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A Developmental Program for Trainable Mentally Retarded Pupils

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A DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM FOR TRAINABLE
MENTALLY RETARDED PUPILS



A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College



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



by
Richard Matthew Ozanich

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In spite of some positive trends, the present literature suggests that children in special classes for trainable mentally retarded did not make significant progress in socialization, intellectual development, self-care, or parent-child relations (Dunn, 1960; Cain & Levine, 1961; Fils, 1955; Goldstein, 1956; Guenther, 1956; Hottel, 1958; Nickle, 1954; Peck, 1960; Reynolds, 1953; Schiphorst, 1966).

Recent trends in special education have been towards developing techniques designed to fractionate global areas of behavior and functioning for evaluation and educational purposes. Mann and Phillips (1967) state that fractional approaches attempt to offer more specificity and structure to the sprawling field of special education. Bateman (1964) suggests that fractional approaches can offer techniques to identify, train, and remediate areas of impairment and weakness.

Gorelick (1963) feels that educational goals for retarded children are too global. She states that it is difficult to change them into daily objectives needed by the teacher working with retarded children. She proposes a classification system which breaks down objectives from

global to classroom operational levels and present examples by showing how teaching goals may be clearly defined. Thus, for example, the global objective "to learn to get along with others" becomes a specific realistic objective such as "to learn to stand in line for a drink without pushing."

To increase the odds of pursuing systematically and consistently a course of social education and training, a program called Social Education First Aid has been developed by Gunzburg (1964).

Persons working in the Richland, Washington, public school special education programs have been concerned in ascertaining what to teach trainable mentally retarded children and how to pursue a specific course of social education, training, and evaluation.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the project was to apply a specified training program and test its results with eight pupils who constituted a class for trainable mentally retarded children. The children were placed in the group on the basis of evaluation by a school psychologist. The training program was the Social Education First Aid (SEFA) program (Gunzburg, 1964). Additional concrete materials were used to supplement the SEFA material. The children's growth in the following areas of social competence was evaluated: self-help, communication, socialization, and occupation.

Major Terms Used

For the purposes of this study, trainable mentally retarded refers to children in the IQ range of 30 to 50, as assessed by an individual intelligence test. Self-help refers to mastery of skills and habits in areas of mobility, table habits, toileting, washing, and dressing. Communication denotes the ability to use and understand the ordinary means of communication such as language, number work, and paper and pencil work. Socialization refers to the ability to work and live with others in areas of play and home activities. Occupation refers to mastery of those skills which make a person useful and capable of contributing to his support, or enable him to occupy himself. The above listed skills are defined according to the Progress Assessment Chart I (P-A-C I) and the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMSc) (Doll, 1965b).

Hypotheses

It was hypothesized for the children in the four months program of the study:

- (1) There would be no significant gain in social competence scores obtained with the Progress Assessment Chart, P-A-C I.
- (2) There would be no significant gain between initial and final scores on the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMSc).

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The training group consisted of seven boys and one girl between nine and sixteen years of age, all markedly handicapped. These pupils were enrolled in a special education class at the Lewis and Clark Elementary School in Richland, Washington. All the children were ambulatory and had about average hearing and vision capacity. The children were primarily limited in verbal expressions, and gross and fine motor capabilities. CA and IQ characteristics for the children at the beginning of the study are given in Table I.

Teaching Materials

The core teaching set used in this investigation was the Social Education First Aid materials (SEFA) (Gunzburg, 1964). Additional materials used are listed in Appendix. The SEFA approach emphasizes the learning of those habits and skills which will help the mentally handicapped to be socially more competent.

The main attraction of the approach may well be the systematic covering of various areas of teaching and the use of certain teaching aids.

TABLE I
PUPILS' AGES AND MENTAL ABILITY LEVELS

Pupil	Age Years-Months	IQ*
A	11-6	39
B	11-5	48
C	16-7	38
D	13-3	38
E	12-8	32
F	14-6	42
G	10-8	45
H	<u>12-2</u>	<u>50</u>
	Mean CA 12-9	Mean IQ 42

* Revised Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale was used.

The SEFA approach provides a syllabus and a step-by-step program of teaching activities. These activities are designed to emphasize the mentally retarded child's growth in social competence rather than in academic skills.

SEFA can and needs to be adjusted and individualized for each child. It encourages the adult to ask questions, such as, why has a specific child learned a particular skill when other children with the same handicap have not been able to acquire it?

The SEFA teaching set, in addition to a manual, contains the following visual aids:

1. Flashcards (90 small cards with one word of the Social Sight Vocabulary printed on each)
2. Social Sight Vocabulary display charts (2 large cards with the complete social sight vocabulary)
3. Word Situation Cards (46 cards showing the application of the social sight vocabulary)
4. Absurdities Cards (6 cards with pictures of absurd social situations)
5. Time Situation Cards (48 cards showing time situations)
6. Dominoes Cards (28 cards for developing the understanding of the meaning of numbers)

Besides the teaching aids, the SEFA teaching set contains score charts.

Assessment Devices

Progress Assessment Chart, Form I

The P-A-C I forms summarize systematically and precisely educational progress in social education, graded to difficulty and distributed among the four main areas: Self-help, Communication, Socialization, and Occupation. The four main areas in the concentric rings on the diagram of the P-A-C I forms (Figure 1) are further sub-divided (e.g., in Self-help: table habits, mobility, toilet and washing, and dressing).

The various items of the P-A-C I comprise samples of behavior and skills, which have been selected from different sources. All items have been related to some particular stage of mental development by one or more authorities.

The P-A-C I makes it possible to see particular achievements in relation to other skills of the same developmental stage. The purpose of the P-A-C I form is to provide a method of systematic sampling of achievements in social skills at regular intervals and to serve as a technique for presenting visually the assessment of each trainee.

All areas corresponding to items which the child performs frequently and/or easily are shaded in the diagram, while the skills which have not been acquired are left blank and indicate the areas in need of training and education.

