

1954

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Recommended Citation

Winkleblack, Robert, "The Case Study" (1954). *Masters Theses*. 4553.
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THE CASE STUDY

Robert Winkleblack



THE CASE STUDY

Presented to

DR. WILLIAM H. ZEIGEL

as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION DEGREE

at the

EASTERN ILLINOIS STATE COLLEGE

By

Robert Winkleblack

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. William H. Zeigel, Director of Placement, Eastern Illinois State College, for constructive criticisms and patient guidance in the preparation of this paper and completion of other requirements for the Master of Science degree.

To Dr. Elizabeth K. Lawson, Dean of Women, Eastern Illinois State College, whose stimulating teaching of Education 552, Understanding the Individual, motivated the writing of this paper.

To Dr. Rudolph D. Anfinson, Dean of Men, Eastern Illinois State College, for a helpful background of information in counseling and guidance.

OUTLINE INDEX

	Page
I. THE NATURE AND USE OF THE CASE STUDY	
Definition	1
Use of Case Study in Initiating Guidance Program	3
Other Uses of Case Study	5
Limitations of the Case Study Method	6
II. HOW TO CONDUCT A CASE STUDY	
Statement of the Problem	8
Types of Information.	10
Sources of Information	12
Recording Information.	15
Reliability of Information	17
III. THE CASE OF JOHN	
Problem	19
Sources of Pertinent Information	19
Physical, Socio-economic and Cultural Environment.	20
Family Characteristics	20
History and Present Characteristics of Case	22
Appraisal, Interpretation and Recommendations	26

THE NATURE AND USE OF THE CASE STUDY

Definition

The case study may be simply defined as a tool or technique used in the total guidance program. More specifically, it is a scientific approach to collecting, synthesizing and analysing pertinent data that may affect the behavior of an individual.

Strang defines the case study as follows:

"The case study may be defined as a narrative account of all the factors in an individual's life history which may lead to fruitful hypothesis regarding the nature and course of his difficulties or which may throw light upon specific behavior or personality development. Briefly, it is an instrument for measuring personality development."¹

Germaine has this to say as an attempt to define the case study:

"As a function of the school, this strategy is a method of appraising all the pertinent facts that can be obtained about the student for the purpose of helping him to make better adjustment to definite life situations. By means of a case study of the problems of an individual, all the environmental and personal factors which affect his behavior may be discovered, and interpreted, and a remedial program inaugurated."²

Allport, referring more specifically to clinical case studies

¹Strang, Ruth, Counseling Techniques in College and Secondary School, p. 32.

²Germaine and Germaine, Personnel Work in High School, p. 116.

rather than studies for educational counseling, has this to say:

"This method... is the most comprehensive of all and lies closest to the initial starting point of common sense. It provides a framework within which the psychologist can place all of his observations gathered by other methods; it is his final affirmation of the individuality and uniqueness of every personality. It is a completely synthetic method, the only one that is precious enough to embrace all assembled facts. Unskillfully used, it becomes a meaningless chronology or a confusion of fact and fiction, of guesswork and misinterpretation. Properly used, it is the most revealing method of all."³

From these three definitions of the case history or case study, three main concepts seem to be outstanding.

1. The case study is a collection of all pertinent data.
2. It is a scientific approach to solving a behavior problem.
3. Case studies must be interpreted by trained people.

Most guidance people are quick to point out what a case study is not, as well as what it is. For example, a case study is not a collection of irrelevant details or interesting gossip. It is not an end in itself but a means to an end. Finally, it is not just a collection of observations, tests and interviews.

Now that we have defined a case study and mentioned a word of caution, we may proceed further and examine the case study more specifically as to the vital purposes that this scientific approach can

³Allport, Gordon W., Personality, p. 390.

serve and the relationship of it to the total guidance program. We must keep in mind that it is one of several important techniques in the total guidance program.

Use of Case Study in Initiating a Guidance Program

As a means of initiating a guidance program in a school system, the case study is one of the possible methods. For example, let us assume that a principal or superintendent is interested in starting a guidance program in his school. We will assume that his purpose is to more fully meet the needs of the students enrolled. How can he help his teachers to become more favorable to the guidance point of view? By this we mean recognizing individual differences and considering each child as an individual and respecting the uniqueness of the individual personality.

