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Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

School classifications on the basis of intelligence.—Although there is undoubtedly a need for a large amount of psychological research in perfecting intelligence tests and in devising tests of other mental traits, the interest of the public school is turning rather generally to the use of test results. School administrators are beginning to see more clearly that carrying out a measuring program solves no educational problem unless the results of the measurements are used to modify the procedure of the school. Consequently, any experiments which have such modification in view are worthy of very careful consideration. A recent monograph¹ by Dr. Terman and others gives an account of a number of attempts to apply the results of intelligence tests to school reorganization.

After an introductory discussion of the general problem by Professor Terman, there appears a somewhat detailed description of the plan being worked out at Oakland and Berkeley, California. This is briefly described by Dr. Dickson as follows:

Our scheme of reorganization is based primarily upon a three-track plan adapted to the needs of accelerated, normal, and limited classes, respectively. This conception of organization prevails throughout the entire city. However, not all schools have all three types of classes organized. In one school more than 50 per cent of the pupils belong in limited classes, while only an occasional pupil is found for the accelerated division. In another school nearly 50 per cent are in accelerated classes and only about 3 per cent are reported for the limited classes. Formerly, each school had a tendency to classify pupils according to the standard of capacity prevailing in that district. Now the classification is based upon the standards for the entire city [p. 34].

The groups thus described are somewhat further classified into four types of special classes: special accelerated classes for the mentally superior who are able to proceed at a rate more rapid than normal; special opportunity classes for those having good mental capacity but who have become retarded because of illness, moving about, or similar causes; special limited classes for the dull, overage children; and special atypical classes composed of pupils whose mental retardation is so pronounced that they require special educational treatment. In the junior high school a plan of ability grouping is used.

¹ LEWIS M. TERMAN, VIRGIL E. DICKSON, A. H. SUTHERLAND, RAYMOND H. FRANZEN, C. R. TUPPER, and GRACE FERNALD, *Intelligence Tests and School Reorganization*. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1922. Pp. viii+111. \$0.96.

The third chapter of the monograph describes the plan of individual instruction which Dr. Sutherland is introducing into the Los Angeles schools. The features of this plan include a careful standardizing of curriculum material, with supplementary test exercises; the use of adjustment rooms in which the child works individually, making his own daily program; and a varying rate of speed by which the child is able to make progress according to his capacity.

In chapter iv, the problem of relating mental and educational tests is discussed by Dr. Franzen. He reproduces evidence obtained from his Garden City experiment which tends to prove that the school is particularly wasteful of the talent of the brightest pupils.

The fifth chapter of the book describes the use of intelligence tests in the schools of Miami, Arizona, illustrating how a small city may reorganize its work in a less elaborate but effective manner.

The final chapter, written by Dr. Grace Fernald, points out possible applications of mental test results in dealing with cases of special deficiencies in reading and spelling.

The experiments which are described deal with some very significant educational problems. It seems clear that at the present time the interest of the schools is centered primarily around the problem of classification of pupils into more homogeneous groups. While this is a very important step of procedure, it alone does not solve the problem of fitting the school to the capacity of the child. Children are educated through the *responses* which they make to the stimuli of the school. If intelligence tests show genuine differences in mental capacity, the school must meet these differences by a genuine modification of its work. An equally desirable *response* cannot be secured from both bright and dull pupils by the same stimulation. Clearly, the problem leads directly toward a modification in some form of both curricula and methods. A genuine difference in capacity can hardly be met by a simple quantitative variation of work through a flexible time program; rather, it demands a qualitative modification. The monograph indicates that this problem is clearly recognized by Dr. Dickson in his Oakland and Berkeley plans. It seems altogether probable that the outcome of his attempt to modify the curriculum will be far more significant than his schemes of reorganization taken alone.

If reorganization on the basis of mental capacity is not followed by a genuine modification of curriculum, of methods, and of standards of work, there is little reason to believe that it will represent more than a hollow formula; if, on the other hand, it is followed by a genuine modification of these elements, it undoubtedly represents one of the most significant tendencies in the field of education.

G. T. BUSWELL

The control of school funds.—Rapidly increasing costs in regard to practically all activities in which the schools are engaged suggest that attention be given