

MASTER'S THESIS

DEALING WITH PROBLEM CHILDREN IN THE MABEL  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BY

KATE HENSON ELLISON

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THE MABEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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DEALING WITH PROBLEM CHILDREN IN  
THE MABEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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A Thesis  
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the Faculty of the School of Education  
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by  
Kate Henson Ellison

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of each school year the writer is usually confronted the first day of school with some problem children in her room. In many instances these are children from homes where the parents have little or no interest in them, and they have been permitted to stay out of school until they are over-age, retarded in their work, and maladjusted to the group they are placed in at school. They seem to be a misfit in most country schools because of the inadequacy of rooms, teachers, and supplies to place these children in a special group where they can be guided and directed by a sympathetic counselor who has had special training in this field. As there has been no provision made for them it is necessary that some special schedule be worked out for the teacher to follow in dealing with them along with the other group of children.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this survey is to find the ways selected teachers deal with problem children.

Importance of the study. Many teachers are concerned with the ways of dealing with problem children. Since almost every teacher is confronted with this problem, this survey was made to clarify the situation.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Problem child. The term "problem child" is used to designate any pupil who--due to such factors as home background, retarded status, or physical or mental handicaps--is maladjusted to conditions in the school.

## III. METHOD OF PROCEDURE AND SOURCES OF DATA

In the first place the writer of this thesis interviewed a selected group of teachers and principals to find from them their methods of dealing with the problem children in their respective schools or school systems.

In general the information obtained paralleled that of the writer--namely, that the present methods used in dealing with problems in this and other states are entirely inadequate. This inadequacy is due to crowded classroom conditions and lack of facilities for dealing with the problem children.

In doing this research the writer spent much time reviewing periodicals, books, and references. The information contained in this thesis is a summary of some of the most

practicable suggestions listed in a large number of books and periodicals.

In addition to the information obtained from books and periodicals, fifty children, five of the best and five of the poorest, from each of the five primary classrooms, of the Mabel Elementary School were studied. These children were given the California Short-form Test of Mental Maturity for Primary Grades one, two, and three. They were observed for a period of ten days and the observation results were recorded on an observation sheet containing twenty-three emotional factors and on a social economic sheet listing sixteen factors.

Other information was secured on these selected children by the use of the audiometer, the Snellen Eye Chart, a co-ordination test, a social acceptance test and the record of the absences for the entire school year.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written in regard to the problem child through the grades. There are still many different opinions as to how teachers should approach and deal with the problem child. From the beginning of free public education, and especially since the public school law says that each and every child must go to school, the teacher has been confronted with a number of problem children. More emphasis is being placed on the child's environment, interests, and his mental, physical, and social handicaps. However, most authorities agree that a problem child must be dealt with as an individual and must progress at his own rate of learning.

In the old days the teacher would have demanded obedience of the problem child, or sent him to the principal, or would have written a note home to his parents; but today methods of dealing with these children have changed.

So much reasearch has been done regarding the mental ability of children that teachers have a greater insight into this problem and are better fitted to deal with them.

Garrison<sup>1</sup> reported that there are over three million

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<sup>1</sup> Karl G. Garrison, The Psychology of Exceptional Children (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1950), p. 117.

handicapped children in our schools. Many do not have enough mental capacity to do the requirements of the regular school work. Ingram,<sup>2</sup> in analyzing the mental retarded, states that these children have definite potential abilities, such as, being able to adjust themselves in simple walks of life, and to do some types of work in the world if they are properly directed. About two per cent of the school population has definite mental limitations so extreme that their failure to succeed in school with normal children is striking. Tredgold,<sup>3</sup> in discussing the abnormal conditions of the mind, divided these into three groups: (1) those who have failed to attain normal development; (2) those who have attained development in disorder; (3) those who have developed and are in a state of decay. These are regarded as mentally deficient. Mental deficiency is the condition of the sub-normal mental development. It is now recognized that the majority of human beings possess a considerable capacity for scholastic education, and in view of this it might be held that the standard of normality should be learning--a person would be considered mentally defective who failed

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Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow Learning Child (New York: World Book Company, 1935), p. 79.

3

A. F. Tredgold, Mental Deficiency (New York: William Wood and Company, 1929), p. 1.

to grasp a degree of scholastic requirement.

According to Kirk,<sup>4</sup> studies that have been made and on frequencies of mental deficiency in schools, two to five of every hundred children in an average American community are mentally retarded and require a modified curriculum for their maximum growth and development. Any school system with an enrollment of five hundred to one thousand students should provide a special class since there are a sufficient number of children who need a special curriculum adapted to their mental level. Any child who has an I. Q. below eighty and who is not progressing in school at the same rate as other children would be considered retarded, or a problem. All studies and observations reveal that the mentally deficient learn more slowly and retain less than normal children.

Cain<sup>5</sup> reveals that since there are so many handicapped children in the various states, special services which provide adequate equipment and trained personnel are being increased, that legislation is being enacted to make expanded services possible, and more and more community groups

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<sup>4</sup> Samuel Kirk, Teaching Reading to Slow Learning Children (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Leo F. Cain, "The Teacher and the Handicapped Child," Education, 69:275, January, 1949.

are working to help further educational programs to insure those children who have difficulty in fitting into the school curriculum. There are special schools, special classes, and special equipment to help meet the needs of this problem.

