

Mr. GALLAGHER. I am glad that the rippling effect of the subcommittee is streaming in the right direction. [Laughter.]
(The following article later appeared in the New York Times.)

[From the New York Times, Sept. 5, 1965]

PEACE CORPS PSYCHIATRIC TESTS CALLED ESSENTIALLY IRRELEVANT (By Natalie Jaffe)

CHICAGO, September 4.—Psychiatric evaluations of the mental health of Peace Corps volunteers were found to be essentially irrelevant in predicting the young teachers' actual performance in Africa.

The American Psychological Association, at its 73d annual meeting here, heard Dr. M. Brewster Smith of the University of California outline today his studies of the first group of Peace Corps teachers in Ghana. Dr. Smith said the mental health stereotype of the sociable, self-confident, well-rounded, well-adjusted Peace Corps worker may have to be abandoned as a measure of competence in favor of more sensitive judgments of commitment and interest.

"The current preoccupation with identifying the disturbed puts to single-minded an emphasis on one set of liabilities without attending to assets appropriate to a job," he said.

EARLY ASSESSMENT

"So long as the volunteers were competent teachers and interested in Africa, their quirks didn't matter," Dr. Smith said in an interview after his address. He based his address on a study of 45 volunteers, both before and after their 2 years of teaching in Ghana, conducted under a contract with the Peace Corps.

Dr. Smith, a psychologist, is a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Berkeley, and a special research fellow of the National Institute of Mental Health.

While the volunteers were in training at Berkeley, each was seen in two 50-minute interviews by seven, psychiatrists from the Langley-Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute.

On one of the predictions they made, called psychological effectiveness, high ratings were given to "the optimally adjusted personality as viewed by clinical psychologists—what amounts to a mental health stereotype," Dr. Smith said.

INTERVIEWS IN GHANA

After the volunteers had been in Africa for a year, Dr. Smith and an associate Dr. Raphael S. Ezekiel of the University of Michigan, went to Ghana and held long, informal interviews with the young teachers at their schools.

The psychologists made another trip at the end of the second year. Both sets of interviews were recorded.

In the interviews, the volunteers discussed their jobs and how they felt about themselves and Ghana.

Back at Berkeley, Dr. Smith's research teams analyzed the interviews and broke them down into components—65 describing personal attitudes and 64 describing performance inside the classroom and out. These components were subsequently rated by 12 advance graduate students in psychology who had never met the young teachers.

"The psychiatrists' mental health ratings had a close to zero correlation with our criterion measures of competent performance," Dr. Smith reported.

TEST DISCREPANCIES

He said he found the discrepancies "not surprising, in view of the psychiatrist's professional training, their responsibility for weeding out disqualifying pathology, and their essential ignorance of the situations the volunteers faced."

No one, even in the Peace Corps administration, he added, knew exactly what was in store for the volunteers when the program first began.

He emphasized that since the final evaluations were based mainly on interviews with the volunteers themselves, the comparisons of prediction and performance could be challenged for their objectivity.