

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 010 930

EC 000 081

SLOW LEARNING CHILDREN IN OHIO SCHOOLS.  
BY- ALLEN, AMY BAKER, VIRGINIA  
OHIO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, COLUMBUS

FUB DATE 62

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.18 HC-\$4.68 117F.

DESCRIPTORS- \*EDUCABLE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED, \*SPECIAL EDUCATION, \*CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, \*PROGRAM PLANNING, \*ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, STATE PROGRAMS, LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS, LANGUAGE ARTS, ARITHMETIC, SOCIAL STUDIES, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, SCIENCES, RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, INTERMEDIATE GRADES, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, COLUMBUS

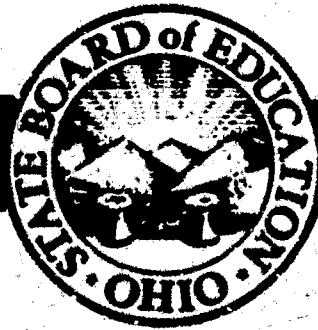
IN THIS BULLETIN SLOW LEARNING REFERS TO CHILDREN IN THE 50-75 IQ RANGE. ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIAL CLASSES IS DISCUSSED, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE TESTING PROGRAM AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE IQ CONCEPT. SAMPLES OF FORMS USED IN COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AND DISTRICT APPLICATIONS FOR SPECIAL CLASSES ARE INCLUDED. LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOW LEARNING CHILDREN ARE BRIEFLY DESCRIBED. THIS BULLETIN, INTENDED FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS, OUTLINES AN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. AREAS OF INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDE LANGUAGE ARTS, ARITHMETIC, SOCIAL STUDIES, OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING, SCIENCE, AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES. APPROPRIATE AMOUNTS OF TIME ARE SUGGESTED. EFFECTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES, RECOMMENDED EXPERIENCE ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE VARIOUS LEARNING AREAS, AND MEANINGFUL CONCEPTS THAT SHOULD BE DEVELOPED ARE AMONG THE SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS MADE. A BIBLIOGRAPHY LISTS SEVERAL BULLETINS AND CURRICULUM GUIDES APPROPRIATE FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AS WELL AS SEVERAL BASIC TEXTS AND RELEVANT PERIODICALS. APPENDIXES OUTLINE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL CLASS PLACEMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS OF SLOW LEARNING CHILDREN. (VO)

ED010930

# SLOW LEARNING CHILDREN IN OHIO SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE  
PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS  
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
POSITION OR POLICY.



Issued by: **E. E. HOLT**  
Superintendent of Instruction  
State Department of Education  
Columbus, Ohio

1962

**SLOW LEARNING CHILDREN  
IN  
OHIO SCHOOLS**

by


**AMY ALLEN      VIRGINIA BAKER**  
**Educational Specialists, Slow Learning Program**



**HAROLD J. BOWERS**  
**Assistant Superintendent of Instruction**

**R. A. HORN**  
**Director, Division of Special Education**

**Ohio Department of Education**  
**Columbus, Ohio**  
**1962**

  
Columbus Blank Book Company  
Columbus, Ohio, 43207  
1966  
Bound by the State of Ohio

## FOREWORD

This is the third such publication to be issued since the origin of Ohio's program for slow-learning children in 1945. In this bulletin revisions and additions have been made which, it is hoped, will serve a three-fold purpose:

1. Clarify some points that were obscure in previous bulletins.
2. Indicate emerging practices in program development throughout Ohio.
3. Present current information relative to State Board of Education Standards and Division of Special Education policies in the area of education for slow learners.

The authors have appropriately asked that this publication be dedicated to the memory of P. O. Wagner, under whose supervision the Ohio program for slow learning children was begun. Division policy still follows the philosophy so well expressed by him in the original bulletin:

- “1. Every educable child is entitled to a chance in school.
2. Within reasonable limits the school program needs to be adjusted to the ability of the child.
3. In planning a program of education, exceptional children in any given community are entitled to be housed in the same building as other children of approximately their age group.
4. Measurement of abilities needs to be a part of the school's procedure. Test results are an important factor in determining placement.
5. Long term observation by teachers is essential in considering the problems and needs of a child, but teacher observation needs to be checked by periodic appraisals through group and individual physical and psychological examinations.
6. So-called “emotional blocks” are frequently encountered when children are asked to function at a level above that of their maturity. The most fertile area for teaching and learning is at or just below the child's mental maturity level.

In planning education for slow-learning children we look back to the level of the child's ability; we look out to the level of his social interest; and we look forward to the possibilities he holds for normal living in the adult community.”

R. A. HORN, Director  
Division of Special Education

III

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Material of the kind presented in this bulletin is never entirely original; it is woven out of the ideas, suggestions and philosophies of many people. The writers recognize their indebtedness to all of these people, and especially to:

1. Mr. R. A. Horn, Director, Division of Special Education, under whose guidance this revision was developed.
2. Staff members of the Division, for their suggestions and encouragement, and Mrs. Helena Brown, secretary, for her competent assistance in the completion of the manuscript.
3. Teachers of slow-learning children in public school classes throughout Ohio, whose work with their children has provided many of the incidents and approaches to problems mentioned here.
4. Slow-learning children, themselves, who, through their activities in special classes in Ohio schools, are demonstrating that they can and do learn when the school program is appropriate to their abilities and needs.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword .....	III
Acknowledgments .....	IV

### PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### Chapter

I: How Big is the Problem of Slow Learning Children? .....	1
II: Who is Eligible for Special Class? .....	2
III: Why This Bulletin? .....	3
IV: For Whom is the Bulletin Written? .....	5

### PART II: PROGRAM PLANNING

V: How do You Feel About the Program? .....	6
VI: What You Should Know .....	9
VII: What are Goals for the Program? .....	23

### PART III: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

VIII: How Does One Go About Teaching Slow Learners? .....	43
IX: What is Reasonable Academic Expectancy for These Children? ..	46
X: What Does One Teach Slow Learners? .....	50
Language Arts .....	50
Experiential Background .....	50
Listening .....	54
Oral Language .....	55
Reading .....	56
Written Language .....	61
Arithmetic .....	66
Social Studies .....	80
Occupational Training .....	84
Science .....	94
Recreational Activities .....	97
Reference List .....	101
Appendix A—Standards for Units for Slow Learning Children .....	104
Appendix B—Certification Standards for Teachers of Slow Learning Children .....	109

## **Part 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Chapter I: HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM OF SLOW LEARNING CHILDREN?**

While the estimated number of children needing slow learning programs has been traditionally considered to be 2%-3% of the total school population, it is important to keep the following in mind:

1. The above percentages were based on a cutting score of 70 I.Q. With increased recognition that many young people in the 70-80 I.Q. range are as handicapped, academically and occupationally, as the more retarded in the 50-70 I.Q. group, cutting scores have been raised in many states, including Ohio. This means that a higher percentage of children may need to have special education programs of this kind. Surveys of local school districts in Ohio over the past fifteen years have shown great variance in the incidence of slow-learners, ranging as high as 6% of the total school population.
2. Other factors influence the distribution of slow children in school districts. With few exceptions, slow-learning adults have fewer work skills to offer industry and agriculture. Consequently, their earnings are low and tend to confine them to the less desirable living areas in both city and country. It is not surprising, then, that a high proportion of slow-learning children are likely to be found in the industrial cities and depleted rural areas. However, since slow learners are found in all communities and at all socio-economic levels, this means that teachers and administrators in more fortunate communities also have responsibility for recognizing and providing for these children. The need in these areas may be critical for the few children concerned, because:
  - a) Family and community aspirations for education are high. Academic success carries a pronounced social significance. Both home and school have many adjustments to make in accepting and providing realistically for the slow-learner.
  - b) There tends to be a wider gap between the slow-learner and his peer group, both in ability and achievement. Both the slow child and his faster companions become aware of his "differentness" at an early age. This aware-



ness can cause personality disturbances that complicate the original problem of slow development.

- c) Family background and income level help make extensive and expensive medical care feasible. Thus more children with multiple handicaps and medically-related problems are likely to live to school age in these districts.

For the teacher in such an area, these facts have specific implications for curriculum development\*. For the administrator, they place definite responsibility for work with parents and the total community in interpretation of needs and development of program. In program organization, a district which has very few eligible children is encouraged to plan cooperatively with neighboring districts (as provided for under Section 8.711 of the State Board of Education Standards), or may choose to establish a fractional unit (as permitted by Section 8.11).

## **Chapter II: WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL CLASS?**

Under Ohio law the special class program for slow learners is for children of school age who fall generally in the 50 to 75 I.Q. range, the group which is frequently referred to in literature and in laws of some neighboring states as the "educable mentally retarded." Provision is made for the severely mentally retarded (below 50 I.Q.), sometimes referred to as the "trainable" group, under the State Department of Mental Hygiene. Children in the slow average group (I.Q. 75-90) are given no special attention through legal provision at the present time; local school administrators and classroom teachers will recognize, however, that these children, too, need some special attention in the way of modified school requirements.

Since school attendance is mandated by the compulsory school attendance law, special education programs, like regular programs for children of average ability, need to be planned for children from six through eighteen years of age.<sup>1</sup> This means that special education needs to be planned for young children even though they may not yet have the maturity to enter and follow a formal academic school program; for slow learning children it is particularly important that they should not spend three or four years in a pressure-type situation before their educational program begins.

\* More detailed information will be found on pp. 43-460.

<sup>1</sup> For physical or mental health reasons the law provides that exceptions to the compulsory school attendance law may be made.

This does not differ essentially from what is needed for many children left in the regular classes. Roughly twelve to eighteen of every one hundred "regular" children entering first grade need to have academic work delayed a year or two; with special class children the need is for a delay of three or more years.

### Chapter III. WHY THIS BULLETIN?

The program for slow-learning children in Ohio's public schools has been growing rapidly in the past few years. There are more than four times as many classes for these children today as were in existence in 1945. Children needing special programs are identified earlier and given service for a longer period of time.

Because of new knowledge gained from working with more children over a broader span of years, much of the thinking about these boys and girls in educational circles has changed in the past quarter century, with resulting changes in educational practices with slow-learning pupils. A few of these changes may be illustrated as follows:

In the early 1920's Tom, I.Q. 70, was in an "opportunity" class. His time was spent almost entirely on handwork; he did woodwork, weaving, plaster casting, metal work—but he was unable to follow even simple written directions for such work. In those days public schools had had little experience in planning programs for boys like Tom. It was assumed by many people that a child with an I.Q. of 70 would never learn to read. Today Tom is both amazed and delighted to discover that his two sons, now in special class, are reading and are making some progress in arithmetic and spelling. Any child who can qualify for placement in a public school class for slow learners in Ohio will have enough ability to learn to read, providing he is not "pushed" to do so three or four years before he has sufficient maturity to profit from "exposure" to reading experiences.

