

SOME POSSIBLE MEANS FOR PREVENTING AND CONTROLLING
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN J. T. BRACKENRIDGE
SCHOOL, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

THESIS

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

One views with alarm the apparent "mushroom" growth of juvenile delinquency during and since World War II, as evidenced by the increasing number of times it is mentioned on the radio and in print. Considered this way it seems to be an appalling liability and a menace to our civilization and democratic society--which is indeed just what it is. On the other hand, one can note with gratification the ever-increasing number of socially-minded individuals and organizations taking cognizance of and attacking this problem of youths whose conduct is not acceptable. A dynamic asset to these individuals and organizations is the array of professional information from scientific studies of the many and divergent phases of the problem which is made available to them.

B. Statement

When juvenile delinquency is discussed the school is

usually blamed for it, sometimes in its entirety, other times the school is named only as a contributing factor.

The writer undertook this study to learn just what, in the opinion of authoritative writers, are the causes of and contributing factors to delinquency. Then, having found those factors, the writer undertook to learn what are considered the best means of preventing or controlling its growth and what the school and the classroom teacher might contribute toward the solution of the problem.

C. Limitations

Realizing that any study dealing with human behavior is as large as the universe itself, the writer has chosen only some of the most significant points and only those that seem to be applicable to the problems of delinquency in J. T. Brackenridge School, of San Antonio, Texas.

D. Significance

Figures are not available to show what juvenile delinquency costs society. The total cost of crime is enormous, something like \$15,000,000,000 annually,¹ and very many criminal careers were begun as juvenile delinquencies.

¹Harry J. Baker, Introduction to Exceptional Children, p. 350.

These authentic statements concerning costs of some items of delinquency were made in a report to Tom C. Clark, Attorney General, by the National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency:

If a juvenile offender persists in delinquency, as an unfortunate number do, we have to bear in mind the costs of police work, court hearings, probation, correctional institutions, etc. To take only one item--the per capita expenses of running any good juvenile correctional institution range from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year. Then the careers of those who continue in delinquencies frequently involve felonies. Years ago a study revealed that the average cost of a conviction for a felony was \$1,500, and the cost is probably greater nowadays. Figuring it all in the light of the typical repetition of offenses over the years, an estimate of the average cost to society of a delinquent not reformed is certainly greater than, say \$3,000. Many examples could be given where the individual has cost society in the ten of thousands.

Nothing is clearer than the great savings that accrue when a delinquent career is prevented.

The amount of human suffering caused by a delinquent career and the value of preventing this need only be mentioned to be appreciated.²

It would be hard to estimate the cost to San Antonio of juvenile misconduct, and the cost to the school system of juvenile vandalism and other forms of delinquent conduct at J. T. Brackenridge School. Figures are not available to show the cost of vandalism, the largest item of which is replacement of broken window panes.

²National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency, Mental Health and Child Guidance Clinics, p. 11.

The cost of material things as items of value lose their significance when compared to the loss to society of a potential worthwhile citizen. The unhappiness generated by maladjustment, frequently accompanied by delinquent conduct, is so devastating in its effect that the writer felt that the study of means for controlling and preventing it would be worth much more than the time and effort consumed.

E. Procedure

In the search for information on the subject of juvenile delinquency, and the possible means for preventing it, many books were collected, some dealing with psychology, others with juvenile delinquency. The writer realized that the causes of delinquency should be ascertained before any consideration was given to means for preventing or controlling it. A first perusal of the books collected showed that the youthful offender was considered handicapped, since he had failed to develop a wholesome personality. The causes for this failure were given as misunderstanding between child and parents, also neglect of the child by his parents. Factors contributing to juvenile delinquency were listed as the family, the neighborhood, and the school.

A search into psychology soon revealed that even the "normal child" has problems of adjustment to solve. It

seemed logical, then, to ask why it was that some children were able to solve or adjust their problems and others were not so successful. The answer to this question seems to be that no one is quite sure why.

Since the child who presents problems of adjustment is considered handicapped and since the patterns of delinquent conduct can be traced back to infancy, the next thought to come to the writer was that perhaps the public school and the classroom teacher could do little with such children as displayed delinquent tendencies. Nowhere was material found to substantiate any such ideas. The books read revealed that the classroom teacher could be a potent factor in controlling and even in preventing some delinquent tendencies.

Books discussing guidance and psychotherapy were then collected, and information that would be valuable to the classroom teacher in aiding her to attack problems of maladjustment was collected.

The writer recorded information that seemed to her as applicable to the problems of maladjustment and delinquent behavior at J. T. Brackenridge School, the factors that contribute to delinquency, certain personality aspects that are related to it, the programs for action that might be taken, and a number of factors the classroom teacher might rely upon to help her control and even prevent some

delinquent tendencies among the pupils in her room.

F. Definitions

Because of differences of opinion as to the meaning of some words pertinent to the study and so that the reader might better understand the viewpoint of the writer, the following definitions were compiled: Just what constitutes delinquency and who is the juvenile delinquent? Very few people, apparently, know the significance of the term, as it has a different meaning to people of different interests. To the doctor, his problem might be a physical handicap or conditions of a constitutional nature that would contribute to delinquency. To a policeman or other law-enforcing person, it relates to a young character known by them because he has committed some act in violation of the law. To the social worker, it is the problem of a youth needing help; to the schoolteacher, it relates to the problem child; and to the psychiatrist, it has a more scientific and poignant meaning. To the lay-populace, a juvenile delinquent merely means a bad boy or girl, or one who has gotten into trouble. For the purpose of this study the following statement, expressed by Cox and Duff, has been chosen because it is more explanatory:

It has been the custom to think of delinquents as youths dealt with by the courts; this view is consonant with the popular notion that the

only crime is being caught. But there are more fish than those brought up in nets and the ones that are caught are not very different from the ones that get away. The children and youths who are booked as delinquents are only a random sampling from the whole number. Delinquency, then, is any such juvenile conduct as might be dealt with under the law.³

These delinquent or potential delinquent youths, then, are those whose behavior is not acceptable and is such that it causes them to be considered as behavior problems. For a more enlightening definition of this concept let us consider the one adopted by the committee which reported on behavior problems of children to the National Education Association:

Behavior problem children are those who stand out or differ from others of their group because of certain undesirable habits, personality traits, or behavior in the home, school, or community; whose conduct interferes, or is likely to interfere with the individual's (or the group's) fullest development and usefulness socially, educationally, or hygienically; and whose behavior may result in more serious handicaps of one sort or another in later life.⁴

Behavior--what is it? This is another word for which we all have different meanings. Yet we all agree that it treats of the activity of others. Here follows a more

³Philip W. L. Cox and John C. Duff, Guidance by the Classroom Teacher, p. 443.

⁴National Education Association, Report of Committee on Behavior Problems of Children, Volume 64, p. 254.

realistic explanation:

First of all, it is well to realize that mind is not some vague intangible essence standing aloof and apart from body, accessible only to the incantations of special tests and complexities of investigation. Mind is the human being in action, and this action we speak of as behaviour. Behaviour is dependent upon two kinds of facts: first the stuff of which we are made--biological, intellectual, temperamental; second, the way environment and training have moulded this constitutional stuff.⁵

Personality comes next in our chain of associated words and is one that needs clarifying as it, too, has so many different meanings. The writer prefers this definition:

. . . it may be helpful to think of personality, not as a thing or collection of different traits or capacities, but rather as the dynamic process by which each individual strives to build up, maintain, and protect his private world and express directly or in disguised fashion his basic feelings toward people and situations. However inadequate this conception of the personality may be for other purposes, it has the merit of focusing our interest upon the active way in which individuals approach life, always in terms of its meaning and significance for them alone. Thus we can begin to gain some understanding and some insight into the individual personality of others by realizing that their private world is just as legitimate and compelling for them as our private world is for us. Moreover, it helps us to understand that the way they feel about people and situations, however bizarre and unwarranted it may seem to the outside observer, is nevertheless a necessary and inevitable response to the kind of private world which they alone see and feel.⁶

⁵Esther L. Richards, Behaviour Aspects of Child Conduct, p. 2.

⁶National Education Association, Mental Health in the Classroom, Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction, pp. 19-20.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Juvenile delinquency is an old problem and has been dealt with down through the ages by the people of any particular era in the manner of their interpretation of it. In early modern times much delinquent conduct was considered criminal and the guilty party, juvenile or adult, was punished for the crime.

In the United States, the first recognition given juvenile delinquency, regarding it as a social problem, was in New York in 1853, when a children's aid society was founded to improve conditions of unfortunate children. Other important related incidents were the several White House Conferences on Children's Problems, the first one in 1909 and the last one in 1939. The studies made and improvements recommended by these various meetings resulted in "The Children's Charter" of 1930, some basic recommendations of which are:

1. For every child a school plant which is safe from hazards, sanitary, properly equipped, lighted, ventilated. For younger children nursery schools and kindergartens to supplement home care.
2. For every child an education which, through the discovery and development of his individual abilities, prepares him for life; and through training and vocational guidance prepares him for a

living which will yield him a maximum of satisfaction.

3. For every child such teaching and training as will prepare him for successful parenthood, homemaking, and the rights of citizenship; and, for parents, supplementary training to fit them to deal wisely with the problems of parenthood.
4. For every child education for safety and protection against accidents to which modern conditions subject him--those which, through loss or maiming of his parents, affect him indirectly.
5. For every child who is in conflict with society the right to be dealt with intelligently as society's charge, not society's outcast; with the home, the school, the church, the court, and the institution when needed, shaped to return him whenever possible to the normal stream of life.¹

During the last sixty years, leaders in the field in making studies of delinquency have come to realize that it is the result of the conflict between man and his environment. This conflict is between the "inner urges" of man and the pressures put upon him by the complexities of social living. It has been recognized that delinquents and criminals were not inherently mean or wicked but that they were emotionally disturbed or ill and that they were suffering from many tensions and anxieties that result from these emotional disturbances.

Mental Hygiene, the name of a scientific study of the effect of one's mental and emotional health upon one's

¹"The Children's Charter," White House Conference, Century Company, New York, 1931, p. 45.

entire being, was first practiced about forty years ago. Originally it dealt with the problems of the mentally ill and in the schools it pertained to the study of behavior problems there. With more recent studies revealing that emotional upsets cause organic upsets, mental health studies provide many recommendations applicable to teacher-pupil relationships in the classroom. No one would think of questioning the need for a healthful physical environment in all schools. Yet some people question the statements made concerning the relation between mental health and the individual's physical health, his attitudes, his activities, and his growth and life in general. However, specialists in this field contend that this relationship is so strong that the schools have a graver responsibility to their students in providing a healthful mental atmosphere than in providing healthful physical conditions. One statement in comparing these two needs is that the school must insure

. . . the protection of the child against emotional hazards due to a bad mental hygiene environment--a far more serious health problem than that of sanitation--and the provision of those constructive influences which will tend toward the upbuilding of a healthy and well-balanced personality.²

²Leo J. Brueckner and Others, The Changing Elementary School, p. 274.

