MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE ABOVE-AVERAGE PUPIL IN THE SMALL SCHOOLS IN NEBRASKA

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Education degree
in the Department of Education
Montana State College
August, 1957

THESES
P378
D48

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today in America, with the great demands of industry and science in our atomic age, and with the need for man to keep abreast with the physical sciences in our social sciences and cultural fields, the acceptance of responsibility by every educator is needed for bringing out and developing the capabilities in those persons who will be responsible for the success or failure of our civilization in the future. There was no question in the mind of the writer but that one must look for and try to develop ways of challenging the mentally above-average individuals. Much of the progress in the future of our country depends upon this group

Although the above-average children have greater potentialities than the average, they have not developed these without the guidance and assistance of persons trained to help them. It has been evident that those of greatest ability demanded even more urgently this assistance. This was clearly brought out by Worcester in his statement:

> Gifted children have to learn. Their potentialities may be largely inherent, but the degree and manner in which they develop are in terms of their opportunities. A gifted child is no better fitted than any other to select wisely his social or educational objectives unless he has a chance to discover what objectives are possible. ....The greater the degree of ability, the more important it is that it be skillfully and fully trained. There is no evidence that "genius will out" in spite of environmental deprivation.[1]

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[1] Worcester, D. A., The Education of Children of Above-Average Mentality, pp. 64-65.

It has been recognized that, regardless of the mentality of an individual, it is necessary to create a favorable environment to develop the individual to the level at which he can make use of his potentialities to the fullest extent. In the large school it has been possible to meet the needs of gifted children by placing them in special classes, using specially trained teachers, and by having a wealth of reading and reference material. These provisions usually have not been possible in the small school as has been pointed out by Sumption, Norris, and Terman:

> In small school districts, . . . full time special classes are ruled out by the circumstances. Regular teachers are seldom versed in the best methods and techniques of dealing with superior children. Proper materials are seldom at hand.[2]

The challenge of educating the above-average individual in the small schools--which, because of limitations of finance and enrollment, can not provide for special classes, trained specialists, and expensive materials--has led to the selection of the problem presented in the next section.

The Problem

The writer has held the belief for a long time that the pupils of above-average mental ability in most of the small schools throughout the country have not been challenged enough to cause them to develop to

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[2]Sumption, M. R.; Norris, Dorothy; and Terman, L. M., "Special Education for the Gifted Child," The Education of Exceptional Children, p. 265.

their fullest capacity. The feeling of this need has led to this investigation of "Meeting the Needs of the Above-Average Pupil in the Small Schools in Nebraska."

The Procedures

In order to determine ways of meeting the needs of the above-average pupil in the small schools in Nebraska the investigation has made use of the following procedures:

1. A survey was made of related literature of the five-year period, 1951-1956, to determine the present needs in relation to the mentally above-average individuals.

2. Information was obtained from the Nebraska State Department of Education on pre-school age admission standards, and a personal visitation survey was made of the status of above-average pupils in the schools of Franklin and Harlan counties, Nebraska, who had been admitted through the pre-school age testing program during the period 1950-1956. This information was examined and a survey was conducted to determine the value of pre-school age admissions as a means of serving the above-average pupils.

3. Information was obtained from the University of Nebraska and from individual schools in Harlan and Franklin counties concerning the extent of the use of correspondence courses by Nebraska schools. This information was analyzed in order to determine the value of correspondence courses in serving the superior students.

Limitations of the Study

Because of certain limitations this investigation was restricted to the following:

1. Individuals with an intelligence quotient of 110 or above to determine how to better serve these pupils in the small schools.

2. Above-average pupils in kindergarten through grade twelve.

3. Schools in Franklin and Harlan counties, Nebraska. These schools to serve as a basis for determining values of pre-school age admissions.

Definitions of Terms

The meanings given to many words and terms have been at times so varied that the following set of definitions are given to the reader in order to give better understanding of certain meanings in this investigation.

1. "Above-average mentally" are those pupils having an intelligence quotient of 110 or above.

2. "Ability grouping" has been used to mean the segregation of children of a given grade or age group according to ability.

3. "Acceleration" means allowing the student to do the work of two or more grades in one year.

4. "Enrichment program" is defined as a program in which the quantity and the quality of the curriculum are increased.

5. "Gifted children" are those in the upper limits of the above-average group.

6. "Pre-school age admission" is the entering of school prior to the regular chronological age set for school entrance.

7. "Skipping" means to omit or by-pass a grade.

8. "Small schools" is used to denote schools that have an enrollment of under five hundred pupils in grades kindergarten through twelve.

As a first step in this investigation a survey was made of contemporary related literature on the above-average child to find out the extent to which his needs have been met and the plans that are being used to meet these needs. The results of this survey are presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the survey of related literature, it was found that much of the material dealt with the gifted child. However, there were many variations of opinions as to the definition of the word "gifted." Some writers considered as gifted those people who fell in the top two percent of our population. Others thought the top five percent had to be considered gifted. Many writers accepted the top twenty percent in this class. This investigation has been concerned with the upper twenty percent of our school children, in general, those who have an intelligence quotient of 110 or above and who need special attention to help them develop their talents.

