

Curriculum Developments

Column Editor: Curtis Paul Ramsey

Curriculum Innovations

Emotionally disturbed children. A regional approach to the problem of adequately providing for children too disturbed emotionally for regular school but not ill enough to be hospitalized has been announced. The new method is to be tried in the South through the auspices of the National Institute for Mental Health and the Southern Regional Education Board.

Mental health needs of the region's children cannot be met adequately by the rapid training of more mental health workers. In fact, the combined mental health facilities of all 16 southern states cannot meet these needs properly.

The Department of Special Education at George Peabody College for Teachers is the recipient of an NIMH grant of approximately two million dollars for development of the eight-year pilot project in Kentucky and Tennessee. A residential school will be established in both states to care for 40 children at each site. Children will be in groups of 8 for living arrangements, work at school, and play. Each group will be under the supervision of two mental health workers for play, a specially trained teacher for formal learning activities, and a professionally trained teacher-counselor will live with each small group when it is not at school or play.

In addition to the direct care of emo-

tionally disturbed children, two additional benefits are anticipated. The residential schools will serve as test models for possible expansion to other states. A large number of teacher-mental health specialists will be prepared through the operation of the schools. Nicholas Hobbs of George Peabody College for Teachers is the author of the basic idea. He has studied similar plans in Scotland and France, although the new program is no European transplant.

Early school admission. Most teachers (and some parents) at one time or another have experienced the frustration of knowing of an extremely capable child who was, nevertheless, under the legal chronological age for school entrance. In fact, the concept of chronological age as the basic criterion for school admission is being questioned seriously by many thoughtful educators.

The Philadelphia Public Schools has announced a new policy which will allow exceptional five year olds to enter first grade in September. Philadelphia is changing to an annual plan of organization. Previously, new classes began at midyear, but this will not be possible in the future.

The plan provides for parents to request psychological examination of children whose fifth birthdays fall between February 1 and June 30, 1961, and who they suspect are exceptional. Since almost all parents have made similar an-

alyses of their own children, the Philadelphia parents are cautioned to seek the counsel of the child's kindergarten teacher and principal before applying.

For the child's early admission to first grade, the psychological examiner must find a chronological age of five and a mental age of seven. He must further be convinced and must recommend that the child is emotionally stable, at the proper social maturity level, and ready for school.

Fortunately, the Pennsylvania School Code contains permissive legislation making it possible for Philadelphia to implement this new program for the maximum conservation and encouragement of young academic talent. One would wish the Philadelphia Public Schools every success as they demonstrate this concern for individual pupil differences and as they try to give opportunity for individual fulfillment.

New Curriculum Bulletins

Milwaukee Public Schools. *Enjoy Summer Safely. A Message to Parents.* Milwaukee, Wisconsin: the Schools, 1961. (Unpaged.)

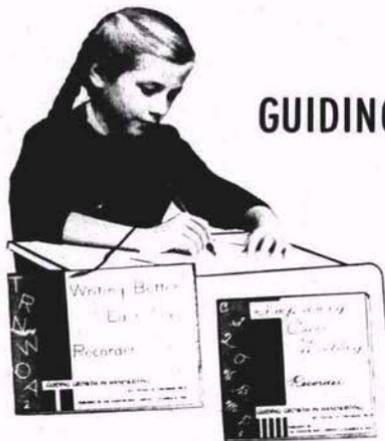
This very interesting and timely publication dramatically emphasizes the schools' concern for individual pupil welfare—in school or out, summer or winter.

Suggestions are given to parents on ways to make the familiar home, yard and neighborhood safe, since so many accidents occur in and around the home. Rules are described for the safe and happy use of bicycles and other toys.

For information of parents, the many opportunities of the city's supervised playground programs; library, museum and art center; and youth organization activities for children are described.

A final note concerns itself with unusual dangers including the growing

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problem of child molestation. This publication is a unique service feature for a school system, but one that surely will reap great rewards—for increased child safety, and as a public relations gesture. It also should be noted that many of the items included in the bulletin are really a summer continuation of some phases of the regular curriculum.

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The Learner

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values reveal infinitesimal changes over the four years of high school. Does this mean that adolescent values cannot be changed? Or does it mean that inadequate emphasis is given to value formation as end and to appropriate techniques of value change as means? Or are there other alternatives?

Let us assume the second, hypothetically, as the most plausible assumption: inadequate attention is given to value development in today's high school. We conclude that more time and new measures are needed for producing deliberate change in affective behavior among high school students. But we observe that high school students, using machines, are now able to learn in a half-hour of daily self-instruction twice as much algebra as they did a few years ago. The state then places a programmed machine in every home and the home takes over responsibility for education in algebra. The high school now uses this time for education in human values and valuing. (Or is abolished if the *only* function of the secondary school is to teach algebra.)

It becomes clear that evidence to the effect that adolescents *can* learn advanced algebra at amazing rates of speed

does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that high schools *should* teach algebra. On deciding that high schools should not teach algebra, according to the line of reasoning outlined, the question of *how* best to teach algebra in high school now evaporates, although the question of how best to teach adolescents algebra at home remains.³

My total analysis reveals, I think, that consideration of learners in planning the school program is not merely desirable; it is inescapable. The analysis reveals also, I believe, that a more systematic identification and treatment of the questions inherent in program planning, together with identification of valid data-sources and data appropriate to each specific question would eliminate the empty subject-child dichotomy. Such analyses might even reveal that current defensive attitudes toward subject-matter organization and programmed learning on the part of some members of our profession are misplaced. Perhaps, instead, we should be viewing with keen anticipation the prospects of automated learnings removing entirely from the realm of human interaction—and thus from schools as we now know them—many subjects now constituting a subject-centered curriculum. And, then, individual pupil interests, needs and purposes might well become the catch-hold points for developing through our schools ideal men and ideal societies of the sort speculated upon in man's best dreams.

³ Again the reader is reminded of my purpose in seeking to separate several of the different *kinds* of educational decisions to be made. It should not be assumed that the field of algebra has no place in seeking to achieve a broad set of educational goals. Nor should it be assumed that whenever teaching machines are employed the teacher must be a supervisor of these machines or that the machine is to be used only if it can be encompassed within the span of control of the classroom teacher as conventionally perceived.

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