A discipline problem may be referred to the principal by a teacher who is dissatisfied with the behavior of one of his students. The principal may suggest that the teacher attempt to find why the student is behaving in this unsatisfactory manner. The teacher may begin to examine the child's home background and health records. If available, cumulative records may be employed. Later a sociogram may give some indication of the pupil's social standing in the class. In the process of collecting and analysing these data the teacher may soon come to realize the complexity of human behavior.

The most apathetic and indifferent teacher or administrator will often become more human and sympathetic after diagnosing and interpreting the facts in a case study of the school's discipline problems--be it the "loafer" or school "trouble-maker." "To know all is often to forgive all."

In the process of conducting the case study other teachers may become involved. For example, teachers who now have or have had the subject of the case study in class will be consulted for information. As these teachers work with the case worker, they may become more sympathetic toward the student and recognize the causes of his behavior. They may also be encouraged to conduct similar studies on other students who need help with problems. The end result may be that these teachers feel the need for professional help on such problems and as a result a guidance director may be employed.

Here, then, is an example of how the case study approach could be used to initiate a guidance program--beginning with one teacher and perhaps spreading throughout the whole staff. The author feels obligated at this point to mention one word of caution with reference to the above example. The initiation of a guidance program needs the sanction of the administrator. The above example was given under the assumption that the administrator mentioned was familiar with guidance practices. In a case where the administrator is not trained in guidance procedures, his sanction and assistance are needed by the

director before the program is initiated or it may tend to be super-imposed upon the curriculum rather than an integral part of it.

Other Uses of the Case Study

The case study is not limited to discipline problems alone. In every classroom there are "average" students who are not working up to capacity or who are harboring problems. There are students who do not measure up to the minimum standards of dependability, cooperation, truthfulness and honesty. Cases of extreme shyness and, in the other direction, over-aggressiveness can be found in most classrooms. A scientific study of these students often proves to be a great help to them in improving learning skills and recognizing the importance of home background, emotional and social conditioning, inherited tendencies and wise choice of vocation.

Another vital function of the case study is the motivation given to the student to help himself. When the student is studied in a counseling situation through the use of a case study technique, he often is quite impressed that the counselor or teacher is sufficiently interested in him to collect the wealth of data needed for the study. When he realizes his need for guidance and knows someone is vitally interested in his improvement, he will often sense the sincerity and depth of interest shown him and respond much more quickly than if he believed the basis for the counseling situation to be prejudice and hearsay.

The scientific approach required by a case study may well be regarded as contagious and herein lies another function of this approach. The use of this method may spread to other school and community problems, resulting in an evaluation of all conditions in the school and in remedial measures needed for a well-rounded educational program.

Mention should be made here of the use of the case study method in clinical counseling. In this premise the case method came into being and is still vital in clinical work with extreme mental cases, but since the purpose of this paper is limited, clinical usage will not be specifically discussed as such.

Limitations of the Case Study Method

The case study is not without limitations and improperly used may become quite futile.

The first question that arises when a case study is started is: "Can I be sure that this information is true?" Information from personal interviews may conflict with information from other sources, such as data from cumulative records and interviews. Thus more objective methods are often needed as well as a skilled interviewer. Tests and scales are usually more objective than information from other sources which may reflect prejudices, biases, opinions, or even fancies. Obviously, all of these factors must be carefully con-

sidered before data can be accepted as reliable.

Another danger or limitation of the case study lies with the person making the study. If he is an unskilled interviewer or uses data from an interview unskillfully conducted, he may be misled in his analysis. Also, he may be prone to play hunches or use his own childhood background as a basis for conclusions. It is often more difficult to be objective about behavior than many other fields of scientific endeavor.

It is easy to fall into the pitfall of shortcuts or quick diagnosis rather than to work out objectively the whole picture or all areas that may be pertinent to the problem.

As a final limitation of the case study, probably the most profound limitation of all is the possibility that the case worker will fail to consider the whole person or total personality. Every bit of information, which may often seem quite insignificant, must be considered and never discarded until a wealth of conflicting information has been collected and synthesized.

All of the specific limitations mentioned above point directly to the personality of the case worker. Not only do they demand a well adjusted person with a thorough knowledge of psychology but also a person who is liked and respected by those whom he will attempt to aid. His ability to interview and skillfully handle the counseling situation will have an important effect upon the success of the case study and its use in problem-solving.

