

# THE TRANSITION SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY

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## Abstract

This paper presents partial results of a research in the area of Vocational Occupational Guidance at the National University of San Luis on the subject "Transition School-University". The information offered here follows a survey on the relationship between the educational area and the organizations, persons and programs of the work and employment area. Reference is made to the information the different participants get as well as the importance they assign to said relationship. The interest of the results obtained is discussed with a view to optimize interventions in the speciality by taking into account the need of articulation of actions between the areas involved.

## Introduction

This paper is based on the Research Work TI-4-9801 "*El estado de la Orientación Vocacional en la Provincia de San Luis*" (The state of vocational guidance in the province of San Luis) of the School of Human Sciences at the National University of San Luis, and its subject refers to the issues concerning transition from school to university.

The relationship established between said institutions conforms a theoretic-conceptual elaboration constituting the standpoint from which to attempt an assessment of this period of transition in the broad sense, the term "school standing for educational and/or institutional processes at every teaching level" (Riquelme, 1989) Consequently, university studies mean a way of "entering the adult world, the practice of an occupational role".

A number of studies and investigations acknowledge deviations in the conceptions of education and work, thus making the inclusion of the concept "work" within a constructive frame necessary. That is, to recognize as conditions for man as to his milieu those of interacting with, perceiving, be guided by and seize it in the sense of ability to transform objects. One of the key processes for said seizure is inherent to the perspective encompassing that that is social, work and productive activity.

From here, Vocational Occupational Guidance which emerges in the modern world as a social need arising from both an individual and a social point of view.

From the social point of view, the need for Guidance is made manifest in the requirements of qualified human resources capable of efficiently entering into the world of work.

These statements become all the more important in our country, where economic, political, social and technological changes have hindered the possibility of obtaining a satisfactory job. The University as an institution for higher education is not alien to the difficulties the choice of an occupation and/or job poses as well as those emerging from

subsequent access to the world of labor within the productive machine of the country and/or region, currently constituting a major problem.

Thus, the challenge we are confronted to is thinking about the future and on which the requirements in terms of work-occupation are. From this specialized view importance is given to the value of work understood as "a personal fulfillment", in this respect, it becomes necessary to point out that *"an optimal feeling of identity is merely experienced as a feeling of psychosocial well-being, its most obvious concomitants being a sense of knowing **where one is leading to** and an inner security of the anticipated acknowledgments of those that are most significant for one."*

The loss of the capacity for work together with the consequent dwindling of exercise of the occupational role and of sociability involves the absence of the most important vehicle for social game and the most significant refuge against what is shapeless and diffused anxiety.

This perspective implies a necessary "renewed conceptualization" of the relation *education and work* within the frame of curricular transformations at educational institutions in order to guarantee an articulation with the social and labor world (Krichesky, 1998).

Education stands as mediator between the labor world and the process of "knowledge acquisition" (Ali Jafella, 1998). However, the importance of the educational role for work depends mainly on the dynamism and the organizational skills fostered in students.

An active participation in the planning, organization, control and evaluation of work substantially enriches social experience, stimulating maturation as well as the sense of responsibility and initiative.

What is to be done, then, from educational institutions, to keep a reflexive and critical attitude enabling to give a new sense to the content of education for the world of work and for the formation of a citizenship aware of the productive and social reality?

One alternative is to place work as the relationship expressing the way in which "man produces his existence" and to promote the union between theory and practice, between what is technical and that that is political through the mediation of education.

School thus turns out to be an alternative space for workers to apprehend both the basic instruments of science and the socially constructed theoretical principles, for access to scientific and technological knowledge is fostered vouching at the same time the socialization of knowledge as a right on the part of workers, increasing in this way their capacity for negotiation within the labor market (Llomavate, 1992).

The situation of transition from youth to the world of adults generates important changes, resulting in insecurity and uncertainty. The social structure demands from the student the definition of a project of his/her own in which the job acquisition and labor insertion play a

leading role.

The young person acquires the behavior, rules, values, skills and abilities necessary to work through this process of labor socialization.