The Extent of Meeting the Needs of the Above-Average Pupil

There seemed to be a general criticism from laymen and from educators that our modern day school systems have not been serving the best interests of the mentally above-average individuals. Youngert has stressed this school failure in his statement:

> Now the bandwagon cry is for well adapted classes for the gifted in high schools, and school and college people are climbing aboard as though each person, individually, holds copyright on a new idea that he has thought up all by himself. It is the fetish of the day.[1]

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[1] Youngert, Eugene, "Giving the Bright Student a Break," The Atlantic 197:39, June, 1956.

The problem of meeting the needs of the above-average pupil is nothing new. Although some attempts have been made to provide appropriate education for these pupils, the provisions have been unsystematic and inadequate. Witty has expressed the opinion that provisions for the education of the gifted child has at all times been insufficient:

> Throughout history attempts have been made to provide appropriate education for the gifted child, for, as one writer has indicated, the need for special education of the gifted is as old as mankind. At all times, including the present, however, such provision has been unsystematic and inadequate.[2]

Youngert's ideas are in agreement with those of Witty that our modern day schools have been inadequate in meeting the needs of the top 20 percent of our pupils. The present schools, he feels, have been geared to the lower intellectual levels, and the children in the early century schools were more fully challenged. He has expressed this opinion in the statement:

> It has been estimated that successful completion of the typical curriculum in the American high school of the early years of this century called for an IQ of about 110. What the 110 IQ high school would do to a true cross-section of American youth today is easily imagined. It would slay them.[3]

There are others who have shared the opinion that the schools of the present decade have not been doing the job of meeting the needs of the superior individuals. There has been growing concern about the need for adequate education for the bright students and this feeling has been

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[2]Witty, Paul, The Gifted Child, p. 1.

[3]Youngert, op. cit., p. 40.

shared by more people in the past several years than ever before. This concern probably has been caused by the realization of new social needs and of the inadequacy of our present educational program in serving the above-average group. Faust has expressed these ideas rather clearly:

> Concern for making adequate provisions to enable superior children to develop their capacities is not wholly new. It has, however, been sharply increased over the past several years. This spreading and deepening concern about adequate education of superior students has, I believe, been stimulated by two considerations--by an awareness of new social needs and recognition of certain failures, or at least serious weakness in our present program of education.[4]

McCandless[5] has expressed a point of view concerning the weakness of our present educational program in serving the above-average pupils in even stronger language in giving the impression that the above-average pupil has not only been neglected, but has been harmed by present-day education. This neglect of the superior pupil has been partially the result of his not being the problem child of the classroom. The present public education does better for the lower 80 percent than for the upper 20 percent of the pupils according to McCandless:

> Today's education tends to make motivational "bums" out of bright children. Up until time for college, the gifted child learns little about working to his limit. The needs of the intellectually gifted tend to be neglected because these children are not the "squeaking wheels" of the classroom. As a group they tend not to become problems and they get along all right academically. American public education probably does an excellent

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[4]Faust, Clarence, "The Accomodation of Superior Students," The Educational Digest 22:8, January, 1957.

[5]McCandless, R. R., "Our Bright Students," The Education Digest 22:5, April, 1957.

job with the lower four-fifths of the intelligence distribution, all things considered, and a wretched job with the top group.[6]

A large percent of the above-average youth have not entered college and many of these above-average pupils have not even finished high school. The idea that our schools have not been meeting the needs of the above-average pupil as well as they should has been clearly substantiated by statistical reports of the National Man Power Council:

> The National Man Power Council estimated in 1951 that one fourth of our 18 year old youth had IQ's of 110 or above. Sixty percent of this group did not enter college, and 20 percent did not complete high school.[7]

> In 1953 the National Man Power Council composed of 20 nationally eminent persons reported after extensive investigation that 40 percent of the young men and women in the United States who are potentially good college material either do not enter college or, if they enter, do not continue to graduation.[8]

With it clearly indicated that the above-average person has not had his needs met to the fullest extent in our public school systems, there must be some logical reasons why they have not been met. The main reasons seem to have been the failure to establish the identity of the gifted and the lack of the right type of counseling service. Both reasons have been suggested by Terman and Oden in their statement:

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[6] Ibid., p. 5.

[7] Witty, P. A., and Bloom, S. W., "The Education of the Superior High School Student," The Education Digest 20:17, April, 1955.

[8] Terman, L. M., "Major Issues in the Education of the Gifted Children," The Education Digest 20:31, December, 1954.

> There are doubtless many causes, but we believe that two of the most important are (1) frequent failure to identify the gifted, and (2) when they are identified, failure to provide the kind of counseling service that is so badly needed.[9]

As has been stated, one responsibility which the school has not been meeting has been the identification of pupils with special ability. The assuming of this responsibility implies the use of a variety of instruments and procedures that would reveal individual differences. Passow has indicated that, with the use of such instruments and procedures, it is possible to maintain a continuous and comprehensive program for the identification of superior students. The school is clearly charged with the responsibility of seeking out these capable youth as brought out in his statement:

> It is the task of the school to seek out children and youth whose abilities require special educational opportunities and guidance. A school can identify children with unusual potential through a continuous and comprehensive program using a variety of instruments and procedures. In a sense, this means systematically finding out about these individual differences which, if properly nurtured, may make possible unusual adult attainment.[10]

Various methods have been proposed to isolate and to recognize the potential of the above-average individual. As early as 1916 Terman[11] suggested the following classifications for the levels of intelligence of individuals on the basis of intelligence testing alone:

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[9] Ibid., p. 31.

[10] Passow, Harry, "For Talented Students," The Education Digest 22:24, October, 1956.

[11] Hollingworth, L. S., Gifted Children, p. 42.

140 IQ or above	----------	genius
120 IQ - 140 IQ	----------	very superior
110 IQ - 120 IQ	----------	superior
90 IQ - 110 IQ	----------	average
80 IQ - 90 IQ	----------	dull normal
70 IQ - 80 IQ	----------	dull
Below 70 IQ	----------	feebleminded

Measurement of the pupil's abilities should not be on native intelligence alone. Superior achievement usually has been a combination of high IQ, intellectual energy, background, and interest. Faust has pointed out this fact in the statement:

> We ought, I believe, to be very hesitant in attempts to locate and isolate superior students. Above all, we should be fearful of identifying special talents and pushing young people into preparation for special tasks, lest we find ourselves in a kind of engineering dangerous because of possibilities of human error. .... I am convinced that superior achievement is not purely and simply a consequence of high IQ, but rather a combination of intellectual capacity, intellectual energy, a desire to do superior work, and perhaps in this connection a certain intellectual background.[12]

Many ways have been proposed for the identification of the above-average pupil. Some of these ways are intelligence tests, results of standardized tests, and observation of social and emotional development. Witty has given an interesting list of ways to identify the above-average pupil:

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[12]Faust, op. cit., p. 8.

> Methods of identifying the intellectually gifted pupils were reported in the following order: ratings on intelligence tests, results of standardized achievement tests, teachers' estimates of students' ability, observation of emotional stability and social maturity, marks on report cards, and age-grade status.[13]

The IQ alone has not been used very often as the only means of evaluation of the superior student. Witty has brought this out in the statement; "Seldom is an IQ used as the sole criterion for selecting the gifted. The most favored means is a combined rating based on mental and educational tests, and teachers' judgment."[14]

Some schools that have measured the mental abilities of their youth have made attempts of putting a plan to work to serve the mentally above-average group. Few schools, though, have had a definite program for serving these superior students. Among the schools that have such a program, several different types of plans have been found. Some of these plans will be discussed in the following section.

Plans for Serving the Needs of the Above-Average Pupil

A few schools throughout the United States have recognized the need to serve the above-average pupil and have set up special plans to meet these needs. In large schools, one of the most common means has been the use of special classes. Other plans have been skipping, accelerating, enriching, and the use of extracurricular activities. All have been proposed by Witty:

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[13] Witty, Paul, The Gifted Child, p. 201

[14] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

> Recently published accounts stress the following practices in caring for the gifted pupil in the elementary school: (a) acceleration or grade-skipping, (b) enrichment, (c) individualized instruction, (d) special classes, and (e) the use of extracurricular activities.[15]

There have been, however, too few schools that have put into operation a definite plan. The United States Office of Education has given this as a fact in its report on the number of students enrolled in special classes.

> The U. S. Office of Education reports that in 1948 only 4080 elementary school pupils and 16,632 secondary school students were enrolled in special classes. Moreover, surveys show that few schools are enriching the curriculum for the gifted pupil in the regular classes.[16]

Another example of how little has been done to educate the superior pupil was brought out in a report at a conference on superior children at Kent State University in Ohio.[17] A questionnaire was sent to 288 cities, counties, and villages in Ohio to find out what was being done to aid the above-average pupil. A statistical picture of the results of the 258 questionnaires returned is presented in Table 1.

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[15] Ibid., pp. 186-187.

[16] Ibid., p. 206.

[17] Witty, Paul, The Gifted Child, pp. 194-195. (citing an unpublished report by E. R. Oswart, at a Conference on Superior Children held at Kent State University, April 29, 1950.)

TABLE 1. Extent of Plans for Meeting the Needs of the Above-Average Pupils in 258 Ohio Schools in 1950.

Plans for Meeting Needs	Percent of Schools Using Plans
Special Classes	2
Enrichment Programs	9
Interested, but Limited by Inadequate Facilities	71
No Provision	18
Total	100

This survey very defintely has indicated that of the 258 schools contacted, only 11 percent were doing anything in an organized way for the above-average, and that most of the special classes and enrichment programs were in Cleveland and the other large cities of Ohio.