Name

Age

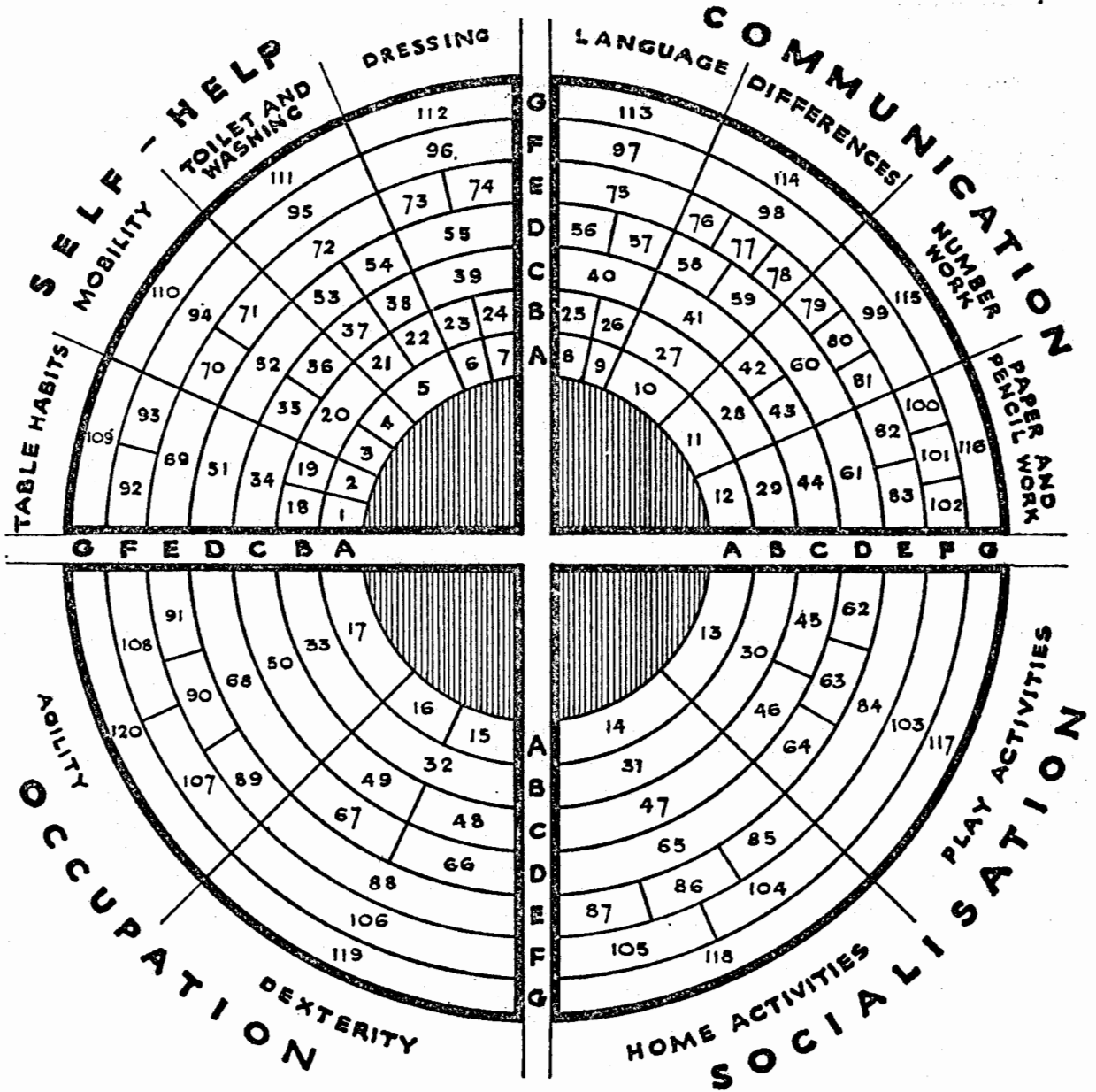


FIGURE I

PROGRESS ASSESSMENT CHART I (P-A-C-I)

The above diagram is reprinted with the permission of the author, H. C. Gunzburg. It shows areas and levels (A through G) of assessment.

Vineland Social Maturity Scale

The VSMSc (Doll, 1965a) indicates the developmental stages which lead to a gradual maturation of social competence. A social age and a social quotient can be obtained with this scale. The scale assesses eight dimensions: Self-help: General, Eating, Dressing; Self-direction; Occupation; Communication; Locomotion; and Socialization. It is thus possible to study the highs and lows of social performance in a profile, which picks out those aspects which require remediation.

Training Program

A head teacher with forty-five years teaching experience, and an assistant (no college, five years teaching assistant experience) worked with the children on a group and individual basis. The adults' roles were to assist each child individually at his level of functioning.

The thirty-by-twenty foot classroom was self-contained. It was an adapted room in an older school building, designed to care for approximately ten trainable mentally retarded children. The room contained a sink with running water. An electric stove, refrigerator, and a work counter were also located in the room. There was a full length blackboard on a large wall. The classroom furniture was easily adaptable to individual or group work.

Records and charts of each child's progress were kept by the teachers. Additionally, simplified progress charts were kept by the

with each student. These charts were used mainly as a means to encourage the children by calling attention to successes and areas still needing improvement.

