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An Investigation of Current Practices in the Education of Gifted Children in Small High Schools of Central Washington, 1959-1960

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AN INVESTIGATION OF CURRENT PRACTICES IN THE EDUCATION OF
GIFTED CHILDREN IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS OF
CENTRAL WASHINGTON, 1959-1960

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
Warren O. Kidder

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

It is the contention of the writer that constant attention need be given the school program in the interest of the higher individual abilities. Since this problem has been recognized by educators, a number of differences of opinion have existed both in relation to the basic principles of education involved and in relation to the procedure best suited to the desired end. Those who propose that education is responsible for progress in this area, are charged with the duty of proving both a need and a means of fulfilling it.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study (1) to evaluate current policy in the education of gifted children in small high schools in Central Washington; (2) to investigate the principle of equal opportunity in its relation to individual capacity; (3) to consider the probability of a need for the greater development of ability; (4) to compare the current opportunities in these schools with standards indicated by recognized studies and to evaluate the areas of improvement.

Importance of the study. In recent years, the American public has become keenly aware of the necessity for highly trained individuals. Americans, as reflected by the current magazines and papers, are evaluating their training program in comparison to those of other countries and considering the need for specialist in many fields. The expanding science program, the complexities of society, and the need for coordination in all areas, from commerce to industry, demand more qualified leaders. On the basis of logic, the more likely group to supply the public need for highly trained personnel, is the gifted group in American schools.

Results of surveys reported in the N. E. A. Bulletin for 1957, indicate that educational plans for the gifted child are almost non-existent on a state level. Enrichment, segregation, and acceleration are integrated patterns of many public school programs. Evidence indicates, however, that there is need for expansion in this direction.

The validity of this report will be proportionate to the accuracy of current measurements of curriculum components. The results of experimental data are rather meager at present. This effort is intended to evaluate the educational experiences offered in the small high schools in Central Washington, bearing in mind that providing richer experiences in education is providing more highly trained leaders.

If it is safe to assume that American education is by, for, and of the people, it behooves the educator to critically examine his program in this light, and better adapt his practice to national and local needs.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Gifted pupil. The term, gifted pupil, was used in this study in the broadest sense permitted by accepted standards. It is considered to include those who show consistently remarkable achievement in any field of endeavor as well as the upper ten per cent in intellectual ability of each age group.

Gifted Child. This term was used in an interchangeable manner with the above term.

Small high school. For convenience, the term small high school was used to include high schools of two hundred and eighty or less pupils in Central Washington.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The current literature in this area reflects the general tone that definite steps should be taken toward a fuller education of gifted children. It is also characterized by the presence of a dilemma, the nature of which is one of compatibility between program and basic principles. In short, supplying society with more specialized personnel through training of superior children is desirable, but not at the sacrifice of our democratic principles of education. Ruth Wood Gavian summarized the situation with this statement:

The goal of discovering and nurturing every student of exceptional ability and discovering and nurturing the exceptional abilities of every student is still elusive and distant, but it is too shining an objective not to be sought with patience and perseverance (11:77).

The value of such a goal is emphasized by Nason. He feels that if its solution makes possible a greater "realization of potential human ability," any problem in American education is important (10:3).

The Portland study brings the human resource problem into keener focus. The rapidly expanding economic, scientific, and political "foundations of society" create a demand for soundly trained and intelligent young people as never before (14:2).

Society wants talent developed. DeHaan and Havighurst mention that Americans, for the most part, believe in the "unique value of the individual" and in the value of developing his abilities along "socially valuable lines" (3:20). They further delegate the responsibility in the statement that: "Society expects education to discover and develop superior abilities in children and youth" (3:20).

James Conant's study points out educational shortcomings in this area: "To my mind, first and foremost among these is their failure to be sufficiently concerned with the intellectually able youth" (2:63-64). The major negative public attitudes concerning special programs for the gifted, as indicated by DeHaan and Havighurst, are that talent will develop by natural causes and that the child with remarkable aptitude is "psychologically abnormal" (3:21).

As studies progress in this area, it becomes more and more apparent that the gifted child needs encouragement and guidance. Joseph French pointed out that in the history of development of talent, usually individuals who developed precocious excellence had early and continuing guidance and superior instruction (8:8).