The process is not a uniform one. Different projects in which the subject assigns meaning and signification to the facts taking place in his/her socio-labor life are the stages contributing to the construction of his/her vocational-occupational identity (Aisenson y Battle, 1998).

Thus, as specialization, Vocational-Occupational Guidance consolidates an comprehensive view of the person, where that that is vocation is in close dialogue relationship with the sense to be found of life in as much as it is understood as "*what one feels and what one pretends to be.*" That is, Vocational-Occupational Guidance has to assume and be responsible for the dimension of man in action, of the active *man*. It is the Busy Man, the active being, subject to personal dilemmas and social demands.

This paper aims at presenting and analyzing information associated with the relationship persons performing counseling functions maintain with institutions in the area of work and employment; the information related to the value assigned to said relationship and to the implications it may have for the practice of counseling. Said information was obtained from a questionnaire whose objective was to explore a number of dimensiont about the "Current state of vocational-occupational guidance in the province of San Luis"

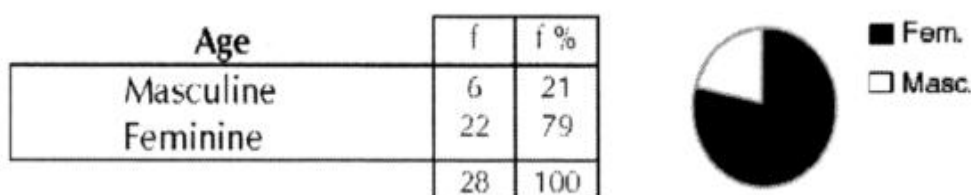
## Methodology

### Participants

The sample was made up by 28 persons working in the *Sector Educación: Escuelas de Nivel Medio urbanas y públicas* (Education Sector, urban and public high schools) of the city of San Luis randomly selected.

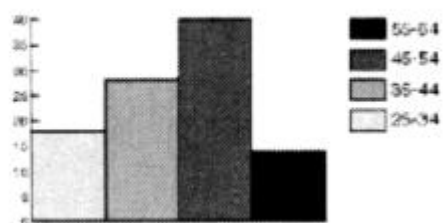
**Participants' characterization:** Most of the people in the survey (79 %) were female. Average age is approximately 44 years. (Tables 1 and 2, Figures 1 and 2).

**Table 1, Figure 1:** sample according to sex



**Table 2, Figure 2:** sample according to age

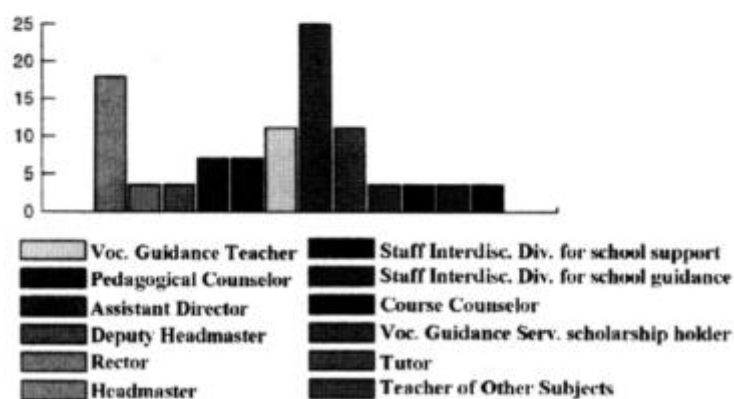
Age	f	f %
25 – 34	5	18
35 – 44	8	28
45 – 54	11	40
55 – 64	4	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>



Twenty-five per cent of the people answering the questionnaire teach other subjects, 18% hold the position of headmaster whereas 11% are Vocational Occupational Guidance Teachers; the same percentage is recorded for tutors. Lower figures are recorded for the other positions (Table 3, Figure 3).

