



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

TYPES OF HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS

FRANK N. FREEMAN

School of Education, University of Chicago

During the winter of 1919 the principal of the University High School of the University of Chicago referred several boys to the Educational Laboratory who were giving difficulty to their teachers and concerning whom he wished an intellectual diagnosis. These boys were examined by means of the Stanford Revision of the Binet Scale. Results of this examination were reported to the principal and were taken into account in dealing with the boys. By combining the results of the test with the observations of the teachers and with the school marks which the boys received, it was possible to arrive at a better understanding of their cases and to determine more intelligently upon the best mode of treatment than would otherwise have been the case. Putting all these data together it was possible to distinguish several types of cases. Types such as these are undoubtedly met with commonly in the high school, and it is with the belief that a description of these types will be of help to high-school principals generally that an account of them is given.

There are, of course, a certain number of students who get into the high school who are not sufficiently well equipped by nature in intelligence to do the high-school work. The disposition of such cases depends upon whether the high school offers courses which require less ability than the regular academic work and which students may be advised to take. If such courses are not offered, it is useless to retain pupils of this type in the school. The value of intelligence tests in such cases rests upon the fact that it is not always easy without such standardized tests to determine whether the pupil's deficiency is one in intelligence. The teacher sometimes judges a pupil deficient, but the tests show him not to be, and a further trial indicates that his poor grade of work was due to some other cause.

The doubt as to the diagnosis of such a case is illustrated by an extract from a letter from the principal in regard to one of the students here examined: "I am sending to you with this note A, a Freshman in our school. A is reported as being excessively timid; his attitude is of the finest but he is failing in both French and mathematics. There seems to be a hesitancy in his speech. The family seems to be rather nervous, and we are thinking seriously of having A withdraw from the school and would very much like to have your opinion as to his ability." An examination of this boy showed that he was clearly deficient. His intelligence quotient was calculated to be in the neighborhood of .70. While he was over seventeen years of age he could not pass the fourteen-year-old test. His vocabulary was 43 and the standard for fourteen is 50. He was able to give only one difference between a president and a king. He failed in three simple arithmetic problems and in three problems in changing the hands of a clock. Conversation with him indicated that he lacked much of the information that an ordinarily observant boy picks up. His parents did not recognize that he was at all below normal, and it was difficult to persuade them that the school was just in asking him to withdraw. The verdict in the case, however, was clear.

A similar type is represented by B. This was a boy of eighteen years of age who was able to pass only the tests equivalent to eleven years and eleven months making his quotient .75. His reaction may be illustrated in the ball and field test. In this test the child is shown a circle with a gap on one side. The circle represents a field and the instruction is that a ball has been lost somewhere in this field. The subject does not know from what direction the ball has come or with what force. He is to trace a line showing the path he would take to find the ball. B traced a line from the opening to one side of the field and then drew a small quadrilateral figure with one diagonal. The entire figure covered less than a tenth of the surface of the field. This represents a very low type of reaction for a boy of even eight years. The test confirmed the judgment that the boy's poor work was due to lack of ability and he was dismissed from the school.

A somewhat more difficult type of case to diagnose and deal with is the boy who is about on the border line of the ability necessary to carry on successfully the ordinary academic high-school

work. There were three cases which represent this type. In all cases they were older than the normal for the freshman year. The youngest was sixteen years and ten months, the next eighteen, and the oldest nineteen years of age. Their ages alone indicated some deficiency in ability. The intelligence quotient of the three boys was in the neighborhood of .90 which is the lowest limit set by Terman of ability necessary for high-school work. One of the boys, C, was reported to have an excellent attitude and to be favorably regarded by some of his teachers. Others, however, regarded him as a shirker. He was failing in some of his work and his plea was that he had been prevented from doing justice to himself by outside work. He was allowed to remain but is doing work just above the passing mark. The second boy, D, is to be described in the same terms.

The third boy, E, represents a somewhat different kind of case. While his test record is the lowest of the three and he is barely managing to retain his place in his classes, he is very successful in conducting certain phases of student activity. He possesses the social qualities necessary in business dealings and also a certain type of shrewdness which is required. His academic ability is so low, however, that while he will be allowed to continue his high-school work, he will not be recommended for college.

The third type is made up of individuals who are average or better in general ability but whose work is impaired by a peculiarity of temperament or by some other trait of personality than pure intellectual ability. The problem represented in such a case may again be illustrated from the letter of the principal. F's case is as follows: "He was admitted to the high school before graduating from the eighth grade on the basis of our entrance examination, which he passed. He has been with us a month and in that time has been reported twice for doing unsatisfactory work in French. The reason for this is that he does not seem to concentrate and seems to be dreaming. His mother feels that he has a very strong imagination. For example, she reports that he has never played with a toy in the way in which it was made to be played with. I should like to know whether this imagination is inclined to be constructive and valuable, also your estimate of his probable success in the high-school academic course." Such a picture is consistent with the interpretation that the boy is deficient mentally,

and also with the quite different interpretation that he is normal mentally but that he has fallen into bad habits of attention and of mental work. The test indicated that this boy has normal intelligence. He was then interviewed and told that no excuses would be accepted for poor work and his remaining in the school would depend upon his satisfactorily passing his courses. His work immediately improved and he is now reported as doing fair work. Obviously, what he needed was to be held up to a performance which corresponded to his ability.

Another case of a boy whose ability appears to be normal but whose work is not satisfactory has not been satisfactorily dealt with. G was reported by his teachers as being lazy, lacking in concentration, taking life too easily, and having a childish attitude. One teacher was of the opinion that he was a mental defective. However, the test indicated that his intelligence is normal. In spite of this fact, it has not been possible to secure satisfactory work from him. His case is complicated by a speech difficulty and the explanation may be that he regards this as an excuse for the failure to secure satisfactory results in his work. He is now reported to be gradually deteriorating and it seems likely that, unless through some unusual stimulus his attitude can be changed, he will not be able successfully to carry on to completion his high-school work.

In the case of a third boy, H, the difficulty seems to be chiefly a disciplinary one. This boy passed a satisfactory intelligence test but was soon after placed on probation and in another month dismissed. There are undoubtedly a certain number of children who, while they have normal intellectual ability, are defective in control and in their moral attitude, either through defective inheritance or faulty training. This case evidently is to be explained by some such supposition.

The last boy in this group belongs to the wandering-attention type. "He never pays attention in class," one teacher reports, "but always tries to make a disturbance if given a chance. Since I have had him he has given but one good recitation." Another says, "His mind is not on his subject; he needs careful watching." Another, "He is not doing his best and his attitude is shiftless," and finally "He will do no work unless under constant supervision; tries to 'put it over.'" The test confirmed the observation of his teachers that this boy did not lack in ability but that he did lack

in persistence and in concentration of attention. Such a case needs further observation and diagnosis. It is clear that the deficiency might be due to various causes. We have carried the diagnosis one step when we find that the cause is not deficient intelligence. Unfortunately we are not able to say which one of a number of possible causes is present in this boy's case.

Finally, there are two cases which are to be explained apparently on the ground of immaturity. In both cases the mental tests rate them as considerably above the average in intelligence. Their work, however, was only fair. One boy was about twelve and a half years old when he entered and the other thirteen. Neither of them was doing work which was to be expected from their mental age or their intelligence quotients. It has been customary to assume that the younger child is equal to the same work in school as the older child of the same mental age. The difference in physical maturity or in the stage of development has not been considered. There is evidence, however, that different children, even though widely different in ability, pass through certain stages of development at about the same age. If this is the case there are difficulties in classifying younger children with older ones, even though their mental age is the same, which has not been recognized. These boys were able to continue their work, but there seems to be an indication that other work might have been found better adapted to their stage of development.

These cases indicate that different students represent a variety of problems. One of the elements in the problem is the student's general intellectual capacity. The objective measure of this capacity leads us a considerable distance towards the diagnosis of the case. In the final diagnosis and treatment, however, other conditions have to be taken into consideration.