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School psychology

1 master

The general introduction to school psychology

Définition School Psychology :

School psychology is a field that applies principles from educational psychology, developmental psychology, clinical psychology, community psychology, and behavior analysis to meet the learning and behavioral health needs of children and adolescents. It is an area of applied psychology practiced by a school psychologist. They often collaborate with educators, families, school leaders, community members, and other professionals to create safe and supportive school environments. They carry out psychological testing, psychoeducational assessment, intervention, prevention, counseling, and consultation in the ethical, legal, and administrative codes of their profession.

Historical foundations:

School psychology dates back to the beginning of American psychology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The field is tied to both functional and [clinical psychology](#). School psychology actually came out of [functional psychology](#). School psychologists were interested in childhood behaviors, learning processes, and dysfunction with life or in the brain itself. They wanted to understand the causes of the behaviors and their effects on learning. In addition to its origins in functional psychology, school psychology is also the earliest example of clinical psychology, beginning around 1890. While both clinical and school psychologists wanted to help improve the lives of children, they approached it in different ways. School psychologists were concerned with school learning and of clinical psychologists.

Another significant event in the foundation of school psychology as it is today was the Thayer Conference. The Thayer Conference was first held in August 1954 in West Point, New York in Hotel Thayer. The 9 day-long conference was conducted by the [American Psychological Association](#) (APA). The purpose of the conference was to develop a position on the roles, functions, and necessary training and credentialing of a school psychologist. At the conference, forty-eight participants that represented practitioners and trainers of school psychologists discussed the roles and functions of a school psychologist and the most appropriate way to train them.

At the time of the Thayer Conference, school psychology was still a very young profession with only about 1,000 school psychology practitioners. One of the goals of the Thayer Conference was to define school psychologists. The agreed upon definition stated that school psychologists were psychologists who specialize in education and have specific knowledge of assessment and learning of all children. School psychologists use this knowledge to assist school personnel in enriching the lives of all children. This knowledge is also used to help identify and work with children with exceptional needs. It was discussed that a school psychologist must be able to assess and develop plans for children considered to be at risk. A school psychologist is also expected to better the lives of all children in the school; therefore, it was determined that school psychologists should be advisors in the planning and implementation of school curriculum. Participants at the conference felt that since school psychology is a specialty, individuals in the field should have completed a two-year graduate training program or a four-year doctoral program. Participants felt that states should be encouraged to establish certification standards to ensure proper training. It was also decided that a practicum experience be required to help facilitate experiential knowledge within the field.

Thayer Conference is one of the most significant events in the history of school psychology because it was there that the field was initially shaped into what it is today. Before the Thayer Conference defined school psychology, practitioners used seventy-five different professional titles. By providing one title and a definition, the conference helped to get school psychologists recognized nationally. Since a consensus was reached regarding the standards of training and major functions of a school psychologist, the public can now be assured that all school psychologists are receiving adequate information and training to become a practitioner. It is essential that school psychologists meet the same qualifications and receive appropriate training nationwide. These essential standards were first addressed at the Thayer Conference. At the Thayer Conference some participants felt that in order to hold the title of a school psychologist an individual must have earned a doctoral degree.

The issues of titles, labels, and degree levels are still debated among psychologists today. However, APA and NASP reached a resolution on this issue for the US in 2010.