A STUDY OF ONE THOUSAND PROBLEM CHILDREN OF THE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SELECTED BY THEIR
TEACHERS AS PROBLEM CHILDREN

by

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H. J. W.
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I. INTRODUCTION

A. The School and the Problem Child

In every school there are pupils whose behavior is erratic, peculiar, or abnormal, whose accomplishment does not measure up to capacity or whose ability is unequal to the tasks imposed upon them by the school, their teachers and society at large. Some pupils persist in the retention of infantile habits long after most children have reached more mature stages of development. Others have developed undesirable attitudes which for some reason or other prevent them from making worthwhile contributions and adjustments to the situations of both school and home. All of these pupils constitute problems which the average teacher must try to meet.

As teachers and educators, we owe certain obligations to these pupils. Such problem pupils should be detected at the earliest possible time if we are to save them for society. Adequate diagnosis of the difficulties of such pupils should be made, and remedial treatment and educational guidance be arranged.

"The elementary school curriculum must be made broad enough to include every fundamental mode of utilizing mind which society employs in the conduct of its affairs. This will encourage each type of useful success and give to every variety of mind that interest and
growth which are necessary to power and self-confidence in doing the day's work. It will lengthen the period of schooling and eliminate the tragic sense of failure with which so many now enter life.\textsuperscript{1}

"The problem for the school, as it relates to these special classes of children, we have found, is one of diagnosis, proper classification, curriculum adjustment, re-statement of educational objectives, revision of teaching methods, differentiated instruction, and proper training and habit formation, with a view to the removal, in so far as possible, of the social menace of those children who enter school life in a handicapped physical or mental condition."\textsuperscript{2}

In the detection of a problem pupil, the teaching of the elementary school must undergo radical pedagogical improvement, and finally the school system must become more intimate with life itself. However, in this thesis the judgments of teachers who come in contact with students daily will be used as the principal source of evidence.

The greatest single cause of problem cases in this study was the mental factor. Therefore, an essential


fact to be considered in making this study of problem children was the mental level. However, the level of mentality alone was not the only factor to be considered.

Many problem cases were due to various physical handicaps, such as poor eyesight, inability to hear well, undernourishment, anemia, and emotional factors. Some cases were caused by sheer laziness. They may have lacked initiative, or may not have been able to adapt themselves to new situations.

Finally the social factor must be considered briefly. Many of the problem cases were caused by unsatisfactory environmental conditions. The parents of the child may have been indifferent to his success in the school room, and in some cases they have been known to deliberately counteract the constructive work of the school.

It is one of the major functions of the school to provide a social environment in which undesirable and anti-social traits will be nipped in the bud and worthwhile qualities developed.

B. The Problem

The problem in this study was to make a survey of one thousand problem children of the elementary schools selected by their teachers as problem children. It has been the purpose of the author to find what he
ould concerning the problems involved in this study. The author has made tabulations of the ten problems involved and made a classification of the types of problem cases, in the hope of getting teachers and educators more interested in problem children, thereby, greatly reducing the number that are quite likely to become social parasites.

C. Definition of the Problem Children in This Survey

"Those who stand out or differ from their group, because of certain undesirable habits, personality traits or behavior in the home, school or community; whose conduct interferes or is likely to interfere with the individual or group's fullest development and usefulness socially, educationally, or hygienically and whose behavior may result in more serious handicaps of one sort or another in later life."  

D. The Plan of Investigation

1. Method of Securing Data. A part of the data used in this study were gathered from teachers by a class in the study of the problem child under the direction of Dr. Shannon of the Indiana State Teachers College of Terre Haute, Indiana. The remainder of the

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data were collected by the writer who interviewed teachers concerning problem cases they had had in their experience as teachers.

2. Method of Treating Data. The data were carefully tabulated by the writer from the data sheets of teachers into eleven frequency tables and the results shown by each of the first ten tables discussed briefly in order to give the reader some insight into the method of treating data.

In Table XI a tabulation of the different types of problem cases included in the study has been taken up and discussed as fully as the data permit. The writer has also included a summary and conclusions which he hoped might be of some value to teachers in the future in dealing with problem cases.

