
A FUNCTIONAL CONCEPT OF GUIDANCE

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Educationists and psychologists have been advocating the necessity for guidance in the secondary school for so long that it comes as rather a shock to learn that a canvass of the situation reveals the fact that most secondary schools still have no definite guidance programs. To discover why this situation exists, a number of superintendents and high-school principals were consulted. Their responses indicate that while they are convinced of the necessity for creating guidance programs, they do not know what to do. They still look at guidance as a separate program—something unrelated to instruction. They look at it as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end. They express a willingness to create guidance programs if they can employ specialists in guidance. In their absence, however, they are at a loss as to what can be done. This is because the approach to guidance has emphasized it as a separate program. It appears that what our secondary school administrators need is a functional concept of guidance, one that relates guidance to the school's primary function, the imparting of instruction. Possessed of such a concept, it is believed that most administrators would create adequate guidance programs.

Among the many questions which they ask about guidance the following four are the most common: What is guidance? What conditions indicate a need for guidance? In case a guidance program is de-

veloped, can members of the present staff act as advisors or counsellors? (In other words, What are the qualifications of advisors and counsellors?) What are the duties of advisors and counsellors? In this paper, an attempt will be made to answer these questions, in turn, in the hope that out of their answers a functional concept of guidance will emerge.

THE NATURE OF GUIDANCE

In the final analysis, guidance is nothing new. It is as old as instruction itself. It is too often thought of as something apart from, or at least something supplementary to, instruction. Only too seldom is it identified with instruction. The term "instruction" has been so closely tied up with the idea of subject-matter that its real connotation with respect to pupils is often overlooked. In the mind of the average individual it is considered as referring to teaching some particular subject. In this concept of instruction, guidance has no place as it becomes a thing apart from instruction. When the term "instruction" is so used as to place the emphasis on the pupil rather than the subject however, as when used to refer to the teaching of pupils, guidance is conceived of differently. Immediately it becomes an integral part, a correlative of, instruction. This is the concept that teachers must accept. Teachers, acting as advisers, should not accept their duties as just other

tasks or burdens placed upon shoulders already bearing heavy loads.

One might argue then, and with some validity, that guidance is a "fad or frill"—that it is only another name for what the school is now doing. This argument would be sound enough provided it might be assumed that the school is actually doing what it has accepted in theory as its task. This assumption is not warranted, however, as the tendency has been to confound education with textbook learning. The high-school curriculum is still traditional, and there is a tendency to measure education by the number of courses completed. This is the result of the present plan of educational organization. The setting up of a program of guidance is an attempt to change the plan or organization in such a manner as to place the emphasis where it belongs, upon the pupil rather than upon the subject. In other words, it is an attempt to make education functional.

THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE

A survey of the attitudes of children of any high-school reveals the need for guidance. If attitudes were always social and never non-social or anti-social, if they were always intellectually correct, and if pupils were always properly conditioned emotionally, there would be little need for guidance. But high-school children often possess attitudes that are perverted. The school is society's agency for developing ideals of good citizenship. It has not met its full responsibility when it restricts its efforts to the inculcation of aesthetic ideals, to the cultivation of intellectual attitudes, and to the development of special abilities.

The problem of guidance has become intensified as the result of fundamental social changes. The indus-

trialization of society and the technological advances in agriculture have brought about a major reversal in the numerical relationship of the rural and urban population. As a result, children have been concentrated in industrial and trade centers and have been released from productive activities. They have found themselves in ever-increasingly large numbers in school with no other place to go and with nothing else to do. Frequently they have found the school inhospitable both in its organization and in its offering. Conditions are favorable, therefore, for the development of perverse attitudes.

Fortunately, education is undergoing a change in both its philosophy and its emphasis. Modern education is shifting its emphasis from subject-matter to children. The school has come to look at the child as a living organism developing as a result of his interaction with his environment. As long as the emphasis was upon the subject-matter or the teacher, guidance was unknown. Now that education has shifted its emphasis to the individual, and now that education is thought of as a process of adjustment, the necessity for guidance becomes apparent. The educative process now becomes one of guiding the individual. And so guidance and true education becomes synonymous, and guidance must be embraced as a means of making the work of the school functional.

QUALIFICATIONS OF ADVISERS OR COUNSELLORS

In any program of guidance, advisors or counsellors occupy the key position, and the success of the program can be measured largely by the extent to which advisors are individually successful. High-school administrators are generally agreed

upon this point. They believe that the greatest obstacle in the way of developing a satisfactory guidance program is the lack of suitable personnel. The following question naturally suggests itself: Can any instructor become a successful advisor? The answer is simple: Yes! Provided that that instructor is, in the real sense of the term, a teacher.