Paul Witty brings to light the current trend to understand gifted persons. He mentions that scientific studies dispel some of the negative attitudes and provide data from which more reliable conclusions may be drawn (13:44).

Educational authorities largely agree that paramount in the program for gifted children is identification of the gifted. DeHaan and Wilson preface their arguments for an identification program with the assumption that provisions for gifted children need to be different from educational programs for the non gifted (13:166). Before adequate provisions may be made for gifted individuals, they must be identified.

DeHann and Wilson propose that: "Identification consists of two processes: screening and selection" (13:16). Screening is considered to be a process whereby all of the pupils in a given group are tested and observed using standardized methods, and are ranked according to ability. Selection is the process of determining who is to be included in groups for special instruction.

The necessity for systematic identification is illustrated by Albert Oliver's list of gifted types other than those of superior achievement:

1. Mentally superior but doing inferior work because of lack of challenge
2. Mentally superior but limited in adjustment from emotional problems
3. Mentally superior with inferior educational background
4. Mentally superior but limited by negative attitude of classmates and narrow interests
5. Mentally superior but restricted in achievement because of poor reading ability (11:13).

In view of these types, identification becomes a matter not to be relegated to one scale of testing, but a matter of complication. The most gifted children may mislead the teacher and seem among the least capable because of lack of interest in routine matters or because performance is blocked by emotional problems (12:262).

In view of the complications of identification and if we may conclude that developing superior individual abilities is desirable, some definite program is indicated. The Connecticut State Department of Education calls to the attention of school officials and citizens the need for adequately educating the "gifted and bright" (4:28). This department feels that the responsibility of determining need and readiness is in the hands of the local boards and administrators. Upon recognizing the need: "It is imperative that a well planned public relations program help the community understand that special provisions for the gifted are democratic and are in the best interests of both the individual and society" (4:29).

The need for attention in the education of the gifted and the complications involved bear out the hypothesis that a definite program for the gifted is desirable. Passow asserts that the results of school programs should be carefully appraised and thoroughly evaluated on the basis of specific goal attainments. This is the only way in which the school will be able to determine whether or not it is actually providing "experiences appropriate for the optimum development of its gifted students" (12:221).

Freehill gives a comprehensive summary of the need for a definite

program: "Better programs do not come from sporadic administrative decision but from a period of study and preparation in which parents and teachers participate" (7:223). He also points out the practical aspects of acknowledging the problem and "systemwide planning" (7:224).

It is safe to conclude that society is certain of its desire for more highly trained young people. However, society is not certain as to just how this additional output is to be realized. It is the problem of the educator to indicate the way. As interest is increased and studies more thoroughly cover all aspects of the problem, the possibilities become more clearly defined. No one set program is the answer for each and every school (12:201).

Lyle Ashby cited the responsibility of the school program to the swift and dramatic changes in society. Society, he asserts, has three great areas of need. The first is for persons who have developed an "independent, versatile, continuing capacity to learn." He points out that this is based on the mastery of skills and that the school which develops this capacity of each pupil to learn to the full extent of his abilities, is fulfilling its primary objective.

The second need cited by Ashby is for people who are "imaginative, inventive, inovative, and creative." He points out that new products, new conditions, and new ways of thinking are needed.

The third is for people of "moral fiber, social conscience, and commitment to a better life in terms of basic values." This implies able leadership and a high level of thinking (20:36-38).

Each of these needs reflects a mandate to develop the special abilities of gifted children. This mandate from society reflects the responsibility of the schools to identify their gifted pupils and define a program for their development.

Many of the children of potential special value to American society are situated in small school districts. The National Society for the Study of Education concluded:

Of special importance is the development of programs for gifted children in the small towns and the villages of the country which do not have the numbers of students or the variety of resources to allow a variegated special program for gifted youth. These small-to-mediumsized communities can do much more than they now do, given interest and imagination on the part of teachers and school administrators (12:10-11).

