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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to try to identify some of the characteristics of those teachers most successful in providing a learning environment for their classes, and to describe some of the things which seem to be effective in motivating children to learn and enjoy both the process and the achievement of learning. To find a qualified group of outstanding teachers of the disadvantaged, school systems or projects which in the view of responsible evaluators could be considered successful or promising in educating their problem-burdened populations were identified; and then were identified the specific school unit within those projects which best fulfilled the objectives of the programs. Seven teachers in six different situations in cities across the country were observed. A study of these six cases, a description of which comprises the major part of this report, is considered to give some basis for checking the description of the model presented by the principals of the schools studied of their "best" teachers. This model was characterized as charismatic, compassionate, intelligent, emotionally mature, hard working, highly creative, and knowledgeable: the model understands the learning process and works well with parents and community people, and has high expectations for achievement by students and demands of herself and them that these expectations be fulfilled. [For related reports, see UD 012 493 and ED 056 133.] (Author/RJ)

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Charles White, *Dream Deferred*, ink, 1970

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There Are Some Good Teachers of the Disadvantaged

Adelaide Jablonsky, Ed.D.

Childhood is not the idyllic period that poets would have us believe. Adults look back and recall the happy moments of their childhood because they have been given a great gift, the ability to forget. Even for children in favorable economic circumstances there are innumerable stumbling blocks—the pain of falling, unsuspectingly meeting a sharp corner, fear of the night, terror of storms, discovering that the colorful flame can scar flesh. Then there are the problems of relating to peers and siblings, the destruction of a ship of blocks by a thoughtless or angry classmate, the battle over the possession of a beloved bottlecap, the loss of a pet. But beyond all these minor tragedies is the problem of being small in a giant world peopled with powerful adults who bend and mold the young to fit their perceptions of the kind of adults they wish to create. No matter how kindly or supportive the stranger, parent or teacher may be, the child melts with a sense of powerlessness. Each child then fits into the spectrum between blind submissiveness and active rebellion. The youngster coming from less fortunate circumstances, where even the most well meaning and supportive parents are torn with the problems of existing and providing for their families, brings an even greater challenge to the school—to compensate, if possible, for some of the injustices of our society and to help the child develop the skills and knowledge to be able to deal with that society in constructive ways.

The teacher in the classroom faces a new group of these students at the beginning of each school year and must bring great compassion, knowledge and skill to the task of making each day a meaningful step forward for each of her charges. Teachers meet this goal differently. The purpose of this report is to try to identify some of the characteristics of those teachers most successful in providing a learning environment for their classes and to describe some of the things they have done which seem to be effective in motivating children to learn and to enjoy both the process and the achievement of learning.

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To find a qualified group of outstanding teachers of the disadvantaged, I first identified school systems or projects which in the view of responsible evaluators could be considered successful or promising in educating their problem-burdened populations. The next step was to identify the specific school unit within those projects which best fulfilled the objectives of the programs. There were some minor difficulties because some contact persons either did not know or were reluctant to designate one unit or school as being better than the others. In most cases, however, administrators enthusiastically selected one school unit. My impression is that these administrators were probably successful in creating in their schools a systematic approach to teaching and learning in which an atmosphere of warmth, hope and achievement prevailed.

Following a search for successful or promising programs for poor and minority-group children as reported in *Status Report on Compensatory Education, IRCD Bulletin*, Vol. VII, Nos. 1 and 2, the staff of the Center felt that an attempt to identify and study outstanding teachers in inner-city schools might prove enlightening. In the process two documents were prepared under the Urban Disadvantaged Series produced by ERIC/IRCD, *Selected Principals' Perceptions of Effective Teachers of the Disadvantaged* and *The Voice of the Turtle is Heard: Teachers' Strategies for Improving Education of the Disadvantaged*. In order to pursue this question in greater depth I observed seven teachers in six different situations in cities across the country.

Each principal was then asked to select his best teacher. Some objected to use of the term "best" since they were concerned about other staff members. For them the term "effective" was substituted. In some schools teams of two, three, and sometimes four teachers were selected. Each recommendation was accompanied by a statement of the criteria used and a description of the characteristics of the teachers.

The model presented by the principals is described in greater detail in the document indicated above. To summarize, she is charismatic, compassionate, intelligent, emotionally mature, hard working, highly creative, and knowledgeable. She understands the learning process and works well with parents and community people. She has high expectations for achievement by her students and demands of herself and them that these expectations be fulfilled.

We know that all teachers need not have all these talents, and indeed no teacher can have all the characteristics described above since teachers are human beings with both strengths and weaknesses. Working under pressure they do make mistakes at times, lose their tempers, but even under these circumstances they protect their students from the damaging consequences of their temporary indisposition.

A study of the six cases which follow should give some basis for checking this description.

Ms. Jane at Carver School

The single teacher in the 4th grade self-contained classroom bears the responsibility for all the planning, instruction, guidance and evaluation of her students. In this case the teacher is charismatic, resourceful, and has a sense of humor to which the children respond enthusiastically.

Approaching Carver School in the downtown area of a large metropolitan city, I walked through several blocks of old tenements, some of which had been or were being converted into more modern apartments. Some buildings had been torn down leaving fenced-in areas of rubble. The streets were strewn with broken glass and garbage and at that early hour the small neighborhood stores were still protected by iron grills. The school building was built early this century and has all of the disadvantages of age. Converted rooms, bland patched paint, long dreary halls, musty smells and the endless flights of Up and Down stairways which lead to Ms. Jane's 4th grade class on the fifth floor.

As I breathlessly reached the fifth floor, a girl in front of me was dragging her briefcase behind her by tugging on a long strap. A teacher stopped her and asked why she was not carrying her books. She plaintively replied, "I think I can never walk up those stairs again."

At 8:45 a.m., I found Ms. Jane writing a paragraph on the chalkboard about the Chinese New Years Day, the Year of the Rat, and the writings of Confucius. Several children were putting their coats away. As the other children staggered in I toured the room for clues to the experiences the class had in the last weeks or months. The students' chairs and movable tables were grouped in two clusters down the sides of the room, leaving a wide aisle down the center which led from the chalkboard to the teacher's desk at the back. Her pocketbook stood open on the desk all morning.

On entering, one is greeted by the sign "Bienvenidos means welcome" on the door. The walls and closet doors were covered with displays, some placed so high that a ladder must have been used to put them up. Compositions under the heading "I Did Beautiful Work," a bar graph representing home appliances, test papers labelled "I am in the 100% club this week", copies of wordy advertisements with the broken words at the ends of lines marked by the children, charts on

heat and cold, boiling and freezing, vitamins and foods, and on the weather with vocabulary words such as inclement and precipitation appearing on one wall. On another could be seen a chart of Emma Lazarus, "Give me your tired, your poor—" and a group of annotations from Aesop's Fables, the Bible and the Koran. There were several art displays, sometimes associated with creative writing, on topics such as If I were a boy (or girl) in colonial times, Peter and the Wolf and The life and death of Martin Luther King. Science was further represented by a chart of the planets, a mural of prehistoric animals and plant life and directions on how to plant an avocado pit accompanied by a lone, struggling foot high avocado plant.

In addition to the picture of King, there were displayed photos of Lindsay, Nixon, Agnew and Mayor Carlos Barclo of San Juan, Puerto Rico, and of the empty classroom and then all the children in the room.

Weekly Readers, filmstrips and viewers, records and players, books, magazines and other innumerable items added rich resources for the students' learning. A small electric clock set on the chalk ledge informed everyone of the time so that there was no question of how much longer till lunch. A schedule of the day's activities was listed at the edge of the board. This was checked by the students as they came in and elicited some nods, some frowns and some glee.

The 24 heterogeneously grouped children were all present on the day I visited and their attendance rate itself testifies to the fact that school for this class is at least more attractive than most other options. The overwhelming majority of the group were children from Spanish-speaking families, including two fairly new arrivals who were not yet comfortable with the English language. Several children were black, one a Moslem, and there appeared to be one or two "others". Ms. Jane reported that almost all of the children were on the free lunch program with a range from lower to low middle socioeconomic backgrounds. Most came from very large families with complications creating problems for the children. One student, a rather large boy, was a holdover because of lack of academic progress. His record in the past had shown problem behavior, and outside of school he sometimes "got into trouble", but in class he seemed relaxed as he straightened out the SRA kit, listened to records on his own, went on errands or at times participated with the others in regular class work. One boy sucked dreamily on a pacifier. Three children had records of outside difficulty such as robbery, vandalism and street fighting. Several are rejected by parents or stepparents so that most of these children come to school with serious personal problems. However, a casual observer would never know this from their general behavior. They have, to a large extent, been "socialized" in this sanctuary in their lives.