Plans to meet the needs of the superior pupils have been best developed in the largest cities in the United States. The states that have been doing considerable in their large cities are, California, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, New York, and Washington. Some of the leading cities are Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York. These great cosmopolitan centers have the population and the facilities to justify a special type of program that could not be put into effect in the small towns of rural America. Since the United States is a nation of small schools, the problem of strengthening the courses for the superior students in these small schools is of great importance. Youngert has emphasized this in his statement:

> As we talk of strengthened courses in high schools, we must remember the difficulty of this problem for small schools. Most high schools in our country are small; indeed, the median high school in the U. S. probably has not fifty seniors.[18]

These reports from literature have shown a number of important facts concerning the above-average pupil and his educational opportunities. First, the American school system has not been challenging the top 20 percent of the American youth to their fullest capacity. Second, the above-average pupils have been best served in the largest cities and the most populated areas of the country. Third, this is a nation of small schools and a great need exists to serve the above-average pupil in the small school.

Some of the plans suggested in literature for meeting the needs of the above-average pupils include special schools, special classes, acceleration, enrichment, individualized instruction, and the use of extra-curricular activities.

One of the ways of better serving the above-average pupils in the state of Nebraska has been the admission of the superior child into school at an earlier age. This has been made possible by means of a pre-school age admission plan with a state-regulated testing program. This pre-school age admission program will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[18]Youngert, Eugene, "Giving the Bright Student a Break," The Atlantic 197:40, June, 1956.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN OF PRE-SCHOOL AGE ADMISSION IN NEBRASKA

One of the means of meeting the needs of the above-average pupil in Nebraska has been provided for in Nebraska School Law (Section 79-444). This law--which was passed in April, 1949-- provides for an examination program by which children whose fifth birthday is after October 15, may qualify for entrance into kindergarten. The basic purpose of the program has been to better meet the educational needs of those children who have sufficient intellectual, physical, social and emotional maturity to enter kindergarten, even though they have not reached five years of age on or before October 15.

The Nebraska School Laws also provide that no school district may enter pupils in kindergarten unless they are five years old or have passed the required pre-kindergarten test set up by the State Board of Education. The law reads:

> Section 79-444, Part (2), The Board in all classes of school districts shall not admit any child into the kindergarten or beginner grade of any school of such school district unless (a) such child has reached the age of five years or will reach such age on or before October 15 of the current year or (b) such child has demonstrated through recognized testing procedures approved by the State Board of Education that he is capable of carrying the work of these grades.[1]

The state of Nebraska has set down some very rigid standards in regards to: the type of tests that should be given for kindergarten admission, the required results on the tests to permit the child to enter school, the time period for testing, and the qualifications of the examiner.

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[1]Decker, F. B., The Program of Examination for Entrance into Kindergarten, p. 1.

The state recommends that the revised Stanford-Binet Scale, Form L, Individual Mental Measurement Test be used or some equally acceptable standardized examination. The child, in order to pass, must show a mental age of at least five years and six months as of September 1, and must show an emotional, social, and physical maturity of at least five years, six months. The time of testing has been set from June 1 to September 15. No tests may be given after September 15.

The state has established three qualifications for an examiner.[2] The first qualification specifies that the person testing must have a master's degree with a major in educational or clinical psychology, or a master's degree in elementary education or school administration with a minor in educational or clinical psychology. The second requires that the person testing must have completed courses in individual testing, which are the equivalent of the two University of Nebraska courses, Educational Psychology 380 and 381, or Psychology 355 and 356. The third specifies that those persons who have received their education outside the state of Nebraska may receive certification only through the Nebraska Commission of Education. The number of examiners certified for each year of the period 1949-1955, the educational status of the examiners, and the location of their employment are shown in Table 2.

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[2] Ibid., p. 3.

TABLE 2. Examiners Certified to Give Pre-Kindergarten Tests in Nebraska, 1949-1955.

Year	Number	Degrees		Location of Employment		
		M.A.	Ph.D.	College	Public School	State Dept.
1949-50	24	24	5	23	1	
1950-51	18	18	6	15	3	
1951-52	26	26	10	21	5	
1952-53	24	24	10	19	4	1
1953-54	35	35	14	29	3	3
1954-55	30	30	12	26	2	2

It has been shown in Table 2 that only 18 examiners were certified in 1950-51, which is the smallest number certificated in any one year. In 1953-1954 the largest number of examiners were certificated. There were 35 in that year. In 1953-1954, fourteen of the thirty-five examiners held Ph.D. degrees. Twenty-nine were located in colleges; three were in public schools, and two were in the state department. These tabulations show the educational and professional levels of the certified examiner to be high. These high qualifications should help to insure proper testing of these pre-school children.

During the period 1949-1950 a total of 6,730 children were examined. A picture of the number of Nebraska's 93 counties that participated in the testing program, the total number of children examined each year, the number of children who passed, the number who failed, and the percent of failures is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Children Examined by the Nebraska State Testing Program for Pre-School Age Admission into Kindergarten, 1949-1955.

Years	Counties represented	Children examined	Approved for entry	Not approved for entry	
			Number	Number	Percent
1949-50	74	686	530	156	22.74
1950-51	68	672	565	107	15.92
1951-52	80	1339	1031	308	23.00
1952-53	84	1274	969	305	23.93
1953-54	82	1345	969	376	27.95
1954-55	87	1414	993	421	29.77
Total		6730	5057	1673	24.85

It should be noted that in the period of 1949-1955, 5,057 above-average pupils were permitted to get an early start in school because of the testing program. In 1950-1951 there were 25 counties in Nebraska that did not test any pupils. In 1951-1952 there were only 13 counties that did not have at least one pupil tested, and for the 1954-1955 school year only Arthur, Hooper, Loup, McPhearson, Thomas, and Wheeler counties did not make use of the testing program.

The writer made a survey of the number of pupils who have passed the tests in Franklin and Harlan counties, Nebraska. Table 4 shows a list of the pupils in Franklin county who passed the tests, the school the pupil attended, and the age of the pupil at the time the test was taken. This group of children was approved for testing by the county

superintendent of Franklin county. Table 5 shows the same information for the children in Harlan county as that in Table 4 for the children of Franklin county. From 1950-1955 a total of 40 children passed the examination in the two counties and were admitted to kindergarten at pre-school age. These 40 children came from 18 different school districts. All schools represented were small schools with enrollments of less than 500 pupils.

The achievements of and later tests taken by these pupils were studied to determine what value there might be in these pre-school age admissions.

TABLE 4. School, Age and Test Date for 19 Franklin County Pupils Who Passed the Nebraska State Pre-Kindergarten Test, 1951-1955.

Name of Pupil	School	Chronological age	Test date
Sharon C.	Riverton	4 - 8	8/15/51
Ronnal D.	District 9	4 - 9	8/15/51
Carolyn R.	Franklin	4 - 10	8/15/51
John S.	Franklin	4 - 8	8/15/51
Robert R.	Franklin	4 - 9	8/15/51
Carolyn H.	Riverton	4 - 9	8/15/53
Philip K.	Hildreth	4 - 9	No record
Kenneth M.	Wilcox	4 - 8	8/16/53
Shelia M.	Franklin	4 - 8	8/14/53
Doris S.	Naponee	4 - 8	7/26/53
Robert S.	Naponee	4 - 8	7/26/53
Tonda S.	Franklin	4 - 9	8/14/53
Linda T.	Franklin	4 - 9	8/14/53
Jack V.	Naponee	4 - 8	7/26/53
Shela W.	Naponee	4 - 9	7/26/53
Jane W.	Franklin	4 - 8	8/14/53
Lavon B.	District 67	4 - 9	8/15/55
Jean F.	District 22	4 - 10	8/15/55
Norman J.	District 22	4 - 9	8/15/55

TABLE 5. School, Age and Test Date for 21 Harlan County Pupils Who Passed the Nebraska State Pre-Kindergarten Tests, 1950-1955.

Name of Pupil	School	Chronological age	Test date
Darlene A.	Ragan	4 - 11	9/7/50
Marlene A.	Ragan	4 - 11	9/7/50
Richard B.	Republican City	4 - 9	7/29/50
Steven G.	Mascot	4 - 10	9/5/50
Vickie P.	Mascot	4 - 10	9/13/50
DeAnne B.	District 35	4 - 8	7/2/52
Elizabeth H.	Mascot	4 - 10	9/2/52
Rebecka P.	Ragan	4 - 10	8/28/52
Colleen W.	District 60	4 - 10	8/28/52
Larry B.	Alma	4 - 8	7/18/53
Pamela H.	Alma	4 - 7	7/18/53
Allen O.	Alma	4 - 9	7/18/53
Lea R.	Alma	4 - 8	7/18/53
Judy S.	Alma	4 - 9	7/18/53
Patricia T.	Ragan	4 - 8	7/18/53
Joy B.	District 59	4 - 8	7/21/54
Jean C.	District 59	4 - 9	7/21/54
Joan J.	Orleans	4 - 9	7/20/54
Gale G.	Huntley	4 - 9	7/25/55
Gerald S.	District 27	4 - 8	6/23/55
Carroll W.	Orleans	4 - 8	7/13/55

In the follow-up study of these children, it was possible to obtain information on the achievement of 22 of these pupils. It was not possible to obtain information on all 40 of the pupils as some had moved out of the counties and some schools did not have a testing program or accurate records. Information on nine pupils was obtained from the Franklin, Naponee, and District 9 schools in Franklin county. Information was also obtained about 13 pupils in Harlan county in the Alma, Ragan, and Districts 35, 50, and 60 schools. The results on the pupils in Franklin county as shown in Table 6, show that all the pupils tested

by the pre-kindergarten test also ranked as superior individuals when tested by the schools with S.R.A. Mental Abilities Tests at the various grade levels. Table 7, which is a similar table prepared for Harlan county, gives a comparable picture of test results for pupils who had taken the pre-kindergarten test for that county.

TABLE 6. Mental Abilities Tests Results, Grades 1-4, for 9 Franklin County, Nebraska, Children Who Had Taken Pre-Kindergarten Tests.

Name of pupil	School	Grade	I. Q.	C. A.	M. A.
Shelia M.	Franklin	1	119	6-7	7-10
Roberta S.	Naponee	1	117	6-3	7- 4
Tonda S.	Franklin	1	110	6-7	7- 5
Jane W.	Franklin	1	110	6-4	7- 2
Doris S.	Naponee	2	118	7-7	8-11
Jack V.	Naponee	2	113	7-6	8- 6
Shela W.	Naponee	2	140	7-7	10- 7
Ronnal D.	District 9	3	103	8-0	8- 3
Robert S.	Franklin	4	101	9-1	9- 2

TABLE 7. Mental Abilities Test Results, Grades K-4, for 13 Harlan County, Nebraska, Children Who Had Taken Pre-Kindergarten Tests.

Name of Pupil	School	Grade	I. Q.	C. A.	M. A.
Rebecka P.	Ragan	K	120	5-3	6- 4
Patricia T.	Ragan	K	122	4-9	5-11
Darlene A.	Ragan	2	116	7-3	8- 5
Marlene A.	Ragan	2	110	7-3	8- 0
Joy B.	District 59	2	127	7-0	8-11
Jean C.	District 59	2	108	7-2	7- 9
Larry B.	Alma	3	125	8-0	9-11
Pamela H.	Alma	3	132	8-0	10- 6
Allen O.	Alma	3	116	8-1	9- 5
Lea R.	Alma	3	116	8-1	9- 5
Judy S.	Alma	3	122	8-2	10- 0
DeAnne B.	District 35	4	126	8-5	10- 7
Colleen W.	District 60	4	116	9-4	10-10

An interesting fact was revealed by the cumulative record study on the above-average pupils listed in Table 6 and Table 7. All of them, with the exception of three pupils, were doing A or A- work in all of their subjects. The other three pupils were doing from C+ to B - work.

A comparison of four of these pupils with other pupils in their class was shown by the testing program for the third grade of the Alma, Nebraska, school as of December 17, 1956. The class as a whole was a superior class. Larry B., Pamela H., Allen O., and Lea R., who had taken the pre-kindergarten test, had done as well on the Science Research Aptitude Tests in reading and arithmetic as the other pupils in the class with equal intelligence.

This survey has tended to indicate that the pupils who were admitted at pre-school age, by means of the state testing program in Franklin and Harlan counties, were properly tested and have developed

according to expectations. The early entrance into school has not hindered them academically.

After the above-average pupils have entered school, it becomes the responsibility of the school to provide further opportunities for them to make use of and to develop their talents. One of the most frequently used methods has been an enrichment of the regular classroom curriculum. Some of the types of enrichment that may be used in small schools will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE ABOVE-AVERAGE PUPILS

Growth and development of the individual has always depended upon the environment surrounding him. The above-average pupil has been dependent upon society to develop the proper conditions and attitudes toward his problems. Neuber has brought out the importance of the philosophy of the total public in regards to serving the needs of the gifted in her statement:

> Growth of any kind depends upon the atmosphere and climate around it. It is important, then, to know the attitudes and values of the school and community which form the basic framework in which the gifted develop. This climate is influenced in a large part by the philosophy of the teachers, administration, of the total school system and of the general public.[1]

The first principle to be put into effect in the establishment of an enrichment program for the small school is a sound philosophy on the part of the administration and the staff. The democratic and flexible staff that has adjusted to meet the needs of youth has taken the first step toward a good enrichment program. Passow[2] has contended that motivation has come from a flexible guidance program. He has also advocated that, with the proper guidance program, the child may profit much from remaining in the regular classroom in a heterogeneous group:

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[1] Neuber, M. A., "When a Child Has High Potential," The School Executive 76:70, April, 1957.

[2] Passow, A. H., "Are We Short-Changing the Gifted?", The School Executive 75:56, December, 1955.

> Motivation can flower from a rich and flexible guidance program which helps superior children understand their own abilities in terms of their meaning for personal development and responsibilities to society.
>
> Enrichment within the regular classroom is today the most widely supported and advertised of any administrative provision. It has been advocated on the basis that a flexible program with a heterogeneous group can stimulate the gifted child while keeping him with his social peers. Unlike special grouping, working with the gifted in the regular classroom requires relatively little extra expense and is possible even within small schools.[3]

The small school has profited when the enrichment program was set in a flexible organization. The small school that permits the teacher freedom and flexibility in serving the above-average pupils has done much to aid the gifted. A flexible organization that serves the gifted is important. Such a flexible program encourages the above-average pupil to achieve more scholastically, to develop better study habits, to increase his areas of interest, and to enrich his personality. Haake has emphasized these values in his statement:

> An enrichment program developed in a flexible organization will provide activities that will be pertinent to all children including the gifted. Such a program will satisfy the gifted child's extreme intellectual curiosity, will raise his standard of achievement, develop desirable work and study skills, and will expand his range of interests. It will develop his mental skills within a framework that will encourage healthy personality development.[4]

With a philosophy in the community that is democratic, flexible, and sympathetic toward the problems of the above-average pupil, there are a number of plans that may be used to enrich the program of the gifted.

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[3] Ibid., p. 56.

[4] Haake, Bernard, "What Means Enrichment, Dad?", Childhood Education 29:319, March, 1953.