The daily schedule was as follows:

9:00 - 10:15	Communication
10:16 - 10:30	Recess, Socialization, and Occupation skills stressed outside
10:31 - 11:15	Communication
11:16 - 11:35	Lunch, Self-help
11:36 - 12:30	Recess, Socialization, and Occupation skills stressed outside
12:31 - 1:00	Rest period
1:01 - 2:15	Socialization and Occupation, inside
2:16 - 2:30	Recess, Socialization, and Occupation, outside
2:31 - 3:00	Communication

Procedure

Two school psychologists independently evaluated each pupil with the P-A-C I and the VSMSc before the program started. Thus inter-rate agreement could be used to determine the reliability of the assessments. Levels of competence for each child were determined in the areas of self-help, communication, socialization, and occupation. It was assumed that the children's needs would differ; therefore, a separate listing of training needs were made for each subject matter skill. Training goals were stated according to these needs. Table II illustrates a sampling of needs and goals used in the area of communication.

TABLE II
COMMUNICATION

Needs	Goals
Language	<p>Obeys simple instructions Understands on, in, behind, under Relates experiences Uses prepositions: above, below Understands directions: upper left, bottom right, etc</p>
Differences	<p>Can tell sex differences Discriminates colors by matching Names four or more colors Correctly refers to morning and afternoon Names days of the week Tells left and right on self Time association</p>
Number Work	<p>Giving one, two, many, a lot Count mechanically ten items Arrange objects from smallest to largest Recognition of coins</p>
Paper and Pencil Work	<p>Imitation of vertical and circular strokes Copy circles Draw primitive man Prints name and recognizes it among other printed words Recognition of 40 or more social sight vocabulary words "Reads" simple words in public places, e.g., Danger</p>

The SEFA program was planned with specific goals for each pupil and with guidance from the SEFA manual. Short term teaching goals were stated on a weekly basis. Goals to be reached were within the estimated ability of each child. The investigator and the two teachers involved determined and outlined a specific program for each child in the class commensurate with the stated goals.

The following activities were carried out in the classroom and on the playground in the areas of self-help, communication, socialization, and occupation.

1. Self-help

- a. Table habits. Carried out in the cafeteria. The teachers ate at the table with the class; exercises in proper uses of knife, fork, and spoon.
- b. Mobility. Walking up and down stairs; running short errands within the school.
- c. Toilet and washing. Stress was on washing of hands and face before eating, and the combing of hair.
- d. Dressing. Practice with buttons, buckles, and snaps; tying shoelaces, bows, and neckties.

2. Communication

- a. Language. Exercises in obeying simple commands and instructions (e.g., put box on desk), define simple words, directions of left, right, upper, lower, etc., telling experiences.

- b. Differences. Color discrimination by matching colored paper; differentiation between short, long, big, small, heavy, and light; correct reference to morning and afternoon by use of SEFA time situation cards; telling left and right on self; use of calendar to name and recognize days of the week; understanding of day-week, minute-hour; associating time on clock with actions and events.
- c. Number work. Discrimination of one, many, or several (give me one, give me two); mechanically counting ten objects, mechanically counting thirty objects; arrangement of objects in order of size from smallest to largest; recognition of coins up to one dollar; equating pennies with nickle, nickles with a dim; giving change out of one dollar.
- d. Paper and pencil work. Correct holding of pencil and imitating vertical and circular strokes, copying circles from those on the board; practice in drawing men and horses; printing first and last name; recognition of name when printed on a card and shuffled with other children's name cards; use of social sight vocabulary by matching flash-cards with words on the display cards simply by their shape; exercises in addressing envelopes; use of SEFA word situation cards displaying words and graphic illustrations of the word.

3. Socialization

- a. Play activities. Teacher narrates a story and children "act" out the parts; organization of group games (hide and seek, tag) emphasizing rules; playing phonograph records, "dancing" to music; passing and throwing large playground ball.
- b. Home activities. Helping set table and clearing table after snacks are served; going on errands to the principal's office, or to other rooms; room responsibilities assigned, e.g., washing dishes, organizing furniture, sweeping, mopping and polishing room floor, cleaning blackboards.