Surveys of American education have led many prominent educators to share this view. Jack Kough goes further with the thought:

For the highly gifted pupils some type of special arrangements should be made. These pupils of high ability, who constitute on a national basis, about three percent of the student population, may well be too few in number in some schools to warrant giving them instructions in a special class. In this case a special guidance officer should be assigned to the group as a tutor and should keep in close touch with these students throughout their four years of senior high school work. The tutor should see to it that these students are challenged not only by special course work but by the development of their special interests as well. The identification of the highly gifted might well start in the seventh or eighth grade or earlier (9:82).

Many authorities may be cited to illustrate the point that identification and guidance, as well as special instruction and motivation, are extremely important for the progress of gifted children. Indeed a

review of the literature concerning this subject charges education with a twofold duty. One is to evaluate the current situation of the gifted children and the other is to plan for its improvement.

CHAPTER III

THE RESEARCH SETTING

School and community characteristics. The eleven schools included in this investigation are located in the less populous areas of Kittitas, Benton, and Yakima counties. Enrollments range from nine to two hundred and eighty and teaching staffs from three to thirteen. This includes all of the high schools of two hundred and eighty or less pupils in these counties. A list of the schools discussed is found in Appendix A, page 44. While the communities selected for this study have the common element of smallness and semi-isolation, it must be considered that there is much variation in size and in the type of community economy and social aspects. For example, the largest school has almost ten times the enrollment of the smallest, and social factors vary from major ethnic influence to the effect of a population of unvaried family groups.

A common factor of the sample is the limitation of types of employment. Each community is predominated by one or two vocations.

School plants varied in structure. Some were comparatively new with modern facilities and good lighting. The two which were less adequate in structure had plans on the boards for new buildings. A general survey would indicate that health and physical well-being were not vital issues. The schoolgrounds varied greatly in acreage per pupil, but in all cases area was listed as no problem.

The research technique. The work consists of evaluation of the programs for gifted children by means of an on-the-scene study of incidents, conditions, behavior, opinions, and procedure in the training of children who had been recognized as being able to achieve far more than average. In reporting the observations every effort was made to treat fairly with debatable interpretations of observed reactions and, wherever possible, to report facts, conditions, and incidents.

Administrator interviews. The information contained in this study was primarily the result of interviews with administrators of the small high schools in Central Washington. These interviews followed a set pattern of questions, many of which required a yes or no answer. The questions were designed to determine the present status of gifted children in these schools and to determine what elements are maintained in the school programs for their development. Opinions were also obtained concerning the debatable issues in the hope that they would illuminate the more complicated areas.

Teacher interviews. Each visitation included a brief interview with a teacher of a gifted pupil to further clarify the question of how classmates regarded the gifted children.

Observations. In each of the schools, a gifted pupil was observed in class and with groups out of class in order to evaluate the attitudes toward the school. The gifted pupils were selected by the teachers on the basis of testing and achievement. These observations were reported to show that what appeared to be the accepted status of

gifted children.

The form used. A copy of the form followed in interviews and observations is included in Appendix B, page 45.

TABLE I

IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED PUPILS IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS
OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON 1960

	Number of Schools in Survey	Yes	Per Cent	No	Per Cent
Permanent record of achievement and observed charac- teristics for each pupil?	11	11	100.0	0	000.0
A definite program for identifying gifted pupils?	11	0	000.0	11	100.0
A list of pupils defined as excep- tional or gifted?	11	0	000.0	11	100.0

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Identification of the gifted. This study was prepared for the purpose of answering certain questions which have been indicated, by the review of literature, as being pertinent to the problem. Table I, page 14, clearly indicates that pupils enter and leave high school with a permanent record of achievement and observed characteristics. These were, in all cases, kept on file and available to the teachers and administrators. However, none of the schools visited maintained a list of gifted pupils as such. Marian Scheifele (13:1) confidently states: "It is generally agreed that identifying the gifted child as early in his life as possible is highly desirable from the standpoint of both the full development of his abilities and his personal adjustment."

Thus, on the very threshold of investigation of this problem one finds an area for improvement. Granted that teachers in these schools have a trying schedule, how much easier it would be to become aware of cases needing more attention with a definite plan of identification. And, how much easier would be the planning with a knowledge of which pupils and how many pupils were involved. Measurements are available to determine special ability in practically all areas of endeavor. By the systematic use of teacher observation, and testing, reasonable identification can be made. These facts indicate two distinct instances in which administrators and teachers might well be urged to plan in

order to better accommodate one basic problem: identifying the gifted children.

