

THERE he sits, waiting. At the moment he is waiting for the sound of the bell; oblivious to the sound of the voice from the front of the classroom explaining a problem in geometry.

This is not a sporadic daydreamer who will come to class tomorrow and attend what is said, grasping the geometric principle. This student is a chronic waiter. He is waiting for the end of this school day and he is treading time until he can quit the schools altogether. He is one of the mentally unemployed and in today's society the chances are that, pursuing his present course, he will become another addition to our national unemployment when he does leave school.

The teacher recognizes the problem presented here. This pupil has withdrawn from educational experiences in the classroom. Is it that he really is not intellectually capable of doing the work? Or is this a gifted underachiever? What is the cause? How can this student and others like him be reached?

To Seek Answers

It is the role of the counseling and guidance service in modern education to seek answers to these questions. Using appropriate testing devices, it is possible to identify whether or not the pupil is achieving in keeping with his intellectual potential. In a district where suitable records have been kept throughout his academic life one can ascertain the history of this pupil's development.

The Highline School District has devised a system of record keeping which is comprehensive and which is a ready index to be used by the teacher and

counselor. A four page record form gives a concise view of the child's educational progress from grades 1-12. This includes the use of local percentiles to relate aptitude and achievement scores of all tests given as part of Highline's minimum testing program. A developmental graph clarifies strengths, weaknesses, and progress through the years.

The Highline District's minimum testing program includes the following:

- Grade 1: Metropolitan Readiness
- Grade 2: Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test
- Grade 3: Metropolitan Achievement Test
- Grade 4: Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test
- Grade 5: Metropolitan Achievement Test
- Grade 7: Lorge-Thorndike and Metropolitan Achievement Test
- Grade 8: California Algebra Prognosis Test
- Grade 9: Iowa Test of Educational Development
- Grade 10: Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test
- Grade 11: Iowa Test of Educational Development.

At the high school level, pupils may take the tests for college admission and/or scholarships.

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Guidance for the Disaffected

In addition to the testing record, significant data covering health, interests, limitations, attendance record and counselor notes are included in the Highline Development Guide. The scope of this record reflects the team approach which is used in this school district. The nurses and district physician, classroom teacher, principal, psychological services and counseling personnel cooperate in identifying and helping the disaffected child. Special education services such as speech and hearing therapists may be called in for consultation.

The team approach is increasingly important in a time of increasing enrollments. Research studies nationally indicate that from 17 to 50 percent of high-ability students, depending on the school setting, are working below capacity. It has been demonstrated that failure to continue education is not a problem peculiar to low-ability students. Nearly one-fifth of Wolfbein's sample of 22,000 school leavers had IQs of 110 or higher.¹

Identification of handicaps is only the first step. The persistence of deficiencies can often be traced but if they have not been corrected the student has not been helped by the identification. Such problems as reading handicaps or deficiencies in other learning skills, health weaknesses, or social and emotional disturbances may be corrected and identified more readily when resources of the total school staff are utilized.

Had our non-attentive pupil who now sits waiting in his geometry class been identified at the elementary level, the teacher and principal would have referred him to psychological services for an evaluation of his behavior. Relevant

tests would have been administered by psychological services following consultations with the teacher, principal, pupil and the parents. Implications for education and environmental factors would have been discussed with the affected parties as an outcome of the study made by psychological services. At the secondary level the counselor would be responsible for the decision as to what course of action should be followed in dealing with the disaffected pupil. The pupil's Developmental Guide would furnish valuable information.

In some cases this pupil would participate in counseling sessions arranged for a group of students within the school. Group counseling may be approached on three levels. Level one is leader-directed, with the counselor preparing the topic to be discussed by the group and the topics handled as they would be in a classroom; that is, by recitation and lecture. Level two utilizes joint planning for topics by the counselor and the group. All persons bring information related to the topic and then divide into smaller groups to make further explorations. In level three, the choice of topic comes from the group and the following interchange is keyed to this group selected subject. This may be open discussion which allows all participants to express their needs and feelings. Group discussion will help each pupil to observe that others of similar age have similar problems.

The group counseling session at the third level has been used advantageously with underachievers. A group of eight to ten pupils will be counseled by a leader who sets the environment through enabling all the grouping to realize they have a similar problem. The counselor can then expertly key the group into the topic of why people do not achieve the

¹ Seymour L. Wolfbein. "Transition from School to Work: A Study of the School Leaver." *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, October 1959; p. 98-105.

grades in school which they are capable of making. A great advantage in this approach is that when a problem is discussed within the peer group, solutions offered within this peer group become more acceptable to the pupil than solutions handed down from the adult level.

Self-understanding is a basic goal in all counseling, for this is a prime requisite for self-actualization. The approach to self-understanding may vary greatly with different pupils. The pupil's peer relations and family relations are a part of the total picture. The Developmental Guide has been so devised that it may be discussed with the pupil and his parents when the counselor deems this necessary.

In using the guide in an individual counseling situation, the counselor uses this to assist the pupil in bringing the student's academic history into focus. This is often an aid in helping the student reflect upon the reasons for his lack of motivation. This exploration may reveal to the counselor the clue necessary in awakening new motivation within the pupil. Such motivation may be the solution to academically salvaging this pupil through giving him self-direction toward an appropriate goal.

A Special Program

In certain cases the principal, teachers and counselor may find they have exhausted the ways in which certain disaffected pupils may be dealt with in the regular school structure. A pupil, through chronic truancy, may have divorced himself completely from the school environment. Is the school to abdicate what it considers an impossible educational situation and expel such pupils? The expelled student may then have accomplished his goal of complete disassocia-

tion from the schools but what is he to do?

One such pupil wanted to become a mechanic. He achieved suspension from school on the grounds of chronic truancy. The school's attempts to deal with this pupil had proved futile. After his suspension this pupil sought employment in a garage. He found it was impossible to gain such employment without a high school education. He was now substantially behind his peer group in academic standing. To deal with cases of this nature the Highline School District has this year initiated a special program at the junior and senior high levels.

Pupils are admitted to this program on a four to six week probationary period after a consultation with the pupil and his parents. During the period while the pupil is still under suspension he will attend special classes. These classes are held from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. outside the regular school schedule. Classes are limited to 12 pupils and cover basic subject areas, with homework assignments which are to be completed outside the class periods. A pupil who indicates by his work that he is interested in completing his education will have his case considered by a committee and may be returned to regular classes. The individual who defaults under these arrangements will have failed in his final opportunity to remain in the school program.

In our democratic society educators deal with the full range of youth and must seek ways to assist all toward a meaningful future. This calls for more organized means for identification of talents and attention to the means for motivation toward individual achievement. Recognition of these educational challenges calls for well defined and effectively utilized guidance services within the schools.

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