Ellis<sup>6</sup> made a survey and found that out of every one thousand children there are 2.5 cripples under twenty-one years of age, and that about one third of these are in need of special educational facilities. The problem of discovery, care, education, and employment of cripples is one of the most urgent considerations now to be solved in this country. The facilities for care, relief, education, and employment are very inadequate in the whole country. He recommends: (1) that each crippled child is a problem of the state, and that each state should assume the responsibility of finding, diagnosing, treating, and placing cripples in business, industry, or professions; (2) each state should establish a legal procedure to find all crippled children, and records on them should be kept at a central permanent place; (3) each state should give each child school medical inspection and orthopedic diagnosis at least once each year; (4) each state should have proper facilities for hospitalization so children

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6

William J. Ellis, The Handicapped Child (New York: The Century Company, 1933), p. 169.

would not have to be placed on a waiting list; (5) each state should provide a state program so that crippled children will have equality of opportunity, especially from the educational standpoint; (6) a vocational guidance program should exist in each state so they will be placed in business, in professions, and in industry as they are trained.

Zintz<sup>7</sup> reported that in the Iowa schools a supplementary study of all physically handicapped children was made in the grammar grades. In the report, out of a population of 11,142 boys and girls, 569, or 5.1 per cent of the sample, were reported by their teachers as physically handicapped. The causes of these handicaps were listed as: defective vision, defective speech, defective hearing, simple crippling condition, and multiple handicaps. Of the handicapped, 58 per cent were boys; 42 per cent girls. In the investigation it was decided that physical handicaps affect the child's normal school development. This type child may tire easily. The handicap may cause strain, fatigue, and discouragement.

In a special study Hildreth<sup>8</sup> found that there are 15 per cent of all children in this country handicapped by

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Miles Zintz, "Academic Achievement and Social and Emotional Adjustment of Handicapped Children," Elementary School Journal, 51:454, May, 1951.

8

Gertrude Hildreth, "Educating the Handicapped for Literacy and Citizenship," Teachers College Record, 53:317, March, 1952.

mental defects, physical disabilities, or emotional and behavioral disturbances. There are at present some four million children of school age handicapped. The goals for educating these children are the same as those for other children, but the ways of achieving them are unquestionably different. More attention must be placed on the formative childhood years if they are to become the type of citizens we expect them to be. Training them to shoulder responsibility, to co-operate with their instructors, to plan a unit of work and carry it through, to live healthfully, and to use their spare time to a good advantage and to recreation. Through working on problems of immediate concern to him, the handicapped child gains new understandings and broader insights regarding himself and the world. In this way every child is helped to discover something he can do successfully. The flexibility provided in the program for the handicapped makes it possible to adapt instruction to the individual pupil's particular handicap.

Whitten<sup>9</sup> declared that the handicapped child does not have educational equality. Much progress has been made, but it will be many years before the largest and best financed school systems will have special classes, equipment, and

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9

E. B. Whitten, "Freeing the Handicapped for a Free Society," Understanding the Child, 18:97, October, 1949.

specially trained teachers to do a complete job. In the meantime regular teachers are going to be faced with handicapped children in their classes. Teachers can do a great deal for these pupils if they really know and understand them. In knowing and understanding her students, the teacher will be able to help the handicapped student develop self-reliance, learn to live with others, develop good study habits, and realize that at all times the child is being prepared for life with normal people. These adjustments which would be simple for a normal person may be more difficult for the handicapped. He must have special help to prepare for these adjustments.

Berkowitz and Rothman<sup>10</sup> state that the emotional child handles himself painfully in his personal and social life. The frustrated, reluctant and suspicious child is not only a problem for the school, but school is a problem for him. The teacher-pupil relationship means that the child must learn to accept the teacher and school situation, and the teacher must accept the child along with his difficulties. The classroom atmosphere must be elastic enough so that each child will be working on his own level. That means, each child will have

own project, and as he handles it to the best of his ability, he will be looked upon as a success in his field. In dealing with an atmosphere of understanding and warmth, it is well that he should know the same feeling will be expected in return.

Blos<sup>11</sup> believes that when a child's conduct seems to be an unusual one, and when nothing we can invent or devise ever seems to make a change in his attitude and behavior-- then, in our opinion--we are dealing with a problem child. Certainly his unruly behavior makes problems for us, but this could be a child with a problem. When a child copes with his personal difficulties and is able to work them out for himself, then he is gaining an inner strength that will enable him to master far greater difficulties later on. Before we make our final decision that we have a problem child, we should make an analysis of his characteristics, and then we can probably find out the root of his trouble.

In our analysis we must find out whether he is capable of demands that are made on him at this stage of his mental, physical, and emotional growth. Maybe the goals are set too high and he is emotionally disturbed because of too great expectations.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Peter Blos, "When Is a Child a Real Problem?" National Parent Teacher, 45:21, November, 1950.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

The cause may lie in the fact that the means taken to attain certain reasonable and practical goals are unsuitable to the child. The misguidance of the parents in trying to baby the child and not let him live as other children socially may cause a behavior problem. This problem would depend upon his environment, dealing with the parents' supervision in the home. If these factors have all been considered, and the child's behavior is still unaccountable, then we surely are confronted with a problem child.<sup>13</sup>

Monroe<sup>14</sup> decided that the great majority of children who become failures and produce problems for the teacher are those who have met with an unusual number of fear-producing experiences. A great number of these pupils are not adjusted and are unhappy in their work, causing deep-seated personality disturbances.

Personality disturbances may often cause learning disabilities. Unless the basis of the child's disabilities is understood, the remedial measures are liable to be a complete failure. The lack of self-assurance and the lack of confidence in a child show that there is a strong need for understanding and sympathetic guidance and security in the

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Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth L. Monroe, "Diagnosis of Learning Disabilities through a Projective Technique," Journal of Consulting Psychology, 13:390, December, 1949.

home and school.<sup>15</sup>

Scheidlinger and Scheidlinger<sup>16</sup> found that language is especially important in our schools because it is one of the most important factors dealing with the behavior of students. This is the student's chief means of expressing and understanding the world of reality, and the chief means of communicating with others. Many educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, and others recognize that the type of language used distinguishes the well-adjusted person from the maladjusted. An analysis of some of the common problems of children tends to show that many are due to faulty use of language in thinking and overt behavior. When children seek goals unattainable for them, they are failures. This causes frustration and demoralization, and often leads to maladjustment.

