

Personality Development*

By Josefina R. Serion

WE saw Linda go up the stage. She held her head high as she walked briskly up the steps. There was no faltering move that gave away whatever feeling she had at the time. Soon she was there on the stage. We watched we got a glimpse of her very pale face. Her lips moved and we waited. There was silence in the audience. Her hands that were clutching her dress fluttered to her mouth. And—the girl broke into tears!

What can the school do for such a child? The function of the modern school is no longer what it used to be. It was shifted from its stress on scholastic achievement to an emphasis on a program aimed towards the development of a well-rounded personality in every child and youth. Not only must he excel in academic work; he has to be helped, too, in effecting such changes within him so that he will become socially mature, emotionally stable, physically and mentally healthy, and intellectually fit to tackle the problems which cross his path. Children of Linda's type — excellent in academic work, cooperative in all activities in the classroom, polite and courteous to the teachers, but nervous, shy, and withdrawing — and many other children having various types of personality problems are the main reasons for the existence of the guidance program in every school.

What is personality, one may ask. Is it innate in a person or is it acquired? Is it fixed or is it dynamic? These are the doubts that form the main obstacles to the work of educators in guiding the child and the youth. The term "personality" has

* The next article in this series will be one on "How to Understand Children."

been very commonly used but very often misunderstood.

Personality is the composite of all the things that make up an individual — his physique, intellectual ability, habit patterns, emotional and aesthetic sensitivity, temperament, attitudes, interests, ambitions, goals, and even his needs. All of these, interacting, form a totality which determines how the individual reacts and adjusts to his environment. Personality is affected to a certain degree by the situations in which the learner finds himself. And to some extent, because it is within the power of the individual to make choices and select experiences within his environment, the individual is a factor in causing changes within his own personality. On this very fact hinges the core of the function of the guidance program as it strives to develop the personality of every child. The knowledge of how this function affects the individual will be of great help to educators. Personality development has to be assessed therefore in order to help the individual toward integrating the various aspects of his personality that are in conflict or are operating independently.

In the assessment of the development of personality the picture of the individual has to be viewed as an integrated whole in his own environmental setting. There are various instruments of evaluation touching on the different aspects of personality which may be utilized.

The Case History

The written case history containing information about the physical characteristics and physiological development of the individual, his family life, school

life, and community life, and his hobbies, interests, personal ambitions, goals, feelings, and his convictions on, attitudes towards, and reactions to various subjects may be used in obtaining such a picture. The dependability of this instrument will be based largely on the sincerity of the person who records his own case history.

The same instrument, the case history, may be used in another manner: in personal interviews of individual cases. The skill of the interviewer will affect much the success of this procedure. For, aside from the information asked for in the case history a skillful interviewer may be able to elicit other relevant facts such as fantasies of the individual, emotional climate at home, and hidden conflicts in his relationships with his parents, his siblings, and his peers.

This instrument may be very useful in the specific case of Linda. It will doubtlessly be of great help in pinpointing the cause of the emotional disturbance. The determination of the specific cause will facilitate the planning of the program of treatment that must necessarily follow.

Below is a part of a case history which may be used for boys and girls:

Case History

Name Date
 Sex Age Date of birth
 Grade School
 Town Province
 Home Town Home Province

A. Physiological Development and Physical Characteristics

What is your height?
 What is your weight?
 Has your height or your weight ever been the cause of any of your troubles?
 When?
 Why? Explain

 Is your vision normal or defective?
 What is the defect?
 Do you wear eyeglasses?
 Since when have you been wearing them?

 Is your hearing normal or defective?
 What is the defect?
 Since when have you had it?
 What has been done to remedy it?
 Have you ever been disturbed by your posture?

 When and how?

Which part of your body is undersized or oversized?
 When did you first begin to notice it?
 Do you stammer or stutter when you talk?
 Do you have any other physical abnormality not mentioned above?
 When did you first begin to have it?
 Have you been disturbed by such an abnormality?
 How?