Segregation of gifted pupils. The data in Table II page 17, demonstrate that all of the schools interviewed practice some ability grouping. This is largely relegated to the selection of the high school course and of electives. Ten of the eleven administrators interviewed felt that ability grouping would improve their program if it were possible and that they would prefer ability grouping. This should be adequate to say that, by failing to use ability grouping, subject matter remains more elementary and achievement is impaired. This, of course, does not prove that small high schools should segregate and group pupils on the basis of ability. It does show that a weakness exists in the educational program and that something might well be proposed to enrich the diluted parts. Segregation is admittedly a more complex solution to the problem. However, the various systems of grouping should be investigated with regard to their adaptability to the curriculum and program.

Acceleration of gifted pupils. Tables III and IV, pages 18 and 19, indicate that little use is currently being made of acceleration. In none of the schools discussed were pupils allowed to enroll in classes for the more advanced years. In all of the schools included in the interviews, acceleration through the grades is seldom practiced. Only two of the eleven administrators felt that a greater use of acceleration would be possible under the present circumstances. This question might better have been worded, advisable, rather than possible, for why it would

TABLE II
ANALYSIS OF ABILITY GROUPING IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS
OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON 1960

	Number of Schools in Survey	Yes	Per Cent	No	Per Cent
Do you practice some ability grouping?	11	11	100.0	0	000.0
Would you prefer more ability grouping in your program?	11	10	90.9	1	09.1
Would your program accomplish more if faster pupils were separated?	11	10	90.9	1	09.1

TABLE III
ACCELERATION PRACTICES IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS
OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON, 1960

	Number of Schools in Survey	Yes	Per Cent	No	Per Cent
Do pupils after the seventh grade have the opportunity to enroll in advanced classes?	11	0	000.0	11	100.0
Do you feel that a greater use of accelerations is possible under your present circumstances?	11	2	18.1	9	81.9

TABLE IV
 FREQUENCY OF PUPIL ACCELERATION IN SMALL HIGH
 SCHOOLS OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON 1960

	Number of Schools in Survey	Yes	Per Cent	No	Per Cent
Often	11	0	000.0	11	100.0
Occasionally	11	0	000.0	11	100.0
Seldom	11	11	100.0	0	000.0

not be possible is certainly not immediately evident. Most of the administrators considered it advisable to retain homogeneous grouping in these communities. Consider the statement of DeHaan and Havighurst (4:122) "Acceleration offers opportunity for a gifted pupil to move at a pace appropriate to his ability and maturity and to complete an educational program in less than the ordinary amount of time."

Fliegler points out that authorities recognize the critical nature of this issue but he asserts (18:28) that the advantages of acceleration far outweigh the disadvantages. Freehill summarizes his discussion of studies concerning acceleration, with this statement: (5:206) "Other studies of the results of acceleration have led almost unanimously to the conclusion that some acceleration should be practiced."

The opinions of the interviewed personnel suggest that the increased practice of acceleration will depend upon community acceptance and approval. While immediate results may not be forthcoming in this regard, it is certainly advisable to investigate the possibility of some progress from this standpoint. In all events, this manifests another weak spot in the program for gifted pupils in these schools and attention may be suggested at this level.

Enrichment for gifted pupils. Table V, page 22, suggests something of a dilemma. Only one of the administrators interviewed believed that gifted pupils were not receiving a fair share of teacher time yet none of the schools had a definite program of enrichment for gifted pupils defined as such. This means that enrichment must be budgeted to fit the

current distribution of teacher time or that additional provisions must be made from a higher administrative level. Progress by both of these methods is not difficult to visualize. Other possible aids, suggested by Willis and Coon (19:169), are experts who can give special help and the utilizing of pupil manpower. Greater responsibility for the pupil is an enriching experience in its own right to say nothing of the release in time for teachers.

