

# Early History of School Psychology – Handout 1880-1960

Dan Florell, Ph.D., NCSP

Eastern Kentucky University  
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## Pioneer Psychologists

- Wilhelm Wundt
- Hermann von Helmholtz
  - German psychologists focused on physiological processes
  - Sensation and perception research
- Francis Galton
  - English psychologist
  - Psychometrics – measure mental faculties
- William James
  - Debate between pluralism vs. monism
  - “It is the most pregnant of all the dilemmas of philosophy, although it is only in our time that it has been articulated distinctly,” (James, 1911)
  - Principles of Psychology

## Social Movements of late 1800’s

- Focus on child being different from adult
  - Thematic public purposes of focus
    - Teaching children about community’s shared beliefs and values
    - Partial regulation of the labor market
    - Getting children ready for adult economic roles
    - Providing services and support for at-risk children
- Incarceration
  - Before - Abandoned, neglected, or abused children incarcerated
  - After – establish orphanages and foster homes
- Judicial system
  - Before – children and adolescents treated as adults
  - After – established juvenile courts
  - After – rehabilitation efforts made in reformatories
- Labor/Education
  - Before – children worked long hours in factories, farms, mines
  - After – ban on child labor with help from unions and social work
- Need for more educated workforce
  - Before – children attended public school for short periods
  - Before – few adolescents attended high school
  - After – compulsory schooling laws
  - After – large influx of children and adolescents into schools

- Compulsory Education
  - Flood of students
  - Range of problems
    - Malnutrition
    - Learning Problems
    - Chronic Diseases
  - Solutions
    - Open air to combat diseases
      - Playgrounds
      - Physical education classes
    - Health screenings
      - Add various professionals to address defects
    - Malnutrition led to milk stations

### **G. Stanley Hall – Father of Developmental Psychology**

- Trained at Harvard under William James.
  - First to graduate with doctorate in psychology
  - Dissertation focus on experimental psychology
- Went to Germany for further training
  - Briefly trained with Wilhelm Wundt
- In 1880, back in US – presented series of Harvard lectures
  - Focus on how psychology could be implemented with education
- Started first experimental psychology lab in U.S.
  - Johns Hopkins University
  - Assistants
    - James McKeen Cattell
    - John Dewey
- Journal article (1882) – “The Content of Children’s Minds”
- Child Study Movement
  - Bring scientific method of psychology to education
  - Questionnaire methodology
    - Distribute to students, teachers and parents
    - Goal to identify common characteristics across children
    - Examples – doll playing, children’s lies, and children’s fears
  - Goal – basic nature of children
  - Questionnaire methodology flawed
    - Questions impersonal and conceptually vague
    - Hall used own insights and examples of children observed
    - Untrained observers collected his data
    - 1900’s research fell out of favor
- Founded *American Journal of Psychology* (1887)
- President of Clark University – focus on psychology
  - Founded Pedagogical Seminary (1891) – focus on implementing psychology within education.
  - Founded American Psychological Association (1893)
    - Became first president

- Published *Adolescence* – coined phrase for life stage.
- Clark Conference (1920)
  - Introduced Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung to U.S.
  - Spurred interest in psychoanalysis

**Lightner Witmer** – Father of School and Clinical Psychology

- University of Pennsylvania (1888 / 1891)
  - Received Master's under James McKeen Cattell
- University of Leipzig (Germany)
  - Doctorate – focus on principles of psychology on individuals
  - Protégé of Wilhelm Wundt
- University of Pennsylvania – faculty
- First Psychology Clinic (1896)
  - First Client – adolescent with spelling disorder
    - Saw more children with handicapping conditions
  - APA Conference (1896) – Areas of Applied Psychology
    - Use statistical and clinical methods to study mental and moral retardation.
    - Establish clinic and hospital for children with deficits where they could be examined and ailments remedied.
    - Teachers and other professional opportunities to observe and work with children with and without disabilities.
    - Provide training through university classes focused on working with children with cognitive and behavioral issues.
  - Evaluation
    - Understand referral concern and gather family and developmental history.
    - General physical exam to rule out physical issues.
    - Examination by psychologist (six tests)
      - Binet-Simon Intelligence Test
      - Form boards
      - Achievement tests
      - Visual-motor integration test
      - General observation
    - Social worker take exam results and find appropriate services
    - Need for multi-disciplinary evaluations
      - Teachers, physicians, psychologists, and social workers commonly involved in evaluations.
    - Observe in naturalistic setting – home and school
    - Teachers
      - Diagnostic teaching – evaluate while children taught
      - Emphasized individualized instruction

- University classes
  - First to offer applied psychology classes
  - Laboratory experiences required in clinic
    - First practicum
    - First internship
  - First internship in clinical psychology (1908)
    - Vineland Training School in New Jersey
- Founded *Psychological Clinic* (1907) journal
  - Published own work almost exclusively in journal
- Legacy
  - Focus on individual differences
    - Child retardation
    - Intelligence
    - Fulfillment of human potential
    - Effects of environment on behavior
  - Attention to plight of handicapped
  - Call for increased social services
  - Vocal critic of other psychologists
    - Described as contentious, antisocial and conceited.

### **First Debate – Nomothetic vs. Idiographic**

- Idiographic - focus on the one or the individual.
  - Clinical psychology
- Nomothetic - focuses on the many. What sort of general laws and commonalities among large groups.
  - Educational psychology

### **Intelligence Testing**

- Francis Galton (1869) – articles on mental characteristics
  - Belief sensory discrimination acuity indicated intelligence
- James McKeen Cattell – assisted Galton in laboratory
  - Established psychology lab at University of Pennsylvania
  - Created mental tests – focus on sensory and motor abilities
- Focus on sensory functioning in 1890's
- Focus on higher mental functions
  - Alfred Binet
  - Victor Henri
  - Theodore Simon
- Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale (1905)
  - Age-related differences in children's cognitive development
- Henry Goddard (1908) – translate Binet-Simon to English
- Lewis Terman (1916)
  - Start use of Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

### **Child Study Bureaus**

- Services devoted to child study movement.
- Measure physiological characteristics
- Measure mental aptitude
- Chicago Board of Education (1899) – W.S. Christopher
- Other cities with Child Study Bureaus
  - Louisville
  - St. Louis
  - Baltimore
  - Cleveland
  - Los Angeles
  - Detroit
- Wallin (1914) noted physical defects in school population
  - Defective teeth (one or more cavities, serious malocclusion), from 50 to 95%
  - Defective vision and adenoids and nasal obstruction, from 5 to 20%
  - Seriously enlarged or diseased tonsils, 5 to 15%
  - Curvature of the spine, 2 to 7%
  - Malnutrition, 1 to 6%
  - Weak or tubercular lungs and defective hearing, 1 to 2%
  - Estimated that 12,000,000 of pupils in public schools in country are to some extent handicapped by one or more physical defects.
- Provide guidance on how to educate diverse abilities
- Teaching pedagogy
- Psychologists provide experimental approach
  - Readily available population for study

### **Arnold Gesell – first school psychologist**

- Clark University
  - Studied under G. Stanley Hall
- Visited Witmer's psychological clinic
- First school psychologist (1914)
  - Hired by State Board of Education in Connecticut
  - Assist with mental exam case studies
  - Conduct survey research of children attending public schools

### **Schools in 1910's**

- School districts develop classification system
  - More urban areas and some rural by 1910
    - Many need services, few were provided
  - Special Education focus
    - Top and Bottom 4% of school in gifted or feebleminded
  - Streamlines referral process of children
    - Mental retardation
    - Behavior problems
    - Giftedness

- Some intelligence testing in Child Study Bureaus
  - Variety of aptitude and achievement test developed
  - Binet-Simon became preferred IQ test
  - Rochester, NY public schools appoint Binet examiner (1909)
- Special Education
  - Different nomenclature and categories
  - Special classes
    - Truancy
    - Delinquency
    - Backwards
    - Adult education
  - Seriously atypical students – educated in separate building
  - Hall (1911) segregationist position –
    - “Habits of stupidity and ineptness are often more contagious than are the examples of the best workers. This is why the elimination of the stupid is so urgent and so often effected today by segregating them in various ways.”

### **World War I – Psychological Testing**

- Army needed screening of soldiers for intellectual and emotional functioning.
- Recruited psychologists including Terman and Goddard
  - Army Alpha test
  - Army Beta test – nonverbal
- Made intelligence testing widely known and accepted.
- Use to rationalize racial biases
- Horace Mann Bond – challenged hereditary conclusions of IQ test results
  - Emphasized effects of environment on IQ
- Albert Sydney Beckham – IQ results greatly effected by socio-economic status
  - School Psychology Clinic at Chicago DuSable school

### **School Psychology Training**

- New York University (1928) – first school psychology training program
- Penn State University (1938) – doctoral training program
- Pennsylvania and New York (1930’s)
  - New York City school district (1925)
    - Establishes first psychology licensure exam
  - First state credentialing
- Gertrude Hildreth - wrote first school psychology textbook
  - Psychological Services for School Problems (1930)
    - Highlight daily activities
      - Individual and group assessments
      - Consultation with teachers
      - Answering mail
      - Completing paperwork
      - Writing reports
      - Creating academic reading and math tests

- Diagnostic services with students

### **School Psychology in 1930's**

- Conferencing with staff, parents and psychologists
- Individual testing
- Group testing
- Scoring tests
- Constructing graphs and charts of test results
- Work with individual students
- Conducting research

### **Professional Organizations**

- American Psychological Association (1893)
  - More experimental focused
- American Association of Applied Psychologists (1937)
  - Four defined specialties
  - School psychologists belong to clinical or educational sections
- Few school psychologists belonged to either organization
- Two organization merged into APA (1945)
  - Adopted divisional structure for organization
  - Division 16 became first national school psychology organization
    - Published first school psychology newsletter (1947)

### **World War II**

- Highlighted role of counseling for psychologists
  - Clinical psychology focused on counseling services
  - School psychologists stayed with assessment role
- Prompted examination of role and function of practitioners
- Baby Boom
  - Millions of children enter school system in intervening years
  - Steep increase in graduate school psychology training programs
  - Number of practicing school psychologists increased

### **Civil Rights Movement**

- Separate but equal – Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)
  - Results in white children educated apart from ethnic minorities
- Debate within African American community
  - School segregation – less racism and diminishment of accomplishments
    - Inez Beverly Prosser
  - School integration – segregation continues in other aspects of life
    - Mamie Phipps & Kenneth Clark – doll studies show impact of segregation.
- 1950's legal challenges started

- Brown v. Board of Education (1954) – Supreme Court
  - Desegregation of schools
  - First time psychological research used as basis of decision
  - Established all children have equal educational opportunity
  - Led to future lawsuits for discriminated populations

### **Professionalization**

- Boulder Conference (1949)
  - Direction for proper training of clinical psychologists
  - Scientist-practitioner model of training
  - Primary focus on adult populations
  - Spurred rapid growth in clinical psychology specialization
- Thayer Conference (1954)
  - Focus on psychologists specializing in children and schooling
  - Define role, function, and training of school psychologists
    - Two level of training and practice with different titles
    - Credentialing through state education agencies
    - Accreditation of programs through APA
  - School Psychologists at Mid-Century – conference proceedings
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> school psychology textbook
  - Sparked rise in training program and other textbooks
- APA Division 16
  - 601 members in 1956
- State School Psychology Associations
  - Ohio (1943) first state to have organization
  - California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey follow during 1950's

### **Contact the Presenter**

- Dan Florell, Ph.D., NCSP – Eastern Kentucky University
  - NASP Historian
  - [Dan.florell@eku.edu](mailto:Dan.florell@eku.edu)
  - Twitter: @schoolpsychtech