

their ability to learn? What are the inadequacies of the home and neighborhood environment for each child? With these and other relevant questions as a basis for searching inquiry, a list of the learning deficiencies and obstacles in the path of his educational development can be made for each disadvantaged child. Such a catalog serves to set the specific program tasks in helping each child to surmount his handicaps.

A second step is to review what is now known about these obstacles to learning and the ways in which they can be attacked. This review furnishes initial leads about what needs to be done. Limitations in sensory perception of young children may be partly overcome through systematic practice in sensory discrimination. A small English vocabulary and lack of conventional linguistic patterns among primary children may be attacked by active participation in listening, discussing, and reporting in oral English. The inclusion of learning experiences in which reading, mathematics, science, and social studies are involved in problems with which the students are vitally concerned can help to reduce the alienation from schoolwork viewed as irrelevant by the pupils. A new selection and more careful grading of learning experiences will often help students to find that they can make progress in learning, and the teacher can aid by expressing approval and encouraging the child in his learning efforts.

These are only a few examples illustrative of the suggestions emerging from experience and published reports about ways to attack the problems identified in the initial study of the disadvantaged children in one's own school.

Once one has obtained ideas about ways of attacking these problems, it is useful to survey the resources available in the school and community on which one can draw or which can be mobilized, organized, and trained for the implementation of the ideas suggested. Are there public or private health agencies that could work on the health problems? What social agencies might be able to meet the nutritional needs of the chronically undernourished? Are the parents from homes that are giving little aid to learning sufficiently interested in their children to be willing to undergo training and undertake some of the guidance and encouragement of their children's learning? Are there agencies or volunteers that would be willing to read to young children and stimulate language usage? Which teachers have experience in parent education that could be used in training parents and laymen? Which are deeply interested in these children and have experience on which individualized learning programs might be carried on? What consultants are available who have special competence

relating to some of the problems? These are a few of the questions that one can ask in connection with a survey of the resources that might be drawn upon in devising and carrying on a program that could provide substantial help to disadvantaged children in their learning.

Having identified the serious problems of the disadvantaged children in one's own school, having brought together a number of ideas about the ways in which problems could be attacked, and having surveyed the resources that could be mobilized, one has the information and suggestions from which a local program can be formulated systematically to furnish help on each problem and to provide individual guidance and graduated learning experiences from early childhood throughout the years of schooling. Such a program must meet several criteria.

In the first place, within the program should be found all the provisions needed to attack the problems identified. Usually these would include, when appropriate, a range of activities such as: parent training in helping young children with language learning and problem solving; special opportunities outside the home for young children to gain sensory discrimination, language habits, interest in learning, and confidence in their ability to learn; habits of punctuality and responsibility; opportunities in the school to continue these elementary learning experiences; revision of the school curriculum to give more attention to content relevant to the children's interests and needs, and a more gradual sequence of learning experiences; opportunities for older children to take partial responsibility for some of the learning activities of younger ones; individual practice materials; utilization of a wider range of learning experiences such as games, audio-visual aids, work responsibilities and the like; and extension of constructive learning opportunities and related features of a stimulating environment to the entire neighborhood, including recreation, community service, and the like. It is not enough to have a little change here and there. Significant impact on the education of disadvantaged children requires consistent efforts over the whole period of childhood and youth. This calls for a carefully planned comprehensive program.

In the second place, the program must be sound and thoroughly worked out. There is no place here for superficiality. We are always tempted to boast of having adopted a popular practice without having carefully analyzed it and supported it with the necessary understanding and training. The impediments in the way of learning encountered by disadvantaged children are so serious that we must understand them and spend the