Scattergood suggests (19:159) a greater use of the community in small high school enrichment. Projects may be planned to make use of as much available material as is possible. Seminar groups may be organized and effect a great deal of enrichment progress with a minimum of teacher guidance. By and large, however, the indications are for a definite enrichment program for gifted pupils and in this respect the small high schools in Central Washington can make some distinct steps.

Pupil encouragement to gifted children. Table VI, page 24, is an evaluation of pupil attitude toward gifted children in the schools included in the sample. Eight of the eleven administrators recorded on this table, report a non-encouraging attitude.

People are largely admired and respected for exceptional ability in most areas of physical achievement. It has been generally accepted that they are less admired for academic prowess. The question arises: is this a true response or a product of society? From the standpoint of the public need for leaders, it behooves the educator to strive for

TABLE V
ENRICHMENT FOR GIFTED PUPILS IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS
OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON 1960

	Number of Schools in Survey	Yes	Per Cent	No	Per Cent
Are your gifted pupils receiving a fair share of teacher time?	11	10	90.9	1	09.1
Do you have a defined enrichment program for gifted pupils as such?	11	0	000.0	11	100.0

better acceptance of academic superiority among students.

Administrator reactions. In general, administrator attitude towards this study was one of helpful cooperation and interest. In all instances time was given generously to the explanation of schedules and testing programs, and careful consideration was given to each question asked. In no case was there reluctance to offer information or state an opinion. It may be said that these administrators are interested in the issue of programs for the gifted but are not convinced of its urgency. In no case were there suggestions that major measures should be taken.

Teacher reactions. The reaction of teachers was also one of concern and cooperation. Teachers appeared to be more keenly aware of such varied individual ability in the same classes. Many of their cherished experiences in teaching were reported to have been in connection with efforts to enrich the activities of superior children.

Interviewer reaction. From the standpoint of the interviewer, it might be said that the work was extremely gratifying. The interview and observation situations were comfortable and natural in regard to relationships. As a result, a depth of insight was possible to achieve in spite of the comparative smallness of the sample.

A well grounded institution is not to be completely reorganized at every whim and fancy, and it is only as need for reorganization and the practicality of consolidation become demonstrated that changes will ensue. In the communities evidence may be cited of pressures in these

TABLE VI
 ADMINISTRATOR RATINGS OF PUPIL ATTITUDE TOWARD
 GIFTED PUPILS IN SMALL HIGH SCHOOLS
 OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON 1960

	Number of Schools in Survey	Yes	Per Cent	No	Per Cent
Very Discouraging	11				
Discouraging	11	8	72.7	3	27.3
Indifferent	11	3	27.3	8	72.7
Encouraging	11				

directions. Probably the more noticeable of these is the growing number of children who live within the areas but who are being taken to larger schools for the more varied opportunity. Another pressure area is the economic strain resulting from an effort to provide opportunity as near as possible on a par with larger systems.

In short, then, interviewer reaction was one of interest, encouragement, and satisfaction because improvements are possible with investigation and effort, and avenues do exist to be opened for the fuller development of talent from these communities.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF OBSERVATIONS

It may be noted that most of the professional personnel contacted in these visitations are convinced that there are a number of advantages in these small schools for the training of superior pupils. Perhaps foremost among these is the pupil-teacher ratio. While the average teacher's daily schedule is quite void of free time, the actual ratio to pupils is approximately one to sixteen which is somewhat lower than the average in larger schools. Observations support the contention that a close relationship between teacher and pupil does exist. It may then be safely concluded that this could foster encouragement for creative endeavor and academic progress providing the teacher is sufficiently trained and alert to the advantage.

In these communities there is a more thorough acquaintance among teachers, pupils, administrators, and parents than in larger systems where teachers are associated with pupils and parents to a more limited extent. This fact was pointed out by a number of teachers during the observations, and in all fairness, it should be recognized that an advantage could be utilized.

Following the concept of a closely knit community-school relationship, mention should be made of the motivational effort being made in these schools by inquiring into the progress of graduates and

informing pupils of successful activities. It was noted that during the interviews, both teachers and administrators referred to graduates who had achieved well in colleges, vocational schools, and other worthwhile endeavor.