E. Previous Studies in This Field


A Brief Review of Previous Studies

The first study was perhaps the best. It was a survey conducted by the psychologist's department, in order to obtain the assistance of teachers in the detection of problem pupils. Circulars stating the purpose of the survey and requesting certain information about problem pupils were sent to all teachers, both in the elementary and high-school departments.

There were two purposes for conducting the survey: (1) the immediate and practical purpose of assisting staff members in the discovery, diagnosis, and treatment of the difficulties of problem pupils, (2) the remote purpose of recording data in order to study the facts about problem pupils in school and to evaluate methods of treatment in light of the results obtained. This survey was made in the Lincoln School of Teachers College, Columbia University.

In this second study the volume was written and intended to illustrate some of the common types of problems among school children--problems involving psychological and social factors which, if allowed to persist, frequently led to serious permanent maladjustment and to indicate the methods used by the visiting teacher to study and help such children.

The narratives presented in this volume were derived from case records of visiting teachers at work.
under the direction of the National Committee on Visiting Teachers, as a part of the Commonwealth Fund Program for the Prevention of Delinquency.

It was gratifying to find that, as the value of visiting teacher case work in the preventive stages of unadjustment is becoming more generally recognized, and the treatment of attendance, health, vocational guidance, and similar school problems outside the field of instruction in its restricted sense is being permeated with this awakened consciousness of the whole life of the child.

In the third study is found a narrative of three children who presented problems of conduct and was published in order to give some indication of the resources which modern science offers for the assistance of those who seek to understand such troubled young lives and to guide them into the channels of normal growth.

The study deals with Mildred, Sidney, and Kenneth and are only three among many types of children who present behavior problems: Mildred, of normal intelligence, retarded in school, unhappy, threatened with possible mental disease; Sidney, of superior intelligence, but failing in school, misbehaving and unhappy; Kenneth, of inferior mentality, a school failure, and apparently at the beginning of a delinquent career.

In the fourth study the author deals with his own personal ideas of problem children and in his book he
attempts to show how unhappiness arises and how it ruins human lives. The author makes a very interesting presentation of his subject. One statement seemed to the writer of this thesis to be very broad, his motto in education and in life: "For God's sake let people live their own lives."
II. OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM

A. Problems Involved

1. What relation exists between the grade and the number of problem cases?

2. What effect does age have upon the number of problem cases?

3. What relation does sex have upon the number of problem cases?

4. What effect does bodily size have upon the number of problem cases?

5. Does race have any effect upon the number of problem cases?

6. To what degree does the status or position in the family affect the number of problem cases?

7. In what measure does the loss of either parent or both affect the number of problem cases?

8. Does the type of school bear any relationship to the number of problem cases?

9. Is the number of problem cases affected by urban or rural communities?

10. Does the dominant industry of a community affect the number of problem cases?
B. A Discussion of the Problems and Tables

1. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Age. Following a rather well-defined curve, the number of problem cases increases until the seventh grade, where it reaches the highest point; thereafter, a slight decrease in the eighth grade is found. The change from childhood to youth is not the simple uniform process it was once supposed to be. Hence, when parents come to understand more clearly than they do now—except in the rare exceptions—that children are largely what their training, their association and nutrition in early life make them, there will be fewer invalids in society, fewer inmates in our prisons and reformatories and finally fewer problem children in our schools.

Table I shows a gradual increase in the number of problem cases up to the seventh grade. Evidently then, there is in reality, little in the elementary studies alone to remove problem tendencies or even attempt to correct such tendencies as they appear. If there were we would probably notice a decrease in the number of problem cases as they advance in the elementary school.
TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEM CASES AS TO GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Distribution of age of Problem Cases. Following a well-defined curve, the number of problem cases increases rather rapidly up to the age of fourteen, thereafter follows a rather rapid falling off at ages sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen. No doubt this rather rapid dropping off of the number of problem cases after the age of fourteen was reached, was due to the fact that many of the cases at that time quit school for various reasons.

"The age of incorrigibility, when the greatest amount of delinquency is found is said to be the years from thirteen to sixteen, the peak being at fifteen." ⁴

"In the eye of the law a child is a person under fourteen. A young person is one between fourteen and sixteen." ⁵

In conclusion we as teachers and educators should strive to detect, diagnose and correct such difficulties at the earliest possible time, thereby we may be able to save a number of boys and girls for society.

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## TABLE II

### DISTRIBUTION OF AGE OF PROBLEM CASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages in Years</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>680</strong></td>
<td><strong>320</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Sex. "The statistics of all civilized countries unite, not only in showing that criminality is much more manifest among men than among women, but also that under the same circumstances and the same social conditions men are more prone to criminal tendencies. In 1904 seventy-nine per cent of our juvenile reformatory inmates and ninety-four per cent of our prison population were males." 6

No doubt quite a great number of the problem boys and girls shown in Table III will later become juvenile reformatory inmates unless something is done to direct their energies and ambitions into useful channels for society.

Table III clearly points out that the number of boys is twice as great as the number of girls in this study. Therefore, something should be done in the near future for the elementary school boys in particular, or society in the near future will be burdened too heavily with their care.

6 A. H. Stewart, American Bad Boys in the Making (New York: H. Lechner, 1912), Chap. III.
4. Distribution of Bodily Size of Problem Cases.

Table IV, no doubt, will help establish the fact that the number of problem cases was not materially affected by the bodily size of boys and girls. It seems safe to say that the general consensus of opinion among people at large, is that most problem children are either rather large or on the other hand rather small.

No doubt those children who were small in bodily size were problems because of malnutrition. "The ratio of malnourished children varies from sixty per cent in some counties of Alabama, due to the hookworm problem, and in Texas, as a result of malaria, and from forty per cent in many of the large cities, to four per cent in communities where there is an efficient health program in operation and where children live in families.
with good home control and no financial stress."  

In conclusion it may be said that by far the greatest number of problem cases in this study are boys and girls of average bodily size. The large outnumbered the small, probably because of greater age.

TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION OF BODILY SIZE OF PROBLEM CASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Race. In this study the number of white cases far outnumber those of the black and red, due to the fact that most of the cases were taken from schools where most of the student body belonged to the white race. Studies in Detroit and Chicago indicate that approximately thirty per cent of the behavior cases are colored and seventy per cent white. In view, however, of the very inadequate data obtainable, it would be hazardous and unfair to single out any race, nationality or group.

6. Distribution of Position in Family of Problem Cases. In the study of the foregoing table it will be noted that the greatest number of cases falls in that group between the oldest and youngest, which, no doubt, most educators would expect, since in this group most boys and girls would be found. On the other hand, however, we find a considerably greater number of cases of the youngest child above that of the oldest. This may be accounted for by the oldest children often having a tendency to domineer over the youngest thereby having a harmful effect upon the character and personality of the youngest brother or sister. Also, the youngest may have been babied by parents and older children. We should not expect to find a great number of only children in a study of one thousand cases; however, quite a large per cent of all the only children were
### TABLE V

**DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEM CASES AS TO RACE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE VI

**DISTRIBUTION OF POSITION IN FAMILY OF PROBLEM CASES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Age in Family</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oldest Child</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest Child</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Child</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Oldest and Youngest</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
disciplinary cases.

"A Child from a broken home or from a home having defective discipline is more likely to become a criminal than one from a normal home." 8

7. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Place of Abode. "Out of ten thousand delinquent children concerning whom the parental conditions were known and who entered St. Louis courts during the years 1916-1920, fifty-nine per cent had both parents living together; 11.5 per cent had parents separated or divorced; 25.5 per cent were orphans or half orphans; and 11.1 per cent lived with step parents." 9

In Table VII it will be noted that most cases live with both parents, as was also the case in the study of the strictly delinquent children brought into the courts of St. Louis.


# TABLE VII

**DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEM CASES AS TO PLACE OF ABODE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Living With</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with Father</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Mother</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Both</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Neither</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# TABLE VIII

**DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEM CASES AS TO TYPE OF SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Per Cent of Teachers Reporting</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per Cent of Problem Cases Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Room</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to Four Room</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger</td>
<td></td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Type of School. It is no doubt the consensus of opinion among people at large that a greater per cent of problem cases comes from one-room type of schools, but from the foregoing table it will be noted that by far the greatest number of students was taken from larger than one-room and two- to four-room schools. Therefore, it will naturally be expected that most of the problem cases will come from that type of school. However, it is safe to say that according to the numbers taken from each type of school the per cent is about the same. The 1,000 problem cases in this study came from 251 different schools. There were 193 larger schools, 32 two- to four-room schools and 23 one-room schools. From the larger school there were 705 problem pupils, 203 from the two- to four-room schools and 92 from the one-room schools.

Some may argue that most of the problem cases will come from smaller schools, due to the inability of the teachers to diagnose the child's difficulties, while others will say the greatest per cent will come from the larger schools, especially those found in industrial centers where the environmental conditions are rather poor for developing that type of personality and character most needed by boys and girls of such schools. However, Table VIII shows the per cent to be about equal for each type of school.
### TABLE IX

**DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEM CASES AS TO TYPE OF COMMUNITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Community</th>
<th>Per Cent of Teachers Reporting</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total Per Cent of Problem Cases Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE X

**DISTRIBUTION OF PROBLEM CASES AS TO TYPE OF INDUSTRY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Industry</th>
<th>Per Cent of Teachers Reporting</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total Per Cent of Problem Cases Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Type of Community. From Table IX, which deals with the type of community from which the cases for this study were taken, there is very little difference in the number coming from urban or rural communities. Here again there has been considerable discussion and argument as to which type of community yields the greater number of problem cases. As far as the writer has been able to find the number of problem cases coming from different type of communities is approximately equal. However, it may be true that if one should take very exceptional communities there would be some variation. It isn't the purpose of the author in this study to find out whether or not such conditions or such communities do exist. The per cent in Tables VIII and IX do not compare due, no doubt, to the larger consolidated schools being classed in rural communities rather than urban communities.

10. Distribution of Problem Cases as to Type of Industry. Since a greater per cent of these one thousand cases came from Indiana, it was not surprising to find the results shown by Table X. Because of the fact that Indiana's urban and rural population is about equal, the urban being 50.6 per cent and the rural 49.4 per cent according to the 1920 census, we find the number of problem cases coming from each to be about the same.
## TYPES OF PROBLEM CASES REPORTED IN STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per Gmt of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mental Deficiency</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discipline</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Physical Health</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mentally Superior but Maladjusted</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Socially Maladjusted</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Poor Eyesight</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lazy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Poor Hearing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cripple</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>680</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Discussion of Types of Problem Cases

A. Mentally Deficient

In this study of one thousand problem cases of students in the elementary schools it has been found as is shown in Table XI that 47.6 per cent of the cases falls into that type of problem called mentally deficient.

The first problem with this subject is to find the mentally retarded children and segregate them for special attention before they have become completely discouraged through repeated failure. The second is to provide the type of training that will prepare them to engage successfully in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations.

It is generally conceded that at least two per cent of the pupils enrolled in the elementary grades are mentally retarded to such a degree that they require special education to make the most of their possibilities. The realization that society will have to bear a heavy burden of misery, dependency, inefficiency and crime because of the failure of the schools to provide efficient instruction for mentally deficient children, has led to the statutory development of state programs for the education of the mentally deficient children.
In 1915, L. M. Terman made the statement that pathological psychology, which up to that time had studied the adult insane, should turn more and more to prevention. "The best time to cure mental disorder," he said, "is before it begins... psychological studies of potential delinquency among school children would prove even more valuable than the tests of juvenile court and reform school cases. About 90 per cent of the latter have displayed a tendency toward truancy or incorrigibility during the school period."10

In smaller cities and towns and in rural districts comparatively little has been done to provide suitable training for these children. In the smaller school districts only one course of study, taught by the conventional methods, is provided, with the result that the mentally deficient children do not receive the training and instruction needed.

In order to accomplish the ideal of equality of opportunity for all children, opportunities must be provided for the mentally retarded to learn how to live completely and successfully on their intelligence levels. Education must be given which will permit them to engage in the work of unskilled labor and live happily in the humblest group. Special abilities should

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1Lewis M. Turman, "Research in Mental Deviation among Children," Educational Pamphlets, LIV (1915), pp. 6-7.
be sought out and developed and, as is the case with all types of handicapped children, the disability should be minimized, not stressed. As life in the world to-day demands some ability to read, write and cipher for successful living, these subjects should be taught, along with the development of manipulative skill, a sound body and good habits.

The solution to the problems of the mentally deficient should be regarded as ever evolving. Better knowledge of the possibilities and capacities of the children of the lower levels of intelligence must come from the continued study of these children and their special abilities or disabilities.

"At three years of age the child's whole emotional life plan has been laid down, his emotional disposition set."2

B. Disciplinary

Ranking next to the mentally deficient in number and per cent come the disciplinary problem cases.

In the public mind these cases are looked upon as the product of a poor home, a bad gang, poverty, and a host of similar causes. Although they seem to have some obvious external cause, in many instances

they are also complicated by emotional instability.

"All crimes, all hatreds, all wars can be reduced to unhappiness. The difficult child is the child who is unhappy. He is at war with himself, and in consequence at war with the world." ³

"It seems that the disciplinary child then is a child at war with himself or herself and so long as there is neither school nor work, mischief fills the empty hours." ⁴

"Delinquents are a group of more or less responsible individuals whose chief difficulties lie in the way they use that ability which they have." ⁵

"Deviation of function involves not only inferior minds but those of normal and superior levels." ⁶

C. Physical Health

Under the term physical health as used in this study are included all those types of cases which, without distinct or visible evidence, physically handicap a child. This type seems to come under the general heading because, although the actual body is

⁶Ibid., p. 385.
physically intact and able to perform all functions, yet there is not enough strength to keep it at work over sufficient length of time, or with the speed required for normal competition in life's struggle. It must be remembered always, that a child who is physically handicapped by ill health has to make a much greater effort to accomplish a given task than does a normal child. Hence, the danger of over-fatigue is always increased, and becomes a factor against which the child must be most carefully and zealously guarded. It is evident from Table XI that there is a great need for special education and training of cases of physical health. Because these children are afflicted with an invisible handicap little, at present, is done to help them educationally. Their frequent absences from school due to physical disability result in suspension, or even discharge from school and those who return when physically able are over-age for their grade. These children become discouraged and embarrassed by association with younger children, often being outdone by younger brothers, sisters, and friends. This leads to the development of a real psychological condition, thereby adding to their difficulties. Many times such children finally feign attacks of illness over long periods in order to remain out of school, as the road of least resistance against these troubles over which they have no control.
In considering what should be done, careful thought should be given to all the influencing factors with which the children of poor physical health should be surrounded so that they will be able to profit to the fullest extent by the instruction and training they receive.

"The home should nourish the child; help it to win health, educate it to respond effectively to situations which produce love, fear, and anger, teach it the art of 'living together' in a kindly way; finally--the supreme task--wean youth from dependence so that it may know the joy of struggle, work, and service outside."

D. Mentally Superior but Maladjusted

Only recently has it been recognized that these children constitute a distinct group of superior intelligence who deviate from the average to such an extent that they require special education to make the most of their possibilities. Usually this group constitutes about six per cent of the school population; however, in this study the per cent is somewhat higher, due, no doubt, to the misjudgment of some cases by their teachers. These children are fairly evenly distributed as to sex, races, nationalities, cities, town and rural districts.

As already stated, these children require special education in order to make the most of their capacities. Our public school curriculum has been made for its great middle group, the average; consequently, it is not adapted either to the lower group or to the higher group, the mentally superior. However, the method of dealing with these gifted children which has aroused the most enthusiasm and attracted the greatest attention is that of grouping them together into special classes. Although the special classes for gifted children are upheld by those who have tried them, yet there is considerable objection to them by some people.

There are at present two methods of educating the mentally superior, that of rapid advancement and that of enrichment.

Special classes for rapid progress have been in vogue the last thirty years and have never solved the problem of the mentally superior child, nor have they made a very great appeal to educators. On the other hand the so-called enrichment classes, after an experimental period of ten years in two large cities and for a shorter period in two or three smaller cities, have aroused great enthusiasm in all those who have been connected with their methods and procedure. 9

"If behavior difficulties of children were to be effectively handled, the preventive attack should be made at a really preventive time before the child came to court, and that it should be directed toward helping parents, schools, health, and social agencies to understand and deal with incipient cases."

E. Socially Maladjusted

This term refers in this study to those children suffering from chorea, speech disorders, encephalitis lethargica, general nervousness disability and coming from homes in which for some reason or another the family or parents are socially backward due to various conditions which may prevail. While it may seem very unusual and incongruous to mention these types under socially maladjusted, yet many of these children are considered problems by their teachers who may not be aware of their true status. Naturally it is futile merely to accuse teachers of negligence in such instances. However, it is also admitted that there are some types of socially maladjusted children which it is impossible to handle in a regular classroom. The toll of excellent teachers who have been discouraged and driven from the profession

of teaching because they tried to accomplish impossible tasks probably will never be known. Until better conditions exist, teachers and principals must take a more charitable and scientific attitude toward socially maladjusted problem children. Present conditions point clearly to the necessity for better periodical physical, mental and neurological examinations of all children and of an investigation of home conditions and interviews with parents.

"If we are going to help healthy individuals to better mental adjustments and prevent dependency, delinquency, insanity, and general social inadequacy, undoubtedly the school should be the focus for our attack. The school surpasses the home in its potential understanding, its objectivity, and its possibilities of consecrated effort."

F. Poor Eyesight

Educational leaders in American history took cognizance, so far as the sense of sight is concerned, of only one group, the normally seeing. At present, however, the problem confronting educational leaders is to provide special educational facilities without

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injury to their sight or general health for two groups of partially seeing children: those who because of progressive eye difficulties and those who because of vision impairment from disease of the eye may be harmed by the use of the regular school equipment.

Carefully compiled statistics from ninety-five cities and towns which have made some provision for the partial seeing classes show the median ratio of one sight saving class pupil to six hundred fifty-nine of the total school population. ¹² Prior to the second decade of the twentieth century, such children got along as best they could. In many instances they kept pace with their companions, usually at the expense of their sight or general health. In other instances they became chronic repeaters, leaving school at the earliest opportunity, and, because of their handicap combined with their lack of education, drifted into blind alleys of unemployment.

G. Lazy

There is considerable difference of opinion among educators as to laziness of children. Some psychologists claim that laziness in children is caused

by some physical handicap, while on the other hand some say all humans are inclined to be more or less lazy. However, in this study it will be impossible to prove or disprove the opinion of either. It will be noticed that the per cent of lazy cases in this study is relatively small as compared to other types of problem cases.

H. Poor Hearing

The hard of hearing are those who had once established speech and acquired ability to understand speech and language, and subsequently developed impairment of hearing. These children are sound-conscious and have a normal, or almost normal, attitude towards the world of sound in which they live.

Many children thought to be mentally dull have only dulled hearing. Many of the "repeaters" have undetected and uncared for hearing defects.

All over the country there are hard-of-hearing children who need medical care and proper educational facilities, most of whom are not even known to be defective to either public health or school authorities. Such misunderstood cases spend years in public and parochial schools, writing a little, drawing a little, idling most of the time, losing the power of attention, and sinking into a lethargic state which closely
resembles feeblemindedness.

Sometimes a new principal, teacher or nurse discovers the fact of deafness and succeeds in making a proper school placement, but in the past numbers of these children have passed through the grades, have been pushed up because of their age, and have gone out to work or to a life of failure and ignorance, simply because no one recognized they were hard of hearing.

Working under the auspices of the Federation of Organization for the Hard of Hearing, Dr. Fletcher and Dr. Fowler estimated in 1926 that "fourteen per cent is not far from the percentage of pupils having a hearing defect. Since there are 24,000,000 public school children in the United States, there appear to be more than 3,000,000 having definite hearing defects."13

I. Cripple

"In the status of the states which provide for the special education of crippled children, the term crippled is used without definition in some instances; the tendency in more recent legislation is to allow for liberal interpretation in individual cases, emphasizing the child's inability to attend regular classes."

with safety and profit, rather than the exact nature of the physical disability."  

In that the education of the cripple has increased very rapidly during the past twenty-five years it makes one wonder about what has been said by Doctor Charles Stivers of Los Angeles, "What if we do right by ten thousand and bring forth only one Steinmetz."

"The crippled child, in the orthopedic sense, is a child that has a defect which causes a deformity or an interference with normal function of the bones, muscles, or joints. His condition may be congenital or it may be due to disease or accident. It may be aggravated by disease, by neglect, or by ignorance."  

