DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 752 EC 042 067

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Folman, Rosalind; Budoff, Milton |
| TITLE | Social Interests and Activities of Special and Regular Class Adolescents and Compared by Learning Potential Status. Volume 2, Number 36. |
| INSTITUTION | Research Inst. for Educational Problems, Cambridge, Mass. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C. |
| BUREAU NO | BR-8-0506 |
| PUB DATE | 72 |
| GRANT | OEG-0-8-080506-4597(607) |
| NOTE | 36p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | Adolescents; Cocurricular Activities; *Educable Mentally Handicapped; *Exceptional Child Research; Learning Characteristics; Mentally Handicapped; *Regular Class Placement; *Social Attitudes; *Special Classes; Underachievers |

ABSTRACT

Low achieving regular class and educable mentally retarded (EMR) special class adolescents from a white, low-income, urban district were administered the learning potential procedure and were interviewed to determine differences in their after-school, non-academic activities. Few differences were reported in the social interests and activities of these two samples. The more able special class students reported themselves to be more isolated socially, engaged in more passive activities, or in athletics, did not belong to peer groups, disliked group activities, and said they did not desire to change their situation. The less able (nongainer) students reported more active social involvements with their peers. Data indicated that nongainers give socially desirable responses which do not reflect their actual behaviors. (For related studies, see also EC 042 064 and 042 065.) (Author/CB)

# STUDIES IN LEARNING POTENTIAL

Social Interests and Activities
of Special and Regular Class Adolescents
and Compared by Learning Potential Status

by

Rosalind Folman and Milton Budoff
Research Institute for Educational Problems





Volume 2, Number 36
1972

Research Institute For Educational Problems
12 Maple Avenue Cambridge, Massachusetts

# Social Interests and Activities of Special and Regular Class Adolescents and Compared by Learning Potential Status

Rosalind Folman and Milton Budoff
Research Institute for Educational Problems

## Summary

Low achieving regular class and educable mentally retarded (EMR) special class adolescents from a white, low-income, urban district were administered the learning potential procedure and were interviewed to determine differences in their after-school, non-academic activities.

There were few differences reported in the social interests and activities of these two samples. Their activities and interests lacked variety, and except for athletic interests, tended to be unstructured and focused on an interpersonal, belonging dimension rather than knowledge-oriented. The special class students tend to report themselves as more socially isolated and as peripheral group members.

The more able special class students by the learning potential assessment reported themselves to be more isolated socially, engaged in more passive activities, or in athletics, did not belong to peer groups, disliked group activities, and said they did not desire to change their situation. The less able (nongainer) students reported more active social involvements with their peers. Data from this and other studies indicates that nongainers

give socially desirable responses which do not reflect their actual behaviors.

The problem remains whether the reported social isolation reflects their perception of their stigmatized status, or social maladroitness associated with mental retardation.

# Social Interests and Activities of Special and Regular Class Adolescents and Compared by Learning Potential Status

Rosalind Folman and Milton Budoff
Research Institute for Educational Problems

## Introduction and Method

Previous papers have reported the responses of urban low income white students drawn from regular and special classes for the educable mentally retarded (EMR) to questions related to vocational aspirations and expectations (Folman & Budoff, 1971A), and toward various school-related attitudinal variables (Folman & Budoff, 1971B). The present paper reports their responses to questions regarding their social and peer group behavior.

A review of the literature regarding the social interests, desires, and behaviors of special class students indicated few germane studies. A few studies reported on the social acceptability of school age EMRs to regular class children. Those that studied IQ-defined EMRs' social interests and behaviors interviewed mildly retarded adult subjects or regular class slow learners. The only germane study (Blatt, 1958) reported that the special class students were more socially mature and emotionally stable than students who had been psychometrically defined as EMRs but retained in regular class. The latter group were reported to have more problems in personal and social adjustment when they were compared to nonEMR regular class students. There were no differences between

special and regular class EMRs in their expressed social interests and hobbies. Unfortunately, however, there was no mention of how S's range of interests and his degree of involvement compared with nonEMR regular class students.

