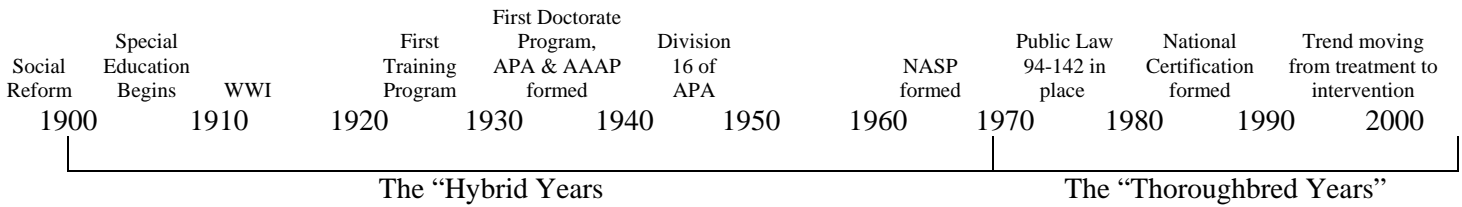


History of School Psychology Timeline



The “Hybrid Years” – 1890-1969: A period when “school” psychology was a *blend* of many kinds of educational and psychological practitioners loosely mobilized around a dominant role of psycho-educational assessment for special class placement.



- Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries: Social reform implemented which included compulsory schooling, juvenile courts, child labor laws, mental health, and vocational guidance. These cultural and social advances were a major force in the push for the need for school psychologists. Compulsory schooling (established in 1918) resulted in mass learning of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Some of these children showed up for school in poor general health, and some children tended to learn slower than their peers. Physical and mental examinations became necessary in the schools.

- By 1910, some special education services were in place in many urban and some rural communities. Due to the emergence of special education services, “experts” were needed to assist in selection and placement of children in these services. Thus the school psychologist as the “gatekeeper” for special education evolved.

Early models of school psychology evolved primarily from Lightner Witmer and G. Stanley Hall. Witmer focused mostly on a more idiographic clinical model, which could provide actual services for the individual, where as Hall’s focus, was much more research orientated, looking to develop normative characteristics for groups. Over the ensuing years, these two approaches were melded to form the foundations of school psychology, particularly the testing movement. No individual is more recognized in the forefront of this testing movement than Alfred Binet. (1857-1911). Together with Theodore Simon, the two helped spur the individual testing movement by developing the first practical intelligence test battery, which assessed higher level cognitive skills and produced substantial correlations with measures of school achievement.



Binet



- World War I (1914-1918) had a major influence on the development of group-standardized tests (Army Alpha and Army Beta) and the utility of these tests gained public attention and acceptance of tests.

The development of individual ability and achievement tests helped define the primary role and function of early school psychologists. These tests were used in differentiating students with different ability and achievement levels and became the main tool used by psychologists in educational settings.

- 1925 saw the establishment of the first school psychology training program at New York University (undergraduate and graduate).

- 1930’s brought the first doctoral level training in school psychology. In the mid-1930’s, state department certification for school psychologists occurred in New York and Pennsylvania.



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1930's continued ...



- American Psychological Association (APA) founded, but excluded most practicing school psychologists because most did not have doctoral level training, which was a requirement for membership.

• American Association of Applied Psychologists (AAAP) was formed and had less stringent membership requirements, thus many school psychologists became members.

• 1945 brought the establishment of Division 16 of the APA, formed specifically for the specialty of school psychology.

• Finally, in 1969, the National Association of School Psychologists was formed. NASP brought practitioners nationwide together in a more “stable and strengthened identity.” (Fagen and Wise, 1994).



The “Thoroughbred Years (1970 to the present): A time of growth in the number of training programs, practitioners, state and national associates and the expansion of literature and regulations, all of which contributed to a stabilized professional entity called School Psychology.

• In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, better known at the time as Public Law 94-142.



This proved to be landmark legislation, requiring public schools to provide students with a broad range of disabilities - including physical handicaps, mental retardation, speech, vision and language problems, emotional and behavioral problems, and other learning disorders - with a "free appropriate public education."

• The passage of P.L. 94-142 triggered an enormous growth in the number of school psychologist practitioners, from 5,000 in 1970 to 10,000+ by 1980, and 20,000 by 1988. Services were now available nationwide despite continued variability in delivery systems and practitioner qualifications.

• With the tremendous growth in school psychologists, came a corresponding increase in the number of state associations, from 17 in 1970 to 48 by 1989.



• The national organization, National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) began assuming much more responsibility in determining education and professional qualification standards, as well as moving from a “reactive” model (simply responding to information and recommendations from outside agencies) to a “proactive” role (working to influence the types of decisions these other agencies might make).



Professionally, NASP developed:

- A monthly newsletter, the *Communique* in 1969
- A quarterly journal, *The School Psychology Review* in 1972
- Publishing of books and products to help practitioners including *Best Practices in School Psychology* (1985)
- The National Certification System in 1988-89
- A national directory of training programs and credentialing requirements

• Changes in role and function of school psychologists began taking place in the 1980's from “assessment and placement intensive” to “preferential assessment, interventions, and at least secondary prevention for at risk groups.” These changes continue to evolve in an effort to make the work of practicing school psychologists available to *all* students, as well as their parents, teachers and the community.



* A special thank you to Thomas Fagen and his extensive work chronically the profession of School Psychology in his many works, especially the chapter “A Brief History of School Psychology in the United States” in *Best Practices in School Psychology – II*, published by the National Association of School Psychologists, and edited by Alex Thomas and Jeff Grimes (1990).