

5-1-1983

A Study of the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory

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A STUDY OF THE MILLARD KINDERGARTEN
PERCEPTUAL SKILLS INVENTORY

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty
University of Nebraska
at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

George G. Denkinger

May 1983

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the Graduate Faculty, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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May 5, 1983
Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Educators and educational systems throughout the country are continually researching their present programs in an attempt to provide the best possible education for students. The Millard Public School District in Nebraska, continues to evaluate and upgrade its educational programs for the purpose of striving for excellence.

At the present time, a topic that is being discussed and tested throughout the country is assessment programs for pre-kindergarten and/or kindergarten students. Pre-school Inventories, Early Entrance Examinations, and other types of assessment programs have been of concern to school districts and officials in many districts. It, too, is an area that the Millard Public Schools wanted to consider for possible changes or revisions.

In the Millard Public Schools what began as a half day visitation for both pre-kindergartners and parents to their respective elementary schools has developed into an evening meeting for pre-kindergarten parents and a three half day experience for the pre-kindergarten students themselves at their home schools.

In the past the school district offered nothing more than a chance for pre-kindergartners to briefly visit the classroom, meet their teacher, and have parents attend a short orientation session. Now, the program has evolved into a vision and hearing test service followed by a very structured program for all pre-kindergartners complete with a basic screening in the Language, Social-Emotional, Visual Perception, Fine Motor Skill and Gross Motor Skill areas.

At the evening meeting, parents are provided information concerning that important "first year" of their child's formal education. This information is explained and discussed by the school nurse, counselor, psychologist, teachers and principal.

The Problem

The school year brought a proposed pilot in the assessment procedures used for kindergarten students. The program called "The Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory," was piloted at three elementary schools. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent information gathered from the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory led to a modification of the Millard Kindergarten curriculum. In order to do so, it was necessary to analyze the data compiled by the staff from the MKPSI pilot program and to determine if the data reveals individual differences, the types of activities designed to deal with these differences and whether there should be a modification of the

existing program to better meet the needs of the incoming kindergarten students.

Limitations

The MKPSI pilot program was limited to kindergarten students from three Millard Elementary schools. The three schools and the number of students involved in the pilot were Morton Elementary with 95 students, Central Elementary with 18 students and Cottonwood Elementary with 92 students.

Definitions

MKPSI -- Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory.

Pre-Kindergarten -- A student who will enter a regular kindergarten program in the fall.

Kindergartner -- A student who is presently attending the regular kindergarten program.

Significance of the Study

The study will be used by the Millard Central Office Administration to determine if the district should continue, expand or revise the use of the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory. This study is significant with respect to the following:

1. Identifying individual differences in students,

2. Designing activities to meet these differences,
3. Implication this has on curriculum.

Procedures

1. Review the current literature pertaining to Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Assessment Programs.
2. Present and analyze results of the MKPSI tests.
3. Contact Kindergarten teachers involved in the pilot program for their comments relating to the tests themselves and to their curriculum activity changes, if any, made by them.
4. Make conclusions and recommendations.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Limitations

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Significance of the Study

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Organization of the Study

Chapter 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 3. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE
RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS WELL AS
STAFF COMMENTS

Chapter 4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Early Childhood Assessment Instruments are criterion-referenced approaches designed to help bridge the gap that often exists between assessment and effective, practical, and traditional educational procedures.

The assessment instrument begins with children entering kindergarten. The assessment analyzes certain skills according to learning processes (auditory, visual, motor, verbal) and determines what level (reflexive, integrative, etc.) the child has obtained prior to entering school. The school program can then take the student along (at his/her own rate) the behaviorally defined sequence until the student reaches the target behaviors reflecting the reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.

These evaluations or assessments do not attempt to isolate various abilities (or disabilities), nor do they determine readiness for school. On the contrary, to use the results properly the assessment instrument must be integrated with curricular objectives and result in individualized instruction. Therefore, various instruments have been designed to help locate the child along a developmental curriculum sequence. The tests themselves reflect and

assess according to behavioral objectives. Each child can, as a result of the assessment, be placed somewhere along a sequential program and teaching can then begin for the child at that particular level; and move upwards in time as he masters more difficult and higher level behavioral objectives. This approach is referred to as the "developmental model."