Parsons(1958) hypothesized that an individual's social interests were a joint function of an individual's intellectual level and his status needs. Thus, persons homogeneous on IQ and work output will not function homogeneously in other areas, i.e., have similar interests, motivation, needs, etc. Individuals at different IQ levels, but with similar striving needs, if given the opportunity to realize them, may exhibit more similar behavior patterns than individuals of the same IQ level who possess different needs. He confirmed this hypothesis in an interview using industrial workers and such measures as degree to which S participates in social activities, number of organizations S belongs to, leadership roles, social participation, and a measure of striving behavior, the degree to which S is motivated to improve his standing relative to others.

Parsons' formulation guided this inquiry of social interests and activities. As in the previous reports, there were two major concerns. Firstly, to what extent do urban low income white marginally adequate students in regular classes differ in their perceptions of their social selves from psychometrically defined educable mentally retarded students assigned to special classes? The few consistent differences in the vocational and academic areas of the interview could be accounted for by the differences in their school experiences. The regular class students aspired and expected

to attain higher level (white collar) jobs, and saw themselves as able to be better students, though they didn't value school highly. Unlike the special class students, they tended to perceive school as relevant to their adult lives. These major areas of difference can be ascribed to the special class Ss' stigmatized state by virtue of their placement in a segregated special class and their continuing failure to cope adequately with school subjects. That is, if one is overtly consigned to the class for "dummies," it is more difficult to see the future in terms of school-associated opportunities. The question then is, do these differences pervade the social realm, where school-associated abilities may not be of paramount importance.

The second concern was to study whether differences in socially defined competencies would be associated with the continuum of ability described by the learning potential assessment procedure (Budoff, 1969). In the learning potential assessment, the student is taught how to solve reasoning types of problems following a pretest. His attainments on the posttest, following training, indicate his capacity to profit from a systematic learning experience. Three patterns of response are evident among Ss whose scores fall within the EMR IQ range (50-79 IQ). Some Ss (high scorers) demonstrate excellent understanding on the trial prior to training, figuring out the problems as they proceed from easy to harder instances, and performing at levels typical of higher IQ children. Other Ss (gainers) perform poorly on the pretest administration, but do improve their scores markedly following instruction. The third group of Ss (nongainers) perform poorly initially and do not profit

from the instructional procedure.

Various data indicate that the improved ability displayed on the reasoning task is not task-specific, but that Ss differing in learning potential status demonstrate consistently different levels of competence on other psychometric and learning tasks (Budoff, 1967, Budoff & Pagell, 1968), in their educational capability, (Budoff, Meskin, & Harrison, 1971) and distinctive patterns on some motivational scales (Harrison & Budoff, 1971). The pattern of these differences among psychometrically defined EMR populations suggests the hypothesis that the high able learning potential (LP) child (high scorers and gainers) represents instances of severe educational handicap, while the uniformly poor performance of nongainers may functionally define them as mentally handicapped. The hypothesis of this study was that the more able special class students, as defined by the learning potential assessment (high scorers and gainers), would demonstrate more social competence than the less able nongainer, and report activities and social involvements similar to those displayed by the low achieving regular class students.

## Method

### Subjects.

The same samples and assignment procedures described by Folman and Budoff (1971) were used as respondents for the present report. In brief, the samples consisted of all the non- brain damaged Ss in three EMR special classes and regular class controls drawn from the low academic tracks of the same urban, low income, white junior high school.

Mean CA was 14 years of age. Special and regular class Ss differed significantly in IQ (means were 69.97 and 92.31 respectively) and CA of regular class Ss were younger (means were 14.42 and 13.18 respectively)(Table 1). Learning potential groups also differed significantly in IQ, in accordance with previous findings on large EMR samples (Budoff, 1970). The groups did not differ significantly in social class background as determined by rating the principal wage earner's occupation according to Turner's classifications (Turner, 1964) (Table 2).

---

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

---

All the special and regular class students were assessed by the learning potential procedure using the Kohs Block design procedure. This procedure involves three individual administrations of the sixteen test designs and five coaching designs: prior to instruction, one day and then one month following coaching. A tuition session using five coaching designs is interpolated between the first two administrations (For details of the procedure, see Budoff & Friedman, 1964). Based on the patterns of performance displayed on the learning potential task, the students were assigned a learning potential status. Students were considered gainers if they met the criterion of solving at least four or more designs (excluding coaching designs) on the post-coaching sessions than on the pretest; nongainers included all those coached Ss whose pre- to posttest score change was less than four designs; high

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Retarded and Nonretarded Samples for IQ, CA, and Occupational Rating of Principal Wage Earner

| | | IQ | | CA | | Mean occupational rating | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interviewed students | N | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD | $\bar{X}$ | SD |
| Educable retarded | | | | | | | |
| High scorers | 12 | 72.83 | 9.89 | 175.42 | 5.27 | 2.25 | .75 |
| Gainers | 19 | 66.31 | 7.95 | 171.16 | 11.77 | 2.11 | 1.33 |
| Nongainers | 15 | 72.33 | 3.16 | 173.47 | 11.69 | 2.00 | .85 |
| Nonretarded | | | | | | | |
| High scorers | 17 | 94.24 | 11.41 | 158.94 | 12.11 | 2.35 | 1.32 |
| Gainers | 8 | 85.63 | 8.63 | 160.25 | 11.47 | 1.38 | 1.51 |
| Nongainers | 8 | 94.88 | 6.71 | 154.37 | 11.66 | 1.88 | 1.81 |

Table 2

Summary of Analyses of Variance for Retarded and Nonretarded Samples for IQ, CA, and Occupational Rating of Principal Wage Earner

| Source | df | F | F | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EMR status | 1 | 132.63** | 34.73** | 0.15 |
| LP status | 2 | 6.09* | 0.43 | 1.13 |
| EMR X LP | 2 | 0.20 | 0.79 | 0.72 |
| Residual mean square | 73 | 72.30 | 122.30 | 1.57 |

*$p<.01$

**$p<.001$

scorers successfully solved one of the difficult 9 or 16 block problems in the upper half of the test series prior to tuition.

Interview.

The student was read a series of open-ended questions which sought to tap the number and type of social activities in which he engaged or would have liked to engage. The questions were arranged so that those relating to a specific type of social activity were grouped together. Each subsection followed the same format. S was first asked directly whether or not he engaged in the specific activity. If he responded positively, he was then given a series of questions aimed at tapping his degree of involvement in the activity, i.e., frequency of participation, attitudes toward it, reason for engaging in it, etc. If S responded negatively, he was asked whether or not he would like to engage in the activity. A positive response was followed by several questions whose aim was to determine whether S's desire to engage in the activity represented an authentic interest or a socially desirable response, i.e., questions were asked inquiring into his reason for desiring activity, reason for not presently engaging in it, specific aspect of activity that interests S, etc. Those Ss who reported no desire to engage in the activity were just asked for their reasons.

The questions referred specifically to three distinct categories of social activities, general leisure activities both in and out of the home, structured group activities and non-academic lessons. S was also questioned on the role assigned to him by his peers in social activities based on both hypothetical

and real social situations. In addition, S was asked to report on his family's social activities.

Each category was then analyzed as a separate entity as well as part of an overall outside interest score.

Statistics.

The $X^2$ statistic was employed for all analyses, special versus regular class and the nongainer X gainer X high scorer comparisons being based on one and two degrees of freedom, respectively. The comparisons among the three LP groups were analyzed by one of two methods: the two degrees of freedom were subdivided into their linear (HS and G versus NG) and quadratic (G versus HS and NG) components, each based on one df. Gainers were combined with either NG or HS depending on the variable in question, and compared with the remaining group. These analytic methods increase the sensitivity of the $X^2$ test in that while an overall $X^2$ may not be significant, it may have significant components which ordinarily would be overlooked.

## Results

The results section is divided into three parts paralleling the interest areas of this inquiry: leisure activities, non-academic lessons, and club membership.

Leisure Activities.

A. Special and Regular Class Comparison.

As indicated in Table 3 the special and regular class students did not differ in the percentage of children who engaged in leisure activities, but in the types of activity in which they engaged.

Although more special class students reported that their most usual after-school activities were at home, the majority of both groups engaged in leiusre activities away from home. These activities tended to be mainly non-specific such as "hanging around," going to one another's house, etc. The majority of the students also mentioned passive activities at home, such as watching TV or listening to the radio. While both groups lack variety in their leisure activities, the regular class student, in comparison to the special class student, engaged in a slightly greater variety of focused activities and hobbies. While more special class students desired additional leisure activities, those mentioned were non-specific, "hanging around" with a different group of peers, going to a playground which is prohibited by parents, etc. The activities desired were different only in the persons or loci involved.

