

An educational program developed at the University now being used all over the country. Here a worker tests children at Dover Air Force base in Delaware for physical disabilities and learning problems.

New tests detect learning problems

By KATHY GOOD
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Johnny is five years old, and about to enter his first kindergarten class. His parents are concerned about how he will relate to his schoolmates, because he has a problem. He just can't seem to keep up with neighborhood children while playing tag or dodge ball.

The Higher Competencies for Young Children program, developed at the University, can solve this hypothetical situation and other real problems parents of young children face everyday concerning kids' learning abilities.

As many as 60,000 Pennsylvania preschoolers have minor physical and learning disabilities that go untreated, says a U.S. Department of Welfare report.

The report says subtle problems in language progression, social and emotional disorders, and other factors delaying development afflict up to 8 percent of children from birth to age 5 in the state.

Using HICOMP's 20-minute testing method, schools can determine if kids from birth to five years have these disabilities. Once the source of the problem is found, proper treatment can be assigned.

"The earlier testing begins the better is the general rule, but with cautions," said Dr. Carol A. Cartwright, professor of curriculum and instruction.

"Children who need help in infancy are very obvious," Cartwright said, "since they were most likely born with the defect. Some are often tricky to detect, such as hearing, for example. Nothing differs show up until the child approaches school and begins failing tests."

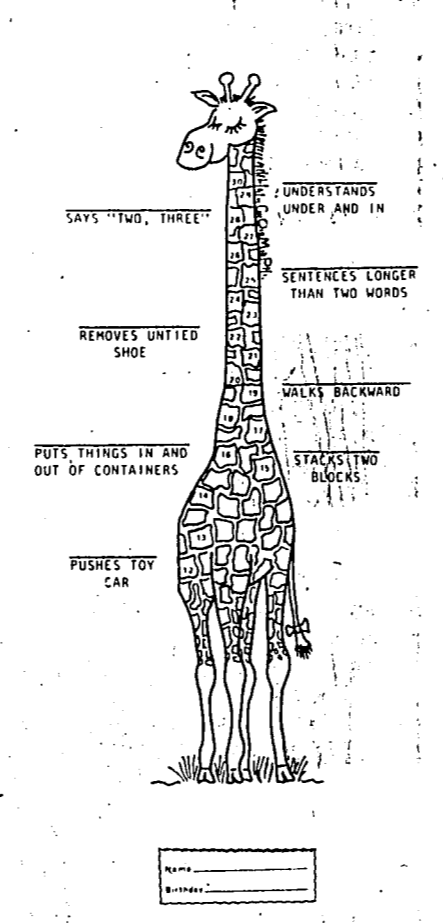
Cartwright said the test can be administered at community centers and shopping malls as well as in schools. If the test diagnoses a problem, the child is scheduled for an in-depth test at home.

"Parents can work along with teachers in solving their children's developmental difficulties," Cartwright said. "Parents are given a chart called 'Jotty Giraffe,' which measures accomplishments at home. Research for HICOMP began seven years ago, under the direction of Dr. John T. Neisworth, professor of special education. He, along with various students, Cartwright said, spent the first three years developing a curriculum suitable for testing."

Working with a University sponsored preschool class, they created a diversified system of tests for different age groups, categorizing them into four domains: problem solving, social interaction, fine motor development, and social interaction.

Further work by Cartwright and Individual and Family Studies Professor Donald L. Peters enabled the program to be packaged and sent out to educators during the next three years. This " Outreach" phase entailed going to schools, Air Force bases and Head Start programs across the country, teaching in-

Jotty Giraffe Helps



"Jotty Giraffe," used in a University-developed educational program, helps diagnose children's disabilities.

structors how to use HICOMP effectively.

"People become interested in the program by seeing it in magazines, or copying to our presentations," Cartwright said. "After every meeting we get a flurry of requests for more information."

HICOMP is used in more than 50 preschools throughout America, but only as an institution sees fit. Cartwright said the project is so comprehensive that teachers can pick up on different aspects according to their needs.

Cartwright said the program is not just a diagnostic tool, and actually is used to teach handicapped and non-handicapped children basic communication skills, self-care and grooming, motor coordination, and problem solving.

