

CANADIAN PROGRAMMES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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PREFACE

The gifted child may be defined as one who is by nature possessed of the potential to achieve eminence. Recent interest in the education of gifted children has led to the introduction in many towns and cities of programmes adjusted to their needs and abilities. Spurred on by a sense of urgency resulting from well-publicized accounts of scientific advances in the U.S.S.R. purporting to be due to an advanced school system and by what may be a belated recognition of a weakness in our educational system, the development and improvement of such programmes is now a major concern of educationalists. A comparative study of what has been done to the present will assist planners by summarizing the procedures adopted, comparing the methods used and attempting a preliminary evaluation of the results. It will also bring together in summary much unpublished material.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For centuries teachers have been aware of the range of differences which exist between individual children. In endeavouring to adjust the school program to these differences the assumption was commonly made that, while the slow learner needed additional help, the gifted child by his very nature could cope with his own problems. The harmful effect of holding back the bright child who could complete the prescribed course in a fraction of the set time appeared obvious. For this reason rapid advancement through the grades was a favourite, indeed, almost the only, method of adjusting the school program to meet the needs of the gifted child.

A number of developments has led to a more thorough-going attempt to find better ways of providing for gifted children in our schools. The basic development has been a reconsideration of the purposes of education in our democratic society and of those expectations which may reasonably be held by an individual born into such a society. As a result of this reconsideration, self-realization has come to be accepted as a basic right of each

individual. This implies that the educational needs of exceptional children are not met by a school program which is geared to the needs and abilities of average pupils. Here is the fundamental reason for an intensified quest for more suitable treatment of all exceptional children, including the gifted.

The technological advances of recent years have emphasized society's need of the intellectual gifts which certain individuals possess. The modern state needs brilliant scholars to become its mathematicians, its pure scientists and its economists and to fill a host of other complicated and complex positions. The state is not interested primarily in the needs of the individual but, because of its own needs, is inclined to give special attention to those who can best serve it in the competitive world situation.

The development of today's measuring devices for intelligence has provided a most useful tool for a tentative and practical identification of the gifted. Most educators restrict the term to include approximately three percent of the total population whose I.Q.'s range above 130. Since this study's concern is not with measurement, a general definition such as that given in the Preface will suffice.

The research of competent psychologists has led to the conclusion that a policy of unlimited acceleration may, by placing a bright child with others who are chronologically much older, cause social and emotional maladjustments. On the other hand, lack of a

challenging program has frequently resulted in frustrated, impatient and indifferent behaviour.¹ Research has also shown that there are some kinds of work that can be done only by the highly intelligent and that any increase in knowledge in the learned professions will come from intellects in the top one percent of the population.²

It should not be inferred from the above that all early efforts made to educate the gifted were misdirected and achieved no results. Without participation in a program specifically designed for such a purpose, many exceptional teachers on their own initiative stimulated and fostered the development of gifted children. The tributes paid to relatively obscure teachers by persons who have risen to prominence are well known to all. The chief lack was of systematic planning and, without this, evaluation and improvement were impossible.

The first fulltime special classes for gifted pupils on this continent began nearly forty years ago. Probably most well-known is the Major Work programme of Cleveland, Ohio. In Canada,

¹S.W. Steinson, "The Characteristics of Bright Children", Journal of Education, Series 5, Vol. 4, No. 3 (June, 1955), p. 51.

²L.S. Hollingworth, Gifted Children, Their Nature and Nurture, New York: The MacMillan Co., 1926. This is generally considered to be one of the best books ever written on gifted children.

two classes modelled after those in Cleveland were set up in 1928 at London, Ontario; Saskatoon, Sask. has had classes since 1932.³ The economic depression of the 'thirties' restricted the organization of programmes in many centers as did also the war effort of the early 'forties'. During the past fifteen years, however, the Canadian public has become vitally interested in the problem of how best to educate gifted children and opinions, often extreme, have appeared on the pages of Canadian newspapers, magazines and educational periodicals. Provision for the gifted was also high on the agenda of the National Conference on Education held at Ottawa in 1958. Amid all this activity, sincere, well-planned and imaginative efforts are being made in many Canadian cities and towns to find a satisfactory solution to the problem of how best to help gifted children to develop their potential.

³Samuel R. Laycock, Gifted Children, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1957), p. 59.

CHAPTER 2

LOCAL ENQUIRY AND RESEARCH

Despite the intense interest in the problem of educational provision for gifted children, efforts to do something about it have reflected the cautious way in which Canadians proceed with changes in any of their institutions. In most, if not all, cases any modification of the school program has been based on research or enquiry of up to several years duration. These modifications have usually been introduced as pilot classes so that a commitment to any approach will not be made unless, in practice, it appears to be substantiated. This procedure is followed despite the fact that almost every possible way of adapting the program to these special needs has been tried.

The Calgary Study

When the School Board of Calgary, Alta. decided to send a questionnaire on practices in other school systems to the superintendents of the larger systems in Canada and the United States of America, its members no doubt hoped to receive answers which could be statistically analysed without great difficulty so

as to show that certain methods or programmes had been chosen in preference to others. Had this been the case, the School Board's decision might have been easy to make.

The Calgary questionnaire sought answers to three questions:

1. If you have attempted to meet this problem through enrichment of the regular program has this proven effective?
2. If you have given such pupils (the bright and gifted) an accelerated programme, what degree of acceleration is permitted and what results have been observed?
3. If you have attempted to segregate them for instruction, has segregation been by special courses, classes or schools, what basis of selection was used, and what results favourable or unfavourable have been observed?¹

Eighty-nine questionnaires were sent out and seventy-one received. An examination of the replies indicated the wide-spread interest in the education of gifted children already evident in 1953 but failed to give the clear cut answers that the School Board was seeking. Both these points may be seen from an examination of the comments received from London, Ont. where classes had been in operation for twenty-five years:

In London there are two classes, the junior room comprising grades V & VI and the senior one, grades VII & VIII, located in a school which has an auditorium.

In November, all grade III pupils in the city are given a group test. From this test and in conjunction with the teacher's opinion, screenings are made and those pupils receive an individual test, Binet Form L. From these results, pupils are given an opportunity to join the Advancement Classes in Grade V.

We use an enriched programme which includes: (1) a type of

¹Final Report on Practices in Other School Systems, Committee on Gifted Children, Calgary School Board, February 10, 1954, p. 1 (Mimeographed)

teaching which requires more than average research by the pupil for lesson material; (2) courses in debating, public speaking and dramatics; (3) conversational French and (4) practice in typewriting as an extra tool. We found this a satisfactory procedure. The children are not accelerated, but spend a year in each grade.²

The use of the word satisfactory in this comment appears to condemn with faint praise. However it appears to be typical of the replies received. Fifty-six officials completing the questionnaire referred specifically to attempted enrichment of the curriculum to meet the needs of gifted children but only ten of these felt the attempts to be successful; others were either non-committal or skeptical.

Remarks on acceleration were so qualified as to be almost impossible to assess. Of forty-four replies which dealt directly with it only seventeen indicated a definite acceleration policy. Eleven replies indicated a definite opposition to this means of dealing with gifted children but sixteen others were opposed to acceleration while using it in individual cases.

Disagreement on whether or not to segregate gifted children was just as marked. Fifteen systems reported practising some type of segregation; thirty-three opposed it and twenty-three were non-committal.

