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DIFFERENT BUT EQUAL, A SPECIAL REPORT.
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PRESENTED IS AN INFORMAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH SPONSORED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ON IMPROVING THE EDUCATION OF THE STATE'S DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN. VARIOUS PROJECTS ARE EXPLORING (1) ATTITUDES AND SELF-IMAGE AMONG NEGROES, (2) THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASS, ATTITUDE, AND ACHIEVEMENT, AND (3) THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN. OTHER STUDIES ARE CONCERNED WITH (1) SCHOOL DESEGREGATION AND QUALITY EDUCATION, (2) THE CULTURAL GAP BETWEEN MIDDLE-CLASS TEACHERS AND LOWER-CLASS STUDENTS, AND (3) LANGUAGE SKILLS AND DIALECT DIFFERENCES. THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS, 101 UNIVERSITY HALL, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720. (NH)

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DIFFERENT BUT EQUAL:

University of California research to improve teaching of disadvantaged children.

A Special Report to The Regents of the University of California

May, 1967

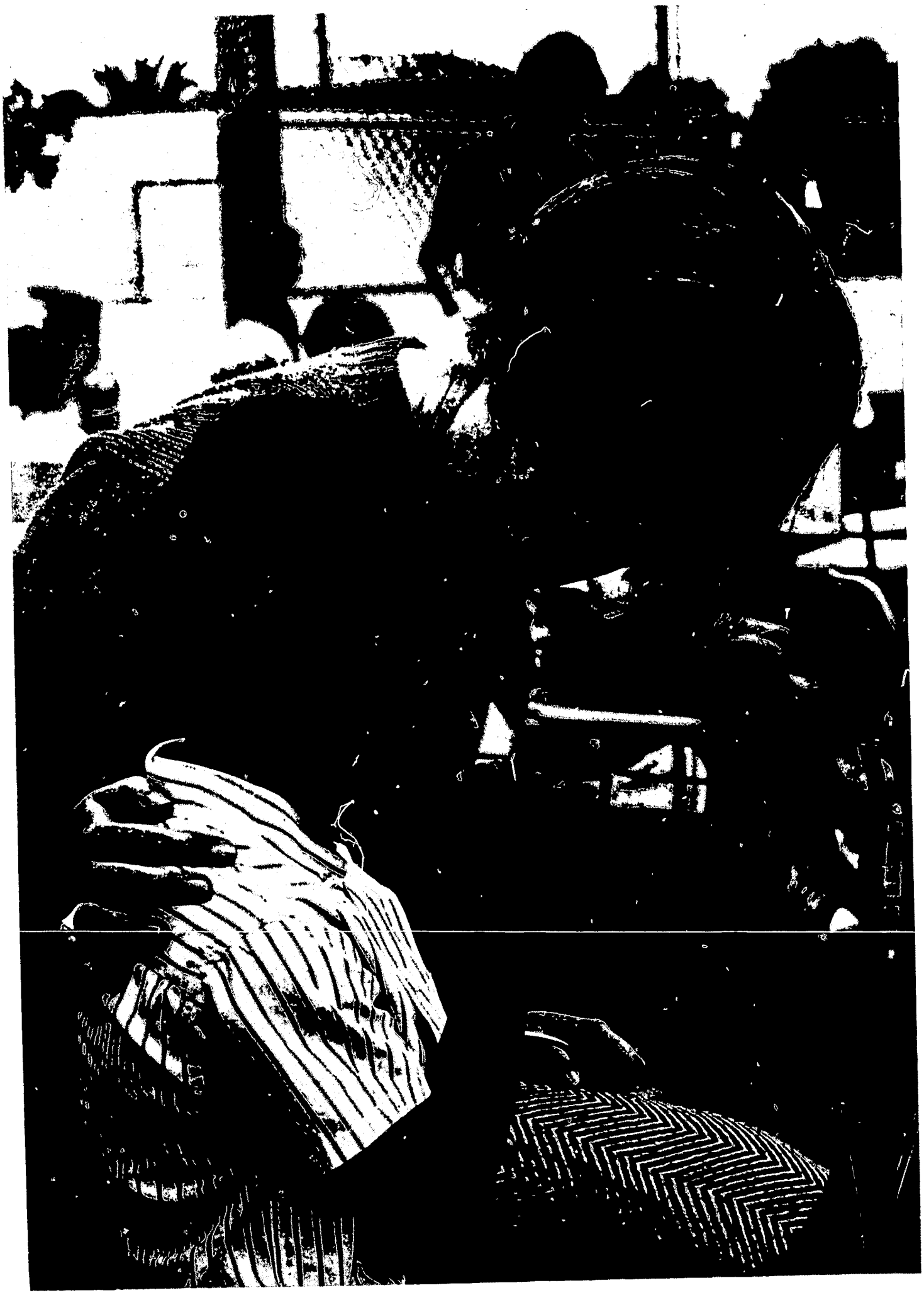
It is 130 years since Horace Mann's ideal of universal free public education was set to work in this country, but American schools still fall short of it. All our giant steps toward equal schooling have served both to enlarge our concept of what we must do and to sharpen our judgments about what we have done.