One child brought a tiara, another a doll and the third a toy. Each treasure was shared with Ms. Jane and with others. The pledge to the flag was recited with careful enunciation to be followed by a patriotic song. One child, who I later learned was a Moslem, sat through these ceremonies. One of the boys opened the windows and adjusted the shades.

The teacher began formally by saying that she was very happy and very unhappy. She was happy about the wonderful ideas and costumes which the children were developing for the creative dramatics presentations to be given next Wednesday. In about the same tone of voice she told them that she was unhappy because the set of new magic markers which she had brought to the class yesterday was missing. The class discussed possible reasons and the subject was ended with the hope that the pens would find their way back to her desk. No emotion, no recriminations, just a statement of fact and a precaution to the students not to leave valuables in their desks.

Several children coming in late caused a stir. Ms. Jane said "For those of you who came in late we are in the middle of a lesson." It developed that one of the girls who had just arrived had the magic markers. To her the teacher said "My darling Daisy borrowed them without telling me. Thank you for bringing them back. Please put them on my desk." The case was closed.

While the class discussed the paragraph on the chalkboard about the Chinese New Year a small group in the back were reading the extended weather report section at the back of the newspaper, discussing the facts fervently and deciding what information should be abstracted and placed on the board for the class's information. After the discussion the children were instructed to copy the paragraph in their notebooks, "Sit up straight and tall, and write a beautiful handwritten page in script, script, script, your very best script." This sing-song statement accompanied by a broad smile was a pattern frequently followed, as if the work to be completed was part of a pleasant game. She gave several children newspaper clippings about the celebration as resource for their creative extensions of her factual statement. The writing began frequently interrupted by a child calling out to Ms. Jane, getting a response and then settling back to work. Quiet discussions were going on in different parts of the room. One boy was humming as he rocked back and forth in his seat. Several phone calls were taken by the nearest boy who sometimes dashed out to call another teacher or will leave the class a message.

Ms. Jane circulated around the desks, whispering to the children, smiling, up close. "Do your best." "Very nice. I like the margins." A child strokes her hair. She smiles and says "Thank you."

As children finished their writing they came to the back of the room where a lesson in using chopsticks to pick up small pieces of Fritos was progressing. They showed remarkable self-control when informed that they should only practice now and that in the afternoon during project time they could eat any rice-sized pieces they could carry to their mouths with the sticks. "It takes a lot of practice, troops." "See—Orlando is a teacher already, he knows how."

For the next experience a large CH was written on the board and the class was asked to think of words with that ending which were made into plurals by adding "es." The children had been asked to prepare a list of ten such words for homework the night before. The first two children were asked to give five words each. That was easy. When it came to the third child he also had to give five. This of course meant checking the words already on the board against his list and

giving several more on the spot. The fourth and fifth children had to give three each—there was much mental straining, hand waving and some *sotto voce* coaching. At the end each child who had one more was permitted to add to the list. Some words such as "which" were suggested and an explanation elicited from the class as to why this did not fit. The word "bitch" was smoothly accepted with an explanation that veterinarians use this term for a female dog. "It is not a dirty word meaning you are a pain in the neck." Smile.

At the start of the lesson the class took longer to settle down than usual, a child asked "What are we going to do?" She responded, "When you are ready I will tell you." "I am not going to start!" A boy shouted "Shut up"—quietly "That we could do without." To an over eager child, "I know you have another word but it's Frank's turn to think of one more." Smile, "Carlos has two more to go—so relax." "It's getting hard down on the wire—give me one more each." "Great—now we have a little time for a game."

From 9:45 to 10:05 the class, except for two girls writing a fairy tale play, was divided into two teams—boy, girl, boy, girl on each. The game involved giving the captain of the opposite team a *very hard* word with a suffix to spell. The isolate was the scorekeeper. Two others decided to only watch—each decision was respected. When tension mounted almost to the point of anger, "This is not a game of life and death. It is to learn—and help each other and even the other side."

By 10:10 the class was deep into two-place multiplication with some children at the board, changing for each example. One child shouted that Jose had made a mistake. "Excuse me—if he is wrong he will figure it out." Smile. She circulated so that each child was checked and helped. One boy, having completed his work correctly, danced quietly all around the room singing to himself. No one noticed his actions and he went back to his seat.

Next the SRA homework papers were collected. Carlos had not done his work. "You will do it now or during luncho—big trouble." Smile. "Por favor, do it now please." Each student then went to the SRA box to get the homework for that night.

"You have 40 minutes to correct your errors then show me what you want checked." "Gary—do you need help?" "Marie—very good, excellent." Smile. One boy calls out "Miss Jane I do need help." They go to the board to work on the problem together.

Gary had brought a jar of pistachio nuts for the day's exercise in approximation. Each child guessed how many there were. Gary kept score. "Is there a prize?" "Yes—a Frito." Discussion about different ways to figure closely rather than just guessing. Six children came within five of the correct number. "Oh my darlings! That was very, very good." Smile—and each smile, each "beautiful" each "excellent" was reflected in the eyes of the children. A girl holds the teacher's hand and whispers in her ear. Ms. Jane smiles and shakes her head in affirmation—joy. "Who will bring a jar of beans for estimating tomorrow?"

At 10:40 crayons and magic markers are brought out to color a Rexograph sheet of George Washington's head—his birthday next week. The letters of his last name had been

hidden in the picture so before coloring his face one must color the letters of his name and have it checked—"There are two n's you know." "Did you turn the paper upside-down to see the secret letters? Hunt, Hunt, Hunt." The child shouts "I found it!" The students were then to write, in their very best script "First in war, etc." and the dates of Washington's birth and death on the bottom of the picture, punch 3 holes and place in notebook.

Next an outline was put on the board.

<i>Lincoln</i>	Same	<i>Washington</i>
	Different	

"Now here is a chance to do research, to use your brain, to find answers. Let's start this together, then you will do the rest by yourselves. We need 10 similarities and 10 differences." Responses popped up around the room until Ms. Jane was sure that everyone had a head start. Until story time at 11:50 some children worked on this research while others prepared their plays for fairy tale day and some returned to chop stick practice.

"It's time for our story now—bring your chairs quietly please. I am waiting for three boys who are being rude." Clustered around her, sprawled on the floor, across desks, on chairs the children listened in wrapt attention as she read in a quiet but expressive voice until the lunch bell.

During project time I had taken seven randomly selected boys and girls to the teachers' room so that I could elicit their reactions to their school and their teacher. All children whose first or last initials were the same as mine were selected to avoid the possibility of the teacher stacking the group. If it were not for my tape recorder and a promise that they could hear themselves at the end of our discussion I doubt that much would have evolved since this was a mercurial, kinesthetic group. After I explained my purposes one of the boys demanded that each child be called on in turn to respond to my questions instead of the free flowing discussion I had proposed. When I decided to keep to a less rigid structure he cut out completely until we arranged a compromise.

Starting with a question about what they like about school I learned that they like to listen to the earphones, to go swimming, to do art. Some liked math, others hated it.

Dr. J.: Why do you like math?

Girl: So that I can learn.

Dr. J.: Why do you want to learn?

Girl: Because if you don't learn in school then you are just going to be like one of the men sweeping the floors downstairs.

Boy: If you do learn you could be an astronaut or one of those computer things.

Girl: If I want to be a nurse then I would know how much medicine to measure.

Boy: I don't like school, period.

Dr. J.: What would you like to do instead?

Boy: I like to go to the movies or to the race track with my father like on Sundays.

Boy: I like to play baseball in the YMCA—or swim in school—we go in the basement every Thursday—the boys and girls together.

Boy: I like social studies and spelling—

Girl: I like to write words three times

Boy: You're nuts!

Dr. J.: Let's talk about Ms. Jane.

Boy: She's the *best* teacher in the school.

