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The gifted child in our schools

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THE GIFTED CHILD IN OUR SCHOOLS

Submitted by

Mary Moulton
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OUTLINE OF THESIS

The Gifted Child in Our Schools

Outline of Thesis (Continued)

THE GIFTED CHILD IN OUR SCHOOLS

Who is the Gifted Child?

In the "good old days" we used to hear of the bright children and the dull children. The slogan in all meetings of educators, teachers or superintendents, was, "Work with the dull ones, the bright ones will get it by themselves." This was when the subject matter, the acquirement of certain facts was made the aim of school. Now, that the child and his development is the objective in all school work, we hear of the superior, the average, the inferior children. Attention is drawn, more and more, to the individual differences existing among children, and the emphasis is placed on the psychological fact that no two are alike. We are told that every shade of intelligence is found among children from the imbecile to the genius. Who, then, in this multitude of more than 20,000,000 school-children, are to be counted as gifted? What are the signs and symptoms by which one can tell whether a child is bright, dull, or average? Terman tells us that "Among the most commonly mentioned indications are: intellectual curiosity, wealth of miscellaneous information, and a desire to learn to read". How much intelligence must a child have in order to be blessed with this curiosity, information, and desire? As one of superior intelligence necessarily ranks above the average, the gifted must be found among the most superior in intelligence. But what is meant by superiority?

From the standpoint of science it consists of a trait, or a group of traits, which are present in a large quantity, or a large degree. Stern, the German psychologist, defines it as "capacity to make a contribution to the common weal". Terman, the most eminent school-psychologist in the United States, arbitrarily defines it as "ability to make a high score on such intelligence tests as the National, the Terman Group, and the Stanford-Binet," and classifies intelligence in the following manner: *

	I.Q.
Genius or near genius.........	above 140
Very superior.................	120-140
Superior......................	110-120
Average.......................	90-110
Dull normal...................	80-90
Dull..........................	70-80
Feebleminded..................	below 70

This classification is now quite generally followed in the practice of psychologists and educators. The range from 110 up includes, judging by the percentage distribution of the intelligence quotients of 907 unselected children studied by Terman (Measurement of Intelligence, p. 66) about 20% of all children born; includes every range of ability from that recognized as rather unusual, upward to the most exceptional; includes the efficient child, the child of superior ability, the talented, the genius. The genius is of such rare occurrence, not more than one in thousands, that the schools cannot be expected to handle

*Measurement of Intelligence, p. 79

him in an effective manner; the same may be said of the talented, those having special abilities in music, drawing, art. This narrows our definition of the gifted down to the children of very superior intelligence - those having an I Q. above 120.

These gifted children are liable to be found in most any school, no matter how small, and the larger the school the larger the number of gifted, probably about 5 in every 100.

How identify the Gifted Child?

How and when is the gifted pupil to be recognized? Parents and relatives are all too prone to feel their Johnny is exceptional, so we must not rely on their judgment. Since statistics compiled by Terman, Cattell, Havelock Ellis and others show a very high correlation in this country and in England* between the intelligence of children and the occupation of their parents, the child of intellectual promise very rarely being the offspring of the unskilled or semi-skilled laborer, (1 out of 560, according to Terman), teachers are justified in looking for their prodigies among the children of professional and business men, but let them not fail to keep a watchful eye over all the children of all classes.

In many school systems the teachers' judgment is the only criterion used in selecting the gifted children, and, if personal judgment is to be the sole criterion, undoubtedly the teacher is the most accurate judge, because of her large and varied experience in the past with which to make comparisons, and her daily opportunity to study certain personal traits of the individual, such as mental attitude,

* Terman, Studies of Genius, p. 64

originality and effort, as well as scholastic achievement. Experiment has shown that teachers are more accurate in the selection of dull pupils than in the selection of the bright ones, that in making a list they overlook many superior children and not infrequently misplace the dull ones. Hollingworth says that the teacher can select not over half of the very intelligent children under her tutelage.* This being true the need is recognized for something more scientific than teachers' judgment as the basis of selection, if all the gifted in a given group are to be discovered.

