

Annotated Bibliography of Selected Information for
Teaching the Intermediate Educable Mentally Retarded

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

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INTRODUCTION

The field of special education has had great growth in the recent years. There is now a vast amount of information written on many aspects of special education. The information at this point in time is not well organized according to the level of mentally retarded student for which it is intended.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this thesis was to survey the available written information on the intermediate educable mentally retarded and to present annotated bibliographies of selected books, curriculum guides and journal articles on the subject.

DEFINITIONS

The educable mentally retarded individual will "exhibit measured intelligence at two or more standard deviations below the mean or average" according to Indiana Rule S-1 (c. 1978, p. 40).

Indiana Rule S-1 maintains that the age group that should make up the intermediate level is from age nine through age thirteen (c. 1978, p. 6)

REVIEW OF SELECTED BOOKS, CURRICULUM
GUIDES AND JOURNAL ARTICLES

Books

Five books were reviewed for this study.

Curriculum Guides

Two curriculum guides were reviewed for this study.

Journal Articles

Three journal articles from three different journals were reviewed for this study.

Books

Five books were reviewed in the areas of math, reading, curriculum analysis and methods.

Kolstoe, Oliver P., Teaching Educable Mentally Retarded Children, 2nd edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, c. 1970.

The first chapter presents a very adequate condensed consideration of the mentally retarded learner. This includes how the mentally retarded are classified, theories of retardation and principles of presentation.

Included in the next two chapters are an inclusive list of objectives, criticisms of teaching the mentally reatarded, Dene's Cascade of Services, identification, diagnosis, service assignment and grouping, typical day outlines and lists of standardized tests.

The remainder of the book is divided into the different areas, the methods and materials to teach them with, and units of instruction. The summary includes instructional outcomes for the educable mentally retarded.

This book can be used as an excellent reference for a teacher of the educable mentally retarded at any level. Each area of the book deals with the different levels separately so that a teacher can easily turn to the section on aesthetics for example, and find a list of clearly stated objectives for art and music on her student's level. To make it even easier, Kolstoe includes all of the objectives at the end of the book. These specific objectives are the most useful portion of the book. Kolstoe also includes many hints on teaching these objectives. For example,

an aid in the multiplication process is the finger abacus. The five steps of sociodrama are also very useful for the teacher and these include: identifying the problem, exploring the problem to identify cast and setting, acting out the problem, evaluation and the "search for metamessages -- the hidden motivation behind words." Another very important aspect of the book is that published resources are listed under almost every topic.

As for weaknesses, these might include lack of a large amount of teaching ideas that are not the type that need to be purchased. The author includes at least one idea under each topic so the reader gets some sort of idea on what can be done. Considering that the book deals with all levels of retardation, it covers the areas quite well. It touches on all of the main topics to be taught. The book should be supplemented with extra sources to obtain practical teaching ideas and games. Another weakness is that it does not specifically deal with the severe and profound although some of the primary or intermediate objectives could be used with them.

Overall, very well written and especially well-organized. An excellent resource for the teacher of the educable and trainable mentally retarded.

Smith, Robert M., Clinical Teaching, Methods of Instruction for the Retarded, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, c. 1968.

The first third of the book covers general issues dealing with educating the MR, diagnosis, strategies, and

organization, and administration of Special Education Services. One excellent chart contained in this section is a list of physical symptoms that suggest immediate professional attention.

The book then covers assessment and teaching of six general areas. The best portion of these sections is the listing of informal and formal tests. Smith also lists many activities to teach within the areas.

The main disadvantage of this text is that it deals with the organization of the text for teacher use. It would be much easier to use the text as a reference if the topics could have been separated from each other so that they are easier to find. It is very difficult to skim through the book when looking for a certain topic. Larger indentations and topics printed in dark ink would have helped some.

The author also does not tell what should be taught at certain levels.

The best procedures in the text are in the reading and arithmetic areas. One suggestion for writing is that new words should be said, traced and written. Teaching subtraction can be first illustrated through dramatization. ("Start with a group of four children, and ask one child to leave the group.")

