


—Reviewed by Willard Abraham, Chairman, Department of Educational Services, Arizona State University, Tempe.

For many years the use of educational clichés like “individual differences,” “taking the child where he is,” and “needs, interests, and abilities of children” have lulled teachers-in-preparation into a kind of rhythmic lethargy. More disturbed by this kind of terminology are the alert among those who are attempting to prepare future teachers, the college and university instructors often discouraged and disheartened by both the writing and teaching of many of their colleagues.

Members of the NEA’s Council for Exceptional Children know through their Journal, conventions and particularly their own day-by-day professional activities in work with exceptional children that the meaningless lip service of such expressions has no part in their teaching. With the mentally retarded, physically and emotionally handicapped and gifted, a demanding professionalism requires that their individual differences be met, and the effort to hit a “class average” has no place in their classrooms.

It is refreshing to see the literature in our profession occasionally enhanced by authors who recognize, in very specific terms, the real individual needs of students. The writers of these three books are not the first, of course, but their detailed contributions will be greeted warmly by those who feel saturated by the generalizations, deliberate efforts to sound scholarly (that too often merely camouflage superficiality), and the reluctance to recognize that innovation and change really are a sign of the times, today and for many tomorrows.

The Kolburne and Gold books, representing much work on the part of their authors, are useful additions to the areas of mental retardation and gifted children. While the former is somewhat of a guide, sketchy in part, the latter’s treatment is about as thorough as any of the many books in the area of the gifted in the past ten years. The Kolburne effort is marred by a table of contents that is difficult to use and a total organization sometimes
hard to follow (for example, should the classifications of mental retardation wait until Chapter 8 for explanation?), but the specifics related to the retarded child's school program are offered in much detail which teachers may appreciate.

Milton Gold went far beyond usual discussions on the gifted with excellent excursions in depth into "thinking," "creativity" and "motivation and achievement." His chapters on subject matter areas and school organizational patterns as they relate to the gifted are particularly thorough, but then the entire book represents a scholarly approach to the subject.

However, it is the Thomas book, *Individual Differences in the Classroom*, that is the most welcome of the three. For here, right on target, is the realization that exceptional children of many types are in each teacher's "regular" classroom. "The regular classroom teacher is asked to accept this potpourri of talents and liabilities and to teach in such a way that each pupil makes the greatest progress that his unique abilities will allow," say the authors in their preface. "This is indeed a great expectation."

So this book was designed to help them meet the many pressures caused by individual needs—and the task is taken on in workmanlike fashion. Most major differences are tackled—gifted, retarded, sight, hearing, speech, and others—and the Thomas team is not frightened by new ideas, techniques and materials. For example, they see the potential breakthrough that programmed learning will bring, devoting a full chapter to the subject, and even do part of it in a programmed format.

It is inevitable that many of our coworkers will continue writing materials that envelop the reader in verbiage not necessarily practical or even interesting, but our profession occasionally does have some publishing pioneers. The Thomas book is in that group, Gold's effort frequently is, and the specific teaching ideas of Kolbourne sometimes put him in the race, too.


—Reviewed by CHARLES E. BISH, Director, Project on the Academically Talented Student, National Education Association, Washington, D.C.

This is a valuable book for academic deans and faculty curriculum committees and a "must" book for guidance counselors and those who are responsible for curriculum design at the secondary school level. The senior author, Joseph W. Cohen, tells of his work as Director of the Inter-University Committee on The Superior Student (ICSS), funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York from 1957 to 1965. He raises and answers such questions as: Why an honors program? What can an honors program achieve? What competencies are required of faculty? and What is at the heart of the colloquium? His basic material is supplemented by accounts of honors programs in a number of colleges and universities—Haverford, Michigan, Kansas and Oregon, to mention only a few.

It is the one book, as far as this reviewer knows, that can help the high school counselor become familiar with programs which have been developed in
college for the entering gifted or academically talented student.

The honors program is an effort at the higher education level to bridge the gap with secondary school programs for the superior student. Some may consider it an extension of the Advanced Placement Program. It provides a means for better articulation and, in the process, a real help to the able but often lost freshman.

Edwin Fenton’s analysis of honors programs at the secondary level, his review of the total national effort and his specific observation based on his own experiences in the “Pittsburgh Scholars’ Program” will be helpful to every high school counselor concerned with helping the superior student as early as the ninth grade or wherever he is identified. However, the major thrust is directed at the conventional college program. In addition to an analysis of the characteristics, aspirations and needs of the superior college student there is an insightful discussion of the problems unique to the small liberal arts college, the large state-supported university, the departmental program as contrasted with the general or core honors program and, of particular help, some ideas concerning evaluation.

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