

1954

Helping the Socially Retarded Child Through Sociometrics and Group Work

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HELPING THE SOCIALLY RETARDED CHILD THROUGH SOCIOMETRICS
AND GROUP WORK

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Committee
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
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July 1954

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INTRODUCTION

A person is in active association with others of somewhat similar goals and needs from the time he is born until he dies. The happiness and success of this person depends to a great extent upon how well he gets along with these associates. Whether or not he develops into a well integrated democratic adult depends largely upon the psychological adjustment that he makes to his peers while a child. What can the school do to help a child that is not adjusting?

The school group is made up of a wide variety of personality types. The majority of them are well adjusted and accepted by the group. Others are not taken in and some are actually rejected. Although every teacher wants to help these pupils, he can not do it alone. He must help the maladjusted child realize what constitutes an acceptable personality, and he must enlist the aid of the other children because they are the ones who pass the final judgment.

In order to undertake a program of this type the teacher must find out who needs help, and to what degree he is retarded. This is necessary because without it there can be no positive evaluation of progress or success. He must find out what there is about the character and personality of this child that is causing the trouble.

If he doesn't know this he can't help the child correct it.

Enlisting the aid of the other students involves the development of attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with our democratic ideals. They must realize the problems and needs of all minority groups before they can be expected to see the problems and needs of one individual.

The first chapter of this paper deals with the need for more extensive and more effective use of sociometrics in the classroom. Chapter two is devoted to descriptions and analyses of sociometric methods and techniques that have been accepted and put to use. Chapter three reviews the responsibility of the schools in furthering democratic ideals through group action. In this chapter is included a sample unit on "Human Relations" as carried through with an eighth grade class, and concludes with a short summary of certain procedures which may be used and the values of such a program.

CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR SOCIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY AND GROUP STRUCTURE

The schools of America have in recent years become aware of the needs of the "whole child". This is in sharp contrast to the "intellectual child" philosophy of the traditional school. One aspect of the "whole child" approach is the provision for adequate social growth. An important part of social growth is a feeling of social belonging. This is substantiated by Hilda Taba who states:

Social belonging is a physiological necessity; the classroom atmosphere has a profound effect on children. All children need the approval of their age mates. They need to feel that they belong and are important to others. Children can be happy and secure in their sense of belonging to an age group, or unhappy and frustrated in their attempts at social participation.¹

An illustrative example of what can happen to a youngster who is not accepted by his group is set forth by Ruth Cunningham, who tells the following story:

Arnold, feeling rejected by his school group, found belonging in a gang which required stealing of an item from a five and ten cent store as an initiation. His value pattern rejected such behavior, but his need to belong and the importance of accepting the culture of the group, if he was to belong, were dominant.

¹Hilda Taba, Diagnosing Human Relations Needs (Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1951), p. 72.

He stole the item and was satisfied with his group belongingness as a consequence.²

In this case Arnold was apprehended and made to answer for his actions. Parents, in this type of situation, often say, "But we gave Arnold an allowance and he could have anything he asked for." The truth of the matter is, he could have anything he asked for other than belonging to the group.

Another point that brings out the gravity of the problem is brought out by Holtby who has found that there is a correlation between social acceptability and achievement in school.³ This does not necessarily imply that the rejectee lacks mental ability, but that due to unhappiness, he is unable to function efficiently.

Merl E. Bonney, of North Texas State College, is more specific about the negative tendencies of children with low social ratings. Five characteristics of these children are:

1. They are less inclined to conform to classroom requirements and expectations.
2. They do not smile as frequently as other children.

²Ruth Cunningham, Understanding Group Behavior of Boys and Girls. (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951), p. 113.

³David C. Holtby, "How to Give Your Class a Social Analysis," Clearing House, 24:403-6.

3. They are slow about engaging in cooperative, voluntary group participation.
4. They do not make as many voluntary contributions to the group.
5. They are inclined to⁴ be alone during free play or activity periods.⁴

The examples and reports quoted above show that an isolate who is always playing by himself may not be as contented as he appears to be. He may be unhappy and frustrated with a thin veneer of unconcern to hide his emotions from himself and from the world. Parents and teachers have been prone to rationalize, "Jimmy prefers to play by himself." The truth of the matter is that Jimmy is not mastering the social skills necessary for the development of a well integrated, democratic adult. Jimmy prefers because he has no choice.