About the only general conclusion which could be drawn from the replies to the questionnaire was that enrichment of the

²Ibid., p.3.

curriculum appeared to be the most favoured method of assisting gifted children to obtain the maximum benefit from their schooling.³

It is interesting to note here that Calgary initiated an accelerated program in September, 1954 as the first step in providing additional challenge for pupils whose rate of development is considerably above average. This program enables rapid learners to cover the work of Grades I, II and III in two years.⁴

The Ottawa Study

Another approach to determining how a school system shall provide for its gifted was adopted by the Ottawa Public School Board in 1954. Despite provision for enrichment in the regular classroom, acceleration without omitting a grade in the elementary schools and streaming of pupils in the intermediate schools, the Board was concerned that it was not yet satisfying the full needs of its most highly gifted children. Accordingly, in September, 1954 a committee was appointed:

...to make a survey of the work being done in the Ottawa Public Schools to identify gifted children and to provide for their fullest development...to report upon work being

³Ibid., p.5.

⁴Calgary School Board. "Division I: Accelerated Program". Calgary: The Board. 1959 (Mimeographed)

elsewhere and to make recommendations for additional practices in the Ottawa Public School system.⁵

The committee entrusted with this three-fold task was composed of a school principal and a teacher with the school psychologist as chairman.

The actual work of the committee did not quite follow its terms of reference. Practices in their own system were well known to the members. A perusal of the available literature showed that every conceivable plan for educating the gifted had been tried before in other systems. The committee thereupon compiled a representative bibliography of Studies on the Gifted as completion of its first two assignments. However, as background to making its recommendations, the committee decided:

...to do a somewhat different type of study from those done in other communities in order to prevent duplication and because the Ottawa Public School system is unique in many respects. In any study of the gifted, allowance must be made for local conditions and local practices.⁶

While the uniqueness of the Ottawa school system may be a matter of opinion, it is a fact that no other study similar to this one and at the same time so comprehensive has been done in Canada.

The plan was to involve all inspectors, principals, supervisors and teachers of the system in planned discussions so that by an exchange of ideas and a re-focusing of attention on

⁵City of Ottawa Public School Board, Study on Gifted Children. (Ottawa: The Board, 1956) p.3

⁶Ibid., p.5

the gifted child and his problems it would be possible to discover new plans and methods based on the experiences of those actually teaching gifted children. It was also hoped that a handbook of suggestions for use by teachers of the gifted might emerge from the composite opinions expressed. Careful provisions were made for the teachers to meet in small grade or subject groups and for the compiling of reports. The topics for discussion, which were the same for all groups, provided for one meeting each week for seven weeks with one topic only being considered at each meeting. The discussion topics were:

- I. (a) Define the intellectually gifted.
(b) What are their outstanding characteristics in the mental, physical, emotional, social, moral and spiritual areas?
- II. (a) How are you attempting to meet the needs of the gifted this year?
(b) What else have you attempted in previous years?
- III. (a) Under ideal conditions what more could be done for the intellectually gifted?
(b) Describe the ideal conditions, as you visualize them, which would be most conducive to the stimulation, releasing and development of the full potential of all intellectually gifted children.
- IV. Would it ever be wise to group all intellectually gifted children of each grade in one class for either part or full time?
(a) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such grouping.
(b) How many of you would enjoy teaching such a class?
(c) How many of you would enjoy teaching a class from which all intellectually gifted children were withdrawn?
(d) Describe the ideal teacher for such a class.
- V. In your opinion are I.Q.'s fairly reliable in selecting your intellectually gifted pupils?
- VI. (a) What books or articles, if any, have you read on the intellectually gifted child which you would recommend to other teachers?

- VI. (b) Would you be interested in a further study of the gifted based on a selected reading list?
 (c) Would you be interested in hearing an authority speak on the intellectually gifted?
- VII. Further suggestions and comments.⁷

When the reports of the discussion groups reached their final summarized form, the committee members were greatly impressed by the closeness with which the opinions of the teachers tallied with more exact research as done by Terman⁸ and Hollingworth.⁹ The most lively discussions were concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of segregated classes for the gifted; the most fruitful discussions dealt with principles and practices of enrichment and the most idealistic comments were evoked in the discussion on teachers for the gifted.

In general the recommendations of the committee represent a complete vindication of the program then in use in the Ottawa school system. With some provision for improving testing procedures, the basic recommendation is for more of the same.¹⁰

On studying this report one is immediately impressed with the enthusiasm and attention to detail shown by the committee,

⁷Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁸L.M.Terman and M.H.Oden, The Gifted Child Grows Up, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1953. A follow-up of over five hundred gifted children twenty-five years after original testing.

⁹L.S.Hollingworth, loc. cit.

¹⁰City of Ottawa Public School Board, loc. cit., pp. 24-28.

the whole-hearted co-operation of close to one thousand educators and the immense intellectual effort involved. Despite such advantages an approach like this to the problem of deciding how best to educate gifted children is open to serious criticism. When an evaluation is to be made of any undertaking with a view to its modification, it is rare for such evaluation to be entrusted completely to those whose duty it has been to devise, administer and carry out the enterprise. Such persons should be included in the board of enquiry if only to provide exact information on existing practices but the board should be enriched, to borrow an educator's term, in breadth as well as in depth if an unbiased report is to emerge from the enquiry.

The determination of what is to be considered the most successful sort of teaching is a factor very likely to suffer from inbreeding or lack of breadth in evaluation. The following is from a part of the study which deals with 1956 ways of educating the gifted:

In one intermediate school an experiment was tried for three or four years where all Grade 7 pupils with I.Q.'s of over 125 were placed in one class. They covered the tool subjects in half the normal time and used the rest of the time for enrichment of various types. The plan was continued when the same pupils entered Grade 8. They wrote poetry, had debates, did research and explored many avenues of thought not possible in a less selected class. The boys took and enjoyed such subjects as cooking and table service. The girls took and enjoyed metalwork and industrial arts and crafts. The experiment was a real success but was terminated when the teacher in charge became a school inspector.¹¹

¹¹Ibid., p. 8.

The fact of the teacher's promotion seems to be convincing proof that the experiment was adjudged a real success by the supervisory staff of the Ottawa Public Schools. Yet the extreme diversification of this program and the use of enjoyment as a measure of the worth of a course in table service for boys gifted with high intelligence is open to question. Walter F. Koerber, Inspector of Special Classes for the Board of Education of Scarborough, Ontario, writing on purposes fundamental to the organization of programmes for the gifted and bearing in mind the psychological soundness of such programmes, writes:

Curricula and courses of study must be provided to give a sense of direction. It isn't good enough to chase the ephemera of the moment just because the child is alert enough to express an opinion. Perhaps the gifted more than any other need to realize the cohesion of all knowledge.¹²

Ruth Strang, a professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, in discussing the implications of the psychology of gifted children, says, "They need instructional material that evokes inventiveness".¹³ Finally Samuel R.

Laycock notes:

¹²Walter F. Koerber, "Purposes Fundamental to the Organization of Programmes for the Gifted", Education of the Gifted, The Fourteenth Yearbook of the Ontario School Inspectors' Association, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1958) p. 48.

¹³Ruth Strang, "Psychology of Gifted Children and Youth", Psychology of Exceptional Children and Youth, ed. W.A. Cruikshank, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955) p. 515

...if efforts to help gifted pupils are to be something more than 'a thing of shreds and patches', teachers and administrators must have clearly in mind the kind of education that is likely to promote the highest development of such youngsters, the kind of education which will help them to develop such generalized habits, skills, knowledge, attitudes and appreciations as will enable them to serve their fellows and, at the same time, to find rich personal fulfillment.¹⁴

The consensus of opinion of these and most other psychologists is that the 'why' and the 'how' of things and facts are most important in teaching and that the wise teacher should attempt to produce the inquiring mind. These considerations do not appear to have been the chief motivation of the Ottawa educators concerned with this experiment.

While occasionally a gifted child with strong motivation may reach eminence through self-instruction, for the majority the competence of their teachers will have a very significant bearing on their educational development. Here is another place where a committee which lacks 'breadth' may produce meaningless verbiage completely without value in making concrete recommendations for the modification of such a basic institution as an educational system.

The following is part of the description of the ideal teacher of the gifted as described in the Ottawa study:

¹⁴Samuel R. Laycock, loc. cit., p. 32

She should have superior intelligence, personality, scholarship, education, training, experience, social and cultural background, moral and spiritual attitudes. She should be widely read, widely travelled and have broad social contacts. She should have an open and enquiring mind and be flexible and objective in her appraisal of children, adults, reports and events. She should have the ability to stimulate, encourage, lead and inspire her pupils to accomplishment commensurate with their various abilities.¹⁵

The paragon of virtues here described represents the composite sublimation of what each individual teacher participating wished she might have been. As such it has no place in a serious study on which is to be based the success of a practical program of education for gifted children. The recommendation that at least two teachers should be sent to a summer course specifically designed for training teachers of the gifted comes as an anti-climax following such a description.

We have so far examined two ways of conducting the research on which may be based a sound program of education for gifted children. Although each method resulted in the accumulation of much useful information, certain defects appeared to be more or less evident. The great variation of programs in use is reflected in the answers to questionnaires submitted to other school systems and the data provided appears to defy statistical analysis. When local efforts are made, a very real danger exists if there is insufficient 'breadth' in the board of enquiry.

¹⁵City of Ottawa Public School Board, loc. cit., p. 19

The Halifax Study

The research method used in Halifax, N.S. appears to have avoided the difficulties just mentioned. Acting on a suggestion of the Superintendent of the Halifax City Schools, a group met one night a week, from October, 1957 to March, 1958 to study the problem of the gifted child. Of the total membership of seventeen, nine represented the administrative and teaching staffs of the city schools. The other members were a psychologist, a psychiatrist and one representative of each of the following groups; Board of School Commissioners, N.S. Department of Education, Nova Scotia Teachers Union, parents, universities and Home and School Association. Although the personnel of this and subsequent groups changed, the broad base of representation was maintained throughout.

During the winter research and discussion on a number of topics was done. Much time was devoted to the formation of a questionnaire on practices in other Canadian schools and to summarizing the replies. The evaluation of the questionnaire is interesting in view of our discussion of the Calgary enquiry.

The group believed it derived no specific help from this questionnaire for our future plans concerning Gifted Children in Halifax City. The reason for this was: (a) Each center has been acting on its own beliefs of what is considered best for their gifted children and (b) each

center has set up a system suited to its own locality, taking into consideration the number of children, finances, space, etc.¹⁶

Non-teacher members of the group prepared a comprehensive written report on "Why Make Special Provision for the Gifted". The identification of gifted children was discussed and concurrently, in the schools, a listing was made of all children with I.Q.'s over 130 and an intensive program of individual testing of Grade 2 pupils was carried out. The culmination of all this activity was the presentation to the Superintendent of an overall plan for future provision for gifted children in Halifax City and immediate recommendations for the school term beginning September, 1958. In the words of the group this program was presented, "since it has always been the aim and desire of the Halifax City School Board to provide equal opportunity for all children according to their ability".¹⁷ If indeed this had always been the conscious aim and purpose, then Halifax had been more advanced than most cities. However, now there was a plan to put aim and purpose into practice.

The overall plan provided for the appointment of a Director of Gifted Children, the appointment of an Advisory Board and the formation over a period of years of fourteen special

¹⁶Report of Study Group on Gifted Children, October, 1957 to March, 1958 (Submitted to the Superintendent of Halifax Public Schools, March 21, 1958) pp. 2-3 (Mimeographed)

¹⁷Ibid., p. 4

classes. These classes were to be located in existing centrally-situated schools with segregation for instructional purposes only. The immediate recommendation was for four classes, two each at the Grade 3 and Grade 7 levels.¹⁸

This group had no official status as it had been formed only at the suggestion of the Superintendent. The Board of School Commissioners now appointed its own committee to consider the group's report and any other pertinent information and to make firm recommendations. The recommendations as presented in May, 1958 suggested a program combining acceleration with enrichment with the proviso that acceleration should not be used beyond a maximum of two years and not at all at the senior high school level. The date for the commencement of the first classes was postponed to September, 1959 but the immediate appointment of a director of training for Gifted Children was urged together with the following further preparatory steps:

That during the school year 1958-59, the Board shall give attention to the preparation of a Course of Study and the selection and training of teachers for Gifted Children. The first will involve working with the curriculum division of the Department of Education; the second will involve financial assistance for teachers at summer schools and travelling expenses to enable the director and possibly one other teacher to visit classes in London and Winnipeg or Hamilton.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 18-19

¹⁹ Report of a Committee Appointed to Study the Problem of How to Educate Gifted Children, May 7, 1958 (Mimeographed)

These recommendations were accepted and implemented by the appointment of an acting Director for Gifted Children and of an Advisory Board of thirteen members, many of whom had been on the first study group and who represented different segments of Halifax society. At their first meeting the Advisory Board decided that immediate meetings should be arranged with the individual principals and staffs of the city schools. It was hoped that this would bring a greater awareness of the problem of educating gifted children in the schools, some of which would have a special class for such children in the following term. This awareness might be developed by the organisation of study groups. It should also be noted that at least fourteen members of the supervisory and teaching staffs had participated in the Study Group and/or the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board also gave attention to the selection of teachers for the special classes. Their statement concerning the qualifications required by such teachers is in marked contrast to that of the Ottawa Study.

They felt that these children need outstanding teachers, who themselves have superior intelligence, scholarship, education, experience and personality. They need teachers who are free from intolerance with those who will frequently question and disagree. The teachers of these children need special understanding and sympathy with them. They need inquiring minds, to help lead these gifted children as far as it is possible for them to go.²⁰

²⁰Advisory Board Report on Gifted Children (Submitted to the Superintendent of Halifax Public Schools, March 20, 1959) p. 3 (Mimeographed)

The Advisory Board were planning enriched programs for 3, 4, 5 and 6 which might be completed by the very superior members of the special classes in three years and for enriched programs in grades 7, 8 and 9 which might similarly be completed in two years. When the Advisory Board reported to the Board of School Commissioners on March 20, 1959, a very comprehensive testing program had resulted in the selection of the gifted children who would make up the special Grade 7 classes in 1959-60. The testing at the grade 2 level had not been completed. This testing was being done by the Acting Director of Gifted Children in her position as Director of the Auxiliary Class Department. As it became apparent that these dual duties meant too great an amount of work, one of the Assistant Superintendents assumed the position of permanent Director of Gifted Children. In May the new Director visited several cities and towns in Ontario to observe classes for gifted children and to discuss their operation with the teachers and officials concerned. His report contains many significant observations on how best to meet the needs of gifted children in our schools. The following are representative:

The success of a programme for gifted children depends on the quality and training of the teachers, and programmes which may appear to be similar on paper may be vastly different in operation because of the difference not in ability but in the attitude of the teachers...
...there seems to be agreement among the groups visited that the establishment of these gifted classes has tended

to improve the quality of teaching generally. The techniques developed and the methods followed have had a carry-over into other classes and have stimulated other teachers to do more effective work.

Acceleration, enrichment, grouping, streaming, withdrawn classes and segregated classes are all making effective contributions to the successful teaching of gifted pupils. Which method receives the most prominence varies from place to place but it does appear that any school system which wishes to give adequate recognition to the needs of all its pupils must build a program in which all these methods are blended in varying measure.²¹

In September, 1959, almost two years after the study group had begun its work, the Halifax programme was inaugurated with two special classes offering an enriched program to selected Grade 7 pupils. The testing program in Grade 2 had not progressed at a rate sufficient to warrant the opening of special classes at the Grade 3 level.

It may be argued that there was unnecessary delay in introducing these classes. However, this is not the feeling of the teachers involved. The principal of one school in which a special class is established and who is himself a teacher of one subject to the class feels that, despite the lengthy preparation, teachers were not fully aware of and ready for the work they were undertaking. Although the members of the special classes had been selected by an extensive testing programme and as a result

²¹Maurice E. Keating, "Report on Programmes for Gifted Children", (Submitted to the Superintendent of Halifax Public Schools, May, 1959) p. 8. (Mimeographed)

of interviews with pupils and, in certain cases, parents, the achievement of some pupils was disappointing. Only by the middle of the term had adjustments been made by both pupils and teachers permitting an approach to the level of achievement that could be expected from the known high intellectual capacities of the pupils involved.²²

The three methods of local enquiry we have dealt with represent the ways in which practically all cities and towns in Canada have endeavoured to determine how best they may provide for their intellectually gifted children. Of the three, the broadly-based enquiry as undertaken at Halifax appears most likely to produce the programme which will be both enduring and effective. The shortcomings of the questionnaire type of enquiry and of the enquiry conducted without breadth of representation may be illustrated again by reference to a study made in Montreal in 1954.

The Montreal Study

A committee of school principals used the questionnaire method to get data on programmes in use elsewhere in North America and to discover the opinions of local elementary school

²²Interview with the Principal of Chebucto School, Halifax, N.S., February 18, 1960

principals concerning the best methods of educating bright pupils. That the Montreal committee found the information received from other centres just as patternless as did the Calgary group is apparent from their report.

Letters were written to many educational systems both in Canada and the United States in the hope of finding some clear-cut pattern which had been successfully developed and followed for a considerable time. No such pattern was received although they were as aware of the problem of educating brilliant children as is our own Board.²³

The results of the questionnaire sent to the principals of all elementary schools under the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal indicated unanimity of opinion on one topic only. When questioned on practices in their schools to provide more suitable programmes for bright pupils, none mentioned acceleration. From this lack of mention the committee decided that acceleration did not meet with favour.

The committee recommended a programme of enrichment with very limited segregation. That this would be so is apparent very early in the printed report. The committee published what purports to be comments from representative cities which had replied to the questionnaire. Three Canadian cities are selected, two of which have programmes using enrichment as their core and a third which has no additional programme as such for gifted children. As we

²³Report of a committee set up by the Montreal Curriculum Council to look into the Provision for Bright Pupils in the Elementary Schools, 1954, p. 7 (Mimeographed)

shall see in the next chapter, this is in no sense truly representative of the wide variety of programmes which have been coming into use in Canadian schools. That the variety is not mentioned appears to be a direct corollary of the lack of variety in the committee.

Most Canadians are aware that their country's greatest natural resource lies in the intellectual gifts of its children. When any school system decides that it should provide a suitable educational programme for these children, its most important preparatory step is the selection of the group who will plan its programme. It is apparent that a breadth of representation and a wealth of information are the ingredients from which a wise choice may be made.

CHAPTER 3

ORGANIZING AND EVALUATING PROGRAMMES

Although it appears to be a matter of democratic principle, psychological research and national survival to offer gifted children an educational programme commensurate with their intellectual capacities, agreement ceases when an attempt is made to translate this purpose into action. Two main methods have been used; acceleration through the grades and enrichment of school work. However these may be employed singly, as in most cases, or in a variety of combinations. Added controversy usually arises over whether, to accomplish the purpose more completely, bright students should be segregated into special classes or even into special schools. In 1959-60 Winnipeg has thirty-six Major Work classes with about nine hundred pupils from the fourth grade to senior high school doing an enriched programme.¹ After considerable experimenting, Hamilton has developed a system of promotion which enables elementary pupils to progress through the grades at varying speeds in proportion to their respective

¹Nadine Chidley, "The Program for Gifted Children in Winnipeg", p. 6 (Mimeographed)

abilities.² The Toronto report Programmes for the Gifted, 1957-1958 in mentioning one highlight activity from each of sixty-two schools, describes thirty-seven activities as enrichment within the regular classroom, twenty-four as taking place with withdrawn or segregated groups and one case of enrichment in an acceleration class.³ As this chapter progresses we shall see why the Ottawa committee felt that, "Apparently every conceivable plan for educating the gifted has been tried many times, in many communities".⁴

Before proceeding to individual examination of a variety of programs, mention should be made of two preliminary steps on which there are no serious disagreements; the selection of teachers and the selection of pupils. With slight modification to meet local conditions, this general statement on the selection of teachers for the Winnipeg Major Work classes would be acceptable to most school administrators:

Because the teacher is the most important factor in the classroom situation, selection must be made carefully. In addition to those qualities of every good teacher such as alertness, friendliness, understanding and constructive attitude toward the individual, he must have an appreciation of the special needs of the major work classes and should be

²J.W.VanLoon, "The Unit System of Promotion as Developed in Hamilton Schools", Canadian Education, XIII (September, 1958) p. 46

³Toronto Board of Education, Programmes for the Gifted, 1957-58 Toronto: The Board, 1958, pp. 11-87 (Mimeographed)

⁴City of Ottawa Public School Board, loc. cit., p. 5

free from rigid ideas of classroom organization and operation. The teacher must be willing to initiate and direct group work, to capitalize on the interests of the children, to use a wide range of resources and yet to maintain a balanced program so that the grade requirements are well met.⁵

Most persons responsible for the identification of gifted children agree that present evaluating methods and instruments are far from perfect. They do, however, think that the gathering of as much evidence as possible from certain sources is a pre-requisite to selection. The sources were listed by the

Halifax study group as:

- a-Group testing
- b-Individual testing
- c-Achievement tests
- d-School records on academic achievement, social maturity and emotional stability
- e-Family report on development.⁶

The general skepticism with which standardized tests results are viewed shows the common sense and good judgement of most

Canadian teachers. They would agree with Cutts and Moseley that:

Granted proper precautions, test results can be an enormous help to you in working with a bright pupil. If they confirm your judgement (or if, after being alerted by the results, your judgement confirms them), you gain valuable confidence in making decisions which affect the pupil's work. A good test lets you compare a pupil's intelligence and achievement with national norms so you know how he stands not only in relation to the others in

⁵Report on Major Work Classes in Winnipeg Public Schools, Superintendent's Department, School District of Winnipeg No. 1, pp. 4-5

⁶Report of Study Group on Gifted Children, loc. cit., p. 1

your class but also in relation to his age mates elsewhere.⁷

It is true that some school systems have prepared designations of I.Q. groupings but these are used only for clarity in discussion and as a means of listing or classifying those who can be screened for special treatment. In general the term gifted applies to the approximately three per cent of the population with I.Q.'s above 130. In most cases the carefully selected children and the prudently chosen teachers have come together in special classes with enrichment programmes.

The London Advancement Classes

In 1928 in London, Ontario two Advancement Classes were set up with pupils from Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. The members of the classes were selected on the basis of individual intelligence tests which had been given in Grade 3. The number of classes remained constant until 1957 but two new classes have been started since then so that the number of pupils in them now represent one per cent of the total enrolment in these grades.⁸

⁷Norma E. Cutts and Nicholas Moseley, Teaching the Bright and Gifted, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice Hall, Inc. 1958) p. 32

⁸Eleanor McRoberts, "Classes for Gifted Children - London, Ontario", Education of the Gifted, Fourteenth Yearbook of the Ontario School Inspectors' Association, 1958, (Toronto:Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1958) pp. 4-5

Enrolment in these classes is at the discretion of the parents of the selected pupils.

The most severe criticism of these classes was evoked by the fact that the pupils had been withdrawn from regular classrooms to form segregated groups. Charges of their being non-democratic and untrue to life were answered thus by one of the Advancement Class teachers:

These critics confused a justifiable opportunity to work with exclusiveness and privilege. No doubt their resentment was due in part to the unwise and vocally expressed pride of some of the selected pupils and their parents, and jealousy expressed by or on behalf of pupils not selected. But the fact remains: children tend to segregate themselves into groups and to play and work with those with whom they are most congenial. Unquestionably, many children profited by association with their peers, the challenge of keen minds and the interplay of ideas.⁹

The teachers begin with the program of studies as prescribed for Ontario schools. Mastery of its subject matter and skills is regarded as fundamental although even gifted children vary widely here. Enrichment activities are chosen so as to, "maintain a balance between the need to 'open doors' to the many worthwhile areas of learning and the temptation to make superficial forays into too great a variety of areas".¹⁰ Each child receives three hours of instruction a week in conversational French with written

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., P. 7

work accompanying the oral instruction. The teachers' talents and enthusiasms have provided many extras so that most pupils in the classes have had work in ceramics, play production and public speaking. Field trips and even overnight expeditions are used but these activities involve both preparatory and follow-up activities. The chief opportunities for enrichment come, however, from the basic studies. An example will show how this may be done in History.

In the case of the Vikings we want them to know about the archaeological diggings in Greenland, to have heard in translation parts of the Sagas, to read a variety of stories in which authors use the Sagas as source material so that the original becomes a many-faceted reality. Children begin to recognize that, as to-day's news is to-morrow's history, history is indeed yesterday's news, and that, as we are both part and result of continual change, we are exceedingly close to the past. ...the experience of tracking down facts through several sources gradually teaches the pupils to sift the material for what they need and to recognize that the material itself must be viewed critically because of conflicting evidence.¹¹

Teaching methods do not differ significantly from those used in the regular classroom. The teachers reported using group and individual projects and assignments, oral reading and group discussions and such other methods as seemed to suit the subject matter. Their chief purpose was to make their children feel a deep sense of satisfaction from intellectual activities so that they might hunger and thirst after knowledge.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 8-9

Due to their early start and to the growing interest in the education of gifted children, the London Achievement Classes have been studied more extensively than any other Canadian programme. By research and by follow-up studies, attempts have been made to determine whether or not the immediate and the long range aims of the programme are being realized. These aims as stated by its originators are:

- (a) to allow the bright child to progress at a rate commensurate with his capacity and to have, thereby, a greater opportunity to develop his full potentialities;
- (b) to help the bright child develop superior study habits by reducing drill and by providing him with competitors of ability equal to his own;
- (c) to provide the bright child with more opportunities for developing an interest in and appreciation of cultural pursuits and more adequate leisure time interests;
- (d) to provide the bright child with special equipment which is too expensive for installation in every classroom;
- (e) to prevent the bright child from being accelerated and allow him time to attain emotional and social maturity before entering secondary school;
- (f) to help the bright child develop an attitude of modesty through his contacts with contemporaries of equal brightness;
- (g) to stimulate in the bright child a sense of social responsibility and a willingness to take on the duties of leadership.¹²

A study by Hignell reported in 1958 attempted to determine the extent, if any, by which attendance at these classes had increased achievement in the tool subjects and had brought about

¹²Frances Hignell, "Academic Achievement in Intellectually Gifted Children", Education of the Gifted, Fourteenth Yearbook of the Ontario School Inspectors' Association, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1958) p. 11

an increased tendency to achieve in proportion to academic ability. An experimental group from an advancement class was matched with a control group from the regular class on the basis of sex, chronological age, Stanford-Binet I.Q. and scholastic achievement as measured at the Grade Three level, and socio-economic status. Five tests were given to each group to measure general achievement; progress in mathematics, reading and essay writing; and a vocabulary test. Only in essay writing did the test results show any marked superiority in the experimental group. Other differences were either not significant or favoured the control group. The investigator was forced to conclude that attendance in a special class, "does not (a) result in an increase in achievement in tool subjects...nor (b) increase the tendency of the students to achieve at levels consistent with their academic ability".¹³

A follow-up study by Vogan¹⁴ examined the positions held in society by graduates of the early London Advancement Classes in order to determine if they had assumed positions of leadership in society to a greater extent than did equally gifted pupils who did not attend these classes. By personal interview where possible and otherwise by questionnaire, detailed information was

¹³Ibid., p. 14

¹⁴R. K. Vogan, Ontario Public School Inspector for the Districts of Carlton No. 1 and Russell No. 1.

secured from one hundred three graduates of the classes in the years 1929 to 1939. A control group of seventy-nine subjects was established, not on the basis of the results of I.Q. tests given in Grade Three for these had disappeared, but on the basis of the results of Manitoba Departmental examinations for Senior Matriculation. A rating scale to indicate the degree to which leadership qualities were needed in the twenty-nine occupations listed in the questionnaire was obtained through a poll of local opinion.

While some allowance should be made for the lack of an accurately representative control group, the effect of this would not nullify the whole effort. In some cases no significant differences existed between the experimental and the control groups. To exemplify, neither group exceeded the other in holding jobs requiring leadership qualities, earned more money than the other or differed from the other in church membership. On the other hand, the experimental group published more of both articles and books dealing with ideas related to their work and belonged to dramatic and literature groups to a greater extent but had less political participation than the control group. Considering the questionnaire as a whole, Vogan concludes:

- (1) that the London Advancement Classes have produced adults who seem to be assuming positions of intellectual leadership and responsibility in adult society to a greater extent than might have been the case if the subjects had graduated from the regular school grades.

- (2) that the London Advancement classes would appear to be justified if the purpose of the classes is to encourage the full development of the intellectual capacity of the superior child.¹⁵

If both studies and their results are considered, it may be deduced that the benefits which follow enrichment programmes like that carried on at London are long range and intellectual rather than immediate and measurable by grades. That such results occur is commendable but we must consider other programmes and their results for our gifted children deserve the best sort of education we can devise.

Hamilton's Unit System of Promotion

The Hamilton, Ontario Unit Promotion Plan has been in the process of development since 1938. It was not designed for gifted children but its advocates claim that it works to their advantage. As presently used, the work of the first six grades in the basic subjects of reading, spelling and arithmetic has been divided into eighteen units of work, three units for each grade. Fast learners who begin the work of a grade in September may complete that grade

¹⁵R. K. Vogan, "A Follow-up Study of the Graduates of London's Advancement Classes", Education of the Gifted, Fourteenth Yearbook of the Ontario School Inspectors' Association, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1958) p. 19

by April. Instead of marking time through such devices as extra drill and problems of no greater difficulty, these pupils may continue their progress by advancing to the next unit of work in the same classroom.¹⁶

It should be noted that this is not a system of teaching but rather a system of promotion. As such it is a development of group teaching which has been used for many years. In Nova Scotia this practice was introduced with the new reading programme and has spread to some extent to the other tool subjects; for, in these as well, pupils learn at varying rates of speed.

Fast learners or "A" groups are usually permitted a maximum of one year's acceleration. Exceptional cases, such as those whose birthdates just prevented their entrance to school a year earlier, are allowed a second year's acceleration if their abilities and attitudes seem to warrant it. The promotional system means that none of these will have skipped any part of the work of any grade. For most gifted children (fast learners) the rule is for the one acceleration to be accompanied and followed by increasing amounts of enrichment.

At the end of June each year classes are reorganized so that each child will start the new year from where he left off

¹⁶J.W. VanLoon, "The Unit System of Promotion as Developed in Hamilton Schools", Canadian Education, XIII (September, 1958) pp. 46-51

with provision for necessary review. The school principal finds that many interesting groupings are possible. A class composed of Unit 5 bright children and Unit 7 slow learners may end the year by completing Unit 8 together. Homogeneous grouping is practised only if it appears that this will benefit the whole elementary programme.

The division of the work into units is done by committees of teachers. Testing practices are also uniform. Methods of placement and instruction are described thus by VanLoon:

No matter what a child's named unit is, his reading level is determined each fall by an informal test in a graded series of sight readers. Places are marked in this series where the approximate vocabulary load of each unit is found. The child's instructional level is at the place where he makes approximately five per cent error.

A child labelled Unit 7 may need instruction in reading and spelling at Unit 8 level and in arithmetic at Unit 6 level. The named unit, as the named grade, is but a common denominator of his abilities.

Three groups in reading are usually the rule. Each group receives instruction in books of the necessary level of difficulty. In addition, the methods and techniques used in teaching the best group are likely to be quite different from those used in teaching the slowest group.¹⁷

Informational subjects are not divided into units and instruction in these often provides opportunity for enrichment.

In the school year 1956-57, 12.26 per cent of the pupils in the elementary schools of Hamilton achieved more than three units of work, i.e. did more than the work of one grade.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 49

Twenty-two per cent of pupils who received all their elementary education in Hamilton accomplished this in seven rather than the usual eight years. This saved time is regarded as the greatest value of the plan. Another value, the prevention of retardation, can be graphically illustrated. It is estimated that in 1956-57, had grade organization been in effect, the result of retardation or the repeating of grades would have added nine hundred seventy additional pupils to the school enrolment. Thus the taxpayers of Hamilton were saved the cost of providing a building and teachers for approximately twenty-three classes. From a pedagogic viewpoint, the immediate incentives, the more easily obtainable goals and the more frequent satisfactions should provide a greater stimulation and motivation to effort.

The Hamilton system has not, as yet, been subjected to research such as that done in London. This is no doubt due both to the recency of the system and to the impossibility of establishing a control group of city pupils since all are involved in the plan. However, the increasing number of elementary school systems which are adopting modifications of the Unit Promotion plan indicates the confidence educators are placing in controlled acceleration without the skipping of grades. In this connection Steinson writes:

Some teachers are taking the view that whereas social development is of primary importance in the case of retarded children, mental development should take precedence with

gifted children. Several reports from Canadian schools where acceleration is used stress the fact that this method does not interfere with the social development of the children involved. In fact, a few mention that it seems to help their social development.¹⁸

The usual modification of the Hamilton plan involves an alteration in the number of grades or units brought under it. In Edmonton, Alta., the first grade is used as an observation and testing period at the end of which pupils are separated into superior, average and slower streams. The superior stream which will, in all likelihood, contain the gifted achievers may complete the work of the next four grades in three years.¹⁹ As a general rule it would seem that the shorter the period in which the acceleration is permitted, the greater must be the rigidity which must be imposed by the plan.

Calgary's Division I Accelerated Program

The Calgary Division I Accelerated Program permits bright pupils to complete three normal years of work in two. The curriculum is not divided into units but compressed or expanded

¹⁸S.W. Steinson, "Gifted Children in Canadian Schools", Canadian Research Digest, 4 (Autumn, 1959), p. 149

¹⁹Edmonton School Board, "The Edmonton Unit System of Promotion". Edmonton: The Board, 1959 (Mimeographed)

in proportion to the pupil's ability. Rapid learners are expected to cover the work of Grade I in eight months, the work of Grade II in six months and the work of Grade III in six months. To accomplish these objectives, teachers must not fall behind a schedule prepared by a committee of principals. The minimum objectives in reading when the Ginn Basic Series is used may be given in illustration:

<u>Reader</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
Pre-Primer I	October 15
Pre-Primer II	November 15
Pre-Primer III	December 30
Primer	March 15
Book I	April 30
Book II Level I(to Unit VI)	June 30
Book II Level I	September 30
Book II Level II	December 30
Book III Level I	March 30
Book III Level II	June 30 20

When it is considered that, for most Nova Scotian children this represents four full years of work in reading, the need to maintain a constant pace is obvious. The lack of provision for review time at the beginning of the second year seems to be a definite weakness.

Calgary's candidates for the accelerated programme are selected during the first six months of Grade I. In addition to a minimum IQ. of 110 and parental consent being required, there must

²⁰Calgary School Board, "Division 1 Accelerated Program, (Calgary: The Board, April, 1959), p. 2 (Mimeographed)

be evidence that health, achievement, and emotional and social adjustment are satisfactory. In the five years of the programme's operation to June, 1959 the percentage of Grade I pupils accelerated ranged from a low of 8.2 per cent to a high of 10.6 per cent.. The number of cases withdrawn from the program due to under-achievement averaged eight per year or about three per cent of the membership.²¹

Studies were begun in June, 1956 to evaluate the effectiveness of the Accelerated Program. These involved the comparison, usually for achievement, of the total accelerated group (I.Q. above 115) with a matched group of equal number (I.Q. above 115) who had spent who had spent three years in Division 1 and were thus one year older than the accelerated group. In 1956, Grade III test results were analysed for significant differences in achievement between the groups. The result of this analysis was as follows:

Where the accelerated and matched groups were concerned, the matched group was found to be superior.

A further study was made to eliminate the factor of age in comparing the accelerated and matched groups in reading achievement. When this was done there were no significant differences found between the accelerated and matched groups.²²

Later analyses of the Calgary programme give similar results. When these findings are compared with the research results from the London programme, the conclusions based on the immediate effects of

²¹Ibid., p. 2

²²Ibid., p. 12

special programmes for gifted children are, strikingly enough, unanimously negative.

The programmes considered above attempt to provide for individual differences at the elementary level. When children enter secondary schools, the differences in achievement that may be expected are very wide. Indeed, if the elementary school has done its work efficiently, the gap in accomplishment between the gifted child and the slow learner will be a serious challenge to the traditional organization of the secondary school. Care must be taken that the average achievement level shall not be accepted as the standard for all.

Secondary Education in British Columbia

British Columbia high schools attempt to provide for individual differences by offering two programmes within the same school organization. One programme provides for high school graduation with the requirements for university entrance; another general programme fits the needs of those who, because of lack of ability or for financial or other reasons, plan to enter business or industrial occupations. Each programme requires the accumulation of one hundred twenty credits for graduation but the basic core of the University programme is more complete and challenging. The subjects comprising the basic core of each are quoted for purposes

of comparison.

