IMPLEMENTING VOCATIONAL THEORY IN GROUP GUIDANCE

Sheilah D. Thompson

Vocational Guidance is part of the armamentarium of every teacher of guidance; yet few topics are handled with so little insight and inspiration. Teachers and students alike appear to "go through the motions" - a process usually involving the administration of an interest inventory by the teacher, and the preparation of a job study by the student, with some brief exposure, academically, to "the world of work" between these two events. Why is the study of vocations, an area of such vital importance in the lives of most people, such a barren sterile experience in most guidance classes?

One explanation lies in the theoretical model underlying most approaches to the subject. No one would consider a Model-T Ford a suitable method of rapid conveyance today; yet there appears to be nothing anachronistic about using a 1908 model for vocational guidance. Frank Parsons' three step process is still the chief approach in the guidance class:

(a) assist the student in making an inventory of his interests and capacities

(b) survey the occupational scene

(c) fit (a) the student, into (b) "the world of work" by some process like putting pegs into holes, a procedure labelled 'true reasoning' by Parsons.

Information on Author:

Sheilah D. Thompson is Assistant Professor of Guidance and Counseling in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver British Columbia.

Of course, Parsons' contribution was immense in his day, but when one remembers that most of the current theories in psychology and sociology post-date this period, the persistence of a static model seems all the more remarkable. Indeed, some of the current theorists (17) defend the model, insisting only on more reliable measurement of traits and better predictive relationships to occupations. But many theorists to-day are concerned with bridging the gap between vocational psychology and related areas - personality and learning theories, counseling theory and the sociology of work. Few claim the existence yet of a comprehensive vocational theory, but many concepts are being presented, tested, and gradually built into a framework for a meaningful methodology in vocational guidance.

Guidance teachers might find a brief survey of some of the current thinking a source of inspiration for new approaches to the whole subject. One major contribution toward the development of theory has been the realization that vocational guidance is not concerned with a choice point in the life of the young person, rather it is part of a lifelong developmental process. The tying-in of vocational development with life stages has been an important step in the changing emphasis of vocational guidance. Buehler, Lazarsfeld, Erikson, Havinghurst, and Miller and Form have all contributed patterns of life stages into which vocational stages fit, and much of the present research takes place within the growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline (2, 22, 23) framework.

Various theorists have selected different aspects of this conceptual process for emphasis. Super, for instance, regards the vocational process as an implementation of the self-concept (22), and his ideas provide much source material. He states that the aspects of the self-concept which must be studied are the dimensions of personality, the traits which people attribute to others and to themselves (22, p. 24). He introduces measures other than traits which he calls metadimensions of self-concepts. By metadimensions he means the characteristics of the traits which people attribute to themselves, such as self-esteem, clarity, abstraction, refinement, certainty, stability and realism. He also describes what he calls self-concept systems, which are really constellations of traits which make up the self-concept system. He cites six of these: structure, scope, harmony, flexibility, idiosyncrasy, regnancy. Both of these

groupings suggest ideas for teachers in group guidance. For example, "Idiosyncrasy" is an area that might be explored.   Super describes idiosyncrasy as those ways in which a person sees himself as different from others, and he recommends the use of interest and personality inventories with atypicality scales in identifying idiosyncrasy.   This method might enable the student and the teacher to pin point particular traits that may have vocational or avocational significance.   Another way of identifying idiosyncratic behaviour might be through a "Complete these sentences...." type of assignment with items like:

1.   Only I know......
2.   I'm different because......
3.   Other people like _____ but ......
4.   Only I can......
5.   My best bet is......
6.   My biggest chance is......

Super's idea of a dictionary to relate "Psychtalk", personality descriptions, to "Occtalk", job descriptions, also suggests many topics for guidance lessons (22, p. 35).

An approach quite different to the idiosyncratic is that of Holland, who has developed a theory based on the assumption that we can characterize people by their resemblance to personality types. He establishes six categories: realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising, and artistic. The descriptions of each type (7) provide material for personality examination through questionnaires, and the examples of jobs within the categories introduce the idea of job families.   This idea is extended by Anne Roe's level-field-enterprise (16) model of vocational choice, a useful method in integrating interests, aptitudes and level of aspiration.

One of the most useful designs for vocational guidance in the school system is that of Ginzberg (14, p. 96) with his fantasy, tentative choice, realistic choice model.   Teachers and counselors have long been concerned about "unrealistic" vocational choices. What can be done to increase the ability of the student to make wise choices? Ginzberg's research indicates that choices in Grades 7 and 8 are usually based on interests, in Grades 9 and 10 on capacity, and in Grades 11 and 12 on values. This categorizing would lead to quite

different emphases at each school level, and can provide some explanation for the lack of "realistic" choice. A concern for values at the senior levels suggests an examination of the place of work in the life of our culture, and an exploration into the area of job satisfaction (10). What are the aspect of jobs that make people like their work? What factors have to be considered?

Some recent studies in this area (11) shatter the myth that the lower ability person is happy employed in a routine job. Obviously the job satisfaction picture is much more complex. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (12) provides one framework for examining this question. Are lower needs, such as safety and security, the ones being met by those lowest in the occupational ladder? Anne Roe (2 , p. 201) has suggested this as a fruitful area for research.

Tiedeman's work has been directed chiefly to the nature of vocational choice, and the processes involved (23). He offers a model of the processes of differentiation and integration in the problem-solving involved in career choice, regarding exploration of possible alternatives as prerequisite to crystallization and clarification of choice. His work is particularly relevant for high school students because he places the goal of vocational choice within the large context of choice of life style, talking about "making a life" rather than "making a living".

It is not the intention here to review in detail all the current theories about vocational choice - merely to indicate how much research being carried on in the field has implications for the teaching of vocational guidance. The chief concern is that the model of vocational development presented to students be more appropriate and relevant, and that aspects of vocational theory that are often neglected, such as personality variables, the nature and process of choice, and job satisfaction, be used to make the exploration carried on in guidance classes more meaningful.

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Cet article examine quelques idées courantes sur la théoric des vocations par rapport à leur application aux services d'orientation dans les écoles.   On suggère que le conseiller se sert trop du modèle théorique démodé de Frank Parsons.   Selon Parsons, le conseiller doit examiner les traits du client, le caractère du métier, et puis faire par l'emploi de la raison une correspondance. L'emphase actuel se dirige vers l'aspect dynamique du choix de profession. Buehler et Lazarsfeld ont proposé un concept de la vie individuelle comme développement par étapes, et plusiers écrivains ont fait l'application de cette idée au développement professionel, en suggérant que le choix de vocation commence par une période de fantaisie, puis d'exploration, d'établissement, de maintien, et finit par une période de déclin. Donald Super avance une approche théorique fondée sur l'idée que le choix de métier remplit pour chaque individu son concept de soi-même.   Holland examine les rapports entre les types de personnalité et le choix de métier;   Roe étudie la question de la satisfaction du travail relativement à la théorie de Maslow d'une hiérarchie de besoins.   Le conseiller de'orientation y trouvera quelques idées utiles pour l'amélioration de ses services au client.