HOW TO CONDUCT A CASE STUDY

A case study is made up of pertinent data; therefore, the person making the study must decide which data are pertinent and which have no bearing on the case. Since this is often difficult to determine at the beginning of the study, most counselors collect all the information that is available before making the decision.

The complexity or length of the case study will, of course, depend largely upon the complexity of the problem.

Statement of the Problem

A statement of the problem is recommended before the case studies are begun. The statement of the problem should be specific. This is one of the problems of referrals made by teachers to counselors. The teacher will often semi-diagnose the case in the referral rather than state specifically the behavior of the student. For example, rather than say that the student seems to need affection, a teacher should give actual, concise descriptions of the behavior that led to that superficial diagnosis.

The following are actual referrals made by teachers to the author of this paper:

"Johnny is maladjusted; he cannot get along with other children. He cannot do his school work because he will not try hard. He is constantly causing trouble on the playground because he is spoiled. He needs someone to be strict with him."

From the above referral the counselor or case worker can gather very little except that Johnny needs help. Here in contrast is a well prepared referral:

"Johnny has poor scholarship and difficulty getting along with other children. The following incidents were observed:

"May 10: Johnny became involved in an argument on the baseball diamond when he was put out at the plate. He contended he was safe although all the other children agreed he was out. He became very angry and struck one of the other children, thus perpetrating a fight.

"May 11: Johnny pushed another child from the slide, injuring her arm. He apparently wanted to use the slide before his turn. When he was sent to his room by the playground teacher, he became very angry and called her names and went to his room with deliberate slowness.

"Other similar incidents occur daily."

Not only concise descriptions of unusual behavior but also the conditions that provoked this behavior and the frequency of occurrence are also needed. Equally important information needed in the statement of the problem is the place where the misbehavior occurs, length of time and the reaction of others in the group to the undesirable behavior.

A difficult but none-the-less important aspect to consider in

all attempts to define or state the problem is a careful consideration of how the problem appears to the student and the satisfactions he is getting from his particular behavior.

Types of Information

The health background should be considered. This should include permanent defects, hearing, sight, speech, physical weaknesses, adenoids, tonsils, weight, height, diet, constipation, tendency toward nervousness, use of tobacco or alcohol, and hours of sleep and exercise.

Many of the above-mentioned health factors may be either cause or effect and must be considered in that light. Even in our schools today there are students who are well along in their educational pursuits before common defects of sight and hearing are discovered. However, one factor is rarely the cause of misbehavior or poor work in school and all factors must be considered as a whole in order to make proper use of the case study approach.

The scholastic record must be considered as a factor in a case study. Reports by teachers, results of standardized achievement tests, mental age, intelligence quotient, reading ability, study habits, subjects in which low, average, or high achievement is made, and the prevalent attitude toward each of these factors are all areas that must be examined in the study.

Personality adjustment and social record in school and out of school should also be collected and analyzed. Probably most important sources of this information are the following: participation in clubs, dramatics, sports, and other extra-curricular activities at school. Church groups, fraternal and other organizations are sources of information out of school. Information relative to personality adjustment may be found by observation, interviews with teachers, adjustment questionnaires, anecdotal records kept by home room teachers or counselor, personal interview with the subject and interviews with others who have contacts with the subject. Special attention should be given to the prevailing attitude of the subject toward each type of information as it is collected.

The home background, sometimes called the home condition area of the study, is of considerable importance. Among the factors here are: relationship between parents, relationship between parents and child, number of brothers and sisters, ages of brothers and sisters, physical properties of the home (location, neighborhood, etc.), number of hours spent reading, type of literature, number of hours spent watching television, income of family, social standing of family.

A record of vocational choices should be available for the case worker's consideration. This should include occupations in which the student has shown an interest, estimate of the student's ability to enter these occupations, type of work done by parents, brothers and

sisters, that might have a bearing on the choice, as well as actual vocational experience of the subject outside of school.

The foregoing paragraphs concerning the areas of examination or sources of information may bewilder the inexperienced case worker or guidance counselor. It seems wise to point out again that the complexity of the case is related to the complexity of the problem. In some cases, where the problem is relatively simple, the need for such a complicated study is nonexistent. However, all these sources may be needed to establish properly what information is pertinent to the problem.⁴

Many forms for recording case histories have been prepared. They differ slightly in form but are similar in content. Here is an example in the form of an outline by Strang.⁵

Sources of Information

School records which usually give address, date of birth, name of parents, occupation and nationality of parents, academic subjects, student's marks.

