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GUIDANCE FOR THE CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED

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My remarks will be restricted to those aspects of the question closely related to the academic achievement of children from culturally deprived districts. In doing so I will presume that you accept the principle that education means much more than simply the ability to calculate or to read.

I shall further presume an understanding of the economic and cultural importance of education in society today. Therefore my remarks will be concerned mainly with those aspects of education that are to be found within the school system and with the relationship of cultural deprivation to what might be called "getting a good education."

I shall state as well without documentation that children of lower intelligence are found in greater numbers in regions of cultural deprivation. We cannot, therefore, overlook the likelihood that children coming from these backgrounds do not bring with them the intellectual potential that can be usually found in children coming from middle- or upper-class backgrounds. Many of the school difficulties of such children surely can be traced to low mental ability.

However, I am more concerned at this time with the relationship of the familial and environmental influences on the use that is made of the intellectual ability that the child does possess. This, of course, would include the factors that would encourage, or restrict, the full development of the intellectual ability or potential of the child.

In the literature there is certainly overwhelming evidence of the influence of the attitude of the family on academic achievement and the desire for further education. There are also indications of a strong relationship between the family attitude towards education and the socio-economic background of the parents. Ellinger (1961) has stated that the correlation between school progress and home environment is much higher than between intelligence and home environment.

This would seem to indicate that the school is perhaps more influenced by the good or bad factors of the home environment than is the intelligence score.

Fathers seem to play a particularly important role simply by their presence in the family unit. It has been shown that the absence of a father is a deterrent to the successful academic and vocational development of children. From the father's occupation and the attitude of the family, the child seemingly acquires a self-image giving himself a fixed status, or a social grade, and setting a limit on his ambition. He seems to know where he belongs and he seems to be prepared to stay there, even though he may not enjoy it.

Of particular importance in understanding the relationship of the home to the child as we see him in school is the work done by Dave and Wolf at

the University of Chicago (1964, 1965). They were able to show that a number of home environmental factors had a very definite correlation with achievement and intelligence. Dave selected the following six groups of characteristics as being very important determiners of the home environment's influence upon educational achievement: 1) Achievement Press—by this he meant the parents' aspirations for the child and for themselves; their interest in, knowledge of, and standards of rewards for the child's educational achievement. 2) Language Models. 3) Academic Guidance provided by the home. 4) Activeness of the Family. 5) Intellectuality in the Home. 6) Work Habits in the Family.

These environmental factors are not of necessity found in bad from in areas of cultural deprivation. These two researchers distinguish very clearly between what they call "measures of social status" and "measures of environment." However, it would seem reasonable after considering other findings related to family structures to presume that children in homes that can be considered culturally deprived are more likely to receive a lower quality of support in the six areas that Wolf has identified.

Wolf's work supported that done by Ellinger (1961) in that it showed that while there is a *significant positive relationship* between environment and I.Q. it is not as great as the relationship between environment and achievement. These conclusions become more important when we become concerned with what has been called "the process goals of education." These are defined in the description of the *Harvard-Boston Summer Program in Urban Development* (1965) as follows:

> Instead of the acquisition of particular content and bodies of knowledge, the schools are urged to pay more attention to teaching pupils how to acquire, interpret, evaluate, and communicate knowledge. In the belief that a rapidly changing society requires its members to adapt to novel and unpredictable situations, many educators and scholars are arguing that pupils may best be prepared for the future through process-centered instruction. This means that, beyond concern for content (terms, information, and theory) as such, there must be particular emphasis on developing basic skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, inquiry, self-instruction, self-evaluation, development of interests, and good study habits.

A recent study in Montreal (Urban Social Redevelopment Project, 1966, p. 44) suggests that there has been a change in the attitude of parents in lower-class areas towards education in that the majority of parents wished their children to complete high school, trade, or business school before dropping out to get a job. This is in contrast to earlier studies that indicated either an indifference or a positive feeling that a complete formal schooling was not necessary.