B. Family Life

How many brothers and sisters do you have?
 How many are older than you?
 How many are younger?
 When you were small, did you often play with your brothers and sisters?
 Who among them was or were very close to you?
 Who among them often teased you?
 Did you use to cry when teased?
 Did you often get spanked or scolded by your parents?
 Why?
 Have your parents always given you the things which you like?
 Have your parents ever denied you some things which you desire very much?
 What are those?
 Do you tell your parents about your quarrels with your brothers and sisters or with your classmates?
 Have your parents often taken you with them to parties or to picnics?
 Do you enjoy going out with them?
 Do you enjoy going out with your brothers and sisters?
 Have you been helping your parents at home?

 What work have you been doing?
 Since when have you been doing these?

 Have you been doing these willingly?
 Have you been told by your parents to do these?

 Have you ever been forced by anybody at home to do things which you do not like?

The Personal Interview

The written case history may be more appropriate for older children than for younger ones. For the latter group the personal interview based on the case history would be for more practical use, for the interviewer can easily tone down the language used to suit the ability of the individual. The validity of the information obtained through the written case history and the personal interview may be

checked against the results of interviews with the parents or guardians and re-checked against the records of his curricular activities and his extra-curricular participation.

The Rating Scale

The rating scale is another instrument that may be used for personality assessment. This is used by the rater for recording observations on certain defined aspects of behavior. It is most effectively used in situations wherein a stimulus is presented to produce a certain type of responses on which observations have to be based. It is least satisfactory when used for casual observations.

The rating scale has to be definite if it is to be of practical use. For this reason a question on a single limited aspect of behavior should introduce each scale. The descriptive phrases which mark off the scale points should be clear, concise, and well-defined. The following scales illustrate the characteristic referred to in the preceding statement.

1. Is the child responsible?

Does not at all show any responsibility in the things he does.	Does not take responsibilities seriously.	Sometimes he is, at other times he is not.	Very often shows responsibility for what he does.	Always feels responsible for things assigned to him.
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2. Is this pupil sociable?

Not interested in dealing socially with people.	Mixes well with old friends, but does not mix easily with new people.	Is very sociable and mixes well with any social group.
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It is essential for the rater to understand exactly what is to be done and how it is to be done. The rater may be a teacher, a classmate, or the individual himself, in which latter case the instrument is used as a self-rating scale. It would be well to average the ratings made by several observers if reliability of the ratings is to be achieved. If self-rating is done, the results of this may be compared to the average of the ratings given by observers and from the comparison another aspect of the individual's personality may be gleaned: his self-concept.

Personality Inventory

Still another instrument for the measurement of personality is the personality inventory which involves lists of questions on a wide variety of fields of children's and adolescents' interests to which the individual responds by answering Yes or No. The inventory which is composed of several parts, each one dealing with various types of experiences that bring forth some underlying tendencies of the indi-

vidual, enables the teacher to get a glimpse of the individual's inner self.

Below are samples of questions included in such an inventory as previously described:

1. Are you afraid to make your own decisions?
2. Do you prefer to stay in the background in social functions?
3. Before you do something do you usually pause to consider what the consequences of your act will be?
4. Do you love to meet people?
5. Do you enjoy doing things for other people?

This instrument may be given in the form of an inventory of children's interests. The individual indicates whether he likes, dislikes, or is indifferent to the idea expressed in each item. The affective responses of the individual to the many items presented will enable one to see things that interest and attract him and those that to him are repelling and unattractive. The usefulness of the instrument will depend to a large extent on the skill of the one who uses it

as he interprets the tendencies of the individual as revealed by the results in terms of his social relationships in the classroom, his academic activities, and his behavior in school, at work or at play.

The following is a part of a sample of the above:

What I Do and Don't Like

Name Sex Age.....
School Grade

	Like it		Don't care	Dislike it	
1. Go with class on picnics.	very much	a little	?	a little	very much
2. Be class representative at a meeting	very much	a little	?	a little	very much
3. Wash the dishes at home.	very much	a little	?	a little	very much
4. Get up early in the morning.	very much	a little	?	a little	very much
5. Talk with my friend's mother or father	very much	a little	?	a little	very much

Projective Devices

Projective devices have been used by some clinical psychologists in their desire to know more of the inner feelings of the individual. The belief in connection with the use of these devices is that no two individuals respond in the same manner to a given stimulus in a certain situation. Given a stimulus, the instantaneous reaction to it by an individual will reflect his inner feelings and attitudes toward it. Some of these devices are the following:

1. The Research Test which is made up of ink blots to which the individual reacts by telling what he sees in each one;

2. The Thematic Apperception Test which is based upon the interpretation of pictures;

3. The Free Word Association Test in which stimulus words are presented to which the individual responds by giving the first word he associates each one with;

4. Play techniques in which the child is given the opportunity to manipulate dolls and other toys;

5. Pictures to be drawn by the individual.

Very few people can administer and interpret projective devices with skill. Because of this, the use of these instruments has been limited in extent.

The Questionnaire on Social Values

If an individual has to be really understood, the social setting of which he is a part has to be studied. For his personality is a product of the interaction of the various factors within him as well as of the factors in his environment. So the effect — whether good or bad — of his immediate social world can not be discounted.

To be able to understand the peer group to which an individual belongs, all the members of the group are asked to answer a questionnaire involving traits they like and do not like in the persons they go with. The results of this will give one some insight into evaluations of personality traits by children of different age levels of both sexes and information on how the values differ between any two age levels and between sexes.

The following shows a part of this instrument. Do you like boys and girls who:

	Like it		Don't care	Dislike them	
1. Know more than you do?	very	a	?	a	very
2. Are good losers?	much	little	?	little	much
3. Don't mind being teased?	very	a	?	a	very
4. Are quiet and never say much?	much	little	?	little	much
5. Read lots of books?	very	a	?	a	very

6. Like to go to parties?	much	little	?	little	much
7. Play games very well?	very	a	?	a	very
	much	little		little	much
	very	a	?	a	very
	much	little		little	much

The Sociometric Test

In addition to these, the sociometric test may be given to the whole class to determine the structure of the group. The individual's position in the group has a considerable effect on his success in his academic work for it is within the setting of pupil — pupil relationships that learning takes place. The instrument makes use of an individual's choices from among his classmates on the basis of a criterion for association in the form of a question. Such a criterion may be any of the following:

For the elementary level:

1. What do you like to play with in the school yard? With whom among your classmates do you like to do that best? Name two of them.
2. Suppose you were to move to another room, which boys and girls from this class would you like best to go with you? Name two.
3. If you were asked to work on a project, who from this classroom would you like to work with you? Name two of them.

For the secondary level:

1. Suppose you were going on a class outing. You were to ride in a car with two others. Whom among your classmates would you choose?
2. If you were to plan a program for a convocation with two others, whom would you choose to be your co-workers?
3. If you were to do some classroom work with two of your classmates, whom would you choose?

The results obtained through the use of the sociometric technique will give a picture of the attraction and rejection within a particular group. This, together with a knowledge of the ideals of the group, will provide an eye-view into the pressures and stimuli in the setting in which the integrated individual functions.

The above instruments are some of those which may be utilized for assessing personality development of individual cases. It does not mean, however, that all of those are to be used for every case. Each case will need one or two specific instruments, and the need will depend on the specific personality deviation of the individual and on the degree of seriousness of the case. In the specific instance of Linda, who is described in the opening paragraph, the abnormality is such that the girl is being impeded in her progress by the deficiency in her personality development. There is therefore a necessity for some immediate

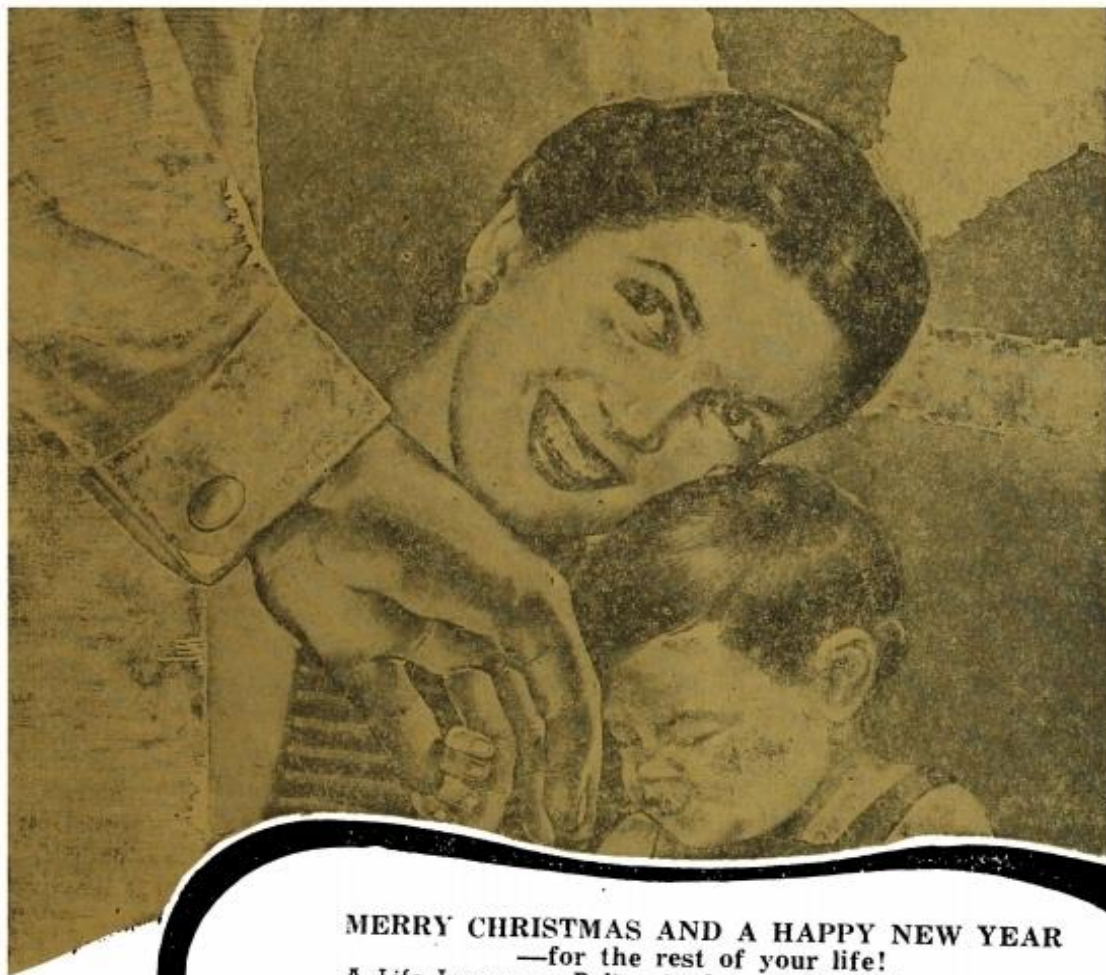
remedial treatment in her case. But proper treatment cannot be administered unless the cause of the trouble is definitely located. In view of this, one or two of the aforementioned instruments must necessarily be used.

The majority of the cases in the field necessitate the use of only a questionnaire or two for gathering the data asked for in the cumulative record. These, supplemented from time to time by anecdotal records, may do the trick of giving all the essential information about every individual. The important thing is for the educator to be able to visualize a complete picture of all the array of forces that are working within the individual and those in his immediate

environment and to understand why he behaves as he does. In the light of such an understanding, it may be possible to utilize both the curricular and extra-curricular activities in helping the individual make full use of his natural endowments to the end that he will develop mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially and make better adjustments to his environment.

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