

**A TENTATIVE CURRICULUM FOR SLOW LEARNERS IN THE  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF NOVA SCOTIA.**

**Thesis written in partial fulfilment of requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts.**

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## PREFACE

The number of students in our junior high schools who are repeating grades, year after year, is growing so large, that they are creating a problem which school authorities are finding very difficult to remedy. These pupils are subject to the same curriculum as the normal and bright students, and as a result they are unable to keep pace, academically, with the rest of the class. Yet they are capable of acquiring the attitudes and skills that will enable them to become contributing members of society if a proper educational program is designed for them.

In this study I propose to identify the slow learners through the medium of intelligence and achievement tests and the teacher's own judgement. I shall also suggest a special program which might be used to train the teachers needed for slow learners. After making a survey of what has been done for the slow learners in Halifax and throughout the province of Nova Scotia, I shall suggest a curriculum which will be suited to their needs and prepare them for everyday living.

In making a survey of what has been done for slow learners in the province, I am indebted to Mr. Douglas Shand, Principal of Kentville Junior High School, also to several other principals in the larger towns of the province who so promptly and willingly replied to a questionnaire that was submitted to them. I am also

indebted to Miss Enid Johnson, Director of the Auxiliary Classes for Halifax Schools, who willingly gave encouragement and assistance during a number of interviews with her.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

During the past two or three years, in our city and province, much attention and interest has been given to the education of "gifted children". It was thought that these children were not being challenged enough and were jeopardized by being subject to the same curriculum as those pupils with less intelligence. After considerable discussion and intelligent advice it was decided that gifted pupils should be taught in a special class, in certain grades. A similar interest in slow learners is now beginning to grow.

Too long have these slow-learners been considered a thorn in the flesh that has been plucked out unwisely without proper care being given to the sore spot. As a result many students have left our schools unprepared to meet the challenges that the adult world presents. These pupils have common sense enough to know that they are not highly considered because they are unable to meet, what to them are, unreasonable expectations in their school work. They often become the teacher's pest and as a result school becomes the sore spot of the slow-learner's life.

It has been estimated that twenty out of every one hundred pupils are regarded as slow-learners. They are left behind in their

grade each year and contribute to the cause of the overcrowding in our schools. Something, I feel, should be done to fit the school curriculum to the needs of slow-learners just as well as to the needs of the more rapid learners. I also feel that most teachers, today, in our city, agree that there are many pupils who cannot profit by the organization and curriculum of the average public school. For slow-learners, special provision must be made if our schools are to provide for their fullest development. Each slow-learning child presents a unique educational challenge. He must be studied individually, and his needs must be provided for in a carefully planned educational program. Christine P. Ingram said:

Whether slow-learning children are placed in special classes or are cared for in the regular school grades, their education and life needs must be met. It is not enough to reduce the content of the graded school curriculum to meet their limited academic capacities, or to provide extra learning time for them. Education for these children must be specifically planned to help them develop those elementary skills, attitudes, and appreciations which are fundamental to the achievement of satisfactory social and economic adjustments in everyday life. <sup>1</sup>

Slow-learning children are not ordinarily classified separately, as are the exceptional, and usually no special classes are provided for them. They form a group midway between normal, average children and the mentally sub-normal, but they are sufficiently different from either to merit special study and discussion. The slow-learning have tended to drift along with considerable failure and retardation. They tend to drop out of

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<sup>1</sup>Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 3.

school as early as possible, usually one at a time, and as a result their immediate absence is not particularly noticed. As Featherstone commented:

If anyone doubts the need of sincere efforts to educate these slow-learners, let him mediate on the fact that twenty out of every hundred pupils chosen at random means at least four million for the country as a whole. Then let him ponder the consequences for the general welfare of permitting that number of future adult citizens to grow up illiterate, uncultured, and uninitiated in our way of life.<sup>2</sup>

It is very important then, that those children be identified, and an understanding be made of their capacities and of the problems they will meet in order to develop a program and a curriculum that will be most beneficial to their academic and social growth.

#### DEFINITION OF THE SLOW-LEARNER

In my research for material for this thesis, I found that there were many who were not too sure just what group of children was meant by slow-learners. One person with whom I corresponded, writing for his department, said, "we are not certain what you mean when you speak of the slow-learner". This was typical of many other letters, and of the people with whom I had personal discussions. In order, then, that slow-learners will not be confused with the emotionally disturbed, educationally retarded, and mentally retarded, I will make sure that this group of pupils will be clearly defined. Good's Dictionary of Education defines the slow-learning child as one

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<sup>2</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow-Learners (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. V.

"who, though capable of achieving a moderate degree of academic success, will do so at a slower rate, with less than average efficiency". The Florida State Board Regulations read as follows:

A slow-learning child is defined as an educable child or youth who because of intellectual retardation is unable to be adequately educated in the public schools without provision of special educational facilities and services.

These definitions do not pin-point the slow-learners in regard to their I.Q. and a further explanation is required. In terms then, of intelligence tests I consider those pupils that range in I.Q. from 75 up to 90 as slow-learners.

The term "slow-learner" has been loosely applied to all grades of children with low intelligence. In dealing with parents, the term is sometimes used because it is a kinder term than "mentally deficient". The slow-learner tests slightly below average in learning ability, but should not be considered mentally handicapped. Yet, a slight intellectual retardation does not mean he is uneducable and does not necessarily result in social incompetence. From that point of view of educational organization, I think the term "slow-learner" should be applied to the child who seems to have some difficulty in adjusting to the curriculum of the academic school because of slightly inferior intelligence or learning ability. According to Kirk and Johnson:

These slow-learners happen to be at the lower end of the average range in learning the academic subjects and can acquire the subject

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<sup>3</sup>Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 5.



matter but not to the same extent or with the same facility as the normal child.<sup>4</sup>

W. B. Featherstone tells us:

There is no fixed standard or level of ability below which a pupil must be called a slow-learner, but in common practise pupils with an I.Q. below 91 and above 74 are so labelled. Yet, when we are thinking about and planning for them, the term "slow-learner should be interpreted consistently to mean slow in learning intellectual things. The reason for this is that slow-learners are not equally slow in all kinds of activities or abnormal in all their characteristics.<sup>5</sup>

#### A COMPARISON OF THE SLOW-LEARNER WITH AVERAGE PUPILS

In order to formulate a curriculum for slow-learners, it is important that they should be compared with the average pupils in respect to their physical characteristics, mental ability, how they learn, and their particular needs.

From the definitions given above it can be seen that the slow-learners occupy a position between the mentally handicapped and the average pupils.

In respect to physical development slow-learners are very much like average children. Featherstone points out:

Age for age they are a little less well developed on the average than normal children. They are a little less tall and heavy and a little less well proportioned, but not enough to cause special concern or require exceptional treatment. . . . Of particular importance are the relatively large number of defects of hearing and of vision encountered among slow-learning children. Such

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<sup>4</sup>Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), P. 12

<sup>5</sup>W.B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow-Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 2.

defects are numerous of course among all children, but one needs to be especially alert to their presence and energetic in trying to correct them in the case of slow-learning children. Every physical handicap that can be overcome increases a child's opportunity to make the most of such intellectual capacity as he has, to say nothing of contributing to his comfort and happiness.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of what age, mental ability is perhaps the most significant factor in success and in adjustment to school life for the majority of children. It is obvious with respect to mental ability that slow-learning children are most conspicuously different from the average. This is emphasized by Christine P. Ingram when she says:

The mental ability of the slow-learning child at any age is characterized by a slower rate of and a less full total of development than that of the average child, and particularly by limitations in abilities having to do with abstract thinking and symbols such as are involved in association, reasoning, and generalization.

According to H. J. Baker there are three important ways in which the slow-learning child differs from the average. Their cumulative, long-time effects, singly and in combination over a period of years, result in marked contrast between them and average children. These three factors are:

- (1) quantitative differences in intelligence;
- (2) qualitative differences in learning methods and in mental functioning; and
- (3) the effects of non-intellectual factors.<sup>8</sup>

It has been argued that although intelligence is not the only

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<sup>6</sup>W.B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Christine P. Ingram, Educating the Slow Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Harry J. Baker, Introduction to Exceptional Children (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), P. 246.

differentiating characteristics of slow-learning children, it is one of the most important. Anyone who has taught the slow-learner can easily detect that he is capable of imitating, planning, thinking, reasoning and is capable of drawing upon his passed experience to meet new situations. But Featherstone says:

The slow-learner does not think and reason as well, he is less imaginative, less able to foresee the consequences of either an overt or an implicit course of action, and is inclined to jump at conclusions without adequately considering alternatives and without the benefit of much reflection.<sup>9</sup>

It has been quite clearly stressed by H. J. Baker that:

the slow-learning child tends to learn by comparatively simple mental processes. He needs a liberal amount of drill and repetition to fix this learning although such drill should be judiciously distributed; otherwise it becomes tiring; monotonous, and uninteresting.<sup>10</sup>

The slow-learner has the same fundamental needs as other children although of course the means by which his needs can be met are necessarily somewhat different. He has the same requirements for certain physiological needs, such as food, drink, shelter, rest, sleep, etc. Even psychologically they have some-what similar needs.

Their status needs for belonging, affection, and likeness to others are no different from those of other children; in fact, it is inability to realize these needs through channels normally open to average and brighter children that motivates much of the slow-learners' behavior. They require, in common with all other children, opportunity for increasing self-direction as they grow

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<sup>9</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. V.

<sup>10</sup>Harry J. Baker, Introduction to Exceptional Children (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), P. 246.

older and learn to manage affairs more adequately. They require contrast and harmony with reality in order that they may have a rational basis for their behavior. They, too, need to grow in self-realization, in perception of selfhood, and they need to understand and accept themselves for what they are.<sup>11</sup>

When the slow-learner meets with failure, ridicule, and scolding in school work all of the psychological needs listed above are apt to be thwarted, and thus his whole personality marred. If education's task is to guide children's development in order that they may grow up with good social attitudes, healthy emotional responses, and effective habits of thinking, a positive rather than a negative attitude is needed and a curriculum must be suited to the slow-learner with that end in view.

#### THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE EDUCATION OF SLOW-LEARNERS

Ingram tells us the objectives that should be set up for the education of the slow-learning

should, in general, grow out of the ideal aim of all education - the development of the individual's capacity to enjoy, to share in, and to contribute to the worth-while activities of life. For although limited in their capacities, most mentally retarded children have the potential capacity to share to some degree in carrying on the normal activities of life. The majority of them can acquire social habits and attitudes, skill of hand, and working habits that will make for satisfactory adjustment in the home, in the community, and in the working world.<sup>12</sup>

Before considering further these specific objectives for the

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<sup>11</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 7.

<sup>12</sup>Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 58.

slow learners, an observation should be made of the aims of public education as set forth in the introduction to the curriculum for Nova Scotia schools. It states:

It is now generally agreed that the public schools should aim to give each child the fullest preparation for participation in adult life consistent with the abilities he may possess. Preparation for adult life, however, means more than the mere mastery of knowledge and skills; it means also that the child must develop proper attitudes toward society, and that initiative, spontaniety and creative effort should be fostered through intelligent teaching. <sup>13</sup>

The curriculum committee for Nova Scotia schools emphasized "preparation for adult life", in its fullest sense, as the fundamental aim for public education. This main aim has been broken down into three parts as follows:

- I. The social aim; to train the pupil for effective participation in adult group activities.
- II. The avocational aim; to train the pupil for the fullest enjoyment of leisure time.
- III. The vocational aim; to train the pupil for participation in productive labour. <sup>14</sup>

I have quoted these aims to show that they apply to all students, in general, and that no reference has been made to any specific group of children. Yet, these aims are broad enough that if applied to the slow learners in respect to their needs, as already stated, they could be of significant value. The Educational Policies Commission of Washington, D.C. has stated four major

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<sup>13</sup> Handbook to the Course of Study (Department of Education, Province of Nova Scotia, 1953), P. IX.

<sup>14</sup> IBID.

objectives of education which are closely related to the ones listed above. They are:

- (1) The objectives of self-realization or personal development.
- (2) An understanding of human relationships as a member of a family and of a community.
- (3) Economic efficiency as a producer and consumer.
- (4) Civic responsibility in local, state, and national government. <sup>15</sup>

Kirk and Johnson says:

In general these objectives are applicable to slow learning children as well as to average or superior children. It is necessary however, that the purpose of education for these children be listed in more specific terms in order to differentiate them from the specific objectives of children with average intelligence. <sup>16</sup>

According to Christine P. Ingram these objectives for slow-learners may be said

to differ from those for all children only to the extent that they are narrowed down to prepare the individual to fulfill specific adjustments in a limited occupational and social sphere. The mentally retarded person cannot achieve so many and so varied adjustments, he cannot contribute to or participate in life so fully, he cannot live at so high a level as the normal; but according to his measure, he can achieve the adjustments within his reach, he can contribute his share to the accomplishment of the tasks of life, and he can enjoy life at his own level of interest and accomplishment. <sup>17</sup>

From this one can readily see that the aim of education for slow-learners should be to help them to react intelligently, as

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<sup>15</sup> Educational Policies Commission, The Purposes of Education in American Democracy (Washington, D.C. National Ed. Association), P. 47.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), P. 117.

<sup>17</sup> Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 61.

growing children, to situations both in and out of school and to establish habits and attitudes that will continue to operate after they have left school.

If such an aim is to be realized for those children, it is particularly important that the application of all his learning to simple life situations be made clear, and that all practice tend to foster functional learnings. For this reason, objectives for the education of the slow learners should be stated in terms of those life activities in which they are most likely to participate.<sup>18</sup>

The outstanding objectives, then, to be sought for in educating the slow learners in Nova Scotia Schools are those prescribed by Christine Ingram. They are grouped under the general headings as follows:

Mental and physical health; a practical working knowledge of the tool subjects; worthy home and community life; worthy use of leisure; and adjustment in industry.<sup>19</sup>

Although some of the children may never attain these objectives completely, yet the school and its authorities cannot afford to strive for less if its task is to be the development of the pupils so that they can enjoy and contribute to the worth-while activities of life to the fullest extent of their capacity.

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<sup>18</sup> Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 61.

<sup>19</sup> IBID. P. 69.

## CHAPTER 11

### IDENTIFYING SLOW LEARNERS

#### The Need For Diagnosis.

Slow learners should be identified as early as possible so that they may be given the attention they require. If they are identified early enough they can then be helped to acquire the right kind of knowledge necessary for effective living and to develop into useful and productive citizens. Dr. Lloyd Dunn, Co-ordinator of education for exceptional children, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, U.S.A., writes:

for educators to devise procedures for the slow learner without diagnostic data is as incongruous as for the physician to prescribe treatment without having made a careful and thorough diagnosis.

Parents, teachers, and those responsible for the education of children are interested in knowing the abilities, disabilities, and personality structure of their children so that, if necessary, more adequate social and educational provisions can be made for them. In order to determine the educational and social needs of a child, it is necessary that an adequate diagnosis be made. Only in this way will teachers of slow learners be able to develop a

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Lloyd M. Dunn, The Slow Learner - An Overview, NEA Journal, Volume 48, Number 7, October 1959, P. 20.



program to meet their needs and to place them in the situation that will be of most value to them.

Kirk and Johnson tell us that:

An adequate diagnosis of a child for the purpose of determining his abilities, disabilities, and needs requires a study of the whole child. This study will include:

- (a) A psychological examination to determine the level of mental ability of the child.
- (b) A medical examination for the purpose of determining possible etiology and need for medical treatment.
- (c) A social and personality study for the purpose of determining personality and social needs.
- (d) An educational evaluation to determine the degree of retardation and possible educational disabilities. <sup>2</sup>

The common mistake of many schools and teachers when making plans for the better instruction of slow-learning pupils, is to accept the fallacy that all educational backwardness is caused by limited mental capacity. Any teacher who has followed the progress of pupils through elementary and junior high school knows that this is not so. W. B. Featherstone, writing on this same subject, says:

The mere fact that a pupil does not get along well in school, fails to read as well as other children in a group, plays truant, or is a troublemaker, is not conclusive proof that he is a constitutional slow learner. Malnutrition, poor health, emotional tension, trouble with parents or brothers and sisters, poor eyesight or hearing, meager educational resources in the home, are only a few of the reasons other than limited intellectual capacity why children fail to meet expectations. Attributing slowness or maladjustment to intellectual limitations should normally be the last, rather than the first, step in studying the characteristics and needs of a group of children. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child (Cambridge University, Mass. The Riverside Press 1951), P. 38.

<sup>3</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 11.

The usual procedure for identifying slow-learning pupils, which also seems to be the most satisfactory and reliable, is based on the following methods and tests:

(1) study of the child's age and grade, (2) and his failure to make normal progress in school; (3) by evaluating each pupil, by intelligence tests, achievement tests, (4) by the teacher's own judgement.<sup>4</sup>

In our schools today these tests are given at different ages and grade levels, from primary to high school, and as a result the slow learner should be recognized early enough so that proper treatment can be administered. Many teachers and schools depend entirely on these tests and forget the valuable information that record cards show. When a pupil is overage at any grade level we could presume that the child is either mentally retarded or slow learning, but the rate of progress must be checked because it is possible that the child in question did not start school at the same age as his fellows. As an example of this, we might find a pupil who has been promoted regularly, one grade each year and is still overage. According to the present system in Nova Scotia a pupil who has made normal progress and is in the fourth grade should be nine and a half to ten and a half years of age. If he is older than that, he is usually presumed to have been left back in some earlier grade and consequently is classed as a slow learner.

Featherstone says:

Since one must locate actual pupils, a mere statistical

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<sup>4</sup>IBID. P. 12.

analysis of the age-grade progress status will not suffice. Each teacher will need to make a list of the pupils in his group, arranging them in order from oldest to youngest. He should then determine the amount of overageness of each pupil by finding the difference between each pupil's age, and the normal age for that grade. He should then record the facts regarding the progress record of each average pupil. Finally, for those overage pupils who started to school late, but whose progress has since been normal, he may well record his judgement whether the pupil is possibly a slow learner. This judgement may be based upon apparent present achievement or upon any other pertinent evidence the teacher has at hand, such as results of standardized tests or even an intelligence test.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE CUMULATIVE RECORD CARD OR SCHOLARSHIP CARD

In most of our schools today some form of cumulative record cards or scholarship cards are kept. These cards show the results of I.Q. tests, the teacher's marks assigned at the end of the year, whether the pupil has passed or failed, and the number of grades repeated. Such information should be examined for each pupil who is regarded, or suspected as being a slow learner. Even though the teachers' standards of marking vary considerably at times, yet they are consistent enough to give additional evidence concerning the pupils. These records should also be examined to see whether the pupil's progress in his academic subjects has been consistently poor during the different years in school. If this is the case, we can very well conclude that there is evidence of slow learning. W.B. Featherstone

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<sup>5</sup>W.B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1951), P.13.

believes:

one should be equally alert to evidence that the pupil's record has been on the whole satisfactory, except for a slump here and there that presumably accounted for his being left back. When this is the case, one may reasonably assume that the pupil is probably not a slow learner, but one should be on the lookout for the possibility of another slump.<sup>6</sup>

#### INTELLIGENCE TESTS

In most of our teacher training schools and colleges of education instructions are given in administering intelligence tests. No teacher should have too much difficulty with such tests unless he or she fails to interpret correctly the instructional part of the test. Most school boards have guidance departments and usually they provide a specialist either to administer the tests or to brief the teacher on the different phases of administering and scoring. The most commonly used intelligence tests in our schools are the group and individual intelligence tests published by Stanford-Binet or Hemon-Nelson.<sup>7</sup> The group tests should be used for all those who show up as presumably slow learners based on the information given by the different record cards.

In using group intelligence tests with slower pupils it is advisable to choose tests in which the tasks to be performed are very similar to the ordinary school exercises to which the pupils are accustomed, and for which the directions are

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<sup>6</sup> W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner, (New York: Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1951), P. 16

<sup>7</sup> Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child, (Cambridge, Mass. The Riverside Press 1951), P. 45.

very simple. Tests that employ artificial alphabets, for example, and illogical and unnatural problems, are possibly more reliable from the test maker's viewpoint, but they frequently cause dismay, confusion, and emotional blocking among slower pupils. The results are sometimes very misleading. <sup>8</sup>

Featherstone further reminds us that:

it is always advisable to give two different tests or alternate forms of the same test before reaching any conclusion about the pupil's capacity. If the scores of two tests are reasonably consistent, say within about five points of each other, the average may be taken as the pupil's probable I.Q. But if the tests differ by more than five points, one should check against any available scores on tests of reading comprehension or arithmetic reasoning and assume that the score is correct that is most clearly borne out by these achievement tests. <sup>9</sup>

Kirk and Johnson tells us that:

Group intelligence tests are designed primarily as a screening device to be used by examiners in choosing the children who should be given individual intelligence tests at a later date. These tests attempt to measure the same mental functions as those measured by individual intelligence tests, but in a group situation. <sup>10</sup>

Individual intelligence tests are given to those pupils who one can be reasonably certain, on the basis of the data given by record cards and group tests, require it. Most psychologists claim that individual tests, if necessary, should be administered by a trained person who is a recognized specialist in that field.

Ordinarily, for most schools there is much less of such service than is desirable. When the facts give a consistent picture of mediocre achievement over a fairly long period of time, one is

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<sup>8</sup> W.B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1951), P. 16.

<sup>9</sup> IBID. P. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child P. 45.

reasonably safe in assuming without giving an individual test that the pupil is a slow learner. Some one particular ability or skill or some special interest may be a sign of actual mental ability beyond what has otherwise been revealed. In all such cases individual tests should be given if at all possible. Such tests are especially necessary when there are grounds for suspecting that a reading disability or poor reading skills may be at the bottom of a pupil's maladjustment. <sup>11</sup>

Besides these two types of intelligence tests it is also sometimes necessary to give a pupil an achievement test. The reason for concern, as already stated, about the slow learner is that he is much more retarded in academic achievement than the average normal child of the same chronological age. Therefore it is necessary for the diagnosis that an achievement test be administered to determine the child's academic level. According to Kirk and Johnson:

If there is little or no academic retardation relative to chronological age, the child cannot be legitimately diagnosed as mentally handicapped and the teacher must look for some other cause for the low intelligence test results. If, however, the achievement is low, the results of the achievement test tend to supplement the results of the intelligence tests. An examination of the achievement tests is often of invaluable assistance to the teacher of the special class in determining the specific academic areas in which the child needs additional help, thus adding to the information required in planning a curriculum. <sup>12</sup>

The tests that are commonly used for measuring achievement are the following: Progressive Achievement Tests; Metropolitan Achievement Tests; Stanford Achievement Tests; and the Gates Primary Reading Tests.

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<sup>11</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1951), P. 17

<sup>12</sup>Sammuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child P. 48

Various other types of tests that may also be given are classified by Kirk and Johnson under the four headings of

(1) Readiness Tests, (2) Tests of Primary Mental Ability, (3) Motor Ability Tests, and (4) Vision and Hearing Tests.<sup>13</sup>

Although it is essential to give as many of the tests as possible for a completely objective evaluation of the child's capacities, they should serve primarily to confirm the conclusion drawn by skilled investigators, for, as Baker says:

a well-trained psychologist is able to form a good estimate of the brightness and dullness of an individual from the type of responses without computing the actual I.Q.<sup>14</sup>

The value of the teacher's own judgement should be of the utmost importance in identifying slow learners. H. J. Baker maintains that:

the regular classroom teacher is able to furnish first-hand information about the general status of educational achievement. It is reflected directly in the scholastic grades which she puts on report cards to parents and enters on the permanent school records. She is able to report on personality and social characteristics and adaptability to the class as a unit. She may have some evidences of physical and sensory handicaps and be aware of, but puzzled by, many less obvious disabilities. Her opinions and observations should have high priority in a diagnostic schedule.<sup>15</sup>

W. B. Featherstone has similar ideas and says:

Even when intelligence tests are given by competent persons,

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<sup>13</sup> Samual A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child P. 53.

<sup>14</sup> Harry J. Baker, Introduction to Exceptional Children (Rev. Ed) New York: MacMillan Company, 1953, P. 259

<sup>15</sup> IBID. P. 257.

there is still plenty of room for error in the results, and for misinterpretations or for failure to ascertain all the factors that contribute to a pupil's welfare in school. A decision that a pupil is a slow learner should be made with the greatest reluctance. Holding tentative judgements helps to keep one alert to potential needs and capacities that might otherwise be overlooked. Therefore the teacher should not hesitate to place considerable reliance on his own subjective judgement, particularly after he has a good background of practical experience and after he has come to know the pupils pretty well in the intimate face-to-face relationships of the classroom. <sup>16</sup>

In brief, then, I have emphasized that a well-defined and executed plan for early identification of the slow learner is essential. A child who is not working up to grade standard is not necessarily a slow learner. Slow rate of mental development is only one of several causal factors in educational retardation. To identify the slow learner, several different approaches must be utilized.

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<sup>16</sup>W.B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1951), P. 18.



## CHAPTER III

### SLOW LEARNERS IN NOVA SCOTIA

#### SLOW LEARNERS IN HALIFAX

Thus far, no curriculum or any form of a program has been organized in Halifax for the pupils whose I.Q. range from 75 to 90 and are classed as slow learners. However, the number of pupils who are failing to complete junior high school has caused great concern among teachers, parents and the Board of Education.

According to the 1958 report of the Halifax School Board, forty-one per cent of the total number of withdrawals, within the school year, were from the junior high school. All of those pupils were far overage for their grade. It also showed that these students were slow learners in the elementary grades. This was not recognized and nothing had been done to help the situation. There is, however, every indication that even before this present school year is completed something of a concrete nature will be done in Halifax, towards a program for the slow learners. In October 1959, a group-intelligence test was given to all pupils in grades six, seven, eight, and nine to determine the number of pupils with I.Q. between 75 and 90. This seems to be the first step taken in Halifax to identify slow learners in the junior high school.

The Auxiliary department gives six reasons why this survey was conducted. They are:

- (1) Several principals asked for assistance with the group of children covered by this survey.
- (2) There is a social and / or disciplinary problem when children are over age for their grade, especially at the junior high school level.
- (3) Pupils who drop out of school before completion of grade 9 are practically unemployable by today's labour standards.
- (4) There is an unnecessary strain on the school budget when a child takes two or more years to a grade, attempting classroom work unsuited to his intellectual capacity or future occupational needs.
- (5) Many (not all) parents of these children are concerned about their offsprings preparation for adult life.
- (6) Employers in particular, and the public in general are questioning why this problem exists.<sup>1</sup>

These reasons show that those boys and girls who fail to qualify in junior high school work are becoming a burden, not only to the school but to society in general. The fact is that the slow learners should remain in school much longer to attain a higher standard of education, provided a curriculum is available that will suit their needs.

The results of the survey mentioned above have not yet been published. Judging from what information I have gathered from the teachers in the schools who administer the tests, every junior high school in Halifax has the 18 to 20 percent slow learners as mentioned at the beginning of this thesis.

#### SLOW LEARNERS IN THE PROVINCE

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<sup>1</sup>Enid Johnson, Explanation of Survey Conducted October 1959,  
Department of Auxiliary Classes, Halifax, N.S.

In Kentville a curriculum for the slow learners has been in use for the past seven years. The junior high pupils in Kentville schools are divided into three groups - average, slow, and fast learners. The principal of the Kentville junior high school, in 1952, had been very concerned about the needs of the slow learners when she said:

we find in almost every school, in fact in almost every grade of our larger schools, a varying number of students who are out of line, out of step, who have lost the way in the maze of educational progress. In order to be more explicit let us consider the junior high school group, grades 7, 8, and 9. It is in this group we often find the slow learners with their lack of interest in learning, their reluctance to acknowledge a lack of knowledge, and their intensified behavior problems. Such students are out of tune with other students, with their teachers, and with those in authority in the home and in the community. They feel they are victims of authority from all sides and determine to outwit, if not ignore, rules and regulations.

The seemingly steady increase in the number of students who do not complete satisfactorily in one term the work of a so-called grade invites consideration.<sup>2</sup>

This was the beginning of a serious attempt to do something about the slow learning situation. In September 1952, a special class of slow learners comprising two girls and twelve boys was organized in Kentville junior high school. These students were registered with the regular grade seven teacher. They were taught as a separate group in the basic subjects of English, Social Studies, and Mathematics. Special work was given in household science and in manual arts.

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<sup>2</sup>Gertrude M. Chase, An Adventure in Teaching, Journal of Education, Series 5 Volume 1 No. 3, June 1952, P. 8.

The teacher of that class wrote, at the time, this account in the Journal of Education.

All students in this class are finding out that they can do things. Concrete interest in learning has developed rapidly. No one seems to mind going back to relearn the facts that were missed. Relieved from all reference to or need for competition, the pupils are competing with the idea of learning the things they do not know. They are happier because each one is progressing. The important traits of self-reliance, positive desire to learn, and personal responsibility are becoming more evident each day. The value of cooperation in all matters pertaining to the school, a new realization of the meaning and purpose of school, as well as a grasp of the value of the place of each student in the school, has helped to change negative school attitudes to more helpful attitudes. The attendance of this class is almost one hundred per cent. Since they have classes in art, music, science, and physical education with the regular grade seven, there is little chance for them to think of themselves as a separate group.<sup>3</sup>

The setting up of such a special class as this showed that it was possible to link special teaching with the regular school program. It also helped the regular class because it removed from that class students who otherwise would disturb the progress of faster and more advanced pupils. This program for slow learners was continued in grade seven for six years before it was undertaken in grade eight and nine. The present principal, Mr. Douglas Shand, of Kentville junior high school says:

even with this one year segregation from the brighter students the majority of slow learners were better adjusted for grade eight. Even though some had to repeat grade seven, yet, a small number of these students went on to high school and received a

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<sup>3</sup>Gertrude M. Chase, An Adventure in Teaching, Journal of Education, Series 5, Volume 1, No. 3, June 1952, p. 10

### Provincial Certificate.

In 1956 the pupils in grades seven, eight, and nine were given tests to determine the group in which each one belonged as high, average, and slow. The slow learners are taught all the regular subjects and are given as much academic instruction as they possibly can do. All subjects are taught in a more modified way than in the regular classes. The teachers of the slow learners have watered down all the courses for these pupils and are giving extensive drill and exercises in the work they can absorb. The principal feels that if you have the right teacher instructing these pupils all the subjects can be taught using the present textbooks and curriculum prescribed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Yet, he feels that only about twenty-five per cent, and possibly less, would be capable of completing grade ten.

### SOME REMEDIES

By the time the slow learner comes to the junior high school he is usually two years behind the normal learner, therefore, it is quite likely that he will not complete grade nine and will be leaving school as soon as he reaches the age when the law does not compel him to come to school. During the time the slow learner is in junior high school he should be taught the necessary subjects to prepare him to become a contributing member rather than an hindrance. If this cannot be accomplished before the age of sixteen, the compulsory school

leaving age should be raised another year.

In our junior high schools, today, the departmentalized idea of moving students from class to class and from teacher to teacher for different subjects is a disadvantage and presents many real problems to slow learning pupils. Featherstone also agrees when he says compartmentalized instruction based upon compartmentalized and uncoordinated planning, has no place in the program of slow learners.<sup>4</sup> The slow learner classes should be small classes of approximately 20 pupils in charge of a homeroom teacher all the time and should have the best arranged and best equipped classroom that the city can afford.

It is usually noted that when the slow learners leave school they tend to marry early, therefore, courses for them, in the case of the girls, ought to deal thoroughly with home management, grooming practices, and child care. The majority of the boys who are slow learners will hold semi skilled jobs. Therefore, for them good work habits and attitudes like co-operation, willingness to work, job responsibility, initiative, and acceptance of supervision are even more important than specific trade training. The program of studies should also emphasize improvement in reading, numbers, and writing. The social studies and science should be functional, whereas, art, music, and extracurricular activities could be taught with the regular classes. If these slow learners, then, are taught in an

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<sup>4</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 34.

atmosphere of friendliness, and if their self-confidence is built up by praise for each success, they will make real progress along the road to good citizenship.

Before the treatment of a suggested curriculum for the junior high school, the problems of segregation and grading of these pupils must be considered. Questions were raised on these topics by many of the teachers who had given valuable assistance in making a program for the slow learners. There has been much said for and against segregation in the junior high school. Many educators have expressed the conviction that children with widely deviating abilities can be taught more effectively, in terms of their total growth and development, in a regular classroom than in a special class. Featherstone states that slow learners can be taught effectively in mixed classes, provided a school is willing and able to make the necessary adjustments to the slow learner's capacities. Yet he emphasizes the fact that

mere segregation without rather far-reaching reconstruction of the curriculum will accomplish little for the slow pupils. It may ease the teacher's work somewhat and possibly improve the situation for the remaining pupils in the school, but it will not in and for itself make the slow pupils' lives any easier. On the other hand, non-segregation will not ease the pupils' burdens either or prevent experiences of inadequacy, feelings of inferiority, and the development of possibly antisocial attitudes, unless the program in the non-segregated group is very flexible and adaptable to a wide range of needs and abilities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 23.

Placing slow learners in a special class does not need to mean that they are being segregated in the sense of social isolation or rejection. It does mean that they are being placed in an environment designed in terms of their peculiar needs and characteristics. G. Orville Johnson claims that

special classes are essential for the provisions of a planned sequence of educational experiences for a group of children whose educational needs are unique from those required by normal children.<sup>6</sup>

The big argument against segregation today in many schools is that it is extremely difficult to organize and manage a school that follows one system of grading for some pupils and another system for others. Any scheme for grading pupils whether they are segregated or not, must, according to Featherstone do three things:

(1) It must maintain reasonably congenial and reasonably permanent working groups of pupils; (2) it must provide for orderly progress through school; (3) it must bring the pupils to the termination of their elementary education at not later than thirteen or fourteen years of age.<sup>7</sup>

With slow learners we know that many of them come into grade seven, the first grade of junior high school, much older than the normal age. For this reason the slow learners who are taught by the curriculum that will be outlined in chapter four, will be graded according to age. Grading the slow learners by any other system

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<sup>6</sup>G. Orville Johnson and William M. Cruickshank, Education of Exceptional Children and Youth p. 199

<sup>7</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1951), P. 29.



defeats its own purpose and precludes the possibility of maintaining congenial working groups of pupils. The more heterogenous a group of pupils are according to age, size, and general development, the more heterogenous they are in actual educational attainments. Featherstone speaking on the grading of slow learners says:

the central idea of grade is uniformity of attainment; uniformity of attainment cannot be achieved in any group - sub-grade or whole grade - and at the same time procure homogeneity of age, size, maturity, and the general "congeniality" that makes for good working relationships. It is largely for such reasons as these that many educators advocate abandoning grade classifications entirely, and recommend basing the organization of classes and the regulation of progress chiefly on age. Age seems to be a better all-round index of development, need, interest, and readiness for group activity than any other factor.

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<sup>8</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 30.

## CHAPTER 1V

### A PROPOSED CURRICULUM FOR SLOW LEARNERS

Broadly speaking, the same goals are used as a basis upon which to establish curricula for the average pupils as for the slow learner. Christine P. Ingram stated that the pupil should be guided

(1) to meet the various personal-social problems arising in school and home, (2) to understand and participate in the duties and responsibilities of family life, (3) to understand and appreciate community responsibilities, (4) to acquire knowledge of local occupational opportunities in various low-skilled and unskilled jobs, (5) to acquire satisfactory habits, skills, and attitudes needed for occupational adjustment, (6) to improve his occupational assets in a series of job try-outs, and (7) to grow in social maturity and to participate in worthy recreation.<sup>1</sup>

These goals are of great value for the slow learning pupils, especially for those who wish to fit themselves into society for: "The demands of the adult world and the concerns of the adolescent must be brought into interactive relationship".<sup>2</sup> Thus the curriculum should provide actual situations that challenge youth to clarify his concepts of adult life and its responsibilities, and to develop social attitudes and good work habits. The curriculum

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<sup>1</sup>Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 323.

<sup>2</sup>IBID. P. 324.

for slow learners, therefore,

should consist primarily of subjects which can be given a practical application to the requirements of his daily living requirements which would include the necessity for self-expression as well as the necessity of making a living.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE CURRICULUM

This curriculum is planned for the education of slow learners (I.Q.75-90) in the Junior High School who will be taught by only one teacher in a special class. The reason for this is that their needs cannot be met adequately in the regular classroom. At this level of mental achievement a curriculum cannot be organized unless it is recognized that the goals of education for these pupils must coincide with their capacities, interests, and limitations. The emphasis in this curriculum is placed on training for participation in the different occupations of our city or province. It is hoped that on this level the education will seek

the development of the individual as a well-integrated personality and a good citizen; aware of his own strengths and weaknesses, able to accept himself as he is and with the will to contribute to his maximum capacity.<sup>4</sup>

In order to do this the children will need more than just special teachers, "they must have a developmental curriculum rather than a

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<sup>3</sup>L.I.Magnifico, Education for the Exceptional Child (New York: Longmans, Green And Co., 1958), P. 138.

<sup>4</sup>Statement of Course of Study for use in classes for Children with Mental Retarded Development, New York, 1952, P. 1.

remedial or make-up curriculum".<sup>5</sup> The curriculum, therefore, must be built around the achieving of occupational competence, for it is here that the slow learner will be able to do his best work.

The philosophy of education for slow learners upon which this proposed curriculum is based, is that each pupil has the right to the education suited to his needs and that through it he will become an adult, self-supporting and self reliant, to the degree his mental capacity will permit. Actually, the philosophy underlying the curriculum for slow learners is basically the same as that accepted for all children. It is the aim of education to teach every child to live wisely and well in whatever environment he may find himself. However, any curriculum that achieves this aim must be so constructed as to serve their special needs. These needs of the slow learner can best be met through a "developmental program" planned in terms of his everyday experiences in the environment in which he lives.<sup>6</sup>

This curriculum will stress occupational education giving particular emphasis to personal, social, and occupational goals, in addition to academic skills. The reason for this is that these children will leave school by the time they are seventeen years old and sometimes before then, and as much training as possible should

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<sup>5</sup>Merle E. Frampton and Elena D. Gall, Special Education for the Exceptional (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1956), P. 478.

<sup>6</sup>Statement of Course of Study for use in classes for children with Mental Retarded Development, New York: 1952, P. 1.

be given to fit them for the occupation they are best capable of undertaking. This occupational education for the slow learner will prepare, or at least attempt to prepare him, for the many possible situations he may encounter in the world of work.

This philosophy coincides in many ways with the philosophy for the mentally handicapped advocated by Chris J. DeProspro:

The philosophy upon which a curriculum for the mentally handicapped must be based is one which will provide an education for the handicapped themselves, leading to social-occupational adjustment. The curriculum must be based on a philosophy of contribution to society. The mentally handicapped can contribute to the world in which they live, and it is the responsibility of education to see that the school, through the curriculum, helps the handicapped to realize this potentiality.

#### GENERAL DESIGN OF THE CURRICULUM FOR SLOW LEARNERS

The Board of Education of the city of New York has organized classes for slow learners around a core curriculum. This idea has lately been used in Canada by the province of Saskatchewan. The core curriculum idea is relatively modern and it means, in many cases, the organization of the educational program into areas of living. According to G. S. Wright:

the term core as used in the secondary schools has had and still does have a variety of meanings. Traditionally it referred to those subjects which were required in the school's program. More recently the core has been used to refer to a special type of course offering of a general education nature. Schools refer to these courses as General Education, Unified Studies, Common Learnings, Basic Living,

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<sup>7</sup>Merle E. Frampton and Elena D. Gall, Special Education for the Exceptional (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1956), P. 478.

Social Living, Integrated Program, or simply as Core classes.<sup>8</sup>

It has been, for a long time, and especially since the last war and the new trends in science, the general feeling among many that all slow learning students are capable of obtaining a grade eleven academic certificate. Reports have shown that a majority of the students who have been aiming in this direction have failed miserably, given up in disgust, and have gone out wholly unprepared to look for jobs. We have to be natural in our thinking as well as scientific, and give those slow learning pupils in junior high school what I would call an occupational education which will guide them into the proper channels and help them to find suitable jobs. To accomplish this a core curriculum could be organized for our Nova Scotia schools.

For the classes in junior high school with pupils having chronological ages ranging from thirteen to seventeen, the curriculum will provide an over-all view of areas of possible employment. While the cores will deal with problems or topics without regard to the ordinary school subjects, yet, the cores will serve to integrate subject matter in different areas, with the Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Health, Music, Art, Social Living and Guidance. In this way the curriculum will avoid the ideas of the departmentalized subject-matter, and will

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<sup>8</sup>G. S. Wright, Core Curriculum in Public Schools Bulletin No. 5, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., Office of Education, 1950, P. 1.

deal with all the aspects of a topic as a unified whole. With effort and ingenuity on the part of the teacher, the subjects mentioned above will in some measure be correlated with the topics of the cores.