"The use of the developmental model, assessment instrument, will tend to broaden and alter the philosophy of the educational system. In essence, by individualizing the school program, the school is in fact assuming the responsibility to teach all the children regardless of individual differences. Therefore, in contrast to a deficit centered approach to assessment this approach is positive in orientation."¹

What is kindergarten screening, and why and how do we do it? This is a question being asked in many schools and communities. For some, screening is perceived as the opening of a door to more positive learning experiences; to others, it is one more threat and infringement on the rights of individuals. Screening and other early assessment programs are a first step in an educational process that

¹Cooperative Education Service Agency 13, Early Childhood Assessment: A Criterion Referenced Screening Device, E.S.E.A. Title III Project, Wanpun, Wisconsin, pp. 1-2.

focuses on success in school. It begins with early identification of those children who, because of problems of development and/or experience, may be least able to meet the typical expectations of the school. For these children school is often an unhappy, failure-ridden experience. Many of them can be identified at a young age and given help to prevent failure. Kindergarten screening programs are one way of accomplishing this.

The expanding role of the school has had positive implications for many children, but for others it has spelled failure.

Evidence of this failure is seen in such statistics as the lower age of delinquents, high rate of dropouts, retentions, and lower reading scores. The average age of the juvenile delinquent today is 13.5. In 1969, 39 percent of all arrests were persons under twenty-one years of age, with 22 percent being committed by persons fifteen years of age or younger (Mauser, 1974). Despite an average IQ of 91 for black delinquents and 94 for white delinquents there was a two-to-four-year discrepancy between actual achievement and achievement potential (Mauser, 1973). Fifty percent of the juvenile delinquents referred to the courts had a specific learning disability (Poremba, 1967). In 1969, one out of every four pupils nationwide had significant reading deficiencies.²

Any community in the country can develop its own statistics to demonstrate the whole continuum of failure. Failure is represented not only by the extremes of poverty, crime, unemployment, and alienation but also by far too many

²Shirley Zeitlin, Ed. D., Kindergarten Screening (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1976), p. 4.

children who struggle with learning they cannot comprehend or by others who are bored by teaching which does not challenge their greater abilities.

Individual differences in rate and pattern of development influence a child's readiness to learn. These problems, which can be identified as early as kindergarten, show up in children as emotional disorders, intellectual defects, learning disabilities, and visual-motor and sensory defects. These difficulties have a major impact on the personal and vocational adjustment as the student moves through school and into the adult world. The psychology of failure becomes a vicious cycle. "I'm not learning, therefore I feel inadequate. When I feel inadequate, why should I try to learn because I'll only fail again and feel still more inadequate."³ Success, on the other hand, encourages learning and the willingness to try.

Screening is not a one-shot miracle solution to the problems of education, but a process of early identification and follow through program. It is a step toward "humanizing education." What could be a more human approach toward the teaching-learning process, than to gather information and design specific objectives of learning for the child at his own developmental level? There is a need to refocus on how we educate and what we expect from young children.

³Zeitlin, p. 5.

Early identification programs are in their infancy. Most educators support the concept but many have concerns about what programs are most effective and the potential for abuse inherent in the concept.

Early identification programs are based on the assumption that no two children are alike, because they differ in what they bring to school in both their experiences and pattern of growth. They also differ in the skills, feelings, and behaviors they develop in school. The goal of screening is not to stereotype children through labeling, e.g. slow learner, but rather to set appropriate expectations for all children and to design appropriate experiences so that they may have success in the classroom as they move toward acquisition of the basic skills necessary to function in our society.

The number of skills that can be assessed varies as widely as the number of tests available. For the purposes of this study we will be concerned only with the following skills.

Gross motor activity - An activity or output in which groups of large muscles are used and the factors of rhythm and balance are primary.

Fine motor development - The maturation and refinement of the small muscles in the extremities of the body such as finger and wrist movements and eye-hand coordination.

Body Image - Awareness of one's own body (including the

precise location of its parts in time and space). It includes the impressions one receives from internal signals as well as feedback received from others.

Directionality - The projecting of all directions from the body into space. The child must develop laterality within his own organism and be aware of the right and left sides of his own body before he is ready to or able to project these directional concepts into space.

Gross motor activity, Fine motor development, Body image, and Directionality can all be grouped under one major classification known as "Motor Skills."

Visual Skills may include the areas of (1) Discrimination - The process of detecting differences as (a) auditory discrimination or the ability to identify sounds with respect to likenesses and differences and (b) visual discrimination or the ability to discriminate between different objects, forms and/or letter symbols. The ability to differentiate or distinguish quality, intensity, frequency, judgments, abilities, and other characteristics. These differences may be between numbers, letters, sounds of letters, persons, objects, etc. It may refer to one's ability to differentiate essential from nonessential details. The ability to discriminate depends in large measure upon one's relative familiarity with the object. (2) Visual Memory - The ability to reproduce a sequence of visual stimuli from memory.

Auditory Skills contain the areas of (1) Auditory discrimination - The ability to identify and accurately choose between sounds of different pitch, volume, and pattern. Includes the ability to distinguish one speech sound from another and (2) Auditory Memory/Sequencing - The ability to repeat a sequence of symbols correctly. To test this immediate auditory recall is requested.⁴

Receptive/Expressive Language Skills are the developmental hierarchy for learning and academic achievement. These skills are the foundation of cognitive thinking, reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic. Receptual/Expressive Language Skills include (1) Following Directions - Is the child capable of following directions? (2) Basic Vocabulary Items - Can the child understand and express single item vocabulary words? (3) Concepts - Is the child capable of understanding, demonstrating and verbally expressing basic concepts? (4) Prepositions - Does the child understand, demonstrate, and express prepositions such as in, out, on, under, etc. (5) Describing Objects and Pictures - Describing an object or picture, first when present and then when removed. (6) Ability to Relate Events Accurately and Sequally - Ability to relate stories or events in concrete sequential order. (7) Questions - Can the child understand

⁴Wilma Jo Bush and Kenneth W. Waugh, Diagnosing Learning Disabilities (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publisher, 1976), pp. 327-328, 332-333, 340.

and answer questions appropriately for age level? (8) Sentence Structure - Examination of the child's verbal expressions.⁵

Assessment of Perceptual Skills among young children has and is taking place throughout the country. The results of these tests have been quite positive.

A 1974 project entitled "The Parent Readiness Education Project" was a successful innovative effort to improve the deficiencies of children through training parents to become change agents and enrich their home environment and interactions with their children through a specific program of daily home activities.

Following the perceptual skills assessment and prescribed child-parent activities this project showed that:

The children made significant gains in readiness skill areas: visual and auditory discrimination, perception, and memory, large and small motor skills, expressive language, and conceptual skills. The children developed confidence in themselves and parent-child relationships were strengthened. The parents became more aware of their child's abilities, individual needs, and ways of making everyday living experiences learning experiences for their children. Supportive interactions occurred between parents.⁶

In Yakima, Washington, Perceptual Screening was used at the first grade level. Their findings concluded that "the

⁵Millard School District Committee, Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory (Omaha, Nebraska: Millard Public Schools, 1978), pp. 184-185.

⁶Diane K. Bert, The Parent Readiness Education Project (Detroit, Michigan: Redford Union Schools District #1, 1974), p. 5.

instrument appeared to adequately screen first-grade population for entry into a visual perception training program. Indications were present that it could also function well at the late kindergarten level and even earlier with further standardization."⁷

George Gordan and Irwin Hyman in an article entitled "The Measurement of Perceptual-Motor Abilities of Head Start Children," conclude that their study:

demonstrates the feasibility of large scale screening for the early identification of perceptual and perceptual-motor integration problems. To the degree that these problems determine future educational deficiencies and are amenable to remediation, such screening is of vital importance.⁸

Screening and/or assessment programs are often victims of the same forces which create the need for the program in the first place: lack of knowledge; attitudes and values detrimental to children; politics; and lack of money, personnel, and resources. The goal to help each child experience success in learning assumes a child-centered approach. In reality this is not always the case. Some programs are based on assumptions about children that theory and experience do not support, others reflect lack of knowledge and/or

⁷George R. Kelly, PH.D., "Group Perceptual Screening at First Grade Level," Journal of Learning Disabilities, III, No. 12, December, 1970, p. 45.

⁸George Gordan and Irwin Hyman, "The Measurement of Perceptual-Motor Abilities of Head Start Children," Psychology in the Schools, VIII, January, 1971, p. 47.

experience, while others are influenced by the biases and politics of their communities.

Screening or assessment can be a negative rather than positive force when the program incorporates any of the following abuses:

1. using screening as diagnosis, i.e. making important decisions on a child from too little, inadequate or inappropriate information, or from only a single involvement;
2. using screening to exclude children;
3. using screening to place labels that stigmatize children;
4. not recognizing the impact of cultural differences;
5. not recognizing the impact of bilingualism;
6. using screening as a program in isolation, i.e. having no goals and objectives, and having no follow-through program;
7. using screening to reinforce and justify existing curriculum-centered programs and to explain the failure of children who do not fit in;
8. focusing on weaknesses of children and ignoring their strengths;
9. allowing attitudes and values of the assessors which are not supportive of the child;
10. using screening to create and implement checklist curriculums.⁹

The abuses of kindergarten screening often reflect the abuses of our total educational system. Other abuses stem from the lack of knowledge and experience with the concept of early identification and personalized learning. It is the responsibility of those in charge of kindergarten screening to see that these abuses are eliminated or at least modified as much as is humanly possible.

⁹Zeitlin, pp. 175-176.

Chapter 3

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This study was conducted in conjunction with the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory Pilot Project being implemented in the Millard Public Schools.

This was a pilot project study of only three different schools previously selected by the Millard Public Schools. Five kindergarten instructors were involved in the study. A questionnaire was designed by this researcher, approved by the Millard School District, and sent to these instructors.

In as much as the questionnaire elicited narrative responses, the complete responses of the instructors have been reported. Hopefully, this will give the reader more insight as to the respondents' true feelings.

1. Were student results on the MKPSI program helpful in determining your teacher's strategy this year?
Yes _____ No _____

The return on this question included three yes and two no respondent choices.

"I felt results were helpful in showing me things children already knew. Since it was my first year in Kindergarten, the program was valuable to me."

"Because of the test, I didn't spend as much time on such areas as color matching etc. However, I would have found out the same information in an easier way. A lot of the materials in the program are also part of the math program so to me, it was generally useless."

"The class results revealed definite skill areas that needed more development by most children. For example, copying triangles or listening to rhyming words. I worked in more activities of this kind during the year."

"Students, when tested in August, were generally able to do all tasks. The results led to my use of volunteers for remediation, but not as a strategy for my teaching."

"Although I felt bogged down attempting to complete the inventories in the fall, I did use the results."

Reaction

It appears that the results of the testing were valuable. Four out of five of the respondents indicated that they did use the results to some degree.

The results were valuable to the beginning Kindergarten teacher. It indicated to her what children already knew upon entry to Kindergarten. It would appear that she used these results to plan future instruction for the students.

One teacher indicated that the results assisted her in deciding on what areas needed to be developed more thoroughly throughout the year.

Another teacher used the results for remediation purposes. She recognized that most of the students could do the tasks. Therefore, she used volunteers to assist those children that needed further development.

A respondent indicated that the test was time consuming but she acknowledged that she did use the results.

One respondent felt that she could have gathered the necessary information from other activities that students do. She felt it was useless.

It appears that the test was of value in the following areas:

1. Indicated what students already knew. Instructionally, this would be valuable information to know. Individual needs can be addressed more efficiently and effectively. Instructional planning for the group would also be enhanced.

2. Indicated specific skill areas that needed more development by most students. More specific instructional objectives could be targeted by the teacher because of the testing results.

3. Indicated individual student skill deficiencies. Volunteers were used by one respondent to remediate student deficiencies. This type of intervention is effective and probably would be used by Kindergarten teachers in general.

2. What did you feel were the main advantages of using the MKPSI?

"I did get an idea of which children were low in color recognition, small muscle control and visual auditory discrimination. It helped to give me an idea which children were going to need individual help so I was better able to make use of volunteers."

"One of the best functions of the MKPSI was to show children with great weaknesses in areas of coordination, both gross and fine motor. It also aided me in seeing some auditory and perceptual weaknesses."

"Kindergarten teachers have usually assessed childrens' skill in these developmental areas as we have gone through the year and kept the results of our observations on a variety of checklists and in our heads. It is nice to have this information all on one card and early enough in the year to help us see each child's strengths and weaknesses. Thus, we are able to plan more activities in the needed skill areas."

"Establishes a base for Round-up recommendations. Kindergarten teachers have been judging children's readiness for years using only our personal experience and bias. We need the protection of district guidelines when we recommend

summer school or, perhaps, another year of pre-school.

- a. Orderly arrangement of skills
- b. Super activities to use in reinforcing weak areas."

Reaction

It appears that two respondents felt that advantages of using the MKPSI were the assessment of abilities in the following areas:

1. Color recognition
2. Coordination - Gross and Fine motor
3. Auditory and perceptual discrimination

Two other respondents felt that the advantages of the testing were in two other areas:

1. Assessment data is contained on one card. A respondent indicated that this would assist the teacher to plan more activities in the needed skill areas.

2. Establishes a base for Round-up recommendations. A respondent indicated that most recommendations by Kindergarten teachers are based more on personal experience and bias. With the data gathered from the MKPSI, a more objective assessment of students strengths and weaknesses can be obtained. The data obtained would assist teachers in making recommendations for summer school and/or future testing to meet students needs. This respondent felt that the MKPSI data could be used to develop district guidelines for

recommendations regarding students and at the same time protect teachers making the recommendations.

In summary, the MKPSI seemed to be valuable in assessing color recognition, assessing fine and gross motor control and assessing auditory and perceptual discrimination. This assessment data appeared to be valuable for planning instructional activities to meet student needs.

The MKPSI appeared to assist instructional planning from an organizational standpoint. By having the assessment data on one card, instructional planning for students was enhanced.

The MKPSI data appeared to provide more objective base line data for the teacher. This data would assist that teacher when a recommendation for summer school or other district programs was necessary to meet a student's needs. According to a respondent, "Kindergarten teachers have been judging children's readiness for years using only our personal experience and bias."

3. What did you feel were the disadvantages of the MKPSI?

"There was one major disadvantage. The time I had to spend individually with each child, through most every skill, left twenty-four other children without a teacher. It is so difficult to establish a good working classroom during the first month when this must be done."

"It was too individualized and it took way too much time. At the beginning of the year, in Kindergarten, the children need supervision. It was extremely hard to do all the individualized testing this program involved. Also, we have so much material to cover in Kindergarten I resented spending the time required to cover the entire MKPSI program."

a. "Too many tests were used in each area. Some very simple and unnecessary.

b. Many of the tests require individual, one to one testing and were impossible to do with the rest of the class present as they are unable to work at tasks on their own without interrupting the test.

c. Setting up our beginning of the year classroom routine was definitely hindered by the time spent on this. The children seemed unsettled during this time.

d. When I used mothers or aides to do the testing I was not always sure of the results."

"Much too time consuming to record scores on individual cards. Several tasks were individualized -- problem: What to do with others early in the year when they do not have independent work habits or long attention spans. Neglect of social/group behavior skills. While I realize these are more difficult to evaluate objectively, they are extremely important factors to consider."

,"The MKPSI is too long and requires too much time at the beginning of the year to complete the inventories on an individual and really meaningful basis."

Reaction

Time to complete the assessment appeared to be the main disadvantage indicated by all respondents. All respondents seemed to indicate that many of the testing activities were too individualized and necessitated too much one-on-one testing.

The amount of time spent on the testing and the individualized format appear to be the main disadvantages to the MKPSI testing. These two factors are mentioned several times throughout the survey. It would appear that these two factors are a major problem regarding the MKPSI testing program.

4. Were any changes in curriculum or teaching strategies made after reviewing the inventory results?

"I feel I emphasized more the things children had difficulty with. Example -- following a pattern; directional commands; going over body parts (because a few did not know neck and ankle)."

"No, not really. Some of my children who did very poorly in this program in the areas of large and small

muscle activities and some listening activities did very well in the Kindergarten curriculum in areas of reading and math. Other children, who passed the tests in the MKPSI with flying colors did very poorly in the reading readiness program. There is not much correlation between the MKPSI program and the actual Kindergarten curriculum."

"I did learn which children to have the volunteers work with individually. Also I learned which children I needed to help in certain areas. However, other years I have learned the same things in normal activities and it took much less time."

"I did see some major areas that seemed to give most children problems and I did more work in those areas than I usually do i.e. repeating patterns; copying shapes; rhyming words."

"I changed my Round-up routine a bit so that I included over one half of the current skills in the spring."

"I certainly used the results and zeroed in on weak areas, particularly where many children showed weaknesses."

Reaction

It appears that respondents did alter their strategies to

some extent. The respondents indicated that they targeted their instruction to "things children had difficulty with;" "children I needed to help in certain areas;" "I did see some major areas that seemed to give most children problems and I did more work in these areas than I usually do;" "I changed my Round-up routine a bit;" "I certainly used the results and zeroed in on weak areas."

One respondent questioned the correlation between the MKPSI program and the actual Kindergarten curriculum.

According to the respondents quotes cited above, it appears the assessment data was used by teachers to meet students needs.

The respondents observation concerning the curriculum correlation to the MKPSI should be a "point of clarification" by the school district.

5. After comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the MKPSI program, what are your recommendations concerning the future use of this program?

"I would like to see a person set up to perform the MKPSI in Kindergarten. I feel the board could train a group of aides and use them on a temporary basis the first month of school. I feel the teacher could have everything ready but the aide would do the testing enabling the teacher to stay with her class."

"To be very truthful I feel it was time consuming and on the whole, useless. If we had an alternative Kindergarten program with a very limited curriculum (the old fashioned play, social Kindergarten) it might be useful in deciding which children should be recommended for that type program."

"Hopefully the changes made in the tests will cut down on the unnecessary tests that take up so much of our precious time. Constant evaluation should be made to see if there is a better way to test a certain skill. I don't feel there should be pressure on the teacher to do these tests the first two weeks of school. Time should be allowed to get our children adjusted to a routine and to have some fun together first. The most difficult tests for me to do were the visual and auditory skills as each are best done in a quiet area without interruption."

"If the Kindergarten teachers could have the use of an aide or a mother the children could get to know and she was available every day for an hour or so each session, I think the testing would be over quickly and be less of a problem for the teachers.

I recommend using a revised version during Round-up for very basic skills and a more detailed test used in the fall."

"This should be used at Round-up as the basis for recommendations regarding summer school and/or practice at home. I would hope that the district establish an 'alternative' which would benefit teachers as well as students i.e. a classroom for those children who are not able to succeed on most MKPSI tasks but are legally eligible for school. Placement in such a classroom would allow a child to drill readiness skills and then to proceed with Kindergarten objectives in reading and math with the intent of being ready for first grade the following year."

Individual respondents comments and/or observations:

"I feel this is a valuable kit to a teacher. I do feel someone else is needed in administering these tests."

"This program had a class card and an individual card for each child that had to be completed. It took alot of time which I resented because I felt I could use that time in better ways. I filled out each card, then filed them and never looked at them again after October. The information I needed for conferences I got from my grade book and personal observations during normal classroom activities."

"I am almost positive that many teachers will not do all of the individual tests on visual skills and auditory skills unless they are given an aide to help them during

that time or are lucky enough to find one of their mothers in each session that would work well with the children."

"The results are helpful. It is good to know the child that doesn't hear sentences accurately and thus, can't repeat them back. However, think of the time it takes, as the teacher, to say three sentences to each child in a class of 25, wait for an answer, and not be interrupted by another child."

"I feel that Millard is correct in most of its moves toward standardizing tools and curriculum used at each grade level. However, the idea of what needs to be standardized and what needs to be offered as an alternative seem to come exclusively from administrators and/or parents. The decisions should include input from teachers. We have the training and the daily experience. Sometimes we know more than the 'experts' in the offices or kitchens."

Reaction

Through the recommendations and comments stated it appears that the respondents are indicating the following areas for revision for deletion:

1. Someone other than the Kindergarten teacher administer the test.
2. Too time consuming for the value received.

3. Find alternative testing instruments for specific components of the MKPSI to cut down on the one-to-one testing without lessening the validity or reliability.

4. Use a revised version during Round-up for very basic skills and a more detailed test in the fall.

5. Use the results at Round-up as the basis for recommendations regarding summer school and/or practice at home.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to solicit responses from staff members involved in the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory Pilot Program and, from these responses determine what, if any, activities were planned to meet the individual needs of the kindergartners tested. Secondly, if the responses indicate so, to recommend possible modifications in the existing pilot program.

Due to the limited number of participants involved, I felt a good return was imperative. Of the five instructors to whom the questionnaire was given, all were returned.

A generalization of the findings would indicate a high level of involvement by the participants with a strong willingness on their part to share their thoughts, ideas and concerns regarding the MKPSI program.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. It appears that where student difficulties were assessed, activities were planned and used to a greater extent in an effort to improve student skills.
2. The program provided an early diagnosis of student weaknesses particularly in the areas of visual and auditory discrimination and body coordination.
3. The perceptual skills test guided and directed teachers in identifying which students would be in greater need of individualized attention.
4. The amount of time required to test the students emerged as the number one concern.
5. The additional record keeping was also mentioned as a concern by several respondents.
6. Teaching strategies were apparently changed. Certain skill areas were given more attention after testing was completed and students demonstrated deficiencies in these areas.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A revision of the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory is necessary. Some of the skills tested need to be reworked while others that test a certain skill may be too numerous and should be eliminated.
2. A pre-assessment test should be offered in the spring as part of the traditional Kindergarten Round-up program followed by a post-assessment in the fall. Thus, students who may have shown difficulty in the spring can be given the opportunity to succeed in the fall.
3. If, in fact, it is a hardship on the regular classroom teacher to complete the testing, the district should consider providing additional personnel to administer the tests.
4. The Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory program should be constantly monitored, reviewed and revised as time and student population may require.

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APPENDIX A

Dear Kindergarten Teacher,

I am in the process of completing my Specialists Degree at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. As part of that process I am working on a field project having to do with the Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory.

I know this is a very busy time for you however, I would very much appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to fill out the attached questionnaire. Signatures are not required so feel free to answer the questions very openly and honestly.

Please return the questionnaire to Jerry Denkinger at Harvey Oaks Elementary at your earliest convenience. Your assistance on this project is very much appreciated.

Thank You,

Jerry Denkinger, Principal
Harvey Oaks Elementary
Millard Public Schools

MILLARD KINDERGARTEN PERCEPTUAL SKILLS INVENTORY

1. Were student results on the MKPSI program helpful in determining your teaching strategy this year?

Yes _____ No _____

Comments:

2. What did you feel were the main advantages of using the MKPSI?

Comments:

3. What did you feel were the disadvantages of the MKPSI?

Comments:

4. Were any changes in curriculum or teaching strategies made after reviewing the inventory results?

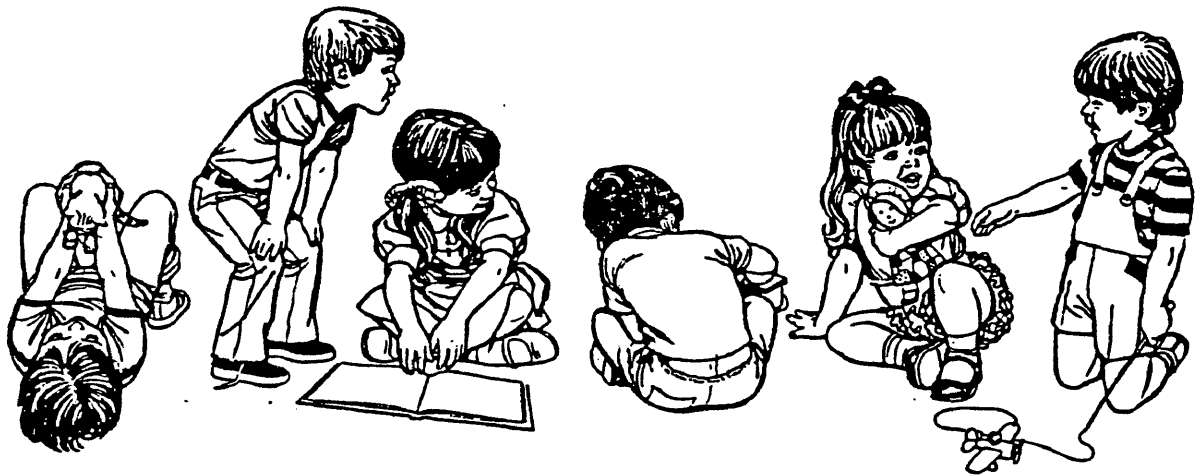
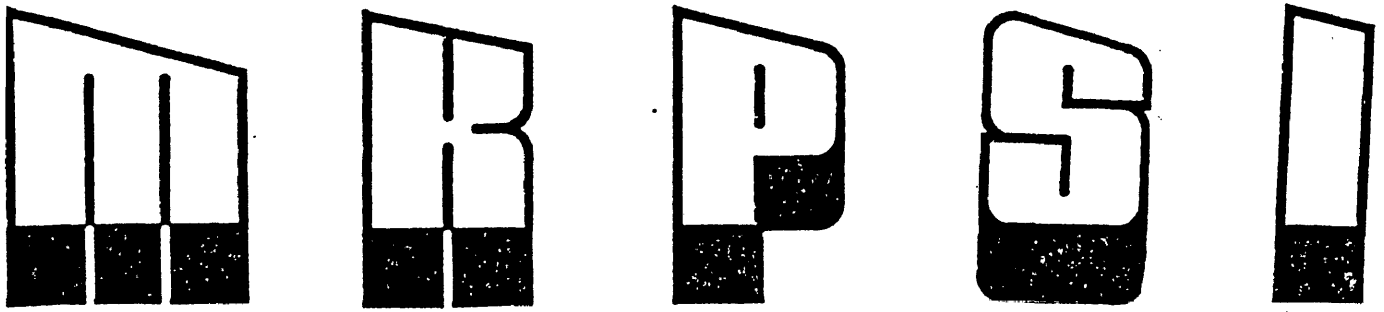
Comments:

5. After comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the MKPSI program, what are your recommendations concerning the future use of this program?

Comments:

6. Any personal comments or observations you would like to make.

APPENDIX B



MILLARD KINDERGARTEN PERCEPTUAL SKILLS
INVENTORY

MILLARD KINDERGARTEN PERCEPTUAL SKILLS INVENTORY

Brief Description:

The Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory is an attempt to assess the motor, visual, auditory, and verbal skills of our kindergarteners. Performance objectives were identified for selected minimum skills and complemented with instructional developmental strategies as needed.

The perception inventory can be used independently as one means of focusing on selected minimum skills for kindergarten or pre-kindergarten students. It can be used in its entirety or, if desired, just needed parts.

The objective of the program is to assist teachers in the development of instructional strategies that meet individual needs.

Each objective has been identified as an essential skill relating to that specific level. A pre-assessment and a post-assessment have been developed for each objective to assess student progress.

Perceptual Skill Areas:

The perceptual continuum is divided into four major areas as follows:

I MOTOR SKILLS

Gross motor coordination
Fine motor - Eye and Hand Coordination
Body image
Directionality

II VISUAL SKILLS

Discrimination
Memory

III AUDITORY SKILLS

Discrimination
Memory - Sequence

IV RECEPTIVE/EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

MKPSI'S MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTS

In designing management procedures for the implementation of the MKPSI program careful consideration was given to (1) inclusion of only those forms which are supportive to instructional activities and (2) development of forms to simplify the recording process. The management materials described individually below include (1) Student Record Card, (2) Class Profile Chart, and (3) pre- and post-tests.

Student Record Card

The Student Record Card is the primary management device used by the classroom teacher. This card contains the pre- and post-test numbers and a brief description of each of the performance objectives grouped in the columnar headings of Motor Skills, Visual Skills, and Auditory Skills, with 4, 2, and 2 sub-categories within each of the major categories. The sub-categories for Motor Skills are Gross Motor Coordination, Fine Motor - Eye and Hand Coordination, Body Image, and Directionality. The sub-categories for Visual Skills are Visual Discrimination and Visual Memory. The sub-categories for Auditory Skills are Auditory Discrimination and Auditory Memory-Sequence. Receptive/Expressive Language Skills section is included as a resource section.

Dates of testing and successful or unsuccessful attempts at skill mastery are recorded on the record card. This card may be kept in a student's cumulative school record file from year to year. The performance data can insure continuity of instructional activities.

The complete Millard Kindergarten Perceptual Skills Inventory is available for inspection at the Millard Public Schools Board of Education Office.