Dobbs<sup>17</sup> thinks that socializing the child, in that the whole class shares in the activities freely, would tend to blot out some of our problem children. Sometimes it becomes necessary to call in the psychiatrist, psychologist, probation officer, and case worker in social agencies. Also the whole

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Ibid., p. 395.

16

Lucy Scheidlinger, and Saul Scheidlinger, "When You Don't Have to Worry," Parents Magazine, 26:44, January, 1951.

17

Harrison A. Dobbs, "The Classroom Teacher and Delinquency," Elementary School Journal, 50:376, March, 1950.

school personnel sometimes can render great services by helping with these problems. Clarification of our attitudes toward children may bring personal and social benefits of great importance. The interrelationships of the teacher and the children make notable progress when the family life of the child has not been very satisfactory or pleasant. In other words, the social life of the child in the home, school, and community has a great deal to do with whether or not this is a problem child.

Stullken<sup>18</sup> believes the causes of poor social adjustments sometimes come from conditions within the individual, and often such failure is due to external influences. When the child's behavior does not interfere with the way he gets along with other people and his personal growth, we would consider his behavior inadequate. When his behavior interferes with the lives of other people and with his learning, we consider this social maladjustment. Characteristics of the socially maladjusted children are:

(1) Sociological Characteristics. Some of the conditions that tend to cause a child to be anti-social are poverty, lack of religious life in the home, and lack of organizational ties which tend to cause the child to be maladjusted socially.

(2) Physical Characteristics. The child may have some physical handicap, or may be oversize, or undersize, which would lead to bad adjustment socially.

(3) Psychological Characteristics. Most of the maladjusted children fall in the dull-normal group of intelligence. Although this group may be permitted to work with the other children, they become discouraged because of their inability to do the work well.

(4) Educational Factors. They are usually a retarded group, have low grades in school, have been transferred from one school to another, have repeated grades, have low school achievement, and have difficulty in achieving desirable social relationships in school.

(5) Deficiencies in Cultural Background. This occurs more often in families of unskilled workers. The inadequacy of space for living, lack of privacy, and the fact that families of problem children move often, is a significant factor in relation to their social needs.

(6) Psychological Needs. When children realize they cannot compete with their fellows on equal terms because of incapability in subject matter and physical handicaps, they often become problem cases. The feeling of being unsuccessful in school work causes many problems for the teacher.

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Sayles decided that family situations which produce the rebellious, or repressed older child and the small spoiled child occur frequently in the experience of those who study the problem, or difficult child. Indifference, neglect, and laxity in discipline are included in this collection of facts which cause problems all the way through school. There are two types of children who represent this group: (1) the child who feels his insecurity by his parents' mistaken attitude and (2) the child who has had extreme poverty, strictness, and uncongeniality.

The feeling of inferiority to one's fellows in personality difficulties is being emphasized as one cause of maladjustment in children. There are four causes of inferiority feelings: (1) the child's inability to rise to the level of family aspirations; (2) a false sense of security; (3) a drive toward achievement unattainable for him; and (4) comparison with other members of the family.<sup>20</sup>

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Ayer and Reinoehl state that in dealing with pupil adjustment there are several things to consider: (1) how to

19

Howard W. Nudd, and Mary B. Sayles, The Problem Child in School (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1925), p. 15.

20

Ibid., p. 287.

21

Fred Carleton Ayer, and Charles Myron Reinoehl, Classroom Administration and Pupil Adjustment (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940), p. 6.

manage a child whether in a group, or as an individual. In dealing with this, the teacher must produce an activity that will be profitable and also enjoyed by the individual. This includes adequate control over their studies, social activities, work, and play. (2) The teacher must then be concerned with the environment in the classroom so that it will create an interest in the type of work they are doing. (3) The organization of the materials to be used so there will be an effective and harmonious working relationship with each other. This should be well planned so the day's work will not be delayed for the teacher's preparation. (4) The teacher should be the chief source in pupil adjustment and in work guidance. (5) The social activities of the children should be sponsored by the teacher in that each child participates in these activities.

The foregoing information indicates that in order to be able to teach a child, the teacher must be able to understand him. In this understanding there must be love, sympathy, experience, and observation. There must be a study of the child's personality, considering his thoughts, feelings, habits, moods, instincts, and those things which make up his consciousness, being able to realize that we think, act, and live.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

A survey was made in the primary grades of the Mabel Elementary School to determine the various causative factors of problem or retarded children. Fifty children, five of the best and five of the poorest, in each of the five primary rooms were observed by the teachers. The students in this study were selected on the basis of their previous records and of their abilities to do the work in the classroom. These students studied were similar to those in any other rural community, having the average rural opportunities.

In this study many factors have been found which might tend, in a majority of the cases, to be responsible for problem or retarded children, but those studied in this chapter were believed by the writer to be the major causes of problem children in this particular school. The California Short-Form Test of Mental Maturity for Primary Grades one, two, and three<sup>1</sup> was given to determine their rank in intelligence. An observation sheet was passed to each teacher with twenty-three emotional factors to be observed and checked by the teacher during a ten day period. A

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Elizabeth T. Sullivan, Willis W. Clark, and Ernest W. Tiegs, California Short-Form Test of Mental Maturity, Primary Grades, one, two, and three (Los Angeles: California Test Bureau, 1936-51).

social-economic status sheet listing sixteen factors to be observed for ten days was also given.