Interviews with student. Under this heading may be included all the formal contacts between the teacher and student as they live and talk every day.

Interviews with parents, teachers and others who know the individual.

Observations and interviews in the home.

Observations of the student in the school, on the playground, on the street, in social affairs, in other school situations.

⁴For further information see Cecil V. Millard, Case Inventory for the Study of Child Development.

⁵Strang, Role of Teacher in Personnel Work, p. 113.

Standardized tests of intelligence, achievement, emotionality, interests, and attitudes.

Cumulative records sent from other schools or grades.

Life histories written by the student himself.

Daily schedule kept by student.

Questionnaires answered by student.

This is, of course, an outline of suggested sources of information and was not prepared as a form of recording such information.

From a study of a large number of case studies, Strang lists the following eleven fields of inquiry:⁶

Information concerning the present problem

Family background

health

personal characteristics

nationality, citizenship, status and religion

educational history

occupations (parents, brothers and sisters)

social activities

atmosphere of parents' home

marital relationship of parents

relationship of parents to children

method of discipline

variations on child's behavior

special accidents or events

brothers and sisters

Home and neighborhood environment

economic conditions

recreational interests and resources

individual's attitude toward home

Early development

history of health habits

conditions of birth

special health conditions

psychological development

⁶Op. cit., p. 114.

- Intelligence of the individual
- Academic development of individual
 - standardized tests
 - attitudes of students
 - study habits
- Health of individual
- Sex development of individual
 - sex education
 - boy-girl relationships
- Social behavior and interests of individual
 - clashes with social rules
 - leisure activities
 - relationship with companions
 - emotional accompaniment
- Religious and emotional adjustment
- Vocational interests and experiences

More briefly, Erickson lists the following fields:⁷

- Counselors' contact
- Identifying data (age, grade, etc.)
- Family background
- School information (tests, grades, vocational interests)

Smith and Roos give an equally abbreviated list of the fields of inquiry.⁸

- Statement of problem - identifying data
- Family history
- Personal history
 - prenatal
 - natal
 - development
 - health
- Habits
- Education
- Recreational activities and facilities
- Personality

It is evident from these three outlines that the case may be as complicated as the problem dictates. Although one outline may

⁷Erickson, The Counseling Interview, p. 120.

⁸Smith and Roos, Guide to Guidance, p. 205.

be more complete than the other, all contain the basic information and the form of recording this information is up to the individual counselor.

Recording the Information

In event that accumulative records are not available or in use, the following form is suggested by Williamson in order that pertinent information be available at all times to facilitate the growth, development and learning of each individual child and also be source of basic data for case studies. This form is available in 8 1/2 x 11 size folder with information recorded on both front and reverse sides.⁹

(form on following page)

⁹Williamson, How to Counsel Students, p. 69.

Front

Reverse

Name	Name of father and mother (or guardian)
home address	Birth dates
Telephone	Birth places
Birth date	Deceased dates
Authority for birth certificate	General health
birth certificate	Religion
passport	Race and nationality
oath	date arrived in U. S.
church	citizen
hospital record	education
Photograph	occupation
Year	language spoken in home
School	type of home community
Grade attained	if parents separated (date)
Mental age	Year and age
Chronological age	Adviser
Academic aptitude	Attendance
test	Discipline
score (M. A.)	Home influences and social
I. Q.	adjustment
percentile	Mental and emotional
Subjects (grades and credits)	Physical and athletic
Achievement and other objective	Extra-curricula activities
test results	Free-time activities
test	Notable accomplishments and
score	experiences
percentile	Vocational experiences and plans
Time profile of school	Educational plans
Grades and standardized tests	Personality ratings
	Remarks

The author highly recommends the keeping of readily available cumulative records, not only as an available source of information for making case studies, but also in detecting educational maladjustment before serious problems arise. These personal records are also an invaluable aid to the teacher, better enabling him to understand and to help guide the development of the student. The form given here

is not necessarily the best available but should help to determine the factors which should be available.