⁴Merl E. Bonney and Johnny Powell, "Differences in Social Behavior Between Sociometrically High and Sociometrically Low Children", Journal of Educational Research, 46:481 - 95 Mar. 53.

CHAPTER II

DIAGNOSTIC DEVICES AND TECHNIQUES

Until recently, teachers' intuitive insight provided about the only picture of the social interaction of children within the school. In this connection, Holtby states that one common error often made by teachers is to confuse social adjustment among children with social adjustment between children and adults.¹ Robbins sums up recent developments as follows:

At present there is developing, under the title of sociometrics, methodology for investigation of the social structure of child groups, their association and communication lives, and the acceptance and rejection patterns which are in operation.²

The sociogram. It is primarily for the benefit of the socially retarded child that educators are employing a device called the sociogram. As explained in the introduction to a publication put out by the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation:

Every teacher knows that the group of children with which he works is more than an aggregation of individuals. He knows that the group has form and structure; that there are sub-groups, cliques and friendships. Some

¹Holtby, op. cit., p. 204.

²Florence G. Robbins, Educational Sociology (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953), p. 315.

individuals are more accepted by the group than others. Some are more rejected.³

Although a teacher is aware that these relationships exist, they are often very difficult to detect. Holtby quotes Marino's book, "Who Shall Survive", which reports that:

Teacher's guesses as to the identity of the two most frequently selected boys or girls in a group, agreed only forty eight per cent with the ratings of pupils. In choosing the least frequently selected two, teacher's guesses agreed only thirty eight per cent with the student ratings.⁴

Thus the sociogram seems to be the quickest and most efficient method for determining the social strata of a group. The Horace Mann school of Experimentation gives the following definition of a sociogram:

A sociogram is a chart of the interrelationships within a group. Its purpose is to discover group structure (sub-group organization, friendship patterns, etc.) and the relation of any one person to the group as a whole.⁵

The definition of a sociogram by Gretchen Atkinson follows the above very closely as she applies the technique to the evaluation of the Social Studies Program.

³Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, How to Construct a Sociogram (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947) Introduction.

⁴Holtby, op. cit., p. 405.

⁵Horace Mann Institute, op. cit., Introduction.

As one aid in evaluating social studies teaching, the sociogram seems to be a valuable tool. In the degree to which it presents a valid picture of children's associations and choices, it can reveal their acceptance or rejection within the classroom structure, and it opens ways for examining reasons for these patterns.⁶

The Horace Mann group offers a caution in the use of the sociogram.

A sociogram is a professional instrument to be used by professional people. If it is used as a mere "popularity contest", or to reinforce a teacher's prejudice for or against certain individuals, it is better that no sociogram be made.⁷

Atkinson also cautions users of the sociogram with the following statement:

It should be clearly recognized that the sociogram is merely one approach to diagnosing inter-group relations. It does not give final answers, but it can point the way to a clearer insight into group patterns.⁸

She goes on to encourage the use of the sociogram as an aid to improving group relations through understanding of the existing problem within the classroom.

It is felt that sociograms have a definite place in open minded objectively professional teaching, and in particular, in forwarding the "One World" ideal which

⁶Gretchen Atkinson, "The Sociogram as an Aid in Social Studies Teaching and Evaluation", The Elementary School Journal, September, 1949, p. 84.

⁷Horace Mann Institute, op. cit.