The audiometer for testing hearing was used with each child individually and The Snellen Eye Chart<sup>2</sup> was used to check the eyesight of each child. Co-ordination tests were given to determine how accurate and with what speed their hands and minds worked together. A social acceptance test, to try to ascertain the social standing of each child, was given in each of the five rooms participating. This study also included a record of absences for the entire year for each individual.

Comparison of best group with poorer group on the factor of intelligence. In order to determine the rank in intelligence of the fifty students studied, the California Test of Mental Maturity<sup>3</sup> was given each child, and they were then ranked accordingly. Table I indicates the comparison of these two groups.

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2

Snellen Eye Chart, National Society (New York: Prevention of Blindness, Inc.)

3

Sullivan, Clark, Tiegs, op. cit.

TABLE I

COMPARISON OF BEST GROUP WITH POORER GROUP ON THE FACTOR  
OF INTELLIGENCE

Best twenty-five		Poorer twenty-five	
Student number	Rank in intelligence	Student number	Rank in intelligence
1	1.0	26	11.5
2	2.0	27	16.0
3	3.5	28	22.5
4	3.5	29	24.0
5	5.5	30	29.0
6	5.5	31	31.5
7	7.0	32	31.5
8	9.0	33	33.0
9	9.0	34	34.0
10	9.0	35	35.0
11	11.5	36	36.0
12	13.0	37	37.0
13	14.5	38	38.5
14	14.5	39	38.5
15	17.5	40	40.0
16	17.5	41	41.0
17	19.0	42	42.0
18	20.5	43	43.5
19	20.5	44	43.5
20	22.5	45	45.5
21	25.0	46	45.5
22	26.0	47	47.0
23	27.0	48	48.0
24	28.0	49	49.0
25	30.0	50	50.0

Table I shows the twenty-five best students as compared with the twenty-five poorer students in their rank in intelligence. Among the twenty-five best students studied, the two ranking the highest with I. Q.'s ranging from 116 to 118 were considered superior; the nine with the next highest rank ranging from 100 to 114 were classed high average, while thirteen who were between 85 and 89 were rated as a low average. Only one fell between 70 and 85 which was considered inferior.

Among the twenty-five poorer students checked there was only one with the high I. Q. rating of 100; three scored from 85 to 89, or in the low average bracket; four came in the 70 to 84 inferior group, while seventeen floundered in the below 70 or very inferior group.

The data in Table I shows very definitely that the intelligence of a pupil has a significant relationship as to whether he is a good student or a problem. It will be noted that there is only one exception. That exception is case number twenty-five in which the student rated an I. Q. of 82, or inferior. The other twenty-five ranged from low average to superior.

In comparison the poorer, or problem children, had one with an I. Q. rating of 100 or above, three ranging from 85 to 89, and all others were inferior or very inferior.

The results of this test might lead one to conclude that nearly all students of low intelligence are, in a measure at least, classroom problems. However, it does not prove that all problem children do have low I. Q.'s; one must conclude that other factors are also causes of problems.

Comparison of physical factors of the two groups.

Table II shows the comparison of physical factors of the two groups. The audiometer for testing hearing was used with each child individually in order to get a true report on defects in hearing. In the group of the twenty-five best students checked there was only one with defective hearing, and in the group of twenty-five poorer students only two had auditory imperfections. The writer believes these defects to have little if any bearing on the causes of retardation among the problem cases studied.

The Snellen Eye Chart<sup>4</sup> was used to check the eyesight of each child. Two of the group of twenty-five best students studied had less than normal vision, but six of the poorer students had visual defects. Since approximately twenty-five per cent of the retarded group had some deficiency of vision, it might easily be surmised that poor vision rates rather high as a contributing factor toward producing

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<sup>4</sup>

Snellen Eye Chart, op. cit.

problems in the classroom. For example, case number twenty-eight's retardation could be caused by physical defects, for both eyes and ears were defective, while case number twenty-five's intelligence rank could have been affected because of defective vision.

TABLE II

## COMPARISON OF PHYSICAL FACTORS OF THE TWO GROUPS

Best twenty-five				Poorer twenty-five			
Student number	Eyes R      L		Ears	Student number	Eyes R      L		Ears
1	20/30	20/30	Normal	26	20/20	20/20	Normal
2	20/20	20/20	Normal	27	20/20	20/20	Normal
3	20/20	20/20	Normal	28	20/30	20/40	Defective
4	20/20	20/20	Normal	29	20/20	20/20	Normal
5	20/20	20/20	Normal	30	20/20	20/20	Normal
6	20/20	20/20	Normal	31	20/20	20/20	Normal
7	20/20	20/20	Normal	32	20/20	20/20	Normal
8	20/20	20/20	Normal	33	20/20	20/20	Normal
9	20/20	20/20	Normal	34	20/20	20/20	Normal
10	20/20	20/20	Normal	35	20/20	20/20	Normal
11	20/20	20/20	Normal	36	20/20	20/20	Normal
12	20/20	20/20	Normal	37	20/20	20/20	Normal
13	20/20	20/20	Normal	38	20/30	20/30	Normal
14	20/20	20/20	Normal	39	20/20	20/20	Normal
15	20/20	20/20	Normal	40	20/30	20/30	Defective
16	20/20	20/20	Normal	41	20/40	20/40	Normal
17	20/20	20/20	Normal	42	20/20	20/20	Normal
18	20/20	20/20	Normal	43	20/50	20/70	Normal
19	20/20	20/20	Normal	44	20/20	20/30	Normal
20	20/20	20/20	Normal	45	20/20	20/20	Normal
21	20/20	20/20	Normal	46	20/20	20/20	Normal
22	20/20	20/20	Normal	47	20/20	20/20	Normal
23	20/20	20/20	Normal	48	20/20	20/20	Normal
24	20/20	20/20	Defective	49	20/20	20/20	Normal
25	20/70	20/50	Normal	50	20/20	20/20	Normal

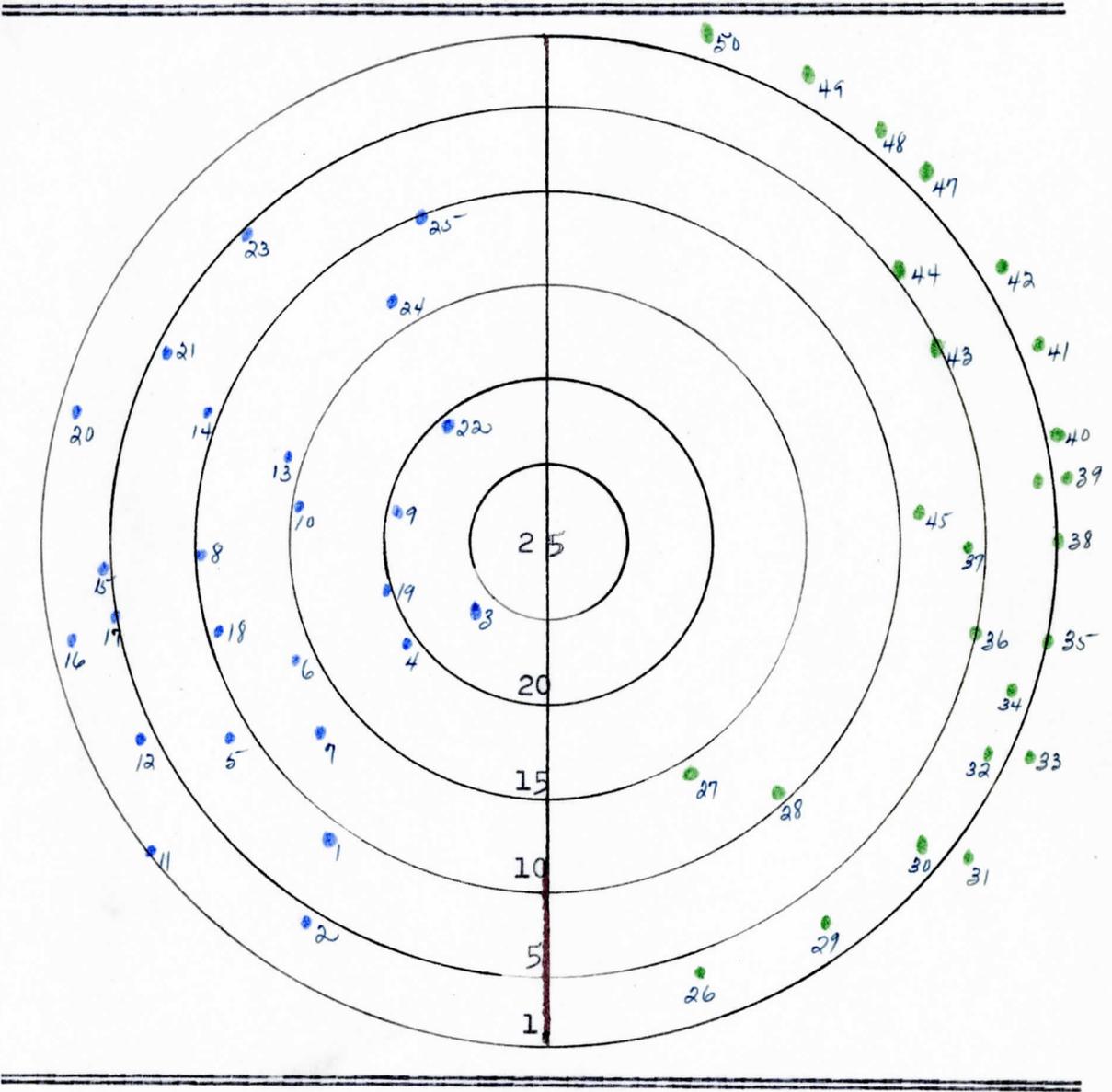
Relation of retardation or problem students to social acceptance. A social acceptance test, consisting of three questions, was given to all members of the classes from which the fifty students were chosen to find out the extent to which the pupils were accepted socially by their classmates. The three questions asked were as follows: (1) Whom, in the entire class, would you invite to your birthday party? (2) Whom would you select to play a game with you? (3) Whom would you invite to spend the night in your home? Each student selected a different classmate for each of the questions asked.

In tabulating the tests the first choices were given a score of three points; second choices were given two points, and third choices were given one point each. Each child was given a total score taken from the number of times he or she was chosen.

The twenty-five best students studied were generally superior in social acceptance, except for one student with a score of only one in social acceptance. Among the twenty-five poorer students ten were isolates--not chosen at all, and two were chosen only once each. Looking at the over-all picture, it is obvious that the best students were more socially accepted than were the poorer students.

Diagram I

SOCIO-GRAM SHOWING THE SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE TWENTY-FIVE BEST STUDENTS AND THE TWENTY-FIVE POOR STUDENTS



- = 25 best students
- = 25 poor students

The numbers, one through twenty-five are the best students and numbers twenty-six through fifty are the poorer students.

The distance from the center of the socio-gram indicates the degree of social acceptance. The social acceptance of the twenty-five best students is indicated by the blue circles, while the green circles indicate the social rating of the twenty-five poorer students.

Comparison of best group with poorer group on co-ordination test. In the co-ordination test given a wooden board, filled with holes, in which nails were to be placed, was given to each child. The teacher kept the time, and each child was given sixty seconds to put as many nails in the board as he could. The nails were then counted to see how many had been put in each board. This test was for speed and to find out how well the student's mind and hands co-ordinated. Table III indicates the results.

TABLE III

## COMPARISON OF CO-ORDINATION TEST OF THE TWO GROUPS

Best twenty-five		Poorer twenty-five	
Student number	Co-ordination score	Student number	Co-ordination score
1	13	26	15
2	12	27	14
3	15	28	14
4	13	29	18
5	17	30	18
6	14	31	12
7	13	32	11
8	17	33	15
9	16	34	15
10	13	35	15
11	12	36	16
12	12	37	18
13	16	38	10
14	17	39	11
15	13	40	5
16	16	41	13
17	15	42	18
18	12	43	14
19	12	44	15
20	18	45	13
21	16	46	14
22	14	47	15
23	18	48	14
24	13	49	15
25	19	50	14

The co-ordination test of the group of twenty-five best students averaged fourteen points, being less than one half a point more than the average of the twenty-five poorer students, who averaged thirteen and one-half points. One student, case number forty, among the poorer rating group placed only five nails in the board. A number of factors, including defective hearing, eyesight, and low I. Q. perhaps contributed to this exception. It is the opinion of the writer that manual dexterity has little or no relation to the causes of problem or retarded children in the Mabel Elementary School.

Comparison of best group with poorer group on the factor of absences. In this survey, records of the children's attendance at school for the entire year proved to be of great value to the writer when it came to searching for reasons why children became problems.

Such factors as; the inclement weather, transportation difficulties, walking distances to bus lines, irregularity of bus schedules and the dangerous roads in the winter months all played a big role in school attendance. Table IV gives a comparison in absences of the two groups.

TABLE IV

## COMPARISON OF ABSENCES OF TWO GROUPS

Best twenty-five		Poorer twenty-five	
Student number	Absences for year	Student number	Absences for year
1	15	26	21
2	31	27	3
3	6	28	57
4	5	29	36
5	2	30	0
6	2	31	34
7	11	32	4
8	4	33	73
9	7	34	20
10	1	35	24
11	5	36	33
12	0	37	45
13	3	38	5
14	30	39	49
15	24	40	20
16	55	41	117
17	16	42	84
18	1	43	0
19	13	44	46
20	18	45	89
21	33	46	8
22	5	47	52
23	0	48	86
24	10	49	117
25	14	50	113

It was found that the group of twenty-five best students had a total of three hundred and eleven absences for the entire year, while the twenty-five poorer students had a total of eleven hundred and thirty absences, almost three times the number of the best students. From this data we may assume that those students who attend school regularly are more likely to be the better students and by the same reasoning we may conclude that irregular attendance plays a major role in creating problem children. Loss of time from the classroom deprives the child not only of instruction, but seems to decrease his interest in school activities, and thus he is unable to participate effectively or profitably on his group's level.

TABLE V

## COMPARISON OF EMOTIONAL FACTORS IN THE TWO GROUPS

Kind of behavior	Number of occurrences	
	Best twenty- five	Poorer twenty- five
Quarreling	14	43
Pushing	3	26
Fights	2	24
Expressed fears	15	33
Over-talkativeness	77	33
Over-secretiveness	34	59
Shyness	38	162
Cheating	0	21
Feeling of hate	1	5
Envy	11	4

Comparison of emotional factors in the two groups.

Table V shows a comparison of some of the emotional factors observed by the teachers. Among the best twenty-five students observed for a ten day period, there were fourteen quarrels, three observances of pushing, two fights, and fifteen had expressed fears. In the group of twenty-five poorer students, there were forty-three quarrels, twenty-six were pushing, twenty-four fights, and thirty-three had expressed fears. This indicates to the writer that the best students are better adjusted emotionally while the poorer students are maladjusted emotionally and are unable to get along with their classmates.

Results in the over-talkativeness indicated that among the twenty-five best students this factor appeared seventy-seven times, however, in the group of twenty-five poorer students this factor occurred only thirty-three times. The writer believes that this data indicates that the best students are more inquisitive and want to discover new things for themselves. It may also indicate that there is a lack of shyness among the better group.

Over-secretiveness occurred among the best students thirty-four times and fifty-nine times among the poorer students, while shyness among the best students appeared thirty-eight times and one hundred sixty-two times among the poorer students. It is fairly obvious that among the

twenty-five poorer students the fact that they are emotionally unstable causes them to be problems for the entire school.

Cheating made no appearance among the twenty-five best students studied but occurred twenty-one times among the poorer students.

A feeling of hate revealed itself only once among the twenty-five best students, while envy appeared eleven times, but among the twenty-five poorer students the factor of hate occurred five times and envy appeared only four times. This would indicate to the writer that the best students have a keener desire to do work equal to the best while the poorer students have, perhaps a dislike, for the work that they are supposed to do.

Observed behavior of the fifty selected students.

Table VI indicates behavior, as observed by their teachers, of the fifty selected children for a ten day period.

TABLE VI

## OBSERVED BEHAVIOR OF THE FIFTY SELECTED STUDENTS

Kind of behavior	Number of occurrences	
	Best twenty- five	Poorer twenty- five
Hostile to discipline	4	34
Temper outbursts	2	10
Obscene talk	1	2
Marked overactivity	16	0
Nervousness	41	36
Biting fingernails	13	18
Stubbornness	10	37
Carelessness	22	140
Daydreaming	4	102
Feeling of insecurity	12	49
Laziness	20	168
Imaginative lying	10	30

Among the best twenty-five students hostility to discipline occurred four times, but appeared among the poorer twenty-five students thirty-four times, which indicated that the students have an unfriendly feeling toward their teachers, thus causing them not only to be problems for the school, but also shows that school is a problem for them.

Temper outbursts occurred twice among the best twenty-five students studied and obscene talk only once, but temper outbursts appeared ten times among the poorer students and obscene talk twice. This shows that the poorer students were more maladjusted in emotional stability than the best students.

Results on marked over-activity showed that among the best students this factor appeared sixteen times, but nervousness revealed itself forty-one times, and biting fingernails thirteen times; however, among the poorer students marked over-activity did not occur at all, nervousness showed up thirty-six times, and biting fingernails eighteen times. Biting fingernails, marked over-activity, and nervousness seemed to be more prevalent among the better students, a fact which the writer thinks could be caused by such factors as: pressure on children by parents to keep up with the superior members of the class, or their home environment could be a leading factor. Case number three in this

study was found to be very nervous and was always biting her fingernails. It was known that her home-life was most unpleasant, which may have been the cause of her nervousness.

Information on stubbornness showed that this factor appeared ten times among the best students; carelessness revealed itself twenty-two times, and daydreaming only four times, but among the poorer students stubbornness showed up thirty-seven times, carelessness one hundred forty times and daydreaming one hundred and two times. It is the writer's opinion that these three factors play an important part in determining whether a child is a good student, or a problem or retarded child. The frame of mind or the mental health of a child plays an important part in whether or not he is a success or failure.

A feeling of insecurity revealed itself among the best twenty-five students twelve times and among the poorer twenty-five students forty-nine times. This factor was four times as great among the poorer students as in the group of better students. Cases forty-nine and fifty in this study have a feeling of insecurity in the home, because of an unusually large family and a very small income. Our observation teaches us that a feeling of insecurity gives any child a feeling of emotional instability and causes one to be mal-adjusted to any situation, thus creating problem children.

Laziness revealed itself only twenty times among the best students studied, while imaginative lying showed up ten times, but in the group of poorer students studied laziness was most prevalent with one hundred sixty-eight appearances, and imaginative lying occurred thirty times. This information indicates to the writer that idleness and lying are closely related and go hand in hand to make up problems for the teacher.

Evaluation of environmental influences. Several factors were thought to be of great value in this study. Table VII indicates the factors studied.

TABLE VII  
COMPARISON OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES IN THE TWO GROUPS

Student number	Best twenty-five					Student number	Poorer twenty-five				
	Homes	Education of parents	Type of dress	Under-nourished	Number of children in home		Homes	Education of parents	Type of dress	Under-nourished	Number of children in home
1	Average	Elementary	Average		2	26	Average	Less than elementary	Average	X	6
2	Poor	High school	Poor	X	4	27	Average	Less than elementary	Average	X	4
3	Average	High school	Average		3	28	Poor	Less than elementary	Poor		4
4	Average	Elementary	Average		6	29	Poor	Less than elementary	Poor	X	6
5	Average	Elementary	Average		2	30	Average	Elementary	Average		4
6	Average	Elementary	Average		4	31	Average	Less than elementary	Poor		8
7	Average	Elementary	Average		2	32	Average	Elementary	Average		2
8	Average	Elementary	Average		3	33	Average	Less than elementary	Average	X	4
9	Average	Elementary	Average		2	34	Average	Elementary	Average	X	2
10	Average	Elementary	Average		2	35	Average	Less than elementary	Average		4
11	Average	Elementary	Average		4	36	Poor	Elementary	Average		2
12	Average	High school	Average		2	37	Average	Less than elementary	Average	X	4
13	Average	Elementary	Average		2	38	Average	Less than elementary	Poor	X	6
14	Average	Elementary	Average		3	39	Poor	Elementary	Average	X	8
15	Average	Elementary	Average		9	40	Average	Elementary	Average	X	4
16	Average	Elementary	Average	X	5	41	Poor	Elementary	Poor		7
17	Average	Less than elementary	Average		2	42	Average	Elementary	Average		4
18	Average	High school	Average		2	43	Average	Less than elementary	Average		3
19	Average	High school	Average		2	44	Average	Elementary	Average		5
20	Average	High school	Average		1	45	Poor	Elementary	Poor	X	9
21	Average	Elementary	Average		4	46	Average	Elementary	Average	X	7
22	Average	Elementary	Average		2	47	Poor	Less than elementary	Average		8
23	Average	Elementary	Average		5	48	Poor	Less than elementary	Average		8
24	Average	Less than elementary	Average		3	49	Poor	Less than elementary	Poor		10
25	Average	High school	Average		4	50	Poor	Less than elementary	Poor	X	10

The homes of the children studied were evaluated on whether they were owners or tenants. If the home was owned by the parents of the students studied, it was considered average and if the family were tenants their home was considered poor.

Of the group of twenty-five best students studied, there were twenty-four who came from average homes, with only one home being considered poor. In seven of these homes the parents had finished high school; sixteen had finished elementary school and there were only two homes represented where the parents had less than an elementary education. The average number of children in each home ranged between three and four, and only two of the twenty-five students studied showed signs of being under-nourished. Twenty-four wore average clothes while one was poorly dressed.

In the study of the group of twenty-five poorer students, there were fifteen average homes and ten classified as poor. This study of the educational status of the parents of these children revealed that ten had finished elementary school, with fifteen having less than an elementary education. The average number of children in these homes were between five and six, seventeen had average clothing, eight were poorly dressed, and twelve were under-nourished.