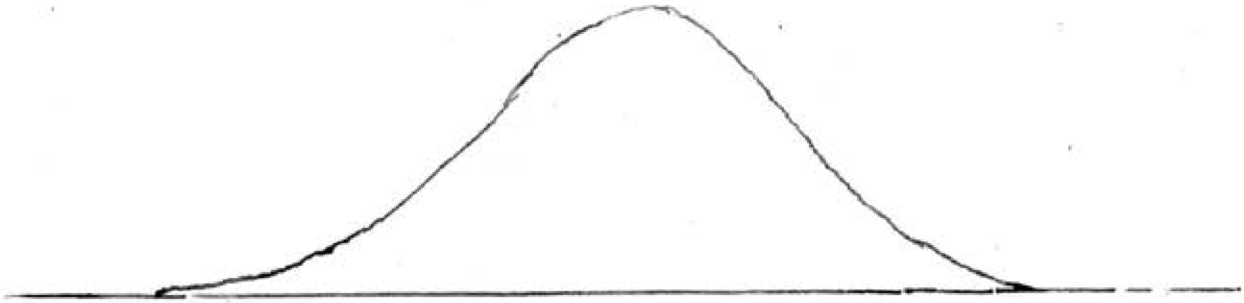
Educators and psychologists have, in collaboration, devised and standardized the accomplishment, or educational tests. These are used in many schools as the chief criteria in the selection of the gifted. They show what a child has achieved, but give no clue to what he is capable of doing if working at limit of his capacity, and therefore should be checked by the intelligence tests, which indicate to a certain extent what he is capable of achieving. "Those who are most familiar with the use of these tests are usually very conscious of their limitations, and it is only as such limitations are generally recognized and understood that the greatest value of the tests will be realized".# The intelligence test should mark the beginning, not the end of the study of the individual child. Research work of recent years shows that if the gifted children are selected by a good combination of teacher judgment, achievement tests, and in-

* Gifted Children, p. 46
# Dickson, Mental Tests and Class-room Teacher, p. 30

telligence tests, their later development, in most cases, accords with early predictions.

Superior ability studied by Galton.

Individual differences in mentality have always been known and recognized, and respect manifested for the more intelligent. Literature on the subject goes back to Plato, who says in his "Republic," when speaking of the future magistrates: "We must watch them from their youth upwards, and make them perform activities in which they are most likely to make mistakes, or be deceived, and he who remembers and is not deceived is to be selected, and he who fails in the trial is to be rejected." Not until comparatively recent years have scholars begun to collect and study data relative to persons of superior intelligence. The first was Francis Galton, (1822-1911) an English meteorologist of distinction, who conceived the idea of applying the statistical methods and theories of probabilities, used in that science, to biology and psychology. He began with the study of heredity and published (1869) "Hereditary Genius", in which he demonstrated the inheritance of genius. In his "Studies of Eminent Men", (1874) and "Inquiries into Human Faculty," (1883) he amassed facts from which he concluded there are various degrees of intelligence, that the frequency of occurrence of each degree decreases as the degree becomes higher and only very few men reach the peak, most are of mediocre intelligence, few being extremely fortunate or unfortunate. We can safely say that from his studies were deduced the basic elements of the present-day curve of intelligence distribution,



showing a gradual increase and decrease from the large central tendency of mediocrity, toward genius on the one hand, and feeble-mindedness on the other.

Binet

In 1904, the French psychologist, Alfred Binet, produced a series of mental tests by which children could be classified on the basis of intelligence. These tests were devised, at the request of the French government, for the purpose of identifying the children of inferior intellect, and for some years were used mainly with that end in view. In more recent times, as the attention of psychologists and educators has been directed towards the superior children, these tests have been the means of accumulating a considerable quantity of knowledge relative to this class of children. The number of studies, based on these tests, made and still being made in England, France, Germany and the United States is all but infinite, and the literature consequently is extensive as to the merits and demerits of the tests.

Goddard

In 1910 Goddard of Vineland, New Jersey, tested an entire school population of some 2,000 children, his aim being to try out the accuracy of the Binet scales with other than defectives. He had each individual tested by expert examiners, then he went over every answer to every question, and drew up tables to show just what percentage of the children at the various ages answered the different questions. The results show overwhelming evidence of the accuracy of the scales, and show, furthermore, that a child, be he bright or dull, stands about the same chance of succeeding with questions adapted to his mental age; that a child, no matter how bright he is, cannot learn things beyond his grade of intelligence. That is to say, a child of 3 years whose mental age is 6, can learn any subject adapted to the normal child of six years, but he cannot do the job destined for the ten-year-old.

<u>Terman</u>

Of the many studies made of superior mental ability none is comparable in extent, thoroughness and minuteness of detail, to those of L. M. Terman, Professor of Education in Leland Stanford University, California. For practically twenty-five years he has been engaged, in one way or another, in the study of mental ability. He was one of the first to grasp the significance of the Binet system of testing intelligence, and worked for years revising and extending the Binet methods, until, in 1916, he published his "Stanford Revision of the Binet Tests", the form now in common usage. Of literature on the subject of mental ability we find many books published by him: "The Terman Group Tests", "The Measurement of Intelligence", "The Intelligence of School Children", "The Education and Training of Gifted Children", "Genetic Studies of Genius", (2 vols.) are among the most important. In addition to his many books, he has written an unusually large number of magazine articles, having contributed to all the school journals and the chief popular monthlies.

