locked him in a closet to show him that there was nothing to fear. Then, too, when the children had been in some escapade, Robert would inadvertently reveal the secret to the irritable
parents and he was blamed by his brothers and sisters for incurring parental wrath upon them all. Even when the other children were able to avoid family conflicts Robert somehow was unable to contrive means of escape and frequently was the hapless victim of much punishment. In school, too, the other five children did acceptable work, but poor Robert, somehow, could not master the situation. He spent hours in the ante-room of the principal's office awaiting admonition for the crimes of "wasting his time," "purposely not paying attention," "wriggling," "wiggling and getting out of his seat," "running about in the classroom," and horror of horrors, "holding his hands over his ears and screaming" right in class.

Robert failed his grade several times and his younger brother passed him up by two grades which was another cause for school and family disapproval that deeply wounded Robert although he hid his hurt valiantly.

When Robert was twelve years old his parents were divorced. The mother was awarded custody of the children, the home, and some income. The three daughters, then in high school, ably discharged the household duties, and their mother secured employment. A new peace and freedom settled upon the family and the children established their home as the social meeting place for a large circle wherein Robert acquired many ideas and imitated the youthful
Romeos of his sisters' high school crowd.

Within two years the daughters had graduated from high school, the eldest sister married and moved to another city and the second sister secured employment in the same place and lived with the couple. The youngest daughter soon married and resided in Omaha. Robert's older brother, then a junior at South High, was highly successful in his school work, especially in the mechanical line. He also worked part time while attending school and had obtained an old car. The family garage had indeed become a shop where the boys dismantled and rebuilt the vehicle more times than one. About this same time the elder lad was inducted into the armed service and was absent from home the next two and one-half years.

Meanwhile Robert, though reasonably happy in home and social life, was a total dunce at school and contrived to involve himself constantly in disciplinary situations. Although he was now fourteen years old and large for his age, he was placed in the sixth grade room, but his academic production was of weak second grade rating. He had frequent sullen spells and often he would scream and run out of doors, with resulting havoc in the classroom and disciplinary measures for Robert. His mother became disgruntled with her frequent trips to school because of the youth's misconduct and finally consented to his placement
in the special center at Bancroft for the mentally re-
tarded.

The Child Study Service examination revealed that Robert had an I.Q. of 67 and academically he had attained the peak of his expectancy of learning; that he had a vi-
sion defect requiring glasses; the aptitude tests re-
vealed a manual dexterity in the upper quartile; but he was a victim of claustrophobia.

Glasses were procured for Robert and psychiatric treatment was arranged for by the Director of Child Wel-
fare and after a few months' rest from school, Robert was enrolled at Bancroft. Since there were no mechanical courses in the elementary department, Robert was per-
mitted to select any other subject offered, as his ex-
pressed chief interest was not available. However, he became really interested in woodwork and experienced genuine pleasure and success in cabinet making and furni-
ture refinishing. He was permitted to have a movable desk near the exit and had permission whenever he felt oppressed to go out of doors, on condition that he stay on the school grounds and report back in fifteen or twenty minutes. In this way he learned to tell time as well as somewhat overcome his fears. On days when Robert felt he could not abide being in the classroom, a work bench and materials were moved out under the trees. Sometimes,
if he wished companionship, another boy was assigned to work with him, but they must report back to the classroom at designated times and demonstrate the progress of their project. The variety of trees in the environs of the school aroused an interest in botany and on his own volition Robert made an elaborate leaf collection, and learned about the markings of the kinds of wood he used in woodwork. During the winter he made a plaque identifying many kinds of wood and examples of types of suitable finish, in his furniture repair class. Robert responded rapidly to the training given him at the special center; his spells of fidgets became less and less and he often expressed his satisfaction in his new school life.

When he was sixteen, Robert was given an opportunity to enroll in the mechanical course at South High, but he declined. He secured work with a local ice and cold storage company and now drives a truck on a retail route. For the two years that Robert has been employed he has made a fine record with his company. He has not had a single accident, nor a day absent. He is friendly and well liked by his employers. Robert earns a larger salary than he ever had expected; he maintains himself, gives money to his mother, has a savings account, and a car. During the past year he has established a work shop in the basement of his home and has purchased several
expensive machines, as lathe, two or three types of electric saws, etc. As a leisure time project Robert repairs and reupholsters furniture, and has fashioned several small tables, cabinets, footstools, magazine racks, desks and bookcases. He is currently interested in the modernistic style and has subscribed for wood and craft magazine for further study and ideas.

