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THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES
OF
INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

By

Lillian Lucile Washington

An Undergraduate Thesis Submitted To The Faculty

of the

College of Arts and Sciences

of

Prairie View State College

Prairie View, Texas

In Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirement Of The Degree

of

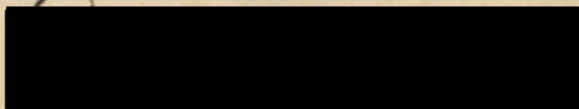
Bachelor of Science in Education

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and

Accepted On The Recommendation

of



Professor of Education

Advantages and Disadvantages of Individual Instruction in the High School

Introduction

1. Purpose of this study
2. Method of procedure
3. The History of Individual Instruction
4. The Various Methods
5. The Individual Method
6. Group Instruction Method
7. Self-Instruction Method

To

My Mother

Whose sacrifices have secured
for me a higher education, than
I alone could have attained.

8. The History of Individual Instruction
9. The Individual Method
10. Group Instruction Method
11. Self-Instruction Method
12. The History of Individual Instruction
13. The Individual Method
14. Group Instruction Method
15. Self-Instruction Method

Advantages and Disadvantages of Individual Instruction in the High School.

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B. Method of procedure

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"The Advantages and Disadvantages of Individual Instruction in the High School"

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to show the advantages and disadvantages of individual instruction in the high school. The subject discussed herein is the outgrowth of the author's extensive research in the various books discussing the problem thus stated and the author's limited experience. It is impossible to discuss all the problems of individual instruction for each day new advantages and disadvantages arise, never-the-less the author discussed only those advantages and disadvantages which occur more frequently in individual instruction.

Method of Procedure: The content of this thesis has been obtained through research work in the various books treating the subject herein discussed, and information obtained in class. The books used in research are found in the library of Prairie View College. The writer will attempt to show merits of individual instruction where in the various authors have shown disadvantages, and defects where in advantages are shown. The writer will draw definite conclusions which will grow out of the contents of the thesis.

The very beginning of our education was characterized by individual instruction. Pupils learned their lessons at their seats and then went up to the teacher's desk to recite to him. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this method was seen to drift away and for forty years there has been a general movement in the direction of returning this form of instruction. In Pueblo, Colorado, research found that the high school pupil made progress in every subject at their optimum rate. Later the late President

Frederick Berk, protested against the "lock step" in school work and advocated individual instruction. He attempted to demonstrate its usefulness in the training school of that institution. Many of his pupils have experimented with this plan in other schools and have attained varying degrees of success. Superintendent Carleton Washburne, at Winnetka used this plan in the elementary schools and his success was great.

The history of individual instruction may be traced back from Socrates to our present day.

Socrates, a great Greek philosopher was conscious of the need and lack of clear insight into principles in matters of conduct and for that reason we find him attempting to discover by methods of cross-examination, the limitations of their ethical knowledge. Socrates always confessed his own ignorance. Socrates would question his pupils as to the meaning or classes of some words they used in ordinary circumstances.

Another method used in early times was the method in which the teacher and the pupils admitted their ignorance and sought to clear among that confusion arising from inadequate conceptions, and to associate and ascertain the truth. In the real sense of the problem method in history and geography and our experimental methods in science are only modern applications of the Socratic method.

Medieval method. Among our very first school masters was Vittorino Defeltre whose aim was to make learning a delight with his method of appealing to the play impulse. Vittorino's method was objective and practical. Oral reading and composition occupied much of the time. Mathematics was taught by means of games. Through the courses he appealed to spontaneity and originality. Vittorino sought out that subject and method of instruction which he believed to be best adapted to each individual's need. He took the very best pains with the dullest students, thereby devising simple tasks by which they might learn.

Another school master was Frutzenloerf, who placed great emphasis and value upon the dialogue as a method of teaching. He demanded three things of each of his pupils. Clear and fluent reading, regular and pleasing hand writing and loud and pure speech.

"The prince of school masters" was Comenius who employed alternate periods with long periods for recreation, with much use of the drama in learning.

Early colonial instruction: In the early grammar schools of old England the accepted curriculum in Latin was adopted and the text was committed to memory without the least idea as to the meaning. Meaning was gathered after words through practice and experience. The function of the teacher was to direct his pupils to noble thoughts in literature and history. The purpose of the teacher further, was to rely on the cooperated activities of his pupils, so that his class room resembled a debating society, in which the critical abilities were developed by the subjection of each pupil to the criticism of his fellows and all of those of the teacher.