Five of the seven children agreed that she was the very best teacher they ever had. One girl remembered a nun who had been her teacher in first grade in parochial school as being best. Another stated that Ms. Jane was tied for best with his third grade teacher. What good fortune! Ms. Jane was best because she was always giving them things like presents at Christmas and on birthdays. She takes us to good places. If you do something bad she don't hit you or nothing. If you have good spelling on Friday she gives you a candy. She lets us have a party for Puerto Rico. And she teaches you a lot and different things.

Dr. J.: What don't you like about Ms. Jane?

Boy: She was going to go to Puerto Rico and we had to have another teacher for three days. Everybody fooled around but when Ms. Jane is there nobody fools around or steals because they are scared of her.

Dr. J.: Why are they scared of Ms. Jane?

Boy: She might get you left back—you know.

Boy: She pinches and pulls my ear.

Boy: She doesn't pinch me—you're bad—that's why.

Repeated questioning on what Ms. Jane said that they like reaped very little except that they like it when she said that the class was good. They don't like it when she says that they have to stay after school on Fridays because they didn't complete their work. There were numerous interjections about problems with each other, because of the disruptive behavior of several children, because of the bossiness of others and thefts of personal property. This group was much more volatile and outspoken than similar groups interviewed in Southern schools. The fact that this group could not verbalize reasons why they liked this teacher did not detract from the voluble expressions of affection for her.

During lunch time, while four girls were voluntarily rehearsing their play, we asked Ms. Jane what she felt were her actions which led to her success. First of all she never loses her temper and almost never raises her voice because the children freeze up when someone "yells" at them. On the few occasions when she does raise her voice it is a calculated act to achieve a special impact on a child or a group. In 15 years of teaching at this school she has stressed social learning, a constant battle against *me, me I, I*. A firm disciplinarian she has permission from most of the parents to admonish the children or to do whatever is needed to maintain a learning environment.

Each activity every day is carefully planned in advance and new and interesting materials are introduced several times a day.

The basic curriculum is presented to the class as a whole with constant accommodation for the level of ability and interest of each child. Experiences are broken up into small units so that progress can be made and noted for each child everyday. Assignments in each of the subject areas are made each day and each child is expected to complete each one correctly. Frequent use is made of tests with Friday being

mop-up day. All the students know that if their work is not completed satisfactorily they do not go swimming, using that time to work—or they are kept after school on Friday if still more time is needed. The work expected however is realistically apportioned so that almost all of the children can complete their work without penalty. Expectation is set high—to the limit of each child's capacity—and often perfection is required.

She showed me some very thoughtful open-ended papers on the topic "I wonder why—" Why people take drugs? Why they make pictures? Why they fight?

Supportive words like beautiful, very good, lovable, great are showered on all except when children do not show respect, are fresh or fight. "In that case they have to deal with me—I'd knock their teeth out." Again that big smile.

We talked about her early years of teaching. Although she went through a traditional teacher education program including student teaching she felt that she had been taught what to teach but very little of the how. The first few years were sink or swim but by her fifth year she kept above water. As she left to supervise the hall as students returned from lunch she clenched her fists like a boxer "I grew up with boys—I'm basically tough." Smile—

Mr. Gray at Ironwood Parochial School

Within the context of traditional teaching in a parochial school a teacher with the assistance of two paraprofessional aides creates an oasis of innovation for 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grade children referred by their teachers because of behavior problems caused by academic frustration. The use of group dynamics techniques establishes relationships leading to positive behavioral change.

The two-propeller plane sets down on an endless plateau 15 miles from anywhere. The limousine ride takes one past a small middle class suburb, endless highway eyesores, a red brick four-story housing project for blacks into Ironwood. This industrial town, with a population slightly over 140,000, has no readily observable redeemable features. The center of the city has the one inevitable old hotel with the purely functional new motel two blocks away. The community clearly exists to maintain its industries and at a time of recession, as the present, a sizeable percentage of the inner-city residents are either working part-time or are unemployed.

Background Information

Of the 54 schools in the city 15 are in the central city target area, two of which are parochial schools. Blacks comprise 50 to 90 percent of the student bodies in the ten schools serviced by the Motivation Centers Program. One of the centers is largely for Spanish-speaking bilingual students. The number of blacks in Ironwood Parochial School is lower than at the neighboring public institutions but it is emphatically pointed out that of the 370 students 112 come from families within the \$3000 to \$4000 annual income range with wide variance in family size. At least 25 children come from poor, poor families living in the depths of poverty and needing intensive social welfare support. Almost 150 children have free breakfast and about 260 free lunch. The case for Federal assistance was clearly established even though almost half of the students come from middle class homes capable of providing private education for their children. The parochial schools were reported as being very grateful for any Federal or State help they received because they have average class sizes of over 35 and generally poorly paid teachers many of whom were not adequately prepared. The Sister who served as principal spoke about crisis following crisis resulting in her fervent prayer, "Lord, drop down dew but make it green!"

Children are recommended for the Motivation Centers by their teachers in the late spring for the following academic year if they have an IQ of at least 90, if they will be in the 3rd, 4th, or 5th grades, if they are at least one year behind in academic skills and if their behavioral problems are caused by academic frustrations rather than from unstable personality. This last distinction was made because it was felt that the specially trained teachers and aides were not prepared to teach emotionally disturbed children. Candidates are intensively tested during the first three weeks of the new school year by a psychologist assigned to the program and his referral and the parents' approval must both be granted before placement.

Observation

On walking into the center one is struck by colored posters, drawings and instructional materials displayed on walls from ceiling to floor and strung across the room from one learning center to another. It takes some time to sort out these impressions into instructional and motivational units.

As the children stroll or burst into the room Mr. Gray is already busy with greetings and planning for the morning's activities. This was Mr. Gray's first year of assignment to a center. He became available when the all-black school, in which he taught 45 students on the 6th grade level in a self-contained classroom, was closed. His success under those difficult circumstances, in addition to 20 years of teaching, 12 of which were spent in the inner-city and 14 years of teaching part-time at the university in teacher-education courses, made him a prime candidate for work in the center.

The first two weeks of the year, while the children were being tested, was spent in in-service training in transactional analysis, directive teaching, open classroom techniques, behavior modification, social modeling and positive reinforcement. While some of these terms are overlapping they followed one another in rapid succession as Mr. Gray explained the nature of the workshop experiences afforded the staff involved in the ten centers. Excepting himself, the teachers for all the centers are young and as yet not completely brainwashed by the establishment. They therefore are open to experimentation. Just out of college they are ready to change the world. Mr. Gray has always been his own person and is therefore immune to brainwashing. He does what he sees as best for the children and never permits diehards to hamper his efforts.

The children go to their homeroom first and return there for religious instruction at 11:30 a.m. The rest of the day is spent at the center.

A circle of chairs has been set up at the front of the room where everyone sits in solemn discussion for the first 20 minutes or longer if needed.

Girl: "Henry was bad. He sneaked on the bus and boys were throwing spitballs."

Mr. Gray: "We'll have to talk about sneaking and spitballs."

Boy: "May I bring my football to school?"

Mr. Gray: "You may if you wish."

Boy: "Do I go out in the hall today? I have 10 bonus tickets."

The complaints and questions were blurted out in random fashion. Mr. Gray sat as mediator with a bundle of bonus tickets in his hand. He handed them to individual children when their behavior or their contribution was exemplary. It soon became clear that bonus tickets were very important to the children since they were the medium of approbation and special privileges.

After the initial steam was taken off Mr. Gray went to a chart and wrote "Good Deeds". One by one the children were mentioned and listed. Carlos helped the aides. John was courteous to our visitors. Marie did outstanding work. John was very good on the bus. Pete carried books for Sister Lorraine. "Now give me the names of all who shared yesterday." Mr. Gray accepted even the slightest good deed if a child volunteered the information. For each child named on the daily chart a leaf is attached to his beanstalk. When a child earns 25 leaves he receives a small gift. One of the boys was almost there. He showed me with pride the miniature model car he expected to earn by tomorrow. The chart is placed in the hall each day so that the whole school can note their accomplishments. The outward result of this emphasis on good manners and behavior was a room full of helpful, polite boys and girls. And these were behavior problems in their classrooms!

Before the circle was broken the students had a chance to ask me questions. Instead of answering them I responded with a guessing game in order to gauge their reasoning power. They soon had the answer to their questions about me, where I came from and why. It was then my turn to ask them questions. Their candor was disarming.