---

Insert Table 3 about here

---

B. Comparisons by learning potential within special class.

The variables that differentiated special from regular class students differentiated learning potential groups within the special class as well. As is evident in Table 3, the nongainers and gainers behaved similarly in contrast to the high scorer who reported fewer focused interests (hobbies) and more passive activities (watching TV). While more high scorers desired more leisure activities, their choices were non-specific.

Table 3

Reported and Desired Leisure Interests

| | Special and Regular Class Comparison | | | | Comparisons within Special Class | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent | | | | Percent | | | | |
| Variable | Retarded | Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Non-gainer | Gainer | High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
| Leisure Activities | | | | | | | | | |
| a. staying home | .24 | .06 | 4.24 | .05 | .25 | .21 | .25 | - | NS |
| b. friend, clubs | .76 | .94 | | | .75 | .79 | .75 | | |
| Desires Leisures Activities | .57 | .34 | 3.71 | .06 | .50 | .42 | .83 | 4.75[a] | .05 |
| Intrinsic Reason for not engaging in activities | .16 | .18 | - | NS | .30 | .17 | 0.00 | 3.17[b] | .09 |
| Engages in Hobby | .67 | .73 | - | NS | .67 | .67 | .67 | - | NS |
| Type of Hobby | | | | | | | | | |
| a. crafts, stamp/coin collection | .19 | .61 | 9.56 | .01 | .30 | .21 | 0.00 | 3.95[b] | .05 |
| b. sports, TV | .81 | .39 | | | .70 | .79 | 1.00 | | |
| Has Special Activity | .69 | .38 | 2.14 | .15 | .50 | .80 | 1.00 | 2.62[b] | .11 |

cont. of Table 3

| Variable | Special and Regular Class Comparison: Percent Retarded | Percent Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Comparisons within Special Class: Percent Non-gainer | Percent Gainer | Percent High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Specifically Desired Leisure Activity (unusual activity and games) | .46 | .45 | - | NS | .50 | .67 | .30 | 1.71[a] | .20 |
| Special Leisure Activity at home - passive | .67 | .61 | - | NS | .60 | .64 | .83 | 1.94[a] | .18 |
| Most Favorite Activity | | | | | | | | | |
| a. social/constructive | .69 | .82 | 3.59 | .06 | .75 | .64 | .67 | - | NS |
| b. DK, TV, housework | .31 | .18 | | | .25 | .36 | .33 | | |

a. Nongainer + Gainer x High scorer

b. Linear Component

Lessons.

A. Special and Regular Class Comparison.

Table 4 indicates that only a very small proportion of each group was taking lessons. Of those children who did, more regular class children liked theirs and gave intrinsic reasons for enjoying them. As with leisure activities, more special class students not taking lessons desired them, and gave intrinsic reasons for wanting them (i.e., to learn something new).

---

Insert Table 4 about here

---

B. Comparison by LP within special class.

The differences among special class subjects was a function of both the nongainers' high expressed involvement and the high scorers' low involvement. While nongainers gave intrinsic reasons for liking their lessons (i.e., they were interesting or they learned something new), not one gainer or high scorer did so. The latter two groups expressed extrinsic motivations, saying they took lessons because they liked the people involved, or they had nothing else to do. The majority of special class children not taking lessons desired them.

Group Activity

A. Special and Regular Class Comparison

As shown in Table 5, the main difference between the samples is in the number of children belonging to groups. More regular than special class students belonged, and more belonged to more

