CASE STUDIES OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN
A Technique in Training Student Teachers to See Children as Individuals

The teacher who sees her class group as individuals is aided in many ways. She has a point of contact in the selection and organization of materials; she can economize in the building of skills; she can utilize present interests and at the same time build permanent ones. Moreover, she can so shape her program for group living that behavior likely to result in desirable personality traits is encouraged.

But the very complexity of the situation tends to cause the student teacher to see her group en masse. She has so many other things to keep in mind; the educational principles underlying her work, the activities being carried on, the materials used, her own evolving control of techniques and subject matter. And unless the school has a systematic participation course, the children being almost entirely new to her, all look and act alike, so that definite provision to force her to see individual traits and capacities is imperative.

The student teacher may learn to recognize and respect individual differences and yet fail to evaluate behavior traits in the light of their significance in personality development; if so, she is quite a typical member of the profession which she is entering. E. C. Wickman, in the recent Commonwealth study, after a careful preliminary investigation, listed fifty behavior problems occurring in children, and to thirty mental hygienists “who were actively and solely engaged in the study and treatment of behavior disorders of children.” In each case he asked that the behavior problems be rated as to seriousness.

There was not only no agreement between the ratings from the two groups; there was even a slight tendency toward negative correlation — .22 between the mental hygienists and the experimental group of teachers and — .11 between the mental hygienists and the control group of teachers. On the other hand, the correlation between the various groups of teachers was high, that between the experimental and control group being .895. Certain items selected from Wickman’s tables comparing the ratings of the 511 teachers in the control group with those of the mental hygienists illustrate the difference. (In these tables a score of 4.5 indicates a problem “of only slight consequence,” a score of 12.5 one which “makes for considerable difficulty,” and a score of 20.5 one which is “an extremely grave problem”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Avg. Score of Teachers</th>
<th>Avg. Score of Mental Hygienists</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destroying school materials</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impertinence, defiance</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorderliness in class</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearfulness</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspiciousness</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsociability</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitiveness</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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Among other things Wickman concludes that (1) teachers consider behavior a serious problem in terms of the effect it has upon their own personality, (2) they view the active attacking types of behavior unfavorably and overlook the seriousness of withdrawing and dependent types, and (3) they direct the treatment of behavior disorders toward the symptoms of maladjustment instead of toward the underlying causes.

As a result of his investigations Wickman suggests, among other things that, (1)
teachers be given a more general knowledge of what constitutes normal child behavior, (2) teachers obtain a dynamic picture of the social and experimental backgrounds of children, (3) teachers be instructed in the methods of treating behavior problems, (4) teachers be given some practice in such methods of treatment, and (5) that some attention be paid to the emotional and social adjustments of teachers themselves. Such a program calls for a set-up of a full-time clinician and a corps of visiting teachers, a set-up which we at Harrisonburg do not have. But Wickman's findings have so colored our thinking that it has seemed wise to thus summarize them here.

Certain methods of training student teachers to recognize and care for individual differences are in rather general use. (1) Student teachers are usually guided in the use of school records, such as general record cards, test results, diaries of units, and case studies. (2) Training schools rather uniformly include exercises in observing individuals and groups as a part of the induction period in student teaching. (3) Courses in child psychology, educational psychology, and tests and measurements are a regular part of the teacher-training curriculum. (4) Student teachers are often given guidance and participation in visiting homes. (5) Making case records of individual children is increasingly being used not only as a means of understanding the particular child, but also as a definite technique in acquiring skill in seeing individual differences. We are attempting the use of all these methods at Harrisonburg, but space forbids more than the above citation here; the remainder of this paper deals with the plan for individual case studies at Harrisonburg.

Our present scheme for case studies is an evolution. First, we had each student teacher study two children, handing in one systematic report on each child at the close of the teaching term, it being felt that this much time was needed to assimilate the information from the school records, to secure the data about the social background, and to make continuous observations. But thus postponing the interpretation until the close of the term resulted in final reports which were full of unchecked half truths and unwarranted conclusions. The papers were not only of slight worth for the school files; the experience itself was of questionable educational value for the student teacher. Moreover, such techniques in studying individuals as the student teacher did acquire usually came too late in the teaching term to be of service in studying the other children in the group.