Next came project time with the children bartering 10 bonus tickets for the privilege of working in the hall. One child who did not have ten borrowed from his friend. And work they did on research in reference books on a wide variety of subjects. When a project book was complete with basic information and illustrations the scholar received 35 bonus tickets, a compliment and a pat on the head from the kindly white-haired grandfather with his bowtie untied. He was filling many roles in their lives. It was clear from observation and private discussion with the children that they adored and respected him and therefore modeled themselves after their perception of his expectations.

One boy whispered to me that later he wanted to show me the thing. He put circled fingers to his eye. Later the thing turned out to be a microscope with four different magnifications. We ran into a problem because of insufficient light. He improvised a solution by holding a flashlight underneath the slide. Another problem solved by native intelligence freed by environment.

"Bonnie, you have done beautiful work on insects. You really have worked hard. Do the rest and then bring it back to me." "Pam, you know more about snakes than I do. You have done a fine job. I never even heard of some of these snakes. Do you want 35 new green bonus tickets or 35 old brown ones?"

Language arts was taught with the class segmented with Mr. Gray working on baseball words with half the class and the rest working with the aides. At times the responses came so quickly from the children that Mr. Gray could not keep up. "Our words today will be worth 3." "Oh please, 5, 5." "O.K., we'll split the difference, 4." The lesson proceeded. If a child was disruptive he took away a ticket. If the whole group was unruly he notified them that they would have seven less minutes in gym—a dire penalty, one which would be repaid by good behavior or bonus tickets.

Mr. Gray shifted around like a boxer, on his toes in contact with everyone in the room—a handshake, a smile, a bonus ticket all saying to the students, "You are very good and capable and productive." He never raises his voice, never loses his cool, interjects a joke, a jibe, a little joy to combat the failure syndrome.

A science lesson on sound followed. It was obvious that this lesson was not put on especially for me because the students were able to answer very specific questions I asked about the structure of the ear and the nature of sound waves.

Mr. Gray believes that development of skills, content and self-concept can go on simultaneously. He is generally discouraged however because of the need for different kinds of principals in schools. They must become educators first and then administrators rather than vice versa. He also sees the need for teachers' unions and associations being held accountable for the performance and productivity of their members if teaching is to be considered a profession and not a job.

He expressed concern for the bright underachievers in the school who were not behavior problems and were therefore confined to the traditional self-contained classrooms where their special needs were most often neither recognized nor remedied. Indeed as we walked past most of the classrooms with girls in muted blue gray plaid uniforms and boys in pale blue shirts, blue ties and navy slacks seated in straight rows doing quiet seat work one wondered and worried.

At the end of the day each child in the center filled out a report of work done and whether he felt up or down and why. These responses were carefully reviewed by Mr. Gray and the aides in preparation for the challenges of the days to follow.

A Reading Team at Northville

A two-member team of reading specialists functioning at the end of a corridor find a solution for themselves and for the reading retardation of 2nd and 3rd grade children through a commercially prepared instructional system.

Fourteen miles from a large metropolitan core Northville is one of the less affluent suburbs. While in years past its status was higher as a bedroom community, creeping urban blight has brought deterioration of housing and services. Two blocks east of one of the main streams of congested traffic stands a relic of another century—a red brick box-like school built in 1882 with its inevitable annex, somewhat newer but still ancient. The streets surrounding the school are lined with what were once upper middle class homes which now show the neglect of years and of residents no longer able to invest in paint and repairs.

Of the about 700 students in the school 300 are on the free lunch program and 150-200 partake daily of free breakfast. In the heart of a Title I ESEA Target Area one-fourth of the students are black, one-fourth are from non-English-speaking backgrounds, predominantly Puerto Rican and half are lower middle or upper lower class whites.

Reviewing the status of the academic program with the principal one learns that this school is fourth or fifth lowest of the 27 schools in the system. At 5.1 grade level the school performed at 3.7 in word meaning and 3.2 in paragraph meaning tests last year. The sincere belief of the principal that the academic achievement record would now move up was based on the expected outcomes of the work of a two-member reading team whose influence on teachers and students was already evident.

The end of the second floor corridor had been partitioned off years ago as a nurse's office. In the last several years this cubby has been used as a reading center supervised by two experienced teachers. Ms. Dine has been specializing in

reading at the elementary level for two years after 13 years of teaching 1st grade classes, while Mr. Johns shifted two years ago, after 10 years of work at the junior high school level, to become a reading specialist for the lower grades.

In addition to their work in reading, both serve as custodial calmers of children brought to them because of misbehavior by the teachers of classes on their floor. These children are quietly accepted and asked to sit down. One can watch an interesting transition take place on the children's faces as the tension of anger generated by some incident in the classroom melts into boredom and then into attention to the lesson in progress or to the numerous charts displayed. If children balk at coming into the room they are given two choices—"Come in, or I'll take you to the principal." They come in. There is a full-time guidance counselor and a part-time psychologist who work in depth with the children and their continuing problems. They are relieved of the more casual incidents by this arrangement.

This technique of handling outbursts of disruptive behavior is reminiscent of the use of the corner or cubby in early childhood classes to which children can go, or be sent, until they are "steady." This team serves only one floor of classes but the teachers and the team all agree that similar benign havens should be set up on all floors. It was reported that some children were frequent "visitors" last year but that their need for inordinate attention had gradually diminished to the point where they were able to accommodate the demands of the classroom.

Due to a teachers' strike earlier in the year all teachers are required to stay an extra hour after school one day a week. This time is used for in-service programs. The bibles used by this team to influence the classroom teachers are *Teaching: a Course in Applied Psychology*, Becker, Engelmann, Thomas, Science Research Associates 1971, and *Preventing Failure in the Primary Grades*, Seigfried Engelmann, SRA, 1969. The SRA Distar Reading Program is used in the center. The team worked with all the 2nd grades last year and is working with the 3rd grades this year. Due to their influence and to the help of an SRA training staff all 1st grade classes now use the tripartite arithmetic, language arts, and reading units taught simultaneously by a teacher and two aides with the children rotating each morning for a lesson in each area. The 2nd grade classes have on aide each so only the language arts and reading programs are used.

Of the hundred 3rd grade children 72 are taught in the center each day, selected because of their poorer reading achievement. The 28 others are taught in their classrooms under the Title I ESEA individualized Action program which had evolved out of Able and Orbit.

Each member of the team works consistently with 33-36 children in small groups of five to seven students for 40-45 minute sessions. A majority of the students are now in the second half of their second year of help but there is continual rotation of the rest due to fairly high mobility, especially of the Spanish-speaking group. It was reported, however, that many non-English-speaking new students fitted quickly into this program and could learn to read the words in many cases before they knew meanings.

Observation I

Seven children, one girl and six boys, came in and sat in small chairs around Mr. Johns.

"Eyes on the book!" They drew their chairs closer, leaned forward and peered at the page held against his chest. Then in unison, or individually, they sounded out the words and endings. "Very good!" "You are sharp this morning". "Very good!" "Shshsh—don't tell!" Their eyes were fastened on his pointing finger moving around the page eliciting shouted responses. Careful attention was given to diction.

Mr. Johns then turned the page, clapped his hands in glee and said, "Now let's see who I can catch!" At the point at which all but one of the responses was wrong the lesson was stopped briefly to give that child one piece of sugar-coated cereal. The next word was easy so each child was offered one flake of cereal. One boy refused this token because he didn't like them. Sometimes raisins are used instead of one or another brand of cereal.

After the phonics exercises the beginning of a story was read expressively by the teacher. The children read the rest. "Point with your finger and read to yourself." Each child then worked on answering the questions or completing the statements on the work sheet until time was up. As all papers were checked before they left, "That's an excellent, beautiful, beautiful writing. I'm really proud of you. Smart, smart boy. You did a nice job today. See you tomorrow."

Mr. Johns reiterates that despite the high cost of materials, and despite the fact that the program goes against all his previous conceptions of good instruction, this was the first time he *knew* he was teaching children to read. At first he had resisted the seeming rigidity and lack of opportunity for creativity for the teacher. However, the positive reinforcement, no scolding, no punishment and the variety of carefully designed materials worked. Especially attractive for the children were the game units in which they had to read and comprehend complicated instructions in order to play and win. I swear by this program! I'd stake my life on it! The non-English-speaking children are even teaching their parents to read with the take-homes."