As a part of the project, graduate students Frances M. Hunt and Elizabeth Llewellyn designed a training program that uses modern learning theories to help children achieve specific developmental goals.

Children and instructors both receive continuous reinforcement, and find this learning is fun, too.

Very young children perform simple tasks like answering the question, "How big are you?" or turning the pages of a book.

Tasks for older children are more difficult.

A 4-year-old must use a pair of tweezers to pick a yellow button from a pile of colored ones. The child uses communication skills to understand the task, problem-solving skills to find the right button, and motor skills to pick up the button with the tweezers.

Encouragement from his or her parents cannot be assured, Dupuis said. Parents who want their child to do better than they did in life will support their learning another dialect. However, those black parents hostile to the white society will not accept such learning, Dupuis said.

"Those parents who want their children to remain living at home forever won't approve of their children learning standard English because they fear such an education will cause a split in the family."

Dupuis said by the time blacks enter junior high school, most are able to comprehend and use standard English. However, she said, effective teaching practices and proper attitudes about language and culture — which are now being taught to education majors as a part of their curriculum — are not being taught to young children.

"Ideally, teachers should speak the same dialect as their students," Dupuis said.

"If they can be bi-dialectal, and move their students with them as the opportunities arise — from a dialect spoken by a minority to one spoken by the majority — making students feel rejected or that their own home language is inadequate," Dupuis said.

Research on this problem has been conducted for 20 years, she said. However, she said action has only recently been taken because of a recent court ruling in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

In the case, a black couple charged that their children were not being taught in a black dialect. In their opinion, the judge said teachers should not be required to teach black dialect, but they should understand the difference between standard English and black dialect and must be sensitive in determining their usage.

Dupuis said it is important to treat children equally — which means overlooking these differences in dialects.

Auction sells bikes, beds, boards

By KATIA K. SMITH
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Old Beaver Stadium scoreboards, abandoned bicycles and University beds and trucks were typical of the items available at the University's annual salvage auction Friday.

A large crowd turned out and bought up most of the second-hand goods — except for the used fleet automobiles. One grumbling customer said the cars did not sell well because the University and trucks were typical of the items available at the University's annual salvage auction Friday.

The most memorable items sold were the old Beaver Stadium scoreboards. Carl Temple, owner of Ed's Discount Surplus and Salvage Center in State College, bought the end zone and press boards for \$600.

He said he plans to use the metal from the structures for construction. Temple estimated the value of the scoreboards at \$10,000, including \$2,000 in metal.

Other merchandise sold included old University dining facility machines, IBM key punch machines, file cabinets, screen doors and fluorescent light covers.

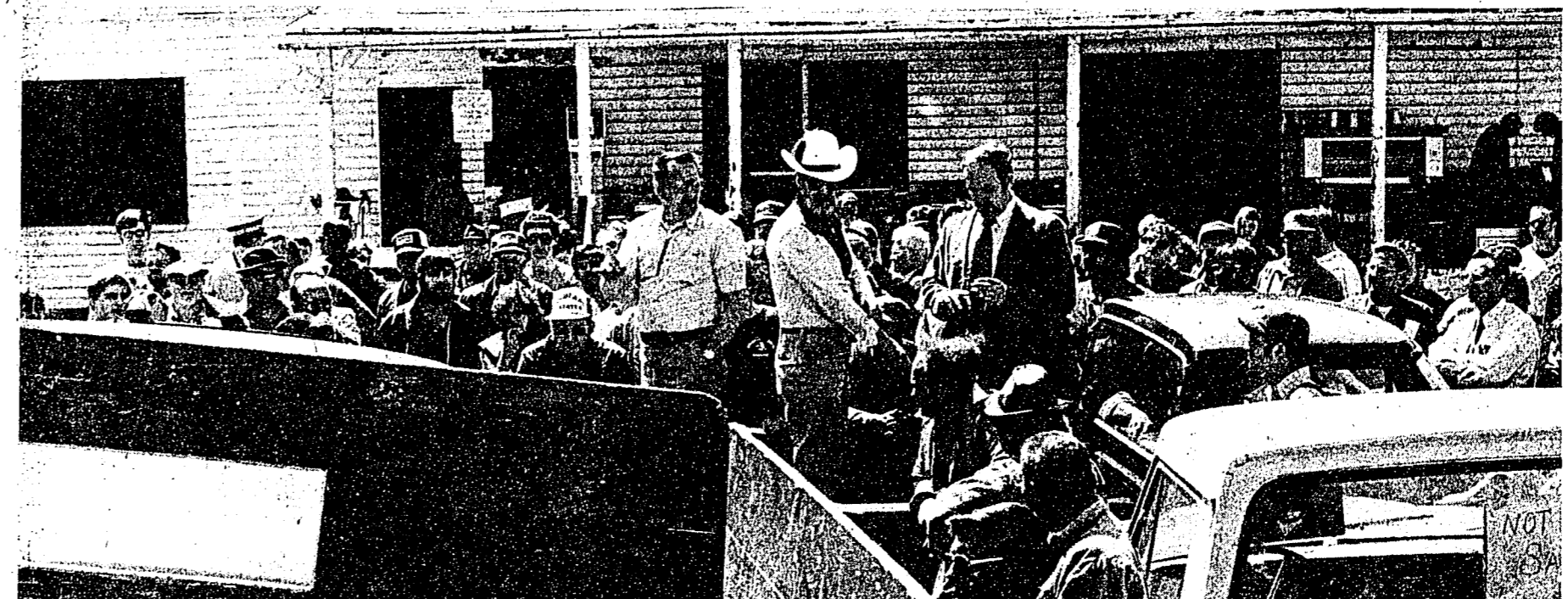
But bicycles attracted the majority of the crowd during the afternoon.