The book contains many suggestions that are useful. More specific objectives and activities would be useful.

Peterson, Daniel, Functional Mathematics for the Mentally Retarded, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, Ohio, c. 1973.

(Only the four chapters applicable to intermediate EMR were considered.-- Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 9)

Limitations and special problems of the educable mentally retarded in dealing with mathematics are discussed. The emphasis for the educable mentally retarded should be placed upon the socially significant aspects of the mathematics program. The math level that the intermediate EMR child will generally be capable of is the first or second grade level. An excellent inventory is included also.

Peterson presents an excellent checklist that lists what an intermediate educable mentally retarded student should learn in each of the eight major math areas. Nearly one hundred pages of teaching ideas to make or buy are included.

One good worksheet idea to teach counting by two's or three's, shows pictures of men and three leaf-clovers. The student is instructed to count the eyes and leaves by two's or three's. Clear plastic bags can be used with marbles or beans to teach place value. In helping students learn which months of the year have thirty-one days, the student can count off the months on his knuckles. All those months that land on the knuckle have thirty-one days.

For the intermediate educable mentally retarded teacher, this book gives many practical ideas, plus it tells what should be taught. The text is well organized. More specific objectives would have been helpful in a summary form.

Frew, Thomas W., Nancy Krow Klein, Marvin Pasch, Curriculum Analysis and Design for Retarded Learners, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, c. 1979.

"The book represents our attempt to bring together theoretically and classroom-tested knowledge of how special education children learn and to focus on mildly and moderately retarded youngsters along with how to select, design, implement, and evaluate their classroom instruction."(viii)

The first chapter deals with the development of the retarded learner. It covers the definition and causes of mental retardation, personality and cognitive development, and learning characteristics of the mentally retarded. The text goes on to discuss educational goals and settings, analyzing curriculum content, writing objectives, supplementing learning activities and classroom evaluation.

The major strength of this book at this point in time is that it is so recently written and published. This means that the book covers mainstreaming, individualized educational programs, behavioral objectives, recent definitions of the mentally retarded, and other new ideas in the field of special education. The chapter on writing objectives would be useful for a teacher in training. A very important aspect discussed in the activities chapter is that there are no right or wrong activities, no perfect methods. The major consideration in choosing an activity is that it matches the objective it is to be used in conjunction with.

Although the text does not give specific teaching ideas, it does build a good framework upon which to place the

activities. Developmental tasks are listed according to age level, but these could have been expanded upon to help build specific objectives for the teacher.

In designing and implementing a classroom and its curriculum, the information contained in this text would be useful.

Gillespie - Silver, Patricia, Teaching Reading to Children with Special Needs, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, c. 1979.

Section one of the text presents the reading process and an ecological perspective of the special student. The ecological perspective includes not just the evaluation of the person's clinical behaviors, but also the person's interaction with their total environment, and how this can affect their performance.

Section two covers the assessment process and section three includes ways to improve the student's reading achievement.

The ecological perspective gives the text a different approach. For instance, the clinician is to consider the total life experience of the child while testing. The teaching strategies are related to the students' personal interactions in his or her environment. This is a definite strength of the text because "for too long special education services have been 'in the basement' . . . and set apart from regular educators." "Recent developments in the field of education call for the school to become a community-of-sorts that considers the total environment of the student."

A helpful section on patterned reading miscues and what strategies to use with them is included. A good suggestion for comprehension is to have the students write haiku, cinquain, or diamente. For building vocabulary, expansion of sentences is a great idea.

i.e., "The old man walked."
"The old man in the gray suit hobbled.", etc.

Weaknesses include lack of specific activities and lack of material on what to teach and when to teach it.

A good resource for the teacher for reading.

Curriculum Guides

Two curriculum guides were reviewed.

A Curriculum Guide for Teachers of the Educable Mentally Handicapped, The Illinois Plan for Special Education of Exceptional Children, Issued by Vernon L. Nickel, Supt., Chicago, Ill., Circular Series B-3, No. 12, 1958.

