

experience in discriminating sense impressions, particularly those of sound and sight, provides a basis for language learning. We know that extensive oral language experience at ages 2 to 5 involving conventional vocabulary and syntax is an important basis for learning to read. We know that the attitude of parents and peers toward school learning is a factor influencing children's confidence and efforts. We know that early success in learning builds motivation for continued learning. These are only a few illustrations of knowledge which we can now use in guiding our planning and our work. More will be increasingly available.

A second resource which many schools can use is the parents of the disadvantaged children. Most parents really care about the welfare and progress of their sons and daughters, but they lack understanding of how they can help, and they may be deficient in the skills required. Most of them need guidance and encouragement, for they often lack confidence in their own ability to help their children.

The sincerely dedicated teachers and administrators to be found in most schools provide another important source that is essential to a successful assault on the problem. The willingness of many professional educators to take the time and effort to get to know each child in difficulty, to study the background information that may help in working with him, and to learn new ways of teaching and counseling should not be underestimated. This provides us with a very worthwhile mission and a sense of pioneering on a major frontier.

Many laymen, too, can be enlisted in the campaign. As loyal citizens and people who care about others, many of us are ready and able to use our time and our own selves, if we can be sure that we can be used constructively. The contributions laymen can make will vary with the needs of the children and with the roles to be filled when the educational program is worked out. Generally, however, with careful attention to the necessary training and supervision, laymen will provide an important resource in many schools.

A fifth resource on which we can draw are the many aids to learning which are already available and which may be constructed and tested in these new programs. Blocks, pictures, games, movies, tapes, records, responsive electronic devices, programed materials, typewriters, simple apparatus for experiments, new tools and instruments—these are among the more obvious aids that may be employed. However, there use should be guided by educational purpose and plan. Too frequently, we purchase aids before we have any clearcut use in mind. Instead, we need to work out the steps to be taken to aid the child's learning and to see which of

these steps can be facilitated by appropriate use of learning aids.

A sixth kind of resource available in many localities is that of community agencies other than the school. Health and social services of various sorts, recreational opportunities, library services, museum offerings, musical performances, work opportunities and the like are sometimes available from community agencies and organizations. In some cases, these agencies are interested in, and are able to develop, new services or will modify older ones to meet imperative needs of children. Where they can be obtained, services of this sort constitute a very helpful resource.

Finally, but not least, we ought to recognize that a major resource in dealing with these difficult problems is the intelligence and ingenuity of the school leaders. In many communities there are no present blueprints or doctrines to guide them in the development of effective programs. Fortunately, leaders in American schools are accustomed to striking out on new paths and solving new problems. The education of disadvantaged children represents an opportunity for imaginative administrators and teachers to design new programs to meet our aspirations.

The job of devising and instituting ways to enable disadvantaged children to become full participants in our society and to achieve their own self-realization is a hard one. We are fortunate to have a number of resources on which to draw as we undertake the task.

How can we best proceed in developing an effective program in an individual school?

Since the particular patterns of handicaps among children vary from school to school and since the resources available also vary, we cannot expect a single National, State, county, or even citywide program to be appropriate for any individual school. In significant respects the constructive means for aiding the disadvantaged children in one school will not be identical with those in another. Hence the task we face is one of devising programs as well as implementing them.

I emphasize the need for individual program designs because we are all anxious to get ahead with the job as soon as funds are available. But this can be unwise, wasteful, and disappointing unless we are embarked on a program appropriate for the problems in our school. I would urge that the first step undertaken in each school be a careful study of the kinds of handicaps found among the disadvantaged children in the school. Which children have deficiencies in language development? Which children find schoolwork irrelevant to their concerns? Which children lack confidence in