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ABSTRACT

A committee under the chairmanship of Benjamin Bloom met in June 1964 to discuss research findings about disadvantaged populations and the prospects for educating them. Many of the things talked about then have been realized: More money has been spent. Better than half of the colleges and universities train teachers for disadvantaged children. More guidance programs have been developed and educational technology obtained. Progress has been made in developing cultural and ethnic pluralism in educational materials. There is a renewed concern for vocational education and career development. But education is not an antidote to poverty. Furthermore, the school is immoral when it continues to hold that as its goal. Schools are one of the resources by which society prepares and develops its members. When other societal resources are unequally distributed, quality of schooling becomes even more important. When the society produces subpopulations less well prepared to benefit from the standard offerings of the school, we have the additional responsibility for broadening, expanding, and enriching the offerings of the schools, not as our first line of defense against poverty, but as protection against the effects of an unjust society, which, if they go uncorrected, systematically erode the human resources of that society. (Author/JM)

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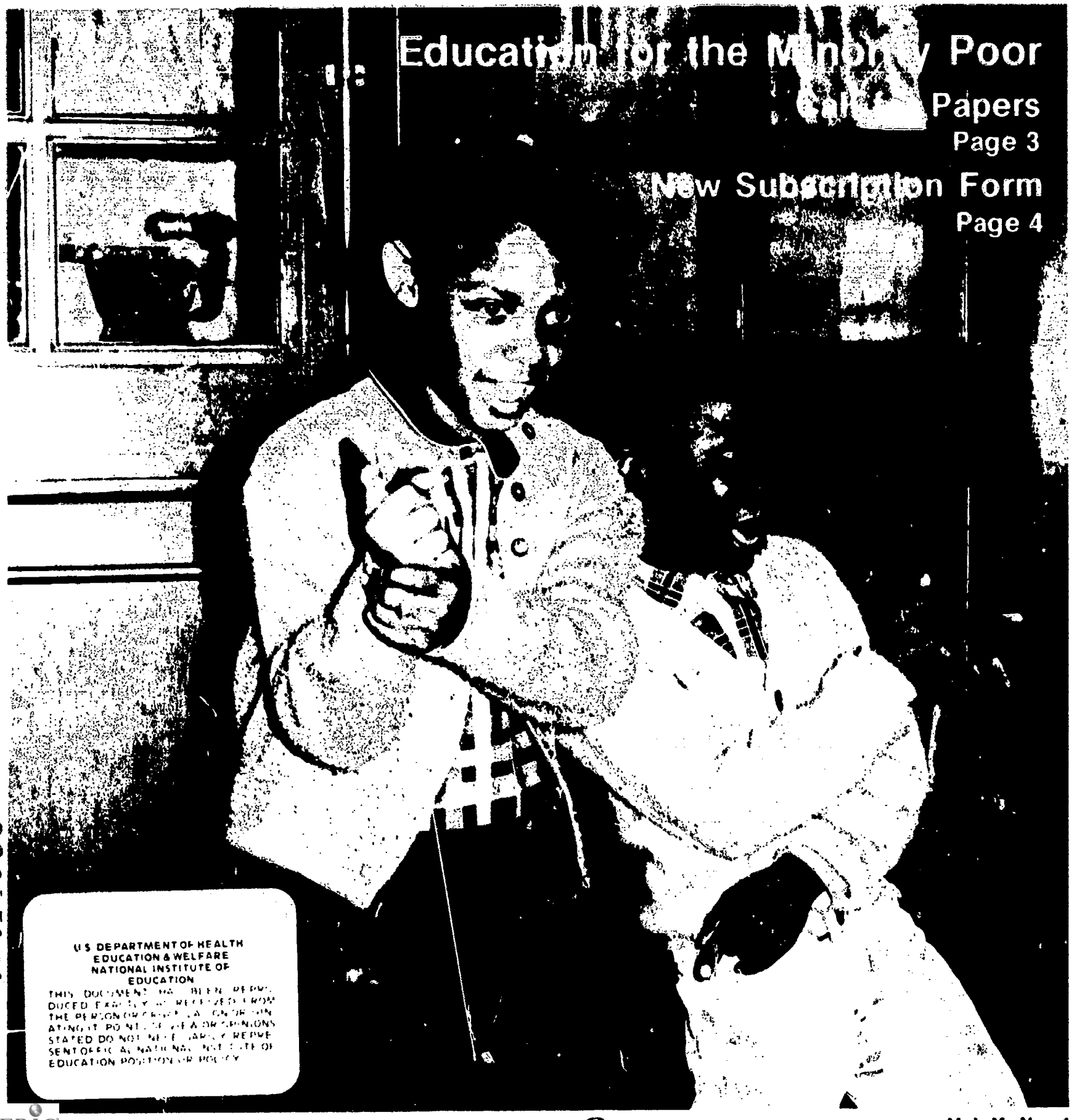

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New Perspectives on Old Issues in Education for the Minority Poor

by Edmund W. Gordon

Dr. Edmund W. Gordon speaking at a conference with educators at Teachers College recently

It's been ten years since June 1964 when several of us met in Chicago under the chairmanship of Benjamin Bloom to discuss what we knew from research findings about disadvantaged populations and the prospects for educating them.[1] In the several years that have passed we have seen the realization of many things that we talked about that summer. In the 60's we believed that more money, extra effort, and improved technology would solve the problems of educating the minority poor.

