

III—A SENSITIVE SCORING METHOD TO DETERMINE THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

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Introduction

In Holland, as in other countries, the adult training centre (D.V.O.) provides a service for mentally handicapped adults of 16 years and over. The objectives of such centres are:

1. To support the participants to retain and develop their social abilities.
2. To give guidance to the parents and guardians of the mentally handicapped in order to facilitate their social integration and maintain their social standard so that they are capable of remaining at home.

The social assessment of D.V.O. participants in five centres on the P-A-C 2 showed that most of them could hardly be given any credits, and it was clear that the skills listed in the P-A-C 2 were "too difficult" and not present. Despite the age of the people concerned, it was decided to use the P-A-C 1 in the five centres with which the writer was personally connected. Of the 162 D.V.O. participants examined, none reached an optimum score on the P-A-C 1. There appear to exist great differences amongst the participants in all the sectors of the P-A-C 1 and there was no indication that this was in any way connected with their age. Bearing in mind other work models and the main objectives of the D.V.O., the P-A-C 1 appears to be a sound basis to work from with the D.V.O. participants.

The Need for a More Detailed Scoring

In the course of the author's duties as an orthopedagogue it became clear that the positive and negative scoring method as described in the Manual of the P-A-C was not sensitive enough to score accurately the progress of D.V.O. participants. This has been recognised in the Manual by suggesting partial credits, though this leads to more problems than would appear at first. A warning is given in the Manual regarding half and quarter credits because nobody knows exactly the criteria for such partial credits and progress can, therefore, not easily be recorded.

A Five Point Scoring Plan

It seemed very necessary to the author that the items listed on the P-A-C 1 should be more clearly defined than was often done in the Manual and that these definitions themselves could be used for giving appropriate partial credits.

For instance, in item 1 of the Table Manners sub-section (Uses spoon when eating without requiring help), there is no way of indicating—if the score is negative—how far the child has developed in the acquisition of this skill and where the actual disturbance is occurring. Is it the grip, the co-ordination, or something else?

More refined scoring within the framework of the P-A-C would, therefore, not only indicate that a particular skill has not been achieved yet, but also how far someone has developed and on which particular level difficulties were occurring. Moreover, a more detailed scoring system would make it possible to have reliable detailed information recorded by different examiners who would use the prescribed criteria.

As a result of these considerations the present author provided a five point

scale for each of the P-A-C items, thereby hopefully giving greater depth and added dimension to the approach used with the D.V.O. participants.

The criteria for the five point division of each of the P-A-C 1 items are described in a special manual. As the following examples show, the points on the scale represent usually stepping stones. For example, the above-mentioned skill number one "uses spoon when eating without requiring help," lists four steps: (a) gets food on spoon, (b) brings spoon to mouth, (c) retains food on spoon, (d) ability to remove the food from the spoon using mouth musculature. The fifth point of the scale indicates that the child is not even able to achieve the first step.

Whilst most items can be sub-divided into five steps which represent a certain sequence, some items, as for example, differentiation of colours, cannot be treated in this way, and in these cases a series of questions are used to form a complete picture, and the five point scale indicates then merely the width of knowledge rather than the sequence of component steps.

A further refinement of the method is the use of a colour code which indicates the level which has been reached (see examples). Another possibility is, of course, also to give each step or colour a particular numerical value, e.g., 100, 75, 50, 25, 0, which can be used when the results have to be worked out in statistical terms.

Filling in the P-A-C diagram by using a colour code related to the clearly defined five point scale, provides considerable advantages since it indicates visually very clearly whether participants in the training scheme are in a stage where they know virtually nothing (the red stage) or that they are very near to a final achievement (green stage). These final sub-divisions are probably more psychologically attractive to the teacher, who can actually record the slow progress of his pupil during a considerable period of training, than the present approach of all or none scoring. This type of recording makes it immediately visible in which direction the D.V.O. participant requires more training and treatment, and by also marking the particular coding in digits or letters besides the item it is possible to record exactly what is known, and therefore to indicate how to commence further developmental measures. Thus this five point scale clearly shows the actual development of the D.V.O. participants and allows for a differentiated treatment and a more objective evaluation. The use of the five point scale will clearly pinpoint the cause of a devious participant's failure in not getting full credit and will initiate action as to what is to be done to help in this situation.

Example No. 1

SELF-HELP: TABLE HABITS

P-A-C 1. Uses spoon when eating without requiring help.

Instruction in the five-point scale manual.

- a. Gets food on spoon.
- b. Brings spoon to mouth.
- c. Retains food on spoon.
- d. Ability to remove the food from the spoon using mouth musculature.

When 4 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 1: blue.

When 3 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 1: green.

When 2 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 1: yellow.

When 1 subdivision is present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 1: orange.

When 0 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 1: red.

e.g. If the subdivisions a+b+d are present colour the space: green.

Example No. 2

SELF-HELP: MOBILITY

P-A-C 20. Uses play vehicle of some kind.

Instruction in the five-point scale manual.

- a. Can use or push a four-wheeled vehicle, without crashing into anything (for example, a wheelchair or pram).
- b. Can use or push a three-wheeled vehicle, without crashing into anything (for example, a tricycle or three-wheeled shopping car).
- c. Can use or push a two-wheeled vehicle, without crashing into anything (for example, a bicycle or hand-cart).
- d. Can push a one-wheeled vehicle, without crashing into anything (for example, a wheelbarrow).

When 4 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 20: blue.

When 3 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 20: green.

When 2 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 20: yellow.

When 1 subdivision is present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 20: orange.

When 0 subdivisions are present colour the space for P-A-C skill No. 20: red.

e.g. If the subdivisions a+b are present colour the space: yellow.

Example No. 3

COMMUNICATION: LANGUAGE

P-A-C 25. Relates experiences in a coherent way.

Instruction in the five-point scale.

Let the D.V.O. participant recount what he has done from the moment of getting up to now.

a. I washed myself.

b. I dressed myself.

c. I had breakfast.

d. I came here.

or similar activities.

Follow the same instructions as above.

e.g. If none of the subdivisions are present colour this space on the diagram: red.

Example No. 4

COMMUNICATION: PAPER AND PENCIL WORK

P-A-C 61. Draws recognisable "men" and "houses."

Instruction in the five-point scale.

I—DRAWING A MAN

1. Head.

2. Eyes.

3. Nose.

4. Mouth.

5. Trunk.

6. Arms.

7. Legs.

8. Indication of clothing.

II—DRAWING HOUSES

a. A square for the walls.

b. A roof.

c. An indication of a door.

d. An indication of a window.

PART I.

When 7—8 credits can be given colour the space: blue.

When 5—6 credits can be given colour the space: green.

When 3—4 credits can be given colour the space: yellow.

When 1—2 credits can be given colour the space: orange.

When 0 credits can be given colour the space: red.

PART II

When 4 credits can be given colour the space: blue.

When 3 credits can be given colour the space: green.

When 2 credits can be given colour the space: yellow.

When 1 credit can be given colour the space: orange.

When 0 credits can be given colour the space: red.

e.g. If in Part I, 5—6 credits can be given, this would be shown by a green marking. But if in Part II only two credits are obtained, this would result in a yellow marking. The space should either be marked with the colour indicating the average between Parts I and II, or, as in this case, with the colour indicating the lower score, namely yellow.