Peter went to special class about 1930. He attended school in a "center," a building in the business section of the city, centrally located so all "specials" could be transported easily. At that time it was felt that these children needed so "special" a school program that they must be totally separated from "regular" school contacts. While the program there was planned to meet his school needs, Peter resented the apartness that made him conspicuous among the neighborhood boys. It took considerable persuasion last spring to help Peter accept special class placement for his young

daughter—and that consent came only after he had visited the class in their own neighborhood elementary school and had seen the extent to which the “specials” were accepted as part of the regular group. Since slow learners must live as adults in the community with the rest of us, efforts are now being made to find ways to help them adjust within the larger group while they are still children.

Several years ago Dr. and Mrs. W. were quite concerned about Paul. They knew he was “different” from their other two children and from most of the children the doctor encountered in his work. They sent Paul to a private school for retarded children for awhile, but this was expensive. (Besides, there was college to consider for Jack and Betty in a few years; not all the money could be rightfully spent on Paul.) With some misgivings they enrolled Paul in a class for slow learners. It was then that they learned that these classes are no longer found exclusively in elementary schools; their city was making its initial attempt to establish work for these pupils at secondary level. Paul was one of the children moved to junior high school. This year, in special ninth grade, Paul played on the football team, is active in the glee club, and popular with the rest of his ninth grade classmates. He is looking forward to graduation this spring and to entering special class in senior high school in the fall. Not all slow pupils are as fortunate as Paul, but more and more the plans being formulated for these children take into consideration provision for twelve years of purposeful school experience—or the equivalent of the twelve years available to non-handicapped students.

Such changes as these mean:

1. There are many new teachers in the field of special education for slow learners—teachers who have been teaching something else and may still be in the process of securing adequate background for their new responsibilities.
2. Since the whole program is in a period of transition, “all the answers” cannot be found by looking at the existing program and existing materials.

#### **Chapter IV: FOR WHOM IS THIS BULLETIN WRITTEN?**

This booklet is written for classroom teachers and administrators working with slow learners in the schools of Ohio. It is with some trepidation that anyone approaches the preparation of a bulletin of this kind. The danger of "concocting a pill," inventing a new panacea for meeting the problems of these children is recognized. The contents of this bulletin are not to be considered a pattern, but rather the presentation of a philosophy and some of the current approaches to the education of slow-learning children.

We would like the teacher who uses the bulletin to go beyond the use of this as a guide—to adapt, locally, a modification of these ideas. We hope that the material presented may stimulate the teacher to find new and better ways of meeting the problems of her children. We further hope that the suggestions offered may give guidelines to the administrator for local class organization as well as strengthen his belief in and support of a complete program for slow-learners in elementary and high school.

## **Part II: PROGRAM PLANNING**

### **Chapter V: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE PROGRAM?**

**How do you feel "deep down" about slow-learning pupils as people and about yourself as their teacher? This will help to determine your effectiveness as a teacher. You may sense how some of these children feel about school and teachers when they come into your class for the first time. Many of these pupils come to you with a feeling of hostility. This is particularly true if the school chances to be one where they are not selected for special help until they reach the "problem age" of twelve years or over, by which time their reaction to frustration and failure is clearly evidenced by behavior. Even though they may not say so, many of them are "against" school and "against" teachers.**

**In a similar way, pupils sense how the teacher looks at them—whether the teacher and the school are "for" or "against" them. Measles are catching. So are feelings. Although you may never express in words the way you feel about these handicapped children, your mannerisms in the classroom will speak for you, and much of the success of your work will depend upon your attitudes. How important are these children to you? Are they as interesting and challenging to work with as any other group? Do you honestly believe they have possibilities, that they are "worth" the time and effort you will spend on them, that an adequate school program for them is sufficiently important to warrant the extra expenditure of money which such special education entails? How do you **really** feel about slow learners?**

**In general, there are two viewpoints about these children. Some people think largely in negatives. They say slow-learning children are likely to be delinquent, likely to present sex problems, that they lack competitive spirit, cannot take responsibility, are not "teachable." They imply that these people cannot, either as children or adults, participate in community living. Their feeling is that the major contribution of a special class is to relieve teachers of regular classes of an extra burden, to "protect" the children in those regular classes, and to keep the slow learners "happy and occupied" (not necessarily in a constructive sort of program). For those people, a school program which totally segregates the slow learner from other groups of children is "the right way"; and they justify such segregation for these children on the basis of sheltering them from ridicule by more fortunate children.**

Then there are those of us who think in more positive terms. We say, "A handicapped child is one who may be like other children in all respects save one," the "one" in this instance being pronouncedly slower mental development, with consequent later readiness for a given level of school performance and an eventual lower ceiling for academic achievement. To the people who assume that these pupils are delinquent or sex problems, we point out that there is no proof for this assumption. (Originally studies of mentally deficient children showed a higher incidence of delinquency, etc.—but those studies were made in institutional settings. It seems only reasonable to note that many children committed to institutions are sent because they have presented problems in their community which could only be cared for by removal from the community, that therefore institutional groups are not likely to be representative of all such children.) To the people who claim these children lack competitive spirit, we proudly mention those slow-learning pupils in our junior and senior high schools who are participating in athletics (track, swimming, football, basketball, baseball) and extra-curricular activities (glee clubs, bands, dramatics, student councils) on the same basis as non-handicapped students. To those who say slow learners cannot take responsibility or become contributing members of society, we refer to the dozens of our former special class pupils who are working and living in their communities, supporting families and participating in community activities. (We who were their teachers know them to be handicapped; a measure of our success in working with them is the degree to which their friends and neighbors fail to recognize them as "different.") With emphasis on the likenesses rather than on the differences of these children, we are anxious to minimize segregation in the school situation, to give them the protection of special class while permitting as much participation in school activities with other boys and girls as they are able to undertake without undue pressure or strain.

**How do you feel about yourself in this work?** There was a time when the special teacher was "low man on the totem pole" among her professional colleagues. Over the past fifteen years, special teachers in Ohio have acquired status at the top of the teaching profession. When you join the more than one thousand teachers in these classes today, you will find yourself among a group of the most resourceful teachers and most interesting personalities in the teaching profession. Still, your own picture of yourself in a special education setting will tend to influence the degree to which you will find happiness and satisfaction in your new work.

If you are teaching in a large city, the chances are that you will find many opportunities for sharing experiences with teachers who are also working with slow learners; but if you are in a small city, an exempted village or county school, you may be the only person within a radius of forty miles who is teaching handicapped children. Are you "just" a teacher of "the kids nobody else wants," a little "peculiar" because you are willing to take these "tag-enders" to work with for a time? Or are you the person who is very "special" because yours is a job many fine teachers could not handle even if they chose, a job requiring an interest in people, a sense of adventure, and a willingness to develop ingenuity in handling a variety of teaching techniques, a touch of artistry in molding personalities, a job offering limitless opportunities for both personal and professional development? . . . You may not be quite sure, at the beginning. You will find in the course of your first year that yours is a difficult assignment; there will be many times when you are discouraged—particularly if you are the only special class teacher in your area—discouraged to the point that you would almost literally like to jump off the nearest available bridge. People, many times your co-workers, will neither understand nor appreciate some of the things you are trying to do for these pupils. Some of your most carefully laid plans will disintegrate with the suddenness of a charge of dynamite; and there may be no one at the moment to whom you can go for help in "picking up the pieces." Special education is a professional field requiring the patience of Job, the understanding of a psychologist, the dedication of a missionary, the deft hand of the sculptor, the skill of an expert surgeon—but you, the teacher, are only human; at best you are bound to make mistakes, as we all do. By mid-term you may be wallowing in confusion; by mid-year you may consider yourself a little "in the fog" but the general confusion will be starting to clear. By June, if you are really made of the material from which special teachers should be chosen, you will be willing to try it again. Through mistakes, through living and learning with these children, through "give and take" with other teachers working with slow-learners, through continued preparation, the special teacher grows in understanding of her children, in her vision for them, and in the development of more effective teaching techniques.

**How important is this program of special education to you? Is it "just another class"? Do you view it as a sort of remedial program in which these children can be "spoon fed" and "pushed up" to the achievement level of their age groups? If this is your philosophy, may we respectfully suggest that you are "on the wrong**

track"; this has been tried by many people in many places—and has never worked yet! Growth cannot be hastened. These children are not growing nearly as fast as other children their age; therefore, they cannot assimilate educational materials intended for "normal" children.

Do you feel that special education is a temporary sort of thing, which is currently flourishing until the appearance of another fad in education? Is it a means of providing training for children who would otherwise become "the lost generation" in our schools, since their handicap makes it impossible for them to profit from the regular program of instruction? The way you feel about the program will be reflected in the kinds of things you do with your children, the way you relate your work to that of other teachers in your building, the place—and degree of "respectability"—your class holds in the total school picture.

#### Chapter VI: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

How much do you know about children? How aware are you of the fact that school programs can move **effectively** no faster than the maturation rates of the children with whom the schools are working? Do you agree with Mrs. Frances Mayfarth<sup>1</sup> that a common error in education is to teach children "too much, too fast, too soon"? Do you see any relationship between the age at which our Ohio children enter first grade and are introduced to formal reading programs and the chronic complaint from our secondary schools that too many of their students lack basic academic skills? Do you feel the accusation that our schools are manufacturing many of their so-called remedial problems is a fair one? Does a child's ability to catch a ball, to ride a bicycle, to relate the theme of a movie he saw last Saturday or a radio program he heard last night, to distinguish a neon sign in the next block or to do an errand at the grocery store tell you anything about his "readiness" for a school program? Slow-learning children are first of all, children; they grow much the same as other children, except at a decidedly slower rate<sup>2</sup>; the more you can observe about all children, the better prepared you will be to work with handicapped children.

How much do you know about slow-learning children? Be it much or little, by the end of the year you will know considerably more, for teaching these children is in itself a learning experience.

<sup>1</sup> Former editor, CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

<sup>2</sup> This statement may not be very literal with respect to those slow-learning children whose handicap is traceable to brain damage, since in their case the retardation is due to actual impairment of brain cells.



However, your work in the year ahead will be considerably easier if you can recognize certain "minimum essentials" before you begin:

- (1) Slow-learning children are noticeably slower in total development than other children their age. While this slower development is most apparent in an academic situation (since academic work tends to be abstract and they have difficulty in grasping abstractions), it can also be noticed in other situations. In young retarded children, coordination is quite likely to be poor; an eight-year-old slow learner may have as much difficulty in catching a ball as many kindergarten children. For the slow learner of six or seven, stair climbing may present difficulties. Creative and imaginative play activities seem difficult for them until they have had considerable guidance in these areas. They are less observant than other children of their age—and as a result have to be specifically shown many things which, it is generally assumed, the other children "pick up" without teaching. This is particularly true of social behavior, and in this area the slow child can be helped to acquire patterns which conform to acceptable standards for his age group.
- (2) Slow-learning children are ~~never~~ ready for an academic school program as soon as other children. The best of this group must be past eight years old, chronologically, before they are ready for reading instruction; the poorest may be nearly twelve years old before they can profit from such work. This says three things to the teacher of slow-learners.
  - (a) If you have been accustomed to expecting children to make school progress at the rate of a grade per year, you will need to lower your achievement expectancy for these children **considerably**. Otherwise both the children and you will be extremely unhappy!
  - (b) If yours is a primary group (children ten years of age and under) most of them should **not** be doing formal "reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic." Instead, you will need to be teaching a sequential development of language and number **concepts**, visual and auditory discrimination, motor and manipulative skills and a rich background of experiences from which ideas and values can grow. This kind of program should help

children build readiness to function successfully in a more formal academic program in the intermediate special class.

