

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

You have been asked for information to be used in connection with the Oral History Program at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi. The purpose of this program is to gather and preserve information for historical and scholarly use.

A tape recording of your interview will be made by the interviewer, and a typescript of the tape will be made and submitted to you for editing. The final retyped and edited transcript, together with the tape of the interview will then be placed in the oral history collection at Jackson State University Jackson, Mississippi. Other institutions or persons may obtain a copy. These materials may be made available for purposes of research, for instructional use, for publication, or for other related purposes.

I, Glenn Allen, have read the above and, in view of the historical and scholarly value of this information, and in return for a final typed copy of the transcript, I knowingly and voluntarily permit Jackson State University, Jackson, the full use of this information. I hereby grant and assign all my rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized, or contemplated, to Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi.

Glenn Allen
Interviewee (Signature)

July 31, 1977
Date

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWER AGREEMENT

I, Willie C. Langdon, in view of the historical and scholarly value of the information contained in the interview with Yolande Allen knowingly and voluntarily permit Jackson State University, Jackson the full use of this information, and hereby grant and assign to Jackson State University, Jackson all rights of every kind whatever pertaining to this information, whether or not such rights are now known, recognized or contemplated.

Willie C. Langdon
Interviewer (signature)

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Interview Number

June 1, 1977
Date

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

INTERVIEWER: Willie C. Langdon
INTERVIEWEE: Yolande Allen
DATE: June 1, 1977
PLACE OF BIRTH: Appoloosa, La.
RESIDENT OF MISSISSIPPI - 11 years
OCCUPATION: Director Of Program Operations
Friends Of Children Of Mississippi
Head Start Program
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Mrs. Allen's House

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

Head Start has a very "fiery" history in the State of Mississippi. Stated Mrs. Allen. It came about as the result of President Johnson's War On Poverty. President Johnson established the Office Of Economic Opportunity in 1964, which was to fight poverty and Head Start was first offered to the Legislators, and because it meant "Intergration" they turned it down. It was offered to the school system the Department Of Education and for the same reason, they also turned it down. Through the assistance of some Early Freedom Fighters and some Black people who were at that time rallying for Equal Rights, decided to apply for Head Start in Mississippi.

The first operation was a Child Development group of Mississippi which served (28) counties in the state and had a "Budget" of 5 million dollars and employed 26 hundred employees. This was a big political struggle because it was just impossible, stated Mrs. Allen, if you were to put yourself in Senator Stennis or Senator Easterling's shoes

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Mrs. Yolande Allen

and there was almost more than (6) million dollars coming into the state which they had refused, and came in inspite all their efforts to stop it, and they found they did not have any political control over these funds.

Mrs. Allen, stated that Head Start today leaves a "bad taste" in a lot of peoples mouths because they see their tax dollars "as they say", being thrown away on Freedom Workers and people who are just providing "Baby Sitting Service" and they feel that there is nothing productive from their tax dollars in the Head Start Program in Mississippi.

Mrs. Allen, stated that this is basically why the Senators and other politicians have fought Head Start. They thought by refusing it would stop it from coming into the state. This did not stop it and there was a lot of money coming in and a lot of people being employed which they had no political ties with and had not made any commitments to any politicians any rights to select certain people for certain jobs.

Basically, all persons employed at that time were "Blacks". There were several whites in Administration, however, out of a staff of (163) approximately less than (9) of those were white. Mrs. Allen stated that at that time they were not able to recruit any professionals because those persons who had gone to college to prepare themselves for their life's work wanted to remain with jobs they felt they would not have to stay out during funding periods because of their commitments to their family and their needs. It was not until (7) years later that Head Start began to appeal to those persons.

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Mrs. Yolande Allen

When asked how the First Grade teacher's in public school responded to Head Start children? Mrs. Allen stated that they had received numerous comments and letters from Principals concerning the progress of these children. The only negative thing was that sometimes they had dicipline problems. These dicipline problems could be attributed to the fact that our curriculum in Head Start is not too structured. Most of the work is done through fun games. The only thing Mrs. Allen, stated is that most of our activities are provided through Educational Activities where the child is able to have some structured activities and some time when children are allowed to initiate their own activities with the teacher playing a supportive role.

When asked how Governor Finch felt about the program in comparison to other Governors in the past who would at sometimes "VETO" the grants? Mrs. Allen answered that Governor Finch is the first Governor in the State Of Mississippi to ever address Head Start or a Head Start related function. Since his inaguration he has spoken at three meetings of Head Start pledging his support of Head Start .

"We do hope", stated Mrs. Allen that Head Start should be expanded to all children who so badly need this training at an early age to better prepare them for future endeavors.

PLAN OF RESEARCH

The objective of this Project was to go into the Clinton Community to interview two persons from this area, and one from your community on subject of, "What is Project Head Start."

I did extensive reading about Head Start, in order that I may broaden my knowledge of the subject.

Afterward, interviews were set-up in the homes of Mr. Bob Swartz, of Clinton, Mississippi, Mrs. Yolande Allen and Mrs. Edna Barksdale, both of Jackson, Mississippi.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT

Three interviews were conduct in an effort to answer the historical question of "What is Project Head Start."

The question was addressed to all three interviewees and they all agreed that Project Head Start should be expanded to all children so badly need this training at an early age to better prepare them for future endeavors.

Head Start set out to help "quote", under-priviledged children. It has set out with qualified staff both state and national to help in accomplishing its goals.

At first, Head Start was looked upon by a lot of people as being a "Baby Sitting Service" for parents who worked on jobs trying to provide for the future of their family.

All interviewees concluded that the government should raise the entrance guidelines to a higher income so that more children can be involved.

B+

Doesn't indicate a
clear understand-
ing of how to use
the material of the
interview for
teaching //

PRESENTED TO DR. ALFERDTEEN HARRISON

in partial fulfillment of

the

WORKSHOP ON ORAL HISTORY

BY

Willie C. Langdon

summer

1977

INTRODUCTION

Social scientist such as Kagen and Deutch State that the necessary prerequisite to the lower class child's entry into American mainstream culture is a change in the "ecology of the lower class child in order to increase the probability that he will be more successful in attaining normative skills - currently much furor is being voiced concerning the premise that the "ecology" or early childhood environmental influences in low socio-economic families is in some way inferior to that of middle class socio-economic families. However, there is little argument that the lower class child enters the predominately middle-class institution of the public schools lacking many of the skills his middle-class children entering a middle-class institution.

On the subject of the reading achievement of the lower-class child, monumental evidence points to the fact that at entrance into first grade verbal achievement is low and becomes even lower as the child passes through the public schools. The child it seems has entered the public schools without the normative reading readiness skills (as evaluated by scores from standardized reading tests).

A search for the reason behind his low achievement uncovers raging controversies as to the nature of his "deficits" and the benefits of instructional approaches designed to overcome these deficits. With this in mind, Head Start set out with new goals in an attempt to help wipe out

these and many other deficits that existed with children of low income families.

Presently, the Head Start Program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs, and that children of low income families, in particular, can benefit from a comprehensive developmental program to meet those needs.

The Head Start Program approach is based on the philosophy that:

- 1) A child can benefit most from a comprehensive interdisciplinary program to foster development and remedy problems as expressed in a broad range of services, and that,
- 2) The child's entire family, as well as the community must be involved. The program maximizes the strengths and unique experiences of each child.

The overall goal of the Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low-income families. By social competence is meant the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both present environment and later responsibilities in school *and* life. Social competence takes into account the interrelatedness of cognitive and intellectual development, physical and mental health, nutritional needs, and other factors that enable a developmental approach to helping children achieve social competence.

With this in mind Oral History classes and all other classes will contain students who have obtained the normative skills in their early years that will assist them in attaining success.

UNIT FOR THE WEEK OF _____

GENERAL TOPIC: PROJECT HEAD START
DURATION: ONE WEEK
GENERAL PURPOSE: Through discussion of Project Head Start, students will better understand its significance in improving normative skills necessary for future learning.

LESSON I - MONDAY

Topic: Reading Readiness Skills

Behavioral Objective: Students will be able to list and explain at least five (5) pre-requisite skills necessary to successful beginning reading.

PROCEDURE: Discussion will be initiated listing and explaining the six (6) pre-requisite skills as follows:
(1) Ability to follow audio instructions.
(2) Ability to spatially locate items on a page.
(3) Ability to follow left to right sequence.
(4) Ability to perceive written symbols as having meaning.
(5) Ability to visually discriminate items.
(6) Ability to auditorily discriminate sounds.

Demonstrations will be given orally and written.

Students will be asked to give oral and written examples.

MATERIALS: Blackboards
Chalk

LESSON II - TUESDAY

TOPIC: Science concepts

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to classify living and non-living things, trees, leaves and animals upon request by the teacher

PROCEDURES: After the teacher-guided discussion on the discussion on the differences between living and non-living things, each student will make a chart to illustrate the concept. He draws and labels pictures of living things on one half of the paper and pictures of non-

LESSON II - TUESDAY (continued)

living things on the other. Cutting and mounting pictures from magazines may be substituted for drawing.

The class selects a tree on or near the school grounds as the class tree, one whose changes throughout the year they will enter the observations, drawings, data on the species. Plans will be made periodically to observe the leaves as they change color and fall. After each visit to the tree, the pupils will write and draw what they see.

The children collect specimens of different forms of leaves: tooth-edged, lobed, compound. They group together similar forms and mount them or draw pictures of them on a chart to illustrate the distinguishing characteristics of each form.

Discussion and chart illustrations will be done by the teacher. Students will use various magazines to cut and paste in notebook the following: Characteristics of the various classes of animals: insects, mammals, fish, birds.

Comparisons between the young and the adult of a given animal: kitten - cat; tadpole- frog; colt-horse; pig-hog.

MATERIALS: Scissors, magazines, drawing paper, notebooks, leaves, chart, paste.

LESSON III - WEDNESDAY

TOPIC: Different Type People

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to identify the four (4) major types of people after looking at pictures.

PROCEDURES:

By the use of visual aids, students will see how different people are classified - Black - Brown - Red - White.

A demonstration of how the Indian dresses will be done for the "Negro-Black" "Caucasian" "white", etc.

Through the use of slides and films the students will see the various customs, dress, and language of the different types of people.

LESSON III -LESSON - WEDNESDAY (continued)

MATERIALS: Visual Aids, films, Projector, various types of clothing.

LESSON IV - THURSDAY

TOPIC: MAN'S BASIC NEEDS

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to list the basic needs of man when asked by the teacher.

PROCEDURE: The teacher will list all the ingredients of the foods the students ate for breakfast, lunch or snack. Discussions as to where each of the ingredients is produced will be conducted. Opposite the name of each one, the teacher will tell and list the country from which it may have come.

The students will draw figures dressed in characteristic suits, protective hats, and boots of special clothing worn by (doctors, nurses, construction workers, farmers, policeman and fireman).

Students will make crayon drawings of all types of homes they have observed.

MATERIALS: Blackboard, Chalk, paper, pencils and crayons.

LESSON V - FRIDAY

TOPIC: Health and Safety

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to list some foods that will keep them healthy.

PROCEDURE: Students will make a notebook containing pictures of various foods cut from magazines and seed catalogues. They will mount the pictures, grouping them by types: fruits, vegetables, cereals, fats, and oils; food rich in protein, vitamins, fats and oils; starch and minerals.

MATERIALS: Scissors, paste, notebook, magazines, seed catalogue.

SUMMARY

Schools of the future will place more emphasis on Early Childhood Education. Experimental Programs such as Head Start along with the research of Benjamin Bloom and others will serve to expedite this and other changes.

Bloom estimates that 33% of "general learning as based on achievement indices" takes place between birth and age four; another 17% takes place between the ages of four and six. Thus, the most important period of intellectual development and achievement takes place before the child enters school.

If Project Head Start is to succeed - attempting as it is to give a boost so quickly to so many young children across the country - those responsible for translating it into reality in each community will need to guard against over-ambition, to prepare for some inevitable disappointments, and set up their remarkable goals in modest fashion.

A child whose poverty-narrowed world has opened out to include a new bright world - this child has surely taken some giant steps.

"Give a child a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime."