

WHERE IS THE RESEARCH?

In placing emphasis on social as well as intellectual grouping many teachers and supervisors are aware that new factors must enter into consideration of grouping within schools. However, too often, we are cognizant that these new factors are important but we have an inadequate concept of what they are. Therefore, we fail to put the results of research into practical everyday classroom situations. With this in mind, this issue includes a bibliography compiled by B. Othanel Smith, professor of education; and A. J. Dolio, research assistant, both at the University of Illinois, Urbana. This bibliography has wide implications for grouping in modern schools. The editors believe that a careful study of the literature and a sincere attempt to utilize results in the classroom will improve grouping procedures and, in the final analysis, enhance the quality of learning for children and youth.

Recent Developments in Grouping— A Minimum Bibliography

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THE GROUPING of children presupposes that the educational objectives of the school will be better realized by this means. Thus, the basis upon which grouping is accomplished reflects the theory of the educational system. Early attempts at grouping reflected the theory of formal discipline, with drill and recitation as methods and subject matter mastery as the objective. With the advent of newer theories and recognition of individual differences in rate of learning there came new attempts at grouping such as graded schools with rapid or delayed promotion, promotion by subjects, parallel sections and courses of study. In time this grouping came to be based upon academic achievement or intelligence as determined by scientific tests. As further study revealed that interpersonal relations and group spirit and activities were perhaps more significant in fostering growth and development of personality than classification by achievement and intelligence

tests, new theories concerning grouping came to the fore. These theories have grown out of a decade or more of psychological and sociometric studies of the structure and dynamics of groups.

Educators today, who are concerned with the development of the "whole individual," believe that drill and recitation are not necessarily the best methods of achieving this development, but that the skills necessary for democratic living can best be learned through the practice of these skills in the setting in which they are likely to arise. Grouping has thus come to have as its objective *the placement of each individual within a group in which he will work better, where he will have a sense of belonging and status, where his mental health will be safeguarded and improved.* Friendship relations and status giving traits, for example, have, therefore, come to be as important in grouping as similarity in such aspects as intelligence and achievement. It is, therefore, not

surprising that teachers, supervisors, and administrators are turning to the newer developments in grouping resulting from psychological and sociometric research.

The following bibliography has been prepared with a view to presenting some of these innovations in grouping. It does not pretend to be exhaustive but is intended to provide a minimum amount of reading for one who wishes an introduction to these advancements. It was built up after a review of approximately one hundred and fifty studies, most of which have been reported within the past four years. The references have been grouped under four headings: (a) Group Status; (b) Grouping, Motivation, and Learning; (c) Group Living and Learning; (d) Techniques Adaptable to Classroom Use. Some of the main points of the references have been presented in the form of a running account instead of the usual remarks which an annotated bibliography contain. This form was chosen because it was believed that such a review, however inadequate, would prove suggestive to the reader for whom the references were not immediately available.

GROUP STATUS

Each individual strives for status in the groups with which he is associated, and his personal development is affected by his success or failure in this struggle (5, 13). The factors which affect his social acceptability are, therefore, of great importance to the school. In school situations groups in which children develop significant social status are found even in the nursery school. At this level the determination of group structure is somewhat complicated by

the fact that most children can express only first choices with respect to such relations as friendship. Varying degrees of intensity of relationship do, however, exist and can be determined (6). The number of groups to which a child belongs increases as he becomes older and each has a socializing effect upon him (9, 14). The fact that the activities of these groups are not integrated leads to discontinuity in the child's life (12). He may play a different role in each group (9). In his peer group he finds more understanding and greater continuity in terms of time than in most adult-directed groups, and this may in part explain the greater effectiveness of the peer group upon him (12). A clear understanding of student groups cannot be obtained without relating them to the group activities engaged in outside the school (14). Since during the school year the classroom group meets most frequently and is the one in which most time is spent (14), educators often tend to disregard the educational significance of experience in extra-school groups.