Guidance, as has already been pointed out, is not new. Many teachers—all those deserving of the title—have practiced guidance without so labelling it. The good teacher has always been an advisor, whether he has realized it or not. The time is past when the best teacher is considered to be that one whose students memorize the most facts. Today we consider the best teacher to be that one who is the most successful in assisting his pupils in developing themselves. To do this successfully, he must perform the functions of an advisor. From this it may be concluded that the qualifications of a successful advisor are included within those of a successful teacher. This means that the average teacher must expand his concept of the teacher's function, and that the teacher training institutions must do likewise.

The successful advisor must have a thorough understanding of the aim of the guidance program. This must necessarily be based upon an understanding of the philosophy which generates the program. An understanding alone is not sufficient, however. It is the attitude of the advisor which accompanies this understanding that is important. The advisor must be sympathetic to the program.

It may be well to add that the advisor should be more than sympathetic with what is attempted—he should be enthusiastic about it. As so often happens in teaching, many

individuals fail as advisors because of this lack of enthusiasm.

This list of qualifications is not intended to be all-inclusive. It includes only those which are generally considered to be the most important. The successful advisor must undoubtedly possess other qualifications, but any teacher in possession of those just enumerated has little to worry about in respect to his becoming a successful advisor.

DUTIES OF ADVISORS AND COUNSELLORS

The duties and activities of advisors grow out of the aims of guidance. What the advisor does, or what he should do, must necessarily be determined by the goals he is attempting to attain.

Any plan of guidance is, in part, an administrative device created for the purpose of bringing matters of administrative import to the attention of pupils who can be influenced much more easily in small groups than through the medium of large assemblies or bulletin boards. From this it follows that one of the duties of advisors is to bring administration and pupils into closer cooperation. It is through the advisor that each obtains the point of view of the other.

Again, the guidance program should aim at the development of the proper relationships between teachers and pupils. This was discussed, in part, in the preceding paragraph, but is much broader than indicated there. If guidance is to result in the development of this relationship, it will be because the advisor assumes certain duties efficiently. Pupils will follow the leadership of someone who shows an interest in them, but one who does not will be forced to drive his pupils rather than lead them. High-school pupils are particularly clever in detecting sham. The interest of advisors should be

demonstrated in all school activities. Likewise, the interest of advisors must carry outside the school into the life-activities of pupils. The ideal relationship between advisor and pupil is one characterized by mutual respect and confidence. Such respect and confidence are developed, largely, as the result of understanding. Understanding will follow interest. An advisor should assume, as part of his duties, any responsibility that results in demonstrating to pupils his interest in them.

The guidance program, as has already been stated, is aimed at individual adjustment. In attempting to attain this aim, the advisor performs one of his most important functions. The task of providing individual guidance involves a number of specific duties. This is a more or less routine task but its importance cannot be over-emphasized. The extent to which guidance is satisfactory is determined in part by the extent to which the advisor's data are complete. To advise properly one must necessarily be possessed of as complete a case history as possible. Advisors must always be on the alert to discover new facts about pupils. The technique of counseling is important. Each advisor must develop his own technique, however, he must experiment until he discovers one that is satisfactory for him. Certain general rules should be followed, of course. The advisor should be possessed of facts, he should be sympathetic, and both he and the advisee should be in

the proper frame of mind. Beyond this his technique should be individual. If the advisor, however, has the interest in his work and in his pupils that he should have, if he is enthusiastic, and if he has the confidence of his pupils he need worry little about the development of a proper technique. The advisor should be on the alert for situations demanding guidance and should provide it where necessary. He should conceive of guidance in its broadest sense as covering educational, vocational, social, and health matters.

SUMMARY

Guidance is too often thought of as a new function, recently added to those previously accepted by the secondary school. Such is not the case. The development of a guidance program is only the creation of a new device for the attainment of an old function. Its aims are to be found in those of education in general. It is only another means of attempting to make education functional. Changing conditions and a changed attitude toward education have necessitated the creation of additional ways of attaining previously recognized goals. With this concept of guidance clearly in mind, it is evident that the duties which a guidance program imposes upon teachers are not new ones but are the same as those that the best teachers have always accepted. The guidance program creates a situation in which these duties can be most efficiently performed.