DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 066 403 SO 004 338

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TITLE Home Environment and Achievement.
INSTITUTION Toronto Board of Education (Ontario). Research Dept.
PUB DATE Jan 67
NOTE 31p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Able Students; Academic Ability; *Academic Achievement; Academic Aspiration; *Academic Performance; Child Rearing; *Educational Research; *Family Environment; *Family Influence; High Achievers; Learning Difficulties; Learning Motivation; Low Achievers; Parent Attitudes; Socioeconomic Influences

ABSTRACT

When the quality of the family's influence on the child's academic performance is identified and evaluated, educators can more fully understand and aid the child in the classroom. This survey of research oriented literature probes the relationship between home environment and achievement. Social class, power-structure, child-rearing practices, religious affiliation, and parental attitude in the home are identified as environmental factors that can be positive or negative influences upon academic progress. If a student problem caused by value conflicts between home and school is understood by the educator, various steps can be taken to help the child acquire motivation to learn and an appreciation of long term goals which school and society have set for them. Among the research findings are the indications that high academic motivation and achievement are prevalent among children from: 1) small, middle-class status, protestant families; 2) families in which the parents are college educated; and 3) families in which the parents are moderate in power in child rearing. Since these studies indicate that achievement motivation is learned in the home, the implied need is for educators to foster special programs for children with different value systems and to encourage active participation of the parents in school. (Author/SJM)

ED 060407

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HOME ENVIRONMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

by

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January 1967

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HOME ENVIRONMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

I - INTRODUCTION

The child's educational environment consists of the home, the classroom, the school, the community, the province, and the nation and the interactions which go on between and within these institutions. The widening educational environment exerts an influence of successively decreasing individual intensity spread out over an ever widening population (Tuel and Wursten, 1965). This being the case, the family will exert intense influence on the young child. The family's role in the child's school success might be expressed through direct involvement with school and school work or it might provide a general attitudinal climate conducive to academic achievement. Conversely, the family might prove to be a negative factor with respect to education. In either case, the quality of the family's influence on the child's performance must be identified and evaluated before the educator can fully understand the child in the classroom.

Family attitudes and activities can, and indeed have been, described as representative of certain social classes; however, within social classes there seems to be a great deal of variability. The various patterns of family roles could be related to the aspirations for, and feasibility of, social mobility. e.g. an upper-lower class family whose head occupies a good paying job with a chance for advancement might logically aspire to the middle class. Members of the family might imitate middle class behaviour and adopt attitudes similar to those of the middle class. Another upper-lower class family whose road is blocked might adhere to lower class values. The children in these two

families will have a different set of values and percepts with which to cope with life in general and education in particular, even though they might be of equal intelligence. Before these children enter school they are equipped with knowledge that either facilitates or inhibits their adaptation to the school environment.

Understanding home environment is necessary not only if the teacher is to deal effectively with the individual "problem child" but also if the school board is to develop successful programs, resources, and services for children with varying attitudes and abilities. The following is a survey of research-oriented literature which probes the relationship between home environment and achievement. The material will be presented under the following headings:

1. "Social Class and Achievement";
2. "Power Structure and Achievement";
3. "Child-rearing Practices and Achievement";
4. "Religious Affiliation and Achievement";
5. "Parental Attitudes and Achievement".

This paper, then, will deal solely with environmental factors. It is proposed that native factors such as intelligence (defined here as the quality of neurological functioning) and possibly, personality traits, will be regarded as limits within which the environmental factors are operational. The emphasis of this paper is in itself not intended to support either side of the nature-nurture argument. It merely represents an attempt to shed some light on one area of the child's world which affects his school achievement.

II - RESEARCH FINDINGS

Social Class and Achievement

The social class of a family is usually measured by one or a combination of the following indices: main wage earner's occupation, education of father and/or mother, chief source of income, type of dwelling, and classification of neighbourhood. The level of social class thus derived might be projected onto a three point, five point, or seven point scale depending on the nature of the community under study.

