

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A STUDY OF CULTURALLY STIMULATING EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN LIVING
IN HOMES IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY DEPRIVED AREA OF WINNIPEG
IN RELATION TO THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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by

Margie A. Fallis

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ABSTRACT

This research project was designed to ascertain the variations in culturally stimulating experiences in the homes of a group of children whose school performance was satisfactory and a group whose school performance was unsatisfactory. Both groups of children were selected from schools located in an environmentally deprived area of the City of Winnipeg.

The study was a descriptive study based on data with regard to a sample of 47 families of children in Grades 1 - 3, in the identified environmentally deprived area. The data was obtained by the administration of a schedule to the parent(s) of each of the children in the sample group. The study was an attempt to measure the variations in culturally stimulating experiences in the home, in four particular areas. These were visually stimulating experiences, verbal and language experiences, activities engaged in and interaction with adults.

The findings revealed that in the area of visual stimulation there was no meaningful difference between the two groups of children - Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. However, in the area of verbal experiences and the number of activities engaged in by the child, there was a tendency in favour of the group whose school performance was satisfactory. In the area of child-adult interaction there was a meaningful variation in favour of the satisfactory group. There was found to be a particularly significant variation in favour of the satisfactory group throughout the study in the areas of homework, reading and related experiences.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"A tremendous reservoir of human potential is lost when the dominant culture is not reflected in the motivational energies, fantasies, and aspiration symbols of minority groups - symbols that are required as foundation for successful climbing of the educational and economic ladders."¹ This problem is becoming increasingly more complex today, as a large portion of the 'poor' or 'culturally deprived' of our nation are unable to function in the present school system. This is creating some concern as to what is being done about the situation. Is the school making a great enough effort to help the lower-class child adjust to the school and function in it? What factors in the family situation contribute to the situation? How do parents' attitudes and the attitudes of the children themselves, affect the school performance of the children?

In this study, carried out by a group of students in their Masters' year at the University of Manitoba School of Social Work, the over-all concern was with the variations in the life-style of a selected group of elementary school children, living in an environmentally deprived area in the City of Winnipeg, whose performance was satisfactory and a group of children whose performance was unsatisfactory. This over-all

¹Martin Deutsch, Minority Groups and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement (Pub. The Society for Applied Anthropology, No. 2, 1960), p. 3.

purpose was then broken down into four different areas. Two of these dealt with cultural stimulation and two with educational motivation. Those dealing with educational motivation were concerned with the variation in the educational experiences of the parents of the children and the variation in the educational experiences of the children. Those who dealt with cultural stimulation were concerned with the variation in the culturally stimulating experiences in the community and the variation in the culturally stimulating experiences in the home. The overall purpose of the study was to look at some of the factors in the home and in the community, and some of the attitudes which might cause unsatisfactory scholastic achievement of some culturally deprived children and satisfactory achievement of others. This would hopefully have some significance to the school and how it can better help the culturally deprived child adjust to the school system.

The focus of this particular study was the culturally stimulating experiences in the home.

This over-all problem of the school drop-out and the inability of the child to function in the school system is of concern to the community as a whole. From a utilitarian viewpoint, the fact that the lower-class child very often fails to get an education and consequently may have difficulty obtaining a job and maintaining his family in later life, may cause a burden on society. He may require financial assistance and in this respect he costs society money. He also may be a burden to society, in that he may be unable to make any contribution to society as a whole. This is also a problem in the humanitarian sense, since the inability of an individual to obtain employment and lead a

productive life may cause him pain and suffering. It is also dysfunctional since the lack of an education may cause impairment in future life roles, such as husband, father and bread-winner. School failure is an impairment of future and present social functioning.

Education is of prime importance in society today. It is of value in order to succeed in a modern industrial society. Every child should be entitled to the opportunity to obtain an education, regardless of his social class background, and society should provide the means by which the culturally disadvantaged child can overcome the gap which seems to exist between the lower class and the middle class, when it comes to education. The difference in the middle and lower class culture does not imply that one is better than the other. The school, however, is a middle class social system and the lower class does not provide the child with the tools to compete in such a middle class social system. It is important for all children to have the democratic right to realize their maximum educational potential in order to contribute to society and lead a productive life. Individuals should be permitted the fullest development of their capacities and the promotion of their well-being in harmony with the needs of the community. As social workers, we believe in the dignity and worth of the individual and view poor school performance, (if the child is not achieving according to his ability), as inadequate social functioning. It is, therefore, our concern to enhance this social functioning. We also respect the cultural variations of different people and their potential for enriching community life - given the opportunity. Society also has a responsibility to safeguard the opportunities and resources for the performance of social roles.

Industrialization with its concomitant changes in social stratification and social mobility has no doubt had an effect on the increasing problem of the school drop-out and the poor achiever. Conversely, industrialization and urbanization with specialization and technical ability being of prominent importance, has made education of even greater value today.

With industrialization it became impossible to maintain the extended kinship group of the traditional family. Increased mobility and stratification brought with them the nuclear family - parents and dependent children. The traditional family functions were economic, educational and protective. Industrialization has meant that the state, school and industry have taken over many of these functions. More and more responsibility is being placed on the school to socialize the child.

The rights of children are part of the Canadian value system, but promises implicit in this system are not fulfilled for all children. "In modern democratic societies early socialization and life chances of children depend largely upon two systems - the family and the school. Ideally these two systems are complementary and mutually supportive."²

However, in the case of the lower-class child these two systems seem to be in conflict and as a result the child suffers. The public school is a social system in which most children are involved. In spite of their differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and conflicting values and attitudes, they are all subjected to the same expectations. This

²Oscar Ritchie, Uncertainties of Children and Social-Class Difference (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1957), p. 235.

creates the problem for the lower-class child and the school does not seem adequately prepared to meet and cope with this problem. "The middle-class orientation of the school helps little in recognizing the realities of the problem and contributes little toward the development of value systems and activities directed towards breaking this dynamic process."³ Cultural deprivation and educational deprivation generally go hand-in-hand, reinforcing one another in their ill effect.

It is important to remember the differences between the lower and middle class culture. Class related behavior is often not seen as such, but rather as correct. The school as a social institution teaches the child a middle class set of goals and behavior. Most of these are meaningless to the lower-class child and he finds school much less rewarding. "Each of these social status levels has a way of life, or culture, which differs in many respects from the cultural way of life of the other social classes."⁴

The child learns to discriminate size, shape and colour by the variety of visual stimuli in his home environment. "Children from an underprivileged environment come to school with a qualitatively different preparation for the demands of both the learning process and the behavioral requirement of the classroom. The culture differs from the school and their socializing experiences are different."⁵ "The dis-

³Deutsch, op. cit., p. 11.

⁴Allison Davis, "Socio-Economic Influences Upon Children's Learning," Proceedings of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth (Raleigh N. C.: Health Publications Institute, Inc., December, 1950), p. 78.

⁵Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," Mental Health of the Poor, ed. F. Riessman, J. Cohen and A. Pearn (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 173.

advantaged environment offers a restricted range of experience. Social conditions reduce the range of variability in these children."⁶

The setting of this study was an area of Winnipeg designated as environmentally deprived, by the Planning Division of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg. It is the area including Census Tracts 11, 12, 19, 22 and 23. The area was identified as being in transition and as falling below generally acceptable socio-economic standards. Some of the characteristics which elucidate this area are an absence or limit of open space, such as parks and recreation areas; overcrowding, mixed industrial and residential development, inadequate maintenance of property, heavy traffic and poor church facilities.

This study was concerned with the families' present situation. It did not take into consideration family background and family patterns. The study was carried out from September 1965 to April 1966.

The scope of the study included 74 families of children in the designated environmentally deprived area. Of this sample, 39 of the children were achieving unsatisfactorily and 35 were achieving satisfactorily. The children were chosen by the teacher on the basis of their school performance, which is explained further under the definitions of satisfactory and unsatisfactory. The children all were chosen from Grades 1 - 3. The study consisted of looking at the various factors in the home and the community which might affect school performance. The scope of this particular aspect of the study was the influence of culturally stimulating experiences in the home, on school performance.

⁶Ibid, p. 178.

The scope of our study posed a number of limitations. The sample was not a random sample, as it was chosen by the teachers in the schools. The sample depended on the teachers' evaluation of satisfactory and unsatisfactory and the findings therefore are applicable only to the group studied. The findings are also only applicable to the current family situation, since this was not a longitudinal study and did not take into consideration family background and previous family patterns. The study was also limited by the fact that in an environmentally deprived area there are varying degrees of deprivation and some homes were not such that could be termed culturally deprived or disadvantaged. The factor of varying degrees of intelligence also imposed a limitation on our study as did other factors such as physical capacity, emotional and psychological factors.

From our experience and knowledge from background material, we were aware of the fact that cultural experiences in the home would only be one factor in the variations in life-style of these children which would cause poor achievement. The rationale for the main hypothesis was the fact that there is a relationship between a child's school performance and the culture of his environment. There is a high proportion of unsatisfactory school performance among children from environmentally deprived homes. What the child sees, hears and does is related to the cultural patterns of his family, which directly influence his school performance. This led us to the hypothesis that :

There are variations in the culturally stimulating experiences provided within the homes of families of a selected group of elementary school children living in an environmentally deprived area

of Winnipeg, whose school performance is satisfactory and a group from a similar area, whose school performance is unsatisfactory.

The terms used in this hypothesis were defined as :

- 'environmentally deprived area' --- areas as defined by the Planning Division, of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg, as being in transition and as falling below generally acceptable socio-economic standards;
- 'culturally stimulating experience' --- those visual, verbal and language experiences and those activities engaged in within the home; which would prepare the child for the learning process in school;
- 'satisfactory' --- those children who are identified, by their classroom teacher, as being above-average in performance;
- 'unsatisfactory' --- those children who are identified, by their classroom teacher, as failing to meet the expectations of the school program or achieving at a very minimal level, including repeaters, borderline achievers and pupils who are over age for their grade level.

From this hypothesis such questions arose as, what are the opportunities for culturally stimulating experiences in the home? What experiences affect the child in regard to the learning process? Is it the number or the quality of the experiences that is significant? What effect does the interaction in the family have on the child? From these and similar questions the following sub-hypotheses were formulated:

1. Those children whose school performance is satisfactory come from homes in which, on the average, there is a greater variety

of opportunities for visually stimulating experiences than those children whose school performance is not satisfactory.

Rationale: We expected that a "child deprived of a substantial portion of a variety of visual stimuli which he is maturationally capable of responding to, is likely to be deficient in the equipment required for learning"⁷ in school, as it affects form discrimination and visual spatial organization.

2. Those children whose school performance is satisfactory come from homes in which, on the average, there is a greater variety of opportunities for the development of verbal and language skills than those children whose school performance is not satisfactory.

Rationale: We expected that, "verbal fluency is strongly related to reading skills and to other highly organized integrative and conceptual verbal activity"⁸ as demanded in the school situation.

3. Those children whose school performance is satisfactory come from homes in which, on the average, they engage in a greater variety of activities than those children whose school performance is not satisfactory.

Rationale: We expected that the more variations in the home with which the child has coped, the greater will be his capacity for learning in the school.

4. Those children who perform satisfactorily in school have, on the average, more positive interaction with adults in the home than do children who perform unsatisfactorily in school.

⁷Ibid, p. 177.

⁸Ibid, p. 131.

Rationale: "Related to the whole issue of the adult-child dynamic in establishing a basis for the later learning process is the ability of the child to use the adult as a source of information, correction and the reality-testing involved in problem solving and the absorption of new knowledge."⁹

The terms in the sub-hypotheses were defined as follows:

- 'variety' --- number of different kinds of experiences a child has in the home;
- 'visually stimulating experiences' --- the perceptions of objects varying in shape, size and colour;
- 'verbal and language skills' --- the ability to understand and communicate by the use of words, in written and spoken form;
- 'positive interaction' --- refers to those experiences between a child and an adult, which leads to the child's use of an adult as a source of information, correction and knowledge.

It was assumed that because of the fact that the children studied were in standard classes, and were identified by the teachers as possessing adequate intellectual capacity to attain a satisfactory level, that any difference in visual, hearing, and intellectual abilities within the normal range would not significantly affect our study. It was also assumed that all factors other than the culturally stimulating experiences in the home, which affect the child's school performance, would not significantly affect the findings of this study. It was further assumed that the expressed answers of the respondents were valid and not affected

⁹Ibid.

by the fact that the interviews were carried out by different interviewers. We also assumed that the classroom teaching provides the necessary opportunities for the children to achieve satisfactorily in school.

The data was collected by means of an interview schedule which was administered in face-to-face interviews with the parents of the children in the sample group. Both parents were interviewed whenever possible. Also by means of a face sheet other pertinent information, such as family size, income of family, ethnic origin and length of residence in Canada, was obtained. A pre-test group was interviewed in December 1965 and a few revisions were made in the interview schedule following an analysis of the data. The revised interview schedule was administered to the sample group in January 1966.

The data obtained was tabulated by several methods. The respondents were set up according to two major classifications, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory; in terms of the level of performance of the children in the classroom. The questions on the schedule were broken down into those which applied to the four categories, visual experiences, verbal and language experiences, activity and interaction. Some of the questions were analyzed by a means approach and percentages and proportions were also used in the analysis. Some of the data and results were represented in tabular form. Within the limits of our study, other interesting and relevant data was noted and analyzed.

Before dealing with the method in detail, the background literature will be reviewed.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

"The social instigations and goals of the middle class, are fundamentally unlike those of the lower class. In education, the ineffectiveness of middle-class sanctions upon the great masses of lower-class children probably is the crucial dilemma of our middle class teachers and school systems."¹ "A large proportion of the ability of our country is wasted in the schools, in the armed services and in industry."²

In order to get to the heart of the problem it is necessary to look at the 'poverty' which exists today in our affluent society. "A thriving productive society can easily find embedded in itself, self-perpetuating parasitic groups."³ In a society of affluence, the school and education provides a means to economic security. There is, however, evidence to substantiate the fact that the educational system is failing to meet the needs of a large proportion of society, primarily the lower class child. The social content of a child's life is crucial to his particular growth of consciousness and unique role he perceives himself playing in the world.

¹Allison Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," Personality: In Nature, Society, and Culture, ed. C. Kluckhohn, H. Murray & D. Schneider (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 575.

²Allison Davis, "Socio-Economic Influences Upon Children's Learning," Proceedings of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth (Raleigh N. C.: Health Publications Institute, Inc., December, 1950), p. 77.

³Kenneth Boulding, "Reflections on Poverty," Proceedings of the National Social Welfare Forum, 1961, p. 53.

In an affluent society whose goal is success and whose measurement is consumption, the lower class child starts the race to the goal with an assortment of disadvantages. Economic uncertainty, slum living, crowded homes and small value given to intellectual activity are not an adequate foundation for achievement. According to Coll, "a vast majority of slum children do not make normal or above average progress in school."⁴ Coll also goes on to state that, "one-third of the children of the United States are living close to the poverty line."⁵ It would seem that there are as many, if not more, in Canada also.

In order to understand the lower class child one must look at his environment, his mores, values and attitudes. In E. Herzog's article on the poor she states that, "poverty in modern nations is not only a state of economic deprivation, of disorganization, or of the absence of something positive in the sense that it has a structure, a rationale, and defense mechanism without which the poor could hardly carry on. It is a way of life remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines".⁶ This is important to keep in mind when one is talking about the 'culturally deprived'. As one can see the lower class definitely possesses a culture of its own, of which many aspects are positive. They are, however, lacking some of the advantages of the middle class culture. In this discussion culturally deprived will refer

⁴Blanche Coll, "Deprivation in Childhood: Its Relation to the Cycle of Poverty," Welfare in Review, Vol. III (March, 1965), p. 4.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

⁶Elizabeth Herzog, "Some Assumptions about the Poor," Social Service Review, No. 4, Vol. XXXVIII (December, 1963), p. 36.

to the members of the lower socio-economic group who have a limited access to education.⁷

There are numerous characteristics of the poor. They have little money, no savings and no economic security. There is also considerable unemployment among the socio-economically deprived and occupations are irregular and usually do not provide much security. There is also much over-crowding, poor housing and a lack of privacy. "Poor housing remains one of the most important facts about the other America (the poor in an affluent society). This is where the nation builds the environment of the culture of poverty."⁸ The poor also suffer from lower levels of physical and mental health and have poor nutrition.

The lower class is also very often characterized by broken homes, female based households, and the extended family. The home which is mother based is not necessarily, however, disorganized; since often the male head of the house is not expected. For the lower class child the extended family provides protection and security. Martin Deutsch in his study of Minority Groups and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement found that, "intact homes are more crowded than broken ones, although the children from intact homes do better in scholastic achievement. This seems to indicate that crowding in the home is less likely to have a negative effect on scholastic achievement than

⁷Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 3.

⁸Michael Harrington, The Other America (Middlesex: Penquin Books Limited, 1962), p. 137.

is the fact of coming from a broken family background. Who lives in the home is more important than how many."⁹

The poor also believe in male superiority with an accompanying cult of masculinity. They frequently resort to violence and frequently use physical punishment in the disciplining of children. Physical aggression in the lower class culture is learned as an approved and socially acceptable form of behavior. The slum child's behavior is usually a perfectly realistic and socially acceptable response to reality - not 'delinquent', 'hostile' or 'unmotivated'. The poor also feel alienated and left out of society. They are not individualistic, self-oriented or concerned with self-expression. The attitude of the poor towards education itself is not so often negative; so much as is their attitude towards the school. The lower class value education as a means of getting ahead; not for the sake of learning. There is a great deal of anti-intellectualism among the poor according to Riessman. The deprived individual is interested in education for what it can do for him. He is usually more inclined towards the vocational than the academic interests. The disadvantaged person, however, feels education is not available for him and he also fears he will be out of place and cut off from his friends and family. This accounts for some of the negative attitudes of the deprived individual towards the school, although another significant factor is the often subtle, but pervasive discrimination against the child, by the school and the teacher.

⁹Martin Deutsch, Minority Groups and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement (Pub. The Society for Applied Anthropology, No. 2, 1960), p. 10.

The values of the lower class also differ greatly from those of the middle class. They are, according to Kluckhohn and Murray,¹⁰ present oriented in contrast to the middle class which is future oriented. They do not value success and competition and are more concerned with getting 'by' than getting 'ahead'. The lower class do not value postponed gratification as do the middle class and it would seem that they are less likely to see education as a means to an end, which is in effect postponed gratification. This helps to some extent to account for the large percentage of drop-outs among the lower class students. They see more value in getting a job, here and now, than they do in completing their schooling in order to get a better job. Thus by briefly considering the lower class child and his environment it is possible to see that "children's initial orientations to the world are influenced by their families' expression of the culture."¹¹ "A child cannot learn his mores, social drives and values - his basic culture from books. He can learn a particular culture and a particular moral system only from those people who know his behavior and exhibit it in frequent relationships with the learner."¹² This socialization of the child takes place within the environment of the child's family friends and peer group. These groups are all restricted in the range of their social and cultural participation

¹⁰Florence Kluckhohn, "Dominant and Variant Value Orientations," Personality: In Nature, Society, and Culture, ed. C. Kluckhohn, H. Murray, and D. Schneider (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 342 - 360.

¹¹Oscar Ritchie, Uncertainties of Children and Social-Class Difference (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1957), p. 236.

¹²Allison Davis, Social Class Influences Upon Learning (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 45.

by social class barriers. According to Allison Davis in his paper on "Socio-Economic Influences Upon Children's Learning,"¹³ lower class people cannot learn middle class foresight and moderation unless they can participate socially with middle class people, whom they may then learn to imitate. The school is the only place lower class people can be taught the middle class motivational pattern. However, the school has not yet understood how to regard lower class pupils. Consequently the teacher has the task of trying to help children learn what is to them unrealistic and extremely uninteresting. Every social status level has a way of life or culture which will differ in many respects from the cultural way of every other social class. Children from the slum, who live in an environment where their parents curse as a routine method of communication, fight and consider the school unimportant in their lives; are in a physical, cultural and economic reality basically very much unlike that of the middle class child. Consequently if the slum child is to survive and be at all realistic, many of his habits and patterns of behavior will differ a great deal from those of the more sheltered and highly supervised middle class child. The middle class family's insistent pressure upon their middle class children for early and rapid attainment and conscientious work habits, makes these children work much harder in school. Thus, they please the teacher much more than do the lower class children, and success is rewarded with success.

In order to see more clearly why the school is failing to meet the needs of the deprived child, it is necessary to take a closer look

¹³Davis, "Socio-Economic Influences Upon Children's Learning," p. 80.

at the school and its values.

Martin Deutsch in his study of Minority Groups and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement says, "the orientation of our schools at present is almost entirely toward middle class values and way of life, which sometimes have no concrete meaning for the lower class child."¹⁴ Our schools are a middle class social system staffed primarily by middle class teachers. A. Davis states that more than 95 out of 100 teachers are from the middle socio-economic group. He goes on to say that from the time the deprived child begins school - and more than 70 out of 100 of elementary school children come from the lower socio-economic groups - most of their ability is misdirected or wasted, because their teachers do not understand the basic cultural habits of the working groups.¹⁵ The teachers do not understand the goals and the behavior of the lower socio-economic group and the pupils, on the other hand, do not understand the teacher's culture and therefore cannot learn. The school values achievement, excellence, co-operative work and to some extent conformity. The teacher also values neatness and cleanliness, orderliness, and no fighting and swearing. These values are often foreign to and even adverse to, the values of the lower class child. Consequently we see a great cultural conflict or divide. Teachers are attempting to change the culture and basic ways of life of more than half of the children in our schools. "Yet they do not understand the interests, goals and culture of those

¹⁴Deutsch, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁵Davis, op. cit., p. 77.

masses of children whom they wish to stimulate to learn."¹⁶

According to O. Ritchie the home environment of middle class children is by contrast with lower class children largely consistent with the dominant value system of the society. When middle class children go to school they have already acquired a socio-cultural orientation different from that of the lower class children.¹⁷ Deutsch sees school as an experience, which for the children of lower status is discontinuous with the values, preparation and experience they receive from their homes and particular community. It represents society's demand that they bridge social class orientations for a few hours a day, five days a week. Yet, nothing significant is done to help these children cross this gap or make this transition. These children have little contact with the outside community and in a sense the school may be a foreign outpost in a community which is surrounded by what, for the child, is unknown and foreign.¹⁸

For the middle class child school represents an experience continuous with his home experiences, while for the lower class child, school is discontinuous and he thus becomes more and more alienated from the school. "Despite the contrasting home environments which sometimes reflect conflicting values, attitudes and behavior problems, all school children tend to be subjected to similar expectations. Lower class children are thus expected to achieve in accordance with standards which are relatively unimportant to them. The contrast between the

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ritchie, op. cit., p. 236.

¹⁸Deutsch, op. cit., p. 3.

lower class home environment and the middle class dominated school is a potential source of uncertainty; regarding desirable models, preferred identifications, meaningful values and reasonable aspirations."¹⁹

The process underlying the failure of the school system is not clear. A. Davis states that it seems probable that lower class children remain 'unsocialized' and 'unmotivated' (from the point of view of the middle class culture), for two reasons. First they are humiliated and punished too severely in school for having the lower class culture, of which their own families approve. Secondly, because the most powerful reinforcements to learning, namely, those of emotional and social reward, are systematically denied to the lower class child by the systems of privilege existing in the school and in the larger society. The lower class child learns by not being rewarded in prestige relationships, such as in school, occupation and status; that the middle class goals and gains are neither likely nor desirable for one in his position.²⁰

As was mentioned earlier there is often discrimination - although subtle, very pervasive - against the lower class child. Because of the personal rejection of teachers, children often lose interest in school. "Teachers often believe children are defying them when actually they are prisoners of their experience. Teachers attitudes make the lower class child resentful and rebellious and they react by, 'If you don't like

¹⁹Ritchie, op. cit., p. 237.

²⁰Allison Davis, "American Status Systems and the Socialization of the Child," Personality: In Nature, Society, and Culture, p. 575.

me, I won't co-operate'."²¹ This may also be reinforced by parents with low education who have negative attitudes toward the school. If individuals have lost hope of social mobility the school presents a symbol of competition in which they believe they have no hope of succeeding. Instead of reacting with increased effort the deprived child reacts negatively and does not work. As he falls behind he is considered 'dumb' and school becomes even less interesting and he can never catch up. "There is a certain irreversibility about school maladjustment."²²

In a study on "The Home and Family Background of Ottawa Public School Children in Relation to Their I.Q.'s," by J. Robbins,²³ there were some interesting findings. The study was on Grade IV students and he found that there was nearly three times the annual income per person in the families of the children with high I.Q.'s; that the fathers of high testing children like mothers, had had about three years more schooling than the parents of the low testing group; that the homes of the more favoured group averaged almost one room larger, although there were decidedly smaller families to live in them; and low testing children much more frequently came from broken homes. "Children's I.Q.'s showed a definite relationship between parental circumstances and home surroundings."²⁴

²¹Jackson Toby, "Orientation to Education as a Factor in the School Maladjustment of Lower-Class Children," Social Forces, Vol. XXXV (March, 1957), p. 91.

²²Ibid., p. 94.

²³John Robbins, "The Home and Family Background of Ottawa Public School Children in Relation to Their I.Q.'s," Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. II (February, 1948), pp. 35 - 37.

²⁴Ibid., p. 37.