The tool subjects - reading, writing, and mathematics, will not entirely be divorced from this suggested curriculum, but original lessons prepared by the teacher on these subjects could be presented and integrated. Physical training and manual training could also be a definite part of the program. By proper use, with the right teachers, the curriculum content will not only be adapted to the interests, needs, and abilities of the slow learner, but also academic values can be realized.

Although it is not the purpose of this curriculum to state the methods to be used in teaching the subject matter of the cores, yet, it should be stated that a part of the school time could be used for presentation of new skills, reading about them, doing written work, drill; and also some time given to concrete activity work. What is meant is this, that after teaching about the different job areas a visit could be made to see what actually goes on in those areas. This could be organized in such a manner as to have the morning sessions in the classroom and the afternoons spent in obtaining first hand experience. A more detailed suggested daily program will be given at this point.

OUTLINE OF CURRICULUM FOR SLOW LEARNERS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

First Year (equivalent Grade VIII ) Age, 13-14.

Core: Study of Job Areas.

Through instructions, class discussions, trips, etc., this core will give the prospective worker an over all view of the possible areas of employment, details of choosing, getting, and holding a job. As far as possible the tool-subjects also Science, Music, Art, Physical and Manual Training will be integrated with the various topics.

1. Job Areas

For Boys

- (a) Sailors
- (b) Porters
- (c) Delivery Boys
- (d) Truck Helpers and Drivers
- (e) Factory Workers
- (f) Packers
- (g) Garage Workers
- (h) Janitors
- (i) Elevators Operators
- (j) Bus Drivers

For Girls

- (a) Household Workers
- (b) Practical Nurses
- (c) Laundry Workers
- (d) Elevator Operators
- (e) Beauticians
- (f) Restaurant Workers
- (g) Charwomen
- (h) Factory Workers
- (i) Store Clerks
- (j) Wives



11. Self-Evaluation for Occupational Placement

(A) Related individual needs for employability

1. Emotional stability
2. Physical development and health
3. Mental ability
4. Social maturity and adjustment

(B) Analysis of Job Requirements in Comparison to Child's Potential

1. Analysis of typical jobs
  - (a) Nature of work
  - (b) Who must work and why
  - (c) Duration of job
  - (d) Hours and wages
  - (e) Opportunities for advancement
  - (f) Expenses while working
2. Self-analysis
  - (a) School record
  - (b) Interests
  - (c) Experience
  - (d) Neighbourhood reputation

111. Necessary Learning for Getting a Job

1. Wage items

- (a) Hours worked each day
  - (b) Total hours worked per week
  - (c) Overtime
  - (d) Income tax deductions
2. Telephone usage
- (a) Using a directory
  - (b) Telephone manners
3. Getting to the Job
- (a) Geography of city
  - (b) Street plans and guides
  - (c) Transit maps and routes
4. Letters of application
5. The Interview
- (a) Necessary information to have before coming
  - (b) Appearance and cleanliness
  - (c) Manners during the interview
6. Completing the application form
7. Complying with Union Regulations

#### IV. Ways of Getting a Job

- 1. "Push" and "Pull" needed
- 2. A job you like

3. Unemployment commission
4. Own initiative
  - (a) Newspapers
  - (b) Friends
5. Employment Agencies
6. Through the School
7. Rehabilitation Services

V. Ways of holding a job

1. Necessary qualities
  - (a) Appearance
  - (b) Speech
  - (c) Poise and manners
  - (d) Cooperation
  - (e) Being honest and trustworthy
  - (f) Ability to take criticism
  - (g) Regularity of attendance
  - (h) Work habits
  - (i) Willingness to get ahead
  - (j) Being thrifty

VI. Employment Regulations

- (a) Insurances (unemployment etc.)
- (b) Blue Cross and Maritime Medical Care
- (c) Compensation

Second Year (equivalent Grade VIII) Age, 14-15.

Core: Spending One's Income.

In this core the student will be able to concentrate upon one or two occupations which are of greatest interest to him and for which he seems best qualified. Practice in budgeting will help the boys who have part time jobs after school hours. As in the first year core, provision will be made for continual integration with other subjects.

1. Budgeting

(1) Definition

(2) Reason and need

(3) Advantages

(4) Ways of budgeting

(a) Basic items - Food, Shelter, Clothing, Health,  
Household, Recreation, Gifts and Charities,  
Obligations

(b) Recreation versus dissipation

(c) Luxuries versus necessities

(d) Apportionments for a family of four on a forty-dollar  
a week income

(5) Ways of buying

(a) Cash - Advantages - Bank accounts

(b) Installment buying - Meaning - Method

(c) Loans

II. Budgeting for Food

1. Percent to be spent for food
2. Eating within your income
3. Low-cost yet nutritive menus
4. Evaluation of food advertisements

III. Budgeting for clothing

1. Percentage to be spent
2. Planned wardrobes
3. Saving through proper care of clothing

IV. Household Budgeting

1. Percentage to be spent for rent
2. Items to be considered in renting
3. Household expenses other than rent

V. Budgeting for Health

1. Necessity of budgeting for health needs
2. Percentage to be spent
3. Health and safety habits as an aid to income
4. Insurance - Health, Life, Old age

VI. Budgeting for Recreation

1. Items included in recreation
2. Family recreation plans
3. Public and private recreational facilities

- (a) Kiwanis club
  - (b) Waegoltic
  - (c) Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.
  - (d) Church clubs
4. Home recreation
- (a) Television
  - (b) Radio
  - (c) Home games and entertainment
5. Planning for a holiday, a week-end away, the summer
6. Budgeting for Taxes
- (a) City taxes - Property, Household or Poll
  - (b) Income taxes
7. Budgeting for Other Needs
- (a) Transportation
  - (b) Gifts
  - (c) Membership in fraternal organizations
  - (d) Charity and religious subscriptions
8. Making a Personal Budget
- (a) A budget for today
  - (b) A budget for beginning wages

Third Year (equivalent Grade IX) Age, 16-17.

Core: The Worker as Citizen and Social Being.

This core will be keyed to those pupils who generally leave school by sixteen or seventeen years of age. It will endeavor to tie together the topics learned in the previous cores and apply them to everyday living. Emphasis will be placed on "the adjustment of the adolescent to family life, to his neighbours, to his employers, to his duties on the job, as a citizen, and to his own dignity and worth as an individual."<sup>9</sup>

1. Getting Along with the Family

A. Values of family life

(a) Contribution of the family

(1) Sense of belonging

(2) Advice

(b) Bases for receiving such contributions

(1) Respect for family

(2) Respect for self

B. Participation in family life

(a) Financial contributions

(1) Planned

(2) Emergency

(b) Sharing of household tasks

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<sup>9</sup>Statement of Course of Study for use in classes for Children with Mental Retarded Development, New York, 1952, P. 7.

- (e) Care in the use of furnishings and equipment
- (d) Maintenance of good personal health, good appearance,  
and good manners

## II. Getting Along in the Neighbourhood

- A. The people with whom we associate in the neighbourhood
  - (a) The groups
    - (1) Clubs or societies in the neighbourhood
    - (2) Workers or helpers ( storekeepers, firemen,  
policemen)
  - (b) Planning for mutual benefits
- B. Kind of facilities through which to gain enrichment
  - (a) Private - movies, clubs, bowling
  - (b) Public - schools, churches, libraries, community  
centres
- C. Activities through which to gain enrichment
  - (a) In the home
    - 1. Radio and television
    - 2. Games
    - 3. Parties
    - 4. Hobbies
  - (b) Outside the home
    - 1. Picnics
    - 2. Outdoor games
    - 3. Hiking



### III. Getting Along on the Job

#### A. Getting a Job

- (a) Analyzing the job
- (b) Self analysis
- (c) Preparing and applying for the job

#### B. Holding a Job

- (a) Relationships with employer
  1. Seeing the employer's point of view
  2. Thrift on the job - care of materials and tools
  3. Reliability on the job
- (b) Relationships with employees
- (c) Relationships with organizations
  1. Knowledge of unions - membership benefits, responsibilities, application initiation fee, dues
  2. Abiding by union regulations - hours, scale of wage, obedience to union directions

