Homemaker as Citizen - Is the Superior Child Getting a Fair Chance?

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Homemaker as Citizen

IS THE SUPERIOR CHILD GETTING A FAIR CHANCE?

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Very little effort has been made except in a few of the schools in the country to provide for the gifted child. The great number of even the largest schools take no notice of the gifted child and most of them have had exactly the same treatment as the normal and sub-normal child. However, there are some schools in which the other extreme is reached, where complete individualized instruction is given. In this way every pupil does his work at his own pace. We have an example of this system at Winnetka, Illinois. At certain times of the week all of the pupils are assembled, at these times the teacher helps each child by working in the social element. During the remainder of the time the pupils are supplied with material including a series of "goal tests" known as "Exercises." Each pupil works according to his own pace, trying to gain in each branch of the work the goal which is next in advance of the one which he is able to attain. The pupil has provided in his material which he applies to himself. If he succeeds in these he is given a test in the topic in which he is not successful. He starts work toward this goal. If unsuccessful the teacher helps him with the points in which he is weak. From our own knowledge of the characteristics of the superior child we can easily realize that this method is a step toward the correct plan for training of superior children since it gives them a stimulus for working, since they are allowed to go as rapidly as their ability permits, and since they have definite goals for which they work.

A second method of providing for the superior child in our schools, and the one most experienced by high grade skipping. Several cities such as Denver, Atlanta, Tallahassee, Newton, Lawrence, Haggerty Delta, Chester, Pennsylvania and Kansas City use this plan. As a general rule no difficulty is experienced in adjusting one's self to the work in the following grade thru skipping a grade. However, if there is any, this could be remedied if the teacher or parent would give the child time and energy in assisting the child to bridge the gap, but cramming should be avoided. This method allows the child to work his mental age but it does not give the incentive for work which the first plan does.

The third method of providing for the superior child consists in dividing the pupils within a given grade into two or three sections, oftenest three sections. This is done on the basis of intelligence tests. We find this method in the high schools of Salt Lake City, Denver, New Haven, Lynn, St. Louis, Omaha, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Spokane and numerous others in the lower graders at Everette, Massachusetts, Kansas City, Missouri, Cincinnati, Kalamazoo and Detroit.

Sometimes under this system the better section undertakes more work than the other sections and sometimes it undertakes similar work at a faster pace.

It has been a problem as to the policy of acceleration and the only policy of enrichment. The tendency appears to be growing to conclude that acceleration is of the whole more obvious and natural in the lower grades say between the kindergarten and the fifth or sixth grade whereas enrichment is the more obvious and natural in the grades above the sixth.

A fourth method of providing for gifted pupils consists in the formation of definite segregated special classes. Such classes have been in operation in Berkeley, Los Angeles and San Diego, California; Meriden, Connecticut, Oak Park, Illinois; St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri; Kentucky, Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts; Battle Creek, Detroit, Grand Rapids and Jackson, Michigan, St. Louis, New York, New York City and Rochester, New York, and Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio.

In Jackson, Michigan, for example, special classes for acceleration were first organized including children from the third to sixth grades with I. Q.'s of 115 or better. The general plan of operation was to keep pupils in these classes for one semester during which they did the work of two regular semesters and then were returned to the regular classes. In these speed rooms a certain amount of accessory work characteristic of the grades in question was reduced in quantity or temporarily eliminated; but there was less time devoted to music and drawing and the manual arts than in the regular grades.

In general these speed rooms have been satisfactory. They have demonstrated that properly selected pupils can accomplish two years of work in one year without detriment to their health. The method is undoubtedly superior to the rougher devise of grade skipping. The inferiority of the latter is removed but the gifted pupil speeds through grade five months out of his elementary career only, and for the rest of the time he must keep the slower pace of the average pupil. The administrative advantage of the speed room is that it makes possible in a smaller school system to bring together under one teacher a sufficient number of pupils of superior ability to form a good sized working group. The attitude of the pupils is excellent and we have had no complaints of children here learn good habits of study and develop right attitudes toward life.

There are also enrichment classes in Jackson including the fifth and sixth grades. The work includes the regular tasks of the fifth and sixth grades but this is supplemented by various types of enrichment. Among the things which have been tried as supplements are (1) numerous visits to industrial establishments and art institutes such as banks and libraries, (2) practice in the use of parliamentary procedure, (3) excursions to various institutions, and (4) work in the laboratory. The work is experimental and the object of an elaborate study of the project method, of the problem of transportation, including the construction of highways.

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and the use of the modern automobile and motor truck, (5) a study of some of the more general features of local geology, including fossils and glaciation.

The small city of Appleton, Wisconsin, provides for gifted pupils who display special interests or aptitudes, to be grouped in clubs for the study of some phase of activity, not directly or not fully undertaken in the regular school program, such as a Forestry club, a Photography club, Radio club and a Teaching club.

Norsworthy and Whitley in their book on "Psychology of Childhood" bring out these points as to the training for gifted children—"Probably a faster than normal pace of study is wise, with attention to intricate, abstract thinking, the stimulation of creative imagination, opportunities for extensive association-farming. Probably, too, such children should be under the guidance of exceptionally gifted instructors from a very early age. Obviously any special aptitude needs to be given full chance for development."

Home Equipment

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in part by transferring outside the home whatever processes may be removed without destroying the home as the center of family life, or by bringing into the home the mechanical means for taking care of that irreducible minimum of work which will remain there for a time at least for personal, traditional, or economic reasons.

The whole modern period in which we live is an age of machinery. The effect of this is felt in too limited a way in our twentieth century home. A desire for equipment is based upon an appreciation of what equipment in the home really means. An investment in equipment must be justified by the proved usefulness of any piece of equipment. The satisfactory accumulation of equipment will come from developing a discriminating judgment based upon facts gained through study and analysis.

The modern progressive home must be well-equipped. The well-equipped home must be "manned" by a "Household Engineer." It is to train this Household Engineer for her job that this course is planned. Sound training here should furnish a good working basis for reducing to a minimum the amount of valuable time the homemaker spends on the "mere mechanics" of housekeeping and provide time for developing the real "art of living."

Conquering an Ogre

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edly, realize how easy it is to "get into a rut" but few of us make any effort to get out.

Besides the actual time released, there is the joy of knowing that one is being scientific in her actions, that she is actually accomplishing something worth while, a feeling that frequently motivates a disagreeable task to a high degree.