

School Findings Prove Startling

(Editor's note: This is the second and final article dealing with the findings of the "Little Red School House" experiment. The study has just been concluded. The findings are being made available to the public exclusively and for the first time by the Torrance Press. A series of four articles dealing with the experiment was published by this newspaper in December 1955.)

BY RALPH K. GOMPERTZ

Any way you want to look at it, the "Little Red School House" experiment which was carried on at Walteria elementary school proved to be a great success.

Pupils learned more and faster, their social development increased significantly; parents were en-

thused; and teachers were anxious to continue teaching in a multi-grade classroom.

Such are the conclusions.

These conclusions do not stem from ivory tower tales or personal pipe dreams. They are rooted, rather, in a thorough and comprehensive study which has just been completed and which involved 15,000 computations, based on an actual experiment.

The study was carried out by Walter Rehboldt, director of instruction, and Warren W. Hamilton, director of special services for the Torrance Unified School District.

The experiment was based on the assumption that children learn more from those who are different than from those who are similar.

The plan involved lumping 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders together into a single multi-grade classroom. The same was done with 4th, 5th, and 6th graders.

Seven such multi-grade classrooms at Walteria school were then compared with eight single-grade classrooms over a one-year period.

The tests involved 234 multi-grade pupils and 255 single-grade pupils. A total of 163 multi-grade families and 168 single-grade families were contacted. Seventy per cent of the multi-grade families and 54 percent of the single-grade families answered the questionnaires.

To make sure that the tests would be as accurate and unbiased as possible, the children were tested in two ways.

1) Classes were compared as a whole by grade levels.
2) And, 96 multi-grade youngsters were matched individually with 96 single-grade youngsters and compared (matching was done on the basis of age, grade, sex, academic ability and achievement).

Only standardized tests acceptable for research were used.

Amazing Conclusion

A number of amazing conclusions emerged from the study. "The total pattern indicated that it was an advantage academically to be in a multi-grade classroom," Rehboldt stated.

While multi-grade pupils profited more than the single-grade pupils, those showing the greatest achievement were multi-grade pupils who would normally be classified as first and fifth graders.

The area of greatest gains was in reading and arithmetic, (the achievement study tested reading, arithmetic and language).

Reason why multi-grade pupils ordinarily classified as first and fifth graders made the best showing was said to be because they tended to learn more and faster as a result of the presence of older youngsters in the classroom who either represented a challenge or an example worth imitating.

Most Profound Findings

The most profound finding, however, was made in regard to social adjustment and maturity, Hamilton and Rehboldt indicated.

Achievements in social adjustment and maturity were significantly higher among multi-grade pupils than among single-grade pupils.

This phase received very detailed study. Social adjustment was broken down to include social standards, social skills, desirable family relations, desirable community relations, desirable school and community relations, and freedom from anti-social tendencies.

Aspects of maturity were studied as evidenced by commu-

nification, self-direction (doing things on one's own), self-help (instead of adult help), socialization (mixing, getting along), locomotion, and occupation (how pupil spends his time).

Other aspects which were studied included characteristics of behavior (leadership, aggressive or withdrawn maladjustment), attitudes towards school (pupil-pupil, feelings of self-confidence and security, group spirit, group morale).

While multi-grade youngsters showed greater gains in these respects than single-grade youngsters, those multi-grade pupils ordinarily identified as 3rd and 6th graders showed the greatest gains.

This was said to be so because they were the oldest youngsters in their respective groups, thus assuming roles of leadership and benefiting from this experience accordingly.

Reaction of Parents

What has been the reaction of parents to this program?

Of those parents who responded, 87% indicated whole-hearted approval of the multi-grade classroom idea.

Of forty-four parents who made special comments, only six held negative views.

Negative comments included: 1) not enough competition; 2) the older child (3rd grader) was held back by the younger children; 3) too much confusion; 4) the older child resents younger children.

Those favoring the program had this to say: 1) it has helped the child from being backward; 2) the program turned out to be "all and more than was promised"; 3) the child made tremendous progress; 4) there was need for a change; 5) it helped the child who was slow to learn; 6) it helped the child in getting along with others and actually resulted in improvement.

Reaction of Teachers

Teachers, of course, also had some definite ideas on the subject.

All agreed that the multi-grade approach represented the most natural grouping.

Teachers disagreed, however, with the original assumption that older children would exert a quieting influence on the class, making the disciplinary problem easier.

The biggest problem, they pointed out, was the lack of materials needed to carry out some of the classroom projects they had undertaken.

Everyone of the teachers who had a multi-grade classroom and who is remaining in the school district, indicated as first choice that he wanted to teach such a class again.

What's Going to Happen?

What will happen as a result of this study?

To begin with, the study represents a valuable contribution to education, going more thoroughly into this problem and related problems than has ever been done before.

Both Hamilton and Rehboldt will submit the study to the University of Southern California as theses for their doctorates of education. (Their study also contains enough material for at least 20 master's theses.)

The pilot project, because of the unusual success and continued demand, will continue at Walteria school, with one more multi-grade class added, bringing the total to eight.

There is the hope that the local project and findings will encourage educators to examine these ideas on local, State and national levels.

Regarding the expansion of the program in Torrance, that will be entirely up to local residents. If they want such a program at other schools, they will have to make such a request to the Board of Education.

The greatest problem with the whole multi-grade classroom idea, Hamilton and Rehboldt pointed out, is that there is not enough help and information available at present to school districts and teachers who would like to attempt such a project.