⁸Atkinson, op. cit., p. 85.

is the objective of social studies teachers who seek to improve today's inter-group relations patterns.⁹

In order to work out a sociogram, the teacher must first obtain the basic information from the children. This information usually consists of the names of those children near by whom they prefer to sit, or with whom they prefer to work. The students are each given a card upon which they are asked to list the names of the children in order of preference. One commonly used question is, "What three people would you like to sit near?" Taba points out that children make valid choices only if they are faced with realistic situations. If the children are asked to choose seatmates, the teacher should re-seat the class.¹⁰

Raymond N. Hatch, Acting Director and Associate Professor at the Institute of Counseling, Testing and Guidance at Michigan State College, has a point worthy of consideration when he recommends that several situations be covered when trying to determine the social structure of the group. He explains in this manner:

The elementary school boy or girl, like the adult, admires and respects different features in different persons. For example, the boy who admires the leadership ability of one boy on the playground might select another to aid in his school work. All three of these situations may give rise to friendship patterns and

⁹Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁰Taba, op. cit., p. 73.

provide an opportunity for many different pupils to be recognized as leaders. Because of the values inherent in determining all friendship patterns, it would seem that the questionnaire should contain items which would permit the inclusion of names of individuals in several situations. Three situations which could be used in the elementary school are: social acceptance, leadership potential and scholastic assistance.¹¹

The social structure of a group is divided into degrees of acceptance and types of association. Hatch has listed and defined these categories as follows:

1. Leaders--Those individuals who are recognized by others as the ones to whom they would turn for leadership and assistance.
2. Isolates--Those individuals who are not selected by others of the group as friends or leaders.
3. Mutual choices--Those individuals who may not be integrated into the group but who depend upon one another.
4. Cliques--Sub-groups who are isolated from the group into a type of island.
5. Rejectees--Those individuals who are rejected by certain members of the group. They can be identified on the questionnaire if negative questions are asked. For instance, "The names of those children by whom you would prefer 'not' to sit."¹²

¹¹Raymond N. Hatch. Guidance Services in the Elementary School (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1951, p. 35.

¹²Ibid., p. 35.

Determining the Reason for Rejection

Merely knowing the identity of the rejectee is not sufficient if adequate remedial action is to be undertaken. There are a number of known reasons why a child is rejected. Among these are family status in the community, low intelligence, and personality characteristics.

Hollingshead spent a year in a typical United States town studying the social structure of the community to determine if community status of the family had anything to do with the social structure of the school. His methods and conclusions are reported in the book, "Elmtown's Youth".

He found that family status determined how high a child was on the social scale of the school as a whole, but findings as to individual adjustment to the homogenous groups were inconclusive.¹³

The findings of Bonney and Powell's study of the high and low sociometrically scored children showed that the social score of ten children of above average intelligence was higher than the children with low social scores.¹⁴ This is understandable since a low intelligence

¹³August D. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth (New York: J. Willey and Company, 1949).

¹⁴Bonney, op. cit., p. 483.

is usually accompanied by a correspondingly low sensitivity to one's physical, social, emotional, and aesthetic environments. A lack of sensitivity toward anything that others feel keenly about would understandably bring about a loss of status with the group.

The personality traits of a child are the ways in which he reacts to social stimulation. Dahlke, in addition to stating that there has been very little research carried out on this point, says that the traits are usually ferreted out by means of the individual interview.¹⁵

Research on this point has been carried out by Jennings who gives good descriptions of the types of personality and behavior characterized by the rejected child. Her study related to the rejectees, a minority group of girls in the dormitory of the New York State Training School for Girls. Their behavior had been carefully observed and reported to her by housemothers in the institution.

The following is a list of typical behaviors for these rejected girls.

1. Quarrelsome and irritable, chip on the shoulder behavior (initiates quarrels, replies in chip-on-the-shoulder fashion, misconstrues criticisms directed towards self, and the like)

¹⁵Otto H. Dahlke and Thomas O. Monahan, "Problems in the Application of Sociometry to Schools," The School Review, 57:223-34, March, 1953.

2. Nagging, complaining, whining behavior (complains and nags housemother and girls about small matters which majority do not mention, as size of room, its location in cottage, amount of portions served at table, turn in showers, etc.)
3. Nervous, jumpy behavior (jerky movements, useless motions, as swinging foot when seated, and the like)
4. Aggressive and dominant behavior (getting another individual to submit to wait on her, make her bed, do her "commands", give in to her suggestions when doing a common task with another, and the like)
5. Rebellious behavior (refusing to do what is requested by person in authority and the like)
6. Behavior actively interrupting the group's activities (assuming role of by-stander when active participation is called for, exhibiting lack of interest and enthusiasm sufficient to interfere with group's plans, and the like)
7. Behavior actively interrupting the group's activities (temper-tantrums, walking out when remaining is essential to group's functioning, and the like)
8. Behavior showing resentfulness of being criticized (sulks, does not behave pleasantly for some time after being criticized, generally considers criticisms unjust, defends own conduct whether or not justified, and the like)
9. Behavior attention-demanding but not praise-seeking (asks questions when she knows the answer, asks for instructions already received, makes requests knowing they cannot be granted, submits work to supervisor prematurely instead of waiting for regular time, persistence in discussing own problems and the like)
10. Praise-seeking behavior (draws attention of staff to minor accomplishments; frequently asks if she is doing well and the like)

11. Initiatory behavior in making innovations without asking permission (behaviors considered as too self-directive and self-confident for the individual's own good, and the like)¹⁶

Some of the characteristics on the foregoing list could be called defense mechanisms of children that have not learned to mix with others. Some of them may reflect lack of attention in early childhood. Whatever they are they stand in need of correction as long as these children are socially rejected.

Before the teacher can help the rejected child understand what his personality problems are, and point out the need for more acceptable standards, he himself must know the child and his problems. As was shown by Holtby, this cannot be done solely by observation.¹⁷

There are a number of methods that help in obtaining this information. Because of adaptability for classroom use the following have been selected for analysis and discussion.

Methods for Determining the Needs of the Rejectee

The foregoing list of characteristics is of no more use to the teacher than is sociometric data unless it is

¹⁶Helen Hall Jennings, Leadership and Isolation, (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), pp. 145-46.

¹⁷Holtby, op. cit., p. 404.

put to use. There is no quick method for determining which of the characteristics listed by Jennings applies to which rejectee in the group, whether in the average school situation or in the institution. However, there are a number of systematic methods for acquiring this information in the classroom which have been recommended by authorities. Of these, the individual interview, the diary, the autobiography and the anecdotal record have been selected for analysis and discussion.

The individual interview. Of the various methods for determining why children choose and reject other children, Taba feels that the information can best be gained by asking them to describe the reasons for their choices. She further states that:

In interviewing children to determine the reasons for their choices it is important not to make any child feel that he has to justify his choice. The teacher must be sure to make clear why he asks for the reasons and how he intends to use the information. A matter of fact statement like the one below is likely to bring the best response. "It will help if you can tell me how you happened to choose the person you did." The teacher must always be careful to point out that the information will be kept confidential.¹⁸

In comparing the personal interview with personality testing, Norman Polansky of Wayne University makes this observation:

¹⁸Taba, op. cit., p. 89.

Perhaps a better way of understanding why children choose or reject others than through inferences based on tests is to ask them. This will still not permit us to get at the reasons which are largely unconscious, but it will yield data on the level from which we might then attempt to make interpretations.¹⁹

The diary. If the teacher attacks the problem of the social deviate from the standpoint that his lack of status is a product of his school behavior alone, he is overlooking a very important aspect of the problem. Taba puts it this way:

Some of the children's deepest roots are outside of school, and some of their keenest interests are in the things they do after the bell rings. Diaries can answer many of the questions the teacher wants to know about the student's after school activities. A story of what each pupil in the class does out of school for a day or two during the week and over the weekend offers a wealth of material. In this record, the teacher may find clues he seeks on children's needs or hints as to the roots of their difficulties.²⁰

The autobiography. The autobiography, according to Raymond Hatch, is defined as follows:

The autobiography is a dual purpose method of obtaining information about the pupil. It is an excellent project for the social studies or English teacher in terms of composition and expression.

The autobiography is a subjective technique for the collection of information. If the writer's efforts are

¹⁹Norman Polansky, "The Use of Sociometric Data in Research on Group Treatment Processes," Sociometry, 13:251-7, February, 1950.

²⁰Taba, op. cit., p. 9.

not structured to a general framework, the result may be less objective. To improve the content of the autobiography, a suggested writing outline is quite helpful. The following outline may be used by the elementary school pupil.

Ideas for Your Autobiography.