One must consider here, however, the cultural biases of intelligence tests. "The judgement of ability is primarily a social class judgement and those children who conform to middle class standards have ability."²⁵ The diagnosis of a child's intelligence is influenced by socio-economic factors. Davis states that according to 'standard' intelligence tests, lower class children between the ages of 6 and 10 have an average I.Q. which is 8 - 12 points beneath the average I.Q. of the higher socio-economic groups. For children of 14, the present tests define the average I.Q. of the lower socio-economic groups as being 20 - 23 points beneath that of the higher occupational group.²⁶ It is difficult to tell how significant this is since these tests deal chiefly with problems which are far more frequently met in urban middle class culture. As Riessman states in The Culturally Deprived Child there is importance in the fact that deprived children are unfamiliar with how to take tests, have less motivation and less rapport between child and the tester.²⁷ The culturally deprived child is slower and more cautious, while the I.Q. tests demand speed. It has also come to be assumed that intelligence is best demonstrated in a school environment and I.Q. tests tend to become tests of scholastic aptitude. This is substantiated by Davis who says, "When one controls the socio-economic cultural factors in a test, one finds sound statistical evidence that

²⁵W. Warner, R. J. Havighurst, and M. Loeb, Who Shall Be Educated? (New York: Harper and Brothers, Pub., 1944), p. 77.

²⁶Davis, "Socio-Economic Influences Upon Children's Learning," p. 81.

²⁷Riessman, op. cit., pp. 49 - 63.

the average real intellectual ability is in general at the same level for all socio-economic groups."²⁸

This is particularly harmful to the culturally deprived child because on the basis of these culturally biased I.Q. tests pupils are separated into so-called 'fast' and 'slow' groups. "These classes do not aim at developing advanced conceptual skills. They assume that the slow learner's ability is basically limited, rather than recognizing that he has a different style of learning that may have positive attributes. They do not envision any potentially gifted children among the slow learners."²⁹ It is much more realistic to consider heredity as setting boundaries, often quite wide, for the child's potential development. Within these boundaries the continuous interaction which takes place between the child and his environment plays the determining role. At no time should it be assumed that because a particular environment does not allow for the development of a child's potential, that the potential is not there.

In the early years of childhood it is easy to cripple human ambition and ability. As Davis states "there is now scientific evidence that the children of families in the lower socio-economic group have a great fund of ability, and many new abilities, not recognized or developed by the schools. If this new ability is to be developed, it must be discovered and trained in the public schools."³⁰ The school

²⁸Davis, op. cit., p. 82.

²⁹Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, p. 66.

³⁰Davis, op. cit., p. 83.

must recognize that the culture from which pupils spring has its own standards and its own sense of values, and that the teacher must work within these values and standards, and in fact turn them to educational profit. There must be stress put upon the positive elements of the child's culture, such as, the freedom from the strain accompanying competitiveness, informality and humor, equalitarianism, freedom from parental over-protection and freedom from self-blame, the children's enjoyment of each other's company and the enjoyment of music, games and sports. Education must serve democratic purposes. As stated by Warner and Havighurst, it must give all boys and girls their chance, and it must select and encourage those with the best abilities wherever they are found. Education must also promote social solidarity through providing equal opportunity and by freeing people from narrow class prejudice and snobbery.³¹

With this background discussion of the problem I would also like to discuss our particular aspect of the study and the background material most relevant to it. Granted that the school system is not meeting the needs of the lower class child and the lower class child is ill prepared to enter the school system. There are, however, some particular reasons within the home environment which account for this conflict.

It is well established that the favorability or unfavorability of environmental factors influences the developmental process, even though this process is biologically the same for all children, regardless

³¹Warner and Havighurst, op. cit., p. 148.

of social class. M. Deutsch states the experiences and subsequent self and world concepts of a child are determined by the conditions under which he lives and grows up. Dissimilarities in the growth process of children become maximized when their actual life conditions are dissimilar.³² As a result, attitudes and patterns of behavior and learning, though basically reflecting the larger group culture, assume particular and often marked sub-group characteristics. "It is generally recognized that emotional and learning factors are closely related. The influence of environmental factors on the intensity of motivation and on the growing child's self attitudes regarding his own capabilities is significant."³³

In his article "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process,"³⁴ Deutsch discusses the importance of the physical environment. He states that the more variety of stimulating experiences the child has the more prepared he will be to meet the school situation. "A child from any circumstances who has been deprived of a substantial portion of the variety of stimuli which he is maturationally capable of responding to is likely to be deficient in the equipment required for learning."³⁵ The more new things the child sees and hears, the more he is interested in seeing and hearing. Also the more variation in reality with which

³²Deutsch, op. cit., p. 1.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," Mental Health of the Poor, ed. F. Riessman, J. Cohen and A. Pearn (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 176.

³⁵Ibid., p. 177.

he has coped, the greater is his capacity for coping (with the school situation as well as any other problems he encounters in later life). For the lower class child, his environment is visually lacking and offers a minimal range of stimuli. There is little variety in shape, size and colour and the child has few opportunities to manipulate and organize. The absence of such things as pencils and paper will result in less familiarity with these items when they are encountered in the school situation. These are seen as being significant because reading skills are form discrimination and visual spatial organization.

The lower class home is also not verbally oriented. Although the environment may be noisy, it is not meaningful to the child. This fosters inattention and this further diminishes incoming stimulation. "Lower class children in their homes have fewer demands made on them for auditory focusing or for sustained auditory attention. For example commands are more likely to be one or several words rather than complete sentences and are typically given without explanation or elaboration."³⁶ This no doubt makes school even more frustrating since one of the primary demands of the classroom is sustained attention, even if only for a short time span.

Basil Bernstein elaborates upon this when he speaks of the lower class as having a 'public' language as opposed to the 'formal' language more often found among the middle class. He discusses what he sees as some of the results of using a public language. "Curiosity is limited

³⁶Deutsch, Minority Groups and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement, p. 4.

by the low level of conceptualization which is fostered by this form of language use, the concern with the immediate prevents the development of a reflective experience; and a resistance to change or inherent conservatism is partly a function of a disinterest in process and a concern with things."³⁷ This helps to explain to some extent why the lower class child may have difficulty in school, where curiosity is an asset and conceptualization and reflection are an important part of learning. Bernstein also states that a public language facilitates types of social relationships "which maximize identifications with the aims and principles of a local group rather than with the complex differentiated aims of the major society."³⁸ This would further add to the conflict between the lower class child and the school, which is a part of the wider society.

There is also little adult-child interaction in the lower class home in a positive sense. The children, for the most part, do not use adults as a source of information and assignments of tasks in the home tend to be motoric in character and relate to concrete objects. There is also little encouragement of questions from children as adults are embarrassed by their own limitations.³⁹

It would seem that for children from non-intellectually stimulating environments the school must offer proportionately more stimulation.

³⁷Basil Bernstein, "A Public Language: Some Sociological Implications of a Linguistic Form," British Journal of Sociology, Vol. X (December, 1959), p. 317.

³⁸Ibid., p. 320.

³⁹Deutsch, Mental Health of the Poor, p. 181.

However, this poor cultural environment which increases the child's need for stimulation in school does little to prepare the child to accept this experience. Thus those who most need school experience are the most difficult to reach.

Deutsch's study on Minority Groups and Class Status as Related to Social and Personality Factors in Scholastic Achievement, seems to be the one with a focus somewhat similar to ours. He states that "Scholastic achievement is related to relatively better social and economic conditions in the home, but is largely unrelated to family atmosphere. There is a tendency for individual family factors to be submerged in the magnitude of economic, cultural and social deprivation."⁴⁰ This discussion of background material forms the basis for our study, of which the focus is the variation of culturally stimulating experiences in the home and their relation to scholastic achievement. This is only one part of a four part study. The concern of the study as a whole is the variation in the life styles of families of children who are doing well and children who are not performing satisfactorily in an environmentally deprived area of the City of Winnipeg.

The effect of all this literature is to emphasize the importance of sub-group environment and life style. It seems to also emphasize the fact that, "the more constricted an individual's social frame of reference and the greater its distance from the cultural mainstream the less meaningful and the less effective are the dominant cultural values that impinge on him in the schools and other social institutions."⁴¹

⁴⁰Deutsch, Minority Groups — in Scholastic Achievement, p. 19

⁴¹Ibid., p. 3.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study was not a study in which statistical significance was sought. Nor was it set up to find a causal relationship between variables, as there was no attempt to control variables. It was an attempt to establish a possible association between social, cultural and educational factors in the home and in the community, as they were related to 'satisfactory' and 'unsatisfactory' school performance.

The over-all concern of the study was with the variations in the life-style of a selected group of elementary school children, living in an environmentally deprived area in the City of Winnipeg, whose performance was satisfactory and a group of children whose performance was unsatisfactory. This over-all focus was then broken down into four areas. Two of these dealt with cultural stimulation and two with educational motivation. They were further broken down into educational experiences of the parents, educational experiences of the children, cultural experiences in the community and cultural experiences in the home. The focus of this aspect of the study was the culturally stimulating experiences of the child, in the home, and the effect they might have on school achievement.