**Table 3, Figure 3:** sample according to position held

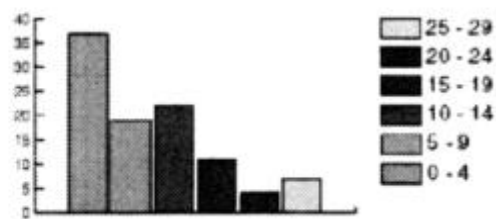
	f	f %
Headmaster	5	18
Rector	1	3,5
Deputy Headmaster	1	3,5
Assistant Director	2	7
Pedagogical Counselor	2	7
Vocational Guidance Teacher	3	11
Teacher of Other Subjects	7	25
Tutor	3	11
Vocational Guidance Service scholarship holder	1	3,5
Course Counselor	1	3,5
Staff of the Interdisciplinary Division for school support	1	3,5
Staff of the Interdisciplinary Division for school guidance	1	3,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>



Average seniority is about 9 years (Table 4, Figure 4). The people working in vocational guidance average 8 years of practice (Table 5, Figure 5).

**Table 4, Figure 4:** sample according to seniority

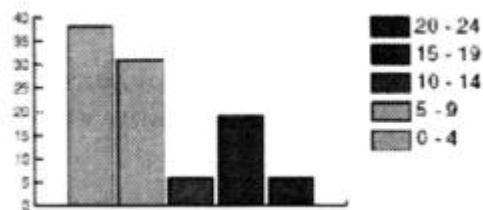
Seniority	f	f %
0 - 4	10	37
5 - 9	5	19
10 - 14	6	22
15 - 19	3	11
20 - 24	1	4
25 - 29	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>27 *</b>	<b>100</b>



Note: \* a subject does not answer this item.

**Table 5, Figure 5:** sample according to numbers of years working in vocational guidance (N=16)

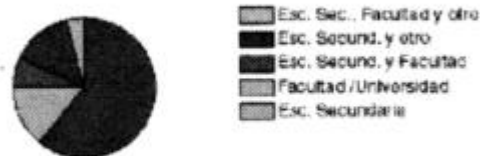
Years	f	f %
0 - 4	6	38
5 - 9	5	31
10 - 14	1	6
15 - 19	3	19
20 - 24	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>16 *</b>	<b>100</b>



Most of the people surveyed (61%) work in the Secondary School (Table 6, Figure 6).

**Table 6, Figure 6:** sample according to area of work

Institution	f	f %
Secondary School	17	61
Faculty / University	4	14
Secondary School and Faculty	2	7
Secondary School and others	4	14
Sec. School, Faculty and others	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>



When other institution is specified, the people answer:

- Center comprising the different system levels: Initial, *EGB (Educación General Básica - General Basic Education)*, High School.
- Initial level, *EGB 1 and 2*
- Non-university teacher training courses
- Pre-primary school
- Tertiary school

### Instruments

A questionnaire was used made up by several sections. The sections included: Guidance Services, Guidance and Counseling Tasks, Case Assistance, Tools and Instruments, Results, Resources and Evaluation, Obstacles and Studies and finally Formation.

The present paper concentrates on an aspect in the guidance services section, namely, the one referred to the relationship established with institutions in the area of work and employment arising from the following items:

1. Do you receive information on work or employment from any institution involved in this issue?
2. In your role of counselor, do you get in touch with the staff or the programs of any institution related to the area of work and employment?
3. Would it be of any help for students if you established a direct relationship with some institution related to the area of work?

## **Results**

The data collected reveals disparity both in the relationship of the people performing guidance tasks with work and employment institutions and in the value they assign to said relationship. The different aspects are analyzed below taking into account the following points:

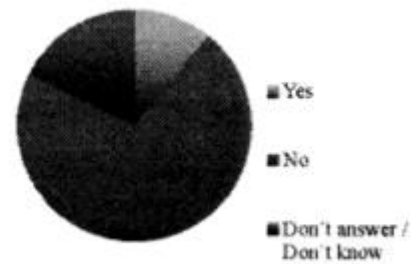
### **1. Information on work and employment received from institutions related to the area.**

According to the data gathered, 71 % of the people surveyed DO NOT receive any information. Eighteen percent of the people either do not know or do not answer; a lower percentage –11%– answered that they DO receive information, namely from the Universidad Nacional de San Luis (National University of San Luis), Red de Educación Plan Social (Social Plan Education Network).

