

**A NEW ISSUE IN GROUPING—
VERTICAL ENRICHMENT VS. HORIZONTAL ENRICHMENT**

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Summary of the presentation made by ABRAHAM H. LASS

ABRAMHAM LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL (among the ten largest in the nation) is meeting the challenge of "bigness" by providing an individually tailored program for each pupil in each subject matter area. The school is committed to the principle that all excellences and all disabilities are specific. So, it is possible for a student to rank high in his English studies and rather low in his mathematics and science. Recognizing this fact, the school has devised the necessary machinery and curricula to meet the wide variations to be found among students and within the individual students.

The school carries out its commitments through a carefully wrought identification program, through individualized scheduling of pupils (no block programming), through differentiated curricula and methodologies, and through guidance and extracurricular programs designed to provide for each pupil according to his needs and abilities. In our democracy, the school feels that it has an obligation to see to it that "no voice is lost."

Summary of the presentation made by HAROLD H. METCALF

THE term enrichment has different meanings to different people. The book, *Working with Superior Students*, states that regardless of how adequately a school handles the problem of grouping, grade placement, and guidance, the major question in educating talented youngsters remains unanswered: How should the actual course content and teaching

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method be differentiated for these students? The easy answer is: enrich the curriculum, but enrichment like the weather is something everybody talks about and few do anything about. We don't really know what enrichment is. Does it mean accelerated coverage of a standard course of study, followed by advanced content in a given discipline; for example, completing elementary algebra in the eighth year and thus, in the twelfth year, having time for a course in calculus? Does it mean digging more deeply or extensively in an area; for example, studying original documents of some historical period? Or does it mean increased independent and creative work in some field of individual interest? Perhaps, the very word enrichment is a misnomer; perhaps what is needed is not embellishment of existing course content but different content. Despite the plethora of "promising practices" suggested by and for teachers, these questions remain substantially unanswered.¹

The above excerpt on enrichment leads me to the point that the title, "A New Issue In Grouping—Vertical Enrichment Versus Horizontal Enrichment" is not an issue. Vertical enrichment and horizontal enrichment are inseparable concomitants of one another.

The most effective high-school teachers are those who have the capacity to take a group of students at the beginning of the year, and through impact of personality and use of devices of one kind or another, provide for each an incentive and a plan. To be effective, I contend that the high-school teacher must have capacity to individualize instruction to a greater or lesser extent, because every group of high-school students however selected will vary greatly in capacities, interests, goals, response to stimuli, and in other respects.

Enrichment within the classroom centers around the assignment. Instead of assigning a number of pages of reading in a text, teachers may suggest a number of avenues of interest, study, or investigation. Students are stimulated to proceed on their own beyond the basic requirements of a course through use of such techniques as oral and written reports, differentiated assignments, independent research, and experimental work. Thus, the individuality of the student and his capacity to learn become important factors in his progress.

At Bloom Township High School, which is large and comprehensive in nature, 700 ninth-grade students have, on the basis of tests, results, and previous school records, been placed in the following classifications in English: mentally handicapped, but educable; remediable; slow; average; fast; fast fast; and accelerated. *The California Algebra Aptitude Test* was used to determine those who would enroll in algebra and in general mathematics. Within the general mathematics and within the algebra, further grouping was done on the basis of an intelligence test, previous school records, and scores on the algebra aptitude test. Those in accelerated English were placed in accelerated general science in

¹ Bruce Shertzer. *Working with Superior Students*. Chicago: Science Research Associates. Pp. 55, 56.

which much emphasis is given to laboratory approach. Content, assignments, methods of instruction, motivation devices, and emphases are differentiated and individualized in sections capable of doing superior work. Both vertical and horizontal enrollment are involved and students progress at their own pace.

Bloom is also providing opportunity for individual students to proceed more nearly at their own pace through team teaching. Three teams, each consisting of an English and a social studies teacher, are working with eleventh-grade students in American literature and American history. The plan provides opportunity for the eighty-one students to be together for large-group instruction for a two-hour block of time. It also provides for small-group and highly individualized teaching involving principles outlined previously in this paper.

Summary of the presentation made by WILLARD C. OLSON

MANY specific proposals are being advanced currently for the development of quality in education, for adjustment to individual differences, and for maximizing the talents of gifted youth. They often involve plans for enrichment within a heterogeneous class or group, for ability grouping within a subject, or for acceleration through a sequence of courses in a subject area, with or without an attempt to have the student cover a fixed span of grades in reduced time.

The practical school administrator is faced with the dilemma of having many partialist advocates of particular practices, on the one hand, and finding little consistent and positive evidence for making a decision on the other. In general, proponents of ability grouping, honors classes and schools, and advanced placement suffer a rude shock when controlled evaluative studies are made with the conventional criteria. The differences are often those that would be expected on the basis of chance. Under these conditions an examination of a theoretical framework would appear to be overdue so that the reasons for the indifferent and inconsistent influence of organization for instruction can be better understood.

A basic difficulty is the tendency to under-estimate the range and stability of individual differences in pupils. Graduates of a select high school may be expected to vary from the fourth to the sixteenth grade in comprehension in reading and in other areas of common learnings. It is naive to believe that any "trick" of organization or method will "cure" these differences.

Consideration of a theoretical model based on studies of individual differences, learning, and growth may give us more precise guides for interpretation and for decision making.

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In the following equation, "maturation" applies to the factors residing in the individual and "nurture" applies to the intake from the environment. The product of these is represented by "development."

Maturation x Nurture = Development. As applied to education we may rewrite the equation as follows: *Maturation x Experience = Achievement.*

If we start with a group of children or youth who are equal in the maturational component, subsequent differences in achievement may be traced to the experience component.

The reason why many logically feasible schemes seem unproductive of results is because there is no real difference in the availability of experience so far as the individual is concerned. A new course of study, an improved textbook, more demanding expectations, and new sensory modes of presentation may have relatively little to do with what the child is able to incorporate. The presence and absence of an experience will make the big differences in the achievement of the above equation. If experience becomes zero, achievement becomes zero. The test of organization is whether it makes a real difference in the responses of the learner.

Let us consider a few illustrative postulates on the relation of the individual to his environment:

1. The organism seeks from the environment according to his readiness and need. Thus if the environmental supply within or without school is adequate, each individual fulfills himself. The existence of a surplus of opportunity is a matter of indifference in so far as achievement is concerned. We learn only our responses. The real threat is deprivation.
2. Organisms in a given environment show the phenomenon of selective uptake, retention, and utilization. Thus in a very limited environment, individual differences still persist, but deprivation may be reflected in averages and range of differences.
3. Experiences not in accord with the readiness of the learner and with his goals are learned with difficulty and are forgotten quickly.
4. Empirical studies testify to the initial rapid loss of most anything that is learned that is not supported in use. This is the fate of much esoteric school learning.
5. Sustained motivation, an intricate complex of ability, experience, and re-enforcement is one of the most precious products of wise educational planning. If this can be obtained, all else follows.

The differences in achievement by varying modes of organization are usually microscopic for areas of common experience while individual differences are macroscopic. The best question to ask of youth for the prediction of future attainment in education is "What can he do?" rather than "What has he had?" Specialized courses and classes may be expected to make the greatest differential impact on individuals when set up for fields representing entirely new experiences to which they can respond successfully.