4. Occupation

- a. Dexterity (fine finger movements). Stringing beads, unscrewing jar lids, cutting paper with scissors with stress on appropriate finger movements, cutting out pictures of common animals; winding thread on a spool; use of building blocks to make simple structures; use of clay to form simple objects; cutting cloth with scissors; exercises in cutting out round outlines on paper; organization of cards or papers in a neat stack after they have been randomly thrown on the table.
- b. Agility (gross motor control). Jumping over a rope held eight inches from the ground--both feet raised at the same time; practice in kicking a large round ball from a standing

position; exercises in standing on "tip-toe" for ten seconds and standing on one leg for ten seconds; hopping and skipping over chalk lines drawn on the floor or playground; use of hammer, saw, and screwdriver; correct hammering of nails; sewing along a straight line, six inches long, marked on cloth; exercises in use of floor polisher and vacuum cleaner; exercises in standing on "tip-toe" while bending forward and while in crouched position.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

VSMSc reliability of re-examination scores of mentally retarded subjects is reported by Doll (1965a). The correlation between first and second assessments of social age (SA) for the group was $r = .92$. Interrater correlations were used in the current study to investigate the reliability of the VSMSc ($r = .53$) and the P-A-C I ($r = .91$).

The P-A-C I pretest and posttest scores and the gains are shown in Table III. In the treatment time of four months, the children gained an average of 23 points. The eight children in this program were initially most advanced in the areas of self-help and appreciably slower in communication and socialization areas. It was observed that the largest gains were made in communication areas: (1) languages, i.e., following simple instructions and understanding simple directions; (2) differences, i.e., color discrimination, differentiation of lengths, morning and afternoon, and days of the week; (3) number work, i.e., number situations up to thirteen, recognition of coins up to one dollar, mechanical counting to ten or thirty; (4) paper and pencil work, i.e., copying and imitating vertical and circular strokes, "printing" first name and recognizing it among others, drawing primitive "man," recognition of forty social sight vocabulary words.

TABLE III
P-A-C I PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES

Pupil	P-A-C I Scores		Gain
	Pretest	Posttest	
A	63	97	34
B	54	68	14
C	63	88	35
D	80	99	19
E	59	69	10
F	68	90	22
G	88	109	21
H	80	111	31
Mean	69	91	Mean Gain 23*

* $p < .005$, one-tailed test, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test used, $T = 0$.

The second largest gains were made in occupation areas of dexterity, i.e., use of scissors in cutting out pictures fairly accurately, arranging materials neatly, use of building materials; agility, i.e., use of simple tools, jumping, kicking, and throwing and balancing.

Socialization areas showed the third largest gains, i.e., play and home activities.

The least gains were in self-help areas, as would be expected because of initial proficiency in these areas which enabled most of the children to score near the ceiling of the P-A-C I.

The significance of the difference was determined by use of the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test. Using a one-tailed test, the gains were found to be significant at the .005 level. (All of the eight children showed P-A-C I total score gains.) These data reject the hypotheses that there would be no significant gain in social competence scores obtained with the P-A-C I. They further show that the change is significant in the positive direction.

The VSMSc pretest and posttest scores and the gains are shown in Table IV. In the treatment time of four months, the children gained an average of 5.63 points. The significance of the difference was determined by use of the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test. Using a one-tailed test, the gains were found to be significant at the .005 level. (All of the eight children showed VSMSc total score gains.) These data reject the hypothesis that there would be no significant difference between

TABLE IV
 VSMSc PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES

Pupil	VSMSc Scores		Gain
	Pretest	Posttest	
A	60	63	3
B	55	60	5
C	59	68	9
D	69	74	5
E	58	65	7
F	61	68	7
G	73	75	2
H	67	74	7
Means	62.75	68.38	Mean Gain 5.63*

* $p < .005$, one-tailed test, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed ranks test used, $T = 0$.

the expected and obtained final scores on the VSMSc.

Change in VSMSc SA and differences in SA gains as found through the VSMSc pretest and posttest comparisons are shown in Table V. All of the children showed SA gains with the mean gain being 1.5 years.