Membership in a group involves more than mere physical presence in the group. The characteristics necessary for status within a group vary with the situation in which the group finds itself (12). At one age an individual may have those characteristics deemed important but a year later may show a marked loss in status if new traits have assumed importance in the eyes of his peers (5, 12). Several investigators have reported that a child's status in a classroom group is approximately constant for periods varying from six months to two or three years (1, 8, 13). Bonney reports such status was approximately as constant as degree of

brightness and academic success. He feels that there is not much hope that a child who is maladjusted in one group will be much better off if changed to another similar group (1). This constancy of status may result, however, from abstracting the status-giving traits from the dynamics of the group situation. If so, the apparent inconsistency between Bonney's studies and the studies of those who have investigated such traits in a dynamic setting, as reported by Tryon, would be explained away. Likeness in physical development, social maturity (11) and in intelligence, in certain situations, help determine status. As noted earlier, traits have different importance at different age levels. At the younger ages cleavage along sex lines is quite marked (4, 13) but from grades 6 through 12 an emerging interest in heterosexual relationships becomes evident (5). Cleavage along racial lines is more evident than cleavage on the basis of nationality. This cleavage becomes more noticeable with increasing age (4). Personality characteristics which are reported to show substantial relationship with acceptability in classroom groups are: cheerfulness, enthusiasm, friendly nature, sense of humor, initiative, and others (2, 5). Children seem to be accepted for what they do rather than for what they refrain from doing (2). A slight tendency for those superior in intelligence to be superior socially has been noted (3).

The social status of the child in the classroom group is influenced by the community and the family. In one study a tendency for those from lower socioeconomic levels to be somewhat isolated is observed (8). Contiguity, with opportunity for participation in extra-

school activities, may play a part since some of those living extremely distant from the school are isolated.

Status seems to be a function of group values operative at a particular time. In certain situations such as study groups the brighter individuals may have high status whereas in others, such as games, the more physically able have high status (9). Leadership is a function of the situation rather than a characteristic of the personality of a certain individual. Murphy (7) stresses leadership as a process, thereby calling attention to its fluidity, and points to job analysis of situations and to sociometry as means for studying this process. An individual who is a leader in many activities probably is so because of his ability to sense the needs of the group in a variety of situations or because of the psychological flexibility of the group (10).

Redl (10) distinguishes between leader and "central person" who is the individual around whom formative group processes take place. He suggests ten possible types of "leadership" on the basis of the different roles played by the "central person" for the basic processes of group formation. Leadership tends to be cumulative (14) and is a result of the needs and purposes of the group and the ability of some individual to clarify these and propose acceptable plans for action (12). Leadership may develop apart from friendship and there is no complete justification for assuming that a person who is occasionally elected to a position of leadership is adequately developed socially (12, 1).

In any group the struggle for status constantly occurs and rapid changes in group structure may appear during

adolescence due to differing rates of development of the members and also to the fluidity of membership (12, 9). Highly integrated groups within the larger group may have greater influence upon group structure and behavior than do individuals at the edges of membership. All these patterns tend to influence individual behavior (9).

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GROUPING, MOTIVATION, AND LEARNING

The schools have always been concerned with the problem of increasing the interests and effort of individuals with respect to activities related to the purposes of education. It has long been recognized that the way individuals are grouped together and the way in which they work in a group are not irrelevant to the educative process. But some of the relations between these factors and the educative process have only now become evident from investigations. Inquiries into this question from different angles reveal facts of significance to the teacher, supervisor, and administrator. It now seems clear that changes in attitudes and in actual ways of behaving result more readily from participation of individuals in the process of group decision than from mere individual ac-

tivities such as listening to lectures (4, 5). Furthermore, more efficient work is done by individuals working together in groups, even in groups of two, than when working alone (2, 3, 7). This is in line with the conclusion, borne out by increasing evidence, that the strongest motivation is from the impact of the group upon the individual. It has been shown, for example, that in industry the worker is more strongly motivated by group goals and group spirit than by various forms of material gain (8). Lewin's investigation revealed that in motivating action the method of group decision was, in terms of percentages, about five times as effective as the lecture method (4).

It is not from a mere collection of individuals, however, that these results are obtained. It is only as such a collection constitutes a social group in which there are friendships and in which the members enjoy a sense of belonging to the group that increased motivation and learning occur. It has been fairly well established that personal objectivity, emotional warmth, and spontaneity are qualities of the "social atmosphere" of effective learning situations (6, 10). Some investigations show that children cooperate more closely and exert more effort when they work with groups of their own choosing than when assigned arbitrarily to groups by the teacher (7). Grouping by sociometric methods has been advocated by some authorities (9), in preference to free grouping or to assigned grouping, on the grounds that sociometric grouping recognizes and provides for personal relations more in line with what members of the group desire.