Table 4

Reported and Desired Non-Academic Lessons

| Variable | Special and Regular Class Comparison: Percent Retarded | Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Comparisons within Special Class: Percent Non-gainer | Gainer | High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Takes Lessons | .24 | .18 | - | NS | .15 | .36 | .25 | - | NS |
| Type of Lesson a. artistic | .60 | .50 | - | NS | .67 | .60 | .50[1] | - | NS |
| Likes Lessons | .73 | 1.00 | 1.99 | .18 | 1.00 | .60 | .67[1] | 1.55[b] | .22 |
| Reason Likes Lessons a. interesting/learn something | .22 | .67 | 2.96 | .10 | .67 | 0.00 | 0.00[1] | 5.14[b] | .05 |
| Desires Lessons | .71 | .42 | 4.70 | .05 | .65 | .89 | .67[2] | 1.81[d] | .18 |
| Type of Desired Lesson artistic - musical | .76 | .91 | - | NS | .91 | .88 | .33[2] | 10.74[a] | .01 |

cont. of Table 4

| | Special and Regular Class Comparison | | | | Comparisons within Special Class | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent | | | | Percent | | | | |
| Variable | Retarded | Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Non-gainer | Gainer | High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
| Reason Desires Lesson interesting/learn something | .47 | .20 | 3.70 | .06 | .29 | .56 | .71[2] | 3.78[c] | .05 |

1. Percentages are based on 24% of the subjects
2. Percentages are based on 71% of the subjects

a. Nongainer + Gainer x High scorer
b. Nongainer x Gainer + High scorer
c. Linear Component
d. Quadratic Component

Table 5

Reported and Desired Group Activity

| | Special and Regular Class Comparison | | | | Comparisons within Special Class | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent | | | | Percent | | | | |
| Variable | Retarded | Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Non-gainer | Gainer | High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
| Belongs to Group present and/or past | .50 | .76 | 5.26 | .03 | .47 | .61 | .41[1] | - | NS |
| Present Group Member | .34 | .58 | 4.22 | .05 | .42 | .31 | .25[1] | - | NS |
| Number of Groups (>1) | .35 | .61 | 5.17 | .02 | .40 | .29 | .33[1] | - | NS |
| Type of Group (athletic) | .81 | .72 | - | NS | .67 | 1.00 | .80[1] | 2.09[d] | .17 |
| Likes Group - activities/fun | .85 | .80 | - | NS | .78 | 1.00 | .80[1] | - | NS |
| No Dislikes of Group | .52 | .32 | - | NS | .78 | .43 | .20[1] | 4.62[c] | .03 |
| Reason Dislikes Group | | | | | | | | | |
| a. vague, DK | .57 | .32 | 2.94 | .10 | .79 | .43 | .40[1] | 2.74[b] | .10 |
| b. people and/or activities | .43 | .68 | | | .21 | .57 | .60 | | |

cont. of Table 5

| Variable | Special and Regular Class Comparison: Percent Retarded | Percent Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Comparisons within Special Class: Percent Non-gainer | Percent Gainer | Percent High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main Group Activity | | | | | | | | | |
| a. athletic | .88 | .67 | 2.31 | .14 | .67 | 1.00 | 1.00[1] | 4.15[b] | .05 |
| b. crafts and trips | .12 | .33 | | | .33 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | |
| Desired Group Activity (athletic) | .66 | .50 | - | NS | .56 | .60 | 1.00[1] | 2.57[a] | .12 |
| Desired Group Activity Score (upper half) | .38 | .40 | - | NS | .56 | .43 | 0.00[1] | 3.67[c] | .06 |
| Group meet > 3 times/week | .80 | .80 | - | NS | .89 | .72 | .80[1] | - | NS |
| Group Involvement Score (upper half) | .50 | .55 | - | NS | .62 | .50 | .25[1] | 1.44[c] | .23 |
| Desires Group Membership | .59 | .50 | - | NS | .62 | .62 | .50[2] | - | NS |
| Desires Athletic Group | .71 | .67 | - | NS | .62 | 1.00 | .50[2] | 3.14[d] | .07 |

cont. of Table 5

| Variable | Special and Regular Class Comparison: Percent Retarded | Percent Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Comparisons within Special Class: Percent Non-gainer | Percent Gainer | Percent High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Desires Group for Activities and Fun | .46 | .40 | - | NS | .58 | .50 | .25[2] | 2.07[a] | .16 |
| Reason Desire Group Score (intrinsic) | .46 | .56 | - | NS | .58 | .50 | .12[2] | 4.21[a] | .05 |
| Desired Group Activity - athletic | .71 | .67 | - | NS | .62 | 1.00 | .50[2] | 3.14[d] | .08 |
| Intrinsic Reasons for not belonging to group | .41 | .33 | - | NS | .50 | .40 | .25[2] | - | NS |
| Desired Group Involvement Score (upper half) | .57 | .45 | - | NS | .41 | .37 | .50[2] | - | NS |
| Family Group Members | .46 | .56 | - | NS | .58 | .43 | .27[1] | 2.99[c] | .08 |