The interviews connected with this study brought out the point that major delinquency is quite rare in these rural communities. In many cases there were discipline problems but no organized element of delinquency. A direct relationship to values for worthwhile activities may be cited, and the condition certainly must be recognized as a motivational factor for achievement since the reward for delinquent activity is reported as being comparatively small. Three of the administrators mentioned the fact that pupils had been transferred to their communities by parents in order to remove them from connection with delinquent groups. It may be contended that this is not the proper way to counteract delinquency; however, a point is recognized for the preservation of the small high school unit.

It must be accepted that community pride and loyalty are prevalent in these areas. School board members were reported as taking a keen interest in all functions of their schools and pride in the systems. Parents received the same report, and, in view of the worthwhile results of enthusiasm in any endeavor, a favorable motivational condition should exist for the gifted pupil.

It was contended by some of the teachers interviewed that a greater percentage of pupils have leadership opportunity in small schools for the simple reason that there are separate leaders in the larger

schools. It was pointed out that small schools maintain the major part of the extracurricular activities common to larger schools and reasoned that superior people have little difficulty in keeping purposefully occupied if they are so inclined.

This opportunity is, of course, directly keyed to guidance, and it was necessary in observing to be especially alert to incidents of teacher-pupil relationship which revealed the presence of desirable guidance. Several circumstances were distinct. In one science class, the enthusiastic cooperation of teacher and pupil was essential to the accomplishment of the difficult project which had been completed by the gifted pupil observed. It was noted in this class that projects varied greatly in complexity. The gifted youth involved had finished building a highly technical instrument. His pride and interest were obvious. Several pertinent factors were apparent in this class. Foremost, was the relative enthusiasm shown by pupils with projects which required comparatively minor concentration. A form of segregation was effected within a limited space and time, and it was noted that the teacher was especially busy. It might also be generalized that teacher time was allotted proportionately to the ability of the individual.

In several of the schools visited, pupils were encouraged by teachers to do creative things. A gifted boy from an English class had written an excellent poem which was being included in the annual. This teacher kept a folder of writing which the boy had done and mentioned other activities she had arranged for him.

A sophomore boy observed in world history was in charge of the school bulletin and was quite useful in an assistant teacher capacity. He was reported as being well accepted by other pupils in this function. In this school, all of the seniors have the opportunity for two weeks of teaching experience.

Numerous other examples of guidance were observed. The incidents do indicate that there are advantages in small schools for the training of gifted children.

Evaluation of conditions observed and factors described by the personnel interviewed illustrate many disadvantages and negative influences for the training of gifted children in small schools. Primary among these are the areas of specialists and equipment. Much effort is being made in these areas to provide specialists in science, languages, and the arts, but in all cases it is necessary to alternate subjects over a two or three year period.

Maintaining a constant staff of qualified specialists is made difficult in these areas by the comparative rapid turnover of teachers. Many teachers use these schools as stepping stones to larger systems. Salaries are thirteen per cent smaller than the average for the State which may be considered both a cause and result of this turnover.

The observations for this study indicate a definite relationship between teacher interest and motivation in the various fields. This includes both their ability to handle the subject matter and their interest and endeavor in a given subject. Teacher-pupil relationship

in enthusiasm and endeavor was quite apparent. Pupil interest was at a high level where teacher interest and effort were at a high level. It was also noted that the number of pupils electing a particular course was greater where more work and activity were evident. This observation was verified by administrators and is an encouraging factor in programs for the gifted where qualified specialists are available.

In the artistic fields the limitation of specialists was especially apparent. Some of the systems advised that they were bringing in uncertified instructors on a part time basis to assist in music and art instruction. While this is a commendable effort, it is certainly not on a par with a staff of trained and experienced personnel.

There were a number of indications in the survey that school size is related to awareness of public desire and need. Six of the administrators interviewed reported a definite increase in pupil interest in science during the past three years and five reported no increase. Those reporting an increase represented a total of one thousand and fifty eight pupils while those of the negative represented a total of five hundred and twenty four pupils. Administrators and teachers of the larger schools visited listed more out of school activities in science and the arts. It is also true that the larger schools were able to offer more academic courses with greater frequency.

It is interesting to note that all of the pupils who were suggested for observation in this work had an appearance of neatness and cleanliness which was noticeably superior to the average. This may be said

to reflect the results of favorable influence upon youth and tends to support the hypothesis that all precocious influence which may be provided is worthwhile.

