

# Where Does Guidance Take Place? \_\_\_\_\_

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A REAL DILEMMA confronts those who work with adolescents as they attempt to formulate generalizations about guidance. On the one hand is the point of view that a good secondary school curriculum, through a general education program, will provide youth adequate help with their problems. On the other is the concept of guidance as a highly specialized function requiring specially trained personnel and an organization apart from the curriculum.

If the first premise is accepted and efforts are concentrated on the arduous process of revising courses, retraining teachers, and educating parents for the new curriculum—there are still youth with problems, youth who need help even while the curriculum is being revised. If, on the other hand, efforts are concentrated on testing, recording, and counseling, guidance experts sooner or later discover that the problems of their counselees cannot be solved by these efforts alone—the curriculum must be revised!

## A Suggested Solution

The way out of this dilemma, we believe, is to concentrate energies on the immediate and obvious problems around us—the *problems of boys and girls*. Agreements and actions result much more readily from solving real problems than from reconciling conflicting theories.

For example, high school teachers are usually aware of youth's academic difficulties. Genuine concern here leads to analysis of difficulties individuals have in reading, observing, listening, and in forming judgments. Diagnostic tests are given, conferences are held, remedial procedures are determined. The teacher finds his own facilities lacking and looks for help from the specialist in diagnosis. The specialist makes further analyses which lead to other recommendations for the teacher and youngster.

Where does guidance take place? From our point of view, *guidance is going on at every point where individuals are given help in the identification of their problems and the formulation of plans for solving these problems*. Thus, the point of view in effective guidance is one of studying and planning for individual youth.

## A Way to Begin

The initiation of any organized program of help to individuals should be prefaced by a series of studies, inventories, and surveys in both school and community. The significance of such research cannot be over-emphasized since it can serve several very important purposes.

*The direction and emphasis of the guidance program should be established by the findings of cooperative studies in school and community.* Until ade-

quate information is available on dropouts and graduates from a school and an analysis made of failures and course changes by students, only haphazard guesses can be ventured as to the needs of students. When the wealth of information from such studies is collected and studied, next steps in initiating the program are generally apparent.

*A better knowledge of the community and of its present and potential relationship to the school is helpful for those who are responsible for guidance activities.* Through parent-teacher-student discussion of the personal-social needs of students; the vocational planning and opportunities of boys and girls; and the varied activities of young people both in and out of school, valuable assistance can be given to guidance workers. Inevitably, an inventory of agencies already in the community which are engaged in youth services must be made and plans laid for correlating their activities with the school program.

*Such preliminary "stage setting" is important because it prepares a large segment of the population for acceptance of guidance as part of the responsibility of schools.* Many programs have foundered in the shoals of public ignorance, indifference, and misinformation.

Armed with such information and experience as suggested, a school faculty proposal can be more confidently made in terms of time, facilities, personnel, and other arrangements. Two items are significant in the above statement. "A school faculty proposal" implies that the entire group has been involved in the planning and research leading up to the proposal. Any administrator,

committee, or "enlightened group" is doing violence to basic democratic principles in education if such a sweeping reorganization of group thinking and practice as implied in a guidance program is made without the sanction and understanding of the majority of the school group. Furthermore, it is evident that a good guidance program is a budgetary problem; adequate support must be forthcoming from the community for this program if any measurable degree of success is to be noted. Certainly the area of organized guidance is still in its experimental stages, and, like any other experimental program, should not be hampered by limitations placed on it by boards of education which do not understand the implications of the program.

#### The People Who Participate

What kind of person should an administrator look for in hiring teachers whom he wishes to involve in a guidance program? What about the classroom teacher who has a role to play in guidance? Added to the usual desirable qualities—preparation in broad fields, good intelligence and scholarship, personal attractiveness, and stability of character—we propose that potential guidance workers in the classroom must have an understanding of modern principles of child development and mental hygiene plus a general concept of the role of guidance in the school. A working philosophy of curriculum is also important for a teacher who views the whole school program as important in guiding young people.