Early Modern Method: In early modern times books were scarce and so was writing materials therefore the following method of teaching consisted of the teacher reading his own copy out while the pupils took notes. So common was this method of instruction that the latin word, *legree*, for reading became useful in teaching. Most of the pupil's work consisted in memorizing the work dictated by the teacher.

In the academy the method of experimentation was used. Recitation method was used also, but some of the newer subjects demanded more emphasis on the practical uses that were not found in previous methods.

The Need for Individual Instruction.

Individual instruction in education is necessary for personal adjustment. We should consider that each pupil has the problem of adjusting himself. "Personal adjustment is necessary because the same explanation, drill, tests, and instruction will not result in educational outcomes to the same degree in different children." Individuals do not only differ widely in the degree to which they profit from similar opportunities to learn, as may be seen from the results of tests or examinations or from the distribution of the teacher's marks received by pupils of the class, but those like scores or marks, differ as to specific weaknesses and as to the need of adopting instruction to them. Individual instruction aids the child in finding himself and his place and then fitting himself to his place.

Learning is necessary to meet the demands of society. Social demands are as important as the demands of the individual. Along with caring for the needs of the individual the work of the school should ^{b.} be directed toward serving the social needs which the individual must meet. Social needs are those which arise from the demands of the world, the government, the city and the community. The School, in adjusting itself to society should use all social problems to the greatest extent. Alexander Inglis Says: "It is an obvious fact that as time passes society changes and the demands of society are modified." Secondary Education must constantly be adapted to meet the changing needs of society in which it is to serve.

Methods of Carrying out Individual Instruction.

Individual instruction is not carried out to a great extent at present because it is too expensive, never-the-less we may see individual instruction carried out indirectly in the following: Problem-project method, flexible assignments, homogeneous groupings, supervised study, use of ungraded rooms and the use of vocation classes, and remedial instruction, actual individual instruction.

1

John Dewey says, "Problems are the starting point of thinking. There is always something which evokes thought and we may call that something a problem. As is often said, "necessity is the mother of invention", brings out the fact that when things are unsatisfactory we begin at once to find a solution for the problem confronting us. Problem solving teaching is said to consist in the raising of perplexity, confusion and doubt in the minds of pupils and this challenges them to find a solution for the problem."

The problem method of teaching has many values. If the problem method were skillfully employed, school work would become more pleasant and agreeable for both the teacher and the pupil, the pupil would no longer be the result of arbitrarily imposed demands from another, but comes as awakened desire for achievement and curiosity which call for the solution of the problems that have arisen naturally in the course of school work. The pupils assume their tasks very willingly. Each pupil is responsible for his own education. Each student is put in a problematic attitude towards his work and this causes him to experience dissatisfaction which can only be satisfied by finding a solution to the problem confronting him. Different teachers arouse the pupils' interest in different ways. Some place a series of problems before the students for each of them to attack each problem in turn. Students may solve the problem by reading a variety of reference work, by having individual or group experience.

1. Dewey, John, "How We Think"

1

Harl R. Douglas says "that when a problem takes on certain aspects it then becomes a project, that is when the problem is solved "in the realm of the real, the material, the physical and the practical." The project when used in teaching is a unit of activity carried on by the learned in a natural and life-like manner and with the idea in mind to accomplish a definite aim. Another source of the interest provoking power of the project work is the fact that it engages some of the most powerful, natural desires for self expression and self-direction; the desire to know and settle states of doubt and uncertainty. The project method offers the activity as a unit, the activity is carried on in a natural and life-like manner, independent of logical diversion of subject-matter, free from academic artificiality and formality, and in a natural setting.

Flexible assignments play a large part in providing for individual instruction. Instead of dividing the pupils into different groups flexible assignments are made. Students falling into the following classes, under average and above average. In making the flexible assignments the teacher assigns the teacher may assign several exercises, designating the minimum goal for each pupil, but emphasizing the fact that those who can and will are to do as much more as they are able to do.

Homogeneous grouping involves the task of grouping pupils, who have registered for the same year subject, into sections based on their ability. When students are grouped homogeneously, we find that the teacher has smaller groups to deal with than when they are in heterogeneous groups, therefore in dealing with smaller groups she is better able to give more individual instrus-

tion. Homogeneous groups are characterized by advantages, dangers and limitations.

Advantages of homogeneous grouping are: much time saved; many failures are done away with; dull students will not retard the progress of the bright students; pupils are retained in school longer; individual instruction can be given to small, slow groups.

Dangers and limitations of homogeneous groups are: dull students do not get the contact of the bright students; dull students feel that they are marked; there is difficulty in getting text-books; the ambitious may injure their health by working too hard; dissatisfaction of the part of the parents; pupils tend to lose interest.

