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## GUIDANCE TESTING

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This field has grown to such proportions that it is impossible in a short paper to include the great scope which it embraces. There are a few important problems which should be considered, even though some of them have not as yet been solved. Progress is being made rapidly, and the prospects point toward a scientific and efficient development in this phase of administrative work in high schools and colleges.

Many educational institutions have, over a period of years, developed guidance clinics, which have become outstanding in their work, and have gained a reputation of efficiency and achievement. Some clinicians have compiled and devised their own tests to serve their special purposes. Experimentation is still going on, which is likewise an indication of progress.

The first question arising when a guidance clinic is about to be established by an educational institution, is that of the specific tests which should be given to students. Is it possible to give too many tests? Is it possible to obtain too much information about the students? It cer-

tainly is possible to give too few tests, and to have too little information about students, in order to give capable guidance. The questions seem, therefore, not to limit the amount of information desirable, but rather, the use made of such information when it is available.

A cumulative record, which includes a case study of each student, seems necessary. The misinterpretation of test results and other information can become a danger to the guidance program. This indicates the demand for a qualified specialist to head the guidance clinic, so that there will not be the danger of the program being "lost in a haze of tests." It would be a definite advantage if the clinician is well-informed in the field of mental hygiene, in addition to other regular qualifications.

The guidance program is all-inclusive so far as the faculty members are concerned. Although the clinician has direct control of the program, responsibility for its fulfillment rests with the entire teaching staff. Cooperation is necessary, since much information concerning

students is obtainable only from individual teachers.

Perhaps one of the first tests to be considered in a guidance program is the intelligence test. On the basis of a reliable test, essential advice can be given as to the education of the student. Perhaps the student should be encouraged to attend college, or discouraged. It may be that the student should be discouraged to complete high school, and to study some trade in a special school. Many cases can be cited in which parents have insisted that their child study for a professional career, against the advice of a guidance counselor, only to fail completely in his studies, and be forced to choose another vocation, after having needlessly wasted two or three years. It must always be remembered, however, that intelligence tests are not infallible, and also that they cannot measure effort nor ambition.

Achievement battery tests, or individual achievement tests in specific subjects, have a place in most guidance programs. On the basis of ability shown by these tests, educational, as well as vocational guidance can be given. These tests may also be used for prognostic or diagnostic purposes, depending on their contents.

The tests which are of prognostic nature are increasing continuously. While these tests are often given before college entrance, some of them can be given to advantage at any time. These specific tests include the fields of music, art, home economics, and general vocational aptitudes.

Nearly every clinic gives at least one test of character or personality. Certain vocations demand a special type of personality. It may be that a certain personality type would mean failure in a specific vocation. Therefore guidance in vocational choice is aided by knowledge of the results of a personality test.

The diagnostic tests are usually considered as belonging to the elementary school only. However, recently such tests have proven to be a great advantage in guidance. This has been true in the field of reading, where diagnosis may indicate a lack in earlier training, and through proper remedial training, it may be possible for a student to attain skill, and perhaps even surpass the average college or high school student in reading ability.

Some institutions have established special reading clinics, because of the need among students. In one college, it was discovered, by means of a reading test, that over fifty per cent of the first-year students had only eighth grade reading ability. Training to overcome this lack might end further difficulty for certain students, especially when they show no lack in other fields. There are some authorities, however, who question the duty of guidance work in the field of remedial training.

Since reading is essential for most high school and college work, faulty habits are a distinct hindrance to progress. A common fault found among students, is that of using oral reading habits in silent reading, that is, pronouncing each word "mentally." This procedure retards reading and hence it hinders a student from obtaining a higher score in any test in which reading is required. The author correlated the reading test scores of one hundred Freshmen with their English Placement test scores, and obtained a coefficient of correlation of  $+ .96$ , P. E.  $.02$ . Reading and intelligence scores for this same group gave a correlation of  $+ .95$ , P. E.  $.03$ .

Vocational aptitude tests are sometimes considered the most important, or the only tests with which guidance counselors should be concerned. Some of the tests in this field are still very much in the experimental stage, that is, their reliability has not yet been proven. Among the vocational tests now available are: dexterity tests, specific interest inventories, occupational questionnaires, and clerical and mechanical aptitude tests. The personal history rating chart is listed also as a vocational test.

Results of these tests can be used as a guide in advising students to enter or to avoid certain vocations. This makes further demands on the guidance clinician, that is, a thorough knowledge of what is required in the various vocations. The interest inventories are seldom reliable, since interest is often fleeting with students, and again, the test may be taken with student intention to check all that he knows belongs with a certain vocation which he intends to enter. However, since his knowledge is limited, his vocational choice may not coincide with interests of the choice.

In addition to the tests mentioned for guidance, educational and family history are of aid to the clinician. Knowledge of the student's health also is of aid in vocational guidance. Emotional adjustment likewise should be known. Sometimes the personality test includes both health and emotional adjustment.

The field of guidance testing is very

wide, and since there are so very many tests available in this field, there may be the danger of including tests which are not valid measures of what they claim to measure. The guidance clinician must therefore have a thorough knowledge of tests, of testing techniques, and of test interpretation, and he must be on the alert for any new ideas and tests which can be of use in his field.

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