It appears that certain attitudes are characteristic of certain social classes. The extent to which a family bears the imprint of a social class will often determine its success or lack thereof in various endeavours. It is generally accepted that the middle class value-system is the most successful when evaluated in terms of school achievement,

> "As all teachers know the children who do the best work, are easiest to control and stimulate, make the best prefects, stay at school longest, take part in extra-curricular activities, finish school with the best qualifications and references, and get the best jobs tend to come from the middle class."
>
> ...Swift, 1966, p. 83.

> "Middle class children are more likely . . . to embrace the achievement value-system which states that given the willingness to work hard, plan and make proper sacrifices, an individual child should be able to manipulate his environment so as to ensure eventual success."
>
> ...Rosen, 1956, p. 211.

In 1955, Campbell set out to discover whether correctly-placed and misplaced grammar school and central school children differed in their

socio-cultural environments. Although all the children studied had the same Intelligence Quotient and primary school marks, those doing well had high socio-cultural scores while those failing had low socio-cultural scores. Curry (1962) in a study on the scholastic achievement of sixth grade pupils found that as intellectual ability decreased, the effect of social and economic conditions increased greatly.

What are the values held by the middle class which are so successful in promoting academic achievement? Davis (1948) states social striving is a middle class characteristic. This being the case, education provides a ladder by which to reach a higher social stratum. Bene (1959) quotes Davis that the middle class way of life is carried on by people who,

> ". . . are culturally motivated to suffer, to renounce, to postpone gratifications in order to achieve." p. 148

The working class on the other hand are less interested and less willing to spend the present in preparation for the future. Hyman (1953, p. 427) points out that,

> "the lower class individual doesn't want as much success, knows he couldn't get it even if he wanted to, and doesn't want what might help him get success."

Katz (1964) undertook an experiment with teenage boys and girls of three social classes (unskilled, skilled and white collar) which was designed to uncover the value system(s) relating to success. Middle class children placed a much higher value on occupational or educational status as criteria of "success." Middle class children stressed personal exertion and hard work as means to achieve "success" while "luck" and "influence" were mentioned more often by those from the skilled and unskilled groups. While middle class children were generally consistent in their attitudes, children of skilled workers showed within group variation. This suggested

to the author that in some cases the children had internalized middle class values and in others, unskilled values. This intergroup variation is clearly shown in the study by the Research Department of the Toronto Board of Education (Palmer, 1966). The greatest variation in achievement is in the group which would be categorized as either upper-lower, or lower-middle class. This finding is consistent with that of Katz's.

> "Achievement in any realm is dependent upon two factors; the possession of both the necessary ability and the motivation to reach the goal."
>
> ...Hyman, 1953, p. 429.

How does the child incorporate the motivational attitudes which facilitate success in school? Clausen and Williams (1963) point out that,

> "the child develops within a social matrix."
>
> ...p. 62

The nature of the matrix influences what he learns and how he feels about it.

Winterbottom (1953) states that strong achievement motivation is thought to develop from a set of conditions most likely to occur in the training of the child by his parents. Of particular importance to the young child is the training imposed on him by his mother. The lower-class mother puts emphasis on obedience, neatness, and cleanliness while the middle-class mother stresses happiness, consideration, and curiosity (Kohn, 1959). Time restrictions regarding feeding, weaning, and toilet training are generally employed by middle class mothers.

Ericson (1947) summarized the expectations of the middle class as follows:

> "Middle-class families were generally found to be more exacting in their expectations for children with reference to the learning of habits of feeding, cleanliness, training,

> environmental exploration and control, and age and sex roles. Training was generally begun earlier in the middle-class than in the lower-class families. In the middle-class families, there was more emphasis on the early assumption of responsibility for the self, closer supervision of children's activities, and greater emphasis on individual achievement."
>
> ...p. 498

"Success" and 'education" are presented very early as desirable goals for middle class youngsters. Not only are these goals verbalized, but an occupational and educational model is readily available. The lower class child whose home values conflict with those of the school is left with the option of complying with two value systems or rejecting one. If the lower class child elects to choose his home values over those of the school, he may well be erecting a self-imposed barrier to mobility.

The effects of social class extend in depth into the human experience and encompass a broad range of human activity. The specific discussion of how social class relates to achievement is concluded here, but the background relevance of social class will be evident in the topics to follow.