The two educators are hopeful, though, that others will be just as much enthused with the findings as they are and that this conviction will give impetus to the "Little Red School House Plan."

The plan, they firmly believe, does more than all the books and buzz sessions in the world to remind teachers every minute of the teaching day of the major concept of modern education—namely, that no two children are alike and that teachers must be constantly prepared to meet individual differences.

Hamilton and Rehboldt are sold on the multi-grade classroom plan. They are convinced that it combines the best of the old and of the new in education.

173 NEW TEACHERS JOIN LOCAL DISTRICT

One hundred seventy-three additional teachers representing over 60 of the nation's leading colleges and universities have been selected to teach Torrance children this term.

Over 100 of these new teachers have had previous teaching experience, and 55 have taught in California schools. Seventy-three will receive their first teaching experience this fall. The practice of employing a significant number of qualified teachers new to the profession each year adds the new ideas, modern training, and youth and enthusiasm of college graduates to the maturity and experience of the existing staff, officials stated.

Teachers recruited from outside California represent almost every state of the union and a few from the Dominion of Canada. The majority hail from neighboring states in the Middle West.

Six hundred seventy teachers are required to educate the Torrance Unified School District's population numbering over 18,000 youth.

According to Robert C. Morton, director of personnel for the school district, it will be

necessary to secure over 50 additional teachers to train children of new residents expected to move into Torrance during the school year.

Gas Pipeline Contract Told

R. H. Fulton & Co. of Lubbock, Texas, was awarded a contract today to construct a 241-mile, 30-inch natural gas pipeline from Newhall to the Colorado river near Needles, costing an estimated \$24 million.

This is the major portion of a \$33.5 million pipeline construction project jointly undertaken by Southern California Gas Co. and Southern Counties Gas Co. to bring an additional 278.2 million cubic feet of gas a day into Southern California.

EMUS CHILDREN'S DEPT. STORE

Largest Selection for Back-to-School in the Area For Girls & Boys at Popular Prices

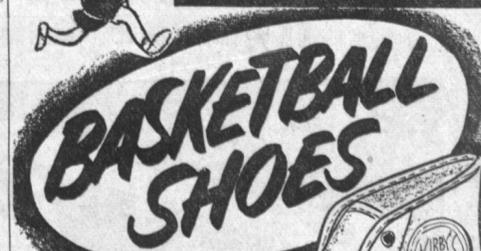
Dresses—Cinderella, Kate Greenway and Jean Durain — White Stag Sportswear — Ship N' Shore Blouses — Matching Sweater Sets — Billy the Kid Jeans — T-Shirts Galore — Savoy and Other Brands — Tailored Slacks and Sport Shirts — Jackets — Meltons and Others—We Also Have A Complete Baby Dept.

1706 SO. CATALINA AVE.

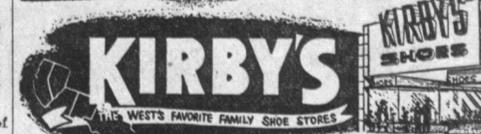
HOLLYWOOD RIVIERA

FR. 5-5539

KIRBY'S SHOES for your SCHOOL NEEDS



BASKETBALL SHOES
3.98 AND 4.98
MEN'S BOYS' YOUTHS' \$2.98
CUSHION INSOLES • BLACK WHITE • ALL SIZES



1276 SARTORI FA. 8-8057 Open Monday & Friday Nites

KIRBY'S SHOES for your SCHOOL NEEDS



KIRBY'S GOLDEN BEAR CHILDREN'S SADDLES
WHITE ON WHITE • BLUE ON WHITE • BROWN ON WHITE
\$3.49 TO \$3.98
INFANTS: 5-8 CHILDREN: 8-12 MISSES: 12-5



1276 SARTORI FA. 8-8057 Open Monday & Friday Nites

KIRBY'S SHOES for your SCHOOL NEEDS



BOYS' SCHOOL SHOES
RUGGED WEARING • ALL THE LATEST STYLES
\$4.98 TO \$6.98
BLACK BROWN SIZES: 3 TO 6



1276 SARTORI FA. 8-8057 Open Monday & Friday Nites

KIRBY'S SHOES for your SCHOOL NEEDS

GIRLS' SADDLES

\$4.98 and 5.98

ALL SIZES

- WHITE SMOOTH
- WHITE BUCK
- BLACK & WHITE
- BROWN & WHITE
- BLUE & WHITE

KIRBY'S THE WEST'S FAVORITE FAMILY SHOE STORES

1276 SARTORI AVE. FA. 8-8057 Open Monday & Friday Nites

Don't go back to School!

*** WITHOUT A NEW PAPER MATE PEN!**

The only pen with a **Built-In Spare Refill!**

IN EXAMS, when time really counts, you don't have to worry about running out of ink because you have 2 fresh ink supplies!

IN CLASS you always have smooth, quality writing because you have two silvered points in the new Piggy-Back Refill!

NEW PIGGY-BACK REFILLS fit all Paper Mate pens and are sold everywhere.

2 Silvered Points- 2 Ink Supplies!

And they're Piggy-Back!

If you damage the point or run out of ink—replace the bottom refill with the top.

PAPER MATE

MCCOWN DRUG STORES Capri

1327 EL PRADO TORRANCE Pacific Coast Highway at Western, Lomita

ONLY \$1.95

© THE PAPER MATE COMPANY, 1956 PIGGY-BACK REFILL—PATENT PENDING