About five years ago he began an extensive study of gifted children "to show in what traits, and to what extent, a representative group of intellectually superior children differs from a group of unselected normal children".* For this study he took three groups of children having IQ'S of 140 or above, a grade of intelligence attained by approximately one person in two hundred. Theyrepresented all ages from 6 years up through the high school, in an elementary group of 643, a high school group of 309, and a special ability group of 26, who failed to qualify for either of the other groups, in all 978, besides groups of average children for making comparisons. The gifted children were selected from numbers named by teachers plus the youngest in the class, if not included by the teacher. "One's best chance of identifying the brightest child in a schoolroom is to examine the birth records and select the youngest, rather than to take the one rated as brightest by the teacher.# Not so much what a child can do, as the age at which he can do it, is the index of intelligence, according to the judgment of Terman. The teacher-chosen pupils were given the National and the Stanford-Binet intelligence tests to determine their IQ's; all who scored below 140 were dropped.

* Studies of Genius, p. 16
# Ibid. P. 640

The tests were administered by assistants who "had had extensive training in the use of tests, all had taught in public schools, and all were especially interested in the proposed investigation," therefore we may assume that the results are as accurate as could be obtained.

The anthropometric study of these children shows that, on the whole, they are physically superior to the various groups used for comparison. One physician, Dr. Bronson, says: "The examinations of the gifted group were the most satisfactory of any series of examinations I have ever conducted. The quickness of these children in comprehending what was desired of them in the various tests was a delight.---- Physically the gifted child ranked above the average child of the community."

The educational history of the main group was studied most minutely and reveals a large number of interesting facts, among which may be cited as of most practical value to the school-man, organizing programs of work for superior children, the following:

1. According to the usual standards about 85 percent. of the gifted children are accelerated and not one is retarded.
2. Teachers' ratings of school work show that the gifted children, as a rule, are doing work of a superior quality in the grade where they are located. The "superiority" is greatest in thought subjects and is near zero in such subjects as penmanship, sewing, manual training, games and sports.

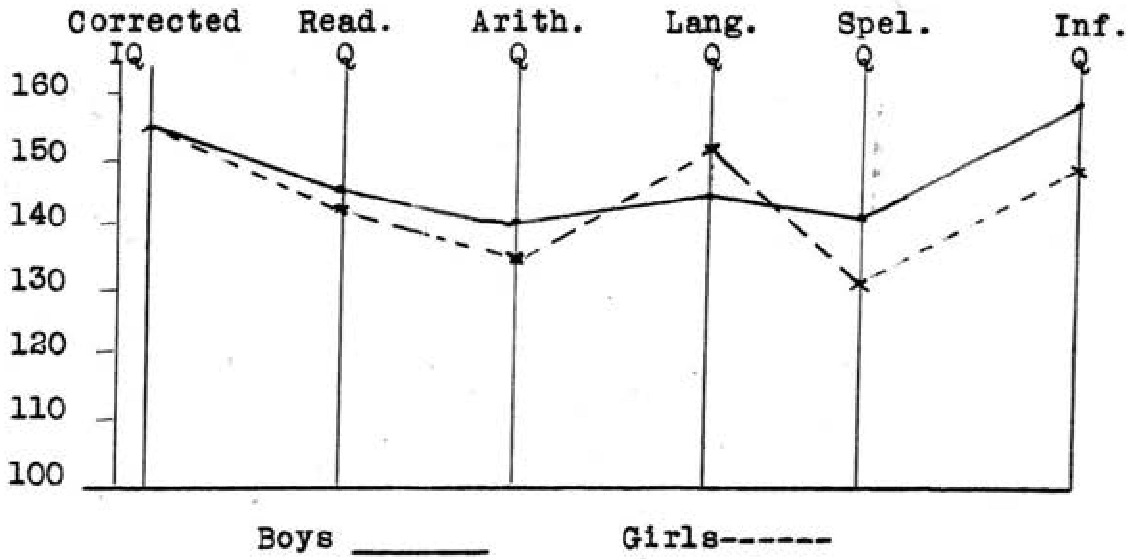
3. Only 1 percent. of the gifted are reported by parents as having a positive dislike for school.
4. Nearly half of the gifted children learned to read before starting to school.---Most of these learned to read with little or no formal instruction.
5. The average age at which intellectual superiority was first noted by parents was about three and a half years. Musical ability first appeared at an average age of 5, and other special abilities at an average age of 6.
6. The indications of superior intelligence most often noted were quick understanding, insatiable curiosity, extensive information, retentive memory, early speech, unusual vocabulary, etc.

Dr. Terman firmly believes that before any attempt is made for special training of gifted children we should know what their accomplishments are under the present system: whether they are achieving to the limit of their abilities, whether they are being unduly retarded, whether their accomplishment is better in some subjects than in others, whether they show an excessive tendency to unevenness, etc.* With these aims in mind the Stanford Achievement tests were given, plus a test of general information in science, geography, literature, history, civics, and arts.

Here again the results show a remarkable superiority of the gifted group over the unselected group. This graph brings out clearly the difference between the two groups.

*Studies of Genius, p. 290

Subject Quotient Profile of Gifted Children*
(Based on mean quotients for the ages combined)



It is to be regretted there is no graph representing the corresponding achievement of the control group and so show more exactly the difference in each subject. While the gifted children have an achievement level well above that of other children, it is nevertheless so much below their level of intelligence, as to make the condition a definite challenge to both the parent and the teacher.

The table of ratings of the various school subjects according to preference and ease show the gifted children more interested in such subjects as debating, dramatics, reading and literature, and much less in penmanship, manual training, sewing, etc. than the control group, the two groups showing about the same preference for games and sports. The reading interests show the intelligence influence on age of reading, quantity, quality, and range of books read. A book that is well liked by the average boy of 11 or 12, is read by the gifted child at 8 or 9. The gifted child of 7 years reads, on the average, more books than the unselected child reads at any

*Ibid. p. 293

age up to 15.*

The classification of books read emphasizes the variety of topics covered by all children. The gifted children read more books treating of science, history, biography, travel, nature and animal stories, informational fiction, poetry, drama and art than do the unselected group, while the latter lead in stories of adventure and mystery, and the popular emotional fiction. On the whole, the reading of the gifted is of a better average quality than that of the control group.

Classifying the interests on the basis of sex, practically the same differences are found between gifted and control girls as between the corresponding groups of boys. Boys in general scatter their reading over a wider range than girls.

Classifying both groups by sex, the figures show that, relatively to the amount read, the girls as, compared to boys, read no more than twelve times as many books of home and school life, nearly five times as much emotional fiction, and only a third as many stories of adventure or mystery. Girls care more for fairy stories than do boys, and boys more than girls for books of science, history, biography, travel and informational fiction. When the twenty most popular books were listed for each sex, only five books were found in both lists, "Treasure Island," "Call of the Wild," "Ivanhoe," "Three Musketeers," and "Tale of Two Cities," indicating that some girls show an interest in boys' books, while boys show practically none in girls' books.

* Studies of Genius, p. 446

A series of seven character tests designed to test such traits as honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness, moral judgment, were given both main groups. A comparison of mean scores* shows a decided moral superiority of the gifted group for both sexes, and at all ages; the superiority is greater for the girls than for the boys, except in test of honesty, where boys of both groups make a better showing than the girls. The results on the whole indicate that the gifted child has, as a rule, reached the stage of character development at nine, which the average unselected child does not reach until about fourteen.

Parents and teachers rated pupils of both groups, selected and control, on 25 personal traits classified as physical, intellectual, social, moral , volitional, emotional. These ratings were matters of opinion, influenced more or less by the personal equation, however teachers and parents agree* to a remarkable degree in respect to the traits in which the gifted group are higher than the control group. It is to be expected that the group, selected because of its superior intelligence, would excel in all traits correlated with intelligence, but, strange to say, mechanical ingenuity was the only trait in which the control group, as a group, surpassed the gifted.

The author of "Genetic Studies of Genius," believing it is possible to measure fairly accurately mental, moral, and personality traits of a child, wished to know whether these traits, as discovered in children of superior intellectual

*Studies of Genius, p. 539

ability, were paralleled in the childhood of men who have achieved eminence. To ascertain whether or not this was so, a psychological study of the biographies of 300 eminent men was made by persons fully acquainted with the standard mental age for the usual performances of children. The group studied is presumably representative of all types of great men, of various nationalities, and the conclusions, if true, may be considered true for other individuals of same type. The conclusions are:*

1. Youths who achieve eminence have in general

   (a) a heredity above the average, and
   (b) superior advantages in early environment.

2. Youths who achieve eminence are distinguished in childhood by behavior which indicates an unusually high IQ.

3. Youths who achieve eminence are characterized not only by high intellectual traits but also by persistence of motive and effort, confidence in their abilities, and great strength or force of character.

It is to be remembered that Dr. Terman, throughout his work, is pointing out the marked traits of children of superior mental ability. His task is to show how markedly the child of high intellectual caliber differs physically, mentally, and morally from the average child, and then prove that the same traits were manifested in youth by men who later achieved marked eminence in any walk of life, scientific, literary, military, political, he makes no attempt to formulate

*Studies of Genius, p. 216

methods of dealing with these bright children; but, in the light of his extensive and careful study, the layman is warranted in assuming that the child of exceptional intellectual ability, who shows a serious purpose, coupled with perseverance, evidences capacity for high adult achievement and should have his school program so shaped that all his latent powers may be developed to the utmost.

Hollingworth

Dr. Lita Hollingworth of Columbia College, in her book "Gifted Children," has assembled from all available sources, including personal experiments, an astonishing amount of data to prove that some children are more generously endowed by nature than others with desirable mental, moral and physical qualities. Hers is not, like Dr. Terman's, a report of the scientific study of children, but a detailed study of results obtained by those who have made such studies, followed by a brief history of experimental work done with gifted children in this country, and suggestions for a school curriculum adapted to the needs of such children.

We have cited but four of the many who have made and are making careful studies of superior mentality. Galton, chosen because he was the pioneer in determining the innateness of superior mentality; Binet, the inventor of means for measuring it; Terman, the most extensive and scientific student of its traits and characteristics; Hollingworth, the careful compiler and critic of data relative to extensive studies made of children of superior ability. These are only a few of the scores now engaged in the work of trying to solve problems incident to the proper method of educating our gifted children. This study is being carried on in all parts of the civilized world, especially in the United States, England, France, Germany, and more recently in Italy. Germany is perhaps doing more than any other country at the present time to identify and train, at public expense, the children of exceptional intellectual promise. The children of poor parents, if they show marked ability, are helped by public stipends in the secondary and higher schools. In the "Aufbauschue" and the "Oberschule", to which promotion is made on the basis of teachers' marks, good physical health, psychology tests, pupil's attitude and parents' wishes, intensive training is given the superior children, particularly along the line of self-initiative. Thus we see that Germany is looking ahead to the time when these bright boys of today will be the leading men of the land, and is helping them to lay the foundation of mental equipment for the high duties they will be called upon to fulfil.

Need of Special Training Felt

The interest in this problem of mental superiority has now passed in all countries from the hands of the psychologists to the educators of youth. These are being fully aroused to the fact that bright children, as well as dull ones, profit little from instruction and training adjustedto the mental pace of the average. They are coming to realize that special opportunity classes must be formed to fit the needs of superior children, as well as for the average and inferior. The idea of the need of special classes for the dull and slow pupils has been quite generally accepted and practiced for some years back; but when the suggestion is made that the same custom be followed with the bright pupils, that they likewise be put into a special group by themselves, and given work adapted to their needs and capacities, a wail of objections is heard.

Objections to Special Groups

They say the dull ones are robbed of the stimulation which they need and which the brighter pupils afford. The validity of this statement may well be questioned in view of the results obtained with divided classes, but, granted that it is true, why should the better minds be dwarfed and aborted for the sake of those who never can master more than the rudiments of a common school education? Every one must admit that each child in our schools is entitled to an opportunity to make the most of himself, also that the work in a mixed class should be graded to the ability of the majority. In such a case the gifted pupil has no need to exert his powers, grows little, forms lazy habits, acquires an exalted opinion of his abilities. In a group composed of pupils of his own or better caliber, his efforts are challenged and he is encouraged to work to the limit of his capacity; then, and only then, is he making the mental progress that is his birth-right.

That the segregation of the best pupils may tend to create an educational aristocracy, foster a sense of class consciousness inconsistent with democratic ideals, is feared by some parents and shared by teachers of the conservative type. In this connection it is incumbent upon the objectors to define what they mean by democracy and ideals of democracy. If democracy signifies, as we like to believe it does, a spirit of mutual appreciation and recognition of the rights and needs of others, then the only thing to do, in harmony with democratic ideals, is to give all children of the land, the bright, the dull, the average, an opportunity to develop to the utmost their innate abilities, and acquire an education as perfectly adapted as possible to their needs. The school is often spoken of as a microcosm of the outside world, in which we find all social grouping is largely on the basis of similarity in intelligence. Segregation of the gifted pupils perhaps starts earlier in life, than would otherwise be the case, a selection inevitable in later years, and so makes the school-room a more complete microcosm.

<u>Difficulties of Handling the Special Group</u>

When the school administrator becomes convinced there are no valid objections to the segregation of the gifted pupils, that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, and attempts to put the system in practice, he is confronted with problems as to organization, space, method of selection, time, teachers, curriculum, methods of teaching, rates of progress, etc. The first, organization and space are individual, each to be settled in accordance with the school conditions of that particular locality. In large systems special classes are readily formed and given in charge of competent teachers. Where numbers are too small to justify the formation of such classes, he introduces some such plan as that of flexible promotion, fast and slow sections, or possibly individual instruction, in order to recognize, encourage, and find scope for the individual development of gifted pupils.

As to how these should be selected, there is now no doubt in the minds of progressive educators that it should be done with the aid of intelligence tests, supplemented by teachers' judgment and results of standardized tests. Just when these tests should be given is still a mooted question; the consensus of opinion inclines to Terman's theory that they should be given at the beginning, before the dull ones become discouraged, or the bright ones conceited. Many feel that the real segregation of gifted pupils and a differentiation in curriculum should not be until the fourth year, that sectioning according to ability gives opportunity for intensive work on the tool subjects and this, with supplementary reading, serves to keep the best of the group working up to capacity limit.

That the selection of teachers for the gifted class should present a problem seems an anomaly, yet literature on the subject of administration frequently refers to the difficulty encountered, and the wish for specially trained teachers is often expressed. Such a teacher should possess an unusual pedagogical and academic training, have a large field of general information on which to draw when occasion demands. She should be one who has more interest in child development than in the course of study; one who understands child psychology, and has sufficient originality and initiative to devise ways and means of keeping the children always interested;

she should have to the nth power all the desirable qualities of any good teacher, plus a keen sense of humor, quick wit, and real enjoyment, not tolerance, of youthful curiosity. If she is not broad enough to feel a thrill of pleasure and pride, when a bright youngster forces her to say "I don't know," or when he excels her in some intellectual performance, she is doomed to failure as a teacher of gifted children. No teacher, any more than a mother, can ever allow herself to be jealous of the mental achievement of youth. No matter how great her experience, how broad her general knowledge, she will find all resources taxed to the limit in an effort to lead these active minds aright.

Cherished forms of technique will have to be altered, adapted, perhaps discarded, for methods must be made to fit the needs of the individual. His best interests will undoubtedly call for a more thorough and detailed study of principles, less repetition than the average pupil requires, but the method of presentation should be left entirely to the judgment and ingenuity of the teacher.

To fit the school work to the abilities of the gifted pupils three ways are open:

1. Acceleration, course of study completed in less time, which enables children to enter the high school younger, but no better prepared.
2. Enriched program, which keeps them in the elementary school as long as the average pupil but gives richer and broader experiences in relation to every required subject, and a dip

into numerous electives;

3. A reasonable combination of these two.

The latter method seems the more just, though the second is more generally favored because of social reasons. The younger child they say has no interest, apart from lessons, in common with his mates. There can be no hard and fast rule for all. The gifted child, who is physically and socially immature, unquestionably should not be accelerated, but no good reason can be found for not accelerating the child who has a physiological and social age corresponding to his mental, to a point in the school system where he naturally meets problems commensurate with his ability. Chronological age counts for nothing when the other three are on the same level.

Those who have experimented with classes of gifted children claim that they can do the work of the regular course in from two to three years less time, than it takes the average pupil, and still have time for much that the enriched program offers.

As to what should be offered in way of enrichment, it might be stated in broad terms anything that will furnish a rich background for achievement, for enjoyment, for helpful service in the future, or that will encourage initiative and originality. As the children of this group are destined for high school, it avails nothing to anticipate work of this school, other than that in foreign languages, which all agree should be begun young, when the child's powers of imitation and rote memory are at a maximum. The regular schedule affords unlimited sources of enrichment through supplementary reading, motivated by excursions, debates, clubs, original composition in prose and poetry, pageants, drama, etc. To this may well be added courses in elementary science for purpose of studying flowers, birds, and animals, biography, civilization, architecture, art, domestic science, and manual training.

Experimental Classes with Gifted Children

The plan of sectioning children according to ability as determined by school performance has been practiced more or less since the latter part of the nineteenth century, usually with more rapid promotion for the bright child as the end in view. In more recent years, plans known to teachers as the Batavia, the Pueblo, the Winnetka, and latterly the Dalton, advocating individual instruction, have resulted in giving the gifted child the opportunity to go ahead at a pace suited to his ability, though no one knew what that was.

With the introduction of intelligence tests about ten years ago, experimental classes, with gifted children, have been held in different parts of the country, to determine points of difference between them and the average child. One of the first of such studies was conducted by Miss Race, in 1918, with a class of 21 public school children, selected by means of Binet tests. The results of her study showed the children capable of completing with ease, in one year, the prescribed work of two, and that they were especially quick and alert in handling abstract ideas.

In 1919 Whipple published an account of his work in

Urbana, Ill., with a class of 35 chosen by teachers' judgment, without the aid of any standardized educational or psychological test. In this he demonstrated the falsity of relying solely upon teachers' estimate of intelligence in the selection of gifted pupils. "At least eight of the pupils in the special group should have been left in the control group and at least twelve in the control group had an excellent claim to inclusion in the special group." *

In 1924, Miss Stedman of Los Angeles, published a detailed account of five years' experimental work with gifted children, selected by a battery of educational and intelligence tests. In this report she corroborates everything stated by Race and Whipple. Her long experience justifies a more explicit description of the abilities of gifted children than is given by the others. "In general, gifted children exhibit the same traits evinced by average children in a different degree. They are adaptable, play normally (with children of their own mental age), cooperate, and are good leaders. They express friendliness and good-will toward other children, who in turn admire and like them. With the exception of children of foolishly proud parents who have apprised the child of his mental superiority, there is no indication that gifted children are more conceited, egotistical, or vain than average children. In the majority of cases the ability is general rather than special. A few children talented in special lines, manifest a very superior general ability also. The gifted child is exceedingly studious, being greatly superior to the average child in this respect. With some the desire to learn seems to be almost an obsession;

*Whipple, Classes for Gifted Children, p. 97

with others studious habits arise from sheer interest and a bookish turn of mind. On the other hand there are gifted children who are mentally lazy and so fail to live up to their capacity.---- As a rule the critical faculty of the gifted child is highly developed, as is evidenced by his ability to criticize himself and by the disposition to accept graciously the criticisms of others." *

The findings of these three, and scores of other investigators, show that the selection of gifted pupils should be based on results achieved in intelligence tests, that these children can learn more rapidly, can grasp more abstract ideas than the average pupil. Terman's extensive study shows that the mentally superior children surpass the average in every mental, moral, physical, and personality trait, that men who have achieved eminence in any walk of life demanding a high standard of leadership belonged as children to this type. The leaders of the future in government, in science, and in general culture, are now in the schools. What is being done to train these soon-to-be leaders? What is being done here in Massachusetts?

<u>Work in Massachusetts for the Gifted Child</u>

With intent to get some information on this subject the following questionnaire was sent to the superintendents of all the public and parochial schools of the State, and to the principals of the private schools not obviously college preparatory.

* Stedman, Education of Gifted Children, p. 185

1. Have you special classes for bright pupils?------------
2. State name and address of person in charge-------------

    ----
3. Are your grades sectioned according to ability?--------
4. Isthat ability determined by
    a. intelligence tests?------------------------------
    b. standard tests?----------------------------------
    c. teacher-judgment?--------------------------------
5. Are these sections doing the grade work
    a. at different rates of progress?-----------------
    b. at same rate with enriched program?-------------
6. Have you pupils who show marked ability in one subject by are average in others?------------------------------
7. What provision is made for these pupils?---------------

    ----
8. Have you a Junior High School?-------------------------
9. Additional information----------------------------------

Of the 213 public school superintendents addressed, 163, or 77%, responded, and 6, or 38%, of the private schools. None of the parochial schools replied.

There was great variety in the answers received. Seven superintendents answered "no" to each question, or left the space blank; 48 failed to answer one or more of the questions; the others gave a series of "yes's" and "no's"; no one answered "yes" to all the questions. Only 11 stated they had special classes for bright children: Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Haverhill, Reading, Somerville, Springfield, Stoneham, Wellesley and Worcester. To each of these cities a letter was sent asking for detailed information as to the work being done in these classes. Few replies were received.

Boston has, in the Dorchester District, what it calls a "Rapid Advancement Class". Children, selected from the number completing the 6th grade, (the choice being based on class records, results of intelligence tests and standard tests) are given an opportunity to do, in two years, the requirements of grades 7, 8, and 9.

Brockton permits the bright child to go ahead as fast as he is able, without waiting for slower pupils in the class.

Reading promotes according to ability through grade 6, then gives an enriched program to the gifted ones.

Springfield is working on the problem of curriculum.

Wellesley selects a "Rapid Promotion Group" from the Grade 4 pupils in April, and prepares them in 1 year and 3 months for Grade 7, thereby saving 1 year in time of preparation for the Junior High.

Worcester has four Preparatory Schools for pupils who wish to study French in Grades 7 and 8 and Latin in Grade 8. Pupils are admitted to these schools from 6A , provided they have a standing of at least 75% in English, Arithmetic, Geography, and History. The work done in these schools is practically identical with the work done in the regular Seventh and Eighth Grades, with the addition of Latin and a modern language.

Stockbridge and one private school, the Brimmer School, are making use of the Winnetka plan.

Norton has a class of 25 children being scientifically studied as to abilities, by Wheaton College; Northampton a class studied by Smith College, and Cambridge one studied by Harvard.

These facts are interesting as showing that public sentiment is becoming interested in finding out what children are capable of doing.

In the matter of sectioning grades, 120, or 73%, of the 163 public schools, and 4 or 67%, of the 6 private schools, section them according to ability, 34, or 28%, of the public schools, rely wholly on teacher-judgment to determine that ability; 2 depend on standard tests; 1 on intelligence tests; 17, or 14%, determine it by a combination of teacher-judgment and intelligence tests; 10, or 8%, by a combination of teacher-judgment and standard tests; 56, or 47%, make use of the three factors, teacher-judgment, intelligence tests, and standard tests, These figures show that intelligence tests are being used in 74, or 62%, of the 120 schools grading according to ability, and the standard tests in 68, or 57% of these schools. Three of the six private schools use intelligence tests and two use standard tests.

Fifty-seven, almost 50%, of these schools do the grade work at different rates of progress; 78, 65%, of them have an enriched program.

As to marked ability in some one subject, 130 schools, 80% of the 163, say they have such pupils; 60 are doing nothing for them; 34 give extra work in the strong subject; 5 put extra time on the weak subject; 10 schools allow the pupil to recite with the upper class in that subject in which he shows marked ability; 21 schools leave to the class teacher the matter of handling these pupils, as time and judgment may dictate.

Haverhill is working with the gifted children along the most scientific basis of any school cooperating in this investigation of work for gifted children. They are starting the work with the first, third, and fourth grades with the intention of enlarging upon it gradually, year by year.

The first grade children are selected by the use of the Pintner-Cunningham Group Test, plus teacher-judgment and knowledge of family. They are given group and individual activities, fostering initiative and ability to carry through problems in wood, clay, cloth, etc. They have an enriched curriculum in reading. In all lines they advance as fast as they are able.

The third grade children are selected by the use of the Multi-Mental Group Intelligence Test, comprehension scores in reading, combined with knowledge of previous school record, and consideration of social and physical development. Individual study and test materials in arithmetic are taking care of the abstract side of this subject, while group activities and individual business transactions represent the content side. A room library of forty books has led to the formation of a book club. They are endeavoring to broaden experience in all possible ways and at the same time advance rapidly. Special talents are studied and given opportunity for expression.

All fourth grade children are surveyed by the TGBF scale of measurements. The children having the highest brightness score are placed in the gifted groups. Special attention is here given to establishing desirable study habits. Case studies of a few outstanding children is being made where there seems lack of balance regarding social, physical, and intellectual development.

Data is being compiled, showing the number of years the gifted children of the fourth grades are retarded educationally.

A second questionnaire was later sent to the 120 towns having their grades sectioned according to ability, to determine:

1. What grades are so sectioned.
2. The number of sections to a grade.
3. Time saved in preparation for the High School.
4. The attitude of teachers toward the system.
5. The attitude of the pupils.
7. How the regular curriculum is enriched.

Seventy-one, or 60%, of the superintendents replied. A study of these replies shows the sectioning to be far from uniform:

38 towns, 53.5%, section all grades,

54 towns, 76%, section the first grades,

50 towns, 70%, section the second grades,

50 towns, 70%, section the third grades,

53 towns, 74.7% section the fourth grades,

53 towns, 74.7% section the fifth grades,

50 towns, 70%, section the sixth grades,

48 towns, 67.6% section the seventh grades,

43 towns, 60.5%, section the eighth grades,

17 towns, all having the ninth grade, section that grade.

The number of sections to a grade varies from 1 to 9; 2 and 3 being the prevailing numbers.

There is little attempt made to accelerate the pupils:

6 towns save 1 year in preparation for the Junior High;

3 towns save 1 year in preparation for the Senior High;

5 towns save, in individual cases, ½ year, or more, in preparation for the Senior High.

The plan, on the whole, is liked by teachers and pupils. Only one of the superintendents said his teachers did not like the system. This dislike was based on the old-time theory that dull pupils need and should have, in order to inspire them to do their best work, the example of the brighter pupils. These teachers forget that often the dull pupil is so overshadowed by the bright ones that he becomes discouraged and gives up; while the bright pupil, finding himself so superior to the others, forms a wrong idea of his ability and becomes self-satisfied and lazy.

Teachers like the plan of sectioning according to ability; they believe it is best for the pupils, yet object in many cases to teaching the lowest section. This is quite human. When a teacher is expected by the school authorities to prepare pupils, with IQ's from 80 downward, "to pass" the same examination, in minimum requirements, as are given the really gifted pupils, she naturally sighs at the work confronting her, for she recognizes her inability to achieve the impossible. She is asked to view the child's mind as a little receptacle, into which a given portion of the holy curriculum must be poured within a given limit of time, and retained at any cost. Acquirement of book facts, not child growth, is made the sole aim of her efforts.

Until the teacher is permitted to adapt the course of study and its methods of presentation to the needs and intelligence of her charges, dislike of lower grade work will continue to exist as a protest against the prevailing mode of dealing with sub-normal children. Modern psychology has demonstrated the utter falsity of the theory that all children, with due amount of application, can in time learn all things, but belief in this one-time theory dies hard.

The purpose of the public school is to train every child in such a way as to give him the best possible preparation for social efficiency. "The social efficiency of a group of human beings depends upon recognizing the mental limitations of each one and upon so organizing society that each person has work to do that is within his mental capacity, and that, at the same time, calls for all the ability that he possesses." *

Like-wise school efficiency requires that each pupil, whatever his mental capacity, should be given work within his power to grasp and for which there is, or will be later, a real need in his life experience.

In order to properly recognize individual differences the school curriculum must be made flexible, and adaptable to

*Goddard, Human Efficiency and Levels of Intelligence the requirements of each pupil, -- a varied menu of the best food, from which each may choose what is best fitted to his individual growth and development.

Conclusion

Our data, if representative of Massachusetts schools, does not indicate that we are doing justice to the superior pupils, that we are expanding and enriching the regular course of study in a way commensurate with their ability. The data is perhaps too meagre to form the basis of such a judgment. There may be, and let us hope there are, many towns doing the careful work we find being done in Haverhill.

There is much that is discouraging when we consider the cold figures, which say only 7% of our school systems have special classes for their bright children, when we know that practically 100% have them for the dull children. But, on the other hand, let us remember that about 70% of the towns now have classes graded according to ability, and that this plan, rightly administered, means classes for the gifted pupils, and an opportunity for them to develop as fast as their natural abilities permit. This thought, coupled with the fact that 63% of these schools are using intelligence tests to aid them in their estimate of child ability, should give the friends of youth courage to hope that the tide of enthusiasm for the uplift of the feeble-minded child is now turning toward the children at the other end of the intelligence scale, and that the time is not far distant when every child of the State, whether sub-normal, normal or super-normal, will be given in our schools an opportunity to grow, for at least twelve consecutive years, to the utmost limit of the capacity with which nature endowed him.

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