We have spent more money. At the peak of activity, over 2 billion dollars per year was allocated to the education of poor children by the federal government alone. We have gotten more effort. At least half the school districts of the nation have initiated programs of some sort directed at the education of the poor. At the peak of activity, 550,000 children were exposed to Head Start and another 3.5 million were reached by the programs funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964. In addition, better than half of the colleges and universities have developed special programs to train teachers for disadvantaged children. We have also developed more guidance programs. Most of them have simply meant *more* guidance services rather than different guidance services, yet some have tried to make the guidance process more meaningful for the target population. Some programs have effectively used peer tutoring with gains reported for the tutors as well as for those tutored. We have gotten more educational technology. Teaching machines, programmed materials, audio visual aids, multi-sensory materials and computer-assisted instruction are available in classrooms across the nation.

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We have made progress in developing cultural and ethnic pluralism in educational materials, so that teachers can now use materials that are indigenous to the specific minority cultures of their students. We have seen the introduction of Ethnic Studies, and a renewed concern for vocational education and career development.

Computer-Assisted Instruction

Of all of these educational interventions, computer-assisted instruction has had the most consistently positive effects on the education of poor students, even though it developed independently of a concern for the disadvantaged. The striking success of C.A.I. seems to result from two unique capacities. First, C.A.I. depersonalizes the presentation of material. Some people have argued that minority children have problems learning because the people who deliver instructions are considered alien. Under such circumstances, "Miss Jones" teaches English, but she also embodies "the opposition." Because a computer cannot be identified as white or black, female or male, or middle class, many people believe that it depersonalizes the educational experience and makes it more acceptable to disadvantaged children. The second advantage of C.A.I. is that the computer provides systematic and regular presentation with the opportunity for continuous self-monitored review. This combination probably contributes to rote learning.

Systematic, regular and consistent exposure may also explain the effective use of television in education. In addition, the same phenomenon seems to operate in several special reading programs that have been developed. Although the various approaches of the programs seem to have little differential effect, the systematic, orderly, and purposeful presenta-

tion of the learning experiences in reading seems to be the key variable responsible for achievement.

Problems of Assessment

All of these innovations are major shifts in the delivery of educational services which have resulted from the use of more money, more effort and more technology. Yet despite more in all these areas, all national assessments of impact have proved discouraging. Why has productivity not matched expectation? One explanation is that we are unable to assess the real impact of these programs on pupil achievement. In evaluative research, there are three levels of concern. First, research can be designed to discover whether or not a particular intervention program helps achieve a specific goal. Second, research can compare programs to determine which is more or less effective. Third, evaluative research can seek relationships between the specific aspects of intervention programs and subsequent changes in behavior. This final form of research is explanatory as well as evaluative.

Most evaluative research has been directed at the first two levels, ignoring the third. Yet only by answering questions on this third level, can we begin to specify treatments which relate to known characteristics of the children to be served. Unfortunately, evaluative research of this quality has seldom been applied to the education of the poor.

In all levels of research, it is difficult to isolate variables with the necessary degree of precision and to discover the effects of specific treatments on targeted behaviors. One particular problem involves the method for selecting subjects. Even though "control" groups are closely matched with experimental groups, the control group is often different from the experimental group in crucial aspects. In addition, researchers must take into account the "radiation effect." Even if the two groups are initially "comparable," the effects on the experimental subjects are radiated onto their families and acquaintances. Eventually, the control subjects are also contaminated if there is any contact, direct or indirect, between these several groups. Finally, in the evaluation of education for the poor, interferences such as teachers' expectations (the "Pygmalion effect") or generalized student reactions (the "Hawthorne effect") have usually not been identified or controlled; consequently, the real effects of various programs cannot be determined from these studies.

Still other problems in the evaluative research design can confuse, distort, or limit the initial data as well as subsequent findings. For example, most evaluations of compensatory education studies depend on static and quantitative measures which neglect the qualitative analysis of behavior or process. This static approach leads investigators to look for generic indicators of pupil characteristics and global or categorical indicators of treatment characteristics. Often this approach is combined with the researcher's tendency to see differences between minority and majority groups as deficits to be overcome rather than assets to be developed. In such cases, there is little opportunity to study the dynamic processes by which success or failure may be more adequately understood. Even more serious is the apparent disregard of the probability that individual pupils respond differently to the same treatments.

Finally, researchers tend to focus on univariable input and output data, despite the existence of complex relationships between dependent and independent variables. When studied, these relationships are treated as constants. The evidence, however, indicates that a variable which is dependent in one context may be independent in another. Even more confusing is the possibility that a variable may be concurrently dependent and independent. These narrow approaches are often accompanied by an inadequate appraisal of program variables which pays little or no attention to the fact that interventions are uneven. Control of treatments in large scale studies is almost nonexistent.

Those of us who can still be optimistic about the current status of our interventions in the education of the poor can argue that the relatively modest pay-off is less a reflection of inadequate or inappropriate interventions, and more an indication of our inability to adequately measure the positive impact that must be there.

Raising the Issues

This leads us to raise the possibility that we have been insufficiently sensitive to the nature of the problems with which we are dealing. For this reason, a review of the ways in which the problems may be conceptualized is necessary in order to determine the logical relationships that exist between these and available treatments. There are, then, several issues related to the education of poor and minority populations which deserve our attention.

Problems of Educability

Prior to the late nineteenth century, little attention was given to the problems of educability. Since educational opportunity had been largely limited to eligible members of the aristocracy, definition of educability had not emerged as an issue. The Reformation and the Industrial Revolution, however, produced a need for education in broader segments of the population. To be sure that education was provided to those most likely to benefit instruments were designed to measure intelligence.

The emergence of I. Q. tests, however, led to false assurance about our ability to measure intelligence and to predict

achievement from test scores. Concern with intelligence measurement and achievement prediction dominates twentieth century selection procedures. Although this represents a shift from an aristocratic to a meritocratic basis for social stratification, lately most instruments developed to measure intelligence have been challenged because they no longer serve the purposes of education. American society is increasingly concerned with the development of all its people. Consequently, prediction of achievement has become less important than description of conditions which will encourage development of adequate functioning. In other words, as the need to democratize educational opportunity has increased, we have begun to broaden the definition of educability. Once narrowly defined, educability is increasingly viewed as a universal human characteristic. The issue of who is educable has become a function of whom society wants to educate, rather than who is most likely to benefit from the opportunity to learn.

Educational practices have also influenced the concept of educability. Traditionally, education provides services to learners and leaves the responsibility for learning with the student. If the learner did not learn, we questioned the quality of the learner, not the quality of the educational intervention. Today, despite some movement towards shared responsibility for teaching effectiveness, we continue to place the responsibility primarily on the learner despite Professor Bruner's proposal that almost anything can be taught to anyone, if the learning experience is appropriately designed. This facet of educability was demonstrated forcefully in animal psychology by E. R. Lashley's experiments with mice. Lashley challenged the assumption that mice have nervous systems which are

incapable of discriminating between geometric figures. By modifying the conditions under which these discriminations are learned, Lashley was able to demonstrate form discrimination in his mice. Although it is not safe to make broad leaps from animal research to human applications, this concern for determining the learning experience design necessary to insure mastery deserves attention in human learning.

Analysis of Learning Situations

For example, more careful analysis of learning behavior, the learning environment, and the task to be mastered may help us determine a more appropriate and productive combination of these factors. Such investigations may lead us to discover that educability results from the quality of these combinations. This conclusion certainly implies a shift in the responsibility for learning--or failure to learn--from the student alone to the participants in an interactive process.

Perhaps we originally placed responsibility on the student because our system of educational evaluation is biased in favor of a quantitative rather than a qualitative approach to learning. Traditionally, we try to classify and quantify functioning. An emphasis on measurable quantities of ability loads the dice in favor of the teacher. On the other hand, if we seek to assess quality of learning we must examine more carefully the delicate balance of interactions among learning behavior, learning environments--including quality of teaching--and learning task demands.

I am making a plea for the qualitative analysis of these aspects of educational experience in our schools. The data from this analysis will be more helpful to teachers and others responsible for curricular and educational experiences design than scores or diagnostic categories generated from quantitative analysis alone. Our lack of progress in education in general, and compensatory education in particular, may be that we have drawn the patterns for organizing learning experiences too narrowly. Instead, we need to expand the ways in which we conceptualize and assemble learning experiences. We can do this in two ways: first, we can procede randomly, by thinking of as many variations as we can imagine in curriculum organization; second, we can take identifiable patterns of learner characteristics and then design learning experiences that match those patterns. It follows from this that the use of better analyses of the characteristics of learners to prescribe instructional experiences might well result in the delivery of more effective educational services to all children--including the poor, and racial or ethnic minorities.

Most current work in individualized instruction matches mastery of the learning task to the rate of student learning. There has been some work matching pupil interest with specific learning materials and tasks. Other research has investigated the relation between learner personality and teacher personality. Of course, none of these combinations is adequate alone. We need to make designs for learning which are sensitive to such variables as rate of learning, cognitive style, interest and temperament; in other words a wide range of learner characteristics must be considered. These are all involved in the learning experience and there are probably quite different distributions of characteristics among individuals and groups. We need greater sensitivity to this whole profile of functional levels and qualities, if the appropriate match is to be made. Education of poor children and racial and ethnic minorities would be greatly improved if the approach to individually prescribed instruction were broadened to include these dimensions.