The technique developed for applying and using the principles of mental hygiene in daily living in the business world and in the schools is known as guidance services. This newer guidance movement dates from about 1921 when the National Committee for Mental Hygiene began a program for the prevention of juvenile delinquency. While previous work with problem children had consisted of "working around and for" the child, this newer concept of the problem caused a change in that the workers began working "with" the child. Such drastic improvements have been effected in this entire area that one author wrote:

The steadily increasing interest in the individual and his adjustment is perhaps one of the outstanding phenomena of our times.³

The school guidance program and its scope varies with different schools. Many large systems are setting up extensive guidance programs with counseling and psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance being rendered by professionally trained workers in the respective fields. In such places the teachers are advised and even given training in the recognition of cases needing treatment. They are also taught how to care for the lesser cases of maladjustment.

³Carl Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy, Preface, p. vii.

When the school system is smaller or does not feel that it is financially able to afford the services of a professionally trained staff, the guidance program involves the use of achievement and intellectual tests which render very little assistance to the teacher in helping her solve the problems of maladjustment among her students.

CHAPTER III

SURVEY OF RELATED STUDIES

Many studies of the problem of youthful misconduct have been made, some extensive and others more limited; some were published, while others were not. Among the latter group there have been a number of interesting and useful studies made and presented as theses at Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Texas.

In 1940, Miss Anne Carsner made a study of juvenile delinquency in San Antonio.¹ She found that as a legal problem it is under the jurisdiction of the Bexar County Probation Department. The county maintains two training schools for dependent and delinquent children, one for boys and one for girls.

The prevention of juvenile delinquency is the expressed purpose of the Boys' Club of San Antonio and the Moonglow Club. Both had been successful with their work in that juvenile delinquency was greatly reduced in the area surrounding each of these club sites.

The Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., and churches all performed valuable services but no facts were available as to

¹Anne Carsner, Trends in the Prevention and Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency in San Antonio, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Texas, 1940.

the extent of their work.

A project known as the Co-ordinating Council for Youth, organized in 1939, had consolidated the efforts of thirty-five social service groups in San Antonio. Their work consequently had become more effective and duplications of service were avoided.

Prior to that date, San Antonio Independent School District maintained no attendance department and had no records to show what adjustments had been made. This caused the schools to be greatly maligned by the uninformed, since observation revealed that the schools were great forces in the reduction of delinquency.

Another interesting study was made by Miss Frances Davidson.² She found that, because of the principle followed in Bexar County of having an agent of the Probation Department cooperating with Child Welfare organizations handle, on the outside, those cases possible, many delinquents were kept out of court. The attending psychological effect of such procedure was beneficial in combating delinquency.

Of those delinquents apprehended and placed on probation, eighty-five per cent follow a straight normal life

²Frances Davidson, Survey of the Major Causes, Corrections, and Results of Juvenile Delinquency of Boys from Eight through Seventeen Years of Age in Bexar County, State of Texas, from June 1941 through June 1943, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Texas, 1943.

and rehabilitate themselves.

The schools of the United States are doing much to solve their problems of delinquency by employing visiting teachers. Facts gathered by Miss Clara Brown show that this method renders a service to the individual child, his parents, and the classroom teacher, bringing all into a more sympathetic understanding of the others and their problems.³

In some schools a teacher visitation program is preferred. Chester Braun made a survey of its benefits. He concluded that:

The home visit is a foolproof method of looking into the child's background. Often parents will mislead the teacher's judgment by their display of clothing or automobiles but a home visit will do much to explain the action of the child in school.⁴

³Clara Brown, The Role of the Visiting Teacher in the Public Schools of the United States, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Texas, 1946.

⁴Chester Braun, Research Paper, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, San Marcos, Texas, 1947.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SURVEY

Delinquent behavior, as any other human behavior, is a product of the individual's make-up and his environment as he interprets and assimilates it to suit his needs. Consequently it is the result of many causal factors and causes, and "its roots reach deep into the conditions that cause social and personal maladjustment."¹

Since no two children are alike in physical make-up, it is easy to realize that no two would be alike as regards their responses to environmental factors. Each action of any individual is his unique response to a unique situation, and this principle is equally true of so-called delinquent conduct.

This very sympathetic statement of a child's anti-social conduct is expressive of the attitude taken in recent studies:

Delinquent children do not act out of their perverseness. Like law abiding citizens, they have reasons for behaving as they do. Their reasons, according to the social code,

¹National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency, School and Teacher Responsibilities, p. 3.

are not acceptable, but for the delinquent, his behavior is purposive and an attempt to achieve satisfaction. Delinquent behavior, like all behavior, usually represents an attempt on the part of the child to achieve some measure of successful achievement, security, or group approval.

Delinquency in any form must be considered symptomatic. It may be symptomatic of conditions such as frustration, lack of judgment, or inhibition. The underlying difficulty may be some inherent individual deficiency or it may spring from a deficiency in the environment. It may grow out of unfortunate personal relationships or it may reflect inadequate education and guidance. Delinquent behavior may arise from all these and similar elements or from any combination of them.²

Since delinquent conduct is symptomatic, in order to understand it better one needs to learn more of its nature. There have been found to be certain factors that contribute to the unsocial and antisocial conduct of a child. Also there have been found to be some children who are more susceptible to delinquent conduct than others. The writer has listed what seem to be the most important of each of these factors that apply to the children in the school being considered in this study.

A. Some Factors That Contribute to Juvenile Delinquency

1. The Family

First and predominant among causes of delinquency of

²Ibid., p. 3.

children is parental attitudes. A study made by Healy and Bronner for the Institute of Human Relations of Yale University revealed that ninety-one per cent of the one hundred fifty-three delinquents studied were found to be extremely disturbed because of emotion-provoking relationships.³ Due to individual differences in constitution, personality, and ability, one child in a family may become a delinquent and the others may not. Parents often accept one child and reject another for a multitude of reasons, among them being his personal appearance and mental alertness and even circumstances attending his birth. Delinquent behavior is often the avenue taken by which he hopes to compensate for his lack of being understood, appreciated, and loved.

2. The Neighborhood

Conditions in the neighborhood are frequently an important factor in determining the kind of person the child will become. The codes of behavior of adolescents and other children, also, are determined by the cultural patterns of the neighborhood. Some children make good in morally unhealthy surroundings, but the committee reporting on Mental Health to the National Conference on Delinquency, in 1946, found that those who work in guidance

³William Healy and Augusta F. Bronner, New Light on Delinquency and Its Treatment, p. 122.

clinics realize that some factors are:

. . . inimical to the right development of children in the given surrounding. . . . it may be the setting of poverty, alcoholism, vice, neighborhood delinquency, poor amusements, insufficient opportunities for good recreation. "The wonder is not that children brought up under the constant influences of such surroundings become delinquent, but that so many escape delinquency."⁴

3. The School

Slightly different views are expressed by authorities as to just how the public school is a contributing factor. Here is one:

. . . the school does not make as many delinquents as it permits children to leave its doors and become delinquents. To this extent, its sin is one of omission rather than commission.⁵

There are those who consider the part of the school sin as one of commission. These reports substantiate their views:

The school is a significant influence in the child's development. The school has many tasks to perform in connection with his personality development, chief of which is helping him to learn how to get along with others and to accept the obligations of group living.

The program of the school must therefore meet not only intellectual needs but emotional and

⁴National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency, Mental Health and Child Guidance Clinics, p. 8.

⁵Paul L. Boynton, Psychology of Child Development, p. 384.

social needs as well. It is important that teachers be trained to recognize unsatisfactory behavior as a symptom of conflict . . . due to some deeper dissatisfaction or frustration.

Truancy is a frequent symptom of a child's poor adjustment in school; perhaps because the curriculum is unsuited to him, or the teacher lacks understanding of his needs, or he has a reading disability or some sensory or physical defect.

The school's failure to see the child as a total personality with a life apart from the classroom and with fundamental needs as an individual that go beyond a desire to master the three R's, contribute to delinquency in many cases.⁶

A similar opinion is that:

The public school program, until it is more satisfactorily organized to meet the needs of the non-academic type of child, will continue to contribute to the delinquency of minors who can not or will not make an adjustment to the present-day school program. Fortunately public school administrators, teachers and educational leaders are becoming acquainted with the facts and are endeavoring to do their part in rearranging the curriculum of our schools to provide for special types of children.⁷

Healy and Bronner, in their work, also made a parallel study of delinquents and non-delinquents which revealed that:

About forty per cent of the delinquents expressed marked dislike for school in general and thirteen per cent for some teacher. A mere four per cent

⁶ National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency, Mental Health and Child Guidance Clinics, p. 7.

⁷ O. H. Close, "Nature of Delinquency Today," California Journal of Secondary Education, Volume 18, p. 396.

of the controls evinced any such dislikes.⁸

Testimonies of prison inmates show some of the frustrations, tensions, and antagonisms which the school created:

1. The teacher tried to make me wear better clothes like other children. I finally told her to go to hell and walked out. I swore that I would have better clothes if I had to steal them and I did.
2. I had a stutter. I was put in a class with a lot of screwballs. My pals kidded me and I quit.
3. My mother was going nuts and I was worried about her. One day the teacher called me crazy too. I never went to school regular after that.
4. I was fired from school because I wouldn't study my history. When they brought me back and made me study history again, I started to skip school.
5. I just couldn't recite in class. The teacher nagged at me and to avoid trouble I left school.
6. I don't know why I ran away from school. I couldn't get along in a crowd, that's all.
7. I was put into a class with a lot of dumb clucks. It was too much for me and I quit.
8. One day I got to school late and was told that if I couldn't get there on time, not to come at all, just to spoil the class record. I took them at their word.⁹

Pertaining to the role of the school as a factor in the misdeeds of youthful offenders, Kvaraceus, after making an extensive study, sums up his opinions on the subject:

Literature in the field of juvenile delinquency reveals, on the whole, rather unsatisfactory

⁸William Healy and Augusta F. Bronner, op. cit., p. 62.

⁹Arthur C. Johnson, "Our Schools Make Criminals," The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Volume 33, p. 311.

school adjustments for most children who fall into difficulty with the law. Retardation is unusually high, low school achievement and poor marks predominate, truancy is frequent, dislike for school and teachers is the rule rather than the exception and early school leaving is very often the delinquent's own solution of an unsatisfactory situation.¹⁰

It would seem that, to a considerable extent, the younger members of our society who go astray are the victims of circumstances beyond their control. These environmental and causal circumstances, however, are not beyond control. In fact the responsibility for eliminating these unwholesome factors rests on the shoulders of the adult members of society.

B. What Groups of Children Are Especially
Vulnerable to Delinquency?

There are certain groups of children who, through no fault of their own, are especially vulnerable to delinquency. These same children under ordinary circumstances or conditions would have sufficient stability to withstand ordinary pressures and adjust themselves satisfactorily. Of the various groups given by different authors, the following compilation was made. This listing includes, in the opinion of the writer, the groups of children in

¹⁰ William C. Kvaraceus, Juvenile Delinquency and the School, p. 135.

J. T. Brackenridge School who might be especially vulnerable to delinquency.

Those children who are bi-lingual.--While practically all of the pupils in this school are so-called "Latin-American" or "Spanish-American" or "Mexican," and come from homes with the handicap of a foreign or semi-foreign social, cultural, and language background, all are not delinquent or even potentially delinquent children. In fact, many of them adjust themselves adequately and very favorably to the bi-social and bi-lingual background. However, to others the problems of social and language differences cause them to fail to make desirable adjustments. The reason may be that some of them mistakenly regard themselves as not only different but at a disadvantage because their parents are foreign born and their culture and language different to that of the schools. In contrast to this last group are those youngsters who resent and oppose the attempts at changing them. They create quite a problem at times by their conduct toward some pupils. For there are rare instances of children who, although they are "Latin-American," speak only English. They are unable to understand the inter-group, playground conversation of the other youngsters. Because of this handicap (as some of the other children think) they are called "White-Negroes." Needless to state their parents quickly move to other areas where

their children will be like the majority, and will not be a small and ineffective minority.

The children of employed mothers.--Many of the children come from broken homes, which makes it necessary for the mother to seek gainful employment away from the home. In some instances, these children have no one at home to look after them during the mother's absence; consequently they lack supervision, direction, and guidance. It is a simple matter for them to develop undesirable associations and find opportunity for activities that lead to delinquency. In other instances, during the mother's absence, the youngsters are supervised by a relative or some other party and because of misunderstandings the children do not know to whom they are directly responsible. Then they become confused and uncertain, feel frustrated, and develop undesirable attitudes, which they frequently express in undesirable activities.

Those children who work.--Many of the school children, especially boys, work at odd jobs after school and at night. Some shine shoes, using small portable kits, which they set up on the sidewalk wherever a patron can be found. Some of the boys work in bowling alleys, others in drug stores, grocery stores, fruit stands, and in fact they seek employment wherever it might be found. Too often, they are not really prepared to do any specific type of work and must

accept jobs where they are exposed to health and accident hazards, and to moral hazards, because the work is not under proper adult supervision or for other reasons the children are subjected to temptations which they are unable to resist.

Those children whose family financial status is insecure.---In some of the families to which these children belong there is no one who earns a substantial amount. Also, the family is large and the money earned has to suffice for too many individuals. This means that the children are deprived of adequate food, clothing, and shelter. Such unfortunate circumstances vitally affect their personal and social adjustment. Frequently, all this is accompanied by family discord as a consequence of the worry of the parents over finances, which can only increase and intensify the lack of satisfactory adjustments by the youngsters.

Those children who come from crowded homes.---Congested areas with the crowded conditions of too many living in apartments and too many people occupying each apartment contribute to the possibility of delinquency of the children affected. These boys and girls do not have adequate space in which to play. A very serious result of this congested and crowded condition is that they are subjected to undesirable influences and strains caused by lack of privacy.

The mentally retarded and physically handicapped children.---A fifth group is made up of those young people

who are mentally retarded or physically handicapped. The mentally retarded child may accept modes of behavior that a normal child would reject. They fall an easy prey to older boys and girls or adults who victimize them by suggesting undesirable behavior for gainful purposes. The physically handicapped children often resort to undesirable or delinquent acts as an avenue for gaining satisfaction to compensate for the frustrations they feel as a result of their handicaps. Included in this group are those with physical stigmata, those who are very tall or short or fat or thin, those with crossed eyes or markedly irregular features. These stigmata subject them to teasing, and taunts, and other forms of torture meted out to them by others, both youngsters and adults. Prescott, in discussing these unfortunates, excuses their behavior by saying:

It is not to be wondered at that children with stigmata often become broken in spirit in the face of other failures or that they attempt compensatory behavior of quite unsocial and revengeful types under such circumstances. They have a right to compensation of some sort.¹¹

The above groupings are the same or practically the same as those that might have been made at any time in the past. A newer group now makes its appearance. This consists of those children born since Pearl Harbor, known as the "War-Babies," who are now entering school. The fathers

¹¹David A. Prescott, Emotion and the Educative Process, p. 129.

of the "War-Babies" were members of the armed-services during the war, which caused their children to grow up under unusual circumstances. There was no natural family set-up for these little boys and girls. Their mothers were both father and mother to them as a rule, and quite frequently they worked away from home, which gave the children less opportunity for securing the assurance and love they so badly needed. Often the mother's life was one of excitement, anxiety, worry, and strain, much of which was imparted to the children. The unusual tense feelings of the mothers caused them at times to over-indulge the children and at other times to over-repress them. Poor children! They never knew what to expect and as a result failed to develop integrated patterns of behavior.

Now, upon reaching school age they are about to enter the public schools. They will present greater difficulties to the teachers than the average class of children. They will respond to stimuli as they have been accustomed to and will require more patient and sympathetic treatment than other children.

Delinquent behavior in all children, those thought to be especially vulnerable, and those thought to be less so, or even those thought to possess all the things that would keep them safe from it, is symptomatic of a feeling of insecurity and inferiority. These feelings are generated by and in turn generate more personality disorders. Such

feelings may result from one or more or a variety of causes. Some aspects of personality disorders are discussed in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER V

RELATION OF CERTAIN PERSONALITY ASPECTS TO
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY WITH IMPLICATIONS
FOR TEACHERS

The great cause of juvenile delinquency has been ascribed to be personality disorders, as, also, it is the cause of much unhappiness, sickness, and poverty. This, says William Burnham, is the opinion of the professionals who deal with the defective, the delinquent, and the incompetent.¹ These unfortunate people with such disorders lack the sense of personality health; they suffer from a sense of unreality, of insecurity, and of apprehension that may be so severe as to be alarming. Ralph Banay, in an extensive study, compiled the findings of a number of different Personality Tests and states that they reveal that these sufferers are emotionally retarded and in the case of delinquents that the extent of immaturity of the emotions tends to increase with the chronological age.²

The problem of dealing with these children is of universal magnitude as delinquency is not confined to any

¹William Burnham, The Wholesome Personality, p. 670.

²Ralph Banay, Youth in Despair, pp. 134-135.

one part of the country, but is found everywhere, in both rural and urban schools. It is exhibited as a heartbreaking problem to the teacher in tardiness, truancy, laziness, lying, stealing, quarrelsomeness, defiance, and bullying. These are all symptoms of the malady--personality maladjustment.

What are the conditions and factors that contribute to personality--one's tool for solving the problems of life--one's pattern of seeing, believing, feeling, thinking, and acting--one's self in action? What causes it to become warped? To understand this we need to gather some of the facts about it.

One's personality has a past, a present, and a future. To a very considerable extent an individual carries the past with him, applies it to the present, and projects it into the future with such modifications as it is necessary to use to adjust it to living. Personality tends toward continuity; it involves more than passive reaction to environment; it is a dynamic system that is selective in its awareness of the environment. To maintain a stable personality one must be able to resist displacement or alteration by temporary environmental variations.³

The past of one's personality dates back to his birth. Many of the anxieties and feelings of insecurity one experiences are thought by doctors to be caused by circumstances

³National Education Association, Meeting Special Needs of the Individual Child, (July, 1940), p. 290.

attending birth. For:

To the young organism birth is a trauma, requiring quick physiological readjustments, which are capable of causing tensions in the individual. Although the mind is undeveloped--the changes and possible attending tensions are registered on the brain--they do not pass into thin air.⁴

Then, when one realizes that anxieties are emotions, all-over sensations, which are felt in the body as well as experienced in the mind and may result in many kinds of distresses of the body and mind, one gets some idea of the devastating effect of anxieties. These anxieties grow out of the conflict between one's instinctive needs and those conditions of one's environment that keeps them from being gratified.

Throughout life each individual is engaged in a constant struggle--a struggle that might be divided into four phases:

1. One must struggle to remain alive, to wrest his livelihood from the world, and to maintain the life of the species;
2. The inimical forces of nature must always be combatted if one is to keep alive;
3. Just how or why it is true no one is sure--yet it is a recognized fact that each one must contend with forces within oneself which strive to destroy--to break down the molecular system. Since we do not know just what constitutes life, it is hard to understand the nature of forces that try to

⁴ Oliver S. English and Gerald H. J. Pearson, Emotional Problems of Living, p. 17.

- preserve life--likewise, it is hard to understand the nature of forces that are within the organism that tend to destroy it; and,
4. There are those conflicts that grow out of our social organization. Those rules that require the individual to consider the needs and rights of others while he is striving to maintain his individual existence. Consequently, one's success and happiness throughout life depend on his ability to deal adequately with these conflicts confronting him.⁵

In discussing maladjusted children, a simple listing of the major causes of their maladjustment includes:

1. Lack of security.
2. Lack of proper amount of attention.
3. Lack of satisfaction from
 - a. Social situations
 - b. Physical activity
 - c. Academic work

Children, like adults, when maladjusted feel that their own private world is threatened, and then become more or less on the defensive. They feel that the very existence of another's private world is a threat to their own, so they actively attack others and try to break down their private wall of reserve and seeming indifference. Another way to describe this behavior is to classify it as active, the "domineering or ruling" type, and passive, the "petted and pampered" type, which also includes escapist, the "running-away" type. The passive type is much harder to detect and

⁵Ibid., pp. 17-18.

often considered more serious for that reason.

It has been said that the more unhappy and insecure an individual is within his private world:

The more his personality processes will be directed to some form of defensive or offensive activity as a release for the strong feelings that dominate his life. Toleration, the acceptance of others and the recognition and protection of their integrity comes only as an individual can work out a design for living and construct a private world in which he can live with some degree of inner peace.⁶

Accordingly, people are classified as well adjusted or maladjusted, in respect to how well or how poorly their personality pattern conforms to that which is acceptable. Perhaps it would be wise to state that there is no such thing as an ideal personality pattern that we should all strive to imitate, but for effective associational living a personality is considered adequate when it is founded on habits of co-operation. A well-adjusted personality can exist only when the individual is able to secure reasonable satisfaction for life's needs. Such an individual's personality will be integrated--his behavior will be consistent. He will be free to act, in that he will not have to struggle with himself, and can direct all his energy at struggling with and solving the objective problems of life.

Socially maladjusted people are those who are not

⁶National Education Association, Mental Health in the Classroom, p. 20.

co-operative; they are singularly individualistic in all their responses. This occurs when the individual fails in his efforts to cope with the problems of existence, or when he fails to satisfy any of the basic fundamental needs or urges or drives. These failures generate tensions, anxieties, or friction which results in unhappiness, unpopularity, spiritual emptiness, illness, and strife with one's fellow men.

Most of us find ourselves pretty well occupied in attending to our jobs of: 1) Doing useful work; 2) Being responsible for our emotional lives; and 3) Establishing a friendly relationship with relatives, friends, and others. Consider the poor maladjusted individual adult or child who is striving to do all of these and at the same time to impress others with his importance and his rights because he is afraid he is unable to accomplish his real job in life. One might say that a maladjusted individual always has "the unfinished business" of satisfying his instinctual needs as an issue to be solved, and that to his emotional existence these needs are more important than any other because upon realizing or satisfying them depends his "ego" preservation. No wonder then that he feels inferior, and, as has been said:

He lacks courage and shirks before new and difficult situations. School duties, stern teachers, hard work, responsibility at home,

and co-operation, whenever required are the bane of his existence.⁷

One's personality may be the supreme gift of nature, but fortunately we do not have to take it as we find it. Adults, except in extreme cases, can adjust their personality patterns that require change. On the other hand,

No child can solve his personality problems, since they are the inevitable and persistent perplexities and anxieties that arise from each individual's private world and must be faced continually on a level with increasing maturity.⁸

Teachers, however, may do much to prevent maladjustment or correct it. Cyril Burt compares the tendencies of conduct to seeds that may never sprout, or if they do, to young shoots that are flexible and may be trained. Indispensable factors to their growth are opportunity and exercise, with modification always being possible, unless habit has set them either in their original or corrected form.⁹ He further adds that:

To wait until a bad habit of emotionalism has been set up, until family friction has roughened it and adolescence has heated it beyond all bearing is to wait until too late.¹⁰

⁷Nahum E. Shoobs and George Goldberg, Corrective Treatment for Unadjusted Children, p. 145.

⁸National Education Association, op. cit., p. 25.

⁹Cyril Burt, The Young Delinquent, pp. 503-504.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 502.

Realizing this no teacher will be content to emphasize the mastery of skills and facts but rather their uses in social relationships in living. Personality training is now becoming the criterion for testing all teacher-pupil activity. This is true and will continue to be true even though the school is equipped with a guidance clinic. This is because the clinic is in reality a personality hospital.¹¹ While the major role of the teacher is one of prevention, she can be helpful in curing slight maladjustments--those of the "dull normal" child, the "lazy bright" child, the scholastic retarded, and those presenting the usual school-and-home behavior problems.

Shoobs states that teachers are advised by experienced psychologists to never undertake to handle the case of an active delinquent, for:

The treatment of such cases by other than professional psychologists has been known to make these children an even greater menace to society. . . . Active delinquents have been known to increase their unsocial activity in order to prove their mental superiority over the psychologist. Expert psychologists have not been notably successful in the treatment of such cases, and we may, therefore, conclude that teachers will have no chance of success whatever.¹²

Any teacher will be glad to heed the above admonition

¹¹Nahum E. Shoobs and George Goldberg, op. cit., p. 3.

¹²Ibid., p. 152.

and direct her energies to the field that is open to teachers and to teachers only in preventing maladjustments or continued recourse to existing maladjustments in the school. She can feel very useful in so doing when she remembers that John Dewey quotes Horace Mann as having said, "Where anything is growing one former is worth a thousand reformers."¹³

To assist teachers, or others, working with the problems of adjustments many tests have been devised to indicate tendencies toward, and areas of, maladjustment. One drawn up by the International Society of Individual Psychologists is given by Shoobs and Goldberg in conjunction with their explanations of cases in which it had been used. Another for ascertaining personal and social adjustment is sold by the California Test Bureau.

An interesting case study using the first test form is briefed.¹⁴

Nearly A Delinquent

13 year old boy, I. Q. 104, Retarded first term of 7th year

I. Situation or Behavior Pattern

Hypersensitive, timid, servile--would isolate self at home.

¹³John Dewey, The School and Society, p. 19.

¹⁴Nahum E. Shoobs and George Goldberg, op. cit., pp. 189, 192.

Complaint: Work and conduct up to seventh grade had been good. Retardation caused shock and shame. He became a truant and joined a gang, was their leader, and was treasurer of pennies they stole from news stands. However he claimed he did not steal. Truancy discovered before he had time to become a confirmed delinquent. Assigned to counselor.

Earliest Recollection: Pleasant incidents of school life.

II. Family Constellation

Seventeen-year-old sister, graduate of high school, with brilliant record. He admires, yet envies her. Fears mother and father; thinks they are too strict with him.

III. Connection between His Family Relationships and Situation

1. He is the youngest child, is spoiled, petted, and pampered. Parents are not over strict. It seems to be a "common phenomenon" that the ingratitude and sense of being abused that a child feels increases in proportion to the amount of petting he receives.
2. He felt it was better to be a "hero" to a gang

of truants than to be no hero at all.

3. The odious remarks made by parents comparing his school record to his sister's discouraged him.
4. He wanted to keep the control and power afforded him, as youngest child, so he did not recognize his school failure as a fault of his.
5. David resorted to the unconscious element of revenge by "attacking" his parents at their weakest point, their pride in their children's high academic rating. When such a motive of revenge is present, it shows that the child feels that his prestige in his family relationships is destroyed. Then, as David did, when they feel that their parents are too severe, run away from home and school to rebuild their power and prestige. They welcome the opportunity to become a hero, even if it is in the eyes of undesirable companions. This marks the beginning of active delinquency. Fortunately David's truancy was noticed and his "activity nipped in the bud" making it possible to bring him back to wholesome living.

Counselors are warned to not use the terms attack and revenge, by telling the individual he

resorted to such means. It is better to praise him by remarking that he is too manly and has too much self-respect to harbor a feeling of revenge. Then tell him that instead of doing his duty he is misdirecting his efforts to prove to his parents that he is an important person. Such a statement is sufficient; it will sink into his mind and destroy the revenge motive. Turn conversation to pleasanter subjects and avoid this topic of revenge in other interviews.

IV. Assignment of Tasks--Rehabilitation

1. Join Boy Scouts.
2. Be co-operative and helpful at home. Act pleasant; volunteer to help mother.
3. Win approval at school by doing good work.
4. Prove he is no coward. Can prove his courage by regular attendance and hard work at school.
5. Study hard and make up lost work in summer.

(David's sister was advised not to help him, but to let someone else tutor him.)

David's mother was interviewed. She co-operated (1) by not censuring him when he did not attain high ratings; (2) by not comparing his achievement to his sister's; and (3) by praising him whenever possible.

David became co-operative at home and at school. His

school ratings were high, his attendance perfect, and he became popular with other students.

Children must have status at home and at school; otherwise they will seek it elsewhere, for it is a necessary feeling or need of all individuals young and adult.

A trained teacher or counselor is able to make satisfactory progress when the child is not confirmed in delinquency.

W. R. Goodson, Superintendent of Schools, Copperas Cove, Texas, administered the California Personality Test to a group of boys living on the Variety Club's Boys' Ranch, which is near Copperas Cove. These boys are either orphans, come from broken homes, or just were not wanted at home. They were compared to an equated group from normal homes. In speaking of the Ranch boys, Goodson says:

None of these boys are criminals, yet most of them would have been sent to the State Juvenile Training School at Gatesville if they had not been taken at the Boys' Ranch, since Texas does not provide enough space in noncorrective institutions for unfortunate boys. . . . the Boys' Ranch boys are maladjusted in how they think and feel about themselves. This is most evident in their lack of the sense of personal freedom, the sense of belonging and a tendency to withdraw. They approach the control group in self-reliance and the sense of personal worth.

The social adjustment of the group is not significantly different and they surpass the control group in the knowledge of social standards. This may be due to their having been so often scolded and lectured by the officials with whom they came

in contact before coming to the ranch.

As might be expected the family relationship section was significantly different, and some antisocial tendencies were displayed.¹⁵

To a teacher these data indicate, as do those from other sources, that the areas where children need the most assistance are:

1. Help to overcome withdrawal tendencies.
2. Help to feel a part of the group at school.
3. Help to develop some sense of personal freedom.

In order to accomplish these a teacher might follow in their work the aims of experienced psychiatrists which would be to first gain the confidence of the child, after which he could "drain off the excess anxiety," build up the "badly damaged self-confidence," and then it would be a matter of letting nature take its course, which in this instance would be permitting the "controlling and restraining forces of the ego to operate."¹⁶ Then the child could develop the courage to face life more realistically and honestly and the social interest to contribute to the group's welfare. As he progressed in these he would be able to expend more of his energy

¹⁵W. R. Goodson, "Variety Club Boys' Ranch," The Texas Outlook, (November, 1947), p. 12.

¹⁶Ralph Banay, op. cit., p. 148.

toward solving the objective problems of living. His attention would not be so divided as he would feel less compulsion to work at, express, and interweave into all his activities those unsatisfied needs, urges, and drives. His personality would become more integrated, which is a characteristic of the wholesome personality. Since integration of personality on a high level has been given as the "all-inclusive objective of education," it might be well to enumerate some means that have been found useful for promoting and elevating it in a child.

1. Respect and preserve his initial integrity.

When he is engrossed in some activity do not distract him by interrupting, since concentration of attention is "both a sign and a concomitant of integration." Encourage his persistence.

2. Encourage him to face and overcome his difficulties--this promotes integration on a high plane. To shield him unduly from difficulties robs him of the opportunity to achieve integration by enjoying success.

3. Stimulate him to choose and carry through worthwhile enterprises on a level of his ability.

This is a fundamental means of promoting his personality integration.

4. Encourage him to develop proper habits of relaxing, resting, and sleeping.

5. Encourage proper control of the emotions, with the use of a sense of humor as a means to emotional stability.¹⁷

A review of the causes and results of personality disorders reveals the important role within a group, at home and abroad, that each individual needs. Parents and others of a family can help their members to achieve such a feeling. Teachers can assist each of their pupils to secure it at school. It is more difficult for teachers than for parents to locate the children who are in need. While some children will indicate their needs by overt behavior, others by their conforming and shrinking away tactics conceal their lack of feelings of security and status. The above types of tests and many other types also reveal those children who are in need, and indicate the areas where their need is felt. It would seem that no teacher can afford to ignore the personality needs of her pupils, for by so doing she increases their feelings of inferiority, which in itself is conducive to delinquent behavior.

¹⁷John A. Hockett and E. W. Jacobsen, Modern Practices in the Elementary School, p. 202.

CHAPTER VI

PROGRAMS FOR ACTION

There is no one panacea for the ills of our youth that result in delinquency or potential delinquency or maladjustment. This is true because the cure, like the disorder, is an individual matter, and each child whose behavior is not acceptable must be dealt with as an individual. Professional people, federal, state and local governmental units, and social and welfare agencies are studying means to attack the problem of, and those co-existent to, juvenile delinquency. Recommendations for action have been made as a result of these various studies. Laws have been passed and funds voted, in some instances, so that proper action in the way of prevention and control might be taken. Some localities have made more progress than others in effecting a solution of their problems. This is because what is ultimately done and the utilization made of resources, informative and financial, is a matter of local disposition.

A. Treatment Afforded Children

Taken to Court

While neither the school nor the classroom teacher is responsible for the treatment given those of their pupils

who are taken to court, they are interested in the manner these children are dealt with because these same children will return to the playgrounds and the classrooms of the schools. With them they will bring their impressions of and their attitudes toward the courts. These they will impart to the other children and greatly influence their attitudes toward the courts and their respect of all "law and order."

The treatment given a child who has been apprehended is of necessity different to that given his brother who for some reason has not been caught. In every community the police or other law-enforcement officials and the juvenile courts represent the authoritative agencies that must deal with the children who get into trouble. At one time the juvenile court was charged with the responsibility of dealing with behavior problems of children, even in cases where no judicial action was called for. This point of view has changed until now most such children are referred to local welfare departments and social agencies. The juvenile court deals only with such cases as require judicial action. Procedures there, also, have changed. Now, in order to better serve the interests of the individual and society, careful consideration is given each case, and circumstances that will encourage or cause the delinquent to become confirmed in his delinquency are avoided. Such measures as

will assure constructive activity for him are used.

In order that children's cases can be disposed of intelligently it is advisable that the following measures be practiced:

1. Such cases be handled by a special unit of the police department, which is informed of the social resources of the community, alert to destructive influences, and responsible for guarding the rights of such children.
2. Court procedure based on the idea that children should be helped and protected rather than punished.
3. When necessary that a court detain children, adequate housing should be provided, which is apart from that used for the detention of adults. Above all, it is necessary that such cases be dispatched with speed.
4. At such times as the court finds it necessary to place a juvenile delinquent outside his family abode only the best of foster-family or institutional care is worthwhile.
5. Child-guidance services by a psychiatrist or other professionally informed worker should be provided to insure better mental-health conditions and treatment for behavior problem children. These services are of especial helpfulness when they are extended to the parents of the children treated.¹

B. Means for Eliminating Contributing Factors

School people, as other intelligent citizens, while appreciating the need for such protection of those children

¹United States Department of Labor, Controlling Juvenile Delinquency, pp. 18-24.

who are taken to court, consider of major importance the measures that might be effective in reducing and preventing juvenile delinquency.

Since the contributory factors were given as (1) the family, (2) the neighborhood, and (3) the school, the steps for treatment must necessarily be through these same avenues.

1. The Family

Much has been, and is being, done to assist families of meager financial means, such as federal housing projects and other measures that assist the head-of-the-house to provide adequately for his family. So that children from such homes may be aided, social-welfare agencies provide free school lunches for those who are found to be in need of them. These measures help to eliminate some of the factors that might cause the family to be a contributing agent to the problem. However all the homes and all the best meals that might be provided cannot eliminate friction that arises because of misunderstandings between the members of a family. This fact has caused informed people to promote a more recent method of attack, one applicable to most parents as well as those of delinquent children; namely, the program of adult education. This may be educational advantages for the father that will enable him to increase

his earning capacity, or for the mother to enable her to care for her family more intelligently, and for both to enable them to better understand their children and themselves. Among some of the reasons given by the psychologist Lyman Bryson for advocating adult education are:

We know that the mind does not lose its learning power as we grow older; there is no reason whatever for believing that an educational system can be allowed to end with youth.²

The same author also declares that:

Adults now outnumber children two to one, have two-thirds the education and carry all the responsibility.

In a world like ours today, parents instead of waiting for their children to learn what every adult knows, have to learn fast to keep up with their children. This applies to everybody including college graduates and members of the professions.³

The need for and importance of adult education that would help parents to better understand just what makes their children "tick" cannot be over-stressed. Some idea of the value of it may be had when one realizes that:

Since the first environmental influences brought to bear upon the young child are those of his parents or their surrogates, it may be assumed that the child's "personality" is clearly defined by the time

²Lyman Bryson, "Do We Need Adult Education," Ladies Home Journal, p. 134.

³Ibid., p. 40.

he reaches school age. The teacher is put in charge of an individual who has already taken a certain mould--to use an old-fashioned terminology. At the age of five or six, the basic personality structure, the tastes and inclinations operative in the selection of friends and leisure-time activities, and the ultimate social adjustments are all strongly determined. They have been determined largely by the family. . . . During the first five years of life--the preschool age--the child is almost entirely dependent upon its mother for the satisfaction of physical and psychological needs. The extent and manner in which these needs are met condition his personality pattern.⁴

Opinions advanced by others bear out these statements and give conclusive proof that in most cases of juvenile delinquency and child behavior disorders "the trail leads inevitably and directly back to the home."

Any educational privileges for parents that will promote a better understanding of their role in the development of their offspring then would surely be a worthwhile investment.

2. The Neighborhood

To eliminate the neighborhood as a contributing factor demands much and consistent effort on the part of the community. This will include legal authority for eliminating harmful influences backed by the support of public opinion

⁴Ralph S. Banay, Youth in Despair, p. 70.

of practices to assure effective legal enforcement, police supervision of public places where minors might be in danger of being victimized or exploited. Operators of commercial establishments furnishing refreshment, entertainment, or selling reading matter should be informed of influences that might contribute to delinquency of their youthful patrons, and their cooperation should be voluntarily given to measures that would keep their establishments free of such potentialities. In the rare instances when they fail to cooperate voluntarily public opinion should be of such a nature and strength as to induce cooperation.

Those citizens of each community who are sincerely and intelligently interested in the character building of their youth will evaluate the over-all atmosphere of the community to see that it is wholesome and conducive to the desirable development of their young people. In view of the following figures, as stated by Clement Malan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Indiana, the potential influence of the neighborhood on the character development of its younger members may be understood by considering how and where any child might spend his time.

To make a week's time table for an average youngster, allowing ample time for eating, sleeping, bathing and dressing, church and related activities, and school, someone has estimated:

21 hours for meals
56 hours for sleep

7 hours for bathing and dressing
 8 hours for church and related activities
 30 hours for school
 122 hours accounted for each week
 46 hours of leisure, or optional hours
 168 hours in the whole week
 It is fair to add, that when school is adjourned
 for three months in the summer, the youngster
 has this additional thirty free hours.⁵

The child then has from forty-six to seventy-six or
 even more hours each week to spend about as he pleases.
 Of course many have outside of school and home responsi-
 bilities and spend their time profitably. But we are all
 aware of the larger number of children and youths seen
 loitering on the streets or in public places; consequently
 how and where they spend their hours of unaccounted for
 time is the responsibility of the community, and, as it
 has been so aptly stated:

. . . in the last analysis the youngster is
 under the care and influence of the whole
 community. So, is it not reasonable to ex-
 pect that parents and citizens should be
 keenly alert and sensitive to the good and
 bad influences of their own communities.⁶

While the elimination of harmful influences is
 necessary, it is not sufficient. Opportunity for worth-
 while activity must be provided. This is being done by
 different localities along different lines. Some are

⁵Clement T. Malan, Constructive Programs to Reduce Juvenile Delinquency, p. 15.

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

finding the use of public school playgrounds and other facilities after school hours, on Saturday, and during summer vacation one way to provide the necessary place for activity. This has its merits and also its disadvantages and is a problem of such magnitude that its solution must be determined by each locality.

3. The School

The schools are accepting their responsibility as a factor that has a large place as a possible means for contributing to conditions conducive to delinquency. They are cooperating by many and varied programs to free their students from possible experiences that will cause or intensify existing causes of delinquency or maladjustment. The objective of the schools is the increasing of educational experiences for all children, for school people are well aware that whatever helps to make an all-around good school helps to prevent delinquency. However, much that is done or not done by the school to solve its problems is due to the attitude of the people, since it would seem that the school system of any locality is just as strong or as weak as the community interest in education. Or, as it has been stated:

In last analysis, the schools belong to the people. They will always reflect the kind

of education that the people really want or think they can afford.⁷

The place of community responsibility in education was emphasized by John Dewey. He realized that the majority of people regarded the school as a relationship between teacher and pupil or teacher and parent, and that those citizens who had no children in school had no interest in it. He insisted that the proper relationship should be like that of a large family, in which all were interested in the welfare of all, since the interests of one member either directly or indirectly affects the interests and rights of the others. He said:

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon it destroys our democracy. . . . Only by being true to the full growth of all the individuals who make it up can society by any chance be true to itself.⁸

Many communities, acting upon these principles, provide sufficient funds for the schools to maintain departments that can carry out activities in accord with the newest and most effective practices. And the personnel of

⁷ National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency, School and Teacher Responsibilities, p. 1.

⁸ John Dewey, The School and Society, p. 19.

the school system accept the allotted funds and expend them wisely and with strict integrity.

They, whose duty it is to do so, should provide a physical plant that is sufficiently large, well ventilated, lighted and heated. It should have adequate furniture and materials to meet the needs for instruction of the many subjects and experiences considered necessary in learning to live in modern society. Spacious playgrounds with a variety of equipment are considered a necessary part of the physical plant.

Other members of the school staff will be charged with the duty of providing educational activities for the pupils. They prescribe a course of study or curriculum for the school. According to latest practices, this curriculum is adjusted to the needs of the modern school child; it also is flexible, in order that it may be adjusted to suit individual needs. It makes provisions for the great variety of individual differences of ability and inclinations of the children. It gives them ample freedom to make personal selection of the activity or project with which they will occupy themselves. John Dewey made this interesting observation:

If education demands liberty before it can shape itself according to facts, how is it to use this liberty for the benefit of the child? Give a child freedom to find out

what he can do, both in the way of what is physically possible and what his neighbors will stand for, and he will not waste much time on impossibilities, but will bend his energies to the possibilities. The physical energy and mental inquisitiveness of the children can be turned into positive channels.⁹

The importance of allowing the pupils opportunity to make decisions for their own activities, then, becomes a part of the flexible curriculum along with a wealth of prescribed activities within the ability range of the class. The value of curriculum adjustment as a means of preventing juvenile delinquency is made clear by Esther Loring Richards, a capable child psychiatrist, whose experiences lead her to conclude:

If one were asked to state the commonest cause of maladjustment among the rank and file of school children I think it would be the discrepancy between child ability and the grade program with which he is struggling.¹⁰

The adjustment of the program to fit the pupil needs is largely the responsibility of the teacher and will be discussed later. This curriculum adjustment is only one of the many attempted means of solution employed by the schools, as other devices are found necessary and profitable.

⁹John Dewey, Schools of Tomorrow, p. 139.

¹⁰Esther L. Richards, Behaviour Aspects of Child Conduct, p. 53.

The Attendance Officer.--Since, in the schools, truancy is the symptom of delinquency most frequently encountered, and since it has been called "the kindergarten of crime,"¹¹ one can understand why the schools resort to means of curbing it, even though it, like all delinquency, is symptomatic and not the trouble or even indicative of the trouble. Many schools employ men, known officially as Attendance Officers, whose duty is to contact the truant and his home and try to encourage regular school attendance. Part of his function might be that of a policeman, but his major duty is that of a social worker, and consequently he must be a professionally trained individual, possessing desirable personality traits. He does perform his police tasks by aiming to get the child back in school, but his obligation as a social worker tempers this in that it is not done irrespective of the child's and his parents' attitude toward the school. Henry J. Otto, Graduate Professor of Elementary Administration and Curriculum at the University of Texas, expresses the work of the attendance department in this way:

It aims, rather, to win the confidence of both the child and the parent, so that when the child does reenter school it will be with a new appreciation of the school's work and his

¹¹William Healy, Address, N. E. A. Proceedings, Volume 64, p. 116.

relation to it, so that he will no longer be a maladjusted individual.¹²

Another area of the work of the attendance officer is that of influencing public opinion, especially when the truant is found attending a neighborhood moving picture show or working at odd jobs for a small business concern. In such instances he can influence the one to discourage or prohibit admittance at the show to school-age children during school hours, and he can influence the other to not employ children of school age while school is in session. These examples show something of the nature of assistance rendered the community and the school, in eliminating factors that contribute to delinquency by the officers of the attendance department of the school.

The Visiting Teacher.--Behavior problem manifestation within the school room was the next field the schools attacked to effect a solution of some of its problems of delinquency. The visiting teacher movement was the avenue of attack. The Visiting Teacher, also called Home and School Visitor, is a woman whose experience as a classroom teacher and training and experience as a social-worker fit her to handle cases the classroom teacher cannot understand. Problems of below-standard-scholastic accomplishment with

¹²Henry J. Otto, Elementary School Organization and Administration, p. 330.

their accompanying behavior problems were her first concern. The value of the assistance from a visiting teacher program was not universally appreciated; consequently in 1919 a national meeting was called to develop standards of work and to promote the development in other localities. The organization planned to hold annual meetings alternately with the National Conference of Social Work and the National Education Association.

Impetus was given the visiting teacher movement in 1921, when the Commonwealth Fund included it in its program for the Prevention of Delinquency. The directors of the Fund realized that maladjustment of the school child, whether it resulted in delinquency or not, was a problem worthy of consideration, since much delinquency could be prevented if the behavior and personality problems were dealt with early in the school life of the child. Provision was made for visiting teachers to be placed in thirty communities scattered over the United States. The results of the studies made of this experience showed a need for guidance in health, personality development and vocation selection. Realization of these aims meant a broadening of the activities of the school program. Howard Nudd expressed its enlargement this way:

The school is looking out as well as in for the enchantment of its purpose and is adding

twenty-four hour construction to its former five hours of instruction.¹³

Guidance Programs.--Many schools, in order to better meet the needs of their pupils and eliminate many existing difficulties that result in delinquency, are organizing guidance programs. The term "guidance" is so new that it has a variety of meanings. Yet it does have some over-all objectives, which are summed up in this statement:

Guidance involves the sympathetic understanding of pupil interests, aptitudes, and abilities, together with the conscious effort to help each pupil make the most of them. Guidance is not something which the teacher does to the pupil. It is a process whereby the teacher encourages the pupil to have the desire and power to do something for himself.¹⁴

Guidance practices are built on the accepted idea of the purpose of the school, which is to educate its pupils for social living, fitting them to contribute of their best to the common good, socially and economically. Its purpose is to help the children make wise decisions for themselves, to understand their abilities and set desirable and attainable goals.

The place of guidance in the educational program of

¹³Mary C. Sayles and Howard W. Nudd, The Problem Child in School, p. 280.

¹⁴Clifford E. Erickson and M. C. Happ, Guidance Practices at Work, p. 6.

the elementary school is well expressed thus:

Neither the teacher nor anyone else can educate youths. The activities of pupils, actual and potential, are themselves the instrumentalities of education. If the school can affect these activities, stimulating and rewarding some, avoiding and discouraging or sublimating others, it can be effective as an educational institution.

Such stimulations, rewards, avoidances, discouragements, and sublimations are implied in the term "guidance" as it is used in respect to the program in the elementary school. Guidance is the methodology of self-adjustment, and hence, of true education.¹⁵

Erickson and Happ report that Glen Ellyn, Illinois, has a guidance program that seems to be exceptionally well organized and one that they consider justifies the time consumed. This program is based on the premise that since the preschool round-up is successfully assisting the children to be healthier, measures to facilitate the child's adjustment to the new experiences of a larger social-world and different activities would be valuable. During the summer a letter is sent to the parents of prospective first graders. This has an explanatory paragraph followed by a check list of points that should contribute to a more satisfactory adjustment of the child. There are eleven of these, but only a few are quoted for examples:

3. Is he ready to meet happily the experiences of being left by his mother in

¹⁵Philip W. L. Cox and J. C. Duff, Guidance by the Classroom Teacher, p. 3.

some place besides his home?

7. Is he sufficiently mature to be interested in doing things with his hands?
8. Does he listen quietly to stories and music?
11. Do you give him an opportunity to put his ideas into words, listening attentively while he tells about the things he sees and does?¹⁶

A second letter is sent when the child enters school, welcoming him and giving seven points on which the parents' cooperation is requested. Some of these points are:

4. When he comes home from school, do not ask him what he learned today. He will tell about his experience later, so wait until he brings it up.
7. Never discuss the child with the teacher, principal, or anyone else when the child is present.¹⁷

So that the teachers can know what to expect from individual children, Metropolitan Readiness Tests are administered to all the first-grade children the first week of school, followed by the Stanford-Binet examination. The use of these, with other procedures has been useful in preventing many cases of retardation.

Where children transfer to this system measures are taken to achieve a satisfactory adjustment of the child.

¹⁶Clifford E. Erickson and M. C. Happ, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 18.

Achievement and intelligence tests are administered to determine his level of achievement and his level of general ability. The school from which he transferred is contacted and then in a conference between teacher, parent, principal, and the guidance director a decision is reached as to where he should be placed. This school does not have a promotion at mid-term, which makes for a problem in adjustment.

Some educators argue that problems of social adjustment have no place in the elementary school because of the social immaturity of the elementary school child. The opposite view is taken by many others, however, and the reasons for considering it are well expressed by F. G. Macomber, Professor of Education at the University of Oregon:

Yet the very characteristics which make for happy or unhappy married life are being developed throughout the elementary school. Selfishness, unwillingness to cooperate with others, lack of a sense of responsibility, and similar characteristics are all-too-common elements of wrecked marriages. A first-grade child who is quarrelsome, who cannot work and play well with others, and who always insists on having his own way is a potential defendant in the divorce court.¹⁸

Social adjustment is only one phase or area of the guidance program. Other areas are health, recreational,

¹⁸Freeman G. Macomber, Guiding Child Development, p. 288.

educational, and vocational guidance. Need for physical health guidance can easily be seen and has long been a part of the educational program. Mental health guidance is taught more indirectly and not so much directly.

Henry J. Otto explains its function:

Mental hygiene is the indirect yet positive contribution to emotional and personality development and to social adjustment which the school makes through the way in which the teachers, the curriculum, methods of teaching, and the administrative practices relate themselves to the children.¹⁹

The attempts at adjusting the school curriculum to meet the abilities and interests of the pupils is indicative of the realization of the importance of a healthful mental environment to pupil growth. Schools are not stressing the accumulation of a vast store of knowledge of facts and skills irrespective of their value to the individual. The stress is now on the utilization that can be made of the knowledge, how it is learned, and how the pupils feel about it.

Recreational guidance is found necessary at the elementary school level. Most adults are prone to think that given an opportunity to play, all children will do so. Observation has disproved this idea. Children are quick to recognize the lack of ability to play certain games,

¹⁹Henry J. Otto, op. cit., p. 103.

in themselves and others. As a consequence in games of team play the less fortunate child is left out of the game. Often he realizes his shortcomings, accepts them as such, and does not question his being excluded from the playing of such contests. To avoid such circumstances calls for close observation on the part of the teacher to make sure that all children are given an opportunity to participate. At times it may be wise for the teacher to contact the parents of such a child to secure their assistance in aiding him. An example of such a circumstance would be in the playing of contest team games such as baseball. If a child is a poor batter he will not be considered a good player and will not be chosen to play, or if the rules for play are such that all must participate, then he will be chosen last. The parents of this child could help him by getting him a ball and bat to play with at home, in order to improve his batting ability.

Vocational guidance in the elementary school is vastly different from that in the secondary school; it does not mean selecting and training in a vocation. Adults are well aware of the play activity of youngsters when they pretend they are "grown-ups." Small boys talk of how they plan to be a fireman or a policeman. The schools utilize this interest and the observational capacity of the children to develop the vocational studies of the curriculum. The child is lead

into experiences that give him an insight into different vocations and the skills necessary to perform them. He is encouraged to develop the personality characteristics essential to success in any vocation.

A well organized guidance program requires the use of cumulative records. Preferably this record begins with information of the child's pre-school years; to it is added his elementary school record, which is passed on to the secondary school to enable it to better advise pupils on the subjects to study when electives are permitted.

The effectiveness and success of any guidance program depends upon close cooperation between parents and teachers. The Parent-Teacher Association is organized to facilitate parent-teacher acquaintance and understanding. A vast number of parents fail to attend the meetings of this organization and to meet the needs of the teachers to become familiar with the home environment of their pupils many schools plan for teacher-visitation in the homes of the children. Regular times for visitation are scheduled and the home is aware that the teacher is going to visit. There are some localities where such a procedure would not be practical and other means are employed such as teacher-parent conferences at school, when the teacher reports the pupil's progress to the parents. This method is used instead of the grade-card method of reporting.

Teacher visitation and teacher-parent conference methods both serve several purposes, a major one of which is the prevention of misunderstanding. In both the teacher must always take the initiative, keep the meeting on a friendly basis and avoid letting personalities enter into the conversation. She must realize that parents differ as greatly as children and must make her plans accordingly.

Teacher visitation as a part of the guidance program or as a means of acquainting the classroom teacher with the background of her pupils has no substitute, especially in a school such as J. T. Brackenridge School. These pupils are bi-lingual and have a cultural background quite different from the teachers. To understand and appreciate this background will help the teacher to better "learn" her pupils so that she can better teach them. There is a French proverb to the effect that "to understand all is to forgive all." Learning more of a child's family background and his personality, by home visitation, certainly should pay large dividends to the school and the teacher who invests part of her time in it.

CHAPTER VII

THE INDIVIDUAL TEACHER DEALS WITH PROBLEMS OF MALADJUSTMENT

What are the things a teacher can do to control the development of unsocial and antisocial tendencies and maladjustment in her room? There are many factors, but, to the writer, some seem more valuable than others. Those selected are:

- A. The teacher.
- B. Mental hygiene in the classroom.
- C. Meeting the emotional needs of children.
- D. Discipline.
- E. The curriculum.

A. The Teacher As a Factor

In the final analysis it would seem that the teacher is the most important factor in the school due to his close relationship with the children. He is the one in personal contact with them, he uses or misuses all materials, and he interprets and manipulates the curriculum. In truth, it would seem that as far as most children in the elementary school are concerned the teacher is the school.

With remarkably few exceptions teachers appreciate these facts and as individuals and as groups study and

evaluate their procedures and themselves in order to be efficient in their work. As has been so well stated, they realize that:

The teacher is the most important factor in the school situation with respect to the adjustment of the pupil. The pupil's learning is conditioned not only by "how much the teacher knows" but also to a considerable extent by the personality traits of the teacher and the psychological relationships existing between teacher and pupils.¹

For these reasons the teaching staff of the school is appraising the attitudes and activities of the teachers in the light of the principles advanced in mental hygiene. Here is a well expressed opinion concerning it:

There is one highly personal and especially difficult obstacle that confronts the teacher in his effort to become a well-integrated personality. Among all adults, personal adjustment depends in a large measure upon the extent to which they can free themselves from a number of persistent infantile reactions and emotional compulsions. This consideration is of utmost importance in the case of the teacher since the ideal of self which he holds should be expressed by the kind of personality which youth will find sufficiently attractive to emulate--not reject or avoid.²

B. Mental Health in the Classroom As a Factor

In a sane teacher-pupil relationship there is nothing

¹Herman H. Remmers and N. L. Gage, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, p. 450.

²National Education Association, Mental Health in the Classroom, pp. 39-40.

that can take the place of the teacher's interest in, and regard for, the pupils. This means all the pupils and not only the more acceptable ones. The teacher should avoid adopting the rather prevalent though erroneous concept that emotional maturity has been reached when one can succeed in hiding all feelings. It would seem impossible for children to develop desirable emotional reactions in an atmosphere of feeling-rigidity and emotional-frigidity. On the other hand any display of feeling must not be profuse. Yet it must be warm, sincere, and genuine, and not doled out as if it were a rationed commodity.

Children are quick to detect any sham or counterfeit display of emotion. When dealing with Latin-American children one must be able to accept them quite whole-heartedly. This short account will serve to illustrate how readily they can react to anything else.

An energetic young woman accepted a position as teacher for a lower grade in a school of Latin-American children in South Texas. She was motivated by a missionary spirit, and said that it was her aim to do good among them. A few weeks after school had started she realized that the pupils of her class were taking the problems of the settlement of their differences among themselves to another teacher. She was puzzled and hurt. Upon questioning some of the children as to why they went to the other teacher, at the same time

reminding them that they were in her room and that she was interested in them, she was frankly informed, "Yes, Miss Blank, but whenever you come near us or touch us, you shiver."

There come times, however, when accepting these children whole-heartedly is not so simple. Some pupils of the school concerned in this study became infected with itch or infested with lice and were suspended from school until they were "clean." Of those sent home for either of the above mentioned reasons, some were able to return as soon as the following morning; others were not so fortunate. There are instances where the parents do not cooperate with the child and help him make himself presentable. There are others in which the child is "clean" but does not desire to come back to school. Some of these suspended children never return to school and become active delinquents. This is one area where a visiting teacher could do much to prevent many of these cases of delinquency by helping the parents to better understand the importance of the necessary cleanliness measures and also to realize the value of regular attendance. The classroom teacher can do much to help the suspended children return to school as soon as possible. One does not need much imagination to realize that the poor children who fail to return are suffering from embarrassment and a feeling of not belonging. To insure the return

of a child as quickly as possible the teacher needs to exercise a little understanding when he is sent home. It is imperative that he realize that it is only the condition that is rejected. This will ease his embarrassment at returning and meeting the teacher and the rest of the group.

How can the teacher send a child home when he is infected or infested and yet keep him from feeling rejected? The teacher cannot hand him the school-provided paper, which prescribes treatment, as from a "ten-foot pole." He must be able to pat the child on the back, advise him to follow the directions on the paper, and add, "Hurry and get back, for we'll miss you." He must be sincere in what he says and he must not "shiver" while he says it. Everything possible must be done to keep the girl or boy from "losing face" at such times, as at all other times.

A sense of humor can do much to keep up the mental health of any group and is especially helpful in a classroom. There is an old saying, which we all accept, that a "merry heart doeth good like a medicine" and it has a double action in that it "blesses him who gives and him who takes." Yet there are those people who think that school teachers have no sense of humor. Can it be possible that the following accusation is true?

In certain occupations like that of the teacher, for example, it becomes an essential of first

importance, although in the view of some, this is precisely the calling where the sense of humor is likely to be absent.³

The easing of tension with a sense of humor will certainly bless both the teacher and the pupils.

Teachers are often advised that a positive approach in dealing with pupils is more effective than a negative approach. Yet these same advisers fail to provide them with techniques or concrete examples to supplement the abstract truths so that they can improve their approach. These ends are not readily achieved and as John Geisel says:

. . . Self-improvement--the source and end result of positive behavior--is a life long problem. Actually, however, the problem of improving one's personal and social relationships cannot be solved except by attacking it and making this attack of everyday living.⁴

Geisel observed teachers in their dealings with their pupils and noted what he considered the desirable effective behavior on the part of the teacher. He classified it under the following heads: "showing interest, agreeing, making balanced criticisms, approving, understanding, and forgiving."

How do teachers show interest in a child's activity

³William H. Burnham, The Wholesome Personality, p. 211.

⁴John B. Geisel, "Cues to Positive and Negative Behavior," School Review, Volume 52, p. 41.

or conversation? This may be accomplished by looking at and listening to the child, and by asking for more information on the activity or the topic of conversation. Some such comments as "That's interesting" and "And then what?" might be heard often.

How do teachers show agreement? This may be done by nodding the head, or smiling, or concurring to the child's proposal of what to do or play.

There come times when it is not possible to fully agree with a child, yet the teacher does not wish to disagree. These are the times when balanced criticisms are desirable, as they give the child credit for the truth or desirability of his proposal. Teachers use such comments as, "Your idea is good, especially in this connection; however, you might find it hard to use elsewhere."

How do teachers show approval? They may show approval of a child's choice of friends, of his preference for or dislike of some object or activity. Approving is signified in about the same manner as is agreeing.

How do teachers show affection for a pupil? There are, and should be, very subtle ways, such as by helping him to get work so he can earn money to buy needed clothing or to spend for some school activity or materials. Affection for a child is also shown by protecting him from embarrassment, or from abuse by others, and by keeping him from

making some serious error.

Approval is also shown by teachers by making use of praise. This is used as a device for spurring pupils to greater effort, and the withholding of praise serves as a means of showing disapproval or dislike. Thus teachers are able to avoid finding fault and criticizing.

How do teachers show understanding? Children need to feel that their teachers understand them and at the same time they need to be assured that this understanding has not caused them to lose status. Teachers may show this by making use of balanced criticisms, by suspending judgment, by some good humor, and sometimes by forgetting.

Also children need to feel that their mistakes are forgiven. To show this teachers may indicate that it was the act and not the child that was rejected. They do not hold a grudge against a child, and they give him a feeling that he will have another chance. After a child has been reproved for a misdeed, too much time must not lapse before his "forgiveness" is indicated.

These devices, which have been listed, are only a sampling of the possible means of keeping a desirable atmosphere in a classroom, where positive responses are more valuable than negative responses. By using procedures to maintain an atmosphere where mental-health is assured, the teacher can contribute to the physical well-being of his

pupils. He will help them to make more satisfactory adjustments and their progress in school will be more certain.

C. Meeting the Emotional Needs of the Children As a Factor

If maladjustments are to be avoided, eliminated, or eased in the classroom, whatever practices that might meet the emotional needs of children will be of great value. Children often miss out on the good things of life. Some have too little love and comradeship, too little steadiness, too little opportunity for peace and calm, too little of the healthy give and take we consider as normal needs for children. Then, there are other children who get too much. They may be over-controlled, over-protected, loaded down with cares and demands.

There have always been children whose emotional needs were not met, but there will be more of them in the schools now than ever before. They will be the "War Babies," those children born since Pearl Harbor. Those children whose father was off fighting a war, and whose mother, torn by worry and anxiety, was unable to be both father and mother to the child. This child was one of a group of children who were born, and grew and kept on growing until now they are big enough to start to school, yet many of them did not grow in emotional experiences that would be considered the

most desirable. James L. Hymes, Jr. calls them the "Purple Heart Brigade," for they were hurt as surely as were their wounded fathers.⁵ To illustrate the extent and seriousness of their injuries to their teachers he tells this story:

Picture a bus stopping at the corner. It is rush time and the crowd squeezes to get in. Now all are in except one, the man who did not push. With a hand on each side of the door he lifts his body up. His right leg is stiff and he swings it up in a rigid arc. The man rests for a second on the step.

Behind, the cars honk. The driver is impatient. He snaps, "C'mon, slow poke, I ain't got all day."

The passenger flushes. He pulls himself up another step and in. It is when he pays his fare that the driver sees in his lapel the button . . . a Purple Heart.

"Gee, buddy, I'm sorry." And softly, "I didn't know."

You may want to blame. You may feel you should get strict. You may think names and labels and sometimes want to call them. But there are things you cannot know. For the man, a leg lost at Anzio. For the child--"War Baby" or not--who knows what happened inside? Or when?

But always, when it is too late, softly we must say, "I'm sorry. I didn't know."⁶

Does trying to identify and classify, then attempt to satisfy the needs of these children seem an overlarge assignment? Well, perhaps it does. Yet it seems that just

⁵James L. Hymes, Jr., A Pound of Prevention, p. 8.

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

exactly that is being expected of the elementary school teacher now. Let us see what Hymes suggests as means to that end.

First, the teacher must sincerely want to help these children. Then, he must believe that they want to do the right thing in spite of the fact that their experiences have given them strange and objectionable patterns of behavior for showing their feelings. Next, he must learn the circumstances of their background, by conversing with the children and getting acquainted with their parents. He must take time to understand them, for it will not be possible to do it readily. Next, he should not take their misconduct personally and should not try to place the blame for it. Lastly, he must consider his attitude; that is what really matters. These will furnish a base on which to build.

The daily program can be used to give the children the "four boosters they need: friendliness from the teacher, freedom for their feelings to come out, getting in with the gang, and a chance to learn, to give, to succeed."

D. Discipline As a Factor

The teacher who follows the principles of mental health and who makes allowances for the emotional needs of his pupils will be able to deal with the discipline problems

that arise in an objective manner. Discipline of his class will not be an unpleasant chore and his position as teacher or leader of the group will be respected.

There will be instances, however, when he will have discipline problems to solve. It so happens that the type of discipline a certain child will respond to may depend upon the form he is accustomed to at home. There are two extremes in this respect; most teachers are familiar with both. We have all seen children who behaved so well under certain circumstances, but when removed from that particular environment or influence, they acted as if they were at a loss to know what to do. This often happens when the child is accustomed to the "bribe" or "reward" or "to please me" method. The other extreme form of discipline is the authoritative or autocratic. Most Latin-American children seem to be accustomed to this type at home; consequently they will more readily respond to it at school.

Teachers do not like to resort to authoritative measures to maintain order, but circumstances may force them on occasion to do so. Rare indeed are the instances when teachers apply the other extreme or "bribe" method. The desirable or democratic type is well described by Hockett and Jacobsen in this paragraph:

Discipline has been described as the fine art of making disciples. The worthy person, however, wishes disciples for the cause he represents not merely personal satellites. So the

teacher uses her influence to build in her pupils allegiance to the ideals and standards she upholds and practices. If her leadership is of the type that makes her pupils dependent upon her and leaves them weaker when her influence is withdrawn, she is leading away from the goal rather than toward it.

It would seem that we are all agreed that there must be order and control in any social group so that it can function effectively. This is true of the home, the school, and other groups. The members of the group, however, should practice self-control. Pupils in the school should be assisted in developing this ability, which will take much patience and persistent effort on the part of the teacher. According to the accepted psychological concept, learning self-control, as is all learning, is experiencing, and is achieved only by repeated experiencing.

We are all aware that democratic procedures vary, and in order to learn more pertaining to them, Alvin F. Zander, a professor of educational psychology of the University of Michigan, examined and analyzed the three most commonly found types in terms of their effects on the children involved. The effect on the leader or teacher of the group is of vital interest to teachers. While Zander used three club groups, nevertheless in his study he emphasizes the fact that a classroom would have done as well. The three

John A. Hockett and E. W. Jacobsen, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

group climates were classified as: dominating or authoritarian procedures; laissez-faire or let-them-work it out alone procedures, and group-integrating or "democratic" procedures.

This is the way Zander explains them: An authoritarian climate--The leader keeps the group under his control, always being the dominating influence. His need for power finds an outlet "by pushing around little boys." He uses the group for his personal gratification. The group reacts by resorting to tension releasing behavior such as fighting or aimless running around. They offer no suggestions for activity, since the leader plans that and his ideas are untouchable. They are learning that it is good to stand in with the boss, and that one can "gold-brick" on the job.