In social life Robert is more or less a success. In his own words, on his last visit to Bancroft Center he said that he "and his brothers and friends go to dances, sometimes stag, sometimes with a date. We go to movies, too, and bowl at least once a week in season. A couple of times a month we throw a party at home—mostly we play cards, but of course if there are girls, we dance. Mom usually goes to the movies but is home in time to get the eats and get the gang going home before too late."

Case of H. G.

The story of H. G. is not all typical but has its points of interest and explains the variety of adaptability and service of the program of the Individual Progress Department. H. G. was a physically large, handsome Negro youth who was first observed in early spring of 1946 by the residents and shopkeepers in the heart of Omaha's Negro district. The lad was seen loitering in the streets
for several days. One day, however, he tried to make conversation with other boys in the street, and H. G. was soon invited to take part in their games. The boy was friendly, a square-shooter, and always seemed free to join any group at any time. Upon questioning by the boys of the neighborhood, it was soon revealed that H. G. had no family, home or money, that he stole what he ate or wore, did no work, and slept in alleys or doorways, and that he had come from Memphis, Tennessee.

After a few weeks, the local lads arranged for H. G. to shine shoes in a nearby barber shop. When the barber discovered that H. G. could not make change, did not care whether or not he charged a customer but was willing to serve; as the result of H. G.'s poor business acumen, the barber suggested that the youth try some other type of work. One day's employment in the next door grocery revealed further that H. G. could not read or write but that he was strong, willing to do any work he was told to do or was shown how to do. He was very polite and kind and everyone liked him; he was the idol of the small fry. Upon the suggestion of the grocer, H. G. was guided to the office of the principal of Kellom School, and via the office of the Director of Child Welfare to the Individual Progress special rooms at Bancroft Center.
When school authorities took charge of H. G., they discovered that he really was from Memphis and his was a strange story. The boy insisted that his name was H. G.--no first name, no last name, just H. G. The only relative he could remember was his mother, with whom he had lived in Memphis. His mother had done laundry work for a living, and H. G. often handled freight on the river dock or did other jobs as his mother directed. He always brought his pay home to his mother; she provided everything he needed and taught him all he knew. He had never been at school in his whole life. Somehow he had evaded trouble and the school authorities. He had learned to defend himself and was proficient with knives or razors as weapons. He loved to sing and dance, and played the harmonica. He liked games of all kinds especially those requiring physical strength. He was fearless and friendly, but strangely, however, he cared nothing for pets, or trinkets such as most toys love, and money was useless to him. Nor could the boy tell time, know the directions, or his age. His life was that simple from his earliest memories of playing in the two-room shack where he had always lived with his mother.

Throughout H. G.'s examinations at the Child Study Service and other assisting agencies, the lad was always courteous, tried his best to answer all questions to the
best of his ability, but he was somewhat irked when he was asked why he had left Memphis. One day, however, he began to cry and told the examiner how lonesome he was for his mother whom he sometimes called "Mimi," and their "'lil ole shack." With this emotional release he told how and why he had come to Omaha. His mother had fallen ill; she refused food and water and would not let H. G. get help or even let their neighbors know that she was ill. She kept lamenting, "When I die, go to Omaha, go to Omaha." The terrified lad fled the shack late that day when he realized that his "Mimi" lay dead. The next day, from a clump of bushes in a nearby lot, H. G. watched the chauffeur of one of his mother's patrons bring laundry to the shack, watched the man enter the cabin and go away with the laundry. Some time later H. G. watched from his hiding-place and saw an ambulance drive away with his deceased mother.

"Go to Omaha," impelled the boy to seek out a box car and soon he was in Omaha, and at Kellom school.

Examinations revealed that H. G. was physically fit in every respect and that he was about seventeen years old. A local Negro organization promised to provide for H. G. for a year or so if he would go to school so as to be useful to himself as well as to society. He was placed in a home and was enrolled at Bancroft school.
H. G. did not like school; he enjoyed the games and social life of school. He evidently would never learn to read. Most of the school time he sat on the floor near the teacher's desk waiting for her to ask him to go on an errand or do some heavy physical work. Nor did the boy like to do any of the craft work or shop work that most of the boys loved to do. Some of the boys were afraid of H. G. and occasionally they taunted him, but most of the time H. G. was happy just "helping the teacher." He did, however, avoid the men of the staff and all the younger women. The psychological clinic indicated a "mother fixation complex" on his referral card.

There came a day when H. G. was absent from school. Upon his return his teacher noticed that H. G. was scowling and sullen. He sat glumly in his place for long over an hour; then in a fit of rage he began to attack one of the other students, meanwhile shouting and screaming, "You lied about me, you lied about me." He pulled a gun from the pocket of his jacket and began to teat the air about in an attempt to strike the pupils about him. When order was restored H. G. was in the office, his anger gone, but the organization which had offered to help H. G. withdrew their patronage and arranged to send him back to Memphis.

Investigation failed to reveal anyone who really knew just who H. G. and his mother were. The woman was
known as "Sally" or "Mimi" to her neighbors, and persons for whom she had done laundry, some as long as twenty years, knew her only as "Sally" and had secured her services through the classified ads. Sally evidently knew how to read. Last reports of H. G. showed that he worked on the river dock handling freight. The foreman who hired H. G. is handling the boy's affairs.

(Note: The name of Memphis is substituted for the true name of the city from which H. G. came, as a measure of protection for the lad.)

Lawrence P.

Lawrence, the youngest of six children, was born in 1932. His parents, four older brothers, one sister and his maternal grandparents left their native Poland in 1926 to come to the United States. In due time all became citizens of our country. The father and grandfather were both employed at a local packing house and reasonable prosperity came to the family. Even during the years of the depression both men managed to be employed.

When Lawrence was born his father was fifty years old and his mother forty-nine. His sister was eight years old and the four brothers ranged from ten to fifteen years. The new baby was a novelty to the brothers, and loved most exceedingly by his sister. Withal,
Lawrence was a welcomed child in his family. The five older children did well in their school work, and learned respect for authority and their elders, obedience, industry and thriftiness and other old world admirable traits of former years. Moreover, the family were devotedly religious and practiced cheerful self-denial and resignation to the will of God. All the five older children in turn graduated from the parish high school and the four boys secured employment, but the daughter, though capable, remained at home.

During his infancy and childhood, Lawrence was a restless, scrawny child. His eyes were pale, his hair sparse and wirelike, and his complexion dull and drab looking. But the boy was polite, obedient and always busy. His grandfather had many fine tools and was adept at carpentry. Early in life, Lawrence learned from his grandfather how to convert scraps into useful and attractive articles, and in addition, an unbeatable philosophy of life here, and hereafter. Everything concerning Lawrence was a matter of importance to all the members of his family circle. His sister proudly led him to school the day he was enrolled in Kindergarten. His home background was prognostic of success in life, but as the years rolled along--five, six, seven--Lawrence was having extreme difficulty in learning his school lessons despite extra
coaching by his teachers and the inevitable home work and family assistance. Somehow the parents were advised to enroll their son in a nearby public school, and from thence this fourteen-year-old lad in the fourth grade was duly transferred via the office of the Director of Child Welfare to a special center for the mentally retarded.

The Child Study Service referral blank indicated a mental age of seven years, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and learning expectancy not to exceed second grade status, slightly faltering speech due to mental incapacity of non-retension of language and not of any defect of the speech organism proper. He had a slight hearing loss, and was subject to frequent colds. Lawrence was deeply ashamed of his poor school record but did not seem to be greatly maladjusted otherwise; the latter condition the examining psychologist attributed to the family's proper acceptance of the boy and his handicap.