14 Laws of California, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Findings

The proper treatment and training of school children who are known as problem cases is a question of very great importance. The task is one that involves the happiness and welfare of children from infancy through adolescence. It reaches into adulthood and through parenthood and often has its effects upon later generations.

Childhood is the golden age of life, yet many thousands of problem children are to be found in our secondary schools throughout the United States. Too often through ignorance and lack of care these children are doomed to unhappiness, difficulties, and failure.

It is high time that we as educators attack this problem of dealing with problem children. Attack it with united effort and vigor at its very source—childhood. A program of diagnosis, treatment, and training should be inaugurated in all our schools throughout the whole United States which no doubt would aid materially in the near future at least.

1. There is a surprisingly large number of handicapped children of every type who need special education, and a comparatively small number who are
receiving it.

2. Special education of all types of handicapped children is almost wholly confined to cities.

3. The less seriously handicapped are more numerous and more neglected than those who are seriously handicapped.

4. The common aim in the education of all types of problem cases of the public schools is to prepare them to live successfully as members of social groups.

5. Comparatively few problem children have the advantage of early discovery, treatment, and training.

6. Finally according to the tables in this thesis the greatest number of problem cases are:
   (a) In seventh grade
   (b) Fourteen years of age
   (c) Boys
   (d) Average size
   (e) White
   (f) Between oldest and youngest in family
   (g) Living with both parents
   (h) From various types of schools
   (i) From all types of communities in about equal proportion
   (j) From various industries
   (k) Mentally deficient
B. Suggestions for Treatment

It is obviously unfair for teachers to give up any problem pupil as hopeless before a thorough analysis and diagnosis has been made and remedial measures have been undertaken to correct them.

A few general suggestions which would be helpful in some cases are listed below.

1. Many more facts that are available should be recorded about each pupil. A program of the daily activities of the pupils should be observed by competent,unprejudiced persons.

2. Parents should be called for conferences and the child's difficulties discussed.

3. Clinical study should be made in the more serious cases.

4. The reclassification of the pupil within the school might be the solution in some cases.

5. Those pupils affected by physical disturbances in particular should have thorough medical and dental examination.

6. Greater effort should be made to arouse the interest and secure the support of civic and welfare organizations in special education of all types of problem children.
7. Early discovery, early treatment, and early training are of vital importance; research should be encouraged in all phases of special education; and, finally, a united effort should be made to eliminate the preventable causes.

C. Sequential Studies

1. Studies should be made on physical, emotional and nervous conditions of problem children.


3. Studies of educational programs for problem children should be made and the advantages and disadvantages of different programs be tabulated.

4. Studies of methods of arousing public interest should be made.

5. Studies to discover the causes of problem children.

6. Experimental studies of problem children in county units or large school systems should be made to determine the relative validity of different methods.
VI. APPENDIX

A. Bibliography


Burnham, William H. "Success and Failure as Conditions of Mental Health," *Mental Hygiene,* III, No. 3.


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Truitt, Ralph P., "Mental Hygiene and the Public Schools," Mental Hygiene, XI, p. 270.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Number</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Status in Family</th>
<th>Which Parent</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name ____________________________ State _________ Races Represented _______

Type of School
One-Room
Two-to Four-Room
Larger

Urban or Rural
Dominant Industry

Public, Private or Parochial
INSTRUCTIONS FOR DATA SHEETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>1 to 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sch. Year</td>
<td>1930-1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Estimates accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>M-male; F-female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>N-normal; I-large; S-small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>White, negro, Mongolian, Indian including Mexican.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status in family</td>
<td>Oldest child, youngest child, only child, between oldest and youngest child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Which parent is the child living with? M-moth; F-father; B-both; N-neither</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type
Disciplinary, mentally deficient, physical health, mental health, mentally superior but maladjusted, etc.

Characteristics
More complete details to clarify the type. Also other characteristics which may suggest other types; i.e., lazy, hearing cases, etc.

PROBLEM CHILDREN

These may represent from 3 to 10 per cent of the children which you have had at some time or another.

DEFINITION OF PROBLEM CHILD

"Those who stand out or differ from their group, because of certain undesirable habits, personality traits or behavior in the home, school or community; whose conduct interferes or is likely to interfere with the individual or groups fullest development and usefulness socially, educationally, or hygienically and whose behavior may result in more serious handicaps of one sort or another in later life."