Reliability of the Information

Following the collection of information for the case study and before any total analysis is made, it often is advisable to attempt to determine the completeness and authenticity of the material collected. The counselor or teacher making the study needs some criteria for judging the adequacy of the record. The following list, summarized by the author from various sources, may be of some help in determining whether or not the case record is satisfactory.

1. Has the case worker adhered to facts and quotations and not fallen into the pitfall of generalization?
2. Are the facts given statistically correct with reference to dates, places, names and the amount of time and frequency of occurrence?
3. Are all facts checked against other sources of information or observations so opinions, biases and prejudices have been eliminated?
4. Has each factor been considered objectively by the case worker to eliminate personal bias and has the whole picture been considered to prevent quick diagnosis or "hunches" from being used?
5. Has the most important information been collected with reference to the particular case?

It seems logical that if a person making a study could not use it objectively, he probably could not use the above criteria objectively. Here again the importance of personality and training of the case worker, whether teacher or counselor, is evident.

THE CASE OF JOHN

The following is a sample of a case study made by the author. Most of the information was collected in the school term preceding the actual writing of the study.

This study is presented here as an actual sample of a case study. Much of the information collected was not used in the actual written account of the study. Only the information that the writer felt was pertinent to the case was used. Each factor was carefully analyzed and checked against other information before the actual written study was synthesized.

It is difficult to establish just what a typical case study is; perhaps there is no typical case. However, the following is presented as an instance of working with young adolescents in which the case study approach may be used. Names used are fictitious.

Name: John Thomas	Father: Albert Thomas
Home Address: [REDACTED], Illinois	Mother: Mollie Thomas
Birth Date: May 16, 1938	Address: [REDACTED], Illinois
Grade: Seven	Case Worker: Robert Winkleblack
Age: Twelve	Date: June, 1951

Problem

Poor scholarship, particularly unsatisfactory grades in language arts and social studies; frequent arguments with other students; and various disturbing habits in classroom.

The following are excerpts of anecdotal records kept by the teacher of grade six:

"During a rest period some students came to tell me that John and another boy were fighting in the rest room. When I arrived, both boys were apparently very angry but were not fighting. It was learned that the boy had made light of John's poor school work in such a way as to cause John to become very angry.

"Other incidents of this nature occur weekly.

"John's carelessness of dress and manner and inability to express himself clearly also cause him unpleasantness. For example, during an English class John attempted to make an oral report. His pauses to choose words and general uninteresting way of presenting the material soon bored the other students and they began to make light of him by various means. This is a daily problem except when an assignment can be found that John can do reasonably well.

"John's interest in the opposite sex seems normal; however, his manifestation of these interests and desires seems unsuccessful. John tries to show interest in girls by teasing and other adolescent methods but is usually so crude that the girls become angry. Some of the girls have complained of obscenity from John which seems to be another unsatisfactory means of getting attention from them. Problems of this type occur one or two times per week."

Sources of Pertinent Information

Attendance, achievement tests and progress marks from cumulative records; interviews with parents, past teachers, students, minister and school principal.

Physical, Socio-economic and Cultural Environment

The home is a farm house in fairly good repair. It is owned by the Thomases and located near ██████████, Illinois, a small community of 900 population. Although the buildings are in good repair, there is a general air of carelessness prevalent. I would term the appearance of the home as "junky." Although the Thomases have electricity, they have no running water or indoor toilet. In general, however, the home is not inferior by comparison to other homes in the community. The only reading matter that I observed in the home was a few back issues of "Saturday Evening Post" and "Colliers." The only newspaper regularly subscribed to was a farm paper of the local community. Both parents are native born Americans and attended elementary schools in the local community.

Family Characteristics and History

Physique and Health: The mother is a plump woman in her late fifties. She is usually seen in an "old-fashioned" styled dress but nevertheless appears neat and clean. The father is less conscious of his appearance. He often appears with a three or four-day beard and dirty overalls. This is not too important, however, since he is a farmer and cannot easily stay clean. When he attends a social function, he usually is dressed in an out-of-date shirt and a pair of trousers in which his friends claim he was married.

John has four brothers. There are no girls in the family. The four boys are older than John. The oldest is twenty years older than John and the youngest is ten years older. All seem to be in good health and the mother states that they were all exceptionally healthy. Both parents are also in good health, although both wear glasses.