Observation II

As Ms. Dine started her session she began with "I liked the way you came in and sat down. Pass the goodies. You were the best one so you may have two." A parent stopped by the door looking for her daughter. Immediately the open invitation, "Would you like to come in and watch? See how smart she is. Come anytime."

Again the book pinned to the teacher's chest, the pointing finger, the shouted responses. "Oh gosh, you are smart!" Whistle. "Let's spell money by sounds. MONY. But we don't say mony. We say muney." All exceptional pronunciations are first read phonically and then correctly. "That's good, good watching. Good job! Lets shake hands."

The group then read in unison as Ms. Dine gave "go" signals and tapped with her feet. Then the transition to individual work as she hugged one of the boys and told him, "I love you—you're so good."

Ms. Dine pointed out in discussion that one of the major strengths of the program is that each child has many chances to read aloud to the teacher, who helps with problems, or rather she helps each child help himself to progress.

It was evident that these 3rd grade children could read comfortably a variety of materials almost justifying the boast that at the end of the 2nd grade program most of the children were independent readers of anything!

Impact

A tour of the first three grade level classes confirmed most of the statements about the spread effect of the program. In the 1st grade rooms the teachers and two aides were working with small groups, books held at chest level. The faculty had all learned to read upside-down and were fluent in implementing the program, evidence of the thorough training afforded by the Distar trainers and by the team.

The aide working with 1st grade language arts was stressing speaking in complete sentences. Before she concluded the unit she asked, "Who has not had enough chances to read?" Despite active participation on the part of all the children at least half of them took advantage of one more chance.

On the chalkboard in a 2nd grade classroom was a list:

- 50 stars — comic book
- 40 stars — 1 box M & M's
- 25 stars — small M & M's
- 15 stars — 1 piece of bubble gum
- 10 stars — 1 cookie

evidence that the token reinforcement system was in use and spreading. The teacher and aide were working with small groups, books pinned to chests, while the rest of the students were doing desk work, diligently bent over their assignments.

The 3rd grade class was attacking such science words as humidity, moisture, hurricane, hemisphere with the children's displayed work showing excellent manuscript and cursive handwriting.

The Teachers' Personalities

In this program the personality of the teacher, his or her skills, knowledge and background become to a large extent instruments subjugated to the program. Given a mature person with good instincts and special training in the techniques and materials of Distar one might say that the teachers are almost exchangeable parts, any one capable of replacing another as long as a record is kept of the place the child or group has reached. As an extension of this I was interested in watching two children waiting between sessions. One held the book to his chest and chanted the questions as the other shouted his responses.

A report from a school using the Distar program at the other end of the country indicated that within a few weeks time the teacher had learned to "reinforce with hugs, handshakes, squeals, and personal, specific, task-related praise. She also follows most formats without even consulting her book... "Perhaps the main reason for the success of this program is that almost everything a teacher needs to say is written down. Anything else needed for successful teaching is taught or trained." "In the Distar program teachers are taught that success in teaching means getting 100% of the children in a group of 5 to 10 children to respond correctly on every segment of every task in every lesson 100% of the time."

Mr. Johns left me with one final statement. "I used all the crap before but this works. It's a miracle!"

Ms. King at Douglass School

A language arts specialist serving different classes at all levels in several schools meets both the needs of students and of the classroom teachers.

The white taxi driver raised one eyebrow and asked "Where?" when I gave him the address of Douglass School. I repeated the address and waited as he sat quietly and scratched his head. "Is there a problem?" I asked. "No lady. I am just trying to figure out how to get there." "But it's right in the heart of the city." "Yes, lady. I know but I can't remember when the last time was that I had a call into that section." "Does that present a problem?" "No," he said resignedly. "I'll get you there."

There was no further conversation as we moved toward our destination. Soon all the people were black inhabiting the middle income houses the whites had only recently abandoned in their flight to the suburbs.

As I entered the Douglass Elementary School building long before the first children had arrived I was greeted by Ms. Harris the principal. She asked me if I minded joining her as she checked on the breakfast program in the all-purpose room. After I was introduced to all the food service staff we sat in the far corner of the combined auditorium-lunch room as the children came in for their orange juice, cereal and milk. I was immediately impressed with the decorum which prevailed. No voices were raised as staff and children followed carefully designed procedures. Ms. Harris' eyes swept across the room as she gave me some of the vital statistics about the school. The building was new, having been constructed in 1963-64 for 700 students. Shortly after opening the enrollment went to 1200 which meant that children waited in the auditorium, some-

times for two hours a day, until classroom space was available. A recent change of boundaries brought the registration down to 900 in 32 classrooms. This includes two kindergarten classes but does not include the one preschool group under the city recreation department.

Of the 900 students, all of whom are black, 530 are on free lunch and many more have partial assistance with the cost of lunch. Free breakfast is provided for 122 to 129 children. Free lunch is provided only to families on welfare or those with aid to dependent children assistance. The average number of children in a family is five to seven. The smallest family is two while the largest is 17.

Some of the non-professional staff have been with the school since it opened. They appear to know all the children by name. One of them confided in me, "It sure is something to have someone baby-sit with your kids. I wish someone had done this for me while I was bringing up my kids."

The guidance counsellor is introduced as a person indigenous to the community who works with the human problems, gets shoes and clothing for the needy, leads a Girl Scout troop on a volunteer basis and conducts a gardening program in the summer. She told me, "This was one of the most militant of neighborhoods. Kids came with knives and threatened the teachers. It's not like that any more. Now love permeates the school and we each try a little harder to make it even better. Most of the credit for the change should go to Ms. Harris who came here four years ago as principal." The principal indicated that while all the children were black the staff was integrated. On further questioning it evolved that only four teachers were white and that there were problems several of them had in adjusting to the special needs of the children.

Ms. Harris' eyes were everywhere as she told me about the troubles she faced in her first year as principal—over-crowding, children losing instructional time, family problems which spilled over to school. Things are better now. With Title I it is possible to reach individual children. Reading scores are beginning to go up. I checked some data which showed grade level performance in the 2nd grade with slippage occurring as the grade level goes up.

The Greater Cities Language Arts Program was introduced to this school last year with a workshop for teachers. The plan had at first been sponsored at other schools in the district by the Ford Foundation in 1960-61 for a three-year period with the understanding that positive evaluation at the end would obligate the system to continue the project. Since that time it is covered by the school district's budget. At the present time there is great insecurity for the staff since financial pressures will force the dropping of some programs and no one really knows where the ax will fall. In the last several weeks some middle administrators have been returned to the classrooms.

There are at this time 21 language arts specialists who serve all 140 schools in the district. Until this year only lower level schools were serviced with assignment of one specialist to a school for five days a week which brought favorable results. Now the specialists move from school to school serving five and sometimes more than five schools each week. This means that the contact is watered down.

I came to observe Ms. King, the specialist who served Douglass school one day a week. Her first period was spent with seven 5th grade boys who were selected in February because of reading retardation. Some of them could not identify the letters of the alphabet in isolation. Now, in May, they were able to do a little better but some still struggled with that task.

As we left the homeroom to walk single file close to the right hand wall one boy asked, "Are we going to play the 1, 2, 3, 4 game? Did you bring it with you?" "Oh yes—I know you like it!"

They got settled quickly, Ms. King then introduced me and gave a brief lesson on pronouncing and reading my name. Each child had selected a library book to read at home so she asked them, with some flair, to share their stories. One boy said he didn't like his book. She accepted his dislike. Later we learned that he really loved the book as he excitedly retold the story with the teacher hanging on every word and relishing each detail.

Although she is a grandmother Ms. King's warm brown face belies her years. Slightly taller than average she carries herself with great dignity. After several hours of observation one is left with an impression of royalty. When she teaches and implores students to help her with ideas one gets an image of a queen beseeching her subjects to help her save the kingdom.

The next activity for the 5th graders was telling a story from a series of large pictures. These boys, some of whom have probably been "retained in grade" at some time were tall and well developed—rather young men than children. I was therefor impressed with the enthusiasm they displayed as they developed the story.

Boy. "Oh me. Let me be first!"

Ms. K. "Look at the pictures and think of some names for the people."

Boy. "One day Bill, Pete and Sue went on a picnic."

Ms. K. "What words told us when they went on a picnic?" She coaxed the answer out of one of the group by swinging his arm and chanting the question again.

"I am going to write your story on the board. Who can read this sentence? Remember we said only one person could talk at a time. Now look and think, look and think."