Education and psychology have given some attention to the characteristics of learners, particularly as these predict achievement--or failure. Unfortunately, comparable attention has not been given to the conditions in which learning and development occur. Yet environmental conditions (the ecology of learning and development) are generally as important in determining the quality of function as characteristics of the learner. This is clearly seen in urban minority poor populations which often suffer a relatively poor match between their indigenous experiences, and what happens at school. Such populations also experience a high incidence of subtle to severe developmental defects, which may form social handicaps. The capacity of these populations to do well results as much from available supports as it does from the individual and group characteristics -- strengths or weaknesses -- that are brought to the schools. If a student enters an experience with a possible handicap, but his family and community circumstances are rich enough to provide him with ways of circumventing or compensating, then the handicap may become relatively unimportant. But if the environment lacks in support, the handicap is doubly difficult to overcome.

Importance of Home Environment

One body of research that speaks to this issue was developed by Herbert Birch in Aberdeen, Scotland, when he examined the relationship between health and school achievement for an entire population of 10-year old school children.[2] Birch found that youngsters with comparable intelligence and similar levels of health impairment showed varying degrees of school success. A better indicator of success or failure in school seemed to be the degree to which the youngsters' home environments provided support for school learning in the presence of handicaps. If the home provided ways of circumventing the difficulty, achievement tended to be better. In contrast, youngsters with the same degree of impairment from homes which were not supportive showed much lower functional levels.

In a related pilot study, one of my students investigated reading achievement in mildly retarded young adults. He found

low correlations between the quality of reading achievement and mental age or Bender Gestalt test scores. He found higher correlations between reading achievement and the fact of having been reared in homes in which there had been a high degree of support for the mastery of reading. In those cases where there had not been support, reading achievement was low even in the presence of higher mental age or better Bender Gestalt scores.

Both of these studies suggest that given the same degree of intrinsic resources for learning or development, the quality of environmental supports for mastery of a learning task may become a deciding element. Perhaps we may infer that achievement is related to the quality of support for mastery available. Thus, environmental support may be as potent a force for learning as are the indigenous characteristics of the learner.

Additional data supporting this assertion is available in work by James Coleman who found relatively low correlations between quality of schooling and achievement.[3] In other words, characteristics of individual schools do not account for the variations in achievement among American public school kids. Yet, when Coleman looked at the data for poor and minority children he found that the quality of schooling made a great difference in their achievement. For society at large, quality of schooling was a relatively unimportant correlate of achievement; yet for poor and minority kids, quality of schooling—teacher characteristics, kinds of materials available, amount of teacher training, money spent on schooling—was more strongly associated with achievement. When support for academic learning was not a part of the natural environment, the relatively modest support supplied by the school did make a difference.

These findings suggest that the crucial factors responsible for differences between achievement levels, intelligence test scores, and the like are not to be found solely in the characteristics of disadvantaged children. The extent to which a child's environment supports mastery of school learning tasks is also a crucial factor.

Importance of Nutrition and Health

In close relation to the problem of ecological support for learning are life conditions such as nutrition and health. Many of the behaviors and conditions encountered in children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are either induced or nurtured by conditions of poverty. The existence of a continuum of reproductive errors and developmental defects influenced by level of income is substantiated by contemporary research such as the excellent studies by Knobloch and Pasamanick of health status and school adjustment for low-income Negro children in Baltimore,[4] by Lashof of health status and services on Chicago's South Side,[5] and by Birch of the health status of children from indigent families in the Caribbean area.[6] Such studies indicate that the incidence of reproductive error or defect is greatest in the population for which medical, nutritional, and child care are poorest.

These studies also point clearly to the following facts about low-income families:

(1) nutritional resources for the mother-to-be, the pregnant mother and fetus, and the newborn are inadequate;

(2) medical care—prenatal, obstetrical, and postnatal—is generally poor;

(3) the incidence of subtle to more severe neurologic defects in children is relatively high;

(4) case finding is hit or miss, so children are not only handicapped by the disorder but there is no official awareness that the condition exists;

(5) family resources and sophistication do not provide the remedial or compensatory supports that can make the difference between handicapped and competent function.

These health-related conditions have important implications for school and general social adjustment. Impaired health or organic dysfunction influences school attendance, learning efficiency, developmental rate and personality development. Pasamanick attributes a substantial portion of the behavior disorders among disadvantaged kids to the high incidence of subtle neurologic disorders. Other writers relate a variety of specific learning disabilities to mild or severe neurologic abnor-

malities. Clearly, in our society adequacy of health status and health care are influenced by adequacy of income. The obvious conclusion is that poverty leads directly to health problems and indirectly to general developmental problems.

Although it seems clear that conditions of life greatly influence the quality of development and function, questions remain about the hereditary limits of development. When the problems of compensatory education are discussed in the context of the nature/nurture controversy, confusion, if not distortion, often results.

Plasticity of Intellect

The plasticity of intellect is a critical issue reflected in the nature/nurture controversy, which is basically unresolved despite a great deal of research. Building upon Binet's early concern with the trainability of the intellect, and Montesorri's efforts to modify intellectual function in children of subnormal performance levels, investigators have worked with children of all mental capacities. These studies have produced mixed findings, yielding no definitive conclusions.