The discussion by Ferguson (1954) of the relation between transfer and ability raises some interesting questions concerning the education of deprived children. Ferguson states that the reason why most people have a relatively stable score on tests of intellectual ability is that these tests measure activities that they have already over-learned. To a considerable extent people perform on these tests at the upper limit of their learning curve. However, Ferguson feels that people whose environments have been restricted with respect to activities similar to those that would be found on

tests of ability may not have had sufficient appropriate experiences to allow them to reach the upper limits of their learning curves.

Therefore, the performance shown by these people from the depressed areas is more likely to be significantly below their physical limits. It would, therefore, seem to be possible for people from such environments to improve their performance on such ability tests if given an opportunity to practise the kind of activity that is being tested. On the other hand, people from enriched environments already operating close to the limit set by physical and environmental factors that are not reversible, will not show as much benefit from additional practice.

However, a recent study done in our schools by Goltz (1967) and Douglas (1967) from McGill has not produced the expected results for such specific training. Rather, it would appear that those children who already have the advantage of a good environment learned more quickly and showed improvement because of the additional practice. The reason suggested for this by the researchers is that the lower-class environment not only does not provide as much opportunity for practice of the operations that compose intellectual ability but also does not generate as much motivation for participating in those opportunities that do exist. The middle-class structure may supply schools that offer lower-class children opportunity for the same types of activities that middle-class children are offered. However, as schools may be unable to develop in lower-class children the same interest in these activities as middle-class children have, lower-class children may participate less in these activities and thus continue to practise such activities less than middle-class children. The result would be that lack of motivation for ability-related tasks maintains the under-development of their intellectual potentiality, even when opportunity for practice is equated with that offered middle-class children.

From the above, and other similar studies, it would seem to be clear that the difficulties experienced by children from low socio-economic districts represent an interaction between the characteristics of the student, his school, and his family. This is not to say that this is not also true of children from middle and upper socio-economic districts, but it is to say that the effects of deprivation seem to be so deeply ingrained as to render the modification of the contributing factors most difficult and in some cases apparently impossible. It is not usual in the case of middle- or upper-class children to find serious deficiencies in all three areas related to his achievement of importance here—i.e., child, home, and school. Rather, it is usual that strong support can be obtained from two of the three areas in order to modify the deficiencies in the third. If it is true then that the situation in the case of the children from culturally deprived districts is different in the sense that the deprivation is deeply rooted, and that it may represent a combination of deficiencies found in each of the three areas mentioned, then it would seem to be important that efforts made to improve the educational achievement of such children must include attempts to reduce the ill-effects of inferior homes and schools.

I should now like to refer very briefly to a few attempts being made in our city to attack the problem on all three fronts.

The role of school-board personnel varies from being an active partici-

pant in all stages of the project to being merely a cooperator in certain projects in the sense that we provide children for the researchers and that we make available to them records of achievement and academic and intelligence testing.

The staff of Royal Arthur School has been working very closely with certain personnel from The Montreal Children's Hospital over the past few years. This school is located in one of the poorest districts of the city, an area to be destroyed and rebuilt in the near future. As part of the regular diagnostic psychiatric service provided for schools under the jurisdiction of The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, The Montreal Children's Hospital provides a consultant psychiatrist one day per week. The principal of the school is thus able to refer for diagnosis any child whom he feels is being handicapped by a problem in learning or behaviour. The usual procedure in these cases is to have the psychiatrist visit the school, meet with the teacher and principal, review the report prepared in advance by the guidance consultant, interview the child, and possibly visit the classroom. In addition, as a most important part of this service, the parents are invited to the school on that day in order that the psychiatrist may discuss the problem with them and make recommendations for further treatment, if necessary.

To this basic programme has been added an additional step that appears to have considerable potential value. The psychiatrist meets each week with a team composed of the school social worker, the school nurse, and the principal. To this team are attached, as necessary, the guidance consultant and one, or more, class teachers. Each week the activities within the school relative to children with problems are reviewed. This may take the form of case conferences concerning individual children, or general discussions concerning school regulations, programmes, adjustments to existing programmes, community resources, or parental contacts. In between these weekly conferences the various members of the team have opportunities to meet with parents or children either in the school, in the home, or in the hospital setting, and in this way the attention of the team is focused both on certain selected children and also on the total school environment.