Lawrence remained in the special center for almost two school years. His health was somewhat improved. His natural bent for carpentry was developed by assigning him to extra shop work periods. This pleased him greatly and his parents were convinced that this type of work would really be the best for their son. The child's
reading was geared to the learning of shop directions and craft instructions and he was taught arithmetic in terms of measurements in concrete examples. Because Lawrence lived some distance from the special school it was necessary for him to go by bus. After a few days his self-confidence soared when he realized that he could go somewhere away from the environs of his home unaccompanied by some member of his family. He was anxious to learn the names of the city streets, how to go places, how to tell time and the directions, how to make change, how to buy some of his own clothing and materials for his wood work projects. Gradually Lawrence's shyness and uninterested attitude toward school life changed to quiet enthusiasm. He was gently but persistently taught to realize that he could never attain much success in regular school subjects, but must do in life with dignity the very best he could with which he was endowed.

When Lawrence was nearly sixteen years of age, he was selected as one of the several students from the special centers who are permitted to enroll in shop, craft, or art classes at South or Tech High Schools. Besides two or three of these types of classes these special pupils confer daily with an advisor who checks on their progress, conduct, needs, and adjustment to a larger social group. Most of these special students remain in
the high school group for a year's work; some longer if they are adept and are desirous of so doing. At the end of a year many of them have acquired some sort of a trade or skill and they and Lawrence soon join Sandburg's work-a-day world parade of

stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Staker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.¹

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The more the writer has studied and observed the Individual Progress Department, the more commendable has become many features of the whole program. Here are several of the most noteworthy of these points of commendation.

The first most conspicuous feature is the highly efficient operation of the administrative office of the Child Welfare Department, which has so economically interwoven existing agencies to extend their services where they are actually needed regardless in which or under whose authority of the system these departments are located. There is no overlapping of unnecessary activities. All operations are directed into channels of true usefulness and worth.

The second most striking characteristic of the program is the complete and adequate testing system which has been jointly operated by the public school system and the University of Omaha. The chief examiner is an Omaha Public School employee and her salary is paid by the system. The University is paid five dollars for each individual test it administers for the school system. In return, all testing, or testing services, that the school
system might want or need, or psychological assistance whatsoever, is administered free of charge by the University. Furthermore, the University must maintain the laboratory, its equipment, its assistants, testers and psychologists. The collaboration, to date, has been highly satisfactory. A visit to the psychological clinic is an utterly convincing experience. A review of one of the cases when referred to the Individual Progress Department is definite proof to any teacher of mentally retarded children of the high caliber of the testing bureau. Reliable and valid testing is absolutely vital for the identification and selection of pupils for the Individual Progress Department.

Perhaps the next and third most conspicuous commendable characteristic of the department is the possession of the lofty professional ideals of the teaching staff. The selection of proper faculty, of course, reflects the competence of administrators, but the qualities of generosity, of cheerfulness, of resourcefulness and of cooperation here are over and above the usual requirements. Observers are acute to this intangible spirit that pervades these special classrooms and shops, and they marvel at the spriteliness, success and nobility of the teachers and craftsmen of the Individual Progress Department.
These three first traits are probably the most outstanding points of commendation, but other essential and noteworthy features cannot be overlooked. The flexibility of the program for curriculum, for methods, and for the efficient use of school plants and equipment must receive favorable recognition. The removal of any stigma and the maintenance of an unblemished reputation, the public good will, the infiltration and promulgation of the principles of wholesome mental hygiene in their practical applications, and the direction of the needy to proper welfare associations are worthy qualities of high praise.

It might thus appear presumptuous to advocate reforms or recommendations to an obviously successful experiment. But, on the other hand, what organization of a mundane foundation can afford to fail to consider suggestions for its practical advancement or needed expansion?

The following recommendations are made in a spirit of profound loyalty and concern for the department and an intense desire to serve the best interests of the students. They are:

1. To establish teacher-training and in-service improvement classes for the special teachers and a restricted number of likely candidates.
2. To re-organize, unify, and extend the guidance program by:

a. Use of visiting teachers.

b. Guidance clinic organization for regular reports and conferences and parole system where needed.

c. Recreational program for out-of-school activities.

3. To establish an industrial collaboration for part time work or training in agriculture, labor and industry for students in connection with the government placement bureau.