As the story unfolded from the students the teacher asked questions to elicit ideas, motivated them to refine the details, congratulated one on the excellent word he contributed, tapped another under the chin to jokingly get him involved. The interactions proceeded at a merry pace. The story was read again and again, faster and faster—sometimes by one child, sometimes by the whole group.

How does one put into printed words the musical notations to represent the expressive fluidity of her voice? How picture the eyes opened in wonder and delight at a child's achievement? How explain the gestures, hands, arms, coaxing, pleading, calming, accelerating? How measure the energy expended in a lesson yet always controlled, calm, regal? How can one explain the magic needed to get mature 5th graders excited and participating in a 2nd or at most 3rd grade lesson? How explain a "no nonsense" approach with no punitive aspects?

The excitement of the students was heightened as they came to the letter lotto game the purpose of which was to get them reading and using letters in isolation—their weak point.

Before the game started one boy was asked to explain it to me and to give me my card and chips. He spoke intensely and sincerely. His mind was clear but his speech was halting as he tried to set aside his dialect for standard usage. This was a boy I heard read with ease and excellent diction but the struggle came in the conflict between his native speech and his perception of my expectations.

The game proceeded with the boys rotating the role of caller. The attention was intense and each seemed to have a real stake in winning.

In closing the session the seven again read their story. One boy who had great difficulty with the letter game did not even watch the board but voiced some words he caught by reading the lips of one of the better readers. After the lesson they clustered around me asking where I came from, how, and about what New York was like.

In discussing some of my impressions with Ms. King she explained that she accepts the basal dialect of the children. It is spoken by the people in his home, whom he loves. It must never be downgraded. She says "Another way of saying it is..." "There is a time to say ain't in informal situations." But she realizes the need for them to overcome the dialect so that they are prepared for the demands of more formal circumstances. "Because you are white, a visitor and a grown-up, he tried to be formal and stumbled in his speech. It is so pitiful—they all need help but some need so much more!"

The 6th grade class was waiting at attention for us. This was the first contact Ms. King had with this group. On our way to the room she told me that she was a little nervous at being observed by an important stranger. I viewed this as first night jitters for the actress who was going on stage but the minute she stood in front of the classroom the play began with no sign of tension.

"Good morning! My name is Ms. King." She writes her name on the board. "This is my neighborhood. You may have seen me in school or in the store or on the street. I am a special teacher. How many special teachers do you have?" Together they enumerated ten. "I am the language arts teacher." Again written on the board in perfect cursive handwriting. "What language do you think I teach? You have Spanish with someone else. Yes English. I want to help you with Junior High School where you will go in September. What's different about Junior High School?"

Boy. "They change classes."

Ms. King. "Yes, here you have one mama. There you have a different one every period."

She then explained how the teachers next year would expect them to know how to write outlines. "Who knows what an outline is?" No responses. She drew a heart on the board and they told her it was a heart. "Not really a heart but an outline of one. Now let's see what a word outline is like."

"Who can tell me some uses for animals? You my friend, what about thinking." A few hands go up. "Oh I should see more hands than that. Everyone knows one animal in America. Come on. Raise your hands." By now about all hands were up waving frantically for recognition.

Girl. "There are squirrels for coats."

Ms. King. "I come from Mississippi and my father used to shoot squirrels and rabbits for us to eat. You don't like that but we did. It was goood!!"

The responses now came thick and fast. They were written on the board as given. Then a very brief explanation of the reason for and organization of outlines was given. She walked to the back of the room and asked them to read together all the animals and their uses.

"How shall we begin our outline? It takes sharp eyes to see the answer in our list of facts." She slaps her fist in the palm. "Think! Think! I don't know what I'm going to have to do to get someone to write on the board."

A girl finally volunteers and starts to write "food." "Oh my. It was my fault. I forgot to tell you that main ideas have the first letters as capitals."

With impeccable speech she proceeded with question after question. What number? What other use? What other animals? Where do we put it? One boy is unable to spell 'clothing' correctly and the children laugh. "Don't laugh at anybody because if you laugh you laugh at me since it is my job to teach you language arts."

As the period came to an end she said, "Everyone should remember *one* thing I taught you this morning. One thing. When I come back I will ask you for one thing and I want to see all the hands." Pleading. "Next time please help me by talking." Exit left rear.

At lunch we talked about parent workshops, staff development days, living in a goldfish bowl and what to do if the funding for the program was terminated. Plans to decentralize the system into four districts also generated insecurity. Changes, cuts, transfer—all tension-generating words. It's hard to work at top effectiveness with those threats hanging over your head after 24 years in the system.

We dropped in to see the principal for a few moments of discussion which focused on the deficits, teachers' union, red tape, the need for a crisis teacher, the need for smaller classes, larger rooms, multisensory and individualized learning and on the break-ins by dope addicts with the periodic theft of urgently needed equipment.

The lesson plan, or rather script for the lesson, for the 4th grade class was well designed. With piercing eyes and a broad smile Ms. King told the class that they would have a lesson on the five senses. "What are the senses?" She does not give information but elicits it from the class. She does not accept a few hands raised but restates the question and implores and coaxes until almost all are involved. "I have nine hands. Can I get ten? Help me. One more? What about you, and you. Good." There's a balance between their participation and her dramatic patter.

"I am going around the room with this bag. Feel inside without looking. What's in it? Touch it but don't tell anybody what you think till everyone has a chance." As she moves down the rows, "You are the nicest class because you are being so patient. It takes a long time to give everyone a chance."

Now with chalk in hand, "Don't tell me what it is. Tell me how it feels. Give me one word to describe how it felt. Sharp, sticky, round, hard, pointy—and on until the feel of a pineapple is described. Next came comparison in looking at a pine cone and a pineapple. It was then smelled and described by everyone. Dropping it on the desk gave a basis for hearing. Then came the best of all—the chance to taste the pieces of fresh pineapple prepared the night before and comparison with canned pineapple chunks distributed as a second treat.

"Now give me all those good words to describe how it tastes." The fifth list was then completed with words flowing over to another taste column. The lists were then read in unison after which the children wrote paragraphs on pineapples as the curtain descended.

Ms. Ryan at Oceanview School

A formal reading center having a director, another certified teacher and two aides utilizes cassette tape recorders and other media with staff-prepared software to overcome reading difficulties of all children not functioning to their full potential.

Deteriorating sections of resort areas create poverty pockets close to affluence and recreational facilities. It is difficult to sense the deprivation of the people living in such communities from the observation of externals especially when most homes are maintained, at least outwardly, in some approximation of their original state and the mild climate does not wreak damage over the years. When the larger metropolitan system provides a new school building for the children of such a community it contributes further to the illusion but also provides the environment in which some compensating influences can be provided the students. Oceanview is a fine model of such a school.

Large classrooms, wide halls, an extensive playground added to a stable and imaginative faculty explain to some extent why the 850 children like to come to school and why behavior problems are minimal. Ms. Klein, the dapper, middle-aged principal in a smart pants suit described the distribution of pupils with more flair than is usual. Of the 850 over 650 receive free lunch with about 300 also having breakfast at school. The children were 53% black, 28% from Spanish-speaking backgrounds and 19% Caucasian. The parents

were either middle class people who loved the beaches and wanted to reside there, were graduate university students, were far-left hippy bead people or were poor. Some were militant, some middle class and some apathetic. Most of the problems of hostility come from outside the community.

Eighteen years ago Ms. Klein was placed in this school for her first assignment as principal. She found an incredible tobacco road situation in which the school became a social agency in addition to being an educational facility. Her first task was to build a good relationship with the community and even today as she visits the neighborhood the parents and children greet her warmly as one of them. She felt that this relationship was responsible for the low rate of vandalism at the school.

Last year had presented a serious problem due to a group of outsiders who came into school politics in an attempt to control for their own purposes some of the Federal funds allocated to the school's programs. She called upon the parents for help and the situation was brought under control. An official parent advisory group is very active in helping to decide what services are to be bought through local, state and Federal allocations. There are 43 teachers, predominantly white, plus 11 aides, all community residents, purchased through Title I. Through inner-city funds one resource position for testing, inservice and varied functions and a vice-principal were bought, the latter not provided for by usual channels because only schools of 1000 or more students have a second administrator assigned.