As part of the attempt to help children improve their academic achievement, and through this possibly their behaviour and general adjustment, a group of teen-agers from some private girls' and boys' schools have been recruited to act as tutors. These children work closely with the team mentioned above and provide weekly tutorial sessions for selected children. In addition, they attempt to enrich the leisure time activity of the children by arranging for recreational outings.

In the same district another project being conducted by the Negro Community Center involves the provision of extra tutorial and guidance service for children in Grades VII and VIII who have been identified as potential drop-outs. This programme is carried on at the Community Center and there is a close liaison with the school authorities. Through the social workers at the Center an attempt is made to reach the parents and to assist them to improve the home environment.

A few years ago the University Settlement in another low socio-economic district in the city instituted a programme called TRY, standing

for Tutorials and Recreation for Youth. This was conducted in cooperation with the staff of three of our high schools. The basic principle of this programme was the recognition of the necessity of providing more than a tutorial service. In addition to tutoring, the programme provided six complementary services: 1) Recreation 2) Discussion groups 3) Home visits 4) Personal and vocational guidance and testing 5) Parents' groups 6) Referral.

This particular project led into a larger study being conducted by the Urban Social Redevelopment Project. In this more recent effort to help the children in this district it has been decided to focus attention upon the children with the greatest potential for change—that is, the elementary and pre-school children. The necessity of working with parents and siblings has been recognized and an attempt is being made to have wider participation of school personnel, parents, and school representatives in order to reduce the factors contributing to deprivation and low school achievement. This new project is being conducted in one of the French Catholic schools in Montreal. Attention is being given to improving the school curriculum, teacher training, and social and health services.

Perhaps the most interesting of the projects being carried out in Montreal is that being conducted in Royal Arthur School with children of preschool age. Under the sponsorship and with the direct assistance of the Council of Jewish Women, The Family Life Education Council is providing a pre-school experience for selected children from one of the most depressed areas in the city. Much of this programme follows the traditional methods being used in Head Start and other such plans.

Probably the most important difference is the manner in which an attempt is being made to change the environment in which the child is growing by working with the child's family. Each week the mothers of the children in the pre-school programme attend school at the same time that the children are in the classroom. The programme for mothers consists of observation of the children, explanation of developmental sequences, and discussion of methods of child rearing. In general an attempt is made to help these parents through group discussion under good leadership. This programme is now in its second year and the preliminary findings suggest that it has been very useful. The children are better prepared for kindergarten than those who do not attend the programme. However, of greater importance would seem to be the apparent change in the attitude of the mothers towards their children and towards schooling in general.

I have described very briefly programmes that are really not guidance programmes at all if we take a narrow view of guidance counselling. However, my feeling in this matter is that guidance conducted in the office of a counsellor in the school is of doubtful value in the case of children coming from culturally deprived districts.

It would seem to me that the role of the school counsellor in working with children of the kind that we are discussing must be seen as that of a member of a team. The counsellor must be prepared to consider his activities as simply one part of a larger attempt to work with the school, child, and family. The counsellor can contribute much to this team. He is the natural bridge between the educational and para-educational personnel. On the team he represents both the school and the child. On the team he represents educa-

tion and psychology. He is conversant with the ideas of social workers. He understands the relationship of medical aspects of child development to school progress, and he is usually able to talk the language of all members of the team. The counsellor will very often be called upon to explain to the school authorities the reasons why changes should be made in curriculum, grade standards, school routines, and other matters in which a sensitive principal might feel that non-educational people had no business being concerned with. In the same way, he has a responsibility to make sure that the other professionals on the team are aware of the necessity of standards of achievement, regular school attendance, discipline, and many other aspects of school life that are not readily apparent to people whose usual contact with children is on a one-to-one or small group basis.