1. Only students who were group members at time of interview.
2. Only students who were not group members at time of interview.

a. Nongainer + Gainer x High scorer
b. Nongainer x Gainer + High scorer
c. Linear Component
d. Quadratic Component

and other reasons which suggested an extrinsic motivation. Similarly, for those S who did not belong and did not desire group membership, there was a (nonsignificant) negative linear relationship between intrinsic reasons for not belonging and learning potential status. More gainers and fewer high scorers did not belong because of lack of interest or motivation ("not enough time", "forgot to sign up", etc.) as opposed to external reasons such as parents wouldn't allow him, other children did not want him, etc. These latter two findings further demonstrate the high scorer's lack of involvement. Both those who desired and those who did not desire group membership did so because of extrinsic motivation.

Social Roles and Responsibility

A. Special and Regular Class Comparison

As indicated in Table 6 there were no difference in role scores when S was read hypothetical situations which required him to state the roles that he thought others would choose for him and the roles for which he would like to be chosen (see Appendix A). Between 40% and 50% of both groups reported being chosen for the more responsible roles. Not one subject reported that he was not chosen for an activity. There was a strong tendency for the subjects in both groups to desire a more responsible role than those they indicated would be chosen for them However more special than regular class Ss exhibited a positive discrepancy indicating they desired more responsible roles than they indicated would be chosen for them, i.e., they desired to be chosen as leaders to organize social activ-

ities rather than followers who joined in after all the plans were made. Contrary to the finding on the hypothetical situations, in real situations, more regular (56%) than special class students (29%) indicated they were centrally involved in their group activities, and were scored as more socially responsible. The regular class S's responsibilities involved planning activities, collecting money, etc., as opposed to the more peripheral participation of the special class student who indicated he contributed money, carried equipment, etc. Also significantly more regular class students reported that they held an office in their groups. Not one special class student reported holding an office.

B. Comparison by Learning Potential within Special Class

The hypothetical role scores did demonstrate differences within the special class. The trend evident in Table 6 indicates that more gainers than nongainers and high scorers thought they would be chosen for the most responsible role, and desired the most responsible role. The nongainers desired to be chosen for responsible roles but indicated they would not be chosen for them. The high scorer behaved relatively consistently on both variables, expecting not to be chosen for responsible roles and not desiring the responsible roles. The high discrepancy between reported and desired roles for the nongainer and low discrepancy for the high scorer resulted in a negative relationship between positive discrepancy (desired role > reported role) and learning potential status. Although not significant, a positive relationship was found between negative discrepancy (desired role < reported role) and LP status indicating

Table 6

Reported and Desired Hypothetical Social Roles

| | Special and Regular Class Comparison | | | | Comparisons within Special Class | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Percent | | | | Percent | | | | |
| Variable | Retarded | Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Non-gainer | Gainer | High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
| Most Responsible Social Role I | .48 | .42 | - | NS | .40 | .57 | .50 | - | NS |
| Desires Most Responsible Social Role I | .61 | .54 | - | NS | .63 | .69 | .50 | - | NS |
| Most Responsible Social Role II | .67 | .67 | - | NS | .55 | .88 | .67 | 2.69[d] | .10 |
| Desires Most Responsible Social Role II | .79 | .76 | - | NS | .81 | .86 | .60 | 2.81[a] | .10 |
| Total Social Role Score (upper quarter) | .48 | .40 | - | NS | .35 | .63 | .50 | 2.33[d] | .15 |
| Total Desired Social Role Score (upper quarter) | .65 | .55 | - | NS | .55 | .79 | .67 | 2.03[d] | .17 |

