

Personal Development and Guidance in College and Secondary School

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HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GUIDANCE
IN COLLEGE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL

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PREFACE

THE function of this book is to summarize the results of investigations relating to personnel work. It is intended for the use of specialists in work with individuals, for research workers, and for teachers whose part in the guidance of students is increasingly recognized. Such a summary furnishes facts and principles useful to personnel workers (1) in performing their primary functions, such as conferring with students concerning a variety of personal problems, giving educational and vocational guidance, and supervising the social life of the institution, and (2) in performing their marginal but still important duties, such as attending and participating in faculty meetings, serving on committees, and conferring with the principal or president concerning policies.

I have, for a long time, recognized the need of bringing together in an integrated form the scattered data on problems in this field of student personnel work. It is part of a program of publicity which Woodrow Wilson once defined as "taking the truth out of cupboards and putting it into the minds of men who stir abroad."

I am indebted to the students in my classes in research in student personnel administration at Teachers College, Columbia University, for reports of investigations which they have contributed during the past five years; to Dr. Irving Lorge for his generous critical reading of the entire manuscript, with special attention to the statistical methods mentioned; and to Miss Phebe Bergen and Dr. Jacob Orleans for their assistance in the editorial work. I also wish to acknowledge my obligation to the many authors and publishers who have given permission for quoting from a large number of published investigations and to my associates in the field of individual development and guidance.

R. S.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE task of individual development and guidance of children and adults is called by many names. Teachers often call it *taking an interest in their students*. In the pre-school field, the term *child development* expresses this important educational concept; in elementary school *child guidance* frequently is used. Work having to do specifically with individuals in secondary schools is commonly referred to as *guidance*. In industry, *personnel work* is widely used to refer to that phase of any organization which is concerned with "the direction and coordination of human relations" (89a:2)¹. Colleges and universities have used this term and we find incorporated in their personnel programs many of the principles and procedures of industrial personnel management described by Tead and Metcalf (89a). Personnel departments have been established and personnel officers appointed, as administrators became increasingly interested in the development and guidance of the college student. Antedating the advent of the separate personnel department were the offices of dean of women and dean of men who for more than thirty years have been concerned with the welfare of the students in higher institutions of learning. The idea of personnel work permeating the entire institution rather than being crystallized in a department or single office has, within the past few years, gained many able advocates.

Psychological tests have given an enormous impetus to the scientific study of the individual, and a pioneer's vision (54a) of the possibility of a more precise appraisal of students' needs and capacities has been realized to an extent which led an educator to say recently that "educational guidance is now possible." The improvement of the measurement of intelligence, the construction of reliable, valid, and comparable achievement tests in all the important high-school subjects, and the development of cumulative records have all

¹ Throughout the text the sources of information are indicated by a number placed in parentheses. This number indicates the book or article in the bibliography to which reference is made. This number is sometimes followed by a colon and a figure which gives the specific page from which quotation is made.

contributed directly and significantly to the study of individual differences and to effective work with individuals.

Social case work is another influence which has made a contribution to personnel work in education in both point of view and technics. Social case workers' emphasis on the rôle of the home, the community, and the economic and social order in individual development should be a more integral part of educators' point of view. Too often, people in educational institutions think of students in their academic environment without being cognizant of the influences impinging upon them from their past experiences and from their family and neighborhood contacts. The technics of social case work—the interview and the case history—have become almost as essential to the personnel officer as they are to the social case worker. In fact, the visiting teacher, who is essentially a social case worker, is now employed in many school systems.

It is because of the many factors influencing the development of guidance and personnel that a summary of investigations in this field becomes so unwieldy. It is, however, none the less necessary.

Summaries of investigations have taken a number of different forms: (1) digests of separate articles, (2) the brief mention of the contribution of each investigation in an exhaustive bibliography of investigations in the field, (3) a more detailed report of outstanding contributions, and (4) an integrated creative summary of all the significant investigations.

The digest of separate articles serves the purpose of making available to the reader in brief form material from a variety of sources to which he may not easily have access. But it requires the reader to make his own synthesis and find relationships among the various articles in a particular area, and often to seek the original report in order to find facts omitted from the digest.

The brief mention of the general contribution of a large number of articles has the same value as a well-annotated bibliography, the purpose of which is to guide the reader's selection of investigations for more intensive study.

The more detailed report of outstanding contributions is of genuine value and fulfills its function of giving the reader quickly significant facts from a variety of sources which may not be accessible to him.

Most valuable of all is the integrated creative summary made by a person who has an overview of the entire field and can see wherein the results of investigations supplement or contradict one another, and what is the peculiar contribution each makes in method, facts,

and principles to a particular area of knowledge. In such a summary the results of research in different areas of the field are given in sufficient detail so that the reader will, in general, not have to refer to the original article.