During the winter quarter of 1930 in a course in the psychology of elementary school subjects, the writer used a series of preliminary reports as a training for a more comprehensive summary report. The students were investigating problem cases in reading; as they gave each reading test, they submitted a report. These partial reports were immediately checked and returned so that the suggestions made could be carried out during the ensuing week; the summary report used the partial ones as one source of data.

In the 1930 summer school the partial report scheme was used in the case studies made by student teachers. The first section included all the objective data the student teacher could gather. This was followed by a weekly informal summary of the student's observations. Unfortunately there was not time for a general report at the close of the term.

Profiting from our former experiences, we are now handling the case studies as follows: (1) only one child is being studied since we feel that studying two children takes too much time away from the student teacher's observation of the entire group; (2) the case study consists of a series of informal short reports and one summary study near the close of the term.

The child study is initiated in a group conference at the beginning of the quarter.
bases for selecting the children are set up; usually children who are in some way a problem and for whom there are no reports on file are chosen. The students are also given some general directions for beginning the work. They are told to observe such things as the child's health, his attitudes, his part in the group life, his interests, his work habits, his abilities in school subjects, his special capacities. Supplementary sources of data suggested to them include the school files, test records, and visits to the homes. In writing the reports they are counselled: (1) to make references to previous reports rather than to repeat statements—the reports are arranged in a folder in reverse order; (2) to avoid sweeping statements and unwarranted conclusions; (3) to use the direct terse style characteristic of such writing.

The school files are open to student teachers, but there is no schedule for their use in the short reports; rather when a student teacher continues to overlook some important source of data her attention is called to it. Such a plan enables a student teacher to adapt her report to what she sees naturally rather than try to see what she is supposed to write on; she can thus write of the child's health after the nurse's round of inspection, of his social adjustment following a hike or picnic, of his social background following a visit to his home.

For in connection with each case study, the student teacher makes a minimum of one visit to the child's home. Guidance for this is given in informal talks with her supervisor and in a group conference. Since her supervisor accompanies her, there is a definite check upon her interpretation of the data secured from the visit.

We are finding these short informal reports an added means of co-ordination with the sophomore course in tests and measurements. Before the first testing was completed, students reported reading ability in very indefinite terms, such as "good," "poor," "average," "in the poorest group." When the Gates tests had been given, some student teachers immediately used the figures from the tests to support their statements, but others continued to make less objective comments such as "Poor in reading for details but good in reading for general meaning." Such students were counselled to make use of the test data in their next reports. In the meantime the instructors in the course taught the class how to use such data in diagnosing individual difficulties in reading. Since these instructors had attempted to ward off faulty statements about I.Q.'s, the reports have been singularly free from such errors; students who have made inaccurate statements have been referred to the professors for reteaching.

In the directions given for final reports, the students were told that all data lending itself to such treatment must be tabulated, and were advised to take any difficulties occurring in such tabulations into their courses in tests and measurements.

We are finding these reports very helpful in our study of the student teacher herself since they mirror her attitude toward children's behavior and toward life. Several quite mature teachers in the summer school felt that they had completed their observations when they reported a child as lazy, indifferent, inattentive. They were rather amazed at the suggestion that they search for the causes in order to attempt some intelligent remedial work. For it had never occurred to them that their responsibility went deeper than labelling the miscreant; "He won't study," is such a customary excuse in the profession.

Such interpretations cannot be expected of student teachers unless definite guidance is given. For it requires a working contact with the current literature in child psychology. Since we at Harrisonburg have no psychology course paralleling either sophomore or senior student teaching, we have been forced to use a less direct co-ordination with the junior courses in mental hygiene and in child psychology. Early in the
fall of 1930 the problems occurring in the sophomore informal reports were listed. Typical problems referred to children who bluff, who are inattentive, who are afraid, who do not try, who stay by themselves, who talk too much, who are nervous. The instructor in mental hygiene then had her class go through their reading list and make page references for these topics. These are gradually being placed on cards and put on file in the library.

At the present we have set up three levels of achievement in the informal reports: (1) accurate reporting of significant facts, (2) interpretation based on the student teacher's present knowledge with stress on remedial work, and (3) interpretation involving the use of literature in the field with very definite suggestions for remedial work. The seniors have been told that any student reaching the third level will be excused from further reports—she will, however, continue to make observations in connection with the diary record which she writes for her supervisor. We will use this plan with the sophomores next quarter since we hope that typewritten directions now being prepared for the students will short-circuit the process of learning to write the reports.