For example, Benjamin Bloom asserts that in the absence of radical shifts in individual life experiences, the quality of cognitive and affective behavior is stable after the second year of life.[7] However, much of Bloom's research data are based upon the study of people whose life conditions have been relatively consistent. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to discuss questions about radical environmental changes in relation to changes in cognitive-affective functioning. In Joseph McV. Hunt's book, *Intelligence and Experience*,[8] the data strongly suggest that the quality of adaptive behavior (intelligence), is greatly influenced by environmental encounters. If a developing person is accidentally or deliberately exposed to a rich environment, his adaptive behavior tends to be richer. For Hunt, the appropriate match between learner characteristics and learning experiences is the key to radical shifts in quality of intellective function. Jones, however, takes a more cautious view of the plasticity of behavior.[9] Reviewing some of the same research, he concludes that the basic quality of intellective potential is stable and relatively unsusceptible to modification by deliberate intervention. This view is currently shared by Arthur Jensen, Richard Herrnstein and William Shockley, who assert the stable nature of cognition by arguing that intelligence is primarily genetically determined.[10] This rather pessimistic view of the developmental potential of intellect may result from too limited a view of the potential significance of the interaction variance. It may be that we simply have not experimented enough with the deliberate manipulations of sufficiently powerful environments to create new and possibly reverse interactions.

Educators need not debate the question of the origins and plasticity of intellectual potential. Instead, we should shift our attention to more aggressively trying to influence the quality of function. With this line of thought we can take the position that all human beings, except about 5% who are truly mentally defective, have potential for adequate functioning. Further we can surmise that it is possible to develop conditions which will enable all people to achieve adequate levels of functioning. Within this frame, the task is not to change the potential, but to improve the quality of function so that the potential can be expressed.

The Importance of Affect

Zigler is one researcher who has attempted to account for changes in the quality of intellectual function on the basis of changes in the affective state (motivation, task involvement, etc.).[1] By manipulating the conditions under which his subjects were examined, Zigler achieved a significant shift in quality of function (20 point I.Q. gain) with mildly retarded subjects. He also determined that there were no major changes in the basic cognitive processes, but that the subjects responded differently depending on the quality of their task involvement and affective responses. Zigler emphasized the conditions which lead to optimal intellectual functioning, rather than a change in basic cognitive processes which is usually connoted by "potential."

Zigler also argues that too much attention has been given to interventions directed at changing basic cognitive processes, since these processes are likely to be either so fixed or so recalcitrant that they will not respond to most kinds of intervention. Instead, he suggests that the affective domain may be considerably more plastic and malleable. This means that cognitive function may be more susceptible to change by affective rather than cognitive intervention. For example, I may move to a qualitatively higher level of intellectual functioning because I am motivated to apply whatever skill and potential I have to the task. On the other hand, efforts intended to teach me how to change my basic cognitive process may have no effect because those processes are too fixed or because my energies are not sufficiently directed at the task. If the social interaction provides motivation to become involved and the aspiration level is high enough, the affective process may induce changes in the cognitive process.

Unfortunately, our tendency has been to separate the affective and cognitive domains from each other. Yet, we cannot separate the two, whether for study, or emphasis, or for instructional purposes. They are so integrally related that it makes no sense to talk about one independent of the other. If we analyze affective function it is difficult to have anything more than mere sensations unless we also understand the experience in cognitive terms. For example, although lower animals develop habitual affinities for each other, they do not develop love. Animals such as humans, however, develop love for each other because the feeling of love requires symbolic mediation. In order to generate love feelings for you I must also generate ideas about you. The two are inseparable.

Nonetheless, in the field of compensatory education, we have tended to treat the two as if they were separate. In some programs, the primary emphasis is an affective development; most programs put the primary emphasis on the cognitive. Both types lack sufficient understanding of the varied interactions between the two domains. The early experiences which many of us had with preschool programs provide one illustration of our misunderstanding about the affective and cognitive domains. Some of the first teachers involved in one particular program worked out of a kind of personal concern or missionary zeal. They approached their youngsters with a great deal of compassion, empathy, and support, because they believed that poor children needed this kind of intervention. When money became available for preschool work, people were hired who in part needed jobs, and correspondingly approached their work a bit more systematically. In one project with which I was associated, conflict developed between the "old-timers" and "newcomers." The old-timers felt that the newcomers were racists, hostile to the kids, and too demanding. The newcomers described the old-timers as "coddling." When we looked at the effectiveness of these two groups, we found that the children in the classes managed by the more recently employed teachers were ahead of the others. It is quite possible that we were hiring a better quality of teacher, yet it was also very obvious that these new teachers made more demands on the youngsters than the older teachers did. In this instance, the performance demand apparently had a positive affective as well as a cognitive effect. The effect was stronger than that produced by reduced performance demands and surplus affection or support.