TABLE V
VSMSc SOCIAL AGE GAINS IN YEARS

Pupil	Social Age		Gain
	Pretest	Posttest	
A	5.8 years	7.6 years	2.2 years
B	4.8	5.8	1.0
C	5.6	7.6	2.0
D	7.8	9.0	1.2
E	5.4	7.0	1.6
F	6.0	7.6	1.6
G	8.8	9.3	.5
H	7.4	9.0	1.6
Mean SA	6.5	7.7	Mean Gain 1.5

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The overall results of the program suggest that the social training which had been given to the children has been effective. The P-A-C I and the VSMSc assessments showed that a number of skills which had not been mastered at the beginning of the program had been acquired during the course of training.

In some retarded children, social competence will probably take place without special training, but the probability of enhancing social competence is raised if specific areas of inefficiency are identified and concentrated on.

It is possible that the gains shown by these eight children were due to an increased amount of personal attention each child received.

It appears that the evidence contained in the investigation suggests new possibilities for the training of the mentally retarded which have received little attention so far. It suggests a way in which curriculum objectives are reduced from complex concepts into measurable and simple steps, and provision for a systematic approach to the achievement of long-range objectives.

The need for evaluation instruments for assessing the development of the trainable child has been frequently cited (Bateman, 1964; Cain & Levine, 1961; Man & Phillips, 1967; Peck, 1960). The introduction of the P-A-C I forms in the Tri-Cities Area Special Education Department classrooms seems to have been an important breakthrough for the teachers who participated in the program. The assessment graphs presented visually the level of social functioning of each trainee. The teachers stated that it assisted them in providing a realistic basis for planning an individual training program, based on the developmental needs of each child by frequent assessments of the skills which would help that child to become socially competent.

In addition, the P-A-C I and the VSMSc seemed to serve as reinforcers for the teachers who felt less doubtful concerning their teaching effectiveness.

The P-A-C I and the VSMSc also acted as permanent reminders to the teachers to observe the child, not only in the skills which he had mastered, but also those which he had not achieved, and to try to find out the reasons for the non-achievements.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the effects of a developmental program upon trainable mentally retarded pupils. It demonstrated that the social competence scores in areas of self-help, communication, socialization, and occupation could be significantly increased over a four-month period. Significant gains in P-A-C I and VSMSc scores were made by the children.

The pupils of this study were eight trainable mentally retarded children. They were between nine and sixteen years of age, had Revised Stanford-Binet (Form L-M) IQ's between 30 and 50, and were enrolled in public school special education class for trainable children. The effects of the developmental program were measured by changes in overall P-A-C I and VSMSc scores, and social ages changes between pretest and posttest administrations of the P-A-C I and VSMSc. The SEFA program was planned with specific goals for each pupil and with guidance from the SEFA manual. Teaching goals were short term, on a weekly basis, and within the estimated ability of each child.

Largest gains were in communication, occupation, and socialization areas respectively. Least gains were in self-help areas, as most assessment items were passed initially.

The significance of differences between means for the total P-A-C I and VSMSc scores was determined with the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test. P-A-C I and VSMSc score gains were found to be significant at the .005 level, and gains are in the positive direction. All of the eight children showed P-A-C I and VSMSc total score gains. These data rejected the null hypotheses that there would be no significant change in social competence scores obtained with the P-A-C I, and no significant difference between expected and obtained final scores on the VSMSc.

It was concluded that this study:

1. Identified a short-term program for trainable mentally retarded children which significantly increased their proficiency in areas of self-help, communication, socialization, and occupation.
2. Presented evidence which partially answers the need for more specificity of educational goals for the trainable mentally retarded.
3. Adds to the literature a developmental program which might be used in further educational goals.
4. Lends some evidence concerning the reliability of the VSMSc and the P-A-C I as instruments for assessing social development progress of trainable mentally retarded children.
5. Provides teachers with some possibilities for (a) assessing with reasonable accuracy deficiencies in social skills, (b)

drawing up a teaching program for individual pupils, and (c) reassessing periodically the progress achieved.