Ms. Ryan, the head of the reading center, is paid for by state funds while her partner, also a fully qualified teacher is provided under Title I. There are numerous other special services afforded the children including a health clinic providing dental, heart, vision, orthopedic, psychological, and guidance assistance.

After a total of fourteen years of work as a 2nd and 3rd grade teacher, advanced university study in teaching reading, three years as a state certified reading specialist, Ms. Ryan was selected to establish and head the reading center in addition to helping new teachers, supervising inservice programs and helping with ordering and care of school equipment. Working with her and her partner are two aides, one of whom is studying toward teacher certification.

Two rooms joined by an internal archway comprise the center. There are small tables with chairs facing the wall around one room, several islands including the teacher's checking desk and a book reading corner in the second room.

The center services four groups a day, with 25 to 30 children from the 3rd to the 6th grades in each 50 to 60 minute session. Students are referred by their teachers for enrichment or remediation. Tests given before the start of the program indicated average performance on intelligence tests at 79. All staff forcefully reminded me that this does not mean that the children's IQ's are low but that their test performance is handicapped by many factors they hope to overcome through the specialized programs. Some teachers had complained that the center did not work with the children with serious behavior problems and therefor the decorum there was exemplary. A check however showed that over one-third

of the students at the center were considered behavioral problems outside of that facility. Indeed as I observed for several hours there were no evidences of restlessness or misbehavior. Once or twice a child slipped into inattention to the task before him but a gentle reminder brought him back quickly.

As the 11 o'clock group filed in after recess each child stopped at the door, took a piece of dampened paper toweling from a container, washed his hands and dropped the towel into a basket, evidence of the clear establishment of routines and the tone of respect for books and equipment. We handle them with clean hands. Individual cards were picked up after which each child slipped into a station, inserted an ear plug, switched on the cassette recorder and followed the skills sheet before him.

One of the two teachers seated herself at the checking desk, one aide was seated in the section devoted to SRA and Sullivan units while the other two adults moved around the room responding to hands raised as a sign of need of help.

No one spoke above a whisper yet conversation was easy and clear. One boy approached the desk where Ms. Ryan was writing. "I'm ready for checking." "Good, Carlos, if you pass this unit you graduate today from this skill. Then I will give you a choice of your next unit." The post-test was given and passed. A graduation certificate with a gold circle and ribbon stating, "This is to certify that _____ knows all word lists, and is able to read the 220 most commonly used words in the English language. Congratulations." The Reading Laboratory certificate was completed and given with a hug, a pat, and a smile". Discussion followed on the selection of his next task. "I knew you would make a good decision!"

After about a half hour each child started to put his project away and to move to the free reading corner, with bookcases on three sides, cushions on the floor and a row of small chairs completing the square. Some children picked up books with their markers in them to continue reading books already started. Others browsed among the racks and boxes looking for the next morsel while a few sat down in order on the chairs to wait their turn for checking.

Ms. Ryan sat at the end of the row and asked the first child to tell her the story he had read. She responded with quiet enthusiasm to the unfolding account after which she turned to a page and asked the boy to read it to her. They both displayed triumphant glee as Ms. Ryan wrote the name of the book on the boy's list. Since he had completed another unit of five he was told to select a sticker and place it on his list. I spoke for a few minutes with this former non-reader who had completed reading 35 books since December 15th, less than six months. I asked him if he had any idea about the book he would take next. His eyes glistened as he told me he would look for another Dr. Seuss book because they were fun. For each of the book periods a word helper comes from a 3rd 4th capable learner class to read difficult words for children needing assistance. One child after another recounted the details of his story, with expression and sincerity eliciting now a chuckle, now a nod or at times a verbal response of wonder at the unfolding tale. While this went on there was the cadent hum of fifteen children reading to themselves in expressive whispers.

Each child passes through steps in letter names, initial consonants, digraphs, blends, long vowels, short vowels, vowel rules. Sight vocabulary is tested by the Fry method for preprimer words, primer and then 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade levels. It is expected that the child achieves each task at the 100% level. That is the expectation and there is no onus if a child needs several sessions to be ready for testing or if he does not achieve perfection on the first evaluation. It is try, try again. Later, children work on units on vowels with R, silent letters, prefixes, suffixes, syllabication, contractions and diphthongs. They also get specific training in learning to listen and follow directions and learning to take tests.

Four children have completed the program already, have received a certificate of honor proclaiming "To Read is to Succeed," and have been made honorary members of the center free to come as they wish to read, borrow books or review skills.

Review of data concerning tests administered after 3 months shows a one-year average growth with the range from one month to three years. "We know that the May tests will show even greater progress because we see growth every day. They spurt ahead with the mastery of each skill."

The staggering fact of this program is that Ms. Ryan, with the help of her colleagues, has prepared the dozens of units including the visual material and the tapes, well designed and presented in exquisite detail, has read numerous books on to cassettes for reading-learning experiences, and has created games, tests, checklists, awards. One of the reasons why commercial units were rejected for the first phases of the program was because almost all of them had workbooks requiring writing. It was felt that to try to overcome both reading and writing deficiencies simultaneously would be self-defeating. The disadvantaged child is easily frustrated and gives up.

If ever I have observed a classroom master teacher who has transformed herself into a manager of a learning environment Ms. Ryan was the prime example. All of the adjectives describing the model teacher are used by her colleagues and superiors in describing her and her contribution to the school except those which portray the charismatic quality of the actor. She submerges herself to bring out the best in others without ever hiding the competence and inner strength which made her a leader. Her pervasive philosophy is that only through individualizing can children be helped to become independent learners cognizant of their own progress. When children are absent, such as those who return to Mexico periodically, they pick up where they left off on their return. Ms. Ryan expressed concern that too many labs are that in name only. If diagnosis, perception, learning, evaluation are not cycled and monitored continuously the laboratory operates on a low efficiency level.

In order to maintain the spurt in growth in reading skills the staff of the center is conducting the program through the summer school sessions. Some of the other special programs will also be offered in order to avoid the loss in achievement one usually observes after the long summer vacation. The summer program is fully enrolled since the children find school a happier place to be than the alternatives in the community.

Usually when a school provides one outstanding program there are other offerings equally exciting. This is the case at Oceanview School. An excited 4th grade boy describes his project in the science-math laboratory. He had tested the color preferences of mealworms. Numerous runs had been observed, data recorded and interpreted and a complete report written, evidence of sophistication in scientific inquiry. A second boy working with mealworms had tested the physical and chemical stimuli which made the mealworms move backward. The math activities in the lab were enriched by equipment secured by the teacher in several workshops.

A special class of 3rd and 4th grade capable learners had been set up to provide enrichment for that segment of the student body so often neglected in compensatory programs. I sat through a half hour of student-made films which in many ways exceeded work produced by graduate students in early media courses. Special effects using student-made attachments for the camera, experiments with the physical aspects of light, competent editing, group planning and responsibility were strongly in evidence. The classroom was rich with units in other curricular areas. I asked the teacher to try to describe what she did or said which appeared to succeed in motivating her students. She said, "What I do right is very elusive. I really cannot verbalize the specifics. I guess its a combination of inspiration and lugging equipment to school for their use."

A Pie Program was attempted mixing the blacks and Chicanos at one time with a group of Japanese students and at another time with a group of Jewish children. The project had several benefits but most important was the breaking down of fear of others unlike oneself.

As I parted from the principal she said, "These are not the only answers. They work now. Maybe next year something else will work." One could trust her and her stable staff to find and use old and new ways for improving the lives and educational experiences for the young people entrusted to their care.



Ms. Ortiz at Costilla School

A Mexican-American teacher with two aides assists the classroom teacher and her paraprofessional aide in implementing a bilingual program to teach English-speaking children to understand, read and write Spanish and the Spanish-speaking children to understand, read and write English. Concept instruction is given in the native language.

It was the morning when the news reached the Chicano community that Cesar Chavez had been admitted to the hospital in critical condition due to his hunger strike against the new restrictive laws governing the rights of migrant workers. With mixed anger and pride they showed me his picture on an immense mural depicting the history of the Mexican-American people from the Aztec period to the present struggle for cultural and human dignity. The mural had been painted by four high school students with the strong support of the community. It was hoped that this painting, in the tradition of the fine murals gracing walls in Mexico, would help to build pride through awareness of their cultural heritage.

The Title VII supported bilingual program at this school is one of several in this city under a project director who had chosen Ms. Ortiz as a most effective teacher. The director heads a team of four bilingual teachers including one placed in the kindergarten, six bilingual aides, two community aides and one secretary. This team works with six colleague teachers and six aides funded under Title I. The progress of the students in the program is matched with children in a control school and is also compared with children at Costilla school who are not in the project.

There is an ongoing education program for the aides at the local college. Those aides who are not graduates of high schools work toward equivalency degrees. The others work toward college credit with the hope and expectation that some of them will ultimately become fully prepared teachers under a Career Opportunity Program funded under a separate Federal grant.

The district is notoriously poor and the problems are great. In order to conserve funds no new teachers are being given contracts. Contracts must be granted if a person has credentials and teaches in one school for six months. Therefore substitutes are moved from school to school every few months. As a result the class I was observing had five different teachers this year. Fortunately for the children however the class aide and the bilingual team which worked with them each morning afforded continuity throughout the year.

Most of the buildings in the school were of prefabricated modules which survive because the weather is never severe enough to inflict extensive damage. Due to construction problems this 1st grade class was housed in an inadequate trailer for several weeks thereby hampering their education.

The major element of the bilingual program is that English is taught to the Spanish-speaking children at the same time that Spanish is taught to the English-speaking black minority. All special lessons are taught in both languages with

the children seeing both units on the board at the same time and hearing both languages in alternate presentations. Children can choose to write their lessons in one or the other. Intensive small group reading lessons are given in the native language.

The black colleague teacher started the day with the pledge to the flag and with arrangements for lunch. Ms. Ortiz, a motherly type in her fifties, with hands clasped in front of her, with her quiet melodic voice and nodding head then took over. In Spanish and then in English they greeted each other.

"Good morning, boys and girls."

"Good morning, Mrs. Ortiz."

"How are you?"

"We are fine, thank you. How are you?"

"I am fine too."

They then discussed the fact that today was Thursday. It was the beginning of a new month—June 1st and it was warm. Both groups of children participated in both languages with ease playing the game outlined for them by this familiar, warm person. The discussion then moved to identifying familiar objects such as paper and pencils in both languages.

The colleague teacher then presented a reading-spelling lesson of ten one-syllable words followed by the children supplying Ms. Ortiz with the Spanish equivalents which she wrote on a parallel list.

"Good for you. You have your thinking caps on today." Papers were then distributed with instructions to write each word three times in careful manuscript. One of the aides took four children in one corner and flashed ESL cards with pictures on the top and the words printed below as the children called out their responses. Ms. Ortiz took five children for a reading and comprehension lesson in Spanish using *Libra Primero de Lectura* published by Cultural Centroamericana, S.A. with many illustrations, highly reminiscent of Dick and Jane. The teacher worked with three boys in English using a standard text. The other two aides rotated among the other children helping them with their writing. I looked over the displayed student work among which was one that noted *1 mama, 1 papa, 8 ninos, 3 ninas, 13 en la familia* with a picture of the family. Everyone worked diligently—no fun and games now.

It was clear that beyond her instructional task Ms. Ortiz was responsible for the management of the team which served this class in the morning and another 1st grade class in the afternoon.

One of the aides in describing Ms. Ortiz said, "Her manner is so confident the children pay attention. She cares and the children know that. She smiles and knows what she is doing. She is warm but firm, a good teacher."

Ms. Ortiz shared her concerns with me. The children see violence all around them. There is too much violence on television which is a very bad influence. But the Mexican-American children are milder in temperament so they are upset by the violence they experience in junior high schools and drop out. Some teachers are too easy. They must set limits and the children must learn these limits. When they grow up the police will not ask them if they have problems. They will be treated as criminals if they do criminal acts.

"I feel that part of me belongs to them and part of them to me. At first when I came here the teachers regarded me as an outsider interfering with their system. They would not refer any children to me for help. They said the children had no language or other problems. After I established a firm relationship they wanted to refer all the children because suddenly they all had problems. The teachers often do not see the children and their differences. Many of them do not recognize the difference between their children who are American Indian from the Mexican-Americans—they just see them as problems.

"I remember the problems I faced because I spoke only Spanish as a child. They punished me in school. I had a kind old teacher. She would clean our faces, sew our buttons, take care of us and sometimes make hot cocoa for us. But she still punished us for speaking Spanish—she said it was against the law. I think this hampered my ability to express myself orally. It is very sad now that the younger people are rejecting their own language."

"Since I was very poor as a child I can understand the problems of poor children. But I also know that kids like authority with humor and justice. I lay down the rules and tell them what I expect and what they can expect from me. I know that poor children have almost nothing they can call their own. So I give them their own desk and materials."

To add to the picture the breakfast program which was offered last year was dropped this year for bureaucratic reasons. Children with sores on their bodies need medical attention. Teachers often use their own money to buy equipment and food for the children. The principal reports that these kids are experts in inferiority. You ask, "What will you be when you grow up?" "Nothing." "Why?" "Because I am nothing."

But in classrooms with good teachers this is changing. My last impression of Ms. Ortiz was of a kindly human being playing word games with three boys sitting on the edge of their chairs to get as close to her as possible without getting up and breaking the rule. Three pairs of large dark round eyes were focused on the cards, three grinning faces responded to her encouragement. They were learning...with enthusiasm...joy.

To quote from the mural—"It is better to die on one's feet than to live on one's knees." An enlightened community and dedicated leaders and teachers will lift these children up to live on their feet or else. . .



Conclusion

There are several tentative conclusions which can be drawn from this small sample, which are supported by other sources in the field and in the literature.

The infusion of funds into local schools from Federal and state services which require careful planning, written proposals and evaluation has forced administrators and teachers to think of better ways to educate children. While there are still too many classrooms in which children sit in fixed rows submissively or restlessly awaiting the next direction from the teacher, in the most effective situations one finds movement toward true individualization of instruction with greater participation by children in decision-making about what and how they will learn. This open, relaxed, unoppressive environment provides for spontaneity and joy. Children fortunate enough to be in such schools or classrooms like to come to school and get excitement and pleasure from the learning process.

When the teacher in a self-contained classroom has a reduced student load and the help of special teachers or programs, she is able to provide quality education if she creates an unoppressive atmosphere. Only one of the six teachers observed, however, worked within such a structure. The others were directors of reading or motivation centers or were special teachers working within several or many other teachers' rooms. This trend has been observed since the inception of ESEA. There are several other patterns evolving in schools, which did not appear in this study probably because of the request for recommendation of a best teacher. Among these probably the most promising is the movement toward having four or five teachers responsible for 80 to 120 children in an individualized learning environment with the additional provision for small and large group teaching-learning experiences.

Federal assistance for schools cannot and does not fully compensate for the social blight one finds in the inner cities and other poverty pockets in our country. In certain neighborhoods, however, there is a new partnership between the school and the community beginning to force the changes needed to create a more favorable social milieu for the residents, both old and young, that Federal assistance alone cannot do. The process is self-reinforcing and has potential for further development.

There are some good schools for poor children, good because the administrators and teachers are determined to serve their students well and the community supports their efforts. Within good and not-so-good schools there are good teachers who are recognized by children, parents and their peers for the excellent quality of their service.

Not all of the outstanding teachers are charismatic and therefore readily recognized. Many are quiet, reserved and submerge their personalities to the process of teaching-learning. The inner strength of these teachers however is readily recognized by those who care to observe them and it is to that strength and the skills and knowledge they bring to their tasks

that the children respond. But strength without compassion, firmness without fairness, create a prison not a positive learning climate. For many teachers this compassion springs from their own childhood or life experiences which have exposed them to poverty, injustice, fear, frustration. Having outwardly overcome these handicaps, or at least having learned how to live with them, equips these teachers with the radar needed to hear and interpret the signals they get from the tensions and unhappiness of their students. Their life experiences too help the teachers to know how to lead children toward relief from, or resolution of, the causes of their deep unhappiness wherever possible within the context of their life space.

There appears to be wide leeway in the areas of how instruction is implemented, what materials are used. Different circumstances require different modalities. Two crucial elements are universal, however, the good teacher believes that her children can learn and stretches them to their limits; the good teacher also believes strongly that what she is doing—her techniques, the materials she provides—will be successful in the task. It almost appears that believing makes it come true if one works hard and well within a favorable climate. Feel! Work! Know! Stretch! Believe!

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