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*Difficulties in judging the suitability of teachers*

In most countries endeavours have been made to construct tests to determine a person's fitness for the profession of a teacher. C. M. Fleming in her book *Teaching: a Psychological Analysis*, published in 1958, summarizes the most important British and American investigations up to that date and concludes that 'there is no reason to suppose that any one type of personality pattern has a monopoly of the claim to be regarded as that of the poten-

tially successful teacher'. This conclusion has not been seriously challenged by any more recent research.

Pupils themselves have very divergent views, that also vary with age, as to the characteristics that go to make up an ideal teacher's personality. A teacher may be eminently successful with pupils of one age but find it difficult to manage an older or younger class. More recent research also indicates that within age groups, and even within schools, particular teachers may be more successful with some pupils than with others, and the participation of teachers in the allocation of children to the various classes, taking account of the individual personalities of both teacher and child, has sometimes proved of benefit to both.

It is also difficult to predict how a particular student in training will be able to endure the strain of the everyday work of a school. It is one thing to give interesting and even inspiring demonstration lessons during teaching practice and quite another to meet the same class hour after hour, day after day, and keep it at a reasonable level of motivation. Sten Henrysson at the Stockholm School of Education and Eric Linder of the Institute of Education at Uppsala University, in unpublished studies dating from the early 1950s, have shown that the mark given for teaching proficiency, which used to be taken very seriously by employing authorities, is not in fact a very good criterion of suitability for the teaching profession. More recently their results have been replicated many times, and this 'injustice' is a subject of everyday discussion among students in training.

*Features of personality appreciated by pupils*

Several investigations have been made with a view to discovering what personality traits make a teacher popular with pupils. One such study, made by Witty in the United States, was based on letters on the subject of 'The teacher who has helped me most'. There were 12,000 letters written by schoolchildren from grade 2 upwards to American college level. The letters were analysed to find the characteristic features mentioned most frequently. It does not follow, naturally, that these features are the most important ones for a good teacher. But the letters reflect opinions that it is worth the teacher's while to know, and that he would

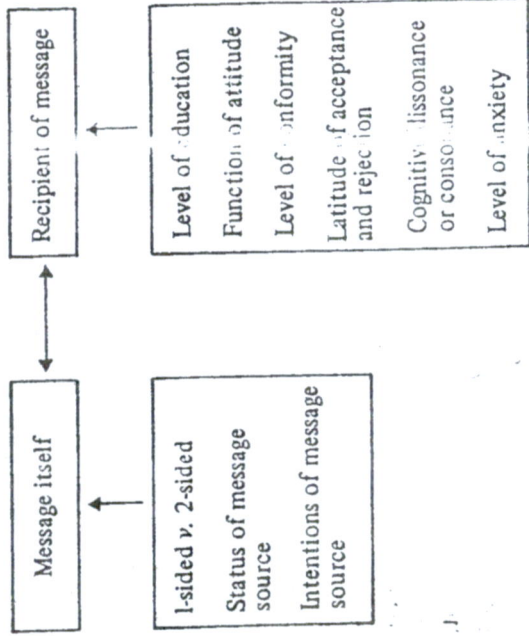
be wise to take into careful consideration. The following twelve characteristics proved to be the most appreciated: (1) Co-operative, democratic attitude, (2) kindness and consideration for the individual, (3) patience, (4) wide interests, (5) pleasing manner and appearance, (6) fairness and impartiality, (7) sense of humour, (8) even temperament and firmness, (9) interest in pupils' problems, (10) flexibility, (11) willingness to encourage and praise, and (12) unusual proficiency in teaching a particular subject.

The last-named characteristic is by no means the least important. It is ranked very high in other investigations. Pupils are quite well able to appreciate a high level of knowledge in a teacher.

