

## Needed Research in Pupil Personnel Services

IN THE past two decades the nation's schools have been the scene of the rapid growth and expansion of "pupil personnel services." This has come about as a result of the National Defense Education Act and as part of a trend for the schools to provide greater educational opportunity for all children. "Pupil personnel services" comprise the services performed in the schools by physicians, psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers, attendance coordinators, and speech and hearing clinicians.

### The Importance of Pupil Personnel Services

The basic purpose of the pupil personnel services is to help insure for every child—the gifted, the normal, and the handicapped—the maximum opportunity for a successful school experience. To achieve the goal of educating all or nearly all children effectively, such services are intended to complement the classroom instruction of the schools. The importance of these services is indicated by a recent survey which shows that from 6 to 14 percent of the school budget is spent upon pupil personnel services. Estimates place the number of children

with reading disabilities, speech and hearing disorders, problems of adjustment and physical handicaps at 25 to 35 percent of all children. It seems clear then that greater knowledge is needed as to how these funds should be spent so as to secure a maximum return.

The foregoing needs for pupil services constitute a large area to which research activity might be directed. An equally large area concerns itself with the organization of the services. Most of the pupil services have their origin in settings other than the school, in many cases a health or welfare setting. Accordingly, the image of the pupil personnel worker, maintained both by himself and the general public, was consistent with the institutional setting and emphasized some form of specified treatment as a primary objective.

When the pupil personnel worker moved into the school, where the primary goal was the facilitation of instruction, the emphasis changed. The need for supportive service was clear, but too

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often the service provided was but an extrapolation of those that had proved appropriate in such other settings as the clinic, welfare agency, or medical institution. Consequently, there is at present an urgent need to adapt functions and professional images to the primary objectives of the school.

A second problem arises from the fact that, although persons performing pupil personnel services have unique areas of specialization, they share common areas of knowledge of personality dynamics, diagnosis or measurement, and counseling. Much of the technical vocabulary is the same in the several fields and some differences of function are finely shaded. As a result, the problems of coordination and cooperative planning on the part of those responsible for the total school program have become the more difficult. There are also complications in interpreting the various professional roles to the instructional staff and the general public.

### **Research Needed in Pupil Personnel Services**

Two areas in the pupil services field stand out as being worthy of greater research efforts. Research should be centered on primary prevention of learning difficulties as well as better utilization of the pupil services.

#### **Primary Prevention**

Primary prevention and better utilization of pupil personnel services are inextricably interwoven. Pupil services could be expanded in such a way as to take care of all types of learning impairments. This would not be the final solution, for there must be attempts to prevent the disorders from occurring as well as to remedy these once they have

occurred. Both of these ponies must be in the race if the pupil services parimutuel is to pay off.

Research on primary prevention of learning difficulties might focus upon alleviation of the plight of the culturally disadvantaged child. Little is known about the form which cultural deprivation takes. Does the culturally disadvantaged youth's inability to symbolize handicap him in his attempts to communicate with others? It may be that this is at the root of his troubles with administrators, peers and teachers. Perhaps his lack of success in life is in part due to this insufficiency.

Much concern has been expressed over the culturally disadvantaged urban child but his rural brother has received little attention. We do not know the number of culturally disadvantaged children there are in urban and rural areas much less the total number in this classification. It is obvious that attempts to remedy this problem cannot be undertaken when we know neither the number to be treated nor the form which such deprivation takes.

Promising attempts such as the Higher Horizons Project and the education of migrant youth in California have been conducted. These, however, represent only cries in the wilderness of ignorance on cultural deprivation.

Another fertile area for research on primary prevention of learning difficulties is that of sex differences in school achievement and adjustment. Studies have established that girls receive a greater number of superior grades than boys, while boys receive significantly more below average and failing grades than do girls. Memberships in school honor societies and honor rolls indicate an imbalance in favor of girls. Oddly enough, there is evidence that boys are

superior in the transfer of learning, yet, as a group they progress less well in school than do girls. This incongruity may be due to the fact that girls adapt themselves to the school environment and relate to others, particularly teachers, more effectively than do boys. Greater facility in human relations may give girls a decided advantage in the race for good grades.

Standardized intelligence tests indicate that although boys and girls have the same overall ability they differ greatly in many sub-areas. Girls are superior in speed of reading, reading vocabulary, and level of comprehension, while boys excel on inductive reasoning and arithmetical ability. Systematic study could suggest ways in which curriculum content and instructional techniques might be differentiated so as to facilitate the learning of boys and girls alike.

At this time no one can assess the impact these incongruities have on the learning of boys and girls. Little or no account is taken of the behavioral differences between boys and girls in the planning of learning experiences. Further research is needed in the determination of sex-linked learning behaviors. We need additional knowledge on teachers' classroom responses to boys versus girls as well as teacher perceptions of each sex. Armed with these research findings we can begin to clear obstacles from the paths to learning for members of both sexes.

#### *Utilization of Pupil Services*

The second large area in which research is needed is that of utilization of pupil services. Over the years, school systems have differentiated the various pupil personnel roles but have given relatively little thought as to how these services might be integrated in such a

way as to bring their full force to bear on the learning and adjustment of children. The problems to be researched with respect to utilization are manifold, but we will raise three questions which we believe worthy of both research and demonstration.

We have need to determine what constitutes a model pupil service program in different types of communities and in school systems of various sizes. It seems clear that in relatively large school systems a highly differentiated but coordinated pupil service program is necessary. On the other hand, we have many school systems that are either relatively small in size or are serving a rural community. At the present time we do not know what type of pupil personnel program best serves each of these widely divergent types of schools and communities as well as those school systems in between.

In the smaller and less affluent school systems, there may be funds for only one pupil personnel worker. Should this be a guidance counselor, a school psychologist, an attendance worker or a social worker? Part of the answer depends upon pupil need for services, but it may be that we need to research the idea of educating a pupil personnel worker who can cut across the now-existing pupil service lines and supply a variety of services. In this instance, we would not only have to educate such a person but to research his effectiveness in the school setting.

The professional literature does not usually consider the classroom teacher as having a central role in pupil personnel work. The teacher must have a role, however, for in the typical case it is the teacher who refers children who have learning disabilities or adjustment problems to the proper source. Good teachers are not content with referring

an unruly child to a pupil service worker, thus freeing themselves of further responsibilities. Instructional services of the school cannot and perhaps must not be fully separated from the pupil services. The question to be researched, then, is, what is the appropriate function of the classroom teacher in a pupil personnel program?

Currently, it is not unusual for a pupil personnel division to perceive itself as supplying direct service to children. It is possible, however, that this perception be modified in such a way as to include consultative service to teachers and to parents. The teacher would be involved in case conferences, and information supplied by the teacher would become much more a part of the total evidence collected to effect some change in a child's behavior.

The history of pupil service workers suggests that these services were added to the school system oftentimes without careful examination of the way in which one professional worker's role would be similar to or different from that of another worker. As a result, even casual observation indicates that the functions of various pupil service workers are overlapping and repetitive. One cannot blame the professional workers for they tend to pursue their activities without a great deal of information as to what functions are being performed by other professional people. Nevertheless, the result is the same and leads to duplication of time and effort.

The teacher may be confused as to which professional worker to turn to when a number of them may be carrying on activities either identical or highly similar in nature. Specifically, we are in need of research on the roles of various pupil personnel workers in the several professions. We need to determine how

the teacher, counselor, social worker, speech therapist, audiologist or psychologist perceives himself and others. It is equally desirable that we learn what activities each of these persons engages in and what career line has led him to his present position.

### Implementation

Researching problems such as those mentioned here requires both time and manpower. It is also probable that these researches are beyond the scope of any one person, institution or professional organization. The urgency and scope of the problems gave rise to the formation of the Interprofessional Research Commission on Pupil Personnel Services. This incorporated group is comprised of 13 national professional organizations, each having some role in the broad area of pupil personnel services.<sup>1</sup> The Commission has been fortunate in obtaining from the National Institute of Mental Health \$1.3 million for a five-year research in pupil services to be conducted by four universities.

Through such a research program the Commission hopes to realize objectives that cannot be achieved by individual universities, research institutions or by constituent organizations acting separately. Specifically, the Commission

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<sup>1</sup> The Interprofessional Research Commission on Pupil Personnel Services is comprised of the following national professional organizations: American Association of School Administrators, American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, American Personnel and Guidance Association, American Psychological Association, American Speech and Hearing Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Council of Chief State School Officers, Department of Elementary School Principals, International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of Social Workers, National Education Association.

laymen advocate that the traditional cultural demands be extended downward from the first grade into the earlier childhood years.

This book was prepared to fill the needs of undergraduate students in early childhood education. According to the preface "the interdisciplinary approach is used which emphasizes the interrelationships of the culture, the research relating to children, the goals sought and the practices employed."

In Part I, the first one hundred pages, the authors review the history of the childhood education movement and present, with elaborate documentation, some of the studies on the growth and development of children. This setting presupposes a child development program of education.

But the second section of about two hundred pages is organized around the cultural demand subjects of the elementary school, although the authors say that a good program "utilizes the experiences of children" but "does not ignore so-called formal subject matter" (p. 103). There are chapters on the Language Arts, the Social Studies, Numbers, Science, Health and Safety, Art and Music, with Moral and Spiritual Values as a leavening agent. Yet these pages contain some excellent illustrations of how capable teachers *work with* children.

John Dewey once said that behavior should be examined as much by what a person overlooks in a situation as by what he includes. Nowhere is there a discussion of empathy with children or how to develop it—a vital preparation for a beginner. The techniques of observing behavior to find the covert aspects are not analyzed—a must for every successful teacher. The process of learning developed in the home and how to

direct it is not examined, yet every teacher must help young children understand and mature it. Many basic principles of learning are not mentioned, such as that the behavior of the child is his best judgment according to his perception of the situation at the moment of action. One very fundamental concept unknown a century ago and now generally accepted is mentioned only as a quote from a reference, "We learn what we select to learn" (p. 212).

This book has so much sound material on child development that a good instructor should be able to overlook the units of work in vogue thirty years ago. He should also be able and willing to help beginning teachers formulate some of the basic concepts of learning herein disregarded. What use students and teachers make of it will depend generally on their interpretation of the two approaches to the curriculum suggested at the beginning of this review.

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**Pupil Personnel Services—  
Waetjen and Fisher**

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hopes to promote more effective pupil services by providing, through research, a body of knowledge that will increase the effectiveness of all professions and services which collaborate in the provision of good learning experiences for children and youth. It will demonstrate efficient programs of pupil services in various school systems where coordination of services within the pupil personnel area and other areas of the school program are deemed important. It is envisioned, also, that research on preven-

tive mental health related to school activities will allow an on-going study of the educational progress of children and youth. The national scope of the program will give it an opportunity to affect practice throughout the country. Further, the multidisciplinary character of the project will help in solution of major problems of coordination of services, making for readier focus on the instructional program.

#### Mental Health—Bower

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Any society that insists and compels all its children to go to school must also insist that the experience be profitable and rewarding to all. The failure of a child to become an effectively functioning human being cannot be prevented *post facto*. The coming era of collaboration between mental health and education will be one of investigating together the nature of cognitive-affective experiences so that more effective growing and learning processes can be instituted in schools to increase the emotional robustness and cognitive effectiveness of coming generations. There will also continue to be collaborative efforts in discovering better ways of educating children with experiential, sensory, intellectual and emotional limitations as well as specific studies of the variety of educational processes needed to produce wise, responsible and free human beings.

It is doubtful that the curtain can be drawn on this drama in the near future. One is hopeful that one or two fishermen will find their way upstream and can make the most of an old Taoist inscription which reads: "He who would cleanse the current of a stream begins by clearing out its source. And he who would straighten the end of a process

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must commence by making its beginning correct."

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