University Programme

English	-four years of study-	20 credits
Social Studies	-three years of study-	15 credits
Mathematics	-three years of study-	15 credits
Science	-two years of study-	10 credits
Effective Living	-three years of study-	15 credits
Foreign Language	-two years of study-	10 credits
	Total	<u>85 credits</u>

General Programme

English	-four years of study-	20 credits
Social Studies	-three years of study-	15 credits
Effective Living	-three years of study-	15 credits
Mathematics	-one year of study-	5 credits
	Total	<u>55 credits</u> ²³

Alternative courses within the basic core provide further for individual differences. Bright pupils are required to take very much enriched modifications of the courses provided in the general programme. In larger schools the use of individual pupil timetables permit the pupil to enroll in classes suited to his interest and ability. The larger high schools normally offer about eighty-five courses from Grade IX to Grade XII.

Such a programme must provide safeguards to prevent underachievement and unwise choice of options. MacKenzie emphasizes the use of counsellors as follows:

²³D.B. MacKenzie, "Providing for Individual Differences in Secondary Education in British Columbia", Journal of Education, Series 5 Vol. 5 No. 2 (March, 1956), p. 31.

To realize to the full the advantages provided for individual differences it is essential to have a well-planned counselling organization staffed by experienced and capable counsellors. Guidance of pupils in the planning of their programmes is essential. A careful study of the interests and abilities of each pupil must be made. Frequent conferences with parents and pupils must be held. Counsellors must ensure that bright pupils are guided into advanced courses that will provide an intellectual challenge.²⁴

Basically the British Columbia plan seeks to provide for individual differences and to offer an enriched programme to gifted children with a minimum of reorganization. Many educators feel that this provision is inadequate. Northview Heights Collegiate Institute at North York, Ont. offers gifted children an opportunity to complete the work of Grades X, XI and XII in two years. This is accomplished by dividing the work of each grade into two terms and by doing three terms' work in each year. The head of the guidance division for the school believes that, while enrichment meets the needs of some gifted children, "neither a greater profusion of subjects in his programme nor a wider participation in activities inside and outside of school provides the type of assurance which acceleration does that the gifted student will be motivated to take up the direct challenge of vigorous intellectual development."²⁵ In New Brunswick the cities

²⁴Ibid., p. 33

²⁵D.A. Bristow, "Acceleration as an Experiment at Northview Heights C.I., North York", Education of the Gifted, Fourteenth Yearbook of the Ontario School Inspectors' Association, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1958), p. 160

of Fredricton, Moncton and Saint John have practised the grouping of gifted children with certain aptitudes into special classes with the possibility of one year of acceleration in secondary school. Where tried this degree of acceleration has not been found to interfere with social development.²⁶

Programmes such as those outlined above usually emerge from group planning and the skills requisite for their successful operation are found only in the better teacher. Occasionally however, there occur examples of what may be accomplished when an outstanding teacher is permitted, even encouraged, to use the basic curriculum in a completely original way to stimulate the innate curiosity and creativity of a group of intellectually gifted children. Such a programme was developed in the 1957-58 school term by the Grade VII teacher at Norman Ingram Memorial School in the Township of North York, Ont.²⁷

Enrichment in Breadth and Depth

In May, 1957 planning for the education of the pupils in

²⁶S.W. Steinson, "Gifted Children in Canadian Schools", Canadian Research Digest, 4 (Autumn, 1959), p. 152

²⁷Peter W. Tacon, "Enrichment in Breadth and Depth", Education of the Gifted, Fourteenth Yearbook of the Ontario School Inspectors' Association, (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Co., 1958), p. 107

this class was begun by the teacher, his principal and his school inspector who discussed, "how to make the greatest possible provision for the enrichment of these children by means of regular classroom procedure".²⁸ The teacher had been carrying on some small-scale experiments in enrichment in previous years but now, in a series of meetings, there emerged a formula for substantial reorganization of the basic curriculum to meet the needs of a core theme.

The first few weeks of the new term were spent in testing the pupils for learning capacity and achievement and the community for resources and interest in education. The pupils were found to be superior in capacity with an average I.Q. of 117 and to be somewhat advanced in achievement beyond what might be expected at the beginning of Grade VII. Some members of the class were found to be considerably below the average. The community was found to be more than usually interested in the welfare of its children.²⁹ After an analysis of this data and personal interviews with the children, the teacher was ready to proceed with the programme.

...great activity and excitement reigned. The programme was being initiated. The children were setting up their own

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 108-109

"Federal State", having drawn up a skeleton constitution authorizing its existence, and were making preparations for a full-scale election. The election saw the Nationalist party, one of five parties, take office for the first two-month term. ...

Following each election, the Official Opening of Parliament, a great ceremony, took place and each ensuing week saw the Assembly convene for its regular sessions. The Cabinet held frequent after-school policy meetings, as did the Opposition's Council of Deputies. Each pupil had his daily tasks to perform as a member of one or more governmental departments, which included activities ranging from dusting the library bookshelves to operating the Stock Exchange. Each individual, too, seemed to feel that, regardless of degree, his task was essential for the successful operation of the 'State'. The children had chosen the name Success for their nation and appeared determined to have the word represent every facet of activity.³⁰

For the balance of the school term, classroom activities revolved around the "State". From it the pupils developed a sense of loyalty and an understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship which will, no doubt, help them in their adult lives. Wherever possible the organization served as motivation for the curriculum subjects as in the case of oral French which was introduced to add a bi-lingual aspect to the "State".

The project method of study was used for subjects which could not easily be incorporated into the basic theme. Five enterprise groups were formed and the results of their efforts included a forty-page book on the history of war and the hope for peace, a scientific experiment to produce the amplification of

³⁰Ibid., p. 109

sound waves and an eighteen by twelve foot wall map of Canada. Formal lesson procedures were followed by group or individual projects but even these did not always absorb all the energy and curiosity of the pupils. The teacher noted that:

Regularly, children could be observed finishing prescribed assignments and moving quietly to the makeshift office at the back of the room to carry on research for their pet project. Occasionally, a child would ask if he might teach the class a bit about 'such and such'. He might explain that he had just been reading "Van Loon's Lives", and had found some material that he thought the class would enjoy. Such lessons were usually carried out with what I used to call 'embarrassing effectiveness'.³¹

Over twenty class excursions were held during the term, some of them on weekends. All were in connection with or as motivation for classroom activities. Unfortunately an expedition to Ottawa to see parliament really in action could not be undertaken. The way in which the students accepted the cancellation of a long-planned highlight activity and found a compromise is termed by their teacher 'their finest hour'.

That such a programme can be carried out in depth and breadth and still provoke superior achievement in the basic curriculum subjects is shown by comparing the results of standardized tests administered in September and the following June of that school term. The September results are shown in

³¹Ibid., p. 111

brackets below.

Core Achievement

Average Total Achievement	Grade 9.2 (Grade 7.5)
Range of Total Achievement	7.0 to 10.7 (5.0 to 9.5)
Number above 7.0	33 (23)
Number below 7.0	0 (11)
Average progress since September	17 school months
Range of progress since September	7 to 26 school months ³²

This programme was planned to provide enrichment for a heterogeneous group. As such all members of the group profited from the activities. Within this framework, the gifted members of the group benefited in proportion to their intellectual capacities. With reference to this, the teacher commented:

It is true that many of the gifted provided most of the class initiative and leadership by accepting responsibilities... It seems, if one were to generalize, the gifted children probed deeper and harder, were more longsuffering in their efforts and, in consequence, came up with more useful knowledge. In other words while the breadth of the experiment was universal, the depth varied widely with the individual.³³

A programme such as this represents enrichment at its best. That such programmes are all too rare is due to the uncommon qualities necessary in the teacher of such a class. The originality required cannot be formed in Normal College; the ability to see a unifying purpose in extreme variety does not come with a university diploma alone; the flexibility needed to press toward

³²Ibid., p. 115

³³Ibid., p. 114

concrete academic achievement by means of creative make-believe games is not developed by practice teaching. Experimentation is discouraged in most school, probably with good reason, because of the present use of some inadequately trained persons in order to keep all our schools open. Until these conditions are remedied, enrichment in breadth and depth will continue to be attempted infrequently, but, when done, will provide remarkable examples of teaching at its best.