Thus the Supreme Court's desegregation decision of 1954 rewrote the ideal of equal schooling in North and South. And mid-century declarations of equal freedoms have started out by acknowledging that our schools still don't provide what Mann said was prerequisite: a basic state of literacy for all.

Schools' efforts to achieve universal literacy can't be gauged by one standard because there are striking differences among students in their capacities to profit from schooling. Some differences schools probably can't change, such as that part of intelligence that's inherited. Other differences which affect learning--such as poor eyesight, malnutrition, emotional disturbance, poverty and discrimination--can often be dealt with.

In a text for student teachers, R. Murray Thomas, dean of the School of Education at the University of California's Santa Barbara campus, says, "Children may need to be treated differentially rather than identically in order better to ensure them equal opportunities to learn."

U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe put it this way: "Some youngsters--those born and raised in the inner-city ghetto, for instance--require much more than an 'average' education just to give them an average start in life."



Watts schools are proving-grounds for UCLA's able young student teachers.
Allen Hogle

Who's failing?

"By all known criteria, the majority of urban and rural slum schools are failures," charged the Research and Development Panel advising the U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1964. "In neighborhood after neighborhood across the country more than half of each age group fails to complete high school. In many schools the average measured IQ is under 85, and it drops steadily as the children grow older."

In the 1950's the crisis in education was defined as a crisis in buildings and teachers, Joseph D. Lohman, dean of UC-Berkeley's School of Criminology, points out. "This we now recognize was a superficial commentary on the educational task, for we have not reduced school dropouts by having more teachers or buildings. We have not reversed the IQ trend. . . ."

Failure in school, Lohman emphasizes, means failure in what, to these youngsters, represents the general community. Thus, the crisis in education in the 1960's has been and still is that minority youth "confront school with such handicaps that they are unable to profit from the purpose and program of education."

Perhaps it is too much to ask the schools by themselves to lessen those handicaps, giving the culturally different child an average start in life. Charles S. Benson, professor of education at UC-Berkeley, contends, "The school is a rather weak instrument to compensate for the disparity that exists between the homelife of the lower-class child with the homelife of the middle-class child. Assuming we are trying to bring lower-class up to middle-class, we must deal also with jobs, housing, recreational and welfare services available in the whole neighborhood in which poor children live."

"What will be, will be."

For the lower-class Negro child these other aspects of his experience create attitudes which tend to hold him back even when external barriers of discrimination are removed, believes Alan B. Wilson, associate professor in UC-Berkeley's School of Education and research associate at the Survey Research Center.

In several community surveys and action projects among Negro school children and their parents in Richmond, Wilson and others are trying to find out whether such attitudes can be changed, and, if so, whether the change affects school performance. These studies are supported by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Office of Economic Opportunity.

From his surveys of teenagers and adults in seventeen hundred Negro households, Wilson reported "sharp contrasts between the Negro and other youths--regardless of social class--in their estimation of their own ability and the possibility of controlling their fate." On a questionnaire item, "I'm capable of getting A's and B's in school," 22 per cent of Negro boys answered "yes," compared to 45 per cent of other boys. Responding to the item, "What is going to happen to me will happen no matter what I do," 40 per cent of Negro boys agreed, compared to 22 per cent of the others.

These feelings of "incompetence, futility and alienation characterize the beliefs and behavior of low-income Negro adults as well as youth," Wilson found. They do not participate in school affairs. "Their personal contacts are frequently unsatisfying," he wrote. "There is a discrepancy in culture--in language and values--and sometimes a conflict in interest between the poor and the professional functionaries."

Wilson believes it's likely that most school people have adopted bureaucratic practices which serve merely to lessen the plight of the poor, while perpetuating their dependency.