A laissez-faire climate--The hands-off leader is more of a spectator, as he directs no activity. The group has no set goals; therefore the members are learning to live outside set rules that should give them mutual protection. Each one is striving to gain his personal ends by whatever method seems best to him. As a whole the group is much like a gang on a street corner, with the adult leader more like a spy to keep the group from misbehaving.

A democratic climate--The group-integrating leader considers the needs of each member in terms of the group.

The members realize the value of cooperation to achieve worthwhile goals. The planned program is flexible and the ends to be achieved are more important than the activities. The members are creative, they are learning to figure things out for themselves, and they are deriving self-assurance from such activity. To them the "goods" and "shoulds" are rules of the game which lend confidence and are releasing rather than inhibiting.

Which climate is best? In a democratic society which needs cooperative, turn-taking, we-spirited personalities, the last climate is best. The "gold-bricker" of the first group and the confused drifter of the second do not contribute much to a social organization such as ours. Zander concludes that teachers who can create a similar group climate are needed if we are to give children opportunity to experience such group activities. Delinquent behavior and other manifestations of maladjustment are the rare exceptions in groups that are able to attain a high standard of group integration and cooperate in activities that promote the welfare of all.⁸

E. The Curriculum As a Factor

That the curriculum must be adapted to the ability of

⁸Alvin F. Zander, "Within the Bonds of Freedom," Childhood Education, (September, 1947), pp. 23-26.

the class is a truism every teacher can appreciate. How that is to be achieved is his problem. The average class will consist of pupils with a wide range of abilities. The teacher may have, for example, a class of first graders but not a first-grade class, as some pupils will show ability far below the third-grade level, some will approximate the grade level, and still others will be above the level.

In searching for material that might clarify the evaluation of the ability of an average group, the writer chose a study made by Esther Richards, Professor of Psychiatry at John Hopkins School of Medicine, since it seemed applicable to a class of Latin-American children. The children who did not approximate the ability for a particular grade level might generally be divided into four groups:

1. Those who are obviously retarded and defective--who seldom advance beyond the fourth or fifth grades--this group makes up about twenty-five per cent of the class in the lower grades.
2. Those psychology calls "dull-normals"--who by dint of much pushing and prodding along manage to pass into junior school.
3. Those who might go faster than others in their grade, but their ability is unrecognized because of temperamental characteristics or because of total lack of desirable habit training.

4. A small but distressing group with intellectual ability who are unable to grasp some certain subject through the method of teaching found effective with the majority.

In brief Richards discusses these groups further:

1. The mentally retarded constitute the bulk of truants because of the succession of scholastic failures they have to endure. These children have the same basic needs and urges as their more fortunate comrades. They have the same emotions to express but a limited means of expressing them. They look forward to an economic future with the same expectations as the others but are limited in their means of realizing their dreams. In school they should not be subjected to the ill-feelings generated by constant failure which leads to delinquency or nervous breakdown. Their limited ability should be learned early in their school career and then they should be given training within their ability, so that they can enjoy success in the form of regular promotions. These children will need much assistance in getting adjusted at school as they will seem to be determined to follow their own urges. After they are understood individually, they are ready for the formal curriculum.

Too often schools have been content to give these children a form of busy work to occupy their time, and to insist that they keep up their attendance record until they reach the age when the law releases them to the world of wage-earners. But what of them? They are neither equipped by nature nor by training for a vocation. Consequently they soon join the stream of human failures who flock to the social agencies for assistance. When their limited capacity is ascertained early and they are trained accordingly they develop agreeable personalities and can become self-supporting citizens. True, they can never become skilled laborers, such as carpenters, plumbers, or master mechanics, but they can become faithful, efficient, and responsible workers in those trades.

2. This group of "dull-normals" is harder to detect. They often rate an intelligent quotient of around one hundred in the elementary school administered tests. It is well to remember, however, that such ratings taken below twelve years of age are not prophetic. These children's progress in the lower grades will be satisfactory; they will seem to grasp the subject. However, at times their attention will "flicker." They reach the limits of

their ability somewhere in junior high school. Then the strain of advanced academic school work will show up as "nerves" or delinquency, and their courses should be changed from academic to vocational. Their emotional reactions will have seemed a little queer all these years. They may prolong childishness and reactions of immaturity such as stubbornness and unintelligent lying and stealing until they are well along into adolescence. Often these shortcomings seem to be due to a kind of moral delinquency.

3. This group consists of bright children who have been permitted to develop undesirable habits in their home training. They are often unruly, and refuse to comply with regulations, are subject to truancy, and at times are so full of mischief that they are destructive. These children have practically unlimited physical energy that must be given legitimate outlets. Their ability must be recognized and challenged, and often their environment will need to be changed. Under desirable conditions they become honor students in comparison to the objectionable ones who lie, steal, or resort to sex misconduct or rowdiness when kept under an environment where they are not understood.

4. Lastly, there is the bright child whose performance is not consistent. He will excel in most subjects, but fail in one. This difficulty is often recognized in the early grades, but he is promoted because of his accomplishments, while little if anything is done about his lack of accomplishment in the one subject. In case the deficiency is in reading, he has soon progressed to about the fourth grade where he is definitely in "deep-water" and he is considered as below average. He will lie about fulfilling the requirements of home-work assignments requiring reading. This child should be given special work with his reading difficulty. Often in six months' time he will be able to eliminate his handicaps, after which he may easily lead his class.⁹

Along with his consideration of adjusting the curriculum to a class with possible variations such as that just discussed, the teacher of the Latin-American child has other considerations to bear in mind. This bi-lingual group will exhibit many degrees of ability in understanding English. Some of them often will speak English at home; others seldom; and others never. Most teachers of these children are

⁹Esther L. Richards, Behavior Aspects of Child Conduct, pp. 63-75.

familiar with the surprised look given them on Monday morning by those children who for two days have heard no English and require a short time after each week-end to re-acustom themselves to an English-language environment. These pupils need much training in sentence structure and conversation.

At examination time due consideration must be given their language handicap. The regular essay-type of examination is not a satisfactory way to test their knowledge. Their language difficulty operates to penalize them on both the objective and the essay-type examinations, but to a far greater degree on the latter. This is thought to be due to the fact that the objective-type requires "recognition" of words, while the essay-type calls for "recall" of vocabulary. Teachers are advised to provide sufficient objective-type examinations for these children to enable them to enjoy a sufficient degree of success to compensate for their failure to make good grades when taking the essay-type.

Teachers of all children are often reminded not to rely solely on intelligence tests for appraising the ability of their pupils. This is doubly true with the bi-lingual child whose language handicap may easily be interpreted as an intelligence handicap.¹⁰

These factors have been suggested as useful in aiding

¹⁰Norma V. Scheidemann, The Psychology of Exceptional Children, pp. 360-362.

the teacher to understand his pupils better and thereby help him to give them the individual training they need in connection with their problems of adjustment. All factors may not be applicable to every case of maladjustment, but the use of even one will help the child to realize that his teacher is interested in him and trying to help him. He will know the value of a friend and can easily be helped to respond to unfavorable circumstances that come his way in a more acceptable manner for having had a wholesome association with his teacher and his classmates.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The treatment and consideration afforded a delinquent has radically changed during the last sixty years. In contrast to being looked upon as a criminal, or at least a person obsessed by criminal tendencies, the delinquent has come to be considered as an individual who is in need of understanding and constructive treatment. Society is no longer satisfied with punishing him for his misdeeds. It seeks rather to learn the causes of his maladjustments and to assist him to make satisfactory readjustments.

Physicians and other professional people are making studies of individual conduct. The findings are being passed on to society in general, to the schools, and to the classroom teachers. Interpretations of the information accumulated with recommendations for its application to specific types of problems is also provided so that it can be used by those desiring to do so.

For the youngster whose conduct is not acceptable the community, the schools, and the classroom teachers are offering assistance. He is no longer dealt with as a problem child but as a child with a problem. The old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is

applied in dealing with him. Measures that will prevent the child's becoming a delinquent are appreciated. Society is seeking to eliminate the factors that contribute to his delinquency. The schools are studying his life at school in relation to his problem. The classroom teachers are searching for means to help him make satisfactory adjustments to living in a larger society than the home.

Whatever will contribute to helping the individual become a well-adjusted, self-supporting, happy and responsible member of society is considered as a necessary part of the school program. Individual differences of natural endowment are appraised and work and experiences to fit each child's ability are becoming a part of the school curriculum.

In setting down the information gathered the writer used only that which seemed applicable to the problems of maladjustment and delinquency in J. T. Brackenridge School.

As means for eliminating some of the contributing factors to delinquency, it became apparent that adult education would be valuable, since it would help the parents of the children of the school to better understand the child and his needs. Those things that cause him to feel insecure could be guarded against, if the parents were aware of them.

The schools could better meet the needs of the non-academic child if his abilities and capacities and maladjustments were learned from tests administered at regular intervals.

It was found that the classroom teacher has a responsibility to his pupils by providing an atmosphere in which the mental hygiene requirements of the child are met. By careful interpretation of tests he can accommodate the curriculum to the needs of his pupils. By being human and considerate he can meet their emotional needs and give them experiences that will eliminate much of the personality disorders that result in delinquent behavior.

It is interesting to note that John Dewey appraised the school systems of our country over thirty years ago. After having done this he made recommendations of desirable changes. These were in regard to the physical plant, and the tendency of the teacher to make the child conform to the school rather than the school to the child. He suggested the need of providing activities to meet the varying abilities and interests of the non-academic child. These same weak points in the school are still being listed as factors in the schools that contribute to delinquency. One can only wonder at what the overall results might have been if society had seen fit to act more fully on Dewey's recommendations. Surely the status of American young manhood

would be different. What would have been the effects on our preparedness for World War II? Would there have been such a drastic increase in juvenile delinquency during and after the war?

It would seem that the authoritative opinions of specialists in the different fields pertaining to juvenile delinquency and its treatment substantiate provisions quite similar to those recommended by Dewey. Experience has proved to these specialists that measures taken in the schools to provide activities for each child that recognize his individual interests and abilities do much to provide educational opportunities for a larger number of children. When children have something interesting to do at school they do not need to search for such experiences elsewhere.

The schools which have endeavored to study the needs of the individual pupils and then endeavored to adjust the curriculum so that the needs of all pupils will be met enthusiastically endorse the employment of Personality Tests in conjunction with Intelligence and Achievement Tests. By doing so, the schools locate the socially maladjusted child and help him to adjust himself more favorably. This principle has been helpful in preventing and controlling juvenile delinquency. It also eliminates much unhappiness among those maladjusted pupils who do not resort to delinquent behavior as an avenue of compensation for their thwarted

desires.

Teachers who study their pupils, all the while keeping in mind the legitimacy of each individual's personality, understand and appreciate the needs of all their pupils. Consequently, they are better satisfied teachers, as they are able to avoid much of the friction generated by misunderstanding of pupils. And they are better teachers, for under their tutelage the maladjusted child becomes better adjusted and the potential delinquent develops a more wholesome personality.

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