Two things may have happened to the children of the older teachers. First, they may not have been sufficiently challenged by the situation. Second, they may have been sophisticated enough to sense that the excessive "love" showed less "respect" for them than the more demanding situation. An alternate explanation may be that through the demands placed upon them, the children accomplished more things. Through this, they began to perceive themselves as competent people and experienced a corresponding improvement in self-concept. In the "loving" situation, the children perceived themselves primarily as dependent persons. Actually, such speculations as these are less important than the demonstrated interplay between affective and cognitive domains which is seldom understood and presented in sophisticated application in educational interventions.

The separation of affective from cognitive functions makes little sense in any educational setting but it is particularly senseless in the education of socially disadvantaged kids. The social context in which education occurs is often alien for poor and minority students. Consequently, such students are less likely to be attracted, motivated, or involved in the learning situation than more privileged kids for whom school has a more obvious relationship to what's happening in the rest of their lives. In schools, the learning difficulties of disadvantaged kids are most prominent so the tendency has been to focus very sharply on cognitive development. Such efforts are invariably defeated before they begin, because they move directly on a factor which is not only one of the major needs of the youngster, but also a major source of frustration. Furthermore, if we assume that progress in the learning situation is related to student involvement and that such involvement requires some degree of identification with the school's values and purposes, then again, these youngsters are at a significant disadvantage since both the content of the school experience and the purpose of schooling may be different for them than for youngsters from the majority culture.

William Labov has done one of the best studies of the relationship between learning and identification with the material being studied.[12] In his work on the sociology of language, Labov demonstrated a major difference in task involvement and quality of function when black students were taught in their indigenous dialect. His work, and that of William Stewart, and Vera John, indicate that young black pupils who show retarded levels of academic and intellectual function in standard English proceed, in their own dialect, to deal with and to solve social and technical problems which would otherwise be

thought beyond their grasp.[13] Moreover, when examined in their own dialect, many young people whose language skills in standard English are judged to be grossly inadequate, show a richness and complexity of language that can only be associated with average or better intellectual capacity.

In another context the early efforts to modify curricular materials so that they more adequately reflect the variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented in our public schools showed poor results as long as they concentrated on elements of form, such as skin color, hair texture and other physical characteristics. However, as these efforts became more sophisticated, the content as well as the form captured elements of the indigenous culture, and exposure to these new materials improved the effectiveness of learning. In both of these instances it appears that where the materials to be dealt with are problems to be solved, or vehicles to be utilized, they enable the pupils to build upon strengths, rather than having them struggle only with their weaknesses. This often results in an improvement in the quality of function.

Importance of Shared Purposes

A more difficult problem arises in the incompatible purposes of schooling as seen by the dominant society and the target population. The anthropologist Anthony Wallace argues that the purposes of education are closely tied to the purposes of society and that these purposes vary in relation to the stage or phase through which the society is passing.[14] He identifies the social phases as conservative, reactionary, and revolutionary, and he classifies the purposes of education depending on whether they are being focused on the development of skills, the development of intellect, or the development of morality. He argues that in the revolutionary phase of a society, the greatest emphasis is placed on moral development, second on intellectual development, and third on skills. These priorities are related to the purposes of the revolution in that a revolution needs people who are concerned with human rights and humanistic concerns. Also, revolutionaries want to sharpen the intellectual function of the masses because support for the revolution is stimulated by this kind of awareness. Only after these two priorities are satisfied can the revolutionary phase switch its attention to skill development. In contrast, societies in the conservative phase give top priority to skill development because skills are needed to maintain the society. Moral development is next in importance but now it takes the form of socialization and answers questions like "What does the society expect of me?" "How do I behave?" or "How do I get along in society?" Intellectual development is given least attention because there is a reduced need for the development of the intellect in a society that is trying to maintain the *status quo*. In fact, intellectuality may be discouraged since a conservative

society frequently cannot tolerate "free thinking." According to Wallace, intellectual development is neglected or even discouraged in both conservative and reactionary societies. Finally, in reactionary states, moral development is moved back to high priority, but now it takes the form of a concern for law and order or "What does the state expect?" The emphasis is on correct behavior and behavioral control rather than on value examination or humanistic goals. Of course, concern is given to skills, because skills are needed, as in the conservative society, to maintain the existing order.

In the context of this theory, the United States and most of the industrialized countries of the West cannot be considered revolutionary. This nation has not been a revolutionary society for more than 100 years. For most of that period it has been conservative, though lately it has been thought of as reactionary. Yet, poor people and minorities soon realize that what they need is not maintenance of the *status quo* but radical change. Our schools are primarily focused on the concerns of the conservative to reactionary society; yet the people who are not making it in that system are primarily concerned with radical change or revolution. The purposes of schooling are incongruous for them and for the society. Poor minority kids coming into the school need ways to radically change things. At the same time, the school is operated by a society which intends to maintain the *status quo*. As one solution Ivan Illich talks about "deschooling society." He sees the school as reactionary, force-restricting, distorting, containing, and confining rather than freeing or releasing.[15] The relevance for compensatory education is that schools may not be able to deliver the thing that is most essential to the development of the target population. Schools may be reasonably proficient at developing skills, yet they have never been good at developing intellect or morality in a humanistic, man-freeing frame of reference.

Thus, the overall purpose of the school is not consistent with the basic needs of disadvantaged people. This incongruence is more difficult to reconcile than the incongruence between language and the cultural emphasis of materials, both of which can be and have been modified. The incongruence of purpose requires change in the society, a change external to the school which is not likely to come shortly. The capacity to feel good about an experience, to identify with it and to assign a high value to it is directly related to the purposes that one attributes to the experience. Thi conflict of purpose in schooling not only limits what the school can do, but defeats most efforts to help the youngster identify with or become enthusiastic about the experience.

A counter illustration of the point is found in the work of the Black Panthers in the early period of the '60's. The Black Panthers, along with the Black Muslims, were probably more successful in rehabilitating and educating young adult and late adolescent blacks than any other movement in this country. Both groups talked about things that had a high degree of congruence with the values and the purposes of these young people. This high degree of congruence helped turn around kids who had been arrested for criminal behavior and juvenile delinquency, were unemployed, etc. Many of these fellows went back to the schools or into responsible working situations. The capacity to attract, hold, and involve is too often lacking in the schools, even though this is a crucial element in effective education.

Control of Decision-Making

Another important issue which arises from this concern with the social purpose of schooling is control of school policy and accountability for the educational process. As more and more poor and disadvantaged children fail to learn or achieve the standards set by society, there is increasing concern about who should control curriculum development and change. In addition we must ask who should be held responsible for correction of the barriers stacked against the development of poor and minority students. The democratic tradition of this

nation presupposes that citizens will actively participate in political decision-making. Yet, political and administrative momentum often leads to increased centralization of power, varying degrees of representation rather than participation, and the alienation of citizens from decisions that affect their lives. A small body of research suggests that as people become more involved in making decisions related to the enterprise in which they're involved, their productivity in that situation increases. Participation in decision-making is greatly influenced by organizational size—the smaller the group, the higher the degree of involvement. An example from industrial psychology may prove helpful. The Acton Society Trust Studies revealed that interest in the affairs of the organization, and knowledge of the names of administrators, decreased as the size of the organization increased.[16] Voting on work unit issues also suffered, as did subscription to professional periodicals, output and punctuality.

In addition, decision-making and participation is crucially influenced by how meaningful and efficacious the interaction proves to be. Again a study from industrial psychology illustrates the point. To examine ways of effecting production changes in an industrial firm, Coch and French created three different work groups.[17] In the first group, changes were introduced by management decision; in a second group, changes were made by representatives selected by the group and, in the third group, all members were involved directly in making decisions about changes. Coch and French found that the production of the first group dropped after the changes were introduced and that they became hostile towards management; the partial participation group, however, continued to produce satisfactorily after a momentary drop in production, and the "total participation" group quickly exceeded its pre-change rate of production and remained satisfied with the job. This study was replicated in a Norwegian factory by French, Israel, and As.[18] There, the investigators found that production did not increase when workers participated in decision-making. They attributed this to the fact that the decision in which the groups participated had little relevance to production. These findings suggest the need to distinguish between token and legitimate participation. They imply that participants must feel that their participation is meaningful and related to the immediate tasks.

These two factors, size of organization and legitimacy of participation, both have applications in the education of the disadvantaged. The rise of big-city school systems has widened the gulf between decision-makers and those affected by decisions until many school systems are simply too large to sensitively administer to the needs of their clients. In New York City, for example, the social and political gap between the growing black and Hispanic population and the educational decision-makers has shown the shortcoming of a highly centralized bureaucratic decision-making process. Many of the minority group members feel they have little access to power in educational and other social-political institutions. Since they have found that the public school is ineffective in fulfilling their needs, they have become unwilling, and at times hostile, participants in schooling. Such arguments have contributed to current efforts toward public school decentralization.

The importance of actively involving individuals in decisions which affect them is demonstrated in several areas. For example, research indicates that when parents of school children are involved in the process of education, their children are more likely to achieve. This heightened achievement

may result from a closer correspondence between the school and the home. It may also be caused by changes in the attitudes of teachers who feel more accountable when the parents of their students are visible in the schools and concerned about their children's progress. Increased participation may also enable children to achieve better, because they have an increased sense of control when they see their parents actively exert influence or engage in decision-making in the school. Moreover, the heightened community integrity and ethnic group self-esteem which result from parent and community groups influencing educational changes solidify the child's sense of his own worth. Presumably, one of the things going for middle class kids is their perception that the school is responsive to their families, their community, their social class. This perception inspires a feeling that "I'm important," "my people are important," "the school is an instrument of my concern." Involvement and productivity are greater because the privileged child views the school as something over which he has power. In contrast, the lower class child perceives schooling as something that controls and influences him, his family and his community.

