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REPORT ON SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Report transmitted by the French National Commission and prepared by Mr. R. Zazzo.

School psychology answers the general need for the better adaptation of the pupil to the school and the better appropriation of school life to the interests of the child, in a world whose social patterns are becoming increasingly complex and a professional and cultural universe which is growing more and more rich and diversified.

The methods of organizing school psychology vary considerably from one country to another and, according to the international survey published in 1948 by the International Education Bureau, in some countries it is the school-master himself who is the psychologist, while in others, this work is done by an independent laboratory staffed by specialists who are not members of the teaching profession. In France, for obvious reasons connected with the position of the State schools, and also with the precise intention of maintaining a close link between psychology and education, it was decided at the time of the creation of the first post in 1946, that the school psychologists should be recruited exclusively from among schoolmasters and that their work should be done in the schools.

This system, which was proposed by M. ZAZZO, who had been instructed to organise the service, was approved after five years of experience, by the "Comité Inter-Directeur de l'Education Nationale" in the first paragraph of a draft paper defining school psychology, which ran as follows: "The school psychologist belongs to the school by his recruitment, by his place of work, and by the nature of the problems he studies and the solutions which he seeks."

Although drawn from the teaching profession, the school psychologist is entirely relieved of the functions of a teacher, and this, for the purposes of the present experiment in school psychology, is the second most important characteristic. It seemed that the work of teaching was too absorbing to leave time for the master to make any psychological study of his pupils and also that the point of view of the master was likely to differ profoundly from that of the psychologist.
As things stand at present, the school psychologist does no teaching and is responsible for a school group (infants, boys and girls) at the primary stage, and for a whole school ("lycée" or college) at the secondary stage. Thus his "psychological guardianship" covers, on an average, about a thousand children.

The School Psychologist's Training.

The first condition to be fulfilled, therefore, is that the school psychologist must be a member of the teaching profession and must give proof that he has had at least five years' practical experience as a teacher or master in a State school.

The second condition is that he must have had a scientific training in psychology and have qualifications recognised by the Government. At the present time, these are the Diplomas in Educational Psychology and Applied Psychology given by the Institute of Psychology of the University of Paris. These two diplomas require two years' study, including theoretical instruction and practical work in a laboratory.

Headmasters are asked by the "Comité Inter-Direction" to take all possible steps to enable the members of their teaching staff to receive this scientific training at the Institute of Psychology of the University of Paris or any other higher educational establishment approved for this purpose by the Directorate of Higher Education. The same Committee also expresses the wish that the two years' study may be followed by a course of one year in practical school psychology before the school psychologist is appointed to his first post.

The School Psychologist's Work

Generally speaking, the school psychologist's work comes under two headings:

1. Psychological examinations of immediate, practical application.

In order to fulfill the requirements of the school management, the masters, the advisors on guidance, the school doctors, the parents, the school medical committees and, possibly, the Administration, the school psychologist has, with the means at his disposal, to carry out examinations which are often urgent in character. (New pupils, maladjusted children, changes of class, school guidance).

In the light of experience, and in order to avoid the possible dangers of blindly following the test method, the "Comité Inter-Direction" has made a point of laying down the guiding principle for the French school psychologist's work, from the time he takes up his post.
"The school psychologist's work shall consist mainly in showing up and encouraging the positive qualities of the pupil rather than in determining his inadequacies for the purpose of elimination or selection. He shall, therefore, aim at continuous observation (e.g. by keeping a note-book of psychological observations) and avoid long-term conclusions drawn from a single examination."

2. Research in Psychology and psychological education.

The purpose of such research is to perfect or establish the means of investigation, more particularly with a view to the psychological analysis of subjects taught and teaching methods.

For instance, a study is made of the nature of the mechanism by which the child learns to read, write, spell, add, etc., and tests are devised for discovering the qualities necessary to succeed in French, Latin and Mathematics. Such research which must be long and thorough, should cover representative categories of school children as well as individual cases of success or failure which may be highly significant.

Comparative studies (e.g. comparisons between boys and girls, between different social groups, etc.) are also undertaken to show the social and biological factors which may cause the children to differ in the extent of their success at school and in their intellectual tendencies.

Such research is the second function of the school psychologist, his main work being that of the individual examination of the pupils. The research must in any case be undertaken to comply with the requirements of the teaching profession.

... ... ... ...

Organisation of work

A psychological examination usually entails co-operation between various people - parents, school doctor, etc. - and in any case between the psychologist and the school-master.

Research requires systematic team work.

Since 1943 the school psychologists of the Paris district have been divided into several study groups which meet, on an average, once a week at the "Laboratoire de Psycho-Biologie de l'Enfant", which is the scientific centre of their research. They hold a general assembly every month to exchange views on their experiences and keep in touch as a team.

... ... ... ...
REPORT ON THE WORK of the school year 1951-1952

Examination carried out by the primary school psychologists of the Department of the Seine for the school year 1951-1952.

During the school year 1951-52, the fifteen primary school psychologists examined 8,729 children of which 3,678 were examined individually and 5,051 collectively. In other words, more than half the school children were examined and one child in every three received an individual examination. Half these examinations were carried out at the instigation of the school psychologist himself, chiefly in order to institute a system of recording new pupils in a card index or register.

The remaining examinations were made at the request of:

- the inspectors (73 examinations, i.e. 0.8%)
- the headmasters (1,201 " 11.6%)
- the masters (2,302 " 26%)
- the medical service (151 " 1.7%)
- the parents (114 " 1.3%)
- the school medical committees (441 examinations, i.e. 5%).

The following figures show the numbers of examinations carried out for the various purposes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Examinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine examination of new pupils</td>
<td>2,675 (30.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of class</td>
<td>1,929 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading and sampling</td>
<td>1,727 (19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School guidance</td>
<td>1,394 (15.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backwardness or failure</td>
<td>712 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties of adjustment due to character</td>
<td>310 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work of School Psychologists at the Secondary Stage

No reports have yet been received on the work of school psychologists at the secondary stage for the school year 1951/52. It should be remembered that school psychology started two years later in the secondary schools than in the primary schools, that is to say, in October, 1948.

At the present time, fifteen "lycées" enjoy the services of school psychologists, i.e. twelve in Paris, two in the suburbs (Suresnes and Montgeron), and one in the provinces (Orleans). In all, 25,000 pupils of both sexes attend these fifteen schools. Some of the Paris "lycées" have two psychologists, which brings the number of school psychologists practising at the secondary stage up to twenty.

Study Group Meetings.

School psychologists at both the primary and secondary stages hold group meetings so that the development of the pupil and the psychological study of school subjects can be followed up throughout the child's school career. The following
meetings were held in 1951/52:

1. Study Group on basic automatisms 9 meetings
   " " mathematics (older children) 15 "
   " " " (intermediate ages) 14 "
   " " " (younger children) 11 "

2. Group for the Study of "cours moyen 2"
   (Primary school children of
   12 to 14 years) 6 "

3. Group for the Study of Sixth Form
   children (11 to 13 years - Lycée)
      Knowledge acquired 2 "
      inventory of equipment 6 "
      school examinations 12 "

4. Committee for the Study of Third
   Form children (14-15 years - Lycée) 9 "

5. Documentation and Bibliography: 6 "

6. School Demography: 2 "

The results of this work have been collated and will be published in December, 1952.

It should be mentioned that the Institute of Psychology of the University of Paris has, since 1950, asked school psychologists to come forward to undertake instruction in school psychology for the Diploma of Higher Studies in School Psychology.