Two experiments are designed to repair this alienation. One places Negro "new careerists" on school staffs to act as go-betweens between school and home. The other attempts to change attitudes toward schooling by placing children in parent-cooperative nursery schools and in after-school study halls. The nursery schools and study halls are being run for two years in a public school, a neighborhood house, and a Negro community action group. These agencies are assumed to have widely varying degrees and styles of working with parents and neighbors. The project's goal is to see whether the programs which most successfully involve adults will improve children's attitudes toward school, and thus affect their success in learning.

Social class, attitude and achievement.

A slum school is a children's domain in a far more literal sense than a middle-class school. For in a grade school where lower-class children dominate the enrollment, children's values, not adults', reign among the pupils.

This striking characteristic of slum schools was reported by Alan Wilson and T. Bentley Edwards, Berkeley professor of education, after their 1959-63 San Francisco area study, "Attitudes as Related to Success in School," for the U.S. Office of Education. The finding has been echoed and underscored in the Office's 1966 survey (the Coleman Report) and the more recent report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on the nation's progress toward desegregating schools and improving education for Negroes.

Edwards and Wilson found much stronger social solidarity--valuing of friends' approval, resistance to adult standards--among sixth-graders in laboring-class schools than among children in middle-class schools. They found that in lower-class schools success in schoolwork was not important in gaining approval from friends. And they found teachers tending to pitch their expectations at the levels set by the students themselves. These attitudes are a heavy lid on pupils' school achievement.

All this is true of lower-class white as well as Negro schools, Wilson added last year, after a study of Richmond schools. He concludes that even if schools in poor neighborhoods become racially integrated, so long as they remain socially and economically segregated--that is, overwhelmingly lower-class--student and teacher attitudes will continue to interfere with learning. Thus it appears that integration must mean mixing social classes as well as races.

But the merger must take place earlier than in junior high. As Edwards and Wilson observed in Berkeley in 1963, when the "flatland" children, inadequately prepared, joined with the middle-class "hill" children, they had to meet equal academic standards.

"Those from the flats are almost automatically and necessarily assigned to a vocational rather than an academic curriculum," Wilson wrote in 1963. "This comes to many of them as an unanticipated and discriminatory jolt."

Compensatory or complementary?

No comparable specific data have been gathered about the school attitudes and experiences of Mexican-American children beyond the general conviction of anthropologists and sociologists that the Mexican-American child comes to school from a culture which is much more different and separate than the Negro's from mainstream America.

UCLA's Mexican-American Study Project is a major effort to fill the gap in knowledge about this minority group. Its study of the public schools is conducted by Thomas P. Carter, assistant professor of education at the UC-Riverside campus. He observes American teaching of Mexican-Americans from the perspective of his prior study of education in several Latin-American nations.

Carter's survey of school programs for Mexican-American children covers Southern California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern Colorado. It is supported by the College Entrance Examination Board. Its concern is with the basic assumptions and goals of so-called "compensatory" programs, past and present. "Are they attempts to impose the

dominant white middle-class culture on children whose non-school experiences are assumed to be largely negative or non-existent?" Carter wants to know. "Or does the school with Mexican-American children assume that both majority and minority ways of life are valid, try to stimulate diffusion of both throughout the school, and try to make a real liaison with the minority community outside the school?"

He is particularly concerned with studying school systems which use both Spanish and English to instruct primary Mexican-American children, which continue to teach both languages to all pupils, and where teachers emphasize values and experiences of both societies--both bread and tortillas.

Compensation or integration?

At Riverside, the University's education, sociology and psychology departments are cooperating with that city's school district in its swift, sweeping, and widely hailed district-wide desegregation program, begun in September 1966.

The University is studying the educational effect of integration on all the children involved, Mexican-Americans, Negroes, Anglos. Special at-

tention is given to the differences between Mexican-American children--whose parents first resisted integration--and Negro children--whose parents demanded the wholesale reshuffling of school populations rather than continued "compensatory" education programs in three de facto segregated schools.

The University's seven-year study on the response of the child and his family to desegregation will be based on preintegration interviews with eighteen hundred kindergartners through sixth-graders and their parents. Annual checks on school performance and attitudes will be supplemented by interviews with teachers and children's friends.

Another aspect is an evaluation of in-service training which can prepare teachers and administrators for the new experience of teaching poor minority group children. The study is financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, Regents' special opportunity funds, and state compensatory education funds.

Surveying the de facto segregated West Oakland schools in 1966, a UC-school district-redevelopment agency study concluded the only way to integrate them is to make them excellent, and make their neighborhoods at least average.