The point of departure for this curriculum guide is the National Education Association's goals, which include the objectives of: self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency and civic responsibility. These goals are reflected in the ten functional headings.

The largest section of the book contains objectives for each of the ten functional headings. Motivating activities language arts activities, math activities, unit plans and fine arts activities are listed for each objective. This is the most useful section of the book. The final portion of the book consists of the seven areas of knowledge and information on their inter-sequence and devices, and materials to teach

them with.

This guide is quite good although it is outdated. The center section that includes objectives could easily have lessons and units built from it. Since it is charted, the information is easy to read. The final section is quite good although it does not exhaust the list of source materials. It must also be kept in mind that it is out-of-date. The guide also does not contain much in the sense of pre-vocational and vocational training.

If updated, it would be an excellent guide. As it stands now, it still has its merits.

Guidelines for Program Development, Special Education,
Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas, Bullentin 673, Vol. I,
1968.

In using this curriculum guide for the intermediate level of EMR, one could use portions of the functional level (age 9 and up) and the prevocational level. These could be used according to the individual's level.

The objectives are clearly and simply stated. They could easily be made into an objectives checklist. Even at the functional level there are many vocational competencies included, which is a good sign. There is a definite need for an increase of vocational education at all levels of special education, so it is good to see the vocational competencies included.

An example of an intermediate unit is included. The unit is complete although simple. This would help give a teacher the outline and type of information that is needed

for a unit.

The appendix is excellent in that it includes examples of various forms used by the teacher (i.e., field trip, medical evaluation, etc.). Although most systems already have a set of forms, these could be useful.

The guide would be useful at planning and individual educational program time.

Journal Articles

Three journal articles from three different journals were reviewed.

Becker, Lawrence, "Learning Characteristics of Educationally Handicapped and Retarded Children," Exceptional Children, CEC, Reston, VA., Vol. 44, No. 7, April 1978, pp. 502-510.

This article "debates the merits of mixing educationally handicapped and emotionally disturbed children." The study included forty educationally handicapped and twenty educable mentally retarded children. By matching chronological ages, they compared the learning characteristics of the two groups for five tasks.

The author hoped to help solve the debate over the issue of massing all EH and EMR students together into one category. The findings of the study show that the two groups varied in four out of the five tasks presented. Four implications were drawn from this variance.

First, homogeneity between the two groups is questionable. Differences were found in "I.Q., sex distributions, learning

characteristics, referral patterns, conceptual abilities, and learning rates."

Second, the data from this study has implications for educational programming using generic categorizing. The wide variety of learning characteristics of the children within one classroom would make educational programming very difficult.

Third, the data raises some questions in the area of teacher training. "Generic programming assumes that if you can teach one type of a child, you can probably teach both types." Since the children's learning characteristics within the two groups do not overlap, then the teacher would need extra training.

Fourth, the author considers some of the effects of generic categorizing on the children.

In conclusion, generic categorizing appears to have its faults. Special educators need to use generic categorization with caution until further studies are completed.

For the teacher of the intermediate educable mentally retarded person, this article can act as a warning. Quite often a teacher will find himself or herself with a classroom with a large variance. Administrators will sometimes try to push a few square pegs into round holes to avoid forming a separate extra class. The teacher must be prepared to recognize these students and to realize, as this study has shown, that this child will have different learning characteristics and will require different educational programming. The teacher may feel the need to acquire extra

training.

Jenkins, Joseph R., PhD, Barksdale, Armanda, Med, and Clinton, Leroy, EdD, "Improving Reading Comprehension and Oral Reading: Generalizations Across Behaviors, Settings and Time", Journal of Learning Disabilities, Springfield, Ill., Vol. II, No. 10, December 1978, pp. 607-617.

In this study, an attempt was made to improve reading comprehension and oral reading. Comparisons across behaviors, settings and time were investigated.

Concerning reinforcement of reading comprehension, it was found that for each of the three students, comprehension was not as high in the classroom as it was in the remedial situation. For two of the students, increasing the schedule of reinforcement in the classroom produced an increase in the rate of comprehension.