Abilities: Neither parent received a formal education past the sixth grade. Both have worked very hard all their lives. They have managed to send the four older boys to college. Two of the boys are in well-paying professions and two are still in college. All four boys served in the Armed Forces during World War II. From interviews with associates in local farm organization and minister of his church, the conclusion was reached that the father is very far behind his time in thinking and forms very few intelligent opinions about world or community affairs. He is a firm believer in education. Despite his poor education and apparently poor judgment, he has made a respectable living and sent his sons to college.

Interests: The main interest of the family centers around the "hill-billy" radio programs and local social functions. There seems to be no interest in other music, sports, or any evidence of interest in important community affairs. None of the boys were interested in art, music, sports, or dramatics, etc.

✓ Emotional Adjustment: I have no record or information on the four older boys as to their emotional development. Both parents seem

well satisfied and proud of their boys. One rarely meets them that they do not mention one of them and remind you that he went to Illinois or Bradley.

✓ Social Status and Relationships: Church, free movies and visits with neighbors are the main relationships with the community. No membership is held in any social organization although there are many active organizations in the community.

Attitudes and Ideals: There seem to be no ambitions or ideals other than to keep the farm running and be able to work. They are not completely unconcerned about John's work in school; however, there is no participation in P. T. A. or other school functions. John is allowed to attend only a few school functions because the parents do not like to drive at night.

History and Present Characteristics of Case

Physique and Health: John is small for his age but from his teachers I learned that his growth had seemed normal. (No school medical records are available.) Information from parents and people acquainted with the family seems to indicate that birth was normal and pre-school development was normal. No height or weight data are available.

Abilities: The case worker was handicapped in this particular area by changes in the marking system. For grades 1-3 marks were

recorded as number grades; in grades 4-5 by excellent, satisfactory and unsatisfactory; and in grades 7-8 by the letter system. From interviews with teachers it was learned that the marks given John were not accurate measures of his progress. The teachers in grades four and five indicated that he had been given satisfactory grades in some subjects merely to encourage him to keep trying. The sixth grade teacher also indicated that he had given John average grades to help erase the stigma of failure that John was experiencing.

Records from the first grade show that his scholastic activities were average. The best marks were in arithmetic and the poorest in reading and language arts. In grade two the same pattern was noted. In grade three marks became poorer in all subjects and especially in reading. Social adjustment was marked as excellent. Marks in grade four were poor and records indicated thirty-one days of absence scattered over the year. These absences were due to several colds and other respiratory diseases.

Stanford Achievement Test scores were available from records in grade five. John was eleven years and six months at that time and the mental age computed was eight years and three months. Reading ability was placed at the third grade level. An I. Q. computed from the test was given as 75. These test results could not be accepted as a basis for judging John's mental ability. The author felt that the I. Q. calculated from an achievement test was more apt to show what John had

learned rather than his capacity for learning; therefore, these test results were considered as an indication of ability and not as absolute fact.

A gradual rise in marks is evident in grade five with only a few absences. Marks in arithmetic were above average. Other grades ranged from poor in reading and language to average in social studies. The teacher indicated poor social adjustment in grade five. In an interview she explained that John became less cooperative in class and was frequently fighting on the playground. The other children often ridiculed him for his poor reading, his "sloppyness" in sports and inability to play well enough to be accepted. By far the most thorough records were available for grade six. In interviews with the principal and teacher I found that John was outstandingly poor in any activity which took quick thinking or muscular coordination. By this time in his school career he had become a discipline problem. On the whole he seemed to be rejected by his classmates or in some cases tolerated merely because it was necessary. The remarks and sneers which had not troubled John in the fourth and fifth grades now seemed to hurt him very much.

A sociogram was made and the results showed John was a social isolate. The members of the group he chose as his friends were low on the graph. This seemed to indicate a more severe problem than was expected by the teacher. Abuse and rejection by classmates resulted in more fights on the playground and more discipline problems in the

classroom. His teacher recalled that by this time he had accepted his poor marks and when asked about them would merely reply that he was the "dumb" one in his family. However, from interviews with his classmates, it was found that he was very angry about them and would rationalize by saying the teacher did not like him. During the latter part of the sixth grade John was absent fifty-three school days with polio. The disease did not reach the paralysis stage, but according to his physician, it affected his heart. This eliminated him from all further physical exercise. He was promoted to grade seven.