"There is no simple linkage between pupils' poor performance in school and any one of three variables--segregation, poor schools, poor environment," the team reported. "In order to widen the educational choices open to ghetto children, it will be necessary to change all three." Environmental changes required include housing, recreation areas, health services, and jobs.

The project was financed by state compensatory education funds and directed by T. Bentley Edwards, professor of education at Berkeley.

At present West Oakland's high school--McClymonds--and its two "feeder" junior highs and seven elementary schools are nearly 100 per cent Negro and generally judged inferior academically when compared with predominantly white schools. Anything more than token integration appears to be years away. It won't come until all Oakland residents assume that the McClymonds area schools are equal or even better than others in the city, according to the report, "McClymonds: a Search for Environmental and Educational Excellence."

The program they recommend to achieve high quality--and thus equality--in McClymonds is an educational park. It would combine all levels of schooling on one campus; or possibly make a campus for each level--elementary, junior high and senior high. The educational park would provide all its schools with central computer and television instruction, library, language and science labs, gymnasiums, humanities center,

Lynn Phipps

Tutoring by a UC-Berkeley student volunteer adds something "more than average" to the reading lesson of a West Oakland pupil. With rare intensity the tutor shares the child's successive moods of bafflement, concentration, and distraction as they work together. At the breakthrough of understanding, the tutor is as delighted and satisfied as the boy.

auditorium and theater, dining facilities, as well as services such as counseling, health, exceptional and compensatory education.

"The educational park is controversial," the report notes. "It questions the time-honored system of neighborhood schools. But it may be the only type of facility which can afford to experiment . . . in the manner necessary to solve the complexities of modern urban life and the problems of ghetto children."

A hybrid of the educational park also offers possibilities. The report suggested linking third through fifth grades with a junior high complex (sixth through eighth) in an educational park, and leaving preschool through second grades in neighborhood schools so that very small children start school close to home.

Public preschool education is vital, the report states, and describes Edwards' idea for "cottage schools," enrolling two- and three-year-olds all day, five days a week, in a homelike center providing meals, health checkups, parent counseling, enriched play and excursions, and intensive language training. Staff would include UC graduate students studying social welfare and preschool education.

Other McClymonds committee recommendations:

- Secondary schools must start right away to provide far more practical options for students--vocational and business training that prepares graduates to meet beginner standards in available jobs, and academic preparation that puts Negro high school graduates on a par with whites in applying for college.

- In elementary schools, the pupil should be free to explore educational interests outside the core curriculum; reading and math teaching should be strengthened; influence of white middle-class symbols in curriculums, texts, and styles of teaching should be reduced.

Cultural disadvantage of the middle-class teacher . . . ?

Teaching the disadvantaged child is acknowledged to be the most difficult and most important job in education. But in tackling it, the average American teacher starts with disadvantages in training, experience and attitude.

The question of how middle-class attitudes, ingrained in the overwhelming majority of teachers, affect their abilities to teach lower-class minority youth is often raised. In his 1963 study of Oakland schools for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, UC-Berkeley Law Professor Ira M. Heyman paraphrased a pessimistic school principal:

"He sees the average teacher (including the Negro teacher) as authoritarian and inflexible, a person who demands conformity to middle-class codes of behavior and refuses to consider sympathetically the reasons for what appears to him as antisocial conduct on the part of Negro students. . . ."

Those teachers who bypass the "middle-class hang-up" and communicate effectively with their pupils owe their success to practical classroom behavior, not to idealistic attitudes. This was the conclusion of an Education-Criminology project, "Cultural Patterns of Differentiated Youth," at Berkeley in 1963-64. For a year, researchers observed and questioned 40 East Bay high school teachers chosen for their success with disadvantaged students. They concluded these teachers did not have exceptionally enlightened attitudes about race, nor did their basic attitudes change significantly in the year's seminar discussions about new knowledge relating to race.

But if teachers are capable, practical, imaginative, objective, and genuine in facing the educational needs of their pupils, the study found, hostile attitudes of both teacher and students can recede. "Attitudes do not have to be changed prior to modification of actual behavior," the researchers stressed.

The project also reported that new findings from psychology, anthropology, and sociology can be used by working teachers only if they translate them into anecdotes describing actual classroom behavior.

There are two prerequisites to the teacher's ability to change his classroom behavior: support from the school administration, and the teacher's understanding--factual and pragmatic--of the culture which has shaped his pupils' attitudes toward learning.