- (c) Since they begin reading later, and since their rate of development is  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  as fast as the "average," their potential "academic ceiling" will be substantially lower than for most pupils in school.<sup>3</sup>

**What do you know about the testing program and its uses?** Most schools today have a testing program, whereby children in two or three selected grades are checked on group intelligence tests each year. In some schools Grades 2, 5, and 7 are routinely tested; other schools prefer to test Grades 3 and 6, or Grades 1, 3 and 5. Some of the smaller schools plan on a total school survey every three years (in a 6-grade school) or every four years (in an 8-grade school). A number of different group tests are used in Ohio for this purpose, but the trend is in the direction of selecting those tests which do not rely too heavily upon acquired reading skill for their judgments of children. Such tests yield information as to the possible number of slow-learning children in the school (or school district) who need special school services; they also keep the information up to date.

On the basis of considerable experience, research and study by the Division of Special Education, selected state universities, and representative field people, the following recommendations are now established Division policy as procedures for identifying those children who are eligible for placement in slow-learning classes:

1. Children enrolled in special classes for slow-learning are those in the general intelligence range of 50 through the middle 70's. This determination must be made before a child is considered for placement in any approved unit in Ohio.
2. In all districts employing a school psychologist, and other districts where psychological services are available, this determination is to be made on the basis of an individual examination by a qualified psychologist.
3. Some school districts in the past have contracted with clinics from state universities and private clinics for individual psychological testing. In such instances, if the tests are given by professionally qualified members of the psychological staff or clinic, the results will be considered accept-

<sup>3</sup> See table, p. 49.

able for placement. Examinations done by students who are not yet certified as school psychologists, or students in clinical psychology are not acceptable.

4. There are a few areas in Ohio where local psychological services are not yet available. In these, provisional admission to a class may be made on the basis of two or more group tests showing close agreement. The following procedure for screening is suggested:
  - a. One group mental ability test (Example: Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Tests) should be administered to all of the children in the grade or grades under consideration if at all possible. Where enrollments are too large to make this feasible, children should be selected to take this first group test if they fall into one of the following four groups: (While there will be some overlapping this should make it possible to find the majority of children needing service.)
    - 1) They have scored 80 or lower on previous group intelligence tests.
    - 2) They are over-age for the grade in which they are placed.
    - 3) They are doing failing work in their present grade situation, irrespective of previous test scores.
    - 4) Any other child about whom the teacher has serious questions. (The teacher should be encouraged to select children who present instructional instead of behavior problems.)
  - b. All children in the group to whom the first test was administered who check 80 and below, should be given a more comprehensive second group intelligence test. (Example: S.R.A. Primary Mental Abilities, Kuhlman-Finch Intelligence Tests, California Test of Mental Maturity.)
  - c. Children who score 79 or below on both of these group tests may be considered eligible for **provisional** admission to a special class for slow-learning, providing they meet other requirements of the group. Such children must be given an individual test within two years of placement in a special class.

- d. There may be some children who score below 79 on one group test and above on the other. Most of these are children with academic retardation and should not be placed in a class for slow learning. Occasionally such a child may be a slow learner. Should a child who scores below on one and above on the other be considered for placement in slow-learning, he **must** be seen individually and have this determination made on more than a group screening. This kind of child is not eligible for placement in a slow learning class on the basis of a group test.

Even if you have no responsibility for the administration of psychological tests in your school, you can use the results to help you in organizing your school program later so that it will fit the needs of your children. If you find a test result recorded on a permanent record card, you may ask yourself:

1. Is the **name** of the test given? If it is an individual test the chances are that it comes closer to giving you a true estimate of the pupil's ability. If it is a group test, is it one which derived its score through the use of reading skill—as is true of those group tests constructed in the early days of the testing movement—or is it a test which has both verbal and non-verbal scores? The latter are preferable, since frequently a child who is not performing according to expectancy, if the teacher views his total score, may be performing in accordance with his ability to handle a language situation. To the administrator, the total score is important; he is concerned with knowing whether a child is eligible for placement as a slow learner or whether he must seek other ways to approach this child's learning problems.
2. **When** was the test given? Unless it was given this year, the mental age will need revising to bring it up to date. Children keep growing mentally, just as they continue to grow physically; the mental age which a child had three or four years ago will not suffice in planning a current school program. Classroom teachers will need to bring mental ages up to date for the beginning and ending of the school year as a routine procedure for anticipating individual and group growth patterns within the school year. Of the several formulae for bringing the mental age up to date, probably the following is easiest for you, as a classroom teacher, to use: Chronological Age multiplied by I.Q. equals Mental Age.

**Example:** John was tested with a Binet examination when he was eleven and one-half years old and found to have a mental age of eight years, I.Q. 70. By September, 1961, he was thirteen years, seven months old. This meant that his current mental ability, as of the beginning of the school year 1961-62 was derived through the use of this formula:

- Step 1: Change C.A. to months—13 yrs. 7 mos. = 163 mos.
- Step 2: Multiply by I.Q. and round off to the nearest month. (If decimal is 5 or less, drop it; more than 5, add 1).  $\frac{163 \text{ mos.}}{\times 70} = 114.10 = 114 \text{ mos.}$
- Step 3: Divide by 12:  $\frac{A = 9 \text{ yrs.}}{12 \overline{) 114 \text{ mos.}}} = \frac{108}{6} = 6 \text{ mos.}$
- A — **Quotient** = M.A. in years  
 B — **Remainder** = M.A. in months  
 John's current M.A. is, therefore, 9 years, 6 months.

By the end of the school year John will be ten months older, chronologically, but he will have grown less than ten months in his ability to do school work. We can figure mental development by using the formula again:

- Step 1: Change C.A. to months—14 yrs. 5 mos. = 173 mos.
- Step 2: Multiply by I.Q.; round off.  $\frac{173 \text{ mos.}}{\times 70} = 121.10 = 121 \text{ mos.}$
- Step 3: Divide by 12:  $\frac{10 \text{ yrs.}}{12 \overline{) 121}} = \frac{12}{1} = 1 \text{ mo.}$

John's mental age in June can be anticipated as 10 years and 1 month. In ten months John has grown seven months in M.A.

**What does test information tell classroom teachers?**

1. The **M.A.** estimates the approximate level of academic work which a given pupil may reasonably be expected to assimilate at a certain time, other things being equal. With John, for instance, at age 13 he would ordinarily be in the 8th grade and his teacher might expect him to perform like other 13-year-old, 8th-grade pupils. However, since she knows John's current mental age (9 years, 6 months) and his probable mental development through the year (which

will bring him to just over 10 years), his teacher can understand that he will be considerably behind 8th grade pupils in performance in academic skill areas. She will begin to think about helping John reach reading and arithmetic skill proficiency at the levels generally expected of children in the first half of fourth grade. She understands that this will be realistic academic expectancy for him.

2. The I.Q. is both the "speedometer" and "barometer" of development. It indicates approximately how fast the child is "traveling" along the road to adult maturity; the child with an I.Q. of 70 is traveling at the rate of 70% of his chronological age, up to sixteen. The I.Q. also predicts what top ability is likely to be for this child at maturity. At sixteen, or by adulthood, the person with an I.Q. 70 can be expected to reach a skill functioning level equivalent to that expected of sixth grade children.<sup>4</sup> It needs to be pointed out that adolescent and adult slow learners **can**, because of life experiences, and **must**, to meet community living requirements, be helped to go far beyond sixth grade children in general knowledge. This is especially true of information and ideas related to job orientation, citizenship responsibilities and those things necessary for successful family adjustment.

In general, if the original appraisal has been a careful one, it is anticipated that children once determined eligible for a slow-learning class are likely to continue to need a special education program. However, since illness, accident or environmental factors may operate to change this picture from time to time, it is important to take another look at the I.Q. at reasonable intervals, so as to make sure the picture of the child which the school has is a reasonably accurate one.<sup>5</sup>

Other factors in addition to intelligence level are of importance in selecting children for your slow-learning class; among these are chronological age, physical maturity and general physical condition,<sup>6</sup> social maturity and emotional stability, previous school experience.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The fact that research indicates that most slow-learners are not reaching this attainment indicates that some serious thinking needs to be given to the timing of skill teaching and methods used with slow learners.

<sup>5</sup>For this reason State Board Standards (8.25) provide for periodic re-evaluations.

<sup>6</sup>It would be desirable for every child to have a complete physical examination prior to placement in a slow-learning class. Since the incidence of illness and physical disability is generally higher among slow-learning children than among the total school population, it is important for the teacher to know how she must adjust her program in terms of physical difficulties which may exist among her group.

<sup>7</sup>These same factors operate in the age groupings within a group of special classes in a city or county district.

**How is the eligible child assigned to your class?** Once it has been decided that a certain child belongs in the slow-learning class, someone should contact his parents. Frequently schools send written notices, but to insure full parental cooperation, most school systems arrange a personal interview with the parents. In large school districts this responsibility is generally assigned to a specific person or group—the visiting teacher, school psychologist or director of special education being most frequently mentioned. In smaller districts, the elementary supervisor (if there is one), the principal of the school which the child is attending, or the principal of the school which houses the special class may make the home contacts. It works out best when one individual in the district is the person who makes decisions on placement and follows through on parent contacts. Having one person in charge also insures consistent policy in assigning children.

In many school districts, parent conferences are strengthened by signed applications for admission to the special class, so that there need be no question in the future as to whether Jimmy's parents were aware that he had been withdrawn from the regular grade program and placed for special educational services. Some districts take time to acquaint parents even more directly with the program by giving them an opportunity to visit the school where their son or daughter may be assigned. A suggested letter for this purpose is reproduced on the next page:

----- Public Schools

-----, Ohio

December 6, 1961

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Doe:

Last Thursday, Mr. Brown talked with you about your son, Frank. At that time you were told that Frank is finding the work in Grade 3 too hard for him.

Our schools have special classes for pupils who find school work too hard. Teachers of special classes are trained to work with these boys and girls. The classes are smaller, so teachers have more time to work with their pupils.

We feel sure that Frank would be happy in one of the special classes where he would be able to do the work.

We would like you to visit at Grove School. We are sure you would enjoy talking to Miss March and her pupils. Please call Mr. Dunn, principal at Grove School at WA 2-0802. He will be happy to have you visit.