I am very much concerned with what appears to be a lack of appreciation and understanding on the part of most counsellors of the important role that the home plays in the child's school progress. I am not suggesting that the counsellor need become a regular home visitor. However, in his training and in his practice he should be exposed to a sufficient number of opportunities to visit homes to insure that he will continually keep in mind the important part that may be played by social workers and public health nurses in the handling of deviant children. An illustration of the vacuum in which school people sometimes work is found in a paper by Mr. Noel Day of Kennedy School in New York. He discusses the case of a particular child with whom he became friendly and for whom he made a great attempt to assist in alleviating what was obviously a nutritional problem. He would often buy lunches for this child and provide him with clothing. The teacher felt that he was making what could be called good progress, and it was not until the child was absent for a period of three days that he came to realize how little he had really known about the situation and how little he had really done. In investigating the absence the school authorities discovered that the child had been run over by a truck three days earlier. The true tragedy became apparent when it was determined that the child had been sleeping under the truck during the night because he had no home, and that he had been living in this manner in alleyways, parks and vacant lots.

There is one aspect of schooling in depressed areas that would seem to offer a natural role for a guidance counsellor. I refer here to the difficulty that there seems to be in getting parents living in these districts to become interested in school activities. Two of the schools best known to me that fall into this category do not have home and school associations, or at least have not had them in my memory. The principals who have been in these schools have been very interested in working with parents and have in other districts helped to organize very useful parent groups. There appear to be a number of special factors operating in these restricted environments. One important problem seems to be a shortage of parents who have the ability and experience to operate an organization or club. Another seems to be a feeling on the part of many of the parents that they should only go to the school when they are called and that this will only be when their children have misbehaved—like the police station, school is a good place to stay away from. Counsellors, it would seem to me, should be able to help in establishing parent organizations suitable to these particular communities. No doubt these organizations

will have somewhat different goals, and may have to operate, at first at least, under somewhat different rules. But surely the development of a group of parents who have confidence in the school and who have sufficient contacts with the school authorities that they become representatives of that authority in the community should be a legitimate goal of a guidance department.

In two of our schools this factor has been recognized and an attempt has been made to help these parents. In each of these schools, while the general population in no way could be considered to be culturally deprived, there was found a special group of parents who represented problems somewhat similar to those mentioned above. These were parents coming from homes of all levels of socio-economic conditions, who had in common the fact that their children were in classes for retarded children. These parents never came to home and school meetings. In many instances they did not live in the particular district where the class was held and even those who did live in that school district seemed to feel some stigma attached to their child's placement and experienced a reluctance to act as did other parents. The principal in each of these schools arranged for a special series of meetings for the parents of the classes for retarded children. These meetings were held in the school staff room and were attended by the principal, the teachers, the visiting teacher, and a guidance officer. They were very successful and did much to assist not only the parents but the teachers in understanding the problems and the opportunities of these children. In order to provide the greatest possible opportunity for good liaison between home and school it would probably be advisable in some districts in the city, if not in all, to provide evening counselling sessions. Many parents work on an hourly wage and are not able to leave their job without suffering financial loss. It is usually true that those who can least afford the loss are those that suffer the most. Principals working in districts of deprivation claim that establishing ready and efficient contact with parents is a most difficult task, and it would seem, therefore, to be important that the school should do as much as possible to make it easier for principal, counsellor, teacher, and parent to get together.

In summary, I have tried to present an interpretation of the role of guidance counsellor in schools in depressed areas that is very likely different in its practice, although not different in its aim, from the role of counsellor in schools in middle- and upper-class communities. This should not hide the fact that in many communities that would be spoken of as middle- and upper-class there will be found parents and homes presenting the same problems that I have discussed and, therefore, some of the same solutions will undoubtedly be needed in such cases. I have tried to represent the counsellor as a worker on the mental health team. I have tried to represent him as a professional educator representing the school, not only in his contacts with parents but in his contacts with other professionals.

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L'ORIENTATION AU SERVICE DES ENFANTS MESADAPTES

H. STUTT

L'article traite du rôle prépondérant du conseiller d'orientation dans les cas d'enfants mésadaptés. On y insiste sur le fait que le conseiller d'orientation doit s'intégrer dans l'équipe multidisciplinaire en tant qu'éducateur professionnel en contact avec les étudiants, le personnel enseignant, les parents, la société, aussi bien qu'avec tous les professionnels.

On y insiste également sur le fait que le conseiller d'orientation en tant qu'intermédiaire dans le milieu où évolue les étudiants doit adapter son action selon les milieux socio-économiques des enfants.

Montréal vient de mettre en oeuvre un programme en ce sens.