In a comparison of the two groups it is evident that the home environment among the twenty-five better students was superior, with only one exception. Better homes, better educated parents, a more balanced diet, and a smaller number of children in the homes of the group of twenty-five best students gave them a great advantage over the twenty-five poorer students. These poorer students were not able to compete with the best students, because they were unfortunate in not having these contributing factors, thus becoming retarded or problem children.

TABLE VIII  
COMPARISON OF SOCIAL AND MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Social and mental characteristics	Number of occurrences	
	Best twenty- five	Poorer twenty- five
1. Disinterest	6	98
2. Indifferent to school work		
a. All the time	3	23
b. Part time	10	129
3. Self-reliant		
a. Very	145	0
b. Average	35	47
c. None	0	148
4. Acceptance by children		
a. Many	25	1
b. A few	0	24
5. Moodiness	0	26
6. Tattling	32	56
7. Gossiping	15	36
8. Aggressive behavior		
a. Leaders	53	0
b. Want to be first every time	29	13
9. Inferiority complex	6	17
10. Co-operation	182	18

Comparison of social and mental characteristics.

Disinterest among the twenty-five best students occurred only six times, while indifference to school work all the time appeared only three times. Indifference to school work part of the time occurred ten times. Among the poorer twenty-five students disinterest revealed itself ninety-eight times, indifference to schoolwork all the time occurred twenty-three times, and indifference to school work part of the time appeared one hundred and twenty-nine times. These two factors, disinterest and indifference, are closely related, and it is evident that they, when they occur as frequently as they did in the ten day period observation of the poorer students, are characteristic qualities in the problem children of the Mabel Elementary School.

The results of the self-reliance check list among the best twenty-five students showed that they were very self-reliant, one hundred and forty-five times, while among the poorer twenty-five students this factor made no appearance at all. Among the best group of students average self-reliance appeared thirty-five times and forty-seven times among the poorest group, while in the factor of not being self-reliant at all among the best students made no appearance, but this factor occurred one hundred and forty-eight times among the poorer students studied. The writer feels that this analysis reveals one of the leading traits

in the causes of problem children in the Mabel Elementary School, because those students who are unable to depend upon themselves will eventually become problems for any classroom.

It will be noted that the best students were accepted by their classmates many times, but among the poorer students only one was accepted many times by the other students, and twenty-four were accepted by a few of the other students.

These results show a distinctive relationship between the best students and the factor of social acceptance by their classmates. It is obvious that the best students are better socially adjusted and that the poorer students are maladjusted socially, except for one, and are not accepted by their classmates.

In comparison of the best students moodiness made no appearance, but among the poorer students this factor occurred twenty-six times.

Tattling revealed itself thirty-two times among the best students, and gossiping showed up fifteen times; however, among the poorer students studied the data revealed that tattling occurred fifty-six times and gossiping appeared thirty-six times. These two factors were practically doubled among the poorer students. This should be conclusive proof that the poor students not capable of doing school work will often seek to build up his own security and morale by gossiping and tattling.

In the aggressive behavior type of students those who are anxious to be leaders and to be first are usually those students who are capable of performing the tasks suggested by the teacher.

This study showed that the group of best students wanted to be first in everything twenty-nine times, and preferred leadership fifty-three times, but the poorer students wanted to be first only thirteen times and had no desire to be leaders, since this quality was not revealed among them at any time during the ten-day observation period.

An inferiority complex was noticeably expressed among the best students six times, and among the poorer students seventeen times.

Co-operation reveals pleasant working conditions and an atmosphere of good learning environment. In this study co-operation occurred among the best students one hundred and eighty-two times, but revealed itself only eighteen times among the poor students. The writer thinks that among the poor students included, their lack of co-operation reveals their poor attitude toward learning, and shows their disinterest, which make problems for the teacher.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the purpose of this chapter to summarize the data considered in this study.

#### Conclusions

Results of this study indicate that:

1. The intelligence of a child has a significant relationship to his success or failure as a student.
2. That physical defects such as hearing in the group studied have little, if any, bearing on the causes of their retardation, but on the other hand, poor vision had a definite bearing.
3. The social acceptance or social approval of pupils by others plays an important role in causing pupils to become problems.
4. The co-ordination of these pupils studied had little or no relation to their retardation.
5. The number of absences plays an important part in the creation of problems in the classroom.

6. The emotional life of the child has a definite relationship as to whether or not he is a good student or a poor one.

7. The social environment of a child is a determining factor in his success or failure.

Results of this study seem to indicate that problem children, among the primary grades in the Mabel Elementary School, have resulted from a number of factors rather than any one of the factors studied. When carefully scanning the results of the survey one is bound to conclude that three factors have contributed toward making the children the problems they are. The first of these, heredity, cannot well be dealt with, but the other two, home environment and school atmosphere can be remedied. This may often be difficult since some children live several miles from the school, but there can always be ways found by the resourceful school personnel.

The writer believes that problem children are individual problems and each one must be treated as such and given individual attention, love, and affection.

The following are a few recommendations which might help to improve the situation.

1. A revision of the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the problem children in the Mabel School.

2. Closer relationships between the home and the school where the parent and teacher can work together for the child as an individual.

3. A recommended study of the emotional factors of these children which will endeavor to help them overcome those that are most prevalent.

4. A closer relationship between the home and school in detecting physical defects and taking the proper corrective measures.

5. The home, school and county officials working together to reduce the number of absences.

6. A community program to improve the economic status and environmental conditions which handicap the problem children.

7. A program to attempt to fit the school curriculum to the interest and abilities of the child, as well as his needs.

8. Use of resource units as a means of developing self-reliance in individuals.

9. Provide plenty of supervised playground activities to give an emotional outlet and to help the student find himself socially.

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APPENDIX