In the matter of providing adequate equipment for the training of gifted pupils, all of the schools visited were noticeably handicapped. While much study and effort had been made to provide sufficient laboratory and library equipment, the facilities were definitely limited. The capitol outlay per pupil for books in these schools was estimated by administrators as being quite high in comparison to larger schools. However, even with this effort, the libraries were limited in scope of the subjects covered. This was to a certain extent offset by considerable care in selecting and supplying departmental libraries but should be considered a handicap to special pursuits for gifted youngsters.

The importance of doing in the learning situation has long been accepted and automatically designates the significance of sufficient facilities. A review of the literature illustrates the greater challenge in facilities necessary to adequately supply the gifted pupil program. It may be said that these observations reveal a definite drawback both to providing activity and stimulation for superior endeavor.

DeHaan and Havighurst (3:130) emphasize the essential nature of need and value to motivation for gifted children. In these communities, economic and social components may be seen to constitute a major influence upon these non-intellectual factors. In some of the commu-

nities, the economy is concerned almost entirely with trucking, logging, or farming, and the culture of the community is modified to fit only these vocations. Certainly not to belittle the importance of these functions, there is, however, little to stimulate a sense of need and value for academic or artistic achievement. In these cases, it is readily conceivable how consolidation with a larger more diversified system would enhance motivation for many individuals.

The attitudes of fellow pupils is recognized as being of major concern in matters of achievement. Some situations noted in this survey are evidence of pupil attitude holding superior children to limited endeavor. In one outdoor industrial arts class the pupil pointed out as being gifted was noticeably quite curious about and extremely interested in learning the use of a surveyor's transit. This boy was distracted in many ways by classmates. While he was apparently reasonably popular, it was obviously impossible to pursue his interest to any great extent and maintain his status as a "regular fellow". One could readily see adverse social influence at work.

A gifted boy in an English Class was proud of showing his ability but displayed something of an overbearing demeanor. This attribute of his personality may have developed as a defense to his position socially. Without a more complete investigation of his environment, however, this cannot be concluded with certainty. It is cited as a social relationship which could be of importance to his future usefulness and success.

Collectively the classroom observations made in connection with this study tend to support the idea that the academic efforts of gifted children in small high schools are in proportion to acceptability by their group. It was suggested by Freehill (7:29) that fear is perhaps the basic motive behind the discouraging attitude toward academically talented youngsters. Things which are common and understood usually incite much less fear. This being the case, and in view of the natural security in numbers, the comparatively larger groups of children doing superior work in larger systems should tend to reduce some of the "egghead" stigma.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

This report points out the basic areas, as indicated by authorities in the field, which are vital to the education of gifted children and thus to education. By means of visitations, the information is related to the situations in small high schools in Central Washington. There are many other factors involved in varying degrees of importance. It is contended by the writer that sufficient basic evidence was presented to draw some conclusions about the educational program in these schools and to indicate some measures which should be taken.

CONCLUSIONS

All of the administrators interviewed for this project, appear to be capable men doing a difficult assignment with efficiency. They are sincere in their approach to administration and not to be taken in by a fad topic until the worth and practicability of the proposal are evident. As continued study illuminates what needs to be done and how, the program for gifted children may well be expected to become an integrated reality in their respective programs.

The administrators contacted feel that programs for the gifted are more difficult to plan in small schools. They also believe that these small schools offer certain advantages in leadership opportunity

and in teacher time per pupil. It is administrator opinion that superior pupils are not noticeably rejected by classmates, although the school atmosphere is at present not conducive to exceptional intellectual development.

The interviews show that the present programs do not include a definite plan for the screening and selection of gifted pupils. Authorities have been cited to demonstrate that selection on the basis of achievement only is not adequate.

The data bears out the point that grouping is being used very little. The administrators all recognized that courses were being diluted to accommodate less able pupils. Several of them mentioned the lack of challenge from the necessity of following too closely to a text.

Acceleration was not advised by the administrators interviewed. It was contended by some that sufficient activity was available in areas other than subject matter for these people. This may be the case, especially in the artistic fields. However, it is highly questionable whether or not these activities would be truly intellectually challenging to one of superior ability.