The informal report goes first to the supervisor; when she approves it, it is handed to the director of training, who reads and returns it immediately. Problems arising in the report are discussed informally with the supervisor; some time is given to such problems in each weekly conference with the director of training. In addition to the conference initiating the reports an entire conference period is given over to the final report. In this conference an outline is suggested to the students, but they are free to modify this as they choose. This outline is as follows:

Case Study of ..................

Part One: The Data

I. The social background

II. Health and physical condition

III. School progress

IV. Personality traits

Part Two: Summary of the Data

Part Three: Interpretation

Part Four: Recommendations

The informal reports will be submitted with the final paper so that the reader can check back at will. These will then be returned to the students; the summary reports will be filed since the marginal comments of supervisor (and of director of training) should bring them to a reasonable level of accuracy.

We have no objective results of the plan to offer for discussion; for the first time we all feel that we are making some real progress with the problem. We believe that the increased co-ordination with the course in tests and measurements has worked to the advantage of both, that the students have seen relationships more than before. We feel that we can see an increasing tendency on the part of student teachers and staff to regard behavior traits as symptoms and to search for underlying causes. We also think we see a tendency to evaluate child behavior more in terms of its effect upon personality than upon the student teacher's peace of mind. The student teachers themselves say that the techniques used in observing one child are helping them to understand the group better.

Among the many problems connected with the scheme, two stand out. There is danger that the student teacher will pay too much attention to her case study, thereby defeating the very purpose of the work, but we are making a concerted effort to prevent this. There is also danger that in acquiring insight into behavior problems the student teacher will acquire a spurious idea of freedom, that in learning to understand so-called "bad" behavior she will learn also to tolerate it to a greater extent than is good for the group or for the child himself. For it requires considerable maturity
to see children's behavior in a disinterested professional manner and yet hold them firmly to the very best that is in them. We are attempting to forestall this in conferences and to give guidance when it occurs. Moreover, this difficulty is not peculiar to the child study scheme; it is inherent in any progressive plan for training teachers. And if it is protested that a "little learning" is particularly dangerous in the field of mental hygiene, it may be replied that these readings do not come simply as a result of the case studies. For an introduction to this literature is fast becoming a necessary part of any well planned scheme of student teaching. Therefore this series of partial reports revealing the student teacher's developing attitude may not so much cause a problem as correct one. For they do offer an opportunity to guide her into a balanced philosophy of education and of life.

Katherine M. Anthony

CREED OF MODERN LIFE

"I believe in God as the Creator."

"I believe in the spirit and mind of man."

"I believe firmly in obeying all the laws of the country in which I happen to be, no matter how I despise them."

"I believe that a brain standard is far more important than a gold standard."

"I believe in the home, and that men should use it more and women less."

"I believe in the Ten Commandments with a far greater intensity than I do in our ten million laws of today."

"I believe that criminals are fools and not heroes."

"I believe all men to be nobler than they are thought to be by others, and all women far less mercenary; that a hard life harms no one, but that a soft life kills; that courage restores life and is greater than wealth."

C. R. W. Nevinson

SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS IN THE SOUTH

IN 1927 the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Southern States adopted standards for the libraries of the high schools in this region, which have come to be known familiarly as "the Southern Standards." The emphasis which these standards placed upon properly trained librarians resulted in the springing up, almost over night, of a large number of courses purporting to prepare students for school library work. In December, 1929, the Policy Committee of the Southeastern Library Association, asked the Board of Education for Librarianship of the American Library Association to survey the library training conditions and facilities of the region, "in order that there may be a complete program for the training of librarians for the various types of library positions that are developing in the South, and in order that all ventures in library training may be so directed and organized that they will contribute to the whole program."

This study was made by Miss Sarah C. N. Bogle, of the Headquarters staff of the A. L. A., assisted by Miss Tommie Dora Barker, Regional Field Agent of the A. L. A. in the South, in March and April, 1930, and their findings were summarized in a mimeographed report in August, 1930.

Almost simultaneously the Joint Library Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools requested the Division of Surveys and Field Studies, of the George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, to make a survey of library conditions in the high schools in the territory of the Southern Association. The request was granted, and the Divisions of

This paper was read before the School Libraries Section of the American Library Association, meeting in New Haven, on June 26, 1931.

A Study of the Library School Situation in the Southern States. To be printed at a later date.