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TEACHER PERCEPTION OF PUPIL SOCIOMETRIC CHOICE.

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TO HELP TEACHERS WORK WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE SOCIAL ISOLATES IN THE CLASSROOM, 800 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO NAME 3 CHILDREN (1) WITH WHOM THEY WOULD LIKE TO PLAY AND DO THINGS AFTER SCHOOL, AT RECESS, AND AT NOON, (2) WITH WHOM THEY WOULD LIKE TO WORK IN THE ROOM, (3) BESIDE WHOM THEY WOULD MOST LIKE TO SIT, (4) BESIDE WHOM THEY WOULD LEAST LIKE TO SIT. 20 TEACHERS WERE ASKED TO ANTICIPATE THE 3 PUPILS WHO WOULD BE CHOSEN MOST FREQUENTLY AND LEAST FREQUENTLY. RESULTS SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING INFERENCES--(A) PRIMARY GRADE TEACHERS MAY BE BETTER ABLE TO PREDICT CHILDREN'S CHOICES AND VARY LESS IN THEIR ABILITY TO PREDICT BECAUSE OF THE GREATER INFORMALITY OF THE PROGRAM IN THE EARLY GRADES AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE CHILDREN'S CHOICES THAN DO INTERMEDIATE GRADE TEACHERS, (B) INTERMEDIATE GRADE TEACHERS WERE PROBABLY BEST ABLE TO PREDICT CHILDREN'S CHOICES OF PLAYMATES BECAUSE THEY WERE ABLE TO ACTUALLY OBSERVE THIS EVENT, (C) THE LEAST PERCEPTIVE TEACHERS CHOSE CHILDREN ON THE BASIS OF INTELLIGENCE IN ALL 3 CATEGORIES PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY LIKE THE BRIGHTER CHILDREN AND FEEL THAT CHILDREN SHOULD ALSO PREFER BRIGHTER CLASSMATES, (4) PERCEPTIVE TEACHERS MAY BE THOSE WHO ALLOW A WIDER RANGE OF ACTIVITIES IN THEIR CLASSROOMS. THIS DOCUMENT APPEARED IN TEACHERS COLLEGE JOURNAL, JAN. 1966, 37, 161-163. (AW)

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THE  
TEACHERS  
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# JOURNAL

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Articles from the Journal are indexed in the Education Index

# Teacher Perception of Pupil Sociometric Choice

By Carl B. Hoffman, Edmund J. Amidon and Betty B. Schantz

AS THE FIRST step in an experiment designed to help teachers work with children who were social isolates in the classroom, a sociometric measure was taken in an elementary school of over 800 pupils. This measure was taken during the closing weeks of the school year, when the children and teachers were well known to each other after eight months of active association.

These were the questions asked of the children in order to determine who among their classmates were the socially isolated and rejected:

- (1) Name three children in this class with whom you would like to play and do things after school, at recess, and at noon.
- (2) Name three children in the class with whom you would like to work in this room.
- (3) Name three children in this class beside whom you would most like to sit.
- (4) Name three children in this class beside whom you would least like to sit.

Before the questions were submitted for pupil reaction, each teacher was asked to anticipate the three pupils who would be chosen most frequently and the three pupils who would be chosen least frequently by their classmates as playmates, workmates, and seatmates. The teacher's choices in the three categories were concerned first with their relationship to the choices of the children, and secondly, with the relationships among the teachers' choices.

When twenty-eight teachers' choices were compared to the children's choices, the following observations were made:

- (1) The primary grade teachers, when surveyed as a separate group, were better able to anticipate children's choices than were the intermediate grade teachers.
- (2) Primary grade teachers were best able to anticipate children's choices of seatmates.
- (3) There was only slight variation in the primary teachers' ability to anticipate chil-

dren's choices of seatmates, playmates, or workmates.

- (4) Intermediate grade teachers were least able to anticipate children's choices of seatmates.
- (5) Intermediate grade teachers were best able to anticipate children's choices of playmates, and did only slightly less well on workmate choices.
- (6) Intermediate grade teachers showed comparatively wide variation in ability to predict, being far more able to anticipate playmate choices than seatmates choices.

The teachers' choices were also analyzed in terms of intelligence quotients of the children, to check the significance, if any, of intelligence in the teachers or children's minds when making choices on any of the questions.

The six teachers who were most perceptive in anticipating children's choices, and the seven teachers who were least perceptive were compared for the purpose of identifying tendencies which teachers may exhibit in the area of underestimating the intelligence quotient of the class social and work leaders.

## Results

While the number of teachers in the study is small and would seem to preclude analysis, a definite trend is evident. If the estimates of the six most perceptive teachers in the school are compared with those of the seven least perceptive teachers, differences are apparent in all three areas: playmates, workmates, and seatmates.

On the question about choice of playmates, the six perceptive teachers rated as popular children those who had lower intelligence quotients than the children whom the class members had chosen. The non-perceptive teachers tended to choose children with higher intelligence quotients than class members did. This trend is also evident in the question about seatmates.

