

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GROUP GUIDANCE PROGRAM AND
SOME THOUGHTS ON COUNSELING

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Guidance is like a suit of clothes. Group guidance could be considered one leg of the trousers, and individual counseling the other leg. Neither one is complete in itself; it takes both branches to provide adequate coverage. Let's call record keeping the belt that holds things in place and testing the vest. The implication of this is that testing is perhaps the least important aspect of guidance, and not the most important as some imagine. The coat, over all, is the guidance philosophy which, in my opinion, puts the emphasis on three main points:

1. Every individual is a person of worth, deserving of acceptance and respect, even if his behavior is unacceptable at times.
2. A fundamental belief in freedom makes it impossible to want to manipulate the life of another human being. Instead, we want to give him freedom to become all that he can be, in his own way.
3. As guidance people we are sincerely concerned about the welfare of our fellow human beings, particularly of the boys and girls we work with. We really care.

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To come back to the trousers, with counseling as one leg and group guidance the other, this does not mean that the counselor or guidance teacher is always out on a limb, although that is sometimes true. The real point is that these two functions supplement each other and are inadequate one without the other. The group approach saves time in conveying information to many at once, and provides opportunity for the interplay of ideas. The individual approach is necessary for the application of ideas to each unique individual.

In our work at Winnipeg we have been busy revising and expanding both our guidance courses and our counseling services. Some of our conclusions may be of interest to you.

We concluded that the following principles would form the basis for our guidance course:

1. The program should be consistent with the developmental tasks of adolescence, and should time its content to exploit the "teachable moment" when students are ready.
2. The program should be developmental and cumulative from grade to grade in each of six main areas: orientation to a new school or a new grade; study methods; educational and vocational planning; personal guidance (developing self understanding and personal values and standards); social guidance (social skills and interpersonal relationships); and learning to use leisure constructively and enjoyably.
3. The content should be keyed to the main decision points, two of these being the choice of a high school course by students about to leave grade IX, and the choice of post high-school educational or vocational opportunities by students in grade XII.
4. The program should be based on up-to-date concepts and materials as far as possible. Extensive use was made of the third edition (1966) of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles in the vocational area, and the career concepts of Donald Saper (The Psychology of Careers), the hierarchy of human needs as discussed by Maslow, and other recent authorities' ideas.

5. A single basic program should be prepared, usable by students in all courses but sufficiently adaptable to allow emphasis suitable to students in each course.
6. Classes for guidance should be as homogeneous as possible, homogeneity being considered first by grade and course, second by general ability and achievement level, and third by sex. Then, in each class, the program should be adapted as to make it useful to the majority of class members.
7. In the program for each grade, certain topics should be identified as "required", some topics as "exclusively for that grade", and some topics as "optional". (This was one idea which was not carried out, partly for lack of time.)
8. Individual counseling was considered outside the committee's terms of reference, but was asserted to be an essential supplement to group guidance. It was recommended that the counselor be responsible for both functions with his case-load of students.
9. Guidance information should reach parents as well as students, especially concerning major decisions.
10. In view of the changing nature of the world of work and of social standards and institutions, the guidance program should be kept under constant review and up-dated at frequent intervals.

Let me give an example of the cumulative treatment of the topic of vocational guidance.

In grade VII - awakening of interest and developing positive attitude to work.

In grade VIII - extending the range of knowledge about careers.

- 3 areas of competence : with data, people, things
- where to get career information
- a survey of the world of work, by areas of work, or worker trait groups
- principal occupations in Manitoba
- part-time work

- In grade IX - choice of high school courses, relating the high school course, post high school training and career areas together.
- In grade X - group or individual study of a number of occupational groups, or worker-trait groups related to the course being taken and student interests.
- In grade XI - the factors relating to occupational choice: self-knowledge, occupational knowledge, other factors influencing choice
 - labor laws and labor unions
 - post high school education: methods and institutions
 - job hunting and job holding
- In grade XII - ways of assessing personal appraisal instruments
 - a detailed report by each student including
 - . a self assessment
 - . career goals
 - . detailed plans for the next step after leaving high school.

I will not go into classroom methods, but over 20 are suggested in the program (pp. 13-18).

It has been suggested that I give my opinion of an ideal guidance set-up in a school. Guidance, incidentally, is what I call the whole service, including group and individual work with students. I warn you that these ideas may seem somewhat impractical under the present circumstances, in the schools I supervise as well as your own, but I am looking ahead, and proposing an ideal to work toward.

The counselor himself comes first. He should be a person with whom students feel they can talk easily, because he listens, and understands them. He is respected for his interest and competence in his work, by both students and staff, and is probably the best teacher in the school. He is the kind of masculine person that boys can look up to, or the feminine type of woman whom girls can wish to emulate. To have a real understanding of his work he has taken professional training and probably has a master's degree in guidance, but his personality and effectiveness and not his diploma are his real credentials.

His time, weekly schedule, and responsibilities can be considered together. He has a number of group or classroom guidance periods each week or cycle, at least one period with each class for which he is responsible. These classes are scheduled at the same time as another counselor's class in the same grade and course and if possible at about the same general achievement level, but perhaps of the opposite sex, and these two classes and two counselors, or perhaps three of each, can be grouped in a variety of ways: all in one place for a film, debate, panel discussion or guest speaker; in groups segregated by sex for differentiated treatment of some topics; in mixed groups for other topics; three-quarters of the group in a general session and one-quarter in a small group for a seminar-type discussion. If additional counselors are free of class responsibilities at the same time, they could serve as leaders so that the whole two or three classes could be divided into seminar groups from time to time. I believe that discussion in depth best goes on in small groups of from 6 to 12 students, who meet often enough on a topic to get down to the realities.

For every 10 to 12 students in his guidance classes, the counselor has one counseling period per cycle. In these counseling periods he can individualize the treatment of matters considered in the group, and also deal with the other matters that are normally a counselor's responsibility. Thus his total guidance program will include two or three counseling periods for every group period.

The question of whether or not a counselor should teach an academic subject besides is still argued in some quarters. My opinion is that if he enjoys teaching the subject, perhaps even to the extent that he would give up guidance if it meant losing his academic subject entirely, he should be allowed to carry one academic class but probably not more. My guess is that he will find it difficult to keep up to date in two main areas, and will be ready to forego the academic eventually, however reluctantly. I would not put him into an academic class at all if he preferred a full-time guidance program and was doing a good guidance job.

The physical facilities for guidance would include a guidance centre in the school, probably of about classroom size containing

one office of about 100 square feet for each counselor, and a combination reading, display, and waiting room, with a school clerk as receptionist and record keeper. I have seen a scheme like this in a Toronto high school, and two Winnipeg high school guidance centres are set up this way. All the other junior and senior high schools have guidance centres, most of them as described above, and all are provided with clerical assistance by the superintendent's department.

The guidance centre would be located near the school office and nurse's room for easy communication and access to records, and on a main traffic path so that students have easy access to it. It should be open-looking and attractive so that students will want to come in.

Adjacent to the guidance centre should be one or more guidance classrooms, set-up with facilities for display of materials and the use of audio-visual aids. And in the same vicinity there should be at least one and preferably several rooms of committee or seminar size for small group discussions.

Materials should be available in the guidance centre, for both staff and students, including professional reference books and subscriptions to professional journals. The guidance records of students should also be filed there.

Finally, to coordinate the service in the school, division or district, to help counselors find ways and materials to the kind of job they want to do, to organize in-service training, and to help in the selection and placement of counselors, there should be a guidance supervisor.

In this description of an ideal school guidance arrangement, I have assumed that there will be auxiliary services such as the school social workers, reading specialists, speech and hearing clinicians, psychologists and psychiatrists such as are provided by the Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg.

Le révision et le développement des services d'orientation dans les écoles de Winnipeg ont été basés sur les principes suivants:

1. Les services d'orientation et de consultation à l'individu et en groupe sont également nécessaires et complémentaires.
2. Les programmes de groupe doivent prendre en considération l'idée générale du développement humain, et surtout des tâches qui confrontent la jeunesse.
3. Le conseiller devrait compléter une formation professionnelle convenable, jusqu'à la maîtrise; il lui faut aussi une révision continue de sa préparation.