6. Adds to curriculum development in special education for trainable mentally retarded children.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOM

The following materials were used in addition to the SEFA teaching materials:

EQUIPMENT

Workbench - 1

Tools

Claw hammers - 4

Hand saw - 2

Coping saw - 1

Blades - 8

Screwdrivers - 4

Cooking Utensils

Fry pan

4 biscuit pans

Measuring cups

4 bowls

8 sets of silverware

Measuring spoons

Sifter

Peeling knife

Large mixing bowl

Beater, hand type

8 sets of dishes

Salt and pepper shakers

Ironing board

Iron

Needles and thread

Floor polisher

Vacuum cleaner

Various sizes of nails

PAPER

White - 1 box - 8-1/2 x 11

Crepe, 5 packages of assorted colors

Blue, red, black, green, brown, purple, orange, green - 2 boxes each -
8-1/2 x 11

Manila - 1 ream

Chart - 1 ream

READING SUPPLIES AND GAMES

SEFA Materials

ART SUPPLIES

Tempra paint - 2 cans each, assorted colors

8 crayon sets

8 paint brushes

Finger paints

Plastic clay

Paste

Cloth remnants

8 scissors

Yarn and thread

Crayons

Color chalk

ARITHMETIC SUPPLIES AND GAMES

SEFA dominoes cards

Counting blocks

Various denominations of coins to one dollar

Calendar

Clock dials

PERCEPTUAL AND MUSCULAR COORDINATION MATERIALS

Wooden stringing beads

Needles and thread

Peg boards and pegs

Spools.

PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR INDOORS AND OUT

2 bats
2 softballs
4 rubber utility balls
Jump rope
4 swing sets
Balance board

HEALTH AND CLEANLINESS

Hand towels
8 combs
Soap (bar)
2 shoe brushes
Shoe polish, black and brown
Neckties, bows, and ribbons
Paper cups
Kleenex and paper towels
Broom and dust pan

CENTRAL WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE

Graduate Division

Final Examination of

Richard M. Ozanich

B. A. in Ed., Central Washington State College

1957

for the degree of

Master of Education

Committee in Charge

Dr. Theodor F. Naumann

Dr. Colin Condit Dr. Hyrum Henderson

Samuelson Union Building

Room 204

Wednesday, July 23, 1969

5:00 p.m.

Courses Included in Graduate Study

Required Courses

Education	507	Introduction to Graduate Study
Education	570	Educational Foundations
Education	600	Thesis

Courses in Field of Specialization

Psychology	444	Tests and Measurements
Psychology	449	Abnormal Psychology
Psychology	457	Psychology of Exceptional Children
Psychology	453	Theories of Personality
Psychology	560	Theories of Counseling
Psychology	564	Mental Testing: Individual Child
Psychology	565	Mental Testing: Individual Adolescent and Adult
Psy/Sp. Ed.	487	Group Leadership and Group Processes
Psy/Sp. Ed.	463	Special Diagnostic Techniques
Psychology	559	Practicum in School Psychology
Psychology	562	Theories of Learning
Psychology	566	Personality Assessment

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

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UNDERGRADUATE STUDY:

Central Washington State College, 1953-1957; 1958.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

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Youth Camp Counselor, Spruce Canyon Youth Camp, Colville, Washington, 1961-1962.

Youth Camp Counselor, Cedar Creek Youth Camp, Littlerock, Washington, 1963.

School Psychologist, Richland Public Schools, Richland, Washington, 1965-1969.

CERTIFICATION:

Standard General Teaching Certificate

Provisional Specialized Personnel Certificate, now being converted to Standard Specialized Personnel Certificate

ADDITIONAL TRAINING:

Army Clinical Psychology, Army Medical Training Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas

Workshops and conferences (as a member of the Washington State Department of Institutions and the Richland Public School District)