The results clearly show lack of information as regards work and employment (Table 7, Figure 7). Absence of these data does not permit to have a clear view of the occupational reality, thus hindering the possibility of getting a job or occupation. This situation influences the possibility of meeting the needs and demands finding an autonomous place in the social reality creates.

**Table 7, Figure 7:** information on work and employment from an institution related to this issue.

Information	f	f %
Yes	3	11
No	20	71
Don't Know	5	18
Don't Answer		
<b>Total</b>	28	100

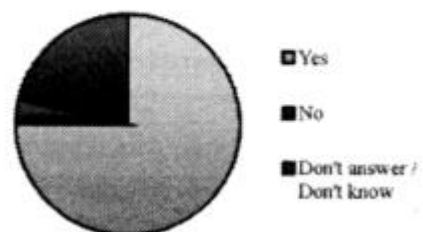


**2. Relationship with the staff or programs of institutions related to the area of work and employment.**

Fifty-four per cent of the people surveyed answered that they do not have any relationship with either staff or programs of institutions related to the area of work and employment; 28% either do not know or do not answer. Only 18% answered that they DO have some relationship (Table 8, Figure 8).

**Table 8, Figure 8:** opinion on whether the relationship with some institution related to the area of work would be help for students

Opinion	f	f %
Yes	21	75
No	1	4
Don't Know	6	21
Don't Answer		
<b>Total</b>	28	100



The results concerning the absence of a relationship with staff or programs related to the area of work and employment are revealing as this means that "there is no room to generate the possibility for the interaction process between counselors and students to take place". Therefore, in most cases there is hardly any chance of planning activities through programs.

**3. Opinion on whether the direct relationship with some institution related to the area of work would be of help.**

Seventy-five per cent DO think that the relationship with some institution related to the area of work would be of some help for students. Some of the reasons given were:

- "Because this would allow to establish a relationship between School-Work

which would eventually enrich the Vocational-Occupational Guidance".

- "It would provide a variety of instruments (in terms of quantity and of diversity) to work with."
- "Because it would be possible to systematize data, reflect on the changes that the students' situation is undergoing, evaluate actions."
- "Because it would translate into more job opportunities."
- "Because Guidance becomes enriching when directly related to labor".

Twenty-one per cent of the people either do not know or do not answer and 4% of the people surveyed think that establishing a direct relationship with some institution related to the area of work would not be of any help for students

From the favorable answer of most of the people surveyed there arises the need to intensify the actions tending to modify this situation.

## **Conclusions**

The following can be expressed from the results obtained: an important aspect to be considered in the period of transition School-Work is the availability of information related to occupational reality, for an extremely high percentage (75%) does NOT get information on work and employment. This absence is not an absolute one, as the National University of San Luis, Social Plan Education Network are mentioned as organizations that provide said information.

Undoubtedly, this situation becomes all the worse since no "links" are established with either staff or programs related to the area of work and employment. The lack or inappropriateness of spaces for interaction makes it difficult to plan or design programs and specific actions concerning this issue.

When considering as relevant data that most of the participants were of the opinion that "the establishment of a direct relationship with institutions related to labor *would* help students *indeed*," the need and significance of being in contact with specific services related to work and employment become quite evident. Such an alternative would allow the strengthening of the relationship between educational and labor areas.

The *Transition School-Work* becomes, then, relevant for it is during this period that the subject shall undergo the process of appropriation of the necessary skills for work and productive activity. Such support and help takes place in fact through the Vocational-Occupational Guidance, an intervention which acquires even more value when directly related to work thus creating more opportunities of getting a job.

This preliminar analysis does take into account the possibility of reflecting on the changes that are taking place in the students' situation, hence the interest in "evaluating actions, systematize data and be provided with various instruments" making the most adequate



strategies in the field of specialization an attainable possibility.

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