- I. Before you went to school
 - A. Where you were born
 - B. Your first home
 - C. Other places you have lived
 - D. Your family (father, mother, brothers, sisters, grandmother)
 - E. Your best friends
 - F. Things you like to do
 - G. Trips or visits you have made
- II. Since you came to school
 - A. Your best friends
 - B. Games, hobbies, and work you enjoy
 - C. What have you enjoyed most from living at home?
 - D. What has been the most fun in your life and what has caused you the most unhappiness?
 - E. What do you like most and what do you like least?
 - F. What do you plan to be when you grow up?²¹

The anecdotal record. The anecdote is another method for examining pupil personality and behavior. This device has come into use in the past fifteen years. It is described by Traxler as a method of setting down an anecdote concerning some aspect of pupil behavior which seems significant to the observer.²²

²¹Hatch, op. cit., p. 29.

²²A. E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 131.

Strang is a bit more explicit in her definition which is quoted as follows: "The anecdotal record is a specialized form of incident observation. It is a description of the child's conduct and personality in terms of frequent, brief, concrete observations of the pupil made and recorded by the teacher."²³

The descriptions of most experts tend to point out only what the anecdotal record is and what it shows in the way of behavior tendencies. Hatch makes very clear the responsibilities of the teacher and the staff in making the anecdotal record an effective tool for the promotion of social development. He points out that each individual responds to stimulation in his own way. The responses are to fulfill a need such as to gain a goal or to avoid an undesirable consequence. Thus the record will show a series of responses and the teacher may be able to detect a pattern.²⁴

Hatch then goes on to show an even more valuable contribution of the anecdotal record.

²³A. E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 132, citing Ruth Strang, Counseling Techniques in College and Secondary Schools (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 84.

²⁴Hatch, op. cit., p. 30.

If used by all of the teachers who are or have been in contact with this individual, the pattern will give evidence of the responses to a variety of situations and the total will give a more comprehensive picture of the child's development or lack of development.²⁵

There are some basic considerations to anecdotal reporting that have also been listed by Hatch. Of these, the most appropriate are listed as follows:

1. The reports should be of significant episodes. The decision as to what is significant is somewhat subjective, but if the incident shows a marked tendency away from the norm it is probably significant.
2. Both complimentary and uncomplimentary incidents should be reported.
3. Anecdotes should be written about all of the students. Teachers have a tendency to report on only the brightest and least bright students and disregard the large group in between the extremes.
4. The anecdote should be the report of the actual observer and written very soon after the occurrence of the episode. If the incident is described by a third person or if considerable time elapses before the recording, objectivity is reduced.
5. The anecdote in itself is of little value. It is when several anecdotes from several reporters have been collected that the information takes on its most meaningful aspects. Even when the record is quite complete, the information should be studied and interpreted with other information gained from other sources.²⁶

²⁵Ibid., p. 30.

²⁶Ibid., p. 31.

It would seem that the recognition of the rejectee through the use of the sociogram, and through the use of such objective means of detecting the child's needs as given above, would far surpass, in effective therapy, the former methods of depending upon mere teacher intuition.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING SOCIAL GROWTH FOR DEMOCRATIC LIVING

Fortunately teachers are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibility to help every pupil acquire the immediate social skills of cooperation, respect for the individual, concern for group welfare, openmindedness, and respect for constituted authority, which are requirements for a well adjusted and effective group member within the periphery of democratic living. We are told by leaders in business and industry that many more persons lose their jobs because they do not get along with people than because they lack technical competence to perform the required tasks.

If we have a responsibility for the adjustment of our pupils, we dare not overlook our responsibility for developing these social skills. Cunningham states that social skills cannot be learned in isolation.¹ She goes on to say:

We know that they are gained through guided experience in a social setting. Through group experience, the group contributes toward guidance and provides the setting. When teachers and groups are aware of

¹Cunningham, op. cit., p. 6.

the needs and processes necessary for developing social skills, they can provide for effective teaching and learning.²

In one group studied by a teacher new to the school system, three isolates were located. One isolate was found to be a child who had recently moved from another city. With little effort it was possible to arrange situations in which he could work with others and earn recognition from the group. Investigation revealed that the second child had been in school for two years and had personality problems requiring the attention of experts in child study. The third child had problems that the teacher could handle through group work and made steady growth in social adjustment during the school year.³

This illuminates the need for the individual to participate in the group, but the responsibility does not end here. She goes on to point to implications of important significance.

Democracy is not merely an idea; it is a way of behaving. If we are to teach both the idea and the way of behaving in ever broadening areas of concern, the school experiences of children and youth must be those which provide opportunities for learning

²Ibid., p. 7.

³John U. Michaelis, Social Studies for Children in a Democracy (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 397.

respect for other individuals and for developing a sense of responsibility of the individual to the group and the group to the individual.⁴

Cunningham goes on to say:

Democracy demands skills as well as attitudes and understandings--skills of leadership and group membership, skills in delegating responsibility, skills in evaluating the individual and group contribution to democratic life. As with other skills, these skills are learned. As with other learning, learning of these skills takes place when there is meaningful experience. Boys and girls, as well as teachers, see new meanings and importance in democratic action as they learn to put into practice the skills necessary to its attainment, and, as they see through experience how skills contribute to such action, they learn to respect the skills. This is experience in which democratic skills and democratic action each reinforce the other toward a growing democracy.⁵

Cunningham continues with the importance of the classroom by stating:

Practice of democratic skills and development of democratic concepts within the classroom are of paramount importance. They provide the basis of an understanding of wider group dynamics of the community of democratic society; of world cooperation. It is with the equipment of such skills and concepts that individuals and groups are able to operate as forces in the community betterment, whether the community means "my school friends," "my neighbors and I," "my country," or "one world."⁶

No study of available resource material will uncover a sure-fire short cut method for assisting the rejected

⁴Cunningham, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵Ibid., p. 7.

⁶Ibid., p. 7.

child in becoming an active group participant. Furthermore, which is just as important, there is no quick, readymade technique for making good group workers out of socially acceptable children.

A survey of the findings of experts on the subject point up one all important conclusion. A program that will assist in the social development on any individual, or the development of the group as a whole, involves the curriculum of the entire school year.

Cunningham puts it this way:

We feel that a study of favorable group living must permeate all activities of the group, but there may be a place for more direct, intensive, organized study in certain specific areas.⁷

The following is a brief description of an eighth grade unit on Human Relations. This description is a summary by Cunningham of a more complete report by the teacher.

Although the theme of human relations was followed throughout the year as a thread in every unit of study, the unit reported here emphasized those phases of human relations selected by the children as vital to them. It was worked through by the cooperative planning of the teacher and pupils together in much the same way as other units.

After discussion the group decided to state the problem as: "How can we get along better with people?" Through class discussion, the class decided that we have human relationships mainly at home, at school,

⁷Ibid., p. 245.

and in the community. The children listed the activities in each category. Samplings from these lists follow.

Things we do with and for people at home.

- Feed baby
- Run errands
- Play games
- Have parties
- Entertain company
- Listen to the radio

Things we do with and for people at school.

- Work on the school paper
- Walk to and from school
- Play on teams
- Study lessons
- Go to social hours
- Have elections
- Go on field trips
- See movies
- Work on committees
- Talk to friends
- Help others with lessons

Things we do with and for people in the community.

- Go to church
- Go to parties and picnics
- Go downtown shopping
- Play on ball teams
- Deliver papers
- Baby sitting

When the class had their lists of social activities compiled, they thought the activities should be classified under the following headings:

- I. Chorus
- II. Hobbies
- III. Safety
- IV. Sports
- V. Recreation
- VI. Work
- VII. Personality
- VIII. Manners
- IX. Use of leisure time

The class then selected four of these fields as a guide for the study of human relations and by a vote of hands, they selected hobbies, sports, safety, and personality. Then on a written ballot each child chose his first and second choice of areas. The groups were then worked out from this ballot.

The class had a fifty minute period each day for General Education and Social Science. The period was divided into two parts of twenty five minutes each. The unit took a seven day week period to complete.

Each day two groups had a part of the period as an activity period in the hall outside the room, while two groups had a discussion period with the teacher. The rest of the time was used for study and research on their problems.

Sometimes this program schedule was interrupted for an all-class activity which the various groups presented from time to time. Again it was broken for class evaluation and for the acquiring of some needed skills.

Each group spent the first day it met in exploring the field, setting up specific goals, and examining the literature in the area it had elected to study. As all four groups operated in a similar manner, the report of the personality group may serve as an example of all group work.

Objectives of the personality group.

To find answers to the following questions.

1. How can we make the most of our looks?
2. What should we say on a date?
3. How should we act and what should we say when we meet new people?

Activities:

1. The group attempted first to try to answer question one, "How can we make the most of our looks?"
 - a. During the following study periods they read books, pamphlets, and magazine articles on personal appearance and took notes on pointers for better looks.

- b. During the planning and activity periods they discussed and showed pictures illustrating the care of hair, clothes, teeth; they discussed what foods to eat, and personal cleanliness.
 - c. During the activity periods both boys and girls tried on different colors, using cloth they borrowed from the Art Department. They made a chart for each member of the group, showing his most becoming colors.
 - d. During activity periods they talked over the situations. They also prepared skits illustrative of various situations.
 - e. One day they gave points to the whole class on proper colors to wear.
2. "What should we say on dates?" was considered next.
- a. In the discussion and planning periods it was pointed out that there are different kinds of dates and the group wanted to know what to say at various times. Kinds of dates listed were: boy-girl, boy-girl with a few other couples, boy-girl at a large party, boy-girl with the family, crowd of girls, and crowd of boys.
 - b. In study periods the group read of such situations in etiquette books and personality books.
 - c. During activity periods they talked over the situations. They also prepared skits illustrating various situations.
 - d. They chose the best skits and presented them to the class.
 - e. Along with the rest of the class they attended a panel on boy-girl relationships presented by a ninth grade class.

3. Sticking very well to their original list of problems, they attacked question three, "How should we act and what should we say when meeting new people?"
 - a. Planning to meet for the first time, the following types of people presented problems to the boys and girls: a person who works with my parents, important people, children of parent's friends.
 - b. Since there was not much literature found on this subject, most of the discussion was carried on in the activity period.
4. During the study periods the class worked on a culminating activity - a stick puppet show on the "Do's and Don'ts" for an eighth grader with a good personality. The group members worked in twos, making a pair of figures and preparing a little patter to go with the skit. When all was completed, a stage was borrowed from the Art Department. Then the group presented the simple puppet show before the entire class.⁸

Evaluation

According to their evaluation of this unit, the students were able to recognize some improvements in their own attitudes and behavior. The following are some specific illustrations that were listed in their culminating report.

1. We learned to share more equally when we gave programs for each other.
2. We had lots of chances to talk things over in the small group. In this way we felt that we

⁸Ibid., pp. 245-48.

could cover more subject matter than if the whole class had been studying the same phase of Human Relations.

3. We think we became more agreeable to each other and especially to teachers. Working in small groups gave us a chance to know some of our class and neighbors better than we ever had before.
4. We learned to use better English and to use better language and manners when we gave reports and skits to our own room and to other rooms. We also learned how to meet and introduce guest speakers.⁹

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The improvement in democratic living just described began in this unit. If the whole school program could be set up with subject matter in terms of life experiences, problem solving, and group achievement as a basis, it could be that there would be substantial growth in democratic attitudes throughout the child's school life.

According to the evaluation on the preceding page, the students experienced growth in such democratic attitudes as understanding of others unlike themselves, respect for individual opinion, and the ability to work as groups in solving common problems.

Today's teacher with scientific, sociometric devices and techniques instead of intuition to rely on, can locate the rejectee and subsequently interpret his behavior. With an understanding of group methods and processes the teacher can do much to correct the problem pointed up through such methods.

Leaders in the field of educational research like Taba, Cunningham, and Jennings, to name just a few, have contributed much in the way of techniques to detect, diagnose, and evaluate the intricacies of juvenile social structure. The absolute

effectiveness of some of the methods are, by their own admission, unproven at this date. The field of sociometric research is quite new and the need for more research, both extensive and intensive is apparant.

The techniques discussed in this paper are tools with which today's teachers may guide children into richer more satisfying living to themselves and others within the democratic society which we hope they may be able, because of their ultimate social adequacy, to help preserve and extend.

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