About 115 bikes of every shape, size and color were up for sale. W.E. Burger, director of purchases at the University, said University Police Services collects abandoned bicycles throughout the year and puts them in storage until the owners claim them. If, after one year, the bikes are not claimed, the police give them to the University to auction.

Stan Voicheck, owner of the Strada Bicycle Shop, 217 S. Burrows St., was at the auction to bid on those used bicycles. He said he was interested in purchasing

the bikes to add to the Eco-Action University bikes that he donated to the campus last year. Voicheck said he was surprised at how many people were bidding for used, rusty, often broken bicycles.

"I've seen bikes go for more than they go for now," Voicheck said. "A lot of people don't know what they're buying." Voicheck wasn't the only person who thought bike bids were too high. Several students who said they thought they could pick up a used 10-speed for \$30 or \$40 found prices to be higher than that.



All eyes were on the auctioneer Friday at the University's annual salvage auction. The used vehicles from Fleet Services were part of a sale which included more than 100 bicycles, some beds and the old scoreboards from Beaver Stadium.

'Biff and Al' cartoon a youthful conception

By ROSEMARY DILLON
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Each week the cartoon strip Biff and Al appears in The Daily Collegian with half a dozen other cartoons read by University students. What makes this strip special is that Biff and Al is the conception of 13-year-old Peter Heitmann.

Heitmann, who attends Park Forest Junior High School, likes running track, riding horses and drawing. His talent for art is good enough for him to merit recognition as a contributor to a college newspaper.

"I've been drawing for as long back as I can remember," he said. "One day I was drawing and the idea just came up." It was Heitmann's 15-year-old brother, Noel, who encouraged him to try to get his work in the Collegian. His cartoon is now printed in the paper twice each week.

Heitmann said he comes up with most of the ideas and captions, but he sometimes gets help from his family. His father, George Heitmann, professor of business administration, sometimes helps with ideas.

"Doonesbury and Norm are two of my favorite comics," Heitmann said. Some of his ideas come from reading other cartoons, and this influence produces ideas witty enough to be amusing to college students.

Heitmann gets encouragement from home and expressed a distinct interest in continuing his cartoons even when he graduates — practical experience. Knowing that Peter Heitmann can produce this kind of work at age 13, it may be wise to keep an eye out for him in a few years.



Peter Heitmann

the daily research

Dialects affect learning

By DIANE MASTRULL
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

A student who regularly uses black dialect will accept that the student's language is an important part of his culture — not worse, just different," Dupuis said.

However, Dupuis said, it is important for black speakers to learn standard English so they can be successful in dealing with the dominant middle-class culture in situations outside of school, such as employment interviews.

"From our research conducted in Harrisburg, we discovered that black teachers, who are the most articulated among teachers, believed that the black child needed lots of dialects to make it in the world, not just the one they are taught at home," Dupuis said.

In teaching black students standard white English, the best approach is to talk about the appropriateness and unappropriateness of their dialects, she said.

"The real purpose of language is to communicate, and the language which best accomplishes communication is the right language to use," Dupuis said. "The real skill of the teacher, therefore, is not in correcting wrong responses, but in creating situations in which the student is induced to respond appropriately," she said.

Teachers can do this by allowing the black child to use his dialect in the halls, on the playground, or during informal rap sessions, Dupuis said. However, a teacher must tell a student he used the incorrect dialect if he uses the same grammar in a term paper.

"Black English should not be replaced," Dupuis said. "A dialect is a sign of belonging, a part of group membership, and to take it from a child would be to deprive him of his own culture, his own roots. This is why we encourage the teaching of a second dialect, an alternate dialect, to be used for certain purposes, in certain situations."

However, motivating a black student to learn standard English is not easy, she said. A student must want to change and, just as importantly, he or she must be encouraged by his parents.

For one year, they conducted workshops to instruct teachers how to properly teach kids from different backgrounds to read and speak better.

Kids kick TV habit

CHICAGO (AP) — Eleven-year-old David Kahn adopted a trombone as a new close friend after dumping a companion he once spent 10 hours a day with — television. He just forgot about all his friends.

And Monica Pence, also 11, doesn't spend five hours a day in front of the television anymore. Her grades are better, she plays basketball and is seeing friends more often.

These sixth graders and dozens of other children kicked the TV habit with a five-week psychology course aiming at developing "an interest in activities outside TV," said Patty Rebek, director of the DePaul University program.

By the end of the course, children should be watching no more than two hours of television on weekdays and three hours on weekends, Kahn and Pence were among the first graduates this month.

Students given skills tests

Program measures reading, writing, speaking abilities

By PAMELA MACLEOD
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Education majors at the University and around the country should be tested rigorously in basic skills, said Mary M. Dupuis, associate professor of education and coordinator of the secondary teacher education program.

Dupuis and her colleagues are experimenting with a program designed to spot deficiencies early and correct them, or route the students into a different area of study.

She said reading, writing and speaking are basic tools in education that are extremely hard to measure in prospective teachers.

Dupuis said the tests administered as a part of the program should go a long way toward gauging teacher competence before graduates enter the classroom.

"It's part of a curriculum in effect for over a year now," Dupuis said.

Last year, more than 40 University secondary education majors, most of whom will graduate this term, were the first participants in tests specifically designed to measure their reading, speaking and writing skills, she said.

Since then, a second cycle of testing has been completed and a third cycle is being performed now. The tests are continually being developed and refined by faculty members, but basically have been the same for the first three cycles.

"Our intent is for students to demonstrate mastery of specific skill areas before they graduate and are certified to teach," she said.

The reading measurements devised for the students involve a widely-known standard test — the Nelson-Denny — combined with an exam gauging how well students understand concepts and points made in professional journals.

"Both sets of results were encouraging," Dupuis said. "On the widely used standardized test, our students' average score was close to the 60th percentile."

The 50th percentile is the midway point in the Nelson-Denny test with half doing better and half worse on the national results, she said.

"We have a fairly high attrition rate, but that's good. The students didn't flunk and they weren't forced out of the program — they were counseled and many chose other fields."

—Edward R. Fagan, professor of language education.

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Phila.—Friday, April 17 at 5:30 p.m.
NYC.—Friday, April 17 at 5:00 p.m.
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Return: Phila., NYC, and Pitt.—Sunday, April 19 at 7:00 p.m.

Buses will begin loading in front of the HUB approx. 15 min. before departure time and will stop at parking lot 80 approx. 5 min. after scheduled departure time.

Phila.—Stops at John Wannamakers in the King of Prussia Shopping Center, and downtown at the Market St. Bus Terminal. Arrives in Philly in approx. 4 hrs.

Pittsburgh—Stops at David Weis at Miracle Mile Shopping Center and at Continental Trailways Bus Terminal on Penn Ave. Arrives in Pitt. in approx. 3½ hrs.

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Tickets will be on sale in the HUB April 13 through April 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.