The generalizations across time were studied. It was found that "comprehension improvements persisted across time even after artificial reinforcers had been removed." The authors feel that this should encourage those who feel that contingency management is only temporarily effective to try contingency management.

Generalizations across settings were looked into also. The carry-over of the effects from the remedial situation to the classroom was not great. The conclusion is that "reading comprehension improvements in a special setting cannot be counted on to appear in the regular classroom."

Reading rate was increased by twenty-eight percent by the students. "Reading rate and comprehension were not

affected by improvements in the other, but each could be affected by direct intervention."

The authors conclude by suggesting that contingency management can be very effective for increasing reading comprehension and rate. This could be effective for the intermediate EMR!!

Mitchell, Lynda, Doctor, Ronald, and Butler, Donald, "Attitudes of Caretakers Toward the Sexual Behavior of Mentally Retarded Persons," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Boyd Printing Co., Albany, N.Y., Vol. 83, No. 3, Nov. 1978, pp. 289-295.

This study was conducted to determine how the caretakers of the mentally retarded feel about sexual behavior for the retarded. The authors feel that adequate sex education is needed for the mentally retarded. "The results of the study were used to help construct a behavior modification system to change inappropriate sexual behavior."

A questionnaire was given to staff at three residential facilities to determine their "attitudes about actual and potential sexual behavior of retarded persons." The questionnaire covered masturbation and homosexual and heterosexual behavior.

Thirty-one percent felt that no sexual behavior was acceptable for the retarded. Seventy-two percent felt that activity such as hand-holding in public was acceptable. Forty-five percent found kissing acceptable. Only nine percent felt that intercourse was acceptable behavior. The percentages were quite lower for the same behaviors for homosexual

relationships. The study also determined the most favored locales for any of the behaviors.

The authors feel that the important fact is that "80.3, 63.2 and 69.2 percent of those questioned felt that inappropriate masturbation, heterosexual behavior, and homosexual behavior, respectively, did occur in the facilities."

Therefore, both sex education and intervention programs are needed. They recommend not suppressing masturbation but rather teaching the appropriate time and place for it. Another important fact is that a large percentage felt that no sexual behavior at all was permissible. Therefore, sex education programs would be more acceptable if conservative.

The authors feel that the big finding of the study is that while academicians are stressing sexual freedom for the retarded, those who take care of them do not all feel this way.

This article is good reading for the teacher of the intermediate EMR because it stresses the fact that retarded people are not sans sexuality. The self-report data shows that sexual activities do occur among the institutionalized retarded person, but that some of it is deemed inappropriate either because of type, location or because the people are retarded. It shows that sex education should be an essential part of the retarded person's education but to appease parents and administrators, it may have to be a conservative program.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The rationale for this library research was duofold. First, the researcher became better acquainted with three of the major resources for a teacher of the intermediate educable mentally retarded student: books, journals and curriculum guides. The annotated bibliographies could be used by the researcher or by the reader to gain an overview of the contents of the book, journal article or curriculum guide. If the review indicated a useful resource, the reader could then locate the resource.

Second, the researcher gained many useful ideas for teaching the intermediate educable mentally retarded students. These were compiled in a card catalog so that the ideas would be easily accessible.

The author hopes that the information contained in this thesis may be of some use for the teacher of the intermediate educable mentally retarded.

COMMENTS ON FINDINGS

Material does exist for teaching the intermediate educable mentally retarded. It does take time to locate the material and to separate it from the material for the other levels. The researcher gained much through this search and evaluation process.

The researcher became much more closely acquainted with five of the most used books on teaching the mentally retarded. The researcher purposely chose five books in varied

areas so that a sound overview would be obtained.

The researcher is now familiar with the format used in curriculum guides. Since curriculum guides are such a vital resource for the teacher of the mentally retarded, knowing how to use these guides is an important skill.

Through reviewing the articles, the researcher became reacquainted with three different journals that will be very beneficial in future teaching.

The most important outcome of the research was the compilation of a card catalog of nearly two hundred cards that list various activities, objectives and materials for teaching the intermediate educable mentally retarded.

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