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ren. The chief of these were Effective Thinking, Basic Skills, Citizenship, Understanding of the Environment, Appreciation of Beauty, World Understanding, Character and Human Relations. In order to enable these children to attain these objectives earlier and to a greater degree than ordinary children, some schools utilised enrichment in regular classes, others through special classes or special interest groups, and many believed in acceleration (the shortening of the years spent at school).

The problem of the adjustment of the gifted child has been the subject of considerable research. The hazards of the high I.Q. are apparent in disciplinary problems in the classroom or at home. There is also the question of under-achievement and all its complications.

There is a necessary section on the choice of teachers (with a list of desirable characteristics of a teacher for gifted children compiled by the children themselves) the training of such teachers, both in-service and undergraduate. "A teacher of gifted children, in comparison to teachers in traditional classrooms, should be more intelligent, flexible, and creative, and better informed in areas other than her speciality. She should also have a desire to teach gifted children . . . She need not however be more intelligent than her most intelligent pupil, because she will have had many more experiences from which to draw." (The Editor). Many articles are written about the relative merits of a programme of enrichment, acceleration, special classes and no special provisions. There is much evidence regarding the value of acceleration or grouping but it has been found that a combination of acceleration, special grouping in classes and enrichment works most effectively.

After completing the volume one feels that research has furnished educators with a great deal of information regarding gifted children, which they are not yet using profitably. But as old misconceptions die out and funds and leadership become available a better programme for educating the gifted will emerge.

E.P.R.

New Zealand analyses causes of University failure.



Success and Failure at the University, by G. W. Parkyn
(New Zealand Council for Educational Research).

This is the first volume of an investigation undertaken by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research into the problem of first-year failures at the university, and deals with academic performance and entrance standard. New Zealand is not alone in its concern for the shocking wastage of good material in the fresher year. Britain, the United States, Australia, and South Africa have all in one way or another tried to find reasons for the

failures. Not only are good people lost, but many students are fated to start life with a confidence-undermining failure.

Not everyone accepts the common university criticism of the schools as being valid. In America they have realised that the university too has failed in certain ways, more especially perhaps in the integration of the fresher into university studies. This New Zealand investigation is interesting in the light of our experience in South Africa where as many as 40 per cent of students in the first year fail.

University entrance in S. Africa is based primarily on success in the matriculation examination for which high prognostic value is often claimed. In New Zealand, the position is a little more complicated. Post-primary education proper is considered to begin after Form III, or at the age of 13½ years. The School Certificate is taken after three years of post-primary education, i.e. at the age of 16, and though this examination has no connection with university entrance, great faith is placed in the examination as an indication of school level (30% must be obtained in four subjects, and an aggregate of 200 marks, with English as compulsory). A year later comes university entrance, but not necessarily by way of an examination, for the system of accrediting high schools is common in New Zealand. In 1944, all university aspirants sat an external entrance examination; 1955, 83% of students gained entrance to the university by being accredited. "Examinolatry" saw in this the chief cause of university failure, in spite of the fact that the curriculum is not hamstrung by a common syllabus and that due weight is given to the teacher's judgement based on a comprehensive knowledge of the pupil's ability, attainment, and character. A representative Conference on Accrediting was held, and certain criticisms of accrediting were examined; that there is inevitably a variation in standard from school to school and that there is an ever-present danger of a steady lowering of standards. S. Africa hopes to see all whites matriculate (or so we are told), but New Zealand sees the risk that if too many pupils of low standard write an entrance examination, the general standard will be lowered, and that this too would affect the standard of accrediting. From this Conference came the present investigation.

All possible data which might affect university performance were collected; the entrance qualifications were carefully analysed; the total marks in each subject of School Certificate and in the examination as a whole were broken down; the average rank in the class in the lower sixth form, and the course of study in the upper sixth were examined; and consideration was also given to bursaries awarded to the student and to the principal's report. Where available, IQ's were considered (the Otis Test of Mental Ability, Higher Form, and an Australian test of the same type). The average IQ at the four New Zealand universities on the Otis Test was 118, and on the Australian 122, i.e. students came on the whole from the higher levels of ability of the population. These figures are very similar to those in

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England and Australia, but higher than those in America except in the top universities. A long chapter which will be a delight to statisticians handles all contributing factors most meticulously.

This volume is, as was mentioned earlier, only one half of the full investigation, but certain conclusions could be drawn, or at any rate observations made, at the half-way stage, and these will be noted briefly.

The largest single group of first years at university had spent five years in high school, i.e. they had spent an extra year at school **after** obtaining their university entrance; the next largest group had spent the normal four years. The next observation is one that would be probably borne out in S. African universities, namely that second and third year students writing first year courses fare much better than freshers; that full-time do better than part-time; that women do better than men. Entrance Scholarship candidates proved themselves the best group, and students who failed to gain accreditation were below average. The lowest 9% of accredited students did as well at university as the lowest 6% of those who passed the entrance examination. Though there was a positive correlation between school attainment and university performance, it was only moderate. (For the statistician: the median tau coefficients of correlation between School Certificate and the various criteria of university performance were: -first-year full-time .36, advanced years full-time .15.)

Other observations: There is "not a very close relation between a student's subsequent performance and the level of his prior ability." This may merely reflect the highly selected nature of the student group relative to the whole population . . . The findings of this investigation do not support the view that the basic reason for failure was that students were not well equipped to enter the university. From this comes the further conclusion: "In New Zealand it would not appear practicable to adopt selective measures severe enough to bring about any marked improvement in university performance, unless alternative instruction were set up to provide for the large proportion of rejected applicants who on present standards could have successful university careers." This is a thought-provoking conclusion, as is the query whether the stiffening of entrance examinations would prove an adequate incentive to higher standards.

This book must be highly commended to educators, both in school and university, who are interested in the maintenance and raising of academic standards. There is obviously no easy solution to the problem, the very real problem, of university failures in the first year, but this investigation can set thinking on the right lines. From the point of view of English-medium education in S. Africa, it may be said that the English teachers' colleges cannot afford the wastage of potentially good teachers in the first year of university. We might go further and say that universities should not be proud in any sense of the number of failures in their first years. They must do something about it.

H.H.

How an American Head Counsellor handles Vocational Guidance: a useful book, in spite of a few quirks.

Methods of Vocational Guidance, by Gertrude Forrester. (D. C. Heath, U.S.A.).



The author describes methods of helping youngsters plan their vocations; she does not deal with principles or theories of vocational guidance. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the giving of information about occupations. This is done in great detail by (a) Making information available about the occupational world. (b) Pointing out sources of information about opportunities, trends and requirements of various occupations. (c) Informing pupils about conditions of work. (d) Giving pupils mastery of techniques to be used in investigating occupations. (e) Informing them about schools, colleges or courses which will fit them for vocations. (f) Cultivating an understanding of the inter-relationships among occupations and the contribution of all forms of work for the welfare of society.

There is a short section on helping the student to assess his fitness for a particular occupation. The author also surveys literature on placement and follow-up services. As this is an enlarged edition of a previous book published in 1951 which catered for the teacher of business subjects in a small school, chapters directed towards the counsellor of a school of 2,000 or more pupils have been added, together with exercises and questions for class and/or individual assignments.

With the co-operation of business leaders, the pupils visit offices and observe a day's routine in various departments: ex-pupils of the school return to give lectures and answer questions about their experiences after leaving school. Much stress is laid on "the dignity of all forms of work" and the inter-relationships of various occupations. The pupils are further encouraged to acquaint themselves with a variety of occupations by using the radio, motion pictures, visual aids, readings, group discussions and interviews with experienced workers.

Trips are planned to organised exhibits such as a fair or museum, and often excursions are made to distant places of historical or political interest. A detailed list is given as to conduct for pupils "who visit industrial plants", as well as suggestions of questions to bear in mind while being shown over such a plant. The teacher also has his list which aims to make such a visit as effective and helpful as possible. There is a useful list of films and filmstrips dealing with vocations, as well as a discussion on the use of radio and television programmes, pamphlets and posters, bulletin boards and displays. The assignments for pupils at the end of each chapter should serve as a useful guide to the inexperienced teacher.

One chapter deals with familiarising the pupil with the "Dictionary of Occupational Titles" which has 40,023 defined titles, ranging from cost accountant to minstrel, from actress to statistician, judge to