Power-Structure and Achievement

There are a number of ways of looking at power-structure. Within the home three types of relationships exist: (1) between parents; (2) between parents and children; (3) between children. Also important is the degree of similarity between the power structure of the home and that of external institutions such as the school, and the degree to which the former generalizes to the latter.

> "Family structure is one of the more important determinants of achievement motivation and skills. Many of the personal qualities and

> skills that enable children to meet standards of excellence--self-reliance, competent judgment, problem-solving ability and a questioning mind--are acquired in parent-child relations providing guidance and yet allowing the child freedom to develop independent mastery and responsible decision making."
>
> ...Elder, 1965, p. 81.

Conjugal role patterns are also important. Elder (1965) notes a number of studies which show that the most negative effects in children are associated with wife-dominance. American adolescents who described their mothers as dominant in family decision-making tended to be relatively low on autonomy and academic motivation. Another study reported in the same article found that American and West German pre-adolescent boys in extremely wife-dominated families were rated by teachers and peers as more selfish, incompetent, excitable, and dependent than boys from any other type of family. On the other hand, Elder's own cross-national study found that conjugal patterns do not affect educational attainment appreciably. This was particularly true for the American sample. German men from equalitarian homes were more likely to reach secondary school than those men from husband-dominated homes. Those men who reported mother-dominance were least likely to have reached secondary school. The German findings support those of earlier studies while the American ones run in the opposite direction. In both samples parent-youth relationships appear to be more important than conjugal role patterns.

A number of studies have investigated the connection between parent-youth relationships and academic achievement. Drews and Teahan (1959) hypothesized that parents of high academic achievers would actually be less permissive and accepting in the treatment of their

children than the parents of low academic achievers. They matched ages and Intelligence Quotient scores of gifted and average students and low and high achievers. Their results supported their hypothesis. Mothers of high achievers were more authoritarian and restrictive. Parents of high gifted achievers were more punitive with respect to child rearing.

Barwick and Arbuckle (1962) explored the relationship between parental acceptance and the academic achievement of adolescents. Their results showed that high achieving boys reported their fathers as more accepting while low achieving boys reported their mothers as more accepting. In the case of the girls in the study, paternal acceptance increased as the level of achievement increased.

Elder (1965) reports that in all nations except Italy, adults who reported equalitarian relations between their parents and democratic parent-youth relations are most likely to have reached secondary school. Those whose parents were authoritarian had a much lower likelihood of reaching secondary school.

Teahan (1963) looked at parental attitudes and college success. In his sample he included forty-six freshmen women, forty-four freshmen males and their mothers and fathers. All the students were in the upper twenty per cent of their high school class. They were categorized as high and low achievers at the end of their first year. An attitude questionnaire was administered to the parents and the students. The results showed no difference in child rearing techniques for high and low achievers. Fathers of low achieving daughters were more dominating and possessive. Mothers of low achieving daughters were more dominating than their daughters while no such disparity was found among high achievers.

Spector (1962) presented ten questions to one hundred and eighty-one thirteen-year-old children. The parents were white, Jewish, middle class, and native born. The questions explored the effects of firm and permissive home discipline. The results showed no relationship between the type of home discipline and conduct, academic success, social behaviour and social attitude for this sample.

This last study contradicts the studies mentioned previously. This could perhaps be explained by the nature of the questionnaire employed by Spector. His questions explored extremes (permissive-firm) and did not include attitudes on democratic parent-child relationships. Also, the rationale behind his coding is open to question, e.g.,

"10. Can you confide in your parents when you have done something wrong?"

"Rationale: A 'yes' answer would indicate firm control, a 'no' answer a permissive atmosphere. Conformity to standards is involved here. It is felt that consistent application of parental standards of what is right and wrong makes parents more approachable when children deviate from the standards" (Spector, 1962, p. 116). This would seem to imply that the child who knows he is going to be spanked for breaking a window will turn himself in more readily than the child who doesn't know what his parents will do. In this situation it would seem that the nature of the reinforcement (in the present case, the form of punishment) would have some bearing on the approachability of the parents. This being the case, the answer given by the child would not be a clear-cut reflection of the disciplinary policies of the parents defined as either firm or permissive) but would be confounded with the psychological and physical repercussions of the methods used to enforce the policy.