Importance of Social Class Mix

Much also has been made of desegregation and ethnic mix in its relation to increased achievement of disadvantaged children. The data seem to indicate that such achievement is more a matter of social class mix. A number of studies have examined the possible relationship of integration (along racial or status group lines) and achievement. The overall results seem to demonstrate that children from lower status groups reached higher achievement levels when they attended schools where pupils from higher status families were in the majority. However, when children from higher status groups were a minority in the school, the lower status groups tend not to improve the level of their achievement.

Although these observations are generally supported by mass data compiled from large-scale populations, there is a need for caution in drawing similar conclusions for smaller populations and individual cases. Studies of minority group performance under experimental conditions of ethnic mix indicate that the impact of assigned status and perceived conditions of comparison (that is, the subject's awareness of the norms against which their data will be evaluated) result in a varied pattern of performance on the part of the lower status group subjects. For example, Katz has reservations about the effects of ethnic mix.[19] His studies suggest that the results of ethnic mix are not unidirectional. For some it accelerates achievement, yet for others it depresses their performance. Thus, it may be dangerous to generalize that across-the-board economic and social class integration will automatically result in positive improvement for the lower status group.

The Relevance of Schooling

Finally, we must mention another issue of overriding importance. Some critics have asserted that schools make little difference and are not effective in changing the life chances of the pupils that pass through them. For example, Christopher Jencks' *Inequality* concludes that the process of schooling has little effect upon the way in which income is distributed in the society.[20] Jencks argues that if society is really concerned with the equalization of income or economic status, it must go about it directly instead of by manipulating marginal institutions such as schools. The data of the several studies that Jencks and his associates reanalyzed used intelligence and achievement test scores as primary indicators of competence. None of these studies was concerned with happiness or social usefulness as outcome dimensions. Jencks acknowledges some of the limitations of intelligence and achievement testing, but he dismisses the affective domain with a four-page chapter in which he concedes that he knows little about this area and has neglected it in his reanalysis. There are several problems here. Jencks ignores what schooling can do to develop people, and concentrates on what schooling can do to increase and equalize economic status. This is only one of the possible outcomes of schooling. In our changing society, it may rapidly become one of the least important outcomes.

Let us, however, examine the Jencks position from another perspective. Schooling serves different purposes for different segments of the population. If a person comes from

a population whose social and political position places him outside the line of opportunity, then schooling vs. no schooling is a relatively unimportant issue. With or without the benefits of schooling, opportunity is unavailable. However, if the person comes from a population subset which places him in the line of opportunity, the fact of schooling becomes important but the quality of school is relatively unimportant. If I come from a segment of the population from which civil servants are likely to be selected and schooling is viewed as a credential necessary to appointment, then having that credential is very important. Yet if I come from an excluded sub-group, that credential is still necessary but not sufficient. In other words, schooling in relation to social position is important whereas schooling in the wrong social position becomes relatively unimportant. Since schooling as a credential has more to do with entry than it has to do with progress in the job, quality of schooling appears to be superfluous. The evidence for this can be found in the relationship between schooling and upward mobility for different segments of the population. Some members of the minority population do make it along the same route as the majority, but simply having equal credentials does not ensure it for them.

Another line of evidence is to be found in the work of Ivar Berg who has studied the relationship between entry requirements for work and job requirements.[21] Berg concluded that entry requirements are consistently higher than job requirements. In addition entry requirements are not used to determine who is qualified to do the job, but to select "desired" people from the society. Given that fact, school provides a credentialing function that is essential and necessary, but not sufficient. In the process of work establishment there are other factors such as culture, social background, economics, politics, social class and social caste which may have more weight than schooling.

Thus Jencks is actually correct in concluding that schooling is not the route to the equalization of income. We equalize income, if that is our goal, by redistributing income, by eliminating exploitation of wealth producing labor, and by making it impossible to hoard capital. True schooling has little relation to economic sufficiency despite the fact that compensatory education and education in general have been sold to the public as the vehicle for upward mobility. This objection, however, does not mean that there are not good reasons to make schooling equally available and optimally effective for all people. If the object of schooling is the humanistic development of man, then there is an important relationship between the effectiveness of schooling and general social competence. To the extent that one can better understand and communicate, then to that extent one is a more effective member of the society. In other words, we should upgrade schooling for reasons other than economic sufficiency. For that pursuit we should move out of the school and into the political economic arena to talk about the way in which the distribution of power and resources must be changed.

Conclusion

Education is not an antidote to poverty. Furthermore, the school is immoral when it continues to hold that as its goal. Education is concerned with the total development of people and their preparation for the multiple roles which make up their lives. Schools are one of the resources by which society prepares and develops its members. When other societal resources are unequally distributed, quality of schooling becomes even more important. When the society produces subpopulations less well prepared to benefit from the standard offerings of the school, we have the additional responsibility for broadening, expanding, and enriching the offerings of the schools, not as our first line of defense against poverty, but as protection against the effects of an unjust society, which, if they go uncorrected, systematically erode the human resources of that society. ■

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