Helping Gifted Under-achievers

Every classroom, regular or special, has one or more pupils who are not progressing as their intelligence would lead us to expect. The problem of helping such pupils to achieve is probably more often in the minds of their teachers than any other, especially if the capacity to achieve is very high. In the Toronto Public Schools in 1957-58, 437 children out of 2528 with I.Q.'s of 131 or over were classed as under-achievers. Because of this, the committee which organizes programmes for gifted children is making a special study of factors involved in under-achievement and in types of motivation which help to overcome the condition. The case history of one such pupil is interesting.

Sandy's under achievement first showed in Grade I where his performance was poor in all subjects including reading.

Group tests of academic ability, given in a classroom situation, produced much lower results than did two individual tests. Sandy has been and still is a minor behaviour problem. He is restless, an attention seeker and his work is untidy and careless.³⁴

When we learn that Sandy has an I.Q. of 175, we realize that he has a real problem. As the teacher's knowledge of Sandy increases, she finds the following factors most likely to have contributed to his difficulty: he is an only child whose mother has over-protected him while his father has tried to treat him as an adult, he finds drill and routine boring, his general health is poor and he has frequent colds. As a result of her knowledge, the teacher arranged the following types of motivation during the year:

He has been used by his teacher as a resource person and for research in Social Studies and Science.

He has participated in a reading-discussion group within his class.

He has been a member of a "Special Activities" group under the direction of the Consultant in Special Education.

He has been counselled individually by the principal.

Parent interviews have been held and the psychologist has been consulted.³⁵

At the end of the school term his teacher was able to report a general improvement in most school work with a superior level of achievement in a number of areas. His parents report that

³⁴Programmes for the Gifted 1957-58, Toronto Public Schools
(Toronto: The Board, 1958), p. 81

³⁵Ibid., p. 82

Sandy had his best year ever at school. The diagnosis and treatment of under-achievement remain, however, a serious problem with the lack of trained personnel being the main handicap.

All organized programmes for gifted children conducted on a full-time basis are similar to or modifications of one or more of the plans we have studied in this chapter. In addition school boards and teachers have often provided the inspiration and the facilities for special groups, on an informal and voluntary basis, to enrich their knowledge in some particular field. Since the members of such groups are almost always gifted children with a pronounced aptitude in some subject area, a consideration of their methods and achievements is within the scope of this study.

High School Student Clubs

Queen Elizabeth High School at Halifax, N.S. has an enthusiastic Mathematics Club due in large measure to the interest aroused and the organizing help given by a member of the Mathematics Department of the school. The Club meets once a week with a typical programme consisting of a lecture by a professor from Dalhousie University, followed by an open discussion. Research by Club members is encouraged with the following being typical of their efforts to the present:

From time to time students present papers on topics which they have investigated, such as the trisection of an angle, the binomial theorem and finite series.

One ambitious project of the Club is the compilation of a dictionary of mathematical terms. Each member contributes definitions to the dictionary, and hence increases his mathematical vocabulary.³⁶

Programmes to provide educational opportunities for Canada's gifted children are yearly increasing in number. Regrettably, information is not available on them all; in many cases even mimeographed accounts have not been prepared. Information, when secured, proves that unjustified modesty has permitted many valuable projects to proceed largely unnoticed. This may be illustrated from the writer's experience in the schools of Dartmouth, N.S. For some years a plan of acceleration has been carried out by which selected Primary children pass directly into Grade II after one year in school. The Grade II teacher receiving these pupils is given detailed information about their progress, particularly in reading which is usually well into the Grade I programme before the first year is finished. By the end of the second year these pupils are well integrated academically into Grade II.³⁷

To my knowledge this programme has received only local

³⁶"High School Mathematics Groups", Journal of Education, Series 5 Vol. 9 No. 1, (November, 1959), p. 13

³⁷The writer has been Principal of Notting Park School, Dartmouth since September, 1956.

interest and no full account of it has been published. However, a project such as this, and research based on it, may help to determine whether or not there is a best age at which acceleration may take place. In this connection, Witty makes the following observation:

It is the thought of some administrators that with early identification of the gifted (at the age of four or five) they can be permitted to complete in one year, perhaps before the age of six, both the kindergarten and first grade. The argument for this practice is that they will immediately be challenged by their first school experience and thus avoid the danger of boredom and careless habits of work.³⁸

The introduction of such programmes has not been limited to any particular part of Canada nor to any age or grade level. While Dartmouth began with provision for gifted beginners, Moncton's initial step was a programme of acceleration in senior high school. Winnipeg has continued its enrichment programme into senior high grades by having the graduates of its Major Work Classes move into Honours Classes. At the same time the trend, particularly in Western Canada, has been to provide acceleration at the secondary level. This diversity can be interpreted as the expression of a desire to find the best possible way to provide educational opportunities for gifted children. As such, it is a very healthy sign.

³⁸Paul Witty (ed.), The Gifted Child, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1951), pp. 260-61

The principle of segregation for instruction appears to have won wide acceptance. In most school systems the prior provision of special classes for handicapped children has led to the feeling that the needs of all exceptional groups may best be met when they are grouped homogeneously for purposes of instruction. We should not forget, however, the experiment with "Enrichment in Breadth and Depth" and its demonstration that there are benefits in higher achievement by all members of a heterogeneous group if the motivation is sufficiently strong.

The Future

The future for the education of gifted children appears very promising. If present trends continue, it seems likely that Unit Promotion programmes at the elementary level will become, for some time at least, the generally accepted way to provide younger children with challenging educational activities. When health is good and satisfactory social and emotional adjustments are being made, a programme providing moderate acceleration seems to be psychologically sound.

At the same time enrichment practices seem likely to increase. The problem in this regard will be the shortage of superior teachers. That this problem may decrease in degree is

indicated by the increasing number of capable persons entering the teaching profession as the status of teachers continues to rise. The provision of university courses in the education of gifted children and related studies will increase the supply of persons capable of providing enrichment both in breadth and depth. In time, enrichment of this sort may replace acceleration and motivate all groups to greater achievement.

Universities are becoming interested in entrance standards for gifted children who have been following enriched programmes in secondary school. In the United States of America, universities have been experimenting with early admissions in an attempt to determine the optimum conditions under which a gifted child may prepare his intellectual gifts for adult use in both his own and society's service.

Interest in the psychology of communication and in the adaptation of modern communication devices to use in schools will undoubtedly affect education in the future. This effect will be greatest on the most receptive minds, those of gifted children.

Above all, evaluation and research will establish the firm base of sound psychological principles on which programmes for the gifted will be built. In this connection, and to keep a proper perspective, the cautioning words of the Harvard

Committee are most appropriate:

The problem ... is not merely to foster the skills and outlooks which divide man according to their special gifts and different destinies but to develop also the traits and understandings which they must have in common despite their differences.³⁹

³⁹The Harvard Committee on the Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society, General Education in a Free Society, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 94

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Files of Enid E. Johnson, Director of Auxiliary Class Department, Halifax Public Schools, Halifax, N.S. containing letters, papers, reports and studies leading to the introduction of the Halifax Program for Gifted Children. 1957-59