When John started the seventh grade, the teacher made a seemingly noble attempt to help him to adjustment. From interviews it was learned that John made a feeble attempt to use his heart condition to cover up his inability to compete in athletics. He rationalized his poor ability in sports by stating he could be good if he were allowed to play. His scholastic endeavors were the same old story. His poor reading ability and poor work habits showed up in all subjects. An attempt was made by the teacher to interest him in industrial arts with the hope that he could find satisfaction in good work with his hands. This proved to be of some help. Marks in industrial arts were above average and John seemed to enjoy this pursuit.

By arrangement with the band director, John learned to play the drum. He later became good enough to play in the band. The satisfaction he gained from marching in uniform and playing at social functions

was unquestionably great. The principal commented that his conduct was appreciably better in grade seven than at any other time during grades four through six. Later in the year John was absent thirty-three days with scarlet fever which affected his previously weakened heart. Upon his return to school he took less interest in both band and industrial arts. His school work dropped to failing in all but three subjects. The band director, exasperated by two broken drum heads previous to his absence, "exploded" on the third one and dismissed him from band. His teacher finally took him to the principal for consultation after repeated complaints by the girls in the class that John had written obscene notes and propositioned them. After the second visit to the principal's office John was paddled for obscenity around the girls. The same poor social adjustment with classmates was evident all through the seventh grade. Scholastically John was passed to the eighth grade on probation since there was no logical reason for retention. His teacher stated he could not tolerate him for another year. Referral to a reading clinic was ignored by parents.

Appraisal, Interpretation and Recommendations

John may be considered a product of poor social adjustment. His inability to gain recognition in school work or athletics caused him to try for that recognition by misconduct in the classroom, fighting and indecency around the girls. Although some satisfaction was gained in

band and industrial arts, the unwillingness of the band teacher to help him left him no other choice but to revert to his own methods of gaining attention.

His narrow background of experiences and his inability to do elementary school work well will probably result in the same scholastic situation in high school. Probably more serious is the fact that failure to find adjustment in high school may lead to equally poor adjustment in the community later.

An interpretation of this case seems to center on the inability of the parents and teachers to understand John and help him. His parents are quite old. In their late fifties, they do not seem to have much in common with John. There is evidence that the parents were more active and gave the four older boys more encouragement than they do for John, possibly because of their age. It seems likely that they cannot understand John's inability to learn because of the success of the four older boys. They are probably the cause of the "I'm the dumb one in our family" attitude of the boy.

Poor health has had a great effect on John. Those days missed added difficulty to his already precarious scholastic record. Retention in grade three would possibly have given him time to mature and become at least an average reader. This would have been extra work for the teacher.

In the latter grades the failure of the teachers to do anything

about the problem is outstanding in this case. By finding activities, even simple ones, that John could do probably would have given him the attention and recognition he needed. This would have worked also in sports activities. The combination of the two would probably have overcome his feeling of inadequacy in scholarship. This is substantiated by his improved adjustment when band and industrial arts were satisfying to him. When band turned out to be another failure, industrial arts was not enough to help him from reverting to his own satisfying methods.

Recommendations are limited and difficult to make, but more difficult to follow. John needs to be engaged in satisfying activities as do all children. He should be encouraged in band. Adjustments should be made by the band teacher to allow him to return. He should continue his industrial arts work under close supervision. Other activities should be provided that he could do well, such as helping in the classroom by distributing books, adjusting windows and shades, and helping to keep the room in order. The teacher will probably need to do some experimenting to see what tasks John finds most satisfying. Perhaps extra coaching on basic subjects will improve his scholarship to some degree. Steps should be taken to give remedial reading help. The important thing is his social adjustment. Most of all he should be counseled to give him an insight into his problems so that he can aid in his own adjustment. The parents should be contacted and counseled separately to help them realize John has a problem and how to solve it. Teachers should accept John

where he is and try to help him on from there rather than trying to make him conform to what they think he ought to be.

Perhaps an evening job helping at school or a paper route could give him some satisfaction. Obviously the boy-girl relationship developing should be handled by other means than physical punishment, if at all possible. Part of this relationship may be based on ignorance as well as a desire for attention and affection.

The success of these recommendations may result not only in adjustment in high school but good adjustment in the community later.

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