"6. Do your parents ever promise to punish you and then forget all about it?"

"Rationale: A 'no' answer would indicate firm control, a 'yes' reply a permissive atmosphere. Restraint is involved here. It is felt that the parents' failure to follow through shows reluctance on their part to impose punishment, i.e., to apply restraint." (Spector, 1962, p. 116).

In the above instance the experimenter has concluded that the threat of punishment is an insufficient means of altering behaviour. As well, the parents' failure to follow through could be intended rather than a result of forgetfulness. These criticisms are intended to show that this study does not pose a significant threat to the opposed conclusions reached in other studies. They are also designed to illustrate in a small way the complexity of human interaction and the difficulties encountered in measuring this interaction.

The power-structure relationship between siblings and its effect on achievement needs to be studied. One possible determinant of the power structure in this case is birth order. The relationship of birth order and achievement will be discussed later in the paper.

The child's adjustment to the power structure at home and at school is vital to his success in these environments. If the power structure is different in these two cases the resulting conflict could pose a problem for the child, e.g., the boy who comes from a home where the father is dominant and the parent-child relations democratic, might have trouble adjusting to a classroom controlled by an authoritarian female teacher. The amount of generalization from home to school, the results of conflict in power structure between these two organizations, and the effect of the school's power structure on the child's achievement are all subjects yet to be explored.

Child-Rearing Practices and Achievement

Child-rearing practices seem to be largely determined by social class and religion. The former has already been discussed and the latter will be dealt with later on in this paper. At the risk of being repetitious, the subject of child rearing and achievement will be discussed separately here as well.

By nursery age (four years old) differences in achievement motivation and behaviour are evident in a variety of areas. The source of this difference is assumed to be in the home. Crandall et. al. (1960) investigated maternal reactions and the development of independence and achievement behaviour in young children. The subjects were nineteen boys and eleven girls ranging in age from three to five years. Their mean Intelligence Quotient as measured by the Stanford Binet was one hundred and eighteen. The parents were middle class. The children's behaviour was observed and rated at home and at school. The results showed the high achieving children to be less dependent on adults. Mothers who rewarded achievement were less likely to reward dependent behaviour. There were no sex differences. It is necessary to point out that the correlations were low.

The theory behind the relationship between independence training and achievement motivation is clearly expressed by Winterbottom (1953).

> "If we accept the assumption that the child makes fewer discriminations in early life, then achievement motives learned at this time will be likely to occur to a wider range of stimuli than those learned later in life. For this reason, the age of independence training becomes important in determining the strength of the achievement motive. If it is developed early in life it will be, in effect, aroused by more cues than if it is learned at a time when achieve-

ment cues are easily discriminable from other cues."

...p. 18, 19.

This approach developed from McClelland's (1953) theories on the origin of achievement motivation. As Rosen and D'Andrade (1959) point out, two different kinds of child-training practices are implicit in this theory.

> "The former has been called 'achievement training' in that it stresses competition in situations involving standards of excellence; the latter has been called 'independence training' in that it involves putting the child on his own."

...p. 186

The research emphasis has been placed on the latter largely to the exclusion of the former. Rosen and D'Andrade believe that

> "of the two training practices, achievement training is the more effective in generating 'n' Achievement" (i.e. Achievement motivation).

...p. 186

In order to test this belief and others they conducted an experiment on forty family groups (father, mother, and son). The boys were between the ages of nine and eleven and attended seven schools in three north-eastern Connecticut towns. They were required to do a number of tasks (block-stacking, ring toss, etc.) with their parents present. They found that the parents of high "n" achievement boys were more competitive and involved. They had higher aspirations for their boys to do well at any given task. They set up standards when none were given and expected their child to do "better than average." From their results the authors concluded that achievement training contributes more to the development of "n" achievement than does independence training.

Douvan (1956) states that child rearing differences cluster in two related areas, (1) development of internalized controls and (2) learning of achievement motivation. She hypothesizes that since working class children are taught achievement strivings neither so early nor so ystematically as middle class children, their reactions to success-failure cues should be more responsive to changes in the reward potential of the situation in which such cues occur. She conducted an experiment with two groups in two reward situations. Both the middle class and working class subjects responded to material reward, but achievement striving of working class Ss dropped significantly when the material reward was removed.

These studies indicate that achievement motivation is learned in the home and that the more successful children learn the cues earlier and derive the most satisfaction from performing well.

Religious Affiliation and Achievement

Max Weber's, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism is a classic study of the relationships between religious values and the social and economic world of today. He discusses the basic beliefs of various Protestant sects and shows how some are more successful than others in everyday living. He also points out that Protestants are more achievement oriented than Catholics.

> "And if we trace the history of the word, ('Berif' - 'calling'*) through the civilized languages, it appears that neither the predominantly Catholic peoples nor those of classical antiquity have possessed any expression of similar connotation for what we know as calling (in the sense of a life-task, a definite field in which to work)

*Inserted by author.

> while one has existed for all predominantly Protestant peoples."
>
> ...p. 79

The Calvinist tried to prove himself worthy of being one of the elect predestined to be saved by his worldly success. The Puritans objected to relaxation on inherited wealth, or the like, and adhered to the doctrine that activity increased the glory of God.

> "Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours, is worthy of absolute moral condemnation."
>
> ...Weber, 1958(ed.) p. 157-158.

The way to heaven was not just through prayer and living a Godly life, but through achieving in the world of "here and now."

Weber's thesis has been put to the test on a number of occasions. Veroff et. al. (1962) surveyed the literature and found reports of high achieving Protestants and low achieving Catholics thus supporting Weber's contention. In their own research however, they found the Catholic men's "n" Achievement scores tended to be higher than the Protestant men's, especially at middle age. On the other hand, still higher scores were obtained by Protestants from high income groups in the north-eastern United States. The highest "n" Achievement scores were found among Jewish people.

This latter finding is supported by Strodtbeck's (1958) Jewish-Italian study. The Jews involved placed a very high value on education and intellectual attainment. The Italians were mostly from southern Italy where school and book learning were alien pursuits. Property in their case was more important than learning. While both groups had a strong family structure, the Jewish families considered

it correct for a child to leave home and further his education. The Italian families frowned on the child leaving home unless he was entering the priesthood.

Bordua (1960) investigated parental stress on college and educational aspirations of high school students. Religious affiliation was related to college plans for all four years for both sexes. Consistent differences were found between Jews, Protestants and Catholics with Jews outscoring both the other groups. The effect of parental stress however was less marked on religious affiliation differences than on sex differences.

Elder (1962) in his large study of adolescent achievement noted that high academic motivation and achievement were most likely among those youths who were from Protestant families in the middle class and Catholic families in the lower class.

Thus, there is evidence of a relationship between religious affiliation and achievement. It is however confounded with class status which in turn adds a new dimension to the theorizing.

Parental Attitudes and Achievement

The influence of social class and religion on attitudes and their subsequent effect on achievement has been discussed previously. What other factors influence achievement and what other causes and effects derive from the main factors already mentioned?

Approaching the problem on a macroscopic scale McClelland (1961) notes that high or low achievement motivation is not due to belonging to a particular race or to living in certain climatic conditions; however, it might bear some relationship to the degree of subordination of the

group. It has been proposed that subordination produces high achievement.

On a more microscopic level it has been shown that personal interest raises achievement motivation and success. Wall and Miller (1962) found that: (1) Children, particularly boys, do very much better at school if their parents are interested in their progress; (2) Children with high measured ability will secure a grammar school place whether parents are interested or not; however, children whose ability is only a little above average are much more likely to be awarded a grammar school place if their parents are eager for them to have one; (3) Children whose parents are rated as "very interested" improve their test scores between eight and eleven years of age while those whose parents are "uninterested" show a deterioration in score.

Douglas (1964) states that children tend to work well when their parents are interested in their school progress. Children of manual workers whose parents have a high interest in their work are awarded double the percentage of grammar school places as those whose parents show an average interest.

Mannino (1962) investigated parental attitudes of youths who remained in school and those who dropped out. While both groups of mothers placed importance on education, parental interest and encouragement was less in the drop-out group.