An important study by Bennett (1976) was designed primarily to answer the question: 'Do differences in teaching styles (i.e. formal versus informal classroom methods) differentially affect the cognitive and emotional development of pupils?' The pupils of thirty-seven teachers, classified as either formal, informal or mixed in their teaching methods, were tested for attainment in reading, mathematics and English before entering their fourth-year class and, shortly after entry, on a range of personality tests. Their behaviour in the classroom was then closely monitored and analysed by a team of trained observers. All were re-tested the following year. While the overall findings favoured the more formal style of teaching for all pupil personality types (with high achievers and anxious pupils tending to benefit most from formal teaching), of particular interest in the present context were the considerable variations in teacher success within the three method groups. Success in either the formal or the informal settings depended to a considerable degree upon the individual teacher's personality and experience, and his teaching and organizational skills. The individual teacher is the most important single factor in educational progress. The contribution of psychology and of psychologists to the life of the school must be made, for the most part, through and in co-operation with the teachers.

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87. Characteristics of communications and recipients which influence attitude change



Attitude change is dependent on many interrelating factors - differentiated and simplified for purposes of study, but in reality very difficult to separate. Hovland and Janis (1959) proposed a model of attitude change which includes as the main factors the source of the message and the message itself, the situation in which it is presented and the recipient of the message. Each of these may vary in such a way that it influences the degree of attitude change. Figure 87 illustrates some of the main factors involved in attitude change.

Characteristics of the recipient

It should be clear from the previous chapter that the formation and maintenance of attitudes derives from several sources. Some attitudes appear to be the result of conforming or complying with the norms of the group or groups of which an individual is a member. Others seem to develop to meet individual psychological needs, to act as ego-defensive attitudes. Some psychologists have developed attitude theories based on the study of the functions of attitudes, categorizing them in terms of the psychological functions they apparently serve. Smith *et al.* (1956) propose that some attitudes help in dealing with material reality and serve an object-appraisal function, others serve a social adjustment function and help in dealing with social relationships, and a third category of attitudes help in dealing with an individual's psychological reality and serve an externalization function by reflecting inner needs and problems. Katz (1960) also proposes functional categories of attitudes, along some-

what similar lines to those of Smith *et al.*, but while the latter's categories are used mainly to describe and understand an individual's attitudes relative to his personality. Katz's functional categories have led to work in devising more effective ways of producing changes in attitudes.

Kelman (1961) argues that conformity to the views of others may differ in degree. He suggests three distinct processes, of compliance, identification and internalization, each occurring in different conditions and leading to different degrees of attitude change. As we have seen, compliance is a relatively superficial process in which an individual conforms to attitudes expressed by others in order to gain approval or avoid disapproval, regardless of what his private values might be. Kelman's concept of identification, not entirely equivalent to the Freudian term, describes the acceptance of the attitudes of others whose relationship with the individual is valued; such acceptance persists as long as the relationship with the significant other lasts. Internalization is the process in which an individual totally accepts the attitude of others because it closely fits his own existing values or needs, and, once accepted at this level, its maintenance is not dependent on a continuing relationship with others.

# 14 Social perception

ONE That knows "the rest of us see"

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Murphy

Social perception, the process of recognizing the attitudes, motives and abilities of ourselves and others, is governed by many of the factors that influence object perception, discussed in Chapter 2. However, perception affects our responses to people and objects. The difference here lies in the fact that people will alter their own behaviour in response to the way that they are treated. If a teacher perceives his student as intelligent he may teach in a different way and get a different response than he might if he were to perceive the same student as dim-witted. Paradoxically, in this way a perceptual hypothesis (see p. 70) may alter the real world.

## Self-perception

Many of us feel that we alone really know ourselves, that only we are privy to our own inner thoughts and 'real nature'. And yet many people are fascinated by the attitude tests and personality profiles that proliferate in the popular press, and take great interest in their results. During adolescence there is a particularly acute demand for information and evaluation from other people about ourselves - 'What kind of person do you think I am?', 'How do you find me?' If we choose to ignore other people's evaluations, how confident can we be in the accuracy of our own self-judgement? It may be thought that because of internal perceptions and thoughts we have special knowledge about ourselves. But we do not see how others perceive us. Brown (1967) gives the example of the individual who 'forces a smile' in a social situation: 'The organism that thinks it is the only

The field of self-perception has greatly increased in influence and impact in recent psychology. This is largely due to the counselling and therapeutic work associated with Carl Rogers, and various trends in society which have led individuals in the direction of exploration and liberation of the self. So what do we mean by the term 'self'? As we shall see, there is no real agreement amongst the leading theorists, but a working definition will serve the purpose of beginning our discussion. Murphy (1947) says, 'The self is the individual as known to the individual.' This emphasizes existence in consciousness, but would, consequently, be unacceptable to Freudians, who argue that the contributory sources and construction of the self are unconscious.

Secord and Backman (1964) propose three aspects to the self: the cognitive, the affective and the behavioural. The cognitive component represents such judgements as 'I am tall, blue-eyed, blond-haired, male', and so on; these are essentially descriptive; an affective component represents one's feelings towards oneself, and may not often be expressed in words. It would include a general self-evaluation as well as specific judgements, such as someone seeing himself or herself as being honest. The behavioural component is the tendency to act towards oneself in various ways: a person may behave in a self-deprecating or a self-indulgent manner, or may show 'oversensitivity to some of his characteristics'.

It has been said by Argyle (1967), 'The more integrated the self-image, the more consistent a person's behaviour will be: one effect of the self-image on behaviour is the suppression of behaviour that is out of line.' We can thus see the interrelationship of the different components of the self.

The term 'self' is one of the current century. Previously writers talked of the 'soul', 'nature', 'will' and so on. Its importance has, however, been long recognized. In more recent years Bidney (1953) suggested that it is the possession of a self-concept rather than language that differentiates man from the lower animals. He says that only man has the ability to see himself objectively, to stand apart from himself, and consider what he is and what he would like to do and become. The first psychological, as opposed to philosophical, contribution of note on the self came from William James, in his famous *Principles of Psychology* (1890). Burns (1979) says, 'His

General

referred

Argyle

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MASLOW'S PYRAMID OF NEEDS

**Self-actualization  
Needs : to find self-  
Fulfillment and realize  
One's potential**

**Aesthetic needs :  
Symmetry, order and beauty**

**Cognitive needs :  
To know, understand and explore**

**Esteern needs :  
To achieve, be competent, and gain  
Approval and recognition**

**Belongingness and love needs :  
To affilate with others, be accepted and belong**

**Safety needs :  
To fell secure and safe, out of danger**

**Physiological needs :  
Hunger, thirst and so forth**

**Faculté des Lettres et Langues Etrangères  
English Department  
Psychology. 3 rd year**

**C.M Fleming in her book , Teaching, A psychological Analysis ended up concluding that although learners seem to stress that personality is the key quality that decides on the teacher's success or ill doing, there seems no agreement even among scholars on what type of personality is best fit for purpose.Doc1.**

**In recent years, however, there seems to be a generalization in our country that teachers are not what they used to be and that they do not meet the standard that society expects of them. The need to comply with these expectations is in itself a controversy and a challenge.**

**Teachers are those who trigger the seeds of change either by being a model to identify with or by influencing change in learners' attitude. It is worthwhile for the student to consider these these questions and eventually try to understand himself to understand others.Doc 2 and 3.**

**For Abraham Maslow, what seems to explain people's personality is the satisfaction or non satisfaction of a hierarchy of needs that we all have independently of our origin, race or religion.Doc 4.**

**It is just as important for anyone to appreciate the rightfulness of this claim and self evaluate his life experience and his position in the pyramid.**

**Today, basic needs have evolved. We will have another session as follow up to weigh the new needs with the concept of democratization of education, particularly, when considering distance learning.**

**Stay home...Stay safe**