If we agree that guidance specialists are important for special services, what additional training is necessary? Any

progressive school or department of education in our higher institutions furnishes the answer in terms of courses in tests and measurements, vocational and educational counseling, and special on-the-job experience in personnel work in business and industry. And yet, in the case of both general and specialized guidance workers in our schools, mere training will not guarantee a good program. The personality of the workers will defeat or promote the goals. Particularly do we refer to intra-staff relationships. Constantly, guidance-minded individuals must guard against messiah complexes, intolerance of conservative viewpoints, and feelings of superiority which may stem from working with pupils' more intimate and revealing adjustment problems.

Accepting the principle that the training and personality of the person is most important, the amount of experience becomes secondary, especially as it relates to experience in the field of education. Exceptions might be made in the case of positions in highly organized programs of guidance where previous experience could be helpful in organizing and administering guidance services. Perhaps the experience gained in situations removed from school routines is most important. A rich experience in travel, work, recreation, and human relationships is certainly of help in making people broad-minded and guidance-conscious.

### The In-Service Job

Closely related to the problem of guidance personnel is the importance of in-service education experiences *for all teachers*. Faculty meetings, conferences, study groups, workshops, case studies,

vocations studies, and surveys are devices enterprising administrators may use to promote guidance. In fact, unless school-wide efforts along these lines are routine procedures, the guidance program is doomed. At best, it becomes a mere time-consuming, troublesome appendage.

No matter where or when guidance programs are organized, it must always be remembered that some guidance has already gone on for as long as the school has existed. The importance of rallying and coordinating all guidance services is apparent, and the necessity of establishing good working relationships among all groups and members is easily seen. School nurse, visiting teacher, attendance officer, welfare agencies, counselors, teachers, deans, and principal must all fit into a pattern of recognized responsibilities and relationships. Without such a pattern, chaos may result which can do untold damage to guidance efforts.

Full responsibility must be vested in the administrator of a building for the development of his guidance program even though in larger cities a director of guidance for the entire system may be necessary. Without local responsibility and initiative, guidance may be only a superimposed idea. With the understanding and support of its principal as leader, a school staff can change the outlook and outcomes of an entire educational program. Therefore, we believe that although certain administrative responsibilities and duties can be delegated to competent personnel, the over-all direction of guidance must rest with the principal, to be worked out through democratic participation on the part of all staff members.

### Facilities for the Job

At the risk of being accused of a lack of sympathy and understanding for the problem, we suggest that no formula can be laid down for assigning time or counselee-load to guidance workers. These are relative matters, depending upon the guidance services which the school feels it ought to perform and the extent to which the whole staff can be involved in the program.

It may be that if a faculty on the whole is not guidance-minded, more time is needed by those who do assume responsibility for guidance; by the same token, however, if much time and emphasis is placed on specialists' services, it may become that much more difficult to draw a major portion of the staff into an appreciation of the role of guidance, if not an active participation in the program. Needless to say, there is a minimum of time and load for either counselors or teachers without which a job cannot be done, either in classroom or counseling office. This can be arrived at only through experimentation, and must be open to revision as the program develops.

More apparent are the needs for adequate tools, records, and space for guidance services. These items, as well as the time, constitute a budgetary problem and must be demonstrated as real needs based on study and survey. It can safely be said that any guidance program in its early stages needs to move slowly in terms of its records, tests, and specialized services, accelerating and expanding only as the need and function of expansion has been clearly demonstrated. Too often guidance programs have been buried under

reams of reports, test scores, and records for which frustrated guidance workers lacked time and clerical assistance to study and interpret. A well-organized, democratically conceived, faculty-wide participation in the evolution of a guidance program would prevent such unfortunate circumstances from developing.

### Curriculum and Guidance

The point of view presented earlier in this article draws no hard and fast distinction between curriculum and guidance. Guidance, we hold, takes place wherever individuals are given help in identifying and solving their problems. Ideally, the entire educational program, or curriculum, will be concerned with the problems of individuals. Actually, curriculum practice falls far short of the ideal. Probably a desirable relationship in the typical school situation is for the curriculum progressively to become more closely identified with youth's own problems.

The authors have observed three general approaches to achieving this relationship. First, specialized guidance workers may undertake a revision of the curriculum through reporting to teachers and other curriculum planners the curriculum problems identified in guidance activities. The counselor reports to the teacher that a student wishes to drop the teacher's class because of its uninteresting nature and suggests that a revision of the course is necessary. This type of reporting may be helpful but in many instances merely results in friction between teacher and counselor, a defensive attitude on the part of teachers, and maintenance of the existing curriculum.

A second, more positive approach to a curriculum related to youth's problems is possible through teachers' use of various records about individuals. Unfortunately, very real mechanical problems make the necessary cooperation and communication exceedingly difficult. For example, how can our ninth-grade counselor interpret adequately the record of each of the one hundred or more youth he counsels, to each of their four or five senior high teachers? Assuming that facts and judgments known or reached by the counselor are important, their chances of being considered by teachers depend on, first, the preparation of adequate notes and records by the counselor, and, second, consultation of these notes and records by teachers. Our experience indicates that both the preparation and consultation of such notes is frequently inadequate. Furthermore, no amount of record-keeping assures that teachers will plan classroom experiences with concern for the unique characteristics of the individuals they teach.

A more fundamental approach to developing a curriculum which is itself a "guidance program" is a faculty study of the relationship of curriculum and guidance. Some of the possible methods of this study have already been described in this article. Analysis of the reasons why youth leave school, of what they do after high school, of their successes and failures in and after school, of their participation in student activities, and of their work experiences has brought about more curriculum change than any other procedure. Such analyses may be prepared by counselors or research workers and made the basis of faculty discussion.

It has also been found helpful to discuss individual school-leavers, course-changers, failures, and graduates with all teachers concerned. Some teachers have made studies within their own classes of participation in student activities, of work experiences, and other out-of-school activities, and used the findings in planning units of work for the group as well as experiences for individuals. Faculty discussion of research data for the school as a whole and of individual cases is particularly helpful in developing dissatisfactions with the existing curriculum. Studies within classroom groups are more immediately effective in developing curriculum plans around individual needs and problems.

#### A Sound Evaluation

The purpose of a guidance program as described in this article is to give adolescents help in the identification of their problems and in the formulation of solutions for these problems. An adequate evaluation of the program would determine, therefore, whether more and how many more youth were given more and how much more help as a result of the program. Actually, such data would be very difficult to secure. However, we believe that certain phenomena are directly related to youth's lack of help in guidance, and that we may therefore evaluate the program on the basis of progress in connection with these phenomena.

For example, a former lack of relationship in the Battle Creek High School between enrollments in college-preparatory courses and the number of youth going to college was considered due, in part, to a lack of counseling. Fol-

lowing the establishment of counseling service, the percentage of youth electing college preparatory courses was considerably reduced. Similarly, a reduced rate of both drop-outs and failures resulted from studies of drop-outs and failures—brought about by greater concern for youth's problems. Follow-up studies of graduates has resulted in considerable change in some requirements in pre-vocational courses. Study of youth's health and other personal problems has led to introduction of a new required course in general education called "Basic Living." Current analyses of youth's out-of-school work experience will provide a basis, it is hoped, for further relating the curriculum to the problems of individuals.

It is suggested, therefore, that the guidance program might be evaluated in part by comparing status from year to year with respect to such items as:

Correlation between pre-vocational courses taken and actual career choices after high school

Occupational success of youth in jobs for which plans were made before school graduation

Number of youth leaving high school before graduation for reasons of dissatisfaction

Number of youth changing courses for reasons of dissatisfaction

Types of extra-class and out-of-school activities sponsored by the school in response to student requests, and participation in these activities

Number and nature of problems of delinquency

Attendance problems associated with dissatisfaction at school

Learning difficulties for which remedial measures are developed

Conferences with teachers and counselors requested by youth to discuss personal problems

Adoption of problem-solving procedures in classroom activities.

## *The Emerging Role of the Teacher*\_\_\_\_\_

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WHAT IS THE PLACE of the classroom teacher in the guidance program?

Judging by the comments, it would seem teachers do not agree on their role:

"My children are learning to live and work together. That's guidance."

"I just teach. Guidance goes on in those little conference rooms down the hall."

"Guidance is helping teachers with the dull and maladjusted children."

"I'm scheduled for guidance the first period. That's when I let loose and preach!"

"All teachers who understand and like children, do guidance."

The experts do not agree either. Past discussions have resulted in the

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