This trend is partially reversed on the question about workmates. Here, the perceptive teachers as a group chose children who were neither more nor less intelligent than the children chosen by class members. The non-perceptive teachers, however, selected children whose intelligence quotients were higher than those of children chosen by their peers.

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## Implications

Primary grade teachers may be better able to predict children's choices of seatmates, workmates, and playmates because of the tendency toward greater informality in the program of the early grades. Teachers of primary grade children probably have more opportunity actually to observe children's choices than do intermediate grade teachers.

That intermediate grade teachers were best able to predict children's choices of playmates probably also reflects the fact that teachers predict best the outcomes of events they have actually observed most frequently. Recess or other informal play times are probably those school times when intermediate grade children have the most freedom to select from among their classmates.

Primary grade teachers probably vary less than intermediate grade teachers in their ability to predict among the three choices because, again, in the more informal setting of the lower grades, they see a wider range of choice occurring among the children. That is, they see children choosing each other over a wider range of activities.

When the least perceptive teachers are compared, it is found that the less perceptive teacher chooses children on the basis of intelligence in all three categories. Perhaps these teachers believe that children *ought* to like brighter children. The teacher likes the brighter children; therefore the children should. The perceptive teacher, on the other hand, is aware of social realities and is thus more capable of judging children's choices, even though these might be different from his own.

Part of being perceptive is, of course, the ability to see relationships; and one would expect certain teachers to be more aware of the relationships among the children in their classes. It may be that teachers who are more perceptive are also teachers who allow a wider range of activities in their classrooms, and thus they can observe children's choices more frequently. One could certainly assume that more perceptive teachers are in a better position to help children in their classrooms who are isolated and rejected. This did turn out to be so, as the additional steps of this study were carried out.

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## An Indispensable Investment (Continued from page 139)

at home and abroad. The Federal Government, with far larger revenues than state and local governments, with the progressive income tax as distinguished from regressive taxes, with the President and Congress more likely to be representative of public opinion than malapportioned state legislatures, must help pay the cost of education.

I believe that overall the results of Federal support of education are beneficial, and I here offer several reasons, with illustrations.

First, badly needed facilities will be built. The Higher Education Act of 1963, for example, provides grants and loans to help colleges and universities build the classrooms, libraries, and laboratories they must have to handle the enormous expansion of population on the American campus during the coming decade. The Health Professions Educational Assistance Act means more medical and dental schools; the Vocational Educational Act, more vocational training schools; the Library Services and Construction Act, more library facilities.

The huge growth in the number of students also makes necessary more modern teaching equipment and materials. For instance, the National Defense Education Act provides first-class equipment for instruction in mathematics, science, and

foreign languages in our schools; the 1965 Higher Education Act aids colleges and universities in buying books for their libraries; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act helps stock the school libraries of the nation.

Federal aid clearly encourages research and innovation. Right now less than one percent of the money we spend on education goes for research and development. Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, federally supported and university-administered regional laboratories can produce results of immense value in improving the ways we teach and learn.

Federal support lifts the quality of education in America, at every level. Project Head Start cannot fail to mean better pre-school teaching throughout the nation. The NDEA graduate fellowship program produces better college teachers and the teacher training institutes, better school teachers. The new Teacher Fellowship Program, which I sponsored, now part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, is aimed directly at raising the quality of elementary and secondary schools by improving the quality of the teachers in them. This program authorizes graduate study leading to a master's degree in teachers' subject matter fields. Title III of the ESEA helps schools finance supplementary educational centers and services for

the specific purpose of enhancing the quality of education in communities all over the country.

Federal support makes possible educational opportunity for many young people who would otherwise be denied it. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act authorizes over \$1 billion to improve the schooling of some five million children from families whose annual income is \$2,000 or less. Through the Educational Opportunity Grants in the Higher Education Act, many able students of exceptional financial need will be able to obtain a college education.

Without Federal funds, we would simply be unable to supply the educated and trained manpower essential to meeting the nation's requirements for defense, science, and economic growth. I here refer, for example, to the programs of research and development funded by the Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, and the Atomic Energy Commission. And Title I of the 1965 Higher Education Act imposes still further responsibilities on the colleges and universities to help solve such community problems as poverty, unemployment, air and water pollution, and mass transit.

I have tried to give only some of the reasons I believe Federal support of state and local efforts

in education is indispensable and to offer illustrations. I must, however, make two other points. First, I share the view of the distinguished Assistant Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and former U.S. Education Commissioner, Francis Keppel, that:

For the federal government to participate in education—to be a partner, a *junior* partner, with the states and local communities—seems to me not only proper but necessary.

Second, I realize that continued Federal support of education will not only help solve problems but will cause problems—coordination of policy-making enforcing desegregation of federally aided facilities, church-state relations, “unbalancing” university curricula, regional rivalry for Federal education funds. I could list other areas of present and potential trouble.

I have, however, not the slightest hesitation in saying that the problems that would be caused by our failure to use Federal funds to support American education would dwarf those we face today. Federal aid to education is here to stay; it is the responsibility of us all—educator, public official, citizen—to insure that Federal support does not weaken but strengthens the enterprise of education in America.