The present summary of investigations is intended to be of the last-mentioned type. Its general functions are to give an overview of the field, to describe and evaluate methods of studying the major areas of personnel work, to show the contribution each investigation makes to a classified list of topics or problems in each area, to indicate gaps in present knowledge, and to suggest additional problems for investigation. This summary goes beyond mere presentation of the results of research. It includes also the author's own evaluation and opinions.

I. SOURCES OF MATERIAL

The materials on which these summaries are based are the published reports of investigations made prior to January 1, 1934. The first reference to educational personnel work in the *Reader's Guide* occurs in the volume of 1919-1921. It seemed, therefore, that in accord with the law of diminishing returns, the effort expended in systematically seeking references prior to 1919 would prove to be relatively unproductive.

2. DEFINITION OF SCOPE OF THE FIELD

It was with great difficulty that the field of investigation was defined. The problem lay in the present indefiniteness regarding both personnel work and research.

Personnel work, defined as "work having specifically to do with the individual" (40:5), might be broadly interpreted to include most of the investigations in the field of education. Crawford's statement (21:405) that

personnel work as a whole may be regarded as a means whereby the individual's total educative experience may be most effectively related to his personal needs and potentialities

likewise requires a broad interpretation. Personnel administration is interpreted as the coordinating function of personnel work (40). This summary is limited to the topics generally recognized as belonging to student personnel work. It does not include articles dealing with the subject-matter fields; with the technics of learning specific subjects; with the mechanics of test construction; or with curriculum construction in general, although a few of the most

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significant articles on curriculum construction have been included to call attention to the fact that a curriculum suited to the capacity of the individual is essential in successful work with students. Articles on the use of, but not on the construction of, tests are included. Articles on study habits which may be useful to personnel workers advising students concerning study problems are included, but not articles on methods of instruction, or, with several exceptions, laboratory experiments on the psychology of learning. All these areas of education are significant to the personnel worker, but it is obviously impossible to include investigations in all these contributory fields within the scope of the four volumes.

The articles were further restricted to the high-school and college field. With the increasing tendency to break down the barriers between high school and college, it is fitting that investigations relating to these two levels should be summarized in the same book.

3. SELECTION OF REFERENCES

A large proportion of the references examined were not included in the summary or in the bibliography. Perhaps still more should have been omitted and the summary limited to the reports which met the critical standards of research. Very few, if any, of the investigations in this field contribute conclusive evidence on the problems of personnel work in high school and college. It was thought to be of value in this pioneer period of work with individuals to include: (1) a number of personnel programs and specific procedures which have been evolved in certain institutions as a result of thought and experience, (2) exploratory surveys using the questionnaire or interview, and (3) attempts to set up experimental types of investigation—controlled and “uncontrolled” and laboratory experiments—even though the results obtained proved inconclusive or applied specifically to the conditions of the particular experiment.

The critical, though not experimental, evaluation of programs and procedures is useful in suggesting real and practical, not hypothetical and theoretical, problems for investigation. Descriptive accounts of personnel work familiarize the research worker with the best present practice and prevent wasteful experimentation with procedures which have been found in practical experience to be unsatisfactory.

The exploratory surveys furnish the research worker with a mass of opinions and practices to be tested. The results of some of these

surveys, moreover, furnish good opinions on which to act temporarily at least until they can be substantiated by experimentation.

A number of unsuccessful attempts to set up experiments are included because they aid progress in student personnel research by *demonstrating errors to be avoided*. Other inadequate investigations are included because they are the sole representatives of an important area of work with individuals and reveal the need for more precise technics in that area.

A summary of research in this field five years hence may well be limited to investigations which meet the rigorous requirements of acceptable research. For reasons stated in the previous paragraphs it did not seem wise so to limit this first attempt to summarize in detail investigations relating to the various areas of work with individuals.

4. METHOD OF SUMMARIZING

As reports of investigations were secured, they were briefly analyzed and classified. Each part of the field was then studied and the references read, compared, and evaluated with a view to making a unified creative summary rather than mere abstracts of isolated references.

The multiplicity of unrelated reports having no unity of purpose presents a difficulty in summarizing investigations in the field of student personnel work. Results of separate investigations on the same problems often cannot be summarized in a significant table because different methods have been used in different situations and the results are not comparable. One value of analyzing this mass of unrelated investigations is that of isolating the most promising methods which may be used in future study of a particular problem.

All scientific progress from time to time requires consolidation and survey of the ground already won, and thoughtful planning of future attacks. (21:405)

It is necessary, at times, to take stock. Such a time seems to have come in the history of student personnel research. Before going forward, it is fitting that the mass of investigations already made be critically examined and that the useful methods and conclusions be extracted from technical journals and put into an easily available form. The work done during the past ten years has not been in vain. By the "process of scurrying forward from one immediate objective to the next," methods have been developed and avenues of investigation opened. From these investigations, viewed in perspective, the

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research worker may make progress in sketching a total coordinated pattern of research in student personnel work.

5. ORGANIZATION OF TOPICS

The scope of the field necessitated a division of the material into four sections, the first of which constitutes this book:

Volume One. Administrative aspects and educational guidance

- A. Personnel work in education
- B. Selection and orientation of students
- C. Educational guidance

Volume Two. Individual counseling

- A. Facts about students—their intelligence, achievement, use of time, use of money, social background, opinions, attitudes, interests, problems and needs, and personality traits
- B. Disciplinary problems
- C. Financial aid—part-time employment, loans, and scholarships
- D. Technics of work with individuals
- E. Records

Volume Three. Control of the student's environment and supervision of group activities

- A. Health programs
- B. Housing
- C. Religious programs
- D. Social life

Volume Four. Vocational guidance

In each section, there will be some consideration of the methods of study, the results and conclusions of the investigations, and further investigations needed. The evaluation of the methods and findings is included whenever such appraisal seems appropriate and useful.

CHAPTER II

PERSONNEL WORK IN EDUCATION

AN OVERVIEW of personnel work should precede an analysis of its component parts. Three fundamental questions which involve numerous perplexing and controversial issues are: What constitutes personnel work? Who performs personnel functions in high schools and colleges? Is personnel work of value?

There is much difference of opinion regarding the nature of personnel work. In the opinion of some authorities, it is as broad as education itself. Others limit personnel work to a specialized form of vocational and educational guidance. Every institution must decide upon the scope of its personnel work and the specific functions to be performed. In twelve colleges and universities studied by the Research Committee of the National Association of Deans of Women (76), great diversity was found. Each institution presented a unique program which had evolved out of its purposes, objectives, and needs in accordance with the personalities of the officers employed, the philosophy of the teaching staff and administrative officers, the funds and physical facilities available, and other factors. Every guidance program must meet the exigencies of the present local situation, but it should also look forward to the most ideal conditions which it is possible for a particular community to achieve. The personnel program in any institution at a given time is an evolutionary development.

The number and preparation of individuals who perform personnel functions in different high schools and colleges also vary greatly. In one institution, there may be a personnel director and a staff of specialists. The director is concerned with student personnel administration. He refers students to the person or agency who can best deal with the problem. He sponsors a constructive program by which each student may attain his optimum development. The specialists in guidance perform their respective functions. They cooperate with the teachers. A reciprocal relationship between teacher and technician exists. There is no substitute for a wise and understanding teacher who is able to make the classroom experiences contribute to the all-round development of the individual. But specialists also are

needed who will provide the teacher with technical information which he has neither the time nor the training to secure, will help teachers improve their methods of work with individuals, and will study expertly the more baffling personality disorders which occasionally occur in every school.

In a small high school or college, the function of administration is fused with the details of personnel work in the person of a "generalist" who obtains as much skilled assistance as possible from the faculty and the community, and has himself acquired considerable knowledge and skill in the performance of the various personnel duties.

The importance, as well as the difficulty, of evaluating personnel work has been recognized, and several attempts have been made to measure some of the outcomes of a few procedures and partial programs.

The function of this chapter is to summarize surveys and descriptions of personnel work in educational institutions, investigations of the status and functions of personnel officers, and attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of personnel work.

I. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

The institutional organization of student personnel work has been studied in five ways: (1) by thinking through the underlying philosophy of a personnel program; (2) by making case studies of personnel work in specific situations; (3) by surveying student personnel programs in a number of institutions; (4) by employing "expert" opinion in judging the value of personal procedures; and (5) by measuring the results of a guidance program experimentally.

The first approach—that of formulating a philosophy of guidance—was used by Lineham (60) in 1927 in his philosophy of guidance in education. Mathiasen (67) also employed this method in his study of guidance and placement in university graduate schools of education. The writers of these two theses make certain assumptions, present facts to support their assumptions, point out problems, and make proposals for a guidance program designed to meet the needs of students. Philosophy, which at its best involves logical analysis and synthesis, enters into all methods of studying personnel work in so far as hypotheses are formed and tested with reference to the data collected. Kelley (53) clearly shows the distinction between philosophy and science by referring to the steps in the complete act of thought. The first five steps, including a felt difficulty, a definition of the difficulty, a tentative solution, a mental appraisal of the solu-

tion and a conviction of the adequacy of the solution, belong to both science and philosophy. But the sixth step, experimental verification, is the special province of science.

Science continues and carries through the complete act of thought; philosophy does not. (53:130)

Research, at its best, involves both accurate significant data and critical thinking in the formulation of the problem and throughout the process of collecting, treating, and interpreting the data.

We cannot think without facts, even though we may have facts without thinking. No person or organization can operate without data, *i.e.*, phenomena of life which are at least to a degree measurable and verifiable. (53:120)

In investigations in which the philosophical aspect predominates, the method is often designated as *philosophical*.

An excellent example of the second method—that of describing personnel work in a specific institution—is the detailed account of the personnel work at Northwestern University (61). Another example of a case study of the personnel work in one institution is Jones' description of a personnel project on the college level (47). The aim of this personnel program was to help each student achieve at the level of his ability. The student's mental ability was measured by seven tests of intelligence, and his scholastic achievement by the grade-point average on the quarterly and semester grade reports from his classes. Jones gives a detailed description of the student personnel service established to accomplish this purpose and a statistical summary of the results of the project.

A large number of briefer descriptions of guidance programs in high school and college have been written, such as Lyman's report of the guidance program of an experimental junior high school (64) and Alltucker's (6) description of the plan for bridging the gap between the junior and the senior high school. Some of the descriptions of personnel work in different situations will be briefly summarized in the next two sections in order to present the outstanding features of personnel programs which have been evolved to meet the needs of local situations.

The third method—that of surveying the personnel work in a number of institutions—frequently is a combination of questionnaires, visits to the institutions being studied, and examination of records. Hopkins (40), in his pioneer investigation of personnel procedure in fourteen institutions of higher learning, first formu-

lated a definition of personnel work; next, prepared a list of activities in which evidence of the influence of the personnel point of view on educational problems might be found; and, finally, visited fourteen colleges and universities, remaining at each two or three days, talking with staff members who were endeavoring in various ways to bring the college into a more personal relationship with its students, and in other ways gaining knowledge of the administrative point of view and procedure relating to personnel work as he broadly defined it. Ratings were given to indicate the effectiveness of the work that was being done.

The Research Committee of the National Association of Deans of Women in 1931 (76) obtained the cooperation of twelve colleges and universities in filling out a thirty-three-page questionnaire covering the functions usually assigned to personnel workers. The special feature of the method used in the investigation was that of having the questionnaire answered in a conference of all the personnel workers in the institution instead of by a single officer who might be biased in respect to the importance of his own part in the program or who might lack knowledge of the services other people in the institution were rendering.

Cowley (18) suggested the following method of making a student personnel survey in a local situation: (1) ascertain the functions performed by each personnel officer in the institution by means of interviews, time schedules, or both; (2) classify the functions performed in the institution; and (3) define and study each function from the standpoint of the centralization and development of the function.

Townsend (91) used the fourth method—that of employing “expert” opinion in judging the value of personnel procedures—in his investigation of the administration of student personnel services in teacher-training institutions of the United States. He submitted a printed comprehensive list of personnel technics to a jury of fifty-seven experts drawn from three groups: (1) theorists in the philosophy and administration of education, (2) representative men and women actually administering personnel services to students on the college level, and (3) experts in the field of industrial personnel. These people rated the comprehensive list of technics, compiled by Townsend, on a five-point scale of desirability.

An example of the fifth method is the experimental study of guidance and placement reported by Holaday (37). In this experiment, two groups of fifty-three students each were equated on the

basis of a battery of tests. The experimental group was given special counseling including the use of personal data, questionnaires, and interviews; remedial health work; training in methods of study; the improvement of speed and comprehension in reading; and the development of imagination, memory, and interest. Each student followed a carefully planned daily program. This counseling program was carried on throughout the year. The control group was treated in the usual way. Three criteria of the success of the training were used:

- (1) The difference in the numbers of students from each group remaining in the university;
- (2) The advantage in average grade-points of the experimental over the control group; and
- (3) The difference in the average numbers of delinquencies reported to the offices of the deans. (37:234)

The groups were studied during a period of three years.

Every attempt to make a control-group experimental study of the effects of personnel work encounters three main difficulties: inadequate measures of the success of the program, the difficulty of precisely defining the experimental factor, and the impossibility of equating the groups with respect to all the factors which might contribute to the outcomes studied. The groups, though equated with respect to the tests given, may not have been equal in interests, in rate of progress, in time at their disposal, or in motives for achieving. Such a large number of uncontrolled factors in experiments of this kind make it impossible to say definitely that the differences found between the experimental and the control group are due only to differences in the personnel methods used.

Investigations of personal work using these five methods of study have contributed information concerning the functions of personnel work in certain institutions. The information thus obtained is of practical value in developing an effective program of personnel work in a particular situation and in making plain the difficulties in evaluating so complex a process.

2. PERSONNEL WORK IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING

Although every college must develop its own program of personnel work in accordance with its accurately defined purposes and objectives, with the funds at its disposal, and with the staff already available, it is of value here to summarize general principles, to define