Very truly yours,

John Henry  
Superintendent



After the program has been explained and the parent has been given an opportunity to visit, the application blank is either given to him by the principal when he visits or mailed to him at home. (Sometimes a follow-up visit becomes necessary if the blanks are mailed). This application is brief,<sup>8</sup> as:

----- Public Schools

-----, Ohio

January 9, 1962

I know that my son, Frank, is finding school work too hard in his present school. I would like him to be placed in the special class at Grove School.

Signed: Mrs. John Doe  
(Parent or Guardian)

In addition to making sure that parents know of and consent to their child's placement, there is a need for some one person to process applications from the sending teachers or sending schools, so that placements are made which are in relation to children already in the class. Needless to say, the special class teacher herself **never** returns a child to regular class—or accepts a child directly from the regular class—but works through central office personnel.

In large school districts slow-learning children who may also be physically handicapped may sometimes be provided for in classes specifically organized for children with both handicaps.<sup>9</sup> In smaller districts or when facilities for the multi-handicapped are already crowded, a slow-learner with an additional problem

<sup>8</sup> In large school districts the last phrase (at ----- School) may need to be omitted, since there may be more than one class to which this child might be assigned.

<sup>9</sup> Section 7.0 of the Standards provides for these children. In 1961-62 there were 12 units for slow-learning crippled and 2 for slow-learning blind approved under these regulations.

(vision, hearing or moderately crippling condition) may be enrolled in a "regular" slow-learning class.<sup>10</sup> If a class has twelve slow-learning children enrolled and a multi-handicapped child is presented for admission, the class can easily absorb one such child; but if the enrollment is already fifteen and there are already two multi-handicapped children in the group, the load would become unreasonably heavy for the teacher. It should be kept in mind that slow-learning classes are primarily for slow-learners who are otherwise normal; overloading the slow-learning class with a disproportionate number of multi-handicapped children will make it impossible for the teacher to carry on a satisfactory program. Certain children with multiple handicaps may, with the approval of the Director of Special Education, be counted as the equivalent of two children on the class enrollment list, since such children require considerably more than the average amount of the teacher's time.

In school districts which operate cooperative programs (two or more small cities and/or villages, or districts within one or more counties) frequently more information is needed about children who are enrolled from districts other than the one operating the class. In order that the person responsible for administering the program in the receiving district may more easily decide some of the questions with respect to proper placement of a particular child, it is well to have admission blanks presented by the sending school, as well as from the parents. The reports from the educators may be more specific and more inclusive, as, for example, the following admission blank worked out for a county class program:

---

<sup>10</sup> This is provided for under Section 8.43 of the Standards. Children with severe neurological involvement may be considered multi-handicapped, also, if medical records are available for substantiation.

----- COUNTY SCHOOLS

-----, OHIO

**Inter-District Application for Slow-Learning Class**

Child's Name ----- Parent -----

Address -----

Home School District -----

Date of Birth? ----- Verification? -----

Present school grade placement -----

Present Educational Level -----

Teacher estimate -----

Test data -----

Can child "fit" with group of children about his age? -----

**Psychological Evaluation:**

Test ----- Date Administered -----

Examiner ----- Findings: C. A. -----

M.A. ----- I.Q. -----

**Physical Condition:**

**General Health**

Can child walk? -----

Can he use hands? -----

Can he care for personal needs without aid? -----

Does he have "understandable" speech for purposes of classroom experiences? -----

Is vision adequate for purposes of classroom experiences? -----

Is there any medical record indicating physical or neurological impairment which might require special attention in planning child's educational program? ----- If so, please attach report.

Does there need to be any restriction on physical activity? -----  
If so, please indicate doctor's recommendations. -----

-----  
Has this child ever been in Juvenile Court or is he a serious behavior problem? -----

Have parents agreed to special class placement? -----  
(Please attach parents' application to this blank.)

Will sending Board of Education sign tuition contract and pay special tuition? -----

Will parents or sending Board of Education provide or contribute to costs of transportation to special class? -----

Information supplied by -----

**What do you know about your classroom? Is it as large as the other classrooms in the building? Does it have sufficient storage and work space? Is furniture appropriate for age and size of children? Is there sufficient light for the children and you to work without strain, even on dark days? What possibilities does it offer for attractive "living quarters"? You will spend many hours there in the next few months; for that reason your classroom should be as attractive as your living room at home.**

**The following suggestions should help make your classroom "home" livable.<sup>11</sup>**

- 1. The classroom should be clean, safe, pleasant, attractive, stimulating, and properly organized to suit the needs of the children and the type of instruction given. Children should be acquainted with the proper places for supplies and equipment, so that a certain routine may be established.**
- 2. The room should reflect the work in progress. Pictures, charts, bulletin board displays, table exhibits, etc. are especially necessary in slow learners' classrooms to further understanding and make learning real.**
  - a) Because the slow learner is easily distracted and confused, clutter must be avoided. All displays should relate to that part of the core unit that is being currently pursued and should be removed before a new topic is begun. Every means should be employed to help the child concentrate on the work immediately at hand. Arithmetic charts, safety posters, etc. should be displayed only during the time they are actually being used and should be removed or covered up when not in use. Only materials illustrative of the current topic should remain on display in the room. Science and other exhibits become meaningless if they are displayed long after the project is completed and interest has waned. Art projects in various stages of completion scattered about the room also add to the clutter.**
  - b) The bulletin board should be eye-catching, simple, colorful, and readable at a glance. If carefully planned, it can help the pupils tie together the scattered bits of learning they have acquired into a complete picture. It can be a means of helping them organize and generalize.**

<sup>11</sup> These are adapted with permission, from Toledo Public Schools bulletin "Administering Classes for Slow Learners," 1961-62, p. 15.

3. **Furniture, Equipment, Materials**—State Standards provide that equipment and materials shall at all times fit the maturity and interest levels of the children. Insofar as possible, furniture and equipment should be arranged so as to provide for good grouping for academic work, for special activities and for meeting the needs of the various physical disabilities of the class members.

**What do you know about your school?** Is it basically concerned with the maintenance of academic standards—or is it primarily concerned with helping children realize their fullest potentialities? Is it a school where traditional practices predominate or where more modern educational procedures are encouraged? As far as possible, what you do within the school setting should be within accepted practices for the rest of the building. Particularly if you work with older children, you will want your slow-learners to have as many contacts with the regular class group as is feasible, and the adjustment of the children to the different settings will be facilitated if there is both mutual respect between other members of the faculty and yourself and somewhat comparable learning situations in the different rooms. In all secondary school groups the Division of Special Education encourages as much participation in the following non-academic activities for each pupil as he, individually, is able to "take": home room, clubs, athletic activities, gym, music, art, industrial arts, home economics.

**What do you know about your school community?** How interested are the parents and other citizens in what the school is doing for their children? Is this interest expressed in constructive ways? Are they people who are ready and willing to accept a program which emphasizes child development rather than academic achievement, per se? Have they been accustomed to classes for handicapped children, or is yours the first venture of this kind in the town? What facilities for educational excursions are available in the community? What shops, stores, farms or institutions<sup>12</sup> exist nearby which might be utilized in occupational training and later job placement for your slow-learning pupils? You will want to find answers to these before you plan extensively for work with the children; a strong special education program is more likely to flourish where there is understanding, respect and support from parents and the community.

<sup>12</sup> By "institutions" we refer to hospitals, county children's homes, county homes, tuberculosis sanatoria, etc. These offer many maintenance jobs of a kind which slow-learners can be trained to handle satisfactorily.

## Chapter VII: WHAT ARE GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM?

What do you see as goals for a program of special education intended for slow-learning children? As a classroom teacher, you will work with these children for a minimum of a year, a maximum of four years. You will be concerned a good deal of the time with what is happening to your own little group. Yet, where special class programs have failed in the past, it has been largely because they failed to point in any particular direction. In what may be referred to as "regular education," there are specific goals with which all teachers in a given system are familiar; in regular classes teachers and children alike have goals to work towards, and while the goals may not be appropriate for all, they at least lend a kind of stability to what goes on in the classrooms each day. The kind of program offered by regular schools may be roughly compared to the kind of clothing produced by wholesale garment houses for public consumption. What about a program for slow-learners?

Ready-made clothing usually needs alterations<sup>1</sup> to fit the so-called normal individual; those who differ widely from the norm require custom tailoring. In custom tailoring there is never a definite standard pattern; there must always be certain principles followed relative to measuring, fitting and refitting. With this basic philosophy it is necessary to state certain objectives in order that the program have direction and move towards certain rather definite outcomes. Among these at the moment we think of:

1. *Giving the child the kinds of experiences that will contribute to a healthy personality.* School should be a place where children are happy while learning; and children—like people in general—can find real pleasure only when they are able to derive satisfaction from their work. In the special class situation these children are able to succeed and to take personal pride in their accomplishments. Then children—again like other people—have an urge to "fit in," to "belong" with the rest of the group. Special education helps develop that sense of personal worth in children who in a large, unselected group, would be conspicuous by their inability to contribute or to be a part of the group. The opportunity to be recognized in an "approved" situation can often make the difference between the child who grows up to take his place in the community and the one who becomes a delinquent.

<sup>1</sup> "Alterations" should imply a flexible program in the schools, with modified work for some children, an enriched program for others, the "regular" program for most. In many school systems a remedial program appears to be the method for permitting alterations.

2. *Helping the child develop acceptable attitudes towards his family, school, community, country, self.* Special education can help children from a poor environment to develop desirable standards and habits of behavior. The children can learn to meet people with ease, to present an attractive appearance, to undertake and carry out such simple social responsibilities as a luncheon, a tea, a picnic, a school party. It may be noted that many of these children's parents are socially unacceptable today and therefore unable to secure steady employment or to live in a decent neighborhood—because no one helped them to make socially acceptable adjustments when they were young. For these children, table setting, dish washing, steam pressing, hair styling and learning how to meet people may have important vocational implications as well as social ones.
3. *Giving the child proficiency in certain skills—among them the 3 R's coupled with what might be called social living skills, or the ability to "live with" people.* In a good special education situation the child goes farther academically than otherwise. Slow learners ranking in the middle 70's may be expected to achieve academically up to the 6th grade level; those in the middle 60's can reach 3rd or 4th grade achievement; and even the low 50's can reach a 2nd grade level. This means that even with the slowest children admitted to public school classes, academic education can be functional: they can learn to read street signs, to follow simple safety rules in shops, to follow directions on recipes and so on. Those children at the upper end of the special group can learn to read newspapers and most popular magazines; they can develop sufficient skill to be able to adjust in industry and in society without being noticeably different from their fellows.
4. *Preparing the child to recognize his own limitations and potentialities, and training him realistically for life in the community,<sup>2</sup> employment, participation in activities of groups, use of leisure time, and so on.* Given occupational guidance and training, these children as adults can fill an important place in industry by providing a source of labor for the unskilled and semi-skilled work upon which others depend. Special education will often make the difference

<sup>2</sup> These children, as adults, generally remain in their home communities. Even when drafted for military service there is a strong tendency for them to return "home" once their period of time with the armed forces is completed.

as to whether the child as an adult will stand in the line of the unemployed and unemployable seeking public assistance or with the employed who are producing in the community.

If these goals are to be reached, there must be a planned program which will provide:

- (a) **Appropriate learning experiences for each level of maturity**, so that children are neither pushed beyond their ability levels nor permitted to waste time in mechanical repetition of tasks which they have already mastered.
- (b) **Variety of experiences**, so that all possible approaches to learning situations may be explored.
- (c) **Continuity of experience**, so that each year of school builds upon the foundation of previous years.
- (d) **Opportunity for progress**, so that there may be recognition by parents, teachers, and children that pupils are advancing in the program, even though promotional policies, because of the relatively small numbers involved, generally necessitate that children remain in the same room for more than one year.

This implies that wherever more than one slow-learning class exists teachers must work cooperatively in the development of the local program. Through experimentation, consultation and constant revision of practices, teachers can evolve over a period of time a curriculum which will fit the particular size and type of community where they are working.

In planning classroom work, the teacher should draw upon her knowledge of child development and sequential learning patterns. When Sara and Johnny, with comparable mental ages, come to her classroom she will probably find that they have quite different performance levels. This will not surprise her, if she realizes that within mental maturity levels children have different strengths and weaknesses, and that past experience as well as social, emotional, physical and mental maturity will influence the way each child performs in school.

**What do you see as goals for the year just ahead?** Without a prescribed amount of reading, arithmetic and so forth to "cover," what guides do you have to help you determine what experiences your children should have in the coming school year? Let's look at what information you have about them:



1. How old are they chronologically? How wide an age spread do they represent? What are the physical activities in which children of those ages are generally interested? What constitutes satisfactory social behavior—on the street, in the theatre or ball park, in stores and restaurants—for children in that age range? In planning for the year's activities, how many of these things can you see in the picture for your handicapped pupils?
2. How old are your children mentally? The individual mental ages will indicate the approximate level of academic work at which, ideally, each child is "ready" to perform. The kinds of academic experiences and situations requiring abstract thinking from which your group should be able to profit during the year will be largely determined by the range of mental ages represented in the class.<sup>3</sup>

With the above two items in mind, some teachers have found it helpful to make tentative plans for the year's program, listing items in a notebook in order of difficulty—or in the order in which they "naturally" follow one another. In doing this, a teacher recognizes that the children may help to change her mind about this program as time goes on, but at least she has a framework from which to start.

<sup>3</sup> See tables A, B, C, and D for sample groupings of children representing different age levels. These class groups represent typical classes.

TABLE A Record: PRIMARY SLOW LEARNING CLASS

NAME	September, 196--					June, 196--					Mental Growth During School Year
	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.	G.E.* C.A.	G.E.** M.A.	C.A.	M.A.	G.E.* C.A.	G.E.** M.A.		
	1. Rose	10-0	6-2	62	4	Pre-ac.	10-10	6-8	5	1	
2. Mary	9-8	5-6	56	4	Pre-ac.	10-6	5-10	5	Pre-ac.	4 mos.	
3. Patty	9-6	6-10	73	3	1	10-3	7-6	4	1	7 mos.	
4. Hubert	9-4	5-7	60	3	Pre-ac.	10-2	6-1	4	Pre-ac.	6 mos.	
5. Jack	9-0	4-11	54	3	Pre-ac.	9-10	5-3	4	Pre-ac.	4 mos.	
6. Gilbert	9-0	6-0	72	3	1	9-10	7-0	4	1	6 mos.	
7. Lois	8-10	6-0	68	3	Pre-ac.	9-6	6-6	4	1	6 mos.	
8. Donald	8-7	5-7	65	3	Pre-ac.	9-6	6-1	3	Pre-ac.	6 mos.	
9. Arthur	8-6	4-10	57	2	Pre-ac.	9-3	5-3	3	Pre-ac.	5 mos.	
10. Sammy	8-2	5-6	67	2	Pre-ac.	9-0	6-0	3	Pre-ac.	6 mos.	
11. Ronnie	7-7	5-6	75	2	Pre-ac.	8-5	6-3	2	Pre-ac.	7 mos.	
12. Charles	7-2	5-0	71	2	Pre-ac.	8-6	5-7	2	Pre-ac.	7 mos.	

\*--indicates grade in which this pupil would probably be enrolled if he were making standard school progress. It gives clues for expected physical development and social interest levels.  
 \*\*--represents the highest potential ability for work which could reasonably be expected in academic skill areas. Whether a child is able to use his ability depends upon many factors; the teacher will have to know the children individually before setting goals for expected progress during the year.

TABLE B Record: INTERMEDIATE SLOW LEARNING CLASS

NAME	September, 196--					June, 196--				Mental Growth During School Year
	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.	G.E.*	G.E.**	C.A.	M.A.	G.E.*	G.E.**	
				C.A.	M.A.			C.A.	M.A.	
1. Nathan	13-2	8-4	64	7	2	14-0	8-10	8	3	6 mos.
2. Yvonne	13-0	8-10	68	7	3	13-10	9-4	8	3	6 mos.
3. Tom	12-9	7-11	62	7	2	13-7	8-6	8	3	7 mos.
4. Edward	12-8	7-0	55	7	1	13-6	7-5	8	1	5 mos.
5. Jean	12-7	9-2	73	7	3	13-5	9-9	7	4	7 mos.
6. David	12-6	7-6	60	7	2	13-4	8-0	7	2	6 mos.
7. Otto	12-6	8-0	64	7	2	13-4	8-6	7*	3	6 mos.
8. Frances	11-9	7-2	61	6	1	12-7	7-8	7*	2	6 mos.
9. Anna	11-9	8-8	74	6	3	12-7	9-3	7	3	8 mos.
10. Henry	11-8	7-8	66	6	2	12-6	8-3	7	2	7 mos.
11. Bob	11-6	8-0	70	6	2	12-4	8-7	6	3	7 mos.
12. Bill	11-3	6-0	53	5	Pre-ac.	12-1	6-5	6	Pre-ac.	5 mos.

\*--indicates grade in which this pupil would probably be enrolled if he were making standard school progress. It gives clues for expected physical development and social interest levels.

\*\*--represents the highest potential ability for work which could reasonably be expected in academic skill areas. Whether a child is able to use his ability depends upon many factors; the teacher will have to know the children individually before setting goals for expected progress during the year.

TABLE C Record: JUNIOR HIGH SLOW LEARNING CLASS

NAME	September, 196--					June, 196--				Mental Growth During School Year
	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.	G.E.* C.A.	G.E.** M.A.	C.A.	M.A.	G.E.* C.A.	G.E.** M.A.	
1. Steven	16-0	11-6	72	10	6	16-10	11-6	11	6	***
2. Walter	16-0	9-10	62	10	4	16-10	9-10	11	4	***
3. Sylvia	15-11	11-4	71	10	5	16-9	11-4	11	5	***
4. Catherine	15-9	10-6	67	10	5	16-7	10-8	11	5	2 mos.
5. Paul	15-6	11-7	75	10	6	16-4	12-0	10	6	5 mos.
6. Marion	15-2	9-9	65	9	4	16-0	10-4	10	4	7 mos.
7. Jack	15-0	8-7	58	9	3	15-10	9-1	10	3	6 mos.
8. Ernest	14-11	10-5	70	9	4	15-9	11-0	10	5	7 mos.
9. James	14-3	10-4	73	8	4	15-1	11-0	9	5	8 mos.
10. Francis	14-2	9-8	69	8	4	15-0	10-3	9	4	7 mos.
11. Curtis	13-8	7-4	54	8	1	14-6	7-10	9	2	6 mos.
12. William	13-7	9-0	66	8	3	14-5	9-6	8	4	6 mos.

\*--indicates grade in which this pupil would probably be enrolled if he were making standard school progress. It gives clues for expected physical development and social interest levels.

\*\*--represents the highest potential ability for work which could reasonably be expected in academic skill areas. Whether a child is able to use his ability depends upon many factors; the teacher will have to know the children individually before setting goals for expected progress during the year.

\*\*\*--These are reaching maturity--continue to learn, but on horizontal rather than vertical base.

TABLE D Record: SENIOR HIGH SLOW LEARNING CLASS

NAME	September, 196--					June, 196--					Mental Growth During School Year
	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.	G.E.*	G.E.**	C.A.	M.A.	G.E.*	G.E.**		
				C.A.	M.A.						
1. Richard	19-2	10-2	64	12*	4	20-0	10-2	12*	4	***	
2. Jerry	18-10	11-6	72	12*	6	19-8	11-0	12*	6	***	
3. Rosemary	18-6	12-0	75	12*	6	19-4	12-0	12*	6	***	
4. Harold	18-4	9-3	58	12	3	19-2	9-3	12*	3	***	
5. Kathleen	18-2	11-2	70	12*	5	19-0	11-2	12*	5	***	
6. Leslie	17-11	12-8	79	12	7	18-9	12-8	12*	7	***	
7. Philip	17-1	11-9	74	11	6	17-11	11-9	12	6	***	
8. Joseph	17-0	10-6	66	11	5	17-10	10-6	12	5	***	
9. Patricia	16-10	8-10	56	11	3	17-8	8-10	12	3	***	
10. Harold	16-7	11-0	69	11	5	17-5	11-0	11	5	***	
11. Shirley	16-4	12-5	78	10	6	17-2	12-5	11	6	***	
12. Bernard	16-0	9-6	61	10	4	16-10	9-4	11	4	***	

\*--indicates grade in which this pupil would probably be enrolled if he were making standard school progress. It gives clues for expected physical development and social interest levels.

\*\*--represents the highest potential ability for work which could reasonably be expected in academic skill areas. Whether a child is able to use his ability depends upon many factors; the teacher will have to know the children individually before setting goals for expected progress during the year.

\*\*\*--These pupils have reached ' ' are reaching adult mental maturity. Further mental growth is too slight to be measurable. Learning continues on a plateau- but it does continue. Practical application of known skills is important to stress with this age level.

**What about planning for the first month?** Suppose Miss Jones has decided that the greatest need for her group at their present developmental stage is a study of the neighborhood. What are the most immediate needs for those children to know? It might be transportation within the neighborhood—including ways the children get to and from school, the movies, Sunday school, the ball park, etc. This may lead into a sub-topic of safety, since there are right and wrong ways of crossing a street, boarding a bus, and so on. She can line up those rather obvious beginning topics for the month of September—and leave the door open for any other phase of the work which may seem feasible after she has worked with the group a few weeks. At the same time, Miss Jones will be more concerned with observing the children during that first month—on the playground, in the classroom, in the halls, wherever she may encounter them; she will be trying to estimate social and emotional growth, along with the measurements of mental development and physical growth which the records have given her. She will be checking academic achievement—if the children are sufficiently mature to have acquired academic skill—and attitudes towards school getting to know her children as individuals and their families as people, so that she will be in a more advantageous position to help the children in the year ahead. The check on academic achievement will apply, of course, only to children with mental ages above  $6\frac{1}{2}$ . For children who are less than  $6\frac{1}{2}$  mentally, observations should center around the development of language and number concepts, since this is the appropriate functioning level for their maturity.