The interest expressed by the parents may depend on the size of the family and the position of the child in the family. Elder (1962) states that children with high motivation and achievement are more likely to come from small families and be the first born. This opinion is put forward by Rosen (1961) as well. Clausen and Williams (1963) provide the following explanation for this finding.

> "Within the larger family, responsibility is likely to be valued above individual achievement, and conformity above individualistic self-expression. The small family tends more often to be oriented toward status-striving, and upward mobility. Indeed, a prime reason for limitation of family size is to permit the maintenance of a higher standard of living and the provision of greater opportunities and benefits to the children."
>
> ...p. 89

The findings with respect to birth order are not clear-cut. Rosen (1961) reported oldest children tended to have higher achievement motivation than youngest children in large-sized, middle-class families, but the reverse was true in lower-class families.

Dave (1963) and Wolf (1963) wrote theses investigating what they called "environmental process variables." These included the amount of stress placed on the child to do well (achievement press) and the academic guidance provided by the family. Emphasis on language and family activity and intellectuality were also evaluated. High scores on these factors correlated highly with achievement.

Positive family attitudes, with respect to education, which are manifested in interest and encouragement of achievement, help in creating a highly motivated and academically successful child. The degree to which parental interest is effective is limited by a variety of factors such as intelligence and the ability of the child to adjust to the school.

III - DISCUSSION

There have been two comprehensive studies of the relationship of home environment to achievement. They were done by Clausen and Williams (1963) and Elder (1962). The latter summarized the factors associated with high motivation and achievement.

"1. High academic motivation and achievement are most likely among those youths who are,

a) Middle class in status;

b) From families in which the parents are college-educated;

c) From Protestant families in the middle class and Catholic families in the lower class;

d) From small families and the first born in the family;

e) From families with a wife-dominant conjugal pattern. The equalitarian conjugal pattern may also engender high achievement;

f) From families in which parents are moderate in power in child rearing;

g) From families in which father is active in independence training.

2. High educational aspirations are most likely among youths in addition to the factors listed under (1),

a) In the lower class who are dissatisfied with their fathers' work;

b) Whose parents expect them to go to college.

3. High occupational aspirations are most likely among adolescents in addition to the factors listed under (1) and (2),

a) Who have strong value orientations toward parents;

b) Who are highly self-confident and independent in decision making." (p. 40)

Except for, 1(e)

> "High academic motivation and achievement are most likely among those youths who are ... from families with a wife-dominant conjugal pattern. The equalitarian conjugal pattern may also engender high achievement..."

the conclusions reached in the literature referred to in this paper concur with the above summary. The amount of agreement in the research on home environment and achievement is unusual in itself. The powerful influence of the home on the motivation and achievement of the child is an undeniable reality.

It is necessary to elaborate somewhat on the subject of social class. The boundaries between social classes are not solid. The degree to which they contain the people above and below them seems to be reflected in the amount of within group variability of attitudes and values. If the boundary dividing the upper-lower from the lower-middle class is more easily crossed than that between the upper-middle and the lower-upper class, one would expect greater variability in the upper-lower class as opposed to the upper-middle class as far as attitudes and values are concerned. The relatively large number of upwardly mobile aspirants in the upper-lower class (products of the "easy boundary") will adopt middle class values in keeping with what they hope will be their future status in life. Those who do not have the job, money, and opportunities required to gain access to the class above them will probably adhere to their lower class values in an effort to reduce frustration. The "hard boundary" separating the upper-middle and the

lower-upper class should reduce the number of aspirants in the former and thereby result in more homogeneous attitudes and values in this particular group.

All of this is hypothetical and derives its source from the results of the Toronto Board of Education's study which showed the greatest differences in achievement between matched groups in the upper-lower, lower-middle class area (Palmer, 1966). As well, Katz's (1964) study reflected intergroup variability in achievement attitudes at about the same social class level. In opposition to this, the middle-middle class students were relatively consistent in their attitudes. The Toronto Board study has socio-economic and achievement data on a large population of children over a six year period. The acquisition of attititudinal data from parents and children (a future project) should shed some light on both the greater variability of attitudes within some social classes and some of its effects on achievement.

The literature presented here supports the idea that the child learns academic motivation and the independence necessary to achieve on his own, from his parents, in the home. This training begins very early, especially in the case of the middle class. The young child is conditioned by reinforcements mainly administered by his parents and the resulting behaviour may or may not be conducive to academic achievement. It is assumed that the child's pattern of responding, the cues or stimuli to which he responds, and the quality of the reinforcer for which he will work are established early in life. This is not to say these things cannot be changed; however, in the case of schooling, the child begins to suffer very quickly if he cannot adapt. Many dropouts in the early grades of high school have experienced repeated failures. The idea

behind the programs for the culturally deprived is to start these children early in learning the skills which will be required for success in school. More than basic skills are needed. These children must also acquire the motivation to learn and an appreciation of the long term goals which the school and society sets for them.

Remedial education represents a problem with widespread ramifications. Should these lower class, so-called "culturally deprived" children be moulded into the existing "achievement" values of the school, or should the school be flexible enough to adapt to and accept the different values held by children from different homes and proceed from there? This question has to be answered by every educator who deals with the aims of early education. It would appear that the decision in most cases has been in favour of maintaining the status quo as far as schools are concerned and giving special attention to the children who deviate from the standardized image. Bricknell (1961) in discussing the dynamics of educational change in New York State reported that:

> "...despite the number of new programmes introduced, most of the accompanying changes took place <u>within</u> the existing structural framework of the school."

The preschool program directed toward this end (i.e. fitting pupils to the status quo) appear to have a rather short lived influence on the children involved. This would suggest that such a program needs to be continued throughout the elementary grades if its influence is to be maintained.. In many cases a basic change in the school system would be required if such a procedure were to be followed.

The literature reviewed here points out the extent of the family's influence on the child's achievement behaviour and the far reaching effects of social class and religion on educational attitudes.

What are the implications of this research for education in general and preschool education in particular?

IV - IMPLICATIONS

The first rather evident fact to be pointed out here is that preschool children are not "uncontaminated" * raw material waiting to be moulded by the school. They are young human beings who to a greater or lesser extent have learned a number of skills for coping with their home environment. In some cases this learned behaviour transfers easily to the school setting while in others conflict is created. It would appear that children with different value systems from the one prevailing in the school system need a special program not just in the preschool years, but throughout the elementary grades if they are to be successful in school. Also, it is questionable as to whether the function of the school should be to foster the "passive, dependent personality," characteristic of the successful middle class student (Spaulding, 1966). It might be well if the relative freedom of the preschool year was extended both in nature and in importance throughout the school system. To quote Bertrand Russell,

> "We are faced with the paradox that education has become one of the chief obstacles of intelligence and freedom of thought."

To answer such objections a school system needs flexibility so that it is vital, questioning, and responsive to change in the world outside.

A number of studies indicate attitudinal variability within social classes. This means that, for the purposes of education, classifying the differences between children on the basis of social class is inadequate. The criteria for discrimination should be somewhat finer.

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* Used in this context by Siegfried Engelmann at O.I.S.E. Conference on Preschool Education.

> "The teacher must learn a good deal about the pupil's cultural environment and his cultural motivation if the teacher is to guide the child's new learning effectively."
>
> ...Davis, 1948, p. 1.

The task of understanding the child's background and motivation could be facilitated by enlarging the scope of the educational institution to include active participation by the parents. The present educational method of treating poverty and ignorance has not been too successful (Kraft, 1966). As well, the child is not a human being in isolation but is a product of a certain type of home environment, an environment in which he continues to learn. At least one program has been carried out, on a small scale, with parents of low achievers and proved a success (Bernardi, 1965). Including parents in the formal educational process should engender a basic change in not only the physical plant but in the philosophy and subject matter of education as well. Any complex change in the present system will take time. One decision which must now be made by educators is whether to continue modifying the existing system or to embark on the thinking and planning which will evolve a system quite different from the traditional one. The pressures of vast social and scientific changes will in time radically alter the formal educational system. Meanwhile, society must act on the problems of the present system which often treats the child without adequate reference to his home and defines very narrow limits within which an individual must fall to succeed.

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