### IV. Getting Along in the City

#### A. Needs and benefits of government

- (a) Protection
  1. Police
  2. Health
  3. Fire
- (b) Facilities
  1. Educational

2. Recreation
  3. Welfare
  - (c) Aid to workers
    1. Unemployment insurance
    2. Accident compensation
    3. Health and safety laws
    4. Minimum wage and maximum hour laws
- B. The Three Types of Government
- (a) Municipal Government
    1. The council (city or town)
    2. The mayor in city or towns
    3. Warden in rural areas
    4. Aldermen in city, councillors in town
    5. Important commissions and committees
  - (b) Provincial Government
    1. Executive Branch
      - (a) The Lieutenant Governor
      - (b) The Premier
      - (c) The Cabinet
    2. Legislative Branch
      - (a) Legislative Assembly
      - (b) The Party in power
      - (c) The Opposition
    3. Judicial Branch
      - (a) Criminal and Civil Laws

- (b) Provincial supreme courts
- (c) Federal government
- 1. Executive Branch
  - (a) The Governor General
  - (b) The Prime Minister
  - (c) The Cabinet
- 2. Legislative Branch
  - (a) The Senate
  - (b) The House of Commons
- 3. Judicial Branch
  - (a) The Supreme Court of Canada
  - (b) The Exchequer Court

C. Duties of Citizens

- (a) Paying taxes
  - (1) Income taxes
  - (2) Sales taxes
  - (3) Property taxes
  - (4) Hospital taxes
  - (5) Methods of paying taxes
- (b) Duty to vote
  - (1) Reasons for voting
  - (2) Qualifications of voters
  - (3) Method of voting
  - (4) Method of choosing a candidate
- (c) Obedience to laws

D. Our Civil Liberties

- (a) Freedom of the press and speech
- (b) Freedom to worship
- (c) Right to vote and freedom to vote
- (d) Freedom from false imprisonment

V. The Greater areas of living

A. The national community

- (a) Our early government and settlement
- (b) National heroes
- (c) The Indian
- (d) Holidays of the nation
  - (1) Meaning of proper observance
  - (2) Dominion day
  - (3) Labor day
  - (4) Natal day

B. The international community

- (a) The family of nations
  - (1) Customs and different cultures
  - (2) Contributions of different cultures
- (b) Problems of the world family
  - (1) International misunderstanding
  - (2) Refugee problem
- (c) Means of cooperation
  - (1) CARE

(2) United Nations

(3) UNESCO

C. The religious community

(a) 1. Catholic

2. Protestant

3. Jewish

(b) The holidays of each faith

(a) Christmas

(b) Easter

(c) Passover

VI. Essentials for Getting Along with One's Self

A. Reality

(a) Awareness of limitations

1. Academic

2. Social

3. Emotional

4. Physical

(b) Awareness of abilities

(c) Changes in conditions of living

1. Economic - e.g. business reverses

2. Social - e.g. death, marriage

B. Responsibility

(a) Towards self

(b) Towards family

- (c) Towards job
- (d) Towards the community
- (e) Importance of contribution and progress even under difficulties

To many this curriculum will appear to stress too much of the occupational and social education of the slow learner and not enough of the academic. Actually emphasis is placed on all three of these areas of learning. Elsie H. Martens has said, and most other educators have agreed, that teaching slow learners

to live in a social environment is far more important than to attempt to teach them to read. Insofar as it is possible, they should be given an appreciation of social and civic values, and every opportunity should be given them to participate in social and civic activities, both in the school and in the community itself.<sup>10</sup>

This does not mean that the academic subjects have no place in the curriculum. No curriculum or program of studies can exist without them. Kirk and Johnson remarked:

even reading, writing and arithmetic are parts of occupational education, since a child will require a minimum of the academic skills in order to read signs, simple directions, and possibly to communicate by means of writing even at a simple level.<sup>11</sup>

The slow learner is capable of acquiring a certain amount of the academic subjects

if the curriculum is a realistic one geared to the retardate's

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<sup>10</sup> Elsie H. Martens, Curriculum for the Mentally Retarded (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), P. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), P. 119.

life experience. Most of the mentally handicapped can acquire a basic education in the tool subjects, if the practical application of each course of instruction is stressed, so that from the very commencement of his studies he can readily grasp the use to which these otherwise apparently meaningless forms and symbols are destined to be put. <sup>12</sup>

#### CONCRETE ACTIVITIES FOR SLOW LEARNERS

Besides learning skills and facts, the slow learner must be able to engage in concrete, meaningful activities. They must be activities that are real and a part of the pupil's environment. W.B.

Featherstone says:

Activity for the slow learner must be chosen with an eye to their ultimate, cumulative, and general values, as well as to their immediate values. This is true for all children, bright and slow, but with the slow learner one is forced to be much more certain that an activity makes sense, seems reasonable, and has some <sup>13</sup> value here and now, than is the case with brighter children.

Many educators have made suggested activity units to illustrate ways and means of making the pupils' experience more concrete and first hand. By such units the slow learner has an opportunity to learn social studies, arithmetic, reading, writing, spelling, art, etc.

Among some of the best examples of suggested units, Mr. Featherstone gives an activity unit on transportation which is outlined below.

This can be of real value in helping teachers with similar units on subjects as local government, nature study, and health.

Principal Subject Matter: Transportation

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<sup>12</sup>L.X. Magnifico, Education for the Exceptional Child (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958), P. 145.

<sup>13</sup>W. B. Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner (New York: Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1951), P. 44.

**Focal Point:** The trucks, busses, trains, aeroplanes, and boats which carry things and people to and from our city.

**Getting Started:** A preliminary trip to a railroad passenger station and to a freight depot might well serve as a device to arouse the interest of the class. The trains at the passenger station will be of interest to most of the group, and travel folders and timetables can be secured for later investigation. At the freight depot, the boxes and crates stored there, their loading and unloading, and their sources and destinations will probably be a source of interest.

**Topics:** Some questions and problems which may be used to organize and focus activity are:

What are the different kinds of transportation to and from your city?

What is the part played by each? why the different kinds?

Is there competition between them?

How is power supplied for the different kinds of transportation?

What were the forerunners of present modes of transportation?

How is transportation accomplished in other lands?

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Trips to railroad passenger and freight depots, trucks, forwarding centers, bus depots, airports, etc.

**Inspection:** of trains, day coaches, pullmans, express and mail cars, locomotives; of busses; of freight cars of different types; of trucks of different types; of airplanes of different types.



Telling about trips they have taken.

Examining and learning to use maps of routes, road maps, travel pamphlets, timetables, tickets, etc.

Planning the itinerary of a vacation tour of national parks.

Writing for travel literature.

Making maps and routes and of sources and destinations of things and people transported.

Computing mileages, time and rates.

Construction of models of trains, trucks, airplanes, etc. by individuals.

Singing songs about travel.

Listing some of the products brought to or taken from the city.

Making a map showing the sources and routes traveled by the furniture and equipment in the classroom .

Reading and writing about modes of transportation in other countries and regions. Reading and writing about early modes of transportation and early trains.

Looking at travel films produced by railroads.

Discussing safety in travel.

Dramatizing a train trip.

Drawing pictures of different modes of transportation - past and present, here and elsewhere.

Comparing Columbus' ships with Atlantic Clippers; pioneer covered wagons with transcontinental planes and high speed trains.

Reading about and reporting on Watt, Stephenson, the Wright brothers, Ford, and other "great" names in transportation.

#### A DAILY PROGRAM

The daily program or time-table for the slow learner has to be well thought out and carefully planned. This should be so arranged that activities are wisely distributed and each given a proper amount of time. No plan should be so rigid that it cannot be changed whenever the need arises. However, it is wise to keep in mind that the slow learner will need, more so than the average learner, a certain amount of regularity. Christine P. Ingram claims:

there are certain activities that must come at regular stated times on the program. It is also well to have stated times for discussing and planning work; for the development of language arts, number ability and manual activities. It is advisable to keep the periods for the development of the tool subjects as regular as possible. <sup>15</sup>

Every good program should have periods when the pupils and teacher can get together and talk over plans for their work. The slow learner will become more interested in school activities if they can help, in some respect, with the planning of their daily work. Ingram also agrees when she says:

the ideal program should always allow time for the children to discuss with the teacher the work they must do, when and how they will do it, and the progress they are making toward their goals. <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow Learning Child (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1953), P. 215.