"Workshops for re-training teachers in newly integrating schools are a good first effort," says Staten Webster, a supervisor in teacher education at Berkeley and veteran director of such workshops. "But the new ideas must be bought by the power structure of the schools. Teachers in these schools cannot change unless they have flexible administrators willing to change."

And, Webster adds, young teachers going into slum schools--"not as missionaries but to acquaint themselves with a wider part of the world"--must understand the cultural influences which cause these students to behave as they do.

Eugene McCreary, also a teacher education supervisor at Berkeley, and one of the directors of the study on teacher attitudes, says young white middle-class teachers can succeed teaching ghetto Negro youth "if you can

get them to understand that much of the students' behavior is not ethnic behavior, it's social-class behavior, and you don't get excited about it."

Nor do you need to get authoritarian about it, McCreary has learned. "Authoritarianism is not the only attitude that works. A teacher who is consistent can minimize punishment. You must know yourself, have confidence in yourself, be free of guilt about race. You must know what you want to do and how to do it. There is great danger in a white teacher relying on punishment in teaching Negro children. Using punishment across cultural lines makes the barriers greater." McCreary acknowledges that this is an issue that is highly controversial. "But it needs to be talked about."

These men and others responsible for teacher training in the University of California have found that accepting attitudes toward pupils cannot take the place of the teacher's command of subject matter and method. Thorough knowledge of subject, of the psychology of learning, and practice in superior classroom techniques are rated the foremost reasons for the success of UCLA's young white student teachers in the schools of Watts.

Language and intelligence.

"Cultural disadvantage" has become the common euphemism for minority children's troubles in school, but many educators now maintain their main disadvantage is verbal not cultural. The disparity between the lower-class Negro child and his dialect and the usage of the schools has been documented by Walter Loban, associate professor of education at Berkeley, in his thirteen-year research for the U.S. Office of Education on the spoken language of school children.

In a sub-study, Loban has counted and classified differences between speech of Caucasian and Negro children, whose language he recorded from kindergarten through high school.

Comparing low-language-proficiency white children with similar Negro children, Loban found the Negroes' deviations from standard English enormously greater. But when he discounted those deviations which he identified as dialect, the groups were similar in performance. This means, Loban says, that dialect-speaking Negro children have to spend most of their energy overcoming deviations which white children never encounter. They must do this because "society exacts severe penalties of those who do not speak the prestige dialect."

Negro dialect has an adequate grammar, Loban found. It uses essentially the same sentence patterns as middle-class language. But it does not provide for elaboration of simple sentences with subordinate clauses, apposites, infinitives, and phrases.

Loban likens these findings to those of Basil Bernstein, who studied the language of Cockney youth in England and described it in terms of "rigidity of syntax . . . restricted use of the structural possibilities for sentence organization . . . condensed speech."

Bernstein found the language proficiency of Cockney youngsters much lower than their scores on a non-verbal intelligence test. Loban cites Bernstein as one authority for his own conviction that the linguistic differences between dialect-speaking Negro children and middle-class whites do not necessarily reflect differences in basic ability.

"I teach myself by talking to myself."

To educational psychologists a child's language is the visible top of an enormously significant iceberg: the underlying mental processes called "verbal mediation." Arthur R. Jensen, professor of educational psychology at Berkeley, defines them as "talking to yourself in relevant ways--usually below the level of awareness"--when you have to learn something, to solve a problem or to master a new concept.

At the Santa Barbara campus, Howard H. Kendler, professor of psychology, and his wife, Tracy, a research psychologist, have shown that this silent speech is the self-stimulator which is the most vital in problem-solving, developing in children from four to seven. To many psychologists it appears to be a function of the child's experience, which is changeable, not of his fixed inborn capacity.

Because the learning problems of many lower-class minority group children have been shown to stem from poor verbal mediation, Jensen describes them not as "culturally disadvantaged" but as "verbally underdeveloped."

Typically, they have not experienced in their homes the attentive listening, talking-together, questioning-and-answering with parents, from babyhood on, that is exercise for minds just as vital as kicking, creeping, walking and running are for muscles. Jensen emphasizes this is not a lack of parental love and nurturing, but a differing pattern of family life.

At the Institute of Human Learning in Berkeley, Jensen and William Rohwer and their associates are comparing lower-class and middle-class children's use of verbal mediation in learning tasks. They have found that lower-class Mexican-American fourth-graders performed only at the levels of white middle-class kindergartners on a task requiring verbal mediation. But the Mexican-American children performed up to their grade level on tasks which either did not depend on talking to themselves or in which they were helped to verbally mediate during the test.