Plans for Enriching the Curriculum for the Above-Average Pupils

Enrichment of the regular classroom work has been a very successful means of serving the needs of the superior pupil. Strauchler[5] has listed four general grouping procedures that have been used successfully in meeting the needs of the gifted. The Project Method is one. In this method the pupil is given special projects to do that demand greater skill and independent thought than the work required of the average pupil. Another is the Laboratory or Research Method. In this method the child is given much more freedom than the average pupil to investigate problems of a scientific nature. Still another is what is called the Individual Method. This method provides the child with the opportunity to work ahead at his own rate of speed. It develops individual interest and initiative. With the fourth method, the Class Method, the class works as a unit with the major responsibilities centered with the gifted.

Some teachers in Harlan and Franklin counties, Nebraska, have met the needs of the gifted at the primary level by dividing the class into three reading groups. These groups are usually called the immature, the average, and the superior. The superior group completes its regular texts in about one-half to three-fourths of the time of the average group, and then is given much supplementary reading. The superior pupil also spends more time in learning ways of word analysis and word identification. In the elementary grades some methods used have been differentiated assignments, special projects, individual research, and a

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[5]Strauchler, Jean, "Challenging the Rapid Learner," Social Education 20:161-162, April, 1956.

varied reading program. The varied reading program usually consists of special texts and reading materials at levels above the grade level of the pupil. In Bloomington, Nebraska, a special social science room has been used. In this room references and texts have varied from grade five to college entrance level. Children in the upper elementary grades with superior ability have worked with texts and other materials two and three years above their grade level. Superior students also have done considerable research in areas of special interest.

One report[6] has suggested the use of special activities, sometimes called extra-curricular activities, as a means of serving the above-average individual. In the small schools of Harlan and Franklin counties, Nebraska, the pupils in the upper grades take part in high school activities. The superior upper grade pupils are permitted to belong to band and music groups. It is not unusual for eighth grade boys to play on B teams in athletics.

After-school classes in areas of special interest are a common practice. Due to limited class enrollment, the teachers in Franklin and Harlan counties give extra work and extra time to the superior pupils. In Bloomington, Nebraska, the 8:30-9:00 pre-school period has been set aside to serve the above-average and the slow pupils. These pupils meet with their teachers by appointment and are excused from study hall.

Flexibility of classroom schedules in small schools has made possible the enrichment of the program for the above-average pupils. Much of the success of the enrichment program depends upon the skill and the interest of the teacher.

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[6]Passow, A. H., "Eight Ways of Enriching Education for Gifted Children," The Nation's Schools 56:52, November, 1955.

Some of the most frequently used methods for the enrichment of the curriculum in Nebraska are: ability groupings, the project method, research method, differentiated assignments, and participation in special activities.

A very practical way of meeting the needs of the above-average pupils in the small schools is the enrichment of the curriculum by the use of correspondence courses from the University of Nebraska. These usually are taken in subject areas not supplied by the school. The next chapter contains a discussion of the use made of supervised correspondence courses in Nebraska schools.

CHAPTER V

THE USE OF SUPERVISED CORRESPONDENCE COURSES IN SMALL SCHOOLS IN NEBRASKA

The above-average pupil, who has had the advantage of an early start in school and an elementary program that has been rich in extra experiences, may have further broadening of his experiences at the secondary level through supervised correspondence courses. The practice of using supervised correspondence courses, in which the student signs for a course from the University and the public high school assigns a class period and a teacher to the course, is not new. The first program of supervised correspondence courses at state level was started by the University of Nebraska in 1930-1931, according to Childs:

> From a very small beginning in 1930-31, when 46 pupils from 8 different high schools enrolled for supervised correspondence instruction with the University of Nebraska, the movement has grown until today tens of thousands of boys and girls of high school age receive instruction by this method from scores of colleges, universities, and state departments of public instruction. ....the action of the University of Nebraska in establishing a program of supervised correspondence study was the first attempt by an educational agency at the state level to foster and encourage such a program .....[1]

Long presented a plan for the use of supervised correspondence courses in small schools in which he recommended "that agencies of the various states issue correspondence courses to be studied by high school students in a special room under the supervision of a teacher."[2]

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[1]Childs, G. B., "Supervised Correspondence Study," The Clearing House 26:3, September, 1951.

[2]Ibid., p. 5. (Editor's Note citing "Correspondence Study in the Small High School," by Forrest E. Long in The Clearing House, December, 1929.)

It has been shown by Childs[3] that pupils who have completed supervised correspondence courses tend to be above-average in intelligence and ability. The purpose of the supervised correspondence courses is not to replace the regular class work. The main reason for taking correspondence courses has been enrichment through an extension of the curriculum. This has been clearly substantiated by Childs in his statement:

> It is not the function of correspondence instruction to replace classroom instruction. Its purpose, rather, is to supplement and enrich the program in operation in secondary schools. Fortunately, most correspondence pupils are enrolled in a regular high school program and are not denied the benefits to be gained from association with other pupils and from the give and take of the classroom. These benefits are theirs, together with the opportunity to study subjects important to them but not offered by the local school.[4]

In answer to an inquiry by the investigator, information was given that about two-thirds of the high schools in Nebraska have had students registered for correspondence courses in any given year and that many of these have been small schools:

> Our records will not show the number of Class D and E schools that have students registered in the University of Nebraska correspondence study program. However, about two thirds of the high schools in Nebraska have one or more students registered with us in any given year, and many of these are Class D and E schools.[5]

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[3] Ibid., p. 6.

[4] Ibid., p. 6.

[5] Personal letter written by G. B. Childs, Specialist in Correspondence Instruction, University of Nebraska, to the writer on February 1, 1957.

The Class D and E schools referred to are the smallest schools in the state with an enrollment of 200 pupils or less in the twelve grades.

In Harlan and Franklin counties, Nebraska, there have been a number of pupils taking correspondence courses for high school credit. Bloomington High School has been the only school in these counties with a supervised correspondence study class. Six pupils at the eleventh and twelfth grade levels completed a double shorthand course (Shorthand XV and XVI) from the University of Nebraska Extension Division. These pupils were supervised by a qualified teacher in a 45 minute daily period. One pupil completed the course with an A average, four pupils with a B average, and one pupil with a C average. Plans have been formulated in the Bloomington High School for 1957-1958 school year to conduct a supervised correspondence class with five pupils of the above-average group in Shorthand XV and XVI, and another class with two pupils of the same ability group in Spanish I and II.

There have been, as yet, no special correspondence courses prepared specifically for the mentally gifted. The first step in this area has just been taken as Childs has indicated in his letter:

> There are no schools at present who have correspondence study courses for the mentally gifted. We are developing such courses at the University of Nebraska and hope to have courses in 9th grade English and in American History ready for September 1957. We plan to add other courses as fast as our facilities permit.[6]

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[6] Ibid. Personal letter.

The general correspondence courses and the special correspondence courses for the gifted are in part an answer to the problem of enrichment of the curriculum for the above-average pupils in the small secondary school that can not build a broad enough curriculum because of such limiting factors as capital and personnel.

Three ways of meeting the needs of above-average pupils have been shown. Two of these ways, shown in the earlier chapters, are pre-school age admissions and enrichment programs. This chapter has discussed the use of supervised correspondence courses as a way of enriching the curriculum for the superior secondary pupil. These means of meeting the needs of the superior pupils indicate clearly what has been and can be done to better serve these pupils.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This investigation has been made to determine what has been done and what may be done in the future to help the above-average pupil in the small schools in Nebraska.

Summary

Recent literature has shown that there is an increased feeling among laymen and educators that our educational system is not serving the best interests of the mentally above-average pupils. The identification of these superior individuals should not be based on intelligence test scores alone, but also on results of standardized achievement tests, teachers' estimates of student's ability, observation of emotional and social maturity, report card marks, and age-grade status. Few schools have had any definite plan for meeting the needs of these above average students; however, plans to meet the needs of superior pupils have been best developed in the larger cities and the more densely populated areas of the United States. Some of these plans have included special classes, acceleration, and enrichment of the regular class work. In the small elementary schools, plans for enrichment in the regular classroom have included projects, research, individualized assignments, varied reading programs and ability groupings.

One means of meeting the needs of superior individuals in Nebraska has been the admission to kindergarten of children under five years of age, who have been tested according to state regulations, and who have a mental age of at least five years and six months and a physical,

social, and emotional maturity of five years and six months. Information from the Nebraska State Department of Education has revealed that during the period 1949-1955, there were 6,730 children tested by the pre-kindergarten testing program. About 75 percent of those tested were approved for entry into kindergarten. A survey in Franklin and Harlan counties, Nebraska, has shown that 40 children in those counties passed the pre-kindergarten examinations, 1950-1955. These children represented 18 small schools. A follow-up study of 22 of these children has indicated that the early entrance into school did not limit their academic achievement. All but three of these 22 pupils have been doing A work.

The first program of supervised correspondence courses at state level was started by the University of Nebraska in 1930-1931, with 46 pupils from 8 high schools enrolled. Tens of thousands of high school students in the various states have now received instruction by this means. The purpose of the supervised correspondence courses has been to enrich the regular curriculum of the local high school. In Franklin and Harlan counties, Nebraska, a number of students have taken correspondence courses, but only one school had a supervised correspondence class in 1956-1957. The University of Nebraska is now preparing special correspondence courses for gifted students.

Conclusions

It may be concluded from this study that there is a great need to better serve the above-average pupils in the small schools. This can be efficiently done in the small schools of Nebraska by making use of the following methods or practices. The pupil with a mental age of at

least five years and six months and who is physically, socially, and emotionally five years and six months of age, should be permitted to enter kindergarten. Even though the chronological age may not justify it, the achievement and adjustment of those children who have been permitted to enter school by this method justify it. This would give the pupil a one year earlier start or advantage. In the primary grades the reading experiences should be enriched and speeded up in order that the pupils may take advantage of a broader enrichment program in the upper elementary grades. In these upper elementary grades much should be done to enrich and broaden the scope of the curriculum. Projects, scientific investigations, differentiated assignments, field trips, varied reading programs, and extracurricular activities are some methods to use to enrich the curriculum of these superior pupils in the small schools. At the secondary level, the above-average pupil should be exposed to all of the classes of value to him in the school plus extra classes of supervised correspondence studies.

The final result would be a student, age 17, prepared with a wider range of experiences, a sense of responsibility, and talents more fully developed, graduating from the small secondary school.

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