It should be pointed out in this con-

nection, however, that the choice of friends and playmates is permeated with social-class values. In one study it was reported that on a "guess who" questionnaire middle-class children very seldom mention lower-class children as desirable friends or playmates (1, 14). The lower-class children, on the contrary, frequently express desire for such relations with the middle-class group. If it is true that the judgments of children are shot through and through with class ideologies, even if unconsciously so, grouping by free choices or by sociometric methods would appear to be open to the charge that they lend themselves to the maintenance of the class structure of society. Such a criticism, however, would cast no doubt upon sociometric methods of securing facts about group structures. It would have reference *only to the way these facts are used in the grouping of individuals*. While motivation may be strengthened and ideas and overt behavior more readily modified through group processes, at the same time it would be well to be on guard against the danger of perpetuating class ideologies by the very way in which individuals are grouped.

Grouping children for effective social cooperation is now precluded in many schools by the practice of promoting individuals purely on the basis of academic attainment. This practice leads to retardation of a considerable number of students. Non-promoted students tend to find their friendships in classes above them and are not chosen readily as companions by their classmates (12). They frequently exhibit undesirable behavior and tend to drop out of school. Whatever may be the justification of

the practice of non-promotion, the practice certainly creates barriers to social achievement as well as to other desirable changes in personal structure and overt behavior. It has frequently been advocated that children should be kept with their own chronological age group. It may be doubted, however, that this criterion alone is sufficient to assure a high degree of homogeneity as to social maturity, since such maturity is not an automatic function of chronological age (13). Too many infantile or aggressive members in a group may accentuate the tendencies of these members. That chronological grouping is a sufficient safeguard against this danger is an hypothesis which investigations are rendering untenable.

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GROUP LEARNING AND LIVING

What kinds of procedures will prepare young people to participate effectively in groups as leaders and followers in ways compatible with democratic principles? While research on this ques-

tion is far from conclusive, enough evidence has been accumulated in the past five years to indicate the general outlines of effective procedures. The creation and maintenance of an appropriate "group atmosphere" is essential if group living is to be fostered (3). If the teacher has sociometric facts about his classroom group, there are certain things which he may do by way of removing whatever difficulties they may reveal. By taking advantage of seating arrangements and other opportunities that arise from time to time, the teacher can bring isolated children into friendly relations with others and seek to help them build a sense of security and accomplishment (2). Among the more effective procedures for bringing about warm interpersonal relationships by creating an appropriate "social climate" in the classroom is the psychodramatic method, developed by Moreno in the field of individual diagnosis and therapy, and now adapted to the management of groups in teaching attitudes, leadership characteristics, and various kinds of skills and techniques (5, 6, 9). This procedure dramatizes a situation realistically and enables the individual members to project themselves into the situation. By this method the whole group can study its own techniques and procedures, as in trying to improve group discussion and decision making, and by criticism and evaluation improve its own performance.

That individuals can be changed from domineering leaders to democratic leaders by observation of good and poor leaders, by studying films involving leadership, and by other similar activities has been experimentally demonstrated (1, 5, 6). The secret of most

of these experimental successes, including the dramatic methods mentioned above, appears to be the fact that the group experiences enable the members to take the role of others, to see themselves in the role which others play and thus to become aware of their own attitudes and activities. These then can become the objects of study and improvement.

The rationale of group thought and action in the process of policy making and decision making has been extensively treated by drawing from the theoretical literature on this subject and related fields (7, 8). By and large there are three sorts of treatments on group living—theoretical explorations of the processes (7), experimental investigations to determine efficient techniques and procedures (1, 9), and descriptions of practical plans that have been worked out in classroom situations (4)—and those who are interested in the problems of developing group living in the school will do well to study intensively the literature of each of these categories.

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TECHNIQUES ADAPTABLE TO CLASSROOM USE

That educators are becoming more aware of the advantages to be gained from a determination of the social relationships present in classroom groups is evidenced by their increasing interest in techniques by which this may be accomplished. Broadly speaking, these techniques may be classified as either "expressed member preference" or "observational," according to the method used to secure the desired information.