Supervised Study: Supervised study may be used as an opportunity for adjusting school work to individual differences. The supervised study period¹ offers several opportunities.

1. The instructor is able, by individual conferences to gather information which will furnish a basis for diagnosis and individual treatment.
2. Supervised study periods make it possible to adjust the assignment to the needs of the slower students and the brighter students.
3. There is an opportunity for personal work and conversation, without the formality of class recitation.
4. There is an opportunity to give individual help to pupils on their various difficulties.
5. In the supervised study period of the pupils each may be given help on the assignment.

Dangers of Supervised Study Period.

1. Douglas: Modern Methods In High School

Dangers of Supervised Study Periods.

1. There is danger that the teacher will mother the pupils too much.
2. There is danger of the instructor spending too much time on the dull student.

The supervised study plan may be carried out in several ways.

1. The alternate-period plan.
- The unassigned lesson plan.
3. The Batavia and the study-coach plan
4. The conference plan.
5. The library-study plan.
6. The double period plan.
7. The divided period plan.

Ungraded rooms. The ungraded room is a special room to which are sent unusually dull or bright pupils, but more frequently these rooms are organized for the dull students. In this room individual instruction is given. The instructor is able to bring the work of the slow student up to the standard which will permit him to return to his regular classes. In the case of the bright student, they are prepared for extra promotion.

Vocation classes. Vocation classes are organized during the summer months. These classes permit students who have failed to do extra work so as to enable them to go into their regular class at the beginning of school in the fall. Such classes enable the dull student to obtain individual instruction and the bright student to go ahead of his regular class.

Remedial instruction. Remedial work should be individual. During the supervised-study period the teacher is able to detect the work on which each pupil is failing. To remedy this the pupil is given a definite set of problems to solve relating to the work in which he has failed. If he is unable to solve the problem his mistakes are pointed out to him and explained. Some times the pupil is allowed to observe other pupils while they solve the problem.

A check test is given at the end of the period of remedial work.

Actual individual instruction. John Kennedy about three decades ago, developed a form of individual instruction in the schools of Batavia, New York. His plan was that of coaching and encouraging the laggard, and persuading them to keep up with the rest of the class. An extra teacher was usually assigned to each room for this purpose. This came to be known as the Batavia plan.

1 The Batavia plan is now in operation at Mt. Vernon, New York. The superintendent of schools provides for the coaching and encouraging of the dull students who lag behind. He does not provide an extra teacher, but provides an extra hour each day for individual instruction by the class room teacher, and he also provides a special teacher in each school to help those students who need more help than the classroom teacher has time to give them.

Some schools allow the slow pupils to increase time spent on subjects in which they are dull, at the expense of their play or assembly activities, or through summer or Saturday work.

All schools in Gary, Indiana are open on Saturdays for individual instruction.

2. The Winnetka plan: The Winnetka plan is divided into two parts. One part deals with knowledge and skill. The other part provides for each child self-expression and the opportunity to contribute to the group something of his own special interest and ability.

To provide for these two divisions of this plan, half the morning and half the evening is given over to individual work and the other half of the morning and evening is given over to group activities.

During the time of individual work, each child does his own job. The teacher spends her time teaching and not listening to recitation. She encourages and supervises.

No one fails and no one skips a grade, but if a child does not finish

* Plan adopted by Carleton Washburne

his work at the end of the school term, he picks up in September where he left off in June.

3. The Platoon plan: In this plan the children are divided into two alternating groups or platoons. While one group is studying the "essentials" in the home room, the pupils of the other group or platoon are engaged in specialized activities in the auditorium, playground, industrial art rooms or library.

In the home room there is personal contact with pupil and teacher which assures the pupil that the teacher is interested in his progress.

The platoon school offers the following advantages:

1. The home room teacher ~~retains~~ the personal touch with the pupils and provides efficient instruction in the three R's.

2. With special teachers working in special rooms the platoons school is providing a round of experience which could not be offered in a school organized on the one-teacher plan.

3. The auditorium in charge of selected and specially trained teachers offers daily opportunities to pupils to participate in self-expressive activities.

4. The platoon organization provides for individual group instruction in the fundamentals.

4. The Dalton plan: The Dalton plan is a widely known form of individual instruction. Under the Dalton plan the work of the year is divided into and laid out in monthly units. The student is furnished with his monthly assignments at the beginning of the school year. The assignments are called contracts for each subject. When the student completes all contracts in all subjects, contracts are given for another month in each subject.

There are no recitations. Class rooms are "laboratories" and the pupils go to them when ever they like to work on their contracts under supervision. The instructors preside over the various laboratories. The groups may hold conferences when desired. The plan is characterized by a means of checking the progress of the students.

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