4. To establish an experimental follow-up system.

5. To establish:

a. A two to five room unit for colored children at the new Kellom school.

b. To enlarge the Howard Kennedy unit to four rooms.

c. To enlarge the Rosewater Center to four or five rooms.

d. To establish a two room unit at Webster school.

e. To establish a two to five room unit at Walnut Hill school.

f. To establish in many districts a heterogeneous, ungraded primary room between Kindergarten and First grade, wherein some pupils are retained for one or two semesters, or longer if necessary, as a preparatory realm for true first grade academic readiness; to early screen out the mentally retarded; and to establish a program assuring success and proper adjustment to the school situation.

g. To establish a traveling clinic for a five district unit to operate for grades two to six wherein remedial work in the tool subjects is taught for the purposes of:
1) Maintaining a true and high scholastic standing.

2) Maintaining wholesome mental hygiene by promoting the realization of personal, social and civic responsibilities, a feeling of success, worth, and security.

3) To bring back to normal classroom status pupils who have been ill, of delicate health, absent for excusable reasons, borderline mentally retarded pupils who should be retained in their own communities, and transient students.

4) Eliminating many discipline cases.

The objections to the preceding suggestions are two-fold, viz., financial complications and the securing of personnel. Both conditions can be remedied, in respect to the financial situation, the following suggestions are offered:

1. To apply for the state finances, already legislated for the partial sighted, the hard of hearing, and special education of the handicapped, to be transferred to the local institutions and agencies who are actually caring for these persons whose parents are reluctant to place their children in institutions away from home.

2. To use the Kellogg Foundation allotment for the special training of well qualified candidates and teachers, by:

   a. Financing them partially at universities or institutions equipped or qualified to give such training.

   b. By exchange of present teachers for short periods with special teachers at similar centers in other cities, say, Des Moines, Chicago, Detroit, Wichita, Kansas.

   c. To train our own cadets, candidates and assistant teachers in our own centers by the operating corps of teachers.
3. To secure financial assistance:

   a. From other Foundations similar to the Kellogg Foundation.

   b. From local organizations who have or can establish welfare project funds similar to the Downtown Kiwanis Fund which is at present contributing to the shoe department of the Individual Progress Department.

4. Through proper public relations arouse the citizens to their civic responsibility of adequately providing supplementary funds by the normal channels of local taxation.

   The most difficult problem, at present, is the securing of qualified teachers who are willing to accept the responsibility of the situation. These problems could be partially solved by:

1. Paying a bonus annually to successful teachers who after two years of service continue with the Department and who participate in the training of cadets and candidates and the program as outlined under Part 2, use of the Kellogg Foundation Fund, page 97.

2. To allow them "Professional Advancement" as required by the Omaha School System, for their work in the Individual Progress Department.

   In final conclusion the writer is aware of the great number of problems and difficulties relative to the education of the mentally retarded that were purposely neglected, or so slightly treated or indicated in this treatise, but a conscious attempt was made to report the conditions of this problem as they exist in the Individual Progress Department of the Omaha Public School System, solely as an education project.
The following report is a study of 100 boys enrolled at the Bancroft Center for the years 1946-47, 1947-48.

Information was secured from the Child Study service school information cards, school census cards, school health records, cumulative records, and visits to guidance clinic sessions with students and advisors.
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Any other characteristic of significance:

- Speech unintelligible
- Almost blind
Explanation of Chart

I. Pupil Number.

The pupils are numbered one to one hundred and were selected at random from cards of the enrollment of the boys at the Bancroft School Center for the mentally retarded for 1946-48.

II. Age.

The age given in the chart was the age of the child at the time of enrollment either in 1946-47 or 1947-48.

III. I.Q.

The intelligence quotient or the I.Q. is the result of the official test, Stanford Revision of Binet, given at the University of Omaha's psychological laboratory. The teacher also receives the M.A. or mental age of the child, but it is not listed on this chart.

IV. Speech Defect.

Speech Defect includes stuttering, stammering, or any mispronunciation due to gross malformation so as to be regarded as a conspicuous defect or to be disturbing to the personality of the victim.

V. Visual Defect.

Near-sightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism or strabismus are not considered if glasses are worn, but if not corrected during the time the child was enrolled for the two specified years 1946-47, 1947-48, and the nurse or teacher considered such condition contributing to the learning difficulty of the child, such defects are labeled "yes" on the chart. Any other gross defects as indicated on the health card or by the examining physician for the physical examination are "yes" on the chart.