The experimenters conclude that the handicap in the Mexican-American children was neither low intelligence nor a family language different from that used in the schools. Rather, they had not learned important verbal skills before they came to school.

To Jensen, the language problem of such children is not just communication. "Language serves not only . . . as a means of communication, but it is also of crucial importance as a tool of thought." The child without this tool, left to mature all by himself without special help, is doomed to early and increasing failure, in Jensen's view.

"If such a child has a low educational ceiling for essentially the same reason that a person will fail calculus if he hasn't first learned algebra," he writes, "the fault is with the conduct of the educational process and not with the child's basic equipment for learning."

Can the educational process be amended so that poor children start first grade with less handicap? A UCLA project for the U.S. Office of Education may show how much help preschool language training can be.

In the Preschool Language Program, Evan R. Keislar, professor of educational psychology, and Carolyn Stern, research psychologist, are providing intensive language training to four- and five-year-olds in several

Children listen to stories. . .

. . . tell stories

Los Angeles day care centers. For two years they'll have daily 15-minute lessons in groups of four and five.

Using a variety of audio-visual teaching devices, the lessons present a kaleidoscope of attention-getting color, illustration, music, humor, stories, puppets, and other objects to manipulate. But their single aim is language: speaking, listening, and verbal mediation ability.

The project aims to bring these children six months ahead of a control group by the time they start first grade, and have them keep the advantage through the first year of school.

It is on this point of hanging on to their advantage that the sharpest criticisms of the preschool Headstart programs are made. Headstart merely helps disadvantaged children adjust to a school classroom setting ". . . and learning advantages seem to disappear in the first year or two." This was reputed to the State Committee on Public Education last year by Arthur Jensen, Alan Wilson, and David L. Elliott, the latter, an assistant professor of education at Berkeley and head of the new graduate program there in early childhood education.

Headstart's weakness, believes Elliott, is that the standard "well-rounded" nursery school doesn't fill in the gaps in the disadvantaged child's development. Well-roundedness for such children must include sharp-pointed emphasis on language functioning and tools of thinking, he says.

At UCLA, Mrs. Stern is directing a Headstart Evaluation and Research Office, one of 12 centers in the nation where the Office of Economic Opportunity seeks to see what effects various preschool programs have on different types of children. Since there are few dependable instruments for measuring the language ability of Headstart children, a first task of the UCLA office is developing and trying out new tests.

Among several other questions the office is studying are these: 1) When you train children to think by "talking to themselves," is their own dialect just as useful as standard English? 2) Can parents of Headstart children be given specific training in how to teach their children at home? Will such training increase the children's success in school?

Mixing a variety of teaching and a variety of youngsters, Peter B. Lenrow, assistant professor of psychology at Berkeley, in the summer of 1966 enrolled equal numbers of middle-class and poor children in each of three preschool classes at the Child Study Center. One program was like a parent-cooperative play school--lots of enrichment and little adult ordering. Two others were professionally staffed--one teacher for every five children--and strongly structured. One systematically taught logical thinking; the other fostered inventiveness and self-expression with carefully organized but free-choice activities.

Now scattered in public school kindergartens, the children are still being observed for answers to questions such as these: Did either of the structured programs help disadvantaged children more than the well-rounded, free-play nursery? Did the highly directed teaching of how to think squelch some children's zest, creativity, and self-confident resourcefullness? The study is sponsored by state compensatory education funds.

The idea that learning ability is both inherited and acquired from early environment and experience has striking implications for all children, not just low-achievers and minority children. "Many school children," Jensen observes, "seem to be operating at a level about 10 to 15 IQ points below their innate potential."

And even though most middle-class children get along quite well without nursery school, Elliott says, "To deal with the educationally disadvantaged as a special group in early childhood education is to be very short-sighted. . . . We must learn more about the relationship between instruction (or any kind of outside stimulation) and the cognitive and language development in all children." We have to find out, he says, not only why certain children fail, but why others succeed, and how to provide schooling equal to the promise of all.

• • •

Thus, what teachers need to learn about their pupils is not how much they succeed or fail, but in what ways they are different. When it comes to schooling "same" does not mean "equal." As Ralph Waldo Emerson--Horace Mann's contemporary--instructs us, "Each mind hath its own method."

BACK COVER

Self-portrait of Angela, five-year-old pupil in the Berkeley Child Study Center's experimental program for preschoolers. The figure on the front cover is by Angela, too.

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