The teacher should recognize that there will be a happier living situation through the year if certain room duties are assumed by the children during this first month. The children can help decide what these will be, and—since there is little likelihood of there being a sufficiently large number of duties for each child to have one every week—a system of rotation should be set up.

There are training opportunities in such duties for children. In many schools the special class children assume major responsibility for the care of their own classroom. There are some junior high schools where boys and girls alike are taught to wash windows, where the boys take care of seating in the auditorium-gym for assemblies, where the special class cares for the school grounds (under janitorial supervision). Similarly, various housekeeping duties in connection with the school cafeteria and school bookstore may be carried out. In this way leads for occupational training are started.

The first month of school will also be the time when the teacher is grouping her children, tentatively—organizing working groups so as to get her program under way. In doing so, she will work with the total group in the beginning. Over the first three or four weeks there will be times when the teacher will send a few children to work independently for short periods while she spends more time with the remainder of the class who need more direct attention. Within the first month to six weeks Miss Jones will attempt to group her children for work in the skill areas (including various readiness skills for a primary class). However, she recognizes that groupings are flexible, that quite probably some of the children will be moved up or down the scale in specific skill groups (reading and arithmetic) as the year continues. There will be more small group work as the teacher grows to know individual needs and growth patterns and as the children learn to handle small group situations. Yet there will continue to be times in the day when the children are drawn together as a class.

**What about the first week of school?** Opening days set the pace for those that follow. Plans must be made at that time with the children for ways of working during the coming year. There must be rules to live by, or else it will be impossible for the group to work in anything resembling harmony; the children—even slow-learning children—are able to recognize some of these, and are more likely to accept such rules if they have contributed to their formation.

Rules should be as few as possible, and they should be followed consistently once they have been adopted. Slow-learning children are easily confused when confronted by many requirements at one time, but learning to follow a few simple rules is within the capacity of even the youngest child if he is helped to understand what the rules are and why they have been made.

The first week of school is an exploratory one for the children, too. With her September plans in mind, Miss Jones will “set the stage.” Picture corners, information tables, book tables, a variety of things which will point up her unit topic, are placed within “seeing, hearing and feeling” reach of the boys and girls. In addition, there will be somewhere in the room a collection of books, toys, pictures, objects representing many different topics and interests. Miss Jones will watch carefully the choices made by individual children—and by the group—from this collection; it will not only give her some clues as to whether the children’s interests are in line with her planning for the month, but will be revealing in terms of social and emotional development within the group.

One more item will probably be noted during the first week of school. Although the work of slow-learners is much more informal than that conducted in some regular classrooms, regularity is needed in the school day. The pupils need to feel the security which comes from a certain routine, even though that routine is kept sufficiently flexible to take care of changes in plans from day to day or week to week. The first week of school is a splendid time to experiment with time blocks and find out the kind of schedule which this particular group of children can "take" with the greatest of ease. As with rules for social behavior, the daily schedule will be accepted with greater enthusiasm by the children if they understand it.

This does not mean that the children decide what they will do and when they will do it any more than they made the actual decision on which rules were established for social behavior. It does mean that after the teacher has decided what general schedule best meets both the requirements of the children and the pattern of the school, she acquaints the children with the schedule and with the reason for it. Even young slow learners can be helped to understand why quiet activity comes at certain times and why noisy or active play must be restricted when others are working.

**What about the first day of school?** Besides having the "stage set" to begin work, Miss Jones knows that there are many interesting activities she can introduce that first day which will help her begin to estimate the children's working levels and simultaneously help the group to become acquainted (or re-acquainted) with each other.<sup>4</sup> Some of the possibilities from which she may choose the day's activities are:

1. Talking over summer activities with the pupils, encouraging each to make some contribution to the general discussion. This will help her to evaluate the children's ability to express themselves through a language medium.
2. Reading a short story to the children—one selected to appeal to their age group; following that, encouraging the children to:
  - (a) Re-tell the story in their own words
  - (b) Dramatize the story, or

<sup>4</sup>These are activities which can be adapted to any age group. The choice of books, directional games, etc., will vary. For example, visual perception is developed in many ways; one medium used is that of picture puzzles. Wooden Judy puzzles might be chosen for a primary class, while intricate jigsaw puzzles would serve the same purpose in a secondary school group.



(c) Draw an incident from the story which was funny, interesting, and so on. This, again, will give her a rough measure of the children's language comprehension; in addition, it may help "spot" one or two children with relatively more creative ability in this area than the rest of the group.

3. Selecting a colorful action picture about which the children can talk. This will again give a rough idea of the children's ability to handle words meaningfully. Even in junior high school groups it is possible to find a pupil who is still at the enumeration stage of picture interpretation, although most older slow-learners can describe the picture, and a few are able to project ideas regarding what has happened, what is happening and what may come next.
4. Working with jig-saw puzzles. While this appears to be play to the children, actually good visual perception is necessary to complete a puzzle successfully. Where speed is a factor, eye-hand coordination may also be in the picture.<sup>5</sup>
5. Writing information needed for general files: name, age and birthday, address, parents' names, number of brothers and sisters. This may be beyond the ability of some slow-learners less than eleven years old (and beyond the achievement level of a few who are older); however, these are things which the children have been "exposed to" since starting school, and will give the teacher an idea of how much they have assimilated through repetition. Moreover, at least their names and addresses are facts which even slow-learning children may need to know in order to get along in the community; age and birthday will be required in job applications, later. If this is a class for upper elementary or secondary school age children, such information should probably be included in the year's planning for the group, particularly for those who cannot write it at the beginning of the term.
6. Having a free reading period. While the children explore books from the library table or bookcases, Miss Jones can call individual children up to her desk for short periods; ostensibly this is for a reading check (although reading achievement will be more carefully scrutinized later, after the children have become more "settled"), but any reading

<sup>5</sup> "Timed" work with jig saw puzzles, peg boards, and such may be a definite part of training for certain assembly line jobs, such as the manufacture of radio tubes and electric light bulbs, where precise motions are a "must."

is kept on a voluntary basis: "Would you like to do some reading for me today?" Because some in the group may lack ability and/or achievement in reading, Miss Jones includes in the materials for the "reading" check some books where "picture reading" or interpretation may serve this purpose. Then every child in the class can be included in the activity.

At this time, it is more important for Miss Jones to get some idea as to the child's attitude towards reading, his readiness for it (both mentally and emotionally), the factors which he believes have contributed to his failure to make acceptable reading progress. All of these things may not be apparent at first contact, so Miss Jones plans to repeat this "free reading" period every day, possibly for a week or more. Since she wants to encourage the child to tell how he really feels about reading (not just parrot what he thinks the teacher wants him to say), she must at all times maintain a permissive attitude, withholding any comment which the child might interpret as being critical of him. Because reading has frequently been a major "bugbear" in the school life of many a slow-learning pupil, his attitude toward it can color his whole adjustment in the school situation.

7. Having an experimental arithmetic period, when through the use of number activities appropriate to the maturity of the group, the teacher informally "puts out feelers" to gauge the background of the group in arithmetic.

For primary classes, this might mean having each child in the group take turns bouncing a ball until he fails to catch it, counting as he bounces. The other children count with him, and the teacher notes which ones are able to count in sequence to 5, to 10, above 10. (At the same time, the catching of the ball is an indication of eye-hand coordination of the little folks) . . . For upper elementary groups a directional game can be inaugurated, whereby they are called upon to find certain dates (i.e. holidays, birthdays) on the calendar, to tell time (when we come to school, when we go to lunch, when the stores downtown open on weekdays, when the theatre opens on Saturday afternoon, etc.) by the clock, to make change up to a dollar, to measure inches, feet, yards, quarts, and pints . . . . This same sort of thing can be done, on a little more difficult level, for secondary school groups; or through the use of clipped newspaper advertisements (distributed among the class) they may be

introduced to practical situations: the cost of a bicycle tire, an auto headlight, an electric light bulb, a pound of butter, a pair of shoes, and so forth.

8. Playing educational games, suited to the age of the group.

For an active type of game, "Simon says" can be adapted, with the leader introducing the words "up, down, left, right" (primary groups), or "east, west, north, south" (older groups) in the course of the game. This entails following verbal and visual directions. . . . For a quiet game "I'm thinking of"—"the color of Mary's hair ribbon" (primary group), "the day we do not come to school" (intermediate group), "a word that begins with H and has five letters" (secondary school group). This will help to estimate, particularly with older children, the readiness for a series of directions. With slow-learning children in the primary groups, following one direction at a time may be all that can reasonably be expected. As they grow older, these boys and girls can be trained to follow a series of two, three or four directions given simultaneously.

In addition, Miss Jones allows time somewhere in that first day of school to introduce discussion of rules to be adopted for classroom living and consideration of the daily program.

**Guidelines For Planning a Daily Program**

For many years a school program consisted of series of 20 to 40 minute "periods." Arithmetic was the "standard" beginning subject, except for first grade where READING was the all-important thing. One subject followed another; children knew that every morning before recess would be arithmetic, after recess would come reading, English and spelling in regular succession. From fourth grade on, the afternoons began with geography, and so it went.

Within the last generation, a gradual change from this pattern has been taking place; with the new knowledge of child development available to teachers and administrators today, the places where elementary schools are subject-matter-centered to the point of chopping the school day into disconnected fragments are becoming fewer each year; even in the junior high schools there is appearing a move to keep seventh-grade pupils, at least, (and in some places the entire 7th, 8th and 9th grade groups) with a home-room teacher one-half of the school day, in which time she combines three or four of the so-called "major subjects" as she sees fit. If flexibility in

a daily program is necessary for the well-being of the child without a handicap, how much more is it essential for the slow-learning child!

What are some of the considerations in planning a daily program for slow-learners?