VI. Hearing Loss.

Hearing loss of more than -3 in both ears or -6
in either ear as indicated by the official audiometer test administered by the speech correction department and aided by the school nurse of the district where the child was examined are "yes" on the chart; also "yes" are any other gross losses as indicated by examining physicians.

VII. Left-handed.

Left-handedness is recorded as the natural left-handedness as indicated by tests of writing, drawing, cutting with a knife, and throwing a ball. Children who had been taught to write with the right hand but who were naturally left-handed are labeled "yes" on the chart.

VIII. Juvenile Record.

A juvenile record "yes" on the chart means that the child has actually been involved in legal misdemeanors.

IX. Welfare Assistance.

Welfare Assistance means that the mother has received A.D.C. funds, or that the family has received financial assistance from governmental and charitable organizations.

X. With whom the child resides.

If the child resides with both father and mother, BP is the symbol; for mother, M; for father, F; for step-father, SF; for step-mother, Sm; any other foster-parents or legal guardians are G. This information is obtained from the official school census cards, and the official Omaha Public Schools' Information Cards.

XI. Note.

Most all of these 100 children are of the white race. Eight are colored and one is Indian. There are no children of the yellow race in this study. Mexican children are classified as white race. The colored children and the Indian boy will be indicated in Column XI. The Omaha Public Schools make no discrimination in respect to racial differences. Cultural conditions are considered only in respect to guidance and always as individual cases.
### Chart in Percentage Form

**I. Ages.**

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<th>Age</th>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>16 years</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>17 years</td>
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**II. Intelligence Quotient Range.**

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<td>Below 65 I.Q.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Above 65 I.Q.</td>
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**III. Speech Defects** - 40%.

**IV. Visual Defects** - 31%.

**V. Hearing Loss** - 36%.

**VI. Speech plus Visual Defects** - 9%.

**VII. Speech Defects and Hearing Loss** - 12%.

**VIII. Visual Defects plus Hearing Loss** - 7%.

**IX. Speech and Visual Defects plus Hearing Loss** - 3%.

**X. Left-handed** - 16%.

**XI. Juvenile Record** - 18%.

**XII. Welfare Assistance** - 18%.

**XIII. Guardian Status**

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<td>Mother and step-father</td>
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<td>Father and step-mother</td>
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<td>Father alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster-parents</td>
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APPENDIX

B
This study for Remedial Reading was conducted for sixteen boys at the Bancroft Center from January 26, 1948, until June 10, 1948, a period of four and one-half months, with actual teaching instruction of 100 hours for each child. The pupils were in groups of three or five per group, and two children, Numbers 6 and 7 of the chart, were each taught individually. The instruction followed somewhat the method advocated by Kottmeier in his text, *Handbook for Remedial Reading*,¹ as used in the St. Louis, Missouri, Reading Clinic.

**FIRST TESTS--JANUARY 26, 1948**

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<th>Gates Survey Form 2</th>
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Analysis of Remedial Reading Chart

For the four and one-half months' instruction by Remedial Reading methods there was some small gain for most of the boys on almost all of the tests. The boys who were able to read 4th to 5th grade material revealed very small gains. Their I.Q.'s were from 67 to 80, a range of 13 points. It is, therefore, concluded that they had attained close to their highest peak before remedial instruction was given.

For the boys who were able to read material of the last half of grade 2 and all of grade 3, there was revealed small gain irrespective of I.Q.'s which ranged from 62 to 89, a difference of 27 points. Strangely, though, one boy with I.Q. of 62, and the oldest of the group, revealed a gain of nine months' reading advancement which was the one case in the study to reveal considerable change. This same boy had had nine years previous reading instruction in both regular and special rooms. It might be concluded that this one pupil had arrived at Reading readiness stage.

In the group of boys from beginning Reading through grade 1 and the first half of grade 2, with I.Q.'s ranging from 50 to 73, there was only a slight gain. A few tests revealed losses in this group.
This study revealed that mentally retarded children, as a rule, do not attain Reading skill beyond primary comprehension and then only to a fair degree after tremendous effort on behalf of themselves and their instructors.

It is concluded that mentally retarded children gain small progress of a true academic nature in Reading. Teachers' opinions and experiences in the individual progress department concur with this conclusion.
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