The sociometric technique is probably the best known and is quite valuable in discovering the structure of a group through portraying by means of expressed preferences or rejections, the feelings of friendship, indifference, and rejection among its members. The members respond to questions asked them, which vary with the nature of the relationships one wishes to study. The re-

sults obtained from such a test are usually plotted on a sociogram which is constructed by using a symbol to represent each individual and drawing lines to show the attraction or repulsion between them. This technique has been used by many investigators and is quite useful in determining the relationships that exist at a particular time. It reveals the isolates, the "stars," and the cliques, and by so doing gives valuable information useful in planning the "social climate" of relationships essential to the development of the whole individual (11, 12, 14, 15). As noted earlier, unless the results are carefully handled, regrouping on this basis may not give the best possible arrangement. It is not merely an individual's choice of friends that must be considered in grouping but also the arrangement which will contribute most to the development of all concerned (13, 14). Teachers participating in an investigation using this technique quickly learn to use the sociogram to locate those children in need of help (15).

Studies 3, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 15 below, will give the reader some familiarity with this technique and with the type of information which can be obtained. For a more technical discussion of the sociogram the reader is referred to 4 below which deals with various ways of presenting sociometric data through sociograms including Northway's target technique with possible adaptations and limitations.

The method of paired comparisons has been used to some extent in determining preferences. Usually this procedure is quite time consuming and it is questionable whether this provides a realistic choice situation for the sub-

ject (7). The study by Koch (8) uses such a procedure.

Time sampling is a technique of controlled observation in which short samples of behavior are observed over a period of time sufficient to give a good picture of the particular behavior in question. In order to be most effective, this technique requires that the behavior which is to be reported be definitely defined. Care must be taken to minimize the effect of the observer on the normal behavior of the group since a person is likely to modify his actions when he knows he is being observed. Sometimes the observer does not take notes during the observation but relies on his memory to supply the observed information immediately after completing the observation. These and other limitations as well as the advantages of this technique are discussed more completely by Arrington (1) who also states: "The validity of the measures derived by time sampling . . . is . . . a function of three factors: the naturalness of the behavior observed, the accuracy with which it was recorded, and the adequacy with which it was sampled."

Bavelas (2) has proposed a technique for investigating individual and group ideology in which he used questions of the connectedness type. If properly constructed, the questions are expected to yield information concerning the specific types of behavior which are approved or disapproved, sources from which this approval or disapproval is expected to come, and the way in which these behavior categories are related to one another in the culture of the group.

The group interview is discussed by Edmiston (5) as a means for obtain-

ing group opinions. The interaction which takes place in a small group leads to the formation or emergence of group opinions and the elimination of those not common to the group. There are a number of precautions which must be observed when this method is used.

Frankel and Potashin (7) devote the first section of their paper to a brief description and summary of the various techniques used in the study of social relationships and point out that a social relationship must be studied in action if it is to be understood. In many cases the relationship to be studied is abstracted from the larger setting in order that it may be more easily observed.

When observing social behavior we should know how much in the situation is imposed on a group by the investigator or by other factors that limit freedom of action of members of the group (9). This leads to a distinction between studies of social interaction in a static situation and in a dynamic one. Results which appear contradictory may be obtained by studying the same behavior in these differing situations.

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tary of the Association, Music Division, the Library of Congress.

PRACTICAL IS THE WORD for the new pamphlet *Planning and Equipping the School Library*, written by Mary P. Douglas, State School Library Adviser in North Carolina (Raleigh, North Carolina, State Department of Public Instruction, 1946, 25 cents, cheaper in quantity). Written in outline form to answer the questions which inevitably arise when a new library is to be built or an old one remodeled in a school, the bulletin is definite and easy to understand.

Phases of school library planning discussed include the location of the library; areas to be included; space to be allowed

for each area; provisions for related areas; suggestions for proper lighting, and sound control; decoration, equipment, and furniture; floor arrangement; and manufacturers of library furniture and equipment. All suggestions effectively demonstrate a philosophy providing library quarters which will increase use of books and other instructional materials in school.

T. Cecil Brown is responsible for the simplified drawings of equipment and the suggested floor plans for libraries. Two photographs illustrate the kinds of libraries the author thinks effective.

This bulletin should prove helpful to administrators, supervisors, and librarians who are interested in school library improvement.

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