1. Is your teaching to be done through a "core" or "unit" approach—where big blocks of time are essential—or are you a person who feels more secure in following what may be called a more traditional pattern of working? While activity-type programs are frequently mentioned as advantageous for slow-learning children (since they afford many opportunities for concrete learning experiences), how the teacher feels about attempting it should be a primary consideration. For the teacher who can do an acceptable job with activity programs—and feel happy doing it—use that approach, by all means! But if she feels insecure, the children are likely to "catch" her insecurity; and no one will receive maximum benefit from such a situation. It is possible for children to be quite relaxed in a more traditional setting, if their teacher is, herself, relaxed, if she has sufficient understanding of their problems, if the work is geared so that they can achieve success without feeling under pressure, and if the content is appropriate to their needs.
2. When is likely to be the most "settled" period in the day for your children to work? The old idea of placing arithmetic or reading early in the morning was based upon the supposition that the children were "freshest" and best able to work at tasks requiring considerable thinking and concentration when they first came to school. On the contrary, for many children in special classes this is the very time when they are at low ebb: Frank, whose home is impoverished, arrives at school without breakfast; Peter, who is one of a family of eleven, "didn't feel like eating" (and Mother was too busy with the others to notice whether he had food) also arrives without breakfast; Anna and Louis were kept awake part of the night by quarreling adults and a noisy jukebox downstairs; Karl, a lawyer's son, and Joan, daughter of a commercial artist, are constantly aware, even at the breakfast table, that the rest of their families are disappointed to discover a slow-learner in the family circle; a need for acceptance "as people" is uppermost for them when they arrive at school. For many of these boys and

girls, early in the morning is a time for forgetting the world beyond the schoolroom, for quieting relaxing experiences that will put them "in the mood" for the rest of the day. Had it occurred to you to start the day with quiet music? a story? a round-the-circle discussion of things the children consider important? a planning period for the day ahead?

3. What are the "set" times—recess, lunch, possible participation in gym, art, music, and so on—around which you will have to build?
4. How much will the maturity—both physical and social—of your children determine for you the length of time blocks and the need for active and quiet periods?

You will want to set up a daily schedule that keeps these factors in mind.

In earlier bulletins samples of daily class schedules were included. With 293 school districts now operating slow-learning classes (1961-1962) it is impossible to show a program which would lend itself equally well to all. Instead, a suggested distribution of time is shown for elementary schools and a listing of areas for departmentalized junior-senior high schools; for primary classes, time indicated for skill work may be used for readiness rather than spelling, arithmetic, reading, etc.

#### **Daily Distribution of Time<sup>6</sup>**

Because many factors, such as level of achievement, rate of learning, expectancy of the various pupils in the class, must be considered, it is difficult to set definite time limits for daily instruction.

The following distribution of daily time is offered only as a very general plan. Because of the variations in individual abilities and needs, each teacher must each year plan her own schedule that best suits her specific situation.

A daily time schedule is necessary for efficient organization of work and as a contributing factor to the children's feeling of security. However, it must be flexible and the teacher is not expected to hold strictly to the schedule at all times.

This schedule is suitable for self-contained classes at the elementary level.

<sup>6</sup> Used with permission from Toledo Public Schools bulletin, *Administering Classes for Slow Learners*, 1961-62, pp. 21-22.

### **Schedule for Working with Two Groups**

#### **Opening Exercises (10 minutes per day)**

#### **Reading Skills (40 minutes per day)**

20 minutes—each group working with the teacher

20 minutes—each group working alone

The time allotment may be broken up into more than one period, depending upon the interest span of the children.

#### **Follow-up Activities (50 minutes per day)**

25 minutes—each group working with the teacher

25 minutes—each group working alone

The time allotment may be broken up into more than one period, depending upon the type of activities and the interest span of the children.

It may be desirable, or necessary, at times to take the class as a whole, rather than by groups.

#### **Oral Expression—sharing, word usage games, other activities (20 minutes per day)**

The work will, for the most part, be conducted on a two group plan but occasionally with the class taken as a whole.

Practice in oral expression is, of course, not confined to specific periods but occurs throughout the day.

#### **Written Expression (20 minutes per day)**

10 minutes—each group working with the teacher

10 minutes—each group working alone

Practice in written expression occurs as part of various lessons and assignments throughout the day and is not an isolated activity.

#### **Spelling (20 minutes per day)**

10 minutes—each group working with the teacher

10 minutes—each group working alone

#### **Writing Skills (20 minutes per day)**

10 minutes—each group working with the teacher

10 minutes—each group working alone

#### **Arithmetic (40 minutes per day)**

20 minutes—each group working with the teacher

20 minutes—each group working alone

The time allotment may be broken up into more than one period depending upon the type of activities and the interest span of the children.

**Music (10 minutes per day)**

For older children it may be desirable to divide the 50 minutes per week allotment into three periods of about 15 minutes each.

**Rhythms, Games, Gym (30 minutes per day)**

The time allotment may be broken up into more than one period, depending upon the interest span of the children and the availability of space.

**Arts and Crafts (20 minutes per day)**

Creative work, bulletin board planning and execution  
Construction of 'props' for activities, shop, sewing, etc.

For all but possibly the very young children, dividing the time allotment of 100 minutes per week into two or three longer periods rather than a short daily period will be more profitable.

**Lavatory and Milk (15 minutes per day)**

**Clean-up and Evaluation (20 minutes per day)**

10 minutes—morning  
10 minutes—afternoon"

With slow learning pupils in junior high seventh and eighth grades, it is suggested that the program pattern proposed for regular seventh and eighth grades by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Schools<sup>7</sup> be followed, with appropriate adjustments made to conform to Special Education Standards.<sup>8</sup> It should, of course, be recognized that program content, materials, and achievement level will differ markedly in academic areas from the usual seventh and eighth grade work.

In the senior high—or grades nine through twelve—the in-school program pattern should conform as closely as possible to that for other pupils. Academic areas—English, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, should be scheduled for the same amount of time as is given to the same subject in other courses; course content, materials used and achievement level expected will, as with the junior high, differ from the other programs in the school.

A block of time should be scheduled for occupational orientation and job experience, since the professed aim of the slow learning program is to lead towards employability. No slow learner is to be assigned to a regular academic class, and care should be exer-

<sup>7</sup> Ohio High School Standards, 1958—p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Sect. on 8.732 and 8.7321 State Board of Education Standards are specific in stating the responsibilities for special class assignments.

cised in selecting those who may enter art, music, physical ed, industrial arts and shop. This will parallel, especially for eleventh and twelfth grades, the courses in Distributive Education, Trades and Industries, etc. for more capable students. At no time should slow learners be assigned to general study halls.

It is recommended that selected pupils in senior high slow-learning programs be enrolled in such non-academic courses as listed in the Standards (8.7321); where enrollment in such a class or in a school activity (such as student clubs or varsity athletics) would interfere with responsibilities in job training, the work experience should be recognized as making a greater contribution to the slow learner's future.

The slow learner who completes the high school program to which he is assigned is entitled to graduate with the rest of his class. The following statement was issued by Mr. Glenn Rich, Director, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Mr. Ray A. Horn, Director, Division of Special Education to help answer questions from Ohio administrators relative to such programs:

"In recent years many questions have been raised by school administrators with the Department of Education relative to programs for slow learning pupils at the high school level. This has been brought about because of the fairly rapid expansion of this program in the past five years. In response to the many questions regarding a terminal program, graduation, and the granting of a diploma to these students, the following is offered as a guideline:

1. The State Board of Education has established through the High School Standards the basic minimum quantitative requirements for graduation at 16 units of credit. There is no stipulation in the High School Standards which establishes a level of achievement to receive a passing grade in a subject or to earn a unit of credit. From this point of view it would appear that if a pupil performed at a maximum level of ability and was given a grade and granted credit, the requirements of the High School Standards would be met.
2. A board of education has the authority to establish differentiated curricula and to set the level of achievement which may be expected in each curriculum. A pupil who completed any one curriculum satisfactorily



could be granted a high school diploma which would bear the name of the curriculum completed. Thus if a board of education wished to establish a special education curriculum, a pupil who completed it could legally be given a high school diploma. However, the transcript should carry the notation that the pupil had been enrolled in the special education curriculum and the principal or executive head of the high school would be under no obligation to recommend this pupil for college entrance.

3. The special education curriculum would have to include three units of English; two units of social studies, one of which must be American history; one unit of mathematics; one unit of science; and one unit of health and physical education with the opportunity to earn eight additional units in elective subject matter fields. The nature of the course and the level of work would necessarily have to be geared to the ability of the pupil.

Section 3313.61 R. C. indicates that a board of education has the authority to grant only a high school diploma to a pupil completing the curriculum. Therefore, it would appear that a certificate of attendance or similar document would not meet the requirements of the law."

### **Part III: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

#### **Chapter VIII: HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT TEACHING SLOW-LEARNERS?**

1. Slow-learners, like all children, must be "ready" for what they are expected to learn—whether it be arithmetic combinations or bed-making, spelling words or washing a car. The teacher of slow-learning pupils must develop an awareness of maturation levels in order to gauge readiness for certain tasks. **Readiness implies a need for careful timing of introductory activities:** In developing number sense, for example, there is a time when the child counts; he follows a sequence of things, objects, people, before he thinks in terms of number. With average children, the "more than one" is usually noticeably acquired by three years of age, the spontaneous interest in counting appears by five years of age. With slow-learning children, who will attain a mental age of five sometime between their seventh and tenth birthday, spontaneous counting interest may be expected at any time after the child enters the slow-learning class. The move from counting objects to recognizing number symbols represents generally another year in development; for the slow-learning child it may take as long as two years, although not infrequently he can travel that distance in a year and a half.
2. Slow-learners take just as long to get the distance they will eventually go as all other children. The teacher of these boys and girls must recognize a ceiling in what may be viewed as purely the academic part of the program, together with the fact that it will take a period of years for her children to reach their potential academic achievement level. The length of time needed for what seems a small amount of measureable accomplishment frequently appears difficult for both parents and teachers to accept. This means that while the slow-learning child does have a later starting point for the academic program and a lower academic ceiling, **yet it takes the slow-learner as long to reach his ceiling as it does the normal child to reach his.** This fact is the basis for the Division's request that a minimum of twelve years of education be made available for these boys and girls. Actually, if twelve years of school ex-

perience are considered necessary for the average and superior students—and to this most present day schools are subscribing — they are even more essential for the slow learner.

3. In general, after the slow-learning child is ready to begin an academic program, he moves from one-half to three-fourths of normal speed. This means that his teacher must recognize that the kinds of educational materials frequently used in regular classes will not be geared to meet his needs; she will have to exercise both discrimination and ingenuity in selecting and devising materials which will fit the pace with the slow-learning child's rate of learning. Many of the materials developed for use with average children have possibilities for adaptation with slow-learning children of the same age, but seldom can they be used in identical form.

There are now a few materials, chiefly readiness and materials in the science and social studies areas that do lend themselves to use with slow learners for every specific purposes.<sup>1</sup> However, these are then used with slow pupils who are older than those for whom the materials were originally prepared.

4. The slow-learner can be taught most successfully through doing, seeing, feeling, experiencing, participating. He is reached less easily through books or other forms of symbolization. This means that for him, the so-called "readiness" work which precedes actual academic programs will be considerably extended, and that throughout his school life he will have ample opportunities for learning through exploration, experimentation, manipulation. This implies that his teacher uses a concrete, rather than abstract, approach wherever possible.

The jump from concrete to abstract, from specific to general information, is often a longer jump for children than it is viewed to be by adults. For the slow-learning child it has to be carefully bridged by realistic programming fitted to the child's level and potential speed of accomplishment.

5. A slow-learner, like other children, needs a well-rounded program. The special class teacher must plan so that his training will be sufficiently balanced. Undue emphasis should not be placed on reading, for example, or industrial

<sup>1</sup> See mimeographed bulletin, *Suggested Basic Materials for Use With Slow Learners*, last edited, June, 1961. Distributed through Division of Special Education.

work; the program must not be "lopsided," neither cramming for academic achievement nor totally neglecting academics<sup>2</sup>. This implies that the teacher's viewpoint needs to be a broad one, likewise that the educational program must be broad, its general aim being to polish each facet of the child's potentialities within reasonable limitations.

6. Slow-learning children are frequently unpredictable in responses even in those situations where they have sufficient ability to respond well. This does not need to be true, but comes about from past experiences in a home or school situation where the child has been building up defenses. Probably by the time the special teacher gets the slow-learning child he has been subjected to various teaching devices, sometimes over and over. For example:

(a) Eddie was brought into an elementary slow-learning class just after recess one morning, several weeks after school had started. Miss Peterson was busy, and in her effort to make Eddie feel "at home" until she had the rest of the group settled in their activities, she handed Eddie a large sheet of manila paper, and some crayons, suggesting that he might like to draw a picture while he waited for her. No one was more surprised than Miss Peterson when Eddie abruptly swept both paper and crayons on the floor and buried his head on his desk in a storm of angry tears. Later she learned that in the fourth grade from which Eddie had come—and in which he was unable to participate to any marked degree in the activities of his younger, more capable classmates—his former teacher "kept Eddie busy" by repeated requests for pictures. It later developed that Eddie did have some artistic ability; but after having this as his only outlet over a period of months, drawing was no longer a means of creating or expressing ideas; it was no longer even escape from an unendurable situation; it had degenerated to a symbol of "apartness" which Eddie resisted. Hence his explosive reaction to that symbol when he encountered it in a new situation.

---

<sup>2</sup>There are still some people who refer to these children as the "hand gifted" and feel they need no academic background whatsoever. Yet this is still—despite television and moving pictures—somewhat a "reading world"; so long as it is, even slow-learners will need a minimum of reading skill in order to make adequate adjustments to normal living situations in the community. Likewise they will be expected to acquire certain common knowledges—which require arithmetic and language ability—to get along with other people as adults.

(b) Again, there was Madeline. She went to school when she was six. As a part of first grade arithmetic work, her teacher used pegs for counting. Madeline was not "ready," not sufficiently mature, to be interested in counting. The pegs were "sticks" to her. At age seven, Madeline was again in first grade. Again the pegs were used. This time they were "pretty sticks"—and after several months Madeline, whose color sense was further developed than her number sense, could tell the red sticks from the blue, and occasionally distinguish between the orange and red or the blue and green. At age eight Madeline was placed in second grade. Here the second grade teacher used pegs in an effort to "modify" the school program to Madeline's needs. By the end of the year the child could distinguish "2 sticks" from "3 sticks"—sometimes with the aid of her classmates. At age nine, Madeline was transferred to a special class<sup>3</sup>. Was it any wonder she rejected the pegs for number work in her new situation—called them "baby stuff"—although number comprehension still had a long way to go?

Meaningless repetition over and over will eventually cause some children to have what we might describe as an "emotional explosion." Other children will react to this same repetition by withdrawal behavior which is potentially more harmful to the individual. There is no place for **meaningless** repetition in the activities of a good special education program.

#### **Chapter IX: WHAT IS REASONABLE ACADEMIC EXPECTANCY FOR THESE CHILDREN?**

In planning a trip, one must know his destination before he can decide upon the particular route he will choose to use in getting there. So with planning an educational program for handicapped boys and girls, where can we expect to take them?

Since the academic part of the program is so important to parents and since this is the area where teachers are most aware of the limitations of these children, let us look first in that direction. In former years, two extremes were seen in such planning. In many places academic drill was introduced too soon for younger slow-

<sup>3</sup>This was a few years ago. We would hope that, in accordance with present day recommendations by the Division of Special Education, children like Madeline, whose I.Q. was in the low 60's, would be placed in special classes as soon as they are identified as slow learners.

learning children and accentuated beyond the point of usefulness for the older ones: in such programs teachers erred on the side of setting goals for reading, arithmetic and such beyond all reasonable limits for children with a mental handicap; the outcome was that teachers, pupils and parents were all likely to be disappointed with the results. On the other hand, there were many classes where academic work ranged considerably below the capacities of the better children in the group; in such cases boys and girls were frustrated upon leaving school to discover they had insufficient mastery of academic skills to enable them to get along in industry. Somewhere between these two extremes lies the real answer for slow-learning pupils.

1. Academic readiness arrives:

For the child with an I.Q. in the 70's—as he approaches 9 years of age.

For the child with an I.Q. in the 60's—from 10 to 10½ years of age.

For the child with an I.Q. in the 50's—from 11 to 12½ years of age.

2. Potential academic expectancy for slow-learners may be pointed up more objectively by showing it in relation to performance to be expected of children in the low average (75-90 I.Q. range) and average (90-110 I.Q. range) groups of comparable age. This is indicated in the table on page 48.

Throughout the school program—particularly with respect to the academic side—emphasis must be laid on two facts:

**The difficulty of material presented to the children must be geared to their mental maturity.**

**The content of material used with the children must be geared to the interests incident to their level of social maturity.**

In most instances teachers will discover that slow learners are more likely to approach their social and physiological age group in social maturity; but a few—especially the younger ones and those older children whose lives have been quite insecure—will have a social maturity commensurate with their mental development. Since social maturity can be improved with good teacher guidance, the teacher has a responsibility to provide opportunities for social growth within her program.

**POTENTIAL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CHILDREN WITH VARIOUS INTELLIGENCE  
QUOTIENT LEVELS**

Chronological Age	Slow Learning Range					Slow Average Range					Average or Above	
	50	60	70	75	80	85	90	100	110			
6	Pre-K	Pre-K	K	K	K	K	K	K & 1.	1			
7	Pre-K	K	K	K	K	K	K & 1	1 & 2	2			
8	K	K	K	K & 1	K & 1	1	1 & 2	2 & 3	3			
9	K	K	K & 1	1	1 & 2	2	2 & 3	3 & 4	4			
10	K	K & 1	1 & 2	2	2 & 3	2 & 3	3 & 4	4 & 5	5			
11	K	1	2	2 & 3	3	3 & 4	4	5 & 6	6 & 7			
12	K & 1	1 & 2	2 & 3	3 & 4	4	4 & 5	5	6 & 7	7 & 8			
13	1	2	3 & 4	4	4 & 5	5 & 6	6	7 & 8	8 & 9			
14	1 & 2	2 & 3	4	5	5 & 6	6	7	8 & 9	9 & 10			
15	2	3 & 4	5	5 & 6	6 & 7	7	8	9 & 10	10 & 11			
16	2 & 3	4	5 & 6	6	7	8	9	10	12			
17	2 & 3	4	5 & 6	6	7	8	9	10	12			
18	2 & 3	4	5 & 6	6	7	8	9	10	12			

This chart represents a generalization which is generally true but will vary with individual children. Attention is called to the fact that these ranges represent assumed **maximum performance**, other things being equal. In thinking about the children for whom they have responsibility, teachers and administrators needs also to recognize the following:

1. Physiological development, social maturity, present level of acquired academic skills, if any, and experiential background must be considered before attempting to press towards maximum achievement.
2. No child performs "on a straight line." At all intellectual levels children will evidence strengths and weaknesses. They will generally perform best and be most interested in those subjects or activities closely related to personal strengths. Since school success frequently relates to verbal abilities, a child is likely to have problems in skills such as reading and arithmetic if his major strengths are in non-language areas.
3. There is no substitute for good teaching, timed appropriately for the growth patterns of the individual child.



## **Chapter X: WHAT DOES ONE TEACH SLOW-LEARNERS?**

### **A. The Language Arts Program**

Language is basic to living in any organized society; in one form or another it is used every waking moment. Therefore, in a school setting language cannot be something which is confined to any particular hour or period; it takes place **throughout** the day and permeates the **entire** curriculum.

Language is man's way of communicating ideas and sharing experiences with others. It evolves in an orderly pattern from babyhood to adulthood. The tiny baby hears sounds—a bark of a dog, a clap of thunder, the scream of a siren, at first with no observable reaction other than a startled response. After a time he shows evidences of separating or distinguishing sounds by locating and turning his head in the direction of the source of the sound. A little later a period of babbling and reaction to conversation can be observed. This may be the point where hearing comprehension begins. As growth continues there is a relationship noticed in the association of objects, people, and actions with words. As experiences broaden, the ability to think should develop; it continues in the active individual throughout life.

The degree of communication skill which a child brings with him to school depends upon three factors:

1. His physical development and well being—how well his eyes, ears, fingers, tongue, and nose act as intake agents to bring him into touch with the world around him.
2. His mental maturity—how far he has grown in terms of ability to interpret what he sees, feels, touches, tastes, and smells.
3. His experiential background—how broad his exposure has been to a variety of interesting things and how well he has been helped to understand his experiences.

The teacher will need to take into consideration individual differences in the above three factors when planning her language arts program.

#### **Experiential Background**

Since language is a communication process, it requires the inter-change of ideas. Before a child can have ideas, he must have experiences from which they can grow. At the very beginning of school, interesting experiences must be provided to stimulate

language use and development. As the school year moves on, as one year follows another, a wide variety of succeeding experiences should encourage more and more adequate use and understanding of language.

The experience, in and of itself, is not important; the increased understanding of himself and his environment as a result of the experience and the use which can be made of this information are what count in the life of the slow learner. A worthwhile experience, properly directed, helps to encourage awareness and interest in people, places, and things around him. It stimulates development of vocabulary by giving him something to talk about; eventually it should bring him to the place where he is interested in written language as well as in oral communication.

**Suggested Kinds of Experiences:**

1. **DIRECT**—where children have first hand contact with things around them. These may be things which the children have (sweaters, toys, books), things within the room—(chairs, chalk, cupboards, classroom pets and plants), things which may be discovered within the building, the school grounds, and the neighborhood. Even though many of these will be familiar, it is not safe to assume that because children have had frequent contact with an article they really understand what it is and how it is used. They need to be guided towards direct exploration of each of these in as many of the following ways as possible: seeing, hearing, handling or touching, tasting, smelling, and using. For example:

a. Apples are fruit which most children have seen, eaten or at least heard about. However, to be certain they completely understand the concept of apple, a number of different varieties need to be collected in the room where the following kinds of observations can be made:

Visual—differences in size, color

Touch—texture, as smoothness of skin

Taste—differences in sweetness, tartness

Smell—odor when ripe, when cooking (applesauce, etc.)

Motor—related to use—What is it for? To eat, to cook (applesauce, pies, tarts, apple butter, etc.) to drink (apple juice, cider).

b. Bells are used in primary classes in connection with music. What kinds of experiences are involved in developing the concept of "bell"? With a collection of bells, there may be: