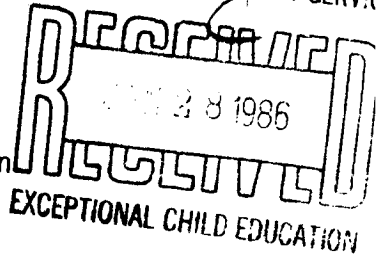


POSITION STATEMENTS AND RATIONALE

Evolved During the Study by the
Council Committee on Educational Diagnostician

Introduction

Initially the study committee was charged with possibly revising preparation-certification program for school psychometrists to keep pace with the current needs of the schools. In particular, it was thought that the position should be more comprehensive and that persons should be prepared more adequately for working with exceptional children. It was also pointed out to the committee that the current provisions for special education diagnostician are somewhat unrealistic, but that certain aspects of this preparation program might be considered in the new position that would emerge from upgrading the provisions for school psychometrist.

Position Statements

1. Perhaps the major function originally ascribed to the position of school psychometrist was that of individual intelligence testing. It is now recognized that while the state curriculum guidelines for school psychometrist provide for coursework and supervised practice in testing, the preparation program does not provide sufficient background for diagnosis of learning problems and the selection of appropriate testing or diagnostic instruments; neither does this program provide preparation as to how the test results might be used to devise appropriate intervention strategies to assist the pupil involved.

In selecting the appropriate additional coursework for upgrading the former preparation program for more adequate diagnosis/assessment/intervention related to intellectual and cognitive functioning it became apparent that the additional coursework was duplicative of that required for school psychologists.

The committee recommends that the function of diagnosis/assessment/intervention with respect to intellectual and cognitive functioning be ascribed to the role and function of the school psychologist. It is noted that a large proportion of former school psychometrists have already upgraded themselves to certification as school psychologists. Also, there appears to be an adequate supply of personnel qualified in school psychology for current demands.

2. There should be created a new position called educational diagnostician with the role and function that has emerged in recent years in the local school districts. This position would not be responsible for individual intelligence testing, but would be responsible for conducting the wide range of educational assessments needed by the pupils in regular education programs as well as for special education programs. Please refer to the attached draft of a job description and responsibilities for the educational diagnostician.

The preparation program for the educational diagnostician would require as a prerequisite the usual four-year preparation program for some type of teaching certificate and perhaps two years of fulltime teaching experience. The curriculum for the Provisional Certificate for Educational Diagnostician would require a 45 semester hour graduate program including a master's degree and including supervised experience. The 45 semester hour curriculum is outlined in the attachment.

3. The position of educational diagnostician as defined in the attachment has much more far reaching responsibilities than that of the old position of school psychometrist; in fact, it is so different as to be considered a new position. However, the "new" position parallels many of the duties that are now being performed in many school districts by the educational consultant authorized by "approval" under 704 KAR 3:030, Section 2. (10). The study committee recommends that this position be established to serve the needs of all pupils. The duties of this position are so demanding and the corresponding preparation program so comprehensive that it is neither feasible nor desirable to require or to prepare this person to conduct the diagnosis, assessment, and intervention for intellectual cognitive testing. A more detailed rationale on this particular point is attached.

RATIONALE FOR ASSIGNING THE FUNCTION OF
INTELLECTUAL COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT
TO THE
POSITION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

1. Sophisticated test interpretation requires a broad background in child psychopathology, cognitive development theory, legal and ethical aspects of assessment, psychometric theory and practice, and general psychological assessment principles and procedures. Almost the entire literature relating to the use of intelligence/ cognitive tests in education rests within the domain of school (and to some degree clinical) psychology, which non-psychologists are typically not familiar with. Taking one course in test administration (with a smattering of interpretation) is quite inadequate, and perhaps dangerous. This does not allow for a balanced and integrated use of the tests in the context of other assessment procedures. What results is often the most blatant form of discriminatory assessment.
2. If the educational diagnostician is given the responsibility to conduct psychological/intellectual evaluations, they would in effect be serving as the entire multidisciplinary assessment team. There would be no incentive to broaden the assessment base by separating psychological and educational assessments. This seems unhealthy and in conflict with the requirements of PL 94-142. Also, it does not solve the problem of role overlap.
3. In nearly every state, including each state on Kentucky's borders, school psychologists conduct the intellectual/cognitive evaluation as part of their assessment. By giving this function to a professional who is non-psychologically trained, Kentucky would be creating a unique circumstance.
4. Both the American Psychological Association and the National Association of School Psychologists are quite clear regarding the use of psychological tests by non-psychologists. Even in the case of psychometrists, using these measures, psychologists are supposed to be involved in the supervision and counter-signature of reports.