<sup>16</sup>IBID.

Kirk and Johnson give the following daily schedule as an example of program that could be used for a special class of slow learning pupils. In this program there are six class periods throughout the day:

"(1) The first period of the day is devoted to physical and mental health and societal relations. This includes planning for the day, reading of newspapers, reporting of current events, and discussing daily routines in relation to health and social programs. For example, if foods and food handling is the experience area under consideration, there is a discussion on balanced diet, 'quack' advertisements concerning digestion, and so forth. One boy, because of his interest and ability, takes an agricultural course at this hour.

"(2) During the second period the boys go from the special room to a regular woodworking class. On Monday and Wednesday the girls stay in the special class for a program of homebuilding which includes the teaching of sewing, cooking, and correlated activities such as reading and discussing recipes. The girls take physical education during this period on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. During this free period the special teacher makes contacts with employers for work experience openings, does program planning, and discusses pertinent problems with regular teachers.

There is a short home-room meeting between the second and third periods. This home-room period includes planning of student activities, club meetings, a weekly all-school assembly, and group guidance.

"(3) During the third period all students are in the special class on Monday and Wednesday. This time is given to remedial reading and free reading related to the area under consideration. On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, the boys attend regular physical education classes while the girls remain in the special class for homebuilding. This scheduling of homebuilding at different times on different days is just one example of how flexible the program must be.

"(4) The fourth period is devoted to occupational education and guidance in the tool subjects, especially in arithmetic. The time is frequently utilized in preparing for or making a visit to an industry. The preparation and the discussion after the trip may include filling out forms, application blanks, Social Security cards, and working related mathematical problems.

"(5) During the fifth period the girls attend a regular home economics class. The special teacher works with the regular teacher to be sure that the work and projects are not beyond the girls' abilities. The boys remain with the special teacher for

work in home mechanics. This includes such activities as work with tools, bench experiments in wiring, and safety education.

"(6) The sixth period is devoted to language development and socialization. The students write stories relating to their daily experiences in school. They debate issues, have discussion groups, go to the youth center, participate in sociodrama, and engage in free play." <sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Samuel A. Kirk and G. Orville Johnson, Educating the Retarded Child (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), P. 217.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

No curriculum, however perfect, works by itself, and its effectiveness in practice depends on the quality of the teachers who carry it out. M. F. Cleugh says:

to provide an education suited to the age, aptitude and ability of every child is a stirring idea, but it can be translated into reality only by the teachers. Backward children, even more than others, depend on their teachers for help and guidance, and form a challenge to their skill and ingenuity, for while an average or bright child can make progress even if the quality of the teaching he receives is not very good, a dull child is more likely to be bogged down in his own incomprehension unless his teacher can rescue him.<sup>1</sup>

It will be of little value to slow learners to be segregated from the average learners unless, as Frampton and Gall state: "there are available highly trained special teachers who can understand his needs to head those classes."<sup>2</sup> H. J. Baker has agreed that, the ordinary teacher, no matter how well trained, is not prepared to cope with the problems of special education, when he says:

the teachers of the exceptional must not only have the training and background for teaching average or normal children, but must also be equipped and trained to meet the unique problems of teaching in their specialized fields as well. They have a double burden in this respect and in addition must understand

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<sup>1</sup>M. F. Cleugh, The Slow Learner (London: Methuen and Company 1957), P. 160.

<sup>2</sup>Merle E. Frampton and Elena D. Gall, Special Education for the Exceptional (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1956), P. 170.

the nature of handicaps together with meeting the needs of every pupil upon an individual basis.<sup>3</sup>

There is a tendency among some teachers to look "down their noses" on those who teach slow learning pupils and treat them as "stepchildren". This attitude will surely not help the beginning teachers or for that matter, the more experienced one to undertake the task of teaching slow learners. In this respect M. F. Cleugh has offered two very good solutions; first, by "stressing the social importance of the task". For he says, "if it is thought of in this context as a form of social service, as salvaging a child who needs special help to overcome his handicaps both inherent and environmental, it is as meritorious as, and much more difficult than, helping a normal child to develop his powers". Secondly, "by increasing the prestige of those who teach backward children. This may be brought about by stressing the fact that posts in special education are given to teachers of high professional standing".<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Merle B. Karnes tells us that:

all children - including slow learners - need able teachers. It is particularly important that slow learners have a teacher who wants to teach them and who neither pressures them to work above their expectancy nor neglects them when they are not achieving optimally. A teacher who is impatient, rigid, lacks a sense of humor, and is poorly adjusted himself will not be

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<sup>3</sup>Harry J. Baker, Introduction to Exceptional Children (Rev. Ed.) New York: MacMillan Company, 1953, P. 18.

<sup>4</sup>M. F. Cleugh, The Slow Learner (London: Methuen and Company, 1957, P. 172.

a successful teacher of slow learning children.<sup>5</sup>

J.E.W. Wallin has a longer list of personality traits which he feels to be "particularly desirable for teachers of the slow learners":

Genuine interest in and sympathy for children

Patience and perseverance

Optimism, companionableness

Self-control

Emotional maturity

Adaptability, resourcefulness

Imaginative insight

Scholarship

Understanding of interpersonal relationships

Loyalty - to lofty personal ideals, to the highest ideals of the profession, and to co-workers, pupils and superior officers.<sup>6</sup>

Other writers such as the Pollocks and A. O. Heck, have given their views on the kind of teacher needed to instruct slow learning pupils.

The teacher of the mentally retarded must have much more patience and understanding than the regular teacher. She must have a precise knowledge not only of abnormal psychology, but also of the normal achievements of children of all ages and grades, in order to recognize how much the retarded youngster deviates from the normal.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Merle B. Karnes, The Slow Learner-Administrative Plans that Help N.E.A. Journal, Volume 48, Number 7, October 1959, P.22.

<sup>6</sup>J.E.W. Wallin, The Education of Mentally Handicapped Children (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), P. 224.

<sup>7</sup>Morris P. and Miriam Pollock, New Hope for the Retarded (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1953), P. 3.

Heck also stated that the teacher of the mentally retarded must have "an unusual amount of patience, because the children she must teach learn slowly; explanations must be repeated over and over again".<sup>8</sup>

M. F. Cleugh gives an account of the content and aims of the course given by London University in England, which was begun in 1950:

"The teachers who come to the course are persons of some standing and seniority. They are not accepted with less than five years' experience and in fact most of them have had more than this minimum, preferably with normal as well as subnormal children and with different age-groups. Nearly all are seconded by their Authority on full salary: this means that mature men and women with family responsibilities are enabled to come. The average age of the teachers is in the later thirties, but ranges up to fifty, and very few come younger than thirty. On the whole, the older ones are the most successful, for a younger teacher, however bright, cannot compete with a good older person in depth and variety of experience

"In planning the content of the course, an effort was made to combine theoretical study at University level with the schools, so that a teacher's reading is never divorced from a practical context. During the first two terms, theory and practice go forward together, and the third term consisting of eight weeks of continuous teaching, followed by a concluding period back at the Institute. For convenience, the various topics that are taught are described in the following order - practical work (visits: sessional work in schools: surveys: continuous teaching practice) and theoretical studies, as long as it is realized, that these are not carried on separately but side by side".<sup>9</sup>

Regardless of what curriculum is advocated for slow learners and what training is given to teachers of this type of pupil, we must agree with Mr. Cleugh that "special educational treatment depends not on policy and organization, but on the human qualities of the teachers".<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Arch. O. Heck, The Education of Exceptional Children (New York: McGraw - Hill Book Company, 1953), P. 359.

<sup>9</sup>M. F. Cleugh, The Slow Learner (London: Methuen and Company, 1957), P. 177-178.

<sup>10</sup>IBID. P. 182.



In the last analysis, the teacher of the slow learners should  
be one

who has taken up her profession because she wants to help others, not because she wants to help herself. She should be a mature, responsible individual, with a satisfactory personal life outside of school and no need to seek personal compensations through teaching. If we want happy, well-adjusted children, competent to the limit of their abilities, we must give them happy, well-adjusted teachers, competent to the limit of theirs. <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>L. X. Magnifico, Education for the Exceptional Child Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1958, P. 112.

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