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A STUDY OF THE NONGRADED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
AND ITS ADJUNCT, THE GRADED DUAL
PROGRESS SCHOOL, AS A MEANS
OF MEETING INDIVIDUAL
DIFFERENCES IN
CHILDREN

AN ABSTRACT OF
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The term "individual differences" as used in this study refers to those areas in which there are dissimilarities amongst the pupils in a class group as to their intelligence, reading ability, application of concepts previously learned and the ability to comprehend the meaning behind the printed symbol. These differences are created by many factors external and internal, the combination of which culminates in the individual with whom we come in contact.

As it has been structured the nongraded elementary school is flexible with regard to pupil movement and the pupil may be transferred into another class at any time in the school year that it is deemed advantageous to his progress and growth. While the flexibility of movement in the graded dual progress plan is more restrictive than that of the nongraded elementary school it does allow for movement in the subject areas included in the cultural electives where grouping is done according to ability, achievement, and interest. Both systems of education in this respect are far more realistic in meeting the individual differences in children than is the graded system which is rather inflexible in movement, restricting grade placement to once or twice a year when promotion or retention takes place.

In lieu of vertical growth the graded elementary school provides for progress through horizontal enrichment once the required course of study for the year has been completed in

order not to infringe upon the curriculum designed for the following year. There is no such problem in the nongraded elementary school nor in the graded dual progress school for their rapid progress is dealt with along both axis. Bright or gifted children are encouraged to progress rapidly and are moved into appropriate groups from which they can derive the benefits of stimulation and challenge that will help in their growth and development.

The graded elementary school with its basic set of standards of grade level accomplishment for all makes no allowance for the slow learner and his punishment for an inability to progress as rapidly as his classmates is grade failure--in many instances repetition of the grade. In the nongraded elementary school where the curriculum has been divided into units there is a realization that each child will move along in his studies at a different rate and those that take longer are given more time to do the assigned blocks of work. Cognizance of the differences in the learning time involved for each child is shown in the structure of the graded dual progress plan which allows for individual progress in the cultural electives.

A child's progress in the nongraded elementary school and in the graded dual progress plan school is determined by comparing his achievement to his ability and both these factors to the overall picture of what is to be accomplished during his years in the elementary grades. The graded elementary school has, for many years, judged a pupil's progress in

relationship to the material successfully covered during the year as well as to his position in relationship to his classmates.

An analysis of the information included in this study leads the writer to feel that positive steps have been taken in both the nongraded elementary school and in those schools experimenting with the graded dual progress plan to better meet the individual differences in children.