A review of the literature was done, both for the over-all study and more specifically for this aspect of the study. The sub-hypotheses and the formulation of the schedule were arrived at from group discussion.

Two guest speakers were heard. They spoke on special education, and cultural deprivation and its effects on education. This material was incorporated into our discussions, although we found that the material relating to special education was not too relevant to this study. We found the material on cultural deprivation and education more useful.

The purpose of the study was to learn more about the cultural and educational factors influencing school performance and, therefore, an attempt was made to find variations in the cultural and educational experiences of the child which seemed to be related to the two major classifications of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. The data was obtained from the administration of a schedule to the sample group.

The area of study was chosen by the Research Committee of the School of Social Work. The sample was selected by consultation with the Research Director of the Winnipeg School Division. The children in the sample were selected by the principals and the teachers of the schools, through the Research Director. The criteria used by the teachers was outlined in Chapter I.

Prior to contacting the Research Director of the Winnipeg School Division, an environmentally deprived area was identified on the basis of the data from the Planning Division of the Metropolitan Planning Corporation. The schools from which the sample was chosen were all within this environmentally deprived area. Originally, there were 74 children identified from the four schools in the area.

The sample used was not a random sample because it was selected by the schools on the basis of a particular criteria.

One of the reasons this particular area of study was chosen was because there was no evidence of any previous research having been done locally, in this area.

In the formulation of the questions for the schedule the major group broke down into sub-groups, one for each of the first three sub-hypotheses. It was out of these questions that the fourth sub-hypothesis was arrived at. The schedule was first drafted and tested in November and December of 1965. The pre-test group consisted of 28 families, 14 of these were selected by the School Division and 14 were chosen at random from the Henderson Directory. This was done to ensure a large enough pre-test group and to test an additional method of selection of the sample group in case it should be required. Only 3 of the 14 chosen from the Directory had children in the appropriate grades. Those provided by the schools were selected from Grades 4 - 6. The end result was that 11 out of a possible 17 families were willing to participate. Only the parent or parents of the children were interviewed in both the pre-test group and the test group. Whenever possible both parents were interviewed.

After the schedule was administered to the pre-test group, the data was collected and analyzed and a few revisions were made in the schedule. These changes consisted of eliminating unnecessary questions, and reformulating others, to ensure the objectivity of responses and to obtain the necessary data. Appendix A contains the schedule in its final form.

The schedule in its final form was administered to the sample group in January 1966. A schedule was completed in respect to the family of each child in the sample, who was willing to participate. The sample group was chosen from Grades 1, 2 and 3. There were 47 schedules completed out of a possible 74. Of these 47 completed schedules, 27 were "Unsatisfactory" and 20 were "Satisfactory".

Originally there were 39 Unsatisfactory and 35 Satisfactory, for a total of 74. Four (4) families were eliminated, 3 from the unsatisfactory group and 1 from the satisfactory group. The reason for elimination in the unsatisfactory group was that these three children were not living with their own parents. The one satisfactory child that was eliminated was not enrolled in Grades 1, 2 or 3, but in kindergarten, according to the parents of the child. Three (3) families were not located, 2 satisfactory and 1 unsatisfactory. Twenty (20) families were not interested in participating, 12 satisfactory and 8 unsatisfactory.

Since this was not a random sample it was, therefore, not representative of the population of an environmentally deprived area. The results and conclusions apply only to the sample group studied. There were also limitations due to the fact that the sample was interviewed by various students and there were, no doubt, some individual differences in administering the schedule and varying degrees of subjectivity. The four groups met together to go over the schedule and to attempt to standardize the administration of the schedule.

Each of the four groups developed their own questions related to their particular focus of the study. As previously stated the composite schedule that emerged out of the four groups was pre-tested and

then modified. The face sheet of identifying data consisted of questions that each group felt were significant.

From the face sheet we made use of the question relating to 'marital status', to compare the number of one parent families of both groups and to relate this to performance. This information was also discussed in relation to interaction and verbal and language skills. The occupation of the mother was also used to compare the number of working mothers in each group. This again was related to the sub-hypothesis on verbal and language skills and the one on interaction. The questions relating to the number of children in the home and the number of other adults in the home were used in relation to interaction and verbal and language skills.

The questions for this particular aspect of the study were developed in relation to the four sub-hypotheses. The three original sub-hypotheses relating to visual stimuli, verbal and language skills, and activity, emerged from Deutsch's article on "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process."¹ Out of the discussion in regard to these three sub-hypotheses a fourth one emerged; interaction, as an important factor and questions relating to it were included in the schedule.

The questions referring to each sub-hypothesis were not all grouped together to facilitate the administration of the schedule. The questions asked, that related to visual stimulation, were an attempt to measure the opportunities for a variety of visual stimulation (variety of

¹Martin Deutsch, "The Disadvantaged Child and the Learning Process," Mental Health of the Poor, ed. F. Riessman, J. Cohen and A. Pearn (New York: The Free Press, 1964).

objects) in the home, and this would give the child more shape and form discrimination and enable him to cope more effectively with the school situation. The same rationale applied to the question relating to a variety of colour.

The questions relating to verbal and language skills were based on the rationale that the more opportunity for variety the child has in reading and language experiences, the more capable he will be of coping with the school situation. The questions in this section related to such things as the use of the adult for information, availability of reading material, early reading experiences and the assumption that children who speak English do better in school, while those who speak English plus another language have still more facility and opportunity for verbal expression. This is due to the fact that English is the language used in the school. The questions in relation to the activities the child engages in were devised to determine the number of activities the child engaged in on the assumption that the more variations in the home that the child coped with, the greater his capacity for learning in school. Those questions relating to adult-interaction were to measure the child's interactions and with whom. This was in regard to the child's use of the teacher in the school situation. The more interaction the child had with adults in the home, the more ability he would have to use the teacher in the learning situation.

Methods of standardization included meeting with the other three groups to go over the schedule. This was an attempt to familiarize the entire group with the other three parts of the composite schedule. There

was also a standard approach to contacting the families. This applied to both the pre-test and the test group. The majority of families were contacted twice. On the first contact the parents were told that the interviewer was from the University of Manitoba, and that he was making a study of some of the experiences of elementary school children. They were then asked if they had any children in Grades 1, 2 or 3, and if so, would they be willing to participate in the study. If they were willing to participate a suitable time was arranged with them, in which the schedule was completed. Whenever possible both parents were interviewed. Each interviewer had an identifying letter, to be shown on request. A letter of thanks was sent to each family which participated in the study.

An attempt was made to eliminate the elements of subjectivity by asking questions requiring a 'Yes' or 'No' answer. Others, however, were less objective. The interviewer was also unaware at the time he administered the schedule, whether or not the child was performing Satisfactorily.

There were some limitations arising from the use of the schedule. Each interviewer administered the total schedule and it was found that interviewers were less familiar with the parts, other than their own. In relation to certain questions the rationale for asking the question was not understood by the interviewer and consequently the question was not administered accurately. In this particular aspect of the study it was found that question 6 had to be eliminated because of inaccurate recording by the interviewers. This limited our analysis.

The major classifications consisted of the Satisfactory and the

Unsatisfactory groups. Under these two major classifications there were the four categories of Visual, Verbal, Activity and Interaction.

The Visual category was further broken down into two sub-categories, one relating to shape and form and the other to colour. The responses under these two categories were analyzed by a means approach. The data was calculated for each classification of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory by totaling the responses and dividing by the number of respondents in the classification to arrive at a mean. Some of these results were presented in tabular form and through discussion.

The Verbal category was broken down into five sub-categories. These were, 'language spoken', 'adult-information', 'early verbal experiences', 'availability of reading material' and 'pre-school learning experiences'. Each sub-category was analyzed in terms of percentages and the information in regard to the availability of reading material was presented in tabular form. The other sub-categories were presented through discussion.

The category relating to Activity was broken down into three sub-categories. These were, homework, fun activities and chore activities. The sub-category of 'homework' was analyzed by calculating a percentage, while the category of 'fun activities' and 'chore activities' was analyzed in terms of both percentages and means.

The category of Interaction was analyzed by presenting the data relating to child-adult interaction in tabular form. The data relating to interaction with children was presented in tabular form in Appendix B and discussed in Chapter IV under additional information. The material

relating to child-adult interaction was analyzed by calculating the mean for each area of interaction and then comparing the means for each classification (Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory).

The information on the face sheet was also analyzed in relation to the sub-hypotheses. The number of one parent families was compared in terms of a percentage and discussed in relation to interaction and verbal opportunity. The number of working mothers in each group was also compared in terms of a percentage and this was also related to opportunity for interaction. The average number of children and other adults in each classification was compared in regard to opportunity for interaction and also in relation to opportunities for verbal experiences.

The analysis and interpretation of the data will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The first major step in the analysis was to tabulate the data as it pertained to each of the four sub-hypotheses relating to the areas of Visual, Activity, Interaction and Verbal. The tabulation of the data was done within each of the major classifications of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory.

Visual Experiences:

The analysis of the category of Visual was done by breaking it into two sub-categories, one relating to 'colour' and the other to 'shape and form discrimination' as measured by the variety of objects present in the home.

The questions were all analyzed in terms of means and it was found that in the sub-category of 'shape and form discrimination', question 23, which measured a variety of objects in the home, showed results of 8.40 for the Satisfactory group and 8.11 for the Unsatisfactory group. This was a slight variation in favour of the Satisfactory group but not of any meaningful variation. A few parts of the question were analyzed separately, to determine if there was any meaningful difference in the occurrence of any one object (ex. paints and crayons, record player). There was no meaningful difference in any particular area so the question was not broken down any further.

In question 26, which also measured the variety of objects in the home, both the Satisfactory group and the Unsatisfactory group had a mean of 6.25 and there was, therefore, no variation. It was found to be of no value to break this question down any further. Question 27, which measured the variety in decorative ornaments, lamps and pictures, was analyzed as a whole. The results are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

VARIATIONS IN DECORATIVE ORNAMENTS, LAMPS AND PICTURES BETWEEN THE HOMES OF THE S. GROUP AND THE U. GROUP AS MEASURED BY A MEAN

Class*	Many	Several	Few	None
S	.63	.89	1.16	.32
U	.62	.77	.77	.31

*Class - Classification

S - Satisfactory

U - Unsatisfactory

It was noted that for 'many', 'several' and 'few', there was a slight variation in favour of the Satisfactory group; while 'none' was contrary to what was expected. It was also noted that the majority of responses for both the Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory groups fell under the headings of several and few.

The comments were used to determine why questions were not answered. One Satisfactory was not answered because the interview was

not held in the family's home. One Unsatisfactory was not answered but no reason was stated. The over-all consideration of this sub-category did not support the sub-hypothesis to any meaningful degree.

The analysis of the sub-category of 'colour' as measured in question 23, is presented in Table 2. and Table 3.

TABLE 2

VARIATIONS IN INTENSITY OF COLOUR BETWEEN THE HOMES OF THE SATISFACTORY GROUP AND THE UNSATISFACTORY GROUP AS MEASURED BY A MEAN

	Dark	Average	Bright
S	.21	.68	.11
U	.36	.48	.16

TABLE 3

VARIATIONS IN QUANTIFY OF COLOUR BETWEEN THE HOMES OF THE SATISFACTORY GROUP AND THE UNSATISFACTORY GROUP AS MEASURED BY A MEAN

	Drab	Average	Much
S	.26	.63	.11
U	.38	.46	.15

It was noted that for 'dark', 'drab' and 'average' there was a slight variation in favour of the Satisfactory group, while 'bright' and 'much' were contrary to what was expected. It was also noted that the majority of responses in both the classifications of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory fell under 'average'. The comments were again used to determine why answers were not recorded. Two of the schedules in the Unsatisfactory group were not completed in part (a) and one in part (b). No reasons were given. One Satisfactory was not completed for either part (a) or (b) because the interview was not held in the family's home. These questions had a subjective element involved and they were very general and this may have had some bearing on the results.

The sub-category of 'colour' had a slight tendency to support the sub-hypothesis but neither sub-category showed any meaningful variation. The sub-hypothesis on variety and visual stimulation was, therefore, inconclusive.

Activity:

The category on activities was broken down into three sub-categories, homework, fun activities and chores.

It was noted that in the sub-category of 'homework', a greater proportion of the Satisfactory children did homework than the Unsatisfactory group. 65% of the Satisfactory did homework as compared to 48% of the Unsatisfactory. This was considered to be a meaningful variation in support of the sub-hypothesis.

In the sub-category of 'fun activities' the mean for the Satisfactory group was 4.85 as compared to 4.22 for the Unsatisfactory group.

This was a slight variation in favour of the sub-hypothesis but not a meaningful difference. It was found that there was more value in looking at individual parts of the question. In doing so there was noted to be a significant difference in part (b) of question 22 on reading and in part (e) on active games and sports. In the area of reading 95% of the Satisfactory group participated in this activity while 66-2/3% of the Unsatisfactory group were involved in reading. In 'active games and sports' it was 84% of the Satisfactory as compared to 52% of the Unsatisfactory.

In the sub-category of 'chores' it was found that 90% of the Satisfactory group did work at home as compared to 89% of the Unsatisfactory group. There were no meaningful variations in the various parts of the question. In question 25, relating to the chore activities engaged in by the child, the mean for the Satisfactory group was 3.38 as compared to 3.08 for the Unsatisfactory group. This was a slight variation in favour of the sub-hypothesis but the sub-category of 'chores' did not reveal any meaningful variation.

The sub-hypothesis on activity tended to be supported, with the most meaningful differences being in the area of homework, and the individual parts of one question relating to reading and active games and sports.

Interaction:

The adult-child interaction is shown on Table 4 and Table 5.

TABLE 4

ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION OF THE
SATISFACTORY GROUP

Areas of Interaction	M*	F	O.A.	Total	Mean
Who reads to the child	13	4	1	18	.9
Who tells stories to the child	10	8	2	20	.9
Who taught child to read	5	2	1	8	.4
Who taught child to print	7	2	1	10	.5
Help with homework	12	8	2	22	1.1
Who child asks questions of	16	11	3	30	1.5
Fun activities	36	26	6	68	3.4
Chore activities	19	7	2	28	1.4
Total	118	68	18	204	10.1
Mean	5.9	3.4	.9	10.1	

*M - Mother
 F - Father
 O.A. - Other Adults

TABLE 5

ADULT-CHILD INTERACTION OF THE
UNSATISFACTORY GROUP

Areas of Interaction	M	F	O.A.	Total	Mean
Who reads to the child	17	2	2	21	.77
Who tells stories to the child	9	6	4	19	.70
Who taught child to read	7	3	0	10	.37
Who taught child to print	9	5	0	14	.52
Help with homework	13	3	0	16	.59
Who child asks questions of	25	11	6	42	1.55
Fun activities	29	20	3	52	1.93
Chore activities	17	2	2	21	.77
Total	126	52	17	195	7.2
Mean	4.66	1.92	.63	7.20	

It was noted that from the over-all view of adult-child interaction, the Satisfactory group had more interaction, 10.1 as compared to 7.2. The greatest difference occurred in, who helps with homework (20), with whom the child engages in recreational activities (22), and with whom the child does chores (25). The least variation occurred in connection with who taught the child to print (18), who the child asks questions of (21) and who taught the child to read (16). As in activities the area of homework was again an area of variation.

Reading vertically on the tables, the Satisfactory had 5.9 interactions with Mother as compared to 4.66 for the Unsatisfactory group. With Father, the Satisfactory group had 3.4 as compared to 1.92 for the Unsatisfactory group. With Other Adults the Satisfactory group had .9 as compared to .63 for the Unsatisfactory group.

These all tended to strongly support the sub-hypothesis on interaction.

Additional information not directly related to the sub-hypothesis was also noted. This is included in Table form in Appendix B. From an over-all view of this table, included in the Appendix, it was noted that the Satisfactory group had more interaction with Siblings and Other Children, 8.70 as compared to 6.44. The most variation occurred in with whom the child engages in activities (22).

Reading the table vertically it was noted that the Satisfactory group had more interaction with Siblings than the Unsatisfactory group, 7.05 as compared to 5.11, and with Other Children it was 1.65 to 1.33. It was of interest to note that the greatest variation occurred in

interactions with Siblings, while there was very little variation in the interaction with Other Children.

This information had some relevance since the total interaction in the home would affect the child's ability to use others for learning and to learn to socialize. The data on interaction did not include the number of children in the home and the possibility of one parent families. The data in relation to kindergarten was excluded since it was not within the home.

Verbal Experiences:

The verbal category was broken down into five sub-categories. The first of these related to 'language spoken'. It was noted that 95% of the Satisfactory group spoke English in the home as compared to 96% of the Unsatisfactory group. This was not a meaningful variation. It was also found that 47.3% of the Satisfactory families spoke English and another language while 34.6% of the Unsatisfactory group spoke English and another language. This tended to support the sub-hypothesis which states that the more variety of verbal opportunity the better the child will be able to cope with school.

It was also noted that the Satisfactory group spoke more English plus another language between the sub-systems, than the Unsatisfactory group. In the parent-child sub-system it was 25% as to 11%, in the sibling system 15% as to 3.7% and between adults 45% as to 29%. This tends to support the sub-hypothesis. The data also revealed that 85% of the Satisfactory group spoke English before starting school as compared to 96% of the Unsatisfactory. This was contrary to what was expected and tends to disprove the sub-hypothesis.

In the sub-category of 'Adult-Information', 75% of the parents in the Satisfactory group corrected their child in English as compared to 93% of the Unsatisfactory. 57% of the Satisfactory used English and other as compared to 50% of the Unsatisfactory. This tended to disprove the sub-hypothesis.

In the sub-category of 'early verbal experiences', questions 6 and 7 were eliminated as they were not answered correctly in numerous incidents. It was noted that in the Satisfactory group 90% of the Mothers read English and 90% of the Fathers as compared to 85% of the Mothers and 81.3% of the Fathers in the Unsatisfactory group. This was a variation in support of the sub-hypothesis. It was also noted that 80% of the parents in the Satisfactory group read to their children as compared to 89% of the Unsatisfactory group. This was contrary to what was expected and did not support the sub-hypothesis. 80% of the children in the Satisfactory group were told stories while 62.9% of the Unsatisfactory group were told stories. This tended to support the sub-hypothesis. There was no meaningful variation in support of the sub-hypothesis in this sub-category except for a strong tendency to support it in the area of telling the child stories.

In the sub-category of the 'availability of reading material' there was a tendency to support the sub-hypothesis. 75% of the parents in the Satisfactory group read magazines and 70% of the Unsatisfactory group. In regard to the parents reading books, 70% of the parents in the Satisfactory group read books as compared to 59% in the Unsatisfactory group. This particular area of the sub-category seemed to be meaningful in support of the sub-hypothesis.

The availability of newspapers is presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

A COMPARISON OF THE AVAILABILITY OF NEWSPAPERS IN THE HOMES OF THE SATISFACTORY GROUP AND THE UNSATISFACTORY GROUP AS MEASURED BY A PERCENTAGE

	Daily	Weekly	Periodically	Never
S	75%	10%	10%	5%
U	70%	4%	11%	15%

This tends to support the sub-hypothesis.

In the category of 'pre-school learning experiences', it was noted that 50% of the children in the Satisfactory group could read before beginning Grade 1, while only 33% of the children in the Unsatisfactory group could do so. This tended to support the sub-hypothesis fairly strongly. 80% of the Satisfactory group could print before Grade 1 as compared to 74% of the Unsatisfactory group. This was a slight variation in favour of the Satisfactory group.

In an over-all view of the sub-hypothesis on verbal activity there was found to be a strong tendency to support it in the areas of reading (both child and parents) and telling stories to the child, and slight support in the other areas, with the exception of reading to the child and whether or not the child could speak English before starting school. It may be that the Satisfactory group are encouraged to do more reading

on their own and consequently are read to less.

From the face sheet it was noted that 11% of the children in the Satisfactory group had only one parent while 37% of the children in the Unsatisfactory group came from one-parent families. This was thought to be significant in regards to adult-child interaction since the Satisfactory group had more opportunity for interaction. It was also significant in relation to the sub-hypothesis on verbal opportunity since the Satisfactory group had more opportunity to use the adult as a source of information.

It was also noted that 26% of the Mothers of the children in the Satisfactory group were working as compared to 15% of the Mothers in the Unsatisfactory group. This was thought to be worth noting in regards to interaction since there would be less opportunity for interaction if the Mother were working. This, however, did not seem to make a meaningful difference since the Satisfactory group had more interaction in spite of having a larger proportion of Mothers out of the home. This speculation may still be valid, and had the Satisfactory group not had a larger number of working Mothers, there might have been a more meaningful difference between the two groups in the area of interaction. It was of interest to note that in spite of the fact that the Unsatisfactory group had a considerably larger number of one-parent families, they had fewer working Mothers.

A comparison was also made of the number of children, and the number of other adults, in each classification of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. It was felt that this would have some bearing on adult-

child interaction and the opportunity for verbal stimulation. It was noted that the average number of children per family in the Satisfactory group was 4.6 as compared to 4.9 in the Unsatisfactory group. This was not considered to be a meaningful variation. The average number of other adults in the Satisfactory group was 2.15 as compared to 1.96 for the Unsatisfactory group. This was not a meaningful variation. It was thought that this might have some bearing on opportunity for interaction and verbal experiences.

The conclusions will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

A group of families of children living in an environmentally deprived area of the City of Winnipeg, whose school performance was satisfactory and a group in the same area whose school performance was unsatisfactory, were studied to see if there were any differences in the culturally stimulating experiences in their homes.

A sample group of 74 families, who were selected by the schools on the basis of a particular criteria, were studied by interviewing the parent(s). An attempt was made to determine if there was a variation in cultural experiences in the home, in four particular areas. These were visually stimulating experiences, verbal and language experiences, activities engaged in by the child and interaction with adults.

The hypothesis tested was:

There are variations in the culturally stimulating experiences provided within the homes of families of a selected group of elementary school children living in an environmentally deprived area of Winnipeg, whose school performance is satisfactory and a group from a similar area, whose school performance is unsatisfactory.

The findings substantiated that there is a variation in the culturally stimulating experiences in the homes of the satisfactory group and those of the unsatisfactory group.

In order to determine in what areas this variation occurred four sub-hypotheses were tested. The first of these was:

1. Those children whose school performance is satisfactory come from homes in which, on the average, there is a greater variety of opportunities for visually stimulating experiences than those children whose school performance is not satisfactory.

The findings did not identify a meaningful variation in the opportunity for visually stimulating experiences in the home, between the two classifications of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. The sub-hypothesis on visual experiences was not supported and proved Inconclusive.

This sub-hypothesis was based on the idea of the 'slum' area, where the items listed might have showed some variation. It would seem that the homes of both classifications were very similar physically speaking, perhaps due to the fact that they were all located in an environmentally deprived area. This speculation was also supported by the fact that 'luxury' items such as the 'record player' and 'musical instruments' tended to be absent from both groups. This sub-hypothesis was not related to basic income or real 'deprivation' and perhaps for this reason it failed to measure any real variation, nor was the sample group related to any particular income group. It is also possible that the schedule measured items which were too basic and it would have been more valid, if it had been measuring differences between a middle class group and a lower socio-economic group, rather than differences within a particular area.

According to our findings it would seem that visual stimulation does not have a significant effect on school performance and the variations occur in other areas.

The second sub-hypothesis tested was:

2. Those children whose school performance is satisfactory come from homes in which, on the average, there is a greater variety of opportunities for the development of verbal and language skills than those children whose school performance is not satisfactory.

The findings tended to support this sub-hypothesis, with particularly strong support in the areas of telling stories to the children (S - 80%, U - 62.9%) and the availability of books (S - 70%, U - 59%). The area of telling stories is closely related to interaction and the higher percentage in the Satisfactory group is also meaningful in this area. There was also a strong tendency to support the sub-hypothesis in the area of whether or not the child could read before starting Grade 1 (S - 50%, U - 33%). This emphasizes the importance of reading and this is also supported in the sub-hypothesis on activities.

It was of interest to note that in the area of reading to the child, the findings did not support the sub-hypothesis (U - 89%, S - 30%). This may be because the Satisfactory group are encouraged to read more on their own. This is substantiated by the findings in relation to activities where there was a meaningful variation between the two classifications in relation to the activity of reading (S - 95%, U - 66-2/3%).

There was also a slight tendency to support the sub-hypothesis in the area of speaking English plus another language, whether Mother and Father could read English, availability of newspapers, and whether or not the child could print before beginning Grade 1.

It was disproved in the areas of whether or not the child is corrected in English, reading to the child and whether the child spoke English before beginning school.

In conclusion it would seem that a higher level of literary skills is encouraged in the homes of the Satisfactory group. The Satisfactory group have more experiences in the areas of reading and printing, which enables them to cope more adequately with the school situation. This was also substantiated in the area of interaction where homework and reading reveal a meaningful variation.

The questions relating to language did not really measure verbal fluency. They failed to explore the area that the sub-hypothesis was related to.

The third sub-hypothesis tested was:

3. Those children whose school performance is satisfactory come from homes in which, on the average, they engage in a greater variety of activities than those children whose school performance is not satisfactory.

The findings tended to support this sub-hypothesis, with the most meaningful variation occurring in the area of homework, reading and active games and sports. Again there was an important variation in areas relating to school. Games and sports could be important in enabling the

child to cope better with peers in the school situation. This might also result in some concept of competitiveness and success, which is related to good scholastic achievement.

It was of interest to note that there was a variation in the area of fun activities but not in the area of chores. This could also be related to interaction, in that the Unsatisfactory group are not involved in fun activities with siblings and adults but they have to do chores alone, and even if with others, there is a different quality of interaction between fun activities and chores. This also relates to the idea of task completion.

The fourth sub-hypothesis to be tested was:

4. Those children who perform satisfactorily in school have, on the average, more positive interaction with adults than do children who perform unsatisfactorily in school.

The findings proved this sub-hypothesis Conclusively. There was an important variation in the nature and content of the interaction in the home in relation to homework, chores and activities. The area of homework was again an area closely related to school. This interaction with adults would also enable the child to use the teacher for learning and to socialize in the school situation. Both are very important in relation to a child's school achievement.

It was also concluded that the absence of one parent seems to have an important relationship to school performance (S - 11% one parent families, U - 37%). It was also of interest to note that all of the one parent families were absent a father. It would also be of interest

to see if the difference in school performance varied for boys and girls, in relation to one parent families. This gave the Unsatisfactory group less opportunity for adult-child interaction. There also may be a relationship between school performance and a father figure. The Satisfactory group had 3.4 interactions with Father as compared to 1.92 in the Unsatisfactory group. It was of interest that in spite of the fact that 26% of the mothers in the Satisfactory group were working and out of the home part of the time as compared to 15% in the Unsatisfactory group, the Satisfactory group still had more interactions with Mother (S - 5.9, U - 4.66). It would appear that it is the quality of the interaction that is important, not the mere presence of a parent.

An over-all evaluation of the study revealed significant variations in the area of interaction with adults and the areas related to school activity (homework and reading). This would suggest that if the culturally deprived child is to function adequately in school he must have a satisfying home environment in terms of his relationship with parents and he must also have some stimulation in the areas relating to school activity.

It would seem probable that what is most significant about stimulation and encouragement in the literary area is the interaction (concern and interest) with the adult providing the stimulation.

It is felt that the study was reliable and if applied to the same sample again, the same results would be obtained. As was stated earlier, very little generalization can be made from this sample since it was not randomly chosen.

The method of approach used in the study was generally valid, although in some instances it did not get at the kind of information desired. This is particularly evident in connection with visually stimulating experiences. Factors which may have limited the validity of the study and which were not controlled for, include the level of intelligence of the children in each group, the quality of teaching instruction and the fact that the collection and analysis of data was dependent on both the way in which the questions were asked as well as on the respondents' replies.

It is hoped that this study has added to a greater knowledge of the relationship between school performance and home environment, particularly cultural stimulation in the home environment. The study serves to indicate areas, such as quality of parent-child interaction, the importance of reading to early scholastic achievement and the effect of one parent families on school achievement, for further study.

The writer feels it also has some implications for the school in teaching the child from an environmentally deprived area and the culturally deprived child. Perhaps more effort should be directed at establishing a closer teacher-pupil relationship with this particular type of child, to help him learn how to use an adult for learning. This may also have some implications for smaller classes. There should perhaps also be more effort at helping the culturally disadvantaged child fit into his peer group at school and to adjust to the middle-class school system.

It is hoped that the exploratory nature of this study provides a basis for a better understanding of the culturally deprived child in relation to his family life-style and the school situation.

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APPENDIX A

Part I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

RESEARCH PROJECT 1965-66

Schedule No. _____

Interviewer _____

Family Name _____

Performance S U

Address _____

School A B C D

Family Members Name Age

Living In Home

Father _____

Yes _____ No _____

Mother _____

Children _____

Marital Status (if one parent family) Divorced _____ Separated _____ Widowed _____

Others in Household:

Relationship _____

Ethnic Origin - - - Father _____ Mother _____
(Language spoken by male ancestor on arrival in Canada)

Length of Residence at present address _____

Length of Residence in Winnipeg _____

(If appropriate) Where else have you lived in Winnipeg during past 5 years?

Father's Occupation _____

Mother's Occupation _____

Gross Family Income _____

Part B

1. What languages are spoken in the home?* _____
2. (If more than one), what language is generally used?
- a) between parent & child _____
- b) between siblings _____
- c) between adults _____
3. (If any answer to question 2 is other than English), do you encourage your child to speak English? Yes _____ No _____ check (v)
4. Could your child speak English before he started Grade 1?
- Yes _____ No _____
5. If your child uses words or sentences incorrectly, do you try to tell him the right way?
- a) in English Yes _____ No _____
- b) in other languages Yes _____ No _____
6. Can all of the adults in your home read? (any language)
- Yes _____ No _____
7. (If answer to No. 6 is No), which adults cannot read: Mother ___ Father ___ Others ___
8. Which adults in the home read English? Mother ___ Father ___ Others ___
9. Does anyone read to the children? Yes _____ No _____
10. (If answer to No. 9 is yes)
who reads to the child? M. F. S. O.A. O.C. **

11. Does anyone tell your children stories? Yes _____ No _____
12. (If the answer to No. 11 is yes)
who tells the child stories? M. F. S. O.A. O.C.

* Throughout schedule home refers to family living quarters and yard

** Mother Father Sibling Other Adult Other Child

13. Do you read newspapers? Daily Weekly Periodically Never

14. Do you read Yes No

a) magazines _____

b) books _____

15. Before your child started grade I, could he read? Yes _____ No _____

16. (If answer to question 15 is yes)
who taught him? M. F. S. O.A. O.C. K.G.*

17. Before your child started grade I, could he print? Yes _____ No _____

18. (If the answer to question 17 is
yes), who taught him? M. F. S. O.A. O.C. K.G.

19. Does your child do homework? Yes _____ No _____

20. If he needs help with schoolwork
who does he ask? M. F. S. O.A. O.C.

21. Of whom does your child ask
questions? M. F. S. O.A. O.C.

22. What does your child do for fun
at home with others (If so, with whom?) M. F. S. O.A. O.C.
check (v)

a) watch T.V. _____

b) read _____

c) colour, draw, cut-out _____

d) cards or thinking games _____

e) active games and sports _____

f) hobbies (sewing, carpentry, etc.) _____

g) other _____

* KG - Kindergarten

23. In the home do you have: - check (v)

- a) paints or crayons _____
- b) pens or pencils _____
- c) scissors _____
- d) paper (to write on) _____
- e) paste _____
- f) T.V. _____
- g) radio _____
- h) record player _____
- i) musical instruments _____
- j) toy(s) _____

24. Does your child do any work at home? Yes _____ No _____

25. (If the answer to No. 24 is yes),
does he do: (If so with whom?) -

- | | check (v) - | <u>M.</u> | <u>F.</u> | <u>S.</u> | <u>O.A.</u> | <u>O.C.</u> |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| a) dishes | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| b) taking out garbage | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| c) running messages | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| d) baby-sitting | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| e) snow clearing or
grass cutting - | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| f) other | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

26. Do you have the following in your home?

- a) telephone _____
- b) clock or watch _____
- c) calendar _____

- d) refrigerator _____
- e) washing machine _____
- f) iron _____
- g) toaster _____

27. Interviewer to observe

	<u>Many</u>	<u>Several</u>	<u>Few</u>	<u>None</u>
a) decorative ornaments	_____	_____	_____	_____
b) lamps	_____	_____	_____	_____
c) pictures	_____	_____	_____	_____

Interviewer's Comments: _____

28. Interviewer to observe
colour in home

- a) Brightness of Colour Dark _____ Average _____ Bright _____
- b) Variety of Colour Drab _____ Average _____ Much _____

Interviewer's Comments: _____

APPENDIX B

TABLE 7

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN OF THE SATISFACTORY GROUP

Areas of Interaction	S*	O.C.	Total	Mean
Who reads to the child	13	0	13	.65
Who tells stories to the child	7	0	7	.35
Who taught child to read	3	0	3	.15
Who taught child to print	5	0	5	.25
Help with Homework	8	0	8	.40
Who child asks questions of	9	1	10	.50
Fun activities	71	32	103	5.15
Chore activities	25	0	25	1.25
Total	141	33	174	8.70
Mean	7.05	1.65	8.70	

* S - Siblings

O.C. - Other Children

APPENDIX B

TABLE 8

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN OF THE UNSATISFACTORY GROUP

Areas of Interaction	S	O.C.	Total	Mean
Who reads to the child	15	1	16	.59
Who tells stories to the child	7	2	9	.33
Who taught child to read	4	0	4	.15
Who taught child to print	4	0	4	.15
Help with homework	11	0	11	.41
Who child asks questions of	11	4	15	.55
Fun activities	62	24	86	3.18
Chore activities	24	5	29	1.08
Total	138	36	174	6.44
Mean	5.11	1.33	6.44	