

PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS OF TEACHING THE SLOW LEARNER

A thesis written in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts.

M. Marion Collie,
St. Mary's University,
School of Education,
April 30, 1960.

© Copyright

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOW LEARNERS	1
The Definition of the Slow Learner	
A Comparison of the Slow Learner and Other Pupils	
The Needs of the Slow Learner	
The Aspect of the Slow Learner to be Studied and the Plan to be Used	
II. SIGMUND FREUD	9
Psychic Energy	
Repression and Sublimation	
III. ALFRED ADLER	15
IV. CARL GUSTAV JUNG	22
The Role of the Parents	
The Conscious and the Unconscious Part of the Psyche	
The Role of the Teacher	
Psychic Disturbances in Children	
Those Who Can Analyse the Psyche	
Kinds of Education	
Importance of Personality in Education	
V. HELP FOR THE SLOW LEARNER	35
Teaching a Child of Low Intelligence	
Teaching Emotionally Disturbed Children	
Attitudes are Important	
Improvements in the Education of the Slow Learner	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	50

CHAPTER I

CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOW LEARNERS

The education of the slow learner is a topic much discussed by the public. There are many books, pamphlets and articles written on the subject. In Canada, there is also National Retarded Children's Week which is from November 15th to the 21st. If so much attention is paid to it by the public, more attention should be paid to it by the teacher. The subject of this thesis is the psychological teaching methods which can be applied by a classroom teacher to a class of slow learners. Attention will be focused particularly to the slow learner of the first grade in the Junior High School, although the slow learner will be discussed in general.

The Definition of the Slow Learner

The slow learner can be defined as a child who has an Intelligence Quotient within the range of 75 to 89 and is judged by teachers and administrators as falling into this artificial category. He is capable of learning, although it may be a slow process. He is sometimes classed as a dull normal or a borderline pupil.

This group of children comprises about 15% to 18% of the school population. Without special help they are unable to satisfy regular grade standards year by year. Their academic achievement for their age is also retarded. With some adaptations however, they are generally able to succeed in the grades. In a school where no adaptations are made for these children they become more retarded year by year and if and when they reach Junior High School they are socially maladjusted. They are simply too old for their grade. Sometimes, before the slow learner reaches the Junior High School, he may even become so retarded as to be considered a candidate for the Retarded Classes. This is rather unfair treatment for him because if given special consideration he would have been able to profit in a regular class. In a system which provides the adaptations, such as a flexible grade plan, smaller classes, an adapted curriculum and special teaching methods, he is able to progress satisfactorily. The special classes should be for those children whose I.Q. range is between 50 and 75 and are so adjudged by their teachers. They should not include those children who are classed as slow learners or dull normals.

As the school system becomes more aware of individual differences, fewer dull-normal children will be included in the classes for the mentally retarded and fewer will be left in the regular classes to create behavior problems. These children become problems because the system is not adjusted to their needs.

Now so far it would seem that the only factor that would make a child a slow learner is that of low intelligence, but this is not so. There are many factors which influence the learning ability of a child. A few of these will now be discussed here.

If a child is in poor physical health or if he has some physical handicap such as hearing or poor eyesight, his progress will undoubtedly be slow in school work. If a child's school attendance is poor, his progress will also be hindered. Personal make-up and social maturity are also factors which operate to aid or hinder his school achievement. If a child is emotionally disturbed, his standing in school work will suffer a definite set-back. If these factors can be removed or at least diminished, the child will be able to achieve to the limit of his ability, if he has the suitable educational environment.

Factors which affect the slow learner are the same as those which affect the normal or average student. If slow learners are aided by such favourable factors as emotional stability, good home environment, regular school attendance, an adjusted school program, understanding teachers, fellow pupils and parents, normal physical development and good physical condition, they can progress in their school work to the limit of their ability.

A Comparison of the Slow Learner and Other Pupils

In physical development slow learners make up a group of children about as variable as average children. According to Featherstone,¹ on the average the slow learners age for age are a little less well developed than normal. The difference is not enough to cause special concern or require extra treatment. Malnutrition, defects of hearing and vision, and defects in tonsils and adenoids occur more often in slow learners than in normal children. Burt wrote that a slow learner is suffering or has suffered "during his preschool life not

¹W. B. Featherstone, TEACHING THE SLOW LEARNER, H. L. Caswell, editor, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951), p. 4.

from any single well-defined complaint but from a plurality of minor troubles, all contriving to manifest and maintain a lowered state of bodily vitality".¹

Studies² have shown that slow learners are a little less well adjusted than normal, but the differences are small. It can be shown that slow learners will respond to favourable educational environments which are designed to develop good personalities.

Laziness and inattention are sometimes cited as characteristics of the slow learner. Laziness could be caused by ill health but also by educational maladjustment.. Slow learners do seem to have shorter spans of attention than normal children but both inattention and laziness can be cured by greater purposefulness in the subject matter and activities.

With respect to the higher mental processes the slow learner really falls short of the measure, when compared with the normal child. In matters of visual

¹Cyril Burt, THE BACKWARD CHILD, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1937), p. 206.

²For example, Georgia Lightfoot, CHARACTERISTICS OF BRIGHT AND DULL CHILDREN, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951).

and auditory perceptions there is not a marked difference. The amount of difference increases when we consider analyzing, reasoning, defining and distinguishing. The slow learner is very poor at abstract reasoning and it is this that makes him slow. The chief concern then in his education is to try and improve his reasoning. This is the chief concern of all education. The slow learner has difficulty in making decisions. He expects quick results and becomes impatient and loses interest if he does not see results in sight or in the near future. This point must be taken into consideration when planning activities for the slow learner. The slow learner is also apt to plunge into ill-considered activities because he has not reasoned well.

The Needs of the Slow Learner

The slow learner's needs, as stated before, are the same as for normal pupils. He needs to fulfill his basic physical needs. He needs shelter, food, rest and sleep, exercise, care while sick, to name a few of his physical needs. He also needs to have fulfilled satisfactorily his social needs, that is, achievement, affection and acceptance. Many of the slow learner's

behavior problems arise because he does not know the normal way to fulfill his social needs. He needs the same balance of success and failure as a normal child needs. He will, as most teachers realize, become a problem if he fails more often than he succeeds. The slow learner has a great need for affection and this is a point that should be realized by the teacher. He needs to grow in self-respect and in self-realization. He needs to accept himself for what he is and he also needs to be accepted by others, not to be treated differently because he is a slow learner. Sometimes we get the idea from others that he is a different species of "homo sapiens" because he is a slow learner. He is not. He is the same as a normal child except that he learns more slowly.

The Aspect of the Slow Learner to be Studied
in this Thesis and the Plan to be Used

The problem presented by this thesis is to find the most effective ways in which slow learners can best be taught in regular classrooms by average teachers. This study will include, as already has been done, an account of the characteristics of the slow learner as compared to the average or normal child. This is

included to give the reader a better understanding of the slow learner. The study will then deal with the theories of three psychologists and an attempt will be made to apply these theories to the teaching of the slow learner. The three psychologists to be studied are Freud, Jung and Adler.

The study will be concluded with a discussion of general teaching methods which can be applied to the slow learner who is emotionally disturbed and also to the slow learner of low intelligence. The final section will include a few pertinent suggestions which could be introduced into the classrooms by the teachers in our Nova Scotia schools.

CHAPTER II

SIGMUND FREUD

In this discussion on Freud it seems necessary to discuss his idea of the psychic apparatus. To Freud it consisted of the id, the ego and the superego. The child according to Freud comes into the world with unorganized and chaotic powers in the id. The sole aim of the id is the satisfaction of its needs, the satisfying of hunger, self-preservation and love. As the child grows and comes into contact with its environment, part of the id is developed into the ego. The ego is conscious of its environment and it tries to curb the id. Freud says that a neurosis develops between the ego and the id in the conflict which results. The ego represses the id. In a normal, healthy person it is impossible to separate the id from the ego. The superego represents a modified part of the ego. The superego is the highest mental evolution attainable by man. The feeling of a conscience depends altogether on the development of the superego.¹

¹John Rickman (ed.), A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD: THE EGO AND THE ID, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 221.

As we know Freud is responsible for psycho-analysis. He calls it "depth psychology",¹ because it has emphasized the role of the unconscious processes. Freud conceives consciousness simply as an organ of perception. The unconscious is unknown and cannot be voluntarily recalled. No person can bring anything from the unconscious to light unless it is done by psychoanalysis. Mid-way between the conscious and the unconscious there is a fore-conscious, where memories are found of which one is unaware but which can be recalled with some effort. This summary gives us an idea of the forces or systems which are to be found in Freud's psychic apparatus.²

Jung says that Freud's psychology is a psychology of a sick person. Freud bases all actions on the idea of sex. Repression to Freud was the suppression of ideas not pleasant to the individual. It is on this basis that Freud's ideas can be used in helping the slow learner. The teacher can help sublimate and not

¹John Rickman (ed.), A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. x.

²Sigmund Freud, THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS, trans. Dr. A.A. Brill (New York: Random House, Inc., 1938), p. 491.

completely repress the child's ideas.¹

Another concept of Freud's which is of great help to educators is that of the libido theory. Libido is a form of energy used by life instincts. The id tries to satisfy the urges of the libido. The homestead of the libido is in the id. As a child the whole libido is in the id, and as the child grows and develops he attaches the libido to other objects. The psychotic is unable to transfer libido from himself to others. He is too interested in himself to bother with outside things. Freud has developed or broadened his sex theory to the libido theory which includes love for other persons and things. This is where the teacher can make use of this energy in school work with the pupil.²

Psychic Energy

The distribution and disposal of psychic energy according to Freud is of interest here.³ The id has

¹John Rickman (ed.), A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD: ON NARCISSISM: AN INTRODUCTION, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 117.

²John Rickman (ed.), A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD: GROUP PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE EGO, (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1957), p. 177.

³John Rickman (ed.), A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD: THE EGO AND THE ID, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 210-235.

energy or libido of its own. If this energy is controlled by the id, conduct is impulsive. Impulsiveness is one of the characteristics of the slow learner. The ego has no energy of its own, its energy comes from the id. The energy of the ego is used in mental operations. If the energy is controlled by the ego, conduct is realistic. This is the energy we wish slow learners to use when we are teaching them, of course this is true of all pupils. The superego is formed through fear of punishment. If the energy is controlled by the superego, conduct will be moralistic.¹ This is another energy we wish to control in the slow learner.

Repression and Sublimation

Freud gives an analysis of the unconscious motives behind forgetting names or words, mistakes in speech, mistakes in reading or writing, forgetting to carry out intentions and many other faulty actions of everyday life.² Freud shows that most mistakes are

¹John Rickman (ed.), A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD: THE EGO AND THE ID, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 231.

²Sigmund Freud, PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE, trans. Dr. A. A. Brill (New York: Random House, Inc., 1938), p. 178.

made by the subconscious, they are repressions of some action which might bring painful, hateful or unhappy ideas with it. We do not do things because even if we plan to do them, unconsciously we do not wish to do them. We unconsciously forget to do them, or else we do something altogether different from what we had planned to do.¹

People forget certain words or names because indirectly these words or names relate to some other experience which proved to be unpleasant. Sometimes it is quite difficult to find out why people do make some errors. The reason for the error is too feeply buried or too involved with other things to separate it easily.² In relation to the slow learner the above may be applicable. If the child finds the result of doing or saying certain things brings back unpleasant situations, or memories, he will refuse to do them. He represses the thought or the act. He will try to sublimate it, that is he will try to find other ways of doing things or saying things. The other ways may prove to be very unpopular to the others around him. This is true with

¹Ibid., p. 147.

²Ibid., p. 61.

respect to discipline problems in a classroom, a pupil will get attention one way or another, popular or unpopular with the teacher and his fellow pupils.

The slow learner perhaps represses ideas more often than normal children due to the fact of his many failures in school work when allowances have not been made for him.¹ He tries to do other things in which he obtains a fair amount of success if it is only making funny faces. If he is made to feel that he is a failure too often, he will eventually stop trying to progress. He will develop a neurosis of a sort. The ego will allow the id to take control and impulsive conduct will ensue. His ratio of failures to successes is top heavy. We must always remember that the slow learner is only slow in learning, his needs are generally the same as for a normal child. He must feel successful in some things so he can reach a relative stage of mental maturity. He certainly will not do so if he is made to feel that he is a complete failure. He will repress his ideas to such an extent that at school he will not learn at all.

¹Ibid., pp. 61, 94 and 103.

CHAPTER III

ALFRED ADLER

This chapter deals with the work done by Alfred Adler on Individual Psychology. To Adler Individual Psychology covered the whole range of psychology in one survey and as a result it showed the personality as "an indivisible unity".

Adler felt that all forms of developmental failure and neurosis were expressions of inferiority and disappointment. To Jung the personality could be developed through a chosen vocation. Adler says that the path an individual follows is extremely important. "We cannot think, feel, will or act without the perception of some goal".¹ He says that all psychic activities are directed by a previously determined goal. "Every psychic phenomenon, if it is to give us any understanding of a person, can only be grasped and understood if regarded as a preparation for some goal".²

¹Alfred Adler, THE PRACTISE AND THEORY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 2nd. ed. 1929, reprint 1955), p.3.

²Ibid., p. 4.

Adler discusses the psychic phenomenon of weakness in memory. He says that if we exclude all possibility of organic causes, we can only give a reason why a person has a poor memory if we know intimately the whole person. An individual may use weakness in memory for some purpose, he may not permit himself to do some things because of it. He uses it as a weapon against a contemplated undertaking. Adler feels that this weakness can be shown in the life-plan of an individual. This deficiency is "arranged" in the unconscious in the individual's life-plan. In this life-plan, Adler feels that all psychic powers are under the control of a directive idea. All ideas, feelings, emotions and so on are permeated by an unified life-plan.

Adler feels that the subjective evaluation by a person is extremely important. It can give rise to a permanent feeling of inferiority. The healthy individual has as his goal superiority.

"Throughout the whole period of development, the child possesses a feeling of inferiority in its relations both to parents and to the world at large".¹

¹Ibid., p. 13.

This feeling of inferiority is the cause for his restlessness as a child. The whole potential educability of the individual child depends upon this feeling of inferiority. The future to the child is a place where he can be compensated. If the child is not able to find satisfactory ways to overcome his feeling of inferiority, a neurosis will develop.

In children suffering from neurosis, a feeling of being pushed aside is often brought to the front in the treatments. Besides this feeling, there is often a feeling of oversensitiveness. These often affect the even flow of the psyche. Children of this sort wish to possess, eat, hear, see and know everything. They become so restless that they become unteachable, bossy towards younger children, lie to their elders and mistrust everyone. It is quite clear that a good teacher can help such children while a poor teacher only makes the situation worse. Under favourable conditions the child's unquenchable thirst for knowledge can be satisfied, but under unfavourable conditions criminal tendencies may develop.

Another type of child that Adler discusses is the submissive child. To Adler he is just as dangerous a

type. This kind of child has reasoned to himself that he can gratify his wishes by the most complete kind of submission. He feels that he can get sympathy from his neighbours and so fulfill his wishes. He becomes withdrawn unto himself. He is a very difficult kind of pupil to teach because of his withdrawal from the class. He does what he is told to do but does not add anything to the class as far as discussions are concerned, or ideas.¹

There is also to be found in some children the feeling of feminity which could best be summed up as a combination of the other feelings, of over-submissiveness, of hypersensitivity, of feeling of being pushed aside and so forth.

These false developments can only be helped according to Adler by a study of individual psychology. Adler gives us many reasons for neuroses and ways in which they can be helped.

A neurotic should be helped from a feeling of inferiority to a feeling of superiority. The neurotic tries to find isolation, he does not feel community bound. He finds protection and withdraws from the group.

¹Ibid., pp. 20-21.

He lives in a world of phantasy and tries to side-step reality. He even uses such dodges from the world, and life in general, that his logic suffers tremendously. We must try to help the neurotic to return to human society. A person who helps the neurotic must be able to put himself or herself in the neurotic's place. Adler says:

The psycho-therapeutic treatment has for its object consequently, to show the patient how in his preparations while awake and occasionally in his dreams, he is always attempting in an habitual manner to fall into the ideal situation of his main path; to show him that first, through negativism and later on of his own free will, he can change his life-plan and with it his system and so gain a contact with human society and its logical demands.¹

Children who are neurotically inclined, have feelings of hate and revenge, have sadistic desires and they continually try to offset educational plans by defiance, laziness and indolence. All these things are indications of the child's revolt against imaginary or real oppression. They resort either to defiance or falling back upon the sense of pity their environment gives to them.

Neurotically disposed children disclose the desire

¹ Ibid., p. 50.

to annoy parents by activities that they feel will draw attention to themselves, although the attention may be in the form of anger. In such activities the child may pretend to be deaf, blind, lame, dumb, clumsy, to stutter and so on to cause attention to be drawn to himself.

Adler discusses the problem of distance. The child may separate himself from reality by a great distance. He may use excuses such as poor memory, sickness and so forth for not doing certain things. He makes great use of the "if" clause. If a decision is passed and it goes against the child, then he uses many excuses for the failure. This problem is not only characteristic of children but also of adults, as for the other problems mentioned.¹

Adler's contributions are pointedly practical for neurotic slow learners. These children have not been able to develop their personalities in the normal way. They have allowed the feeling of inferiority to take over and it is the duty of the teacher through his or her own personality to help make the child feel superior. The pupil is to feel superior in a normal, healthy way

¹ Ibid., p. 104.

and not neurotically. The child's problem is how to cope with society and the teacher, by good example, can clearly lead the way for the pupil until he is able to lead himself in the normal way.

CHAPTER IV

CARL GUSTAV JUNG

This chapter will consist of a discussion of the development of the individual by C. G. Jung with special emphasis on the types of slow learners.

It is during childhood and adolescence that the ego is awakened and firmly established. Jung regards the psychology of parents and educators as of the greatest importance in the growth to consciousness of children. He emphasizes that an unsatisfactory psychological relationship between parents may be an important factor in the psychic disorders of childhood.¹

Jung places great emphasis on the importance of concept-building for the solution of psychic conflicts. Development of thinking is of great importance to him. He stresses this difference between himself and Freud's idea of sexuality. In the absence of concept-building, Jung says that with a certain intensity of conflict,

¹Carl Gustav Jung, THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY, ed. Sir Herbert Read, Dr. Michael Fordham and Gerhard Adler (Bollingen Series XX, Vol. 17, New York: Pantheon Books' Inc., 1954), p. 39.

the libido is pushed back into its initial sexuality with a result that a neurosis in the child is developed. Jung also discerns the seeds of spiritual functions in this concept-building. He says infantile conflicts can be helped through concept-building.

In Dec. 1938, Jung made the statement: "We still know so little about the psyche that it is positively grotesque to think we are far enough advanced to frame general theories".¹ Theories about the psyche, according to him should then be capable of re-adjustment or abandonment at any time. Psychic theorizing is only a framework to which we can attach new knowledge.

The Role of the Parents

One of Jung's theories contends that children are more affected by the unconscious background of the parents than by their conscious states. Parents should be conscious of the fact that they themselves are the main cause of neuroses in their children. The conduct of the parents is extremely important, both in what they do not do and in what they do. He says the life which the parents have shirked is what is most important in the development of the child's

¹Ibid., p. 7.

personality.¹

Parents' problems can often be seen in the lives of the children. If the problem is not seen directly in the child's life, it will act as a catalyst and produce effects in the child's psyche.

The causes of the psyche's reactions are important. But it does not necessarily react with consistent sameness to the same stimulus. This fact should be remembered by parents when dealing with the children in the family. It should also be remembered by teachers so that they may stress the individual rather than the class.

The Conscious and the Unconscious Part of the Psyche

The child's psyche before the time of ego-consciousness is certainly not empty, according to Jung. With relation to time, consciousness follows the development of speech very quickly. The unconscious psyche of the child is limitless in extent and age. It is a collective psyche of all the ages of mankind. The child's ego is developed when the child uses the word "I". He becomes conscious of himself. He is a budding individual.²

¹Ibid., p. 43.

²Ibid., p. 52.

Jung says that we know now that the conscious mind consists only of those ideas which are directly associated with the ego. Jung compares the conscious part of the psyche to an island and the unconscious part of the psyche as the sea. He adds to this comparison that the island is not stationary, it may rise and fall from time to time. In falling we have the process of forgetting, with rising we have the process of learning. The unconscious part of the psyche is the basis for the conscious part of the psyche.¹

As stated before, once the child uses the word "I" consciousness begins. The process continues throughout life, from puberty onwards it is slowed, fewer and fewer pieces of the unconscious are added to the conscious. Between birth and puberty, and in our culture up to the twenty-fifth year, the greatest development of the conscious takes place. This development makes a firm connection between the ego and the conscious part or that part of the previous unconscious which is now conscious. Teachers and educators re-enforce this state by education and culture. School is "a means of strengthening in a purposeful way the integration of unconscious-

¹Ibid., p. 52.

ness".¹

Jung says if we did not educate as we do, children would be merely intelligent by instinct. They would be ignorant and unconscious of themselves and others.

Jung says that in mental development children pass through stages that could be compared to unconscious animal conditions into conscious civilized conditions. He says that during the development, parental influence can be for good or evil. All parental difficulties can be shown in the psyche of the child. Sometimes they produce pathological results.²

When the child reaches school at the age of six or thereabouts, he is still not capable of asserting his own individual personality. Sometimes we as teachers find he is peculiar or obstinate and blame it all on the child himself. Jung says we should enquire further and without a doubt it will be traced to the parents.³

The Role of the Teacher

Jung says that the teacher should realize the role

¹Ibid., p. 52.

²Ibid., p. 53.

³Ibid., p. 53.

he or she is playing in the development of the child. The teacher must not be satisfied with the mere passing on of the subject matter, but he must influence the child through his own personality. The teacher is faced with the delicate problem of not appearing too assertive to the child. He does not wish to create repressions, but he still must deal with the child firmly. This attitude must be real. It must be implemented in a natural way, as natural as everyday action. Jung feels that the teacher's life must be one of good example.¹ He feels that much is taught by good example. The methods of teaching are only half of the job, the other half of the education of the child is obtained through the personality of the teacher. The teacher is to guide the child from a world of parental influence to one with a wider scope. The school helps to lead the child to this world of wider scope. It is necessary for the teacher to use the personal approach towards the child or at least leave a place where such can take place. This is especially true of slow learners. They are to be treated very personally. Jung says if the personal relationship between the child and the teacher is a good one , it

¹Ibid., p. 56.

matters very little how the child is taught. Sheer knowledge is not so important as is the development of real men and women.¹ Education should make the child properly conscious of himself. Jung also states that a man's education is not finished when he leaves school or university, but it should continue afterwards. It is to become then self-education. The basis of this is self-knowledge.²

Psychic Disturbances in Children

In Jung's lectures on "Analytical Psychology and Education", he states there are five main groups of psychic disturbances in children. These groups will now be discussed here.

The first group is that of backward children. Jung says that a common form is the mentally defective. These are children of low intelligence and in general have a limited capacity to understand.

He says that some of the dull children are characterized "by a certain richness of heart, and----- are capable of loyalty, affection, devotion, reliability

¹Ibid., p. 56.

²Ibid., p. 58.

and self-sacrifice".¹ They may be poor in intellect but they do possess the above qualities. There are also to be found the "excitable, easily irritated child",² who suffers from possessing a one-sided temperament. The above types are educable. We also have the child with the arrested mental development. His development is very slow. It takes the advice of an expert to tell whether he is a case of mental deficiency or not. Such children often have outbursts of emotion similar to imbeciles. If these children are not ruined by forcing them educationally, they can in time attain a relative mental maturity. Too much should not be expected of them in short lapses of time.³

The second group, according to Jung, is that of psychopathic children. The disorder in cases of moral insanity is either due to congenital or organic injury to parts of the brain. These are incurable. Sometimes they become criminals, even habitual criminals.⁴

From this group we must separate the child with

¹Ibid., p. 69.

²Ibid., p. 69.

³Ibid., p. 70.

⁴Ibid., p. 70.

arrested moral development. They completely lack human feeling, usually they are illegitimate or adopted children. They have not had the love they needed from parents. They were not able to adapt themselves to foster homes. If they have good intelligence, they can learn to rise above their criminal tendencies.¹

The third group consists of epileptic children. They are not uncommon in the population. The forms of epilepsy are numerous and Jung does not discuss them. There are obvious attacks and others that pass nearly unnoticed, except that the child behaves peculiarly, although still conscious.²

The fourth group consists of various forms of psychosis. Cases are not uncommon among children. Generally these children act strangely, they are incomprehensible, sometimes hypersensitive, emotionally abnormal, either being very placid or apt to explode over the least thing.³

The fifth group consists of neurotic children. These may range from the naughty behavior of childhood

¹Ibid., p. 71.

²Ibid., p. 71.

³Ibid., p. 73.

to definitely hysterical attacks and states. The trouble can be physical or mental and moral.¹

Those Who Can Analyse the Psyche

Jung stresses that in order to analyse children, a person must be competent. Only those who are skilled, educated and trained should even attempt to do it. Jung states:

To analyse children is a most difficult and delicate task. The conditions under which we have to work are altogether different from those governing the analysis of grown-ups. The child has a special psychology. Just as its body during the embryonic period is part of the mother's body, so its mind is for many years part of the parents' mental atmosphere.-----Only a very little of the child's psychic life is its own; for the most part it is still dependent on that of the parents. Such dependence is normal, and to disturb it is injurious to the natural growth of the child's mind.²

It is difficult to analyse children because their psychic lives are very little their own, most of their psychic lives still belong to their parents. According to Jung this is normal and it would be wise not to upset the natural growth of the child's mind.

Kinds of Education

Jung recommends three kinds of education, and

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²Ibid., p. 74.

these three kinds can be used for both the slow learners and for the normal and gifted. In the discussion which follows we can see the various uses of these kinds of education.

The first kind of education is education through example. It proceeds generally unconsciously. It is the oldest and most effective kind of education. Environment is more or less identical to the child, especially with his parents. Sometimes the best methods of education are ruined by a bad example.

The second kind of education is collective education, by this Jung means education according to rules, principles and methods. The individuals turned out from this kind of education will be moulded according to the rules, principles and methods used. Usually individuals conform to this type of education and from it we tend to get a uniform population. The more individuals conform, the more uniform will be the mass. Children who do not conform to it are usually those suffering from psychic abnormalities. In general Jung says that the collective education type is the best for most people but there are exceptions and for these exceptions he

prescribes individual education.¹

Individual education is especially useful for mental defectives. Its aim is to bring out the specific individuality of a pupil. The types of children he includes here are: a) those who are ineducable due to brain damage either from disease or by accident, b) those who are educable but have difficulties in some subjects while not in others, such as those who have difficulty in mathematics and c) those children who suffer from neuroses and have developed certain attitudes that would hinder them in collective education.²

Importance of Personality in Education

Jung never stops stressing the importance of the personality of the teacher and of the parents. He says that the teacher "should constantly ask himself whether he is actually fulfilling his teachings in his own person and in his own life, to the best of his knowledge and with a clear conscience".³ Education "presupposes self-education".⁴ When he discusses the qualities of a good

¹ Ibid., p. 151.

² Ibid., p. 151.

³ Ibid., p. 140.

⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

teacher he also includes, "a certain knowledge of psychology - by which I mean common sense and experience - is therefore a desirable requisite in a teacher".¹

Some children do very well under one teacher, but when this teacher is no longer with the pupil, the pupil does not do as well. This shows the importance of good personal influence by the teacher. "Besides the gifts of the head, also those of the heart",² are no less important.

¹ Ibid., p. 140.

² Ibid., p. 140.

CHAPTER V

HELP FOR THE SLOW LEARNER

Teaching a Child of Low Intelligence

The teacher must remember that the slow learner is the same as the average child except that he learns more slowly. His needs are the same as for the average child. The teaching methods would be somewhat the same with a few alterations.

When teaching the slow learner, the teaching must be slow and repetitive. A small amount of new work should be presented at a time and this well taught. Where possible visual aids of any sort should be used, so that the subject can be made more concrete or more tangible to the child. Let him see as well as hear. Besides hearing and seeing, let the child act. We know from past experiences of our own, that if we can participate in an activity, we can learn it faster. Let the child participate in activities on the subject being discussed. If the subject is Science and the topic is root hairs, let the child germinate seeds, let him tend the seeds and let certain children pass out the germinated seeds to the others. If possible let each child see

the root hairs through a magnifying glass or a microscope. If a child has taken part in the activity, as each one should, he will remember root hairs, where they are, what they look like and their use to the plant. This should then be concluded with the drawing of the root with the root hairs by the child, so that he can refer to it at a later date. The above has been cited as an example, in other subjects other means of illustration and participating should be used. Sometimes it takes a great deal of imagination on the part of the teacher in some subjects to illustrate a topic. But the results are well worth the effort.

The slow learner abstracts very poorly and it is the duty of the teacher to help him learn to improve this deficiency, and this can best be done by going from the concrete to the abstract. If the child can understand thoroughly things which he can see, touch and hear, he is then better prepared to understand those things which he cannot see, touch or hear. If a child sees a root hair, he can better understand the use of it, how it works and the why and the how of it.

If it is a story in English, the child can better understand why the characters say and do certain things if he tries to act out the part or if he sees a movie

of the story or has the story read to him by someone who reads well.

Successes and Failures

The kind of success which is important to any child is objective success. With each success the child must have learned something that will help him in another situation. In order for a child to be always successful with objective problems, the problems must not be too difficult. It is a mistake to give a problem which is too difficult for the child. The first situation should be so simple that victory is practically certain. The child should be supervised so that help can be given at the right moment. After each victory the degree of difficulty can be slightly increased. It is not so important that the child learn to conquer a certain situation but that he learns the attitude of conquest. He must be more sure of himself after each victory.

The teacher should be aware of the attitude of each pupil with each problem given. Each pupil will react differently. The teacher must help the child to meet each situation squarely and attempt to solve the problem.

The habit of success is the goal of every individual.

the slow, the average or the gifted learner. Each teacher should help correct any faulty habit pattern. Each pupil must learn to face a problem respectfully but confidently. This is the habit of success.

As said before in another chapter, the ratio of successes to failures should be about the same for slow learners as for others. The type of problem does not and should not be the same for each type of learner, but the success to the slow learner is just as important to him as to the gifted. The problem for the slow learner should be less involved, with relatively quick results possible. He is apt to become discouraged when he does not see results at once or at least possible in the near future.

"Intellectual defect is more shameful to admit, and every effort is made to keep up an intellectual front".¹ Children as well as adults, hate to admit failures or an inability to keep up with their fellows. Individuals will not face some situations squarely because they are unpleasant to their ego. They refuse to remember certain situations because of fear of unpleasant memories. If a

¹John J. B. Morgan, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNADJUSTED SCHOOL CHILD (revised ed.; New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949), p. 98.

slow learner or any pupil has unpleasant memories about certain things in school work, it will be extremely difficult to get him to do satisfactory work in that subject unless his fears can be dispersed by enlightening experiences. Experience and new knowledge tend to lessen and destroy illogical fears.

Reading and Arithmetic

It has been shown many times by teachers that a child who has difficulty in reading or has a reading disability suffers in all academic subjects. H. Loewy discusses means to help a slow learner to read. She stresses the use of games in teaching the child. This idea of games is, of course, not a new idea. It has been known since Plato's THE LAWS. She stresses the idea of avoiding fatigue. Only a short period of time should at first be spent at reading and this can be increased as the child's progress is observed. Care should be taken not to rush the child.

Miss Loewy says that sometimes people say that certain children show no desire to learn. This is of course very wrong. The child has a great desire to learn but with his difficulty, he appears to be unwilling and resists because of it. If a child does not suffer

fatigue and the work is adjusted to his speed and his level, no difficulty is usually encountered.

The games introduced by Miss Loewy are for group endeavours. But she stresses the fact that these games may be so constructed as to develop the child in initiative. Children gain self-confidence with these games and "so graduate happily on to solo reading and feel more triumphant".¹

Miss Loewy also offers games in Arithmetic. They are designed to give the child "a number sense".² This means more than the ability to count. The child's mind should be trained to concentrate. This can also be done by means of games. At first the slow learner does best when he does things with the teacher but, as shown in the reading games, he soon gains sufficient self-confidence to work on his own.

Teaching Emotionally Disturbed Children

"Emotionally disturbed children display fear and rage; they are restless or listless; they fidget, they

¹Herta Loewy, MORE ABOUT THE BACKWARD CHILD (London: Staples Press Limited, 1957), p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 87.

fight; some are dreamers, others are bullies".¹ The emotional disturbances are found among the slow learners as well as among normal children. This emotional stress is often due "to conflict in the home, to a broken home, parental rejection, insecurity, fear, worry, anxiety, or some unfortunate social circumstance".² These difficulties can involve a slow learner or make a normal child appear to be a slow learner.

If a child is emotionally disturbed to any great extent, he will be unable to progress in school work. If success is to be achieved in teaching him, he must first of all be treated for his disturbances by a qualified psychologist or a child psychiatrist. It is a teacher's duty to be on the alert for any unusual mental disturbance. She should not try to diagnose or treat the child herself, but she should refer the child to someone who is better qualified. The need for a school psychologist is felt by many large schools. Once the child's problems are understood, the child's behavior no longer appears peculiar. A psychiatrist can help

¹Sister Mary Theodore, O.S.F., THE CHALLENGE OF THE RETARDED CHILD (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1959), p. 85.

² Ibid., p. 85.

the child towards better feelings between him and adults. Sister Mary Theodore says that when a child appears to be most annoying in a class, he is then ready to be helped. Insecure children then begin to improve when they appear their worst, perhaps because the help they have received from the psychiatrist is just becoming effective. People who work with emotionally disturbed children need great understanding and much experience. They need to realize that undesirable behavior is a symptom of tension. Teachers and others who deal with these children must truly wish to help free them from their unhappy tensions before it is too late.

John J. B. Morgan gives some practical hints for teachers in his book, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNADJUSTED SCHOOL CHILD. He says that the teacher should try to study the peculiarities of the child in an impersonal objective way. The only motive behind the observation is to improve the child.

It is not the concern of this paper to discuss in detail the neuroses of children, only a few general statements about the teaching of such children will be made here.

A teacher should try to build self-confidence in

a child. She should never humiliate a child by making a display of his poor work, nor permit the other children to ridicule him or take advantage of his failure in any manner. Personal comparisons should not be made. If a teacher wishes to display pupils' work, she should use material from former years or of unknown authorship.

If a child daydreams excessively, he is then not satisfied with reality. A teacher should try to find out what is back of the dreams. She may then be able to help the child adjust to reality. If she makes reality satisfactory then the child will not want to daydream.

If a child is stubborn, the teacher should help him to use his energy constructively so that he may develop interest in his own work. Later he may be taught not to resist the ideas of others.

These suggestions are applicable to both the slow learner and the average child. If the teacher feels that she has a problem which she cannot solve alone she should not hesitate to ask for help.

Attitudes Are Important

We are now free to discuss attitudes towards the slow learner. This subject will be discussed under four

sections: the attitude of the home, of the teacher, of the other pupils and lastly the attitude of the public towards the slow learner.

The Home

The more freely and realistically the parents of a slow child speak of him, the easier will be the situation in the home. The reactions of the normal brothers and sisters will be more pleasant if the parents really accept their child. Conflict in the home usually results from the tendency of one parent to blame the other for the child's condition. A healthy atmosphere depends on the understanding attitude which the parents cultivate for each other. If they have emotional problems of their own, it becomes more difficult for them to adjust themselves to their slow learning child. First of all they should get professional psychiatric help, if they or their child need it.

The slow learning child should not be hidden as if he were something shameful. Parents need not feel hopeless. There are constructive things which can be done. The great trouble is the lack of understanding of the problem.

This lack of understanding is seen in other children.

They not only torment the slow learner by teasing him and calling him names, but sometimes the brothers and the sisters of the slow learner get some of the same treatment. The teacher can help to overcome this deficiency.

The School

When the slow learner goes to school, he comes into contact with a wider range of personalities. No teacher should teach or have anything to do with a slow learner if she feels that he is just an annoyance. He is an individual who needs a lot of love and attention from his teacher. The teacher of the slow learner should herself be emotionally secure. She must be able to encourage confidence in her pupils. Personal qualifications of patience, energy, and true devotion are as important in the teacher as in the parents of the slow learner.

The teacher must believe that she can help the child through the parents. Co-operation between parents and teachers is important in helping the child. An understanding teacher is a key person in the life of the slow learner as well as the normal child.

A healthy classroom climate may be created by both the pupil's and the teacher's attitudes. If the slow

learner is in a regular classroom, much of the attitude of the class towards him depends on the attitude of the teacher.

It is felt that if the slow learner is in a separate class that he can receive more individual help and then proceed at his own pace. The average pupils would then not have to wait for him and he would not feel left-behind the others. The others would become his equals or his peers if he were in a separate class. He should then be more contented and happy in such a program, even though later he has to face the realization that others are brighter than he.

The Public

The people outside the home and the school can help or hinder the slow learner. If they understand him and accept him, he will be helped in his progress to adjust to his environment. If they do not accept him, he of course will feel rejected by society. If the neighbours have a positive and constructive attitude towards the child, he will then be helped towards his maximum development. It is the duty of all to help the slow learner, the home, the school and the public. Cardinal Cushing of Boston has remarked: "the greatness of a civilization can be

measured by the provision it makes for its least members".

Improvements in the Education of the Slow Learner

The teaching of the slow learner is a very great problem. Hughes and Hughes in their book LEARNING AND TEACHING, quote E. Thring as saying, "A dull boy's mind is a wise man's problem".¹ The problem certainly cannot be completely solved, but the suggestions offered here may help towards a partial solution.

1) The number of pupils per class must be small, comprising no more than 15 pupils to a class.

2) The teacher must be understanding, sympathetic, imaginative, patient, well-educated and able to set a good example by their lives.

3) The classes should be separated from ordinary classes but the pupils must not be left out of the regular activities of the school, such as, sports, dances, assembly, etc.

4) The syllabus should be taught on a working approach rather than on a wordy approach. The slow learner abstracts poorly so he must work on concrete

¹A. G. Hughes and E. H. Hughes, LEARNING AND TEACHING (2nd. ed. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946), p. 282.

situations with the idea that abstract work would be done at a later date.

5) Reading should be encouraged. Interest in reading and confidence in reading should be the key points in the program.

6) The attitude of the teacher, fellow-pupils, parents, and the public in general must be improved. These children are not a different species of man nor are they freaks, they are children who possess a handicap in learning new things, usually academic things.

7) The curriculum should be adjusted to meet the needs of these pupils.

8) Slow learners can more easily be reached through the heart than through the head. Teachers who teach slow learners should love these children, they should teach them with true devotion. The children will themselves learn more through love than through fear.

The problem of teaching the slow learner is ever-present, and the challenge to those teachers who feel they can help the slow learner is great. May we have more devoted, understanding teachers for their cause in the future! As Miss Loewy says in her book, "The backward child not only needs helping, but he needs the best"

possible help that is available".¹

¹Herta Loewy, MORE ABOUT THE BACKWARD CHILD (London: Staples Press Limited, 1957), p. 138.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Adler, Alfred. THE PRACTISE AND THEORY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY. Translated by P. Radin, 2nd. ed. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1955.
- Burns, Charles L. C. MALADJUSTED CHILDREN. London: Hollis and Carter, 1955.
- Burt, Cyril. THE BACKWARD CHILD. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1937.
- Crow, Alice. AN OUTLINE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY. Ames, Iowa: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1958.
- Crow, Lester D. and Alice, (ed.). READINGS IN ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY. Ames, Iowa: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1958.
- Featherstone, W. B. TEACHING THE SLOW LEARNER. Edited by H. L. Caswell. New York: Stratford Press, Inc., 1951.
- Freud, Sigmund. A GENERAL SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF SIGMUND FREUD. ed. by John Rickman, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1957.
- Freud, Sigmund. THE BASIC WRITINGS OF SIGMUND FREUD. Trans. by Dr. A. A. Brill. New York: Random House, Inc., 1938.
- Glover, Edward. FREUD OR JUNG? New York: Meridian Books, 1958.
- Hughes, A. G. and Hughes, E. H. LEARNING AND TEACHING. 2nd. ed. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946.
- Ingram, C. P. EDUCATION OF THE SLOW-LEARNING CHILD. 2nd. ed. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1953.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. MODERN MAN IN SEARCH OF A SOUL. Trans. by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1933.

- Jung, Carl Gustav. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY. Ed. by Sir Herbert Read, Dr. Michael Fordham and Gerhard Adler. 3rd. ed. Bollingen Series XX, Vol. 17, New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1954.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. TWO ESSAYS ON ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY. Trans. by R. F. C. Hull. 5th. ed. New York: Meridian Books, 1956.
- Lightfoot, Georgia. CHARACTERISTICS OF BRIGHT AND DULL CHILDREN. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951.
- Loewy, Herta. MORE ABOUT THE BACKWARD CHILD. London: Staples Press Limited, 1957.
- Morgan, John J. B. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE UNADJUSTED SCHOOL CHILD. revised ed. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949.
- Murphy, Gardiner. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PSYCHOLOGY. Revised ed., New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company., 1949.
- Sister Mary Theodore, O. S. F. THE CHALLENGE OF THE RETARDED CHILD. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1959.
- Smith, Marion Funk. TEACHING THE SLOW LEARNING CHILD. New York: Harper and Bros., 1954.