It would be extremely unfair to say that these schools do not practice enrichment activities. On the contrary, there is evidence of considerable effort in this direction. However, all of the schools lacked in a specific enrichment program for a defined group of gifted

pupils. Experiments have shown numerous ways in which enrichment activities may be integrated with the curriculum to enhance the opportunities for a more complete growth of superior children.

In no case in these visitation was there found a definite assignment of programing for gifted pupils by specific personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the contention of this study that attention needs to be given in varying degrees to four basic areas for the greater development of special ability: identification, segregation, acceleration, and enrichment. The adoption of a program of identification may be considered a decided step forward toward the fuller development of the gifted. It is concluded that segregation is the most probable solution to some problems in programing for the gifted. It is to be hoped that more use may be made of segregation in the future. In view of the findings of authorities, the possibilities of acceleration might well be investigated. There are several possibilities which should be explored from the perspective of specific assignments. In each school one of the personnel should be delegated to determine who the gifted pupils are and to investigate the various means available for their progress. In the more remote instances, assignments are advisable from a higher administrative unit to determine who the gifted children are and assist in programing for their development. Such an assignment would have the capacity of a special area instructor.

The situations of these schools and their relationship to neighboring districts should be frequently evaluated from a state and local level. The rapid development of all phases of transportation can be deciding factors in the continuation of these districts. Evaluation should be made from a state level in the light of state and national need and goals in education.

Studies should be encouraged in the field of education and data compiled concerning each pertinent factor. Continued research is valuable for its information and for reason of its tendency to influence public attitude toward academic achievement and its contribution in apprising citizens of the problem.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN SAMPLE

BENTON CITY

BICKELTON

EASTON

EAST VALLEY

GRANGER

KITTTITAS

MABTON

RIVERVIEW

THORP

WHITE SWAN

ZILLAH

APPENDIX B

FORM FOLLOWED IN STUDY

School

Enrollment

Number of teachers

Salary base

Average increment

Masters increment

Acreage

Furthest bus distance

Distance to similar school

Regular tests given:

Do you practice some ability grouping? Yes _____, No _____.

Do you feel that ability grouping, other than selection of college prep,
or vocational course, is practical in schools of this size? Yes _____,

No _____.

Would you prefer ability grouping if it were possible in your program?

Yes _____, No _____.

Would your program accomplish more if faster pupils were separated?

Yes _____, No _____.

Do you feel that a greater use of acceleration is possible under your present circumstances? Yes _____, No _____.

Do students from the seventh grade up have the opportunity to enroll in advanced classes? Yes _____, No _____.

Will you give an opinion on acceleration in small high schools:

In your opinion, acceleration would have the most detrimental effect upon the slow learner _____, average group _____, fast group _____.

Have you a permanent record of achievement and observed characteristics for each pupil? Yes _____, No _____.

Have you a list of pupils defined as exceptional or gifted? Yes _____, No _____.

Do you feel that gifted youngsters are receiving a fair share of teacher time? Yes _____, No _____.

Have you a defined enrichment program for gifted pupils as such? Yes _____, No _____.

Are parent teacher conferences scheduled regularly for all parents _____, with need _____, seldom needed _____.

Have you noted a definite increase in student interest in science during the past three years? Yes _____, No _____.

Is your library available to pupils at times other than school hours? Yes _____, No _____.

Is your laboratory used before and after school often _____, occasionally _____, seldom _____.

Do you feel that student attitude toward gifted youngsters is very discouraging _____, indifferent _____, encouraging _____.

Opportunities in the community, other than extracurricular school activities, for youngsters to use musical and artistic talents are good _____, average _____, poor _____.

Opportunities in the community for pupils to use academic talents are good _____, average _____, poor _____.

Opportunities in extracurricular activities for students to use artistic and musical talents are good _____, average _____, poor _____.

Opportunities in extracurricular activities for pupils to use academic talents are good _____, average _____, poor _____.

Have some of your students done original things in the past two years:

Writing

Musical compositions

Design

Experiments

Research

What percentage of your graduates for the past three years have entered college?

Comments on class observation: