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Descriptive Summary

Identifier  ICU.SPCL.THELENH
Title  Thelen, Herbert. Papers
Date  1934-1983
Size  27.25 linear feet (45 boxes)
Repository  Special Collections Research Center
University of Chicago Library
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract  Herbert Thelen (1913-2008). Professor of Education at the University of Chicago, researcher in group dynamics and behavioral science. The Thelen Papers contain manuscripts, notes, research materials, and records from studies conducted by Thelen. Also included are a small amount of personal and biographical material and correspondence, as well as photographs and several filmstrips.

Information on Use

Access

Series VII includes evaluative student materials that are restricted until 2049, as well as biographical information about study subjects that is restricted until 2047.

Audio visual material in the collection does not have access copies for research use. Please consult with staff before requesting these materials.

The remainder of the collection is open for research.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Thelen, Herbert. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Biographical Note

Herbert Thelen was born in 1913 and grew up in Berkeley, California. He was married to Leonora Elizabeth Knox from 1937 until her death in 1977, and married to Sophia Lazarus from 1977 until her death in 2004. He had two children, David and Marian. He died in Laguna Woods, California in 2008.
Thelen graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1934 with a B.A. in chemistry and went on to earn an M.A. in chemistry from Berkeley in 1938. Before coming to the University of Chicago, he taught high school in Oakland, California and was a chemistry instructor at Oklahoma A&M College. He received a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Chicago in 1944, and was a faculty member in the Education department from 1945 until his retirement in 1979, serving as Chair of Educational Psychology. In his research, Thelen worked to integrate behavioral science with the process and practice of education. His work was especially influential in the field of group dynamics, and he conducted two major studies of school children exploring group dynamics in the classroom. He also designed a laboratory to study students from the University’s Laboratory Schools, which operated on the fourth floor of Blaine Hall. His research formed the basis of five books: Dynamics of Groups at Work, Emotional Dynamics and Group Cultures, Education and the Human Quest, Classroom Grouping for Teachability and The Classroom Society.

Thelen was also involved in the greater Hyde Park community, helping to develop the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference as well as neighborhood block groups. He received the Mayor’s Commission on Human Relations annual award in 1951 for his work.

**Scope Note**

The Herbert Thelen Papers are comprised chiefly of research materials and writing by Thelen, primarily related to his studies of classroom settings and of group dynamics among students. Series I contains a small amount of personal and biographical material, including his professional vitae and a few items of memorabilia. Series II contains memos and some records from the University of Chicago Education department, where Thelen was appointed from 1945 to 1979.

Series III contains extensive records from a project Thelen directed under the auspices of the National Institute for Mental Health. This study addressed group dynamics and interpersonal relations among elementary and high school aged children. Thelen and his research assistants ran “human relations” groups at the University Laboratory Schools, Scott School, and Raymond School. Records from this project include photographs, narrative reports, meeting notes, miscellaneous teaching and testing tools, and published and unpublished articles and book manuscripts based on the study written by Thelen and his students.

Series IV contains records from Thelen’s Authenticity-Legitimacy-Productivity Study, which was conducted at a number of high schools in the Chicago area. These records include data and narrative reports, articles, testing tools and various templates for gathering data. Also included are some comparative research materials and a small amount of correspondence. Included in both Series III and IV are copies of funding and grant proposals and reports for these studies.

Series V contains records from several other, smaller studies directed by Thelen, including studies conducted for the United States military, a high school in Oakland, California, and an early study conducted at the Laboratory School. Series VI contains research materials and writing unrelated to these studies or to the projects in Series II and IV. Subseries I contains published
and unpublished writing by Thelen on a variety of subjects, spanning from 1934 to 1983, as well as research notes. Subseries II contains work by other writers, spanning from 1942 to 1978.

Series VII contains oversize and audiovisual material, including photographs, charts from the NIMH study, manuscript drafts, audio records, classroom activity materials, filmstrips, and components for a “teaching machine.” Series VIII contains restricted materials.

Related Resources
The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html

Subject Headings
- Thelen, Herbert Arnold, 1913-
- University of Chicago. Dept. of Education
- University of Chicago. School of Education
- University of Chicago. Laboratory Schools
- National Institute of Mental Health (U.S.)
- 
- Education
- Behavioral sciences

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"Group Dynamics as a Science and as a Technology," Journal of the National Association of Deans of Women, vol. XII, no. 3, March 1949

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   "Current Investigations in the Laboratory," Journal of Educational Research, October 1951
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"Individual Change and Group Development: A Two-Way Street?" United States Civil Service Commission, Digest of Proceedings, Institute for Employee Development Officers, November 2-6, 1959

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"Dynamics of social systems: organization and work group," Psychosociologie Industrielle, 1959

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"Nursing Education: Diversity without Unity," 1960

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"How to Run Away from an Educational Problem," Paul B. Diederich, Progressive Education, vol. XIX, no. 8, March 1942
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"Introduction: The Effect of the Teacher’s Role on the Group’s Willingness to Participate in Problem Solving," Milton Freedman, December 1952

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