cont. of Table 6

| Variable | Special and Regular Class Comparison: Percent Retarded | Percent Non-retarded | $X^2$ | p | Comparisons within Special Class: Percent Non-gainer | Percent Gainer | Percent High scorer | $X^2$ | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive Social Role | | | | | | | | | |
| Discrepancy (1 or more) | .50 | .36 | 1.45 | .23 | .65 | .43 | .33 | 3.27[c] | .08 |
| Negative Social Role | | | | | | | | | |
| Discrepancy (1 or more) | .22 | .24 | - | NS | .15 | .21 | .33 | - | NS |
| | Reported Real Social Role | | | | | | | | |
| Held Office in Group | 0.00 | .67 | 7.47 | .01 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | - | NS |
| Active Participation in Group | .68 | .75 | - | NS | .75 | .50 | .80 | - | NS |
| Type of Participation (high responsibility) | .29 | .56 | 2.33 | .13 | .50 | 0.00 | .25 | 2.36[b] | .15 |

a. Nongainer + Gainer x High scorer

b. Nongainer x Gainer + High scorer

c. Linear Component

d. Quadratic Component

that fewer nongainers and more high scorers desired less responsibility than they were given.

When S is asked about his role in real social situations, fewer gainers reported being actively involved in group activities. Of those who did, not one reported being given a highly rated responsible job. By contrast, more nongainers reported participating in group activities and of those who did 50% said they were given highly responsible jobs. Though a high percentage of high scorers said they participated, only a small proportion assumed responsible roles.

## Discussion

The most outstanding finding was the large degree of similarity of reported social interests between these low achieving regular and special class children. Parson's findings that an individual's social interests are a function of both his intelligence and status needs are given little support. However, by employing adults as his subjects, Parsons was working with individuals who were able, if they so desired, to engage in social activities outside of their immediate neighborhood. More importantly, by traveling to work outside of their neighborhoods and mingling with co-workers from different areas they were given an opportunity to learn of different types of social activities.

On the whole, the trends in this section tend to be consistent. Both groups lack variety in their non-academic academic activities. The activities mentioned both within the home and outside it, except for athletic interests, tended to be unstructured and focused on the interpersonal, belonging dimension rather than knowledge-oriented. This pattern is typical for adolescents from the low

income social backgrounds typical of the special and regular class students. While the special class students' behavior is indicated to be very similar to their regular class peers, the overall picture suggests they are more socially isolated and peripheral group members.

The learning potential assessment discriminates a range of ability in the psychometrically defined special class sample. The data from other studies indicates that high scorers and gainers, those who show ability on the nonverbal reasoning task prior to or following training are educationally but not mentally retarded. The nongainers have been shown not to profit from many learning situations and eventually they define themselves as mentally retarded.

On these interview data, however, the nongainers tend to report greater social involvement in leisure and group activities, unlike the more able high scorers and gainers, and suggest greater adequacy in non-school related activities than would be consistent with evidence from the validity studies of learning potential.

One variable which may account for the inconsistencies within the special class sample is the number of times a subject did not answer a question. There was a significant negative linear relationship between Learning Potential status and the number of "don't know" responses, that is more nongainers and fewer high scorers avoided directly answering questions by giving a "don't know" response. This pattern leads us to question the reliability of the nongainers' self report responses. Evidence from other studies suggests that these students tend to give less reliable verbal

responses. Folman and Budoff (1971) reported that as the non-gainers were asked vocational choice questions which demanded more specific information, they weren't able to demonstrate understanding of their high job aspiration which unrealistically required post high school training. Their expected vocational attainment was a blue collar job. By contrast, the more able (LP) special class students aspired to a blue collar job, could give specific evidence of understanding, and expected to attain the job. Budoff and Pines (1971) tested their reliability verbally by asking the same question in an open and closed ended format. Nongainers changed their response category more frequently than gainers or high scorers. It appears then that the validity of this verbal evidence of competence socially must be questioned. Alternately, as with the vocational aspiration data, their verbal report may represent wish more than reality.

The one trend in these data is the suggestion of a pattern of greater social isolation, when one discounts the exuberant and probably unreliable verbal reports of the nongainers. The problem is whether this pattern may be a function of their stigmatized state, rather than a condition intrinsic to the hypothesized deficits of psychometrically defined educable mentally retardates. The stigmatized state engendered by special class placement can account for the tendency for special class subjects to be more passive socially, and to desire rather than engage in a variety of activities. The significantly lower number of group memberships cited by the special class students and their involvement in fewer responsible group activities can be accounted for by

their feelings of rejection. This social passivity among the special class students is most clearly stated by the most able students by the learning potential criterion. They seem to be saying that there is little point in trying to strive if one has been so clearly told he can not perform adequately, and his peers are aware of this message.

These results give some support to Blatt's finding that special class students, in comparison to average IQ regular class students, exhibit more problems in personal and social adjustment. However, neither Blatt's results nor ours indicate whether this social maladjustment is intrinsic to the special class students or a function of the social climate and the stigmatized status with which he must cope.

## References


Blatt, B. The physical personality and academic status of children who are mentally retarded attending special classes as compared with children who are retarded attending regular classes. American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 1968, 62, 810-818.

Budoff, M. Learning potential among institutionalized young adult retardates. American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 1967, 72, 404-411.

Budoff, M. Learning potential: A supplementary procedure for assessing the ability to reason. Seminars in Psychiatry, 1969, 1, 3, 278-296.

Budoff, M. Social and test correlates of learning potential status in adolescent community special students. Studies in Learning Potential, 1970, No. 3.

Budoff, M., & Friedman, M. Learning potential as an assessment approach to the adolescent mentally retarded. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1964, 28, 434-439.

Budoff, M., Meskin, J., & Harrison, R. An educational test of the learning potential hypothesis. American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 1971, 76, 159-169, 159-169.

Budoff, M., & Pagell, W. A. Learning potential and rigidity in the adolescent mentally retarded. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1968, 73, 479-486.

Folman, R., & Budoff, M. Learning potential and vocational aspirations of retarded adolescents. Exceptional Children, 1971, 38, 121-130.

Harrison, R., & Budoff, M. Demographic, historical and ability correlates of the Laurelton Self Concept Scale in an educable mentally retarded sample. Studies in Learning Potential,

No. 15; American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 1971, 76.

Parson, O. A. Status needs and performance under failure. Journal of Personality, 1958, 9, 123-129.

Pines, A., & Budoff, M. Studies in personality correlates of learning potential status in adolescent EMRs: Reaction to frustration on self-peer evaluation. Studies in Learning Potential, No. 16.

Turner, R. H. Social context ambition: A study of high school seniors in Los Angeles. San Francisco: Chandler Publications, 1964.

# Appendix A

Non-Academic Lessons

Other things that some kids do after school or on weekends is to take lessons. They may be lessons in religion, music, art, etc.

1. Do you take any?

2. What?

3. Do you like it?

4. Why? (why not?)

Desired Lessons

5. Would you like to take lessons?

6. In what would you like lessons?

7. Why? (why not?)

Group Activities

There are many different kinds of groups that grown-ups and kids - can belong to - church groups, "Y", athletic groups - baseball, basketball, social groups - clubs.

1. Do you belong to any?

2. What kind of a group?

3. What do you like about the group?

4. What do you dislike about the group?

5. How often do you meet?

6. What do you do together?

7. What would you like to do together?

Desired Group Activities

8. Would you like to belong to a group?

9. Why? (why not?)

10. What kind of a group?

11. What would you like to do together with the group?

12. Why don't you belong now?

13. Does anyone in your family belong to any groups?

Social Role (Real)

1. Have you ever held an office in the group?

2. What?

3. When the group plans an activity - party, trip, etc., do you ever help out?

4. What would you do?

Social Role (Hypothetical)

Suppose you were at the afterschool center and they had a problem. They were looking for new ideas for what to do in their free time during vacation. They were going to choose some kids to be in charge - to think up ideas of what to do. They were going to choose some kids to help organize these activities - you know, to help with the games; some kids who don't have to think up ideas or help with the games but who will just join in on the activities and some kids who will be able to play by themselves not having to join at all.

1. Now, which one of these things would you be chosen to do?

2. What would you like to be chosen to do?

Suppose from a large group of boys and girls, some were going on a picnic. In order to make sure that it would be a success, some kids were to be chosen to decide who should come to the picnic, some kids were to be chosen to be in charge of getting the lunches, games and baseballs, some kids were chosen not to help but to go along so that there will be a nice large crowd and other kids from this group wouldn't go since they don't like picnics.

3. Which of these things would you be chosen to do?

4. What would you like to be chosen to do?