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## The Role of occupational Information in Counseling, 1961

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THE ROLE OF OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

IN COUNSELING, 1961

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A Research Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington College of Education

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

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by

Howard H. Parkhurst

August 1961

THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING  
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

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Robert L. Curran  
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose . . . . .	1
Definition of Terms Used. . . . .	2
Occupational information. . . . .	2
Valid . . . . .	2
Counselor . . . . .	2
Educational information . . . . .	2
Social information . . . . .	2
II. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE . . . . .	3
I. A Survey of Recent Past and Present Practices . . .	3
II. Required Occupational Information for Schools and Implications as to the Nature of the Provider . .	8
III. A Proposed Role for the Counselor . . . . .	13
III. SUMMARY . . . . .	18
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	19

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. PURPOSE

During the last several years the place or role of occupational information in the school systems of this country has been relatively undecided. It has ranged from 10 total hours of occupational information to 180 (17:441) in schools that thought this information important enough to present at all. It has been and still is a required course in some colleges.

The school counselor has the recognized duty of helping students plan so they will have the required courses to meet some educational goal. Some counselors feel a responsibility for presenting occupational information. Other counselors feel that the teacher should do so. Still others feel that the school has no responsibility in this regard.

The first purpose of this paper was to survey the literature concerning recent past and present positions of schools and authorities in regard to occupational information. A second was to determine what role, if any occupational information should play in counseling. This role must be compatible with the generally accepted theory of counseling. Current theories will have to be briefly touched upon to find if this compatibility exists.

## II DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Occupational information. In this paper the term will be the same as Norris' definition:

Occupational information is valid and usable data about positions, jobs, and occupations, including duties, requirements for entrance, conditions of work, rewards offered, advancement pattern, existing and predicted supply of and demand for workers, and sources for further information (20:22).

Valid. The term valid is also as Norris defines it: "...valid means data which are accurate, authoritative, timely, and balanced" (20:22).

Counselor. The term counselor will mean the person who has this title in the public school.

Educational information. Norris defines this as follows:

Educational information is valid and usable data about all types of present and probable future educational or training opportunities and requirements, including curricular and co-curricular offerings, requirements for entrance and conditions and problems of student life (20:23).

Social information. Norris also defines this term:

Social information is valid and usable data about the opportunities and influences of the human and physical environment which bear on personal and interpersonal relations. It is that information about human beings which will help a student to understand himself better and to improve his relations with others. Included, but not constituting the whole, are such broad areas of information as "understanding self" and "getting along with others," as well as such specific areas as boy-girl relations, social skills, home and family relationships, financial planning and healthful living (20:23).

## CHAPTER II

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

## I. A SURVEY OF RECENT PAST AND PRESENT PRACTICES

Occupational information has been taught in colleges for many years: one study revealed several in 1932 (12:362) and another survey in 1937 indicated 71 colleges teaching such (16:357). If the University of Minnesota is any criterion, it was considered quite essential, for its bulletin stated it would not be fulfilling its educational obligations without offering students the University's course in occupations (16:357).

The position of occupational classes in high schools is indicated in one of the United States Office of Education releases for the years 1948 and 1950. More students were enrolled in occupation classes than in many of the more traditional classes, over 150,000 being enrolled in occupation classes in United States public schools (17:441).

In another release, the United States Office of Education indicated that 1,122 high schools in 1953 had courses in occupations (15:540).

From these few surveys it could perhaps be concluded that several colleges and public schools felt occupational information in some form was needed and that it might be considered as an important aspect of American education in the early 1950's.

What has happened to cause educators such as Cass and Tiedeman (3:538) and Foster (8:109) to feel that occupational information is being seriously neglected? One possibility is that the impact of new

theories has made school people uncertain of what to do so far as occupational information is concerned. With this possibility in mind, it might be well to investigate a few of these new theories.

In 1951, Eli Ginzberg and others published Occupational Choice. This book contains a new theory as to how occupational choices are made. The main part of the background study was made of upper middle-class children, and his theory is that occupational choice is made in three stages: fantasy choice at approximate ages six to eleven years; tentative choice, early and late adolescence; and realistic choice, early adulthood (10:60).

Ginzberg states earlier that:

Our basic assumption was that an individual never reaches the ultimate decision at a single moment in time but through a series of decisions over a period of many years; the cumulative impact is the determining factor (10:27).

This theory was and still is widely accepted, as it should be, but with more and more things being placed into the school curriculum and the person not making his realistic choice until early adulthood, it may have been decided that this subject could be replaced by another. The possibility is strengthened by the fact most occupational classes are being taught in the junior high school (15:540).

Ginzberg certainly didn't call for occupational information to be dropped from the curriculum, though to the casual observer this might seem to be so. Ginzberg meant for occupational information to be presented to the child, for he says:

One of the major challenges facing our society is the development



of appropriate methods—in addition to financial support—to help those with capacity and talent in the lower income groups to pursue additional education and specialized training. These adolescents require the outside stimulation and guidance which their families and their friends are unable to provide (10:232).

This same year (1951) Carl Rogers came forth with his book Client-Centered Therapy (24). This book also could have caused a great deal of anxiety as to the place of occupational information in the school curriculum. It might raise the question: Is the presentation of occupational information infringing upon student self-choice?

The possibility that there was a great deal of misunderstanding about client-centered counseling is brought out by Rogers' statement:

...some counselors--usually those with little specific training--have supposed that the counselor's role in carrying on non-directive counseling was merely to be passive and to adopt a laissez faire policy...This misconception of the approach has led to considerable failure in counseling--and for good reason. In the first place the passivity and seeming lack of interest or involvement is experienced by the client as a rejection, since indifference is in no real way the same as acceptance (24:27).

He also said this about the goal of education:

...the goal of democratic education is to assist students to become individuals...who are capable of intelligent choice and self-direction...who have knowledge relevant to the solution of problems (24:387).

The foregoing statement cannot be construed to mean that Rogers is in favor of occupational information classes, but it would seem apparent that the child cannot make his own decision unless he has had the necessary exposure to make the self-directed choice wisely. One possible objection would be fear of coercion in presenting occupational information. However, if occupational information were presented by

psychologically competent people, the fear might be groundless.

Perhaps the work of Anne Roe has further muddied the water of occupations for the schools. Her The Psychology of Occupations has indicated myriads of facets in connection with an occupational choice (23). Some of the facets that Roe feels play primary and secondary roles in occupational satisfaction are age, sex, family, peer groups, race, and education (23:3).

This could have made more school people unsure of the correct procedure for the best interest of the child. Perhaps this caused some schools to do as Thompson has suggested some counselors would like to do, namely, beg the whole set of questions by going back to the counseling procedures of an earlier time when it was considered proper to give a small battery of tests, match these results with an occupation, and with this information solve the client's problems (31:350).

Roe indicates this as an improper approach to occupational counseling.

It has become abundantly clear that the problem of occupational adjustment is not merely one of matching aptitudes or even patterns of aptitudes to establish job requirements for these aptitudes, but that it is as complicated as life adjustment, of which it is only a facet (23:314).

These three, Ginzberg, Rogers and Roe, have perhaps been the main cause of uncertainty, but they are by no means the only ones. Super (29), Shartle (27), Holland (11), Hoppock (14), and many others have offered theories as to how occupational choice should be handled. It is very difficult to arrive at a clear approach to counseling and occupa-

tional informations without a great deal of research that many do not have time to do, but that surely needs doing (28:500).

According to Thompson, the counselor

...is faced with the task of working his way through a barrage of exhortations and theorizing about the goals and nature of counseling, and of distinctions among guidance, counseling, and psychotherapy. He is urged to be non-directive and treat vocational problems just like any other personal problem, or to apply psychoanalytic concepts such as identification, sublimation and ego-ideal; or to approach counseling as facilitation of a learning process or to help clients reduce irrelevant drives and develop appropriate responses (31:350).

Some of the reasons for the lack of occupational information may have been presented here, but the question of whether occupational information should be a part of the school curriculum has still not been answered. Perhaps a brief summary of some of the findings of writers in this field will partially answer this question.

The National Education Association includes the study of vocations in its Seven Cardinal Principles of Education. An indication of how this study of vocations is to be accomplished is given by the emphasis placed upon occupational information in the National Vocational Guidance Association's official definition of vocational and educational guidance. Many schools have included occupational information since 1945 (20:18).

A study has revealed that occupational information, taught as a part of a social studies class, has value. The obligation to the supporting society is to teach economic efficiency and help in any way possible to avoid having shortages of trained men in this country at this time of national tensions (1;32;19;9;20).

The occupation is the primary source of satisfaction in American life. To enjoy satisfaction, a wise occupational choice must be made. A person cannot make a wise choice unless he has had the exposure to occupational information needed for meaningful perceptions to take place. Schools are the logical place for the meaningful dispensing occupational information so that a person may more nearly reach his potential. The job will be, then, a known quantity. He will be in a better position to gain status and thus satisfaction from his chosen occupation (2;3;4;5;6;20;21;22;23;25;26).

This, then, would indicate a psychological, a sociological, and an authority demand for occupational information in the school program. Now the questions arise of who should present the information and how should it be presented. These are answerable only insofar as it can be determined what kind of information is necessary.

## II. REQUIRED OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS AND IMPLICATIONS AS TO THE NATURE OF THE PROVIDER

This section will investigate literature about occupational information in the schools to see if any conclusions can be drawn as to the nature of the person presenting the material.

Several texts outline what their authors feel should be presented in occupational courses. Perhaps listing a few aspects considered important would give insight into some complexities of the problem.

One book lists,

1. Employment prospects
2. Nature of the work
3. Qualifications
4. Unions
5. Discriminations
6. Preparations
7. Entrance
8. Advancement
9. Earnings
10. Number and distribution of workers
11. Advantages and disadvantages (10:18).

In addition to this list, these were discovered:

1. Places of employment
2. History of the occupation
3. Related occupations (14:123).

That this information would be difficult for an untrained person to find seems self evident. It needs a person technically informed in occupational information.

Some believe that occupational information should be presented to the student continuously, that is, each year from the first grade on through high school and in post high courses (20:118;10:14). Roe feels that since schools are orientated toward the middle class child, the lower strata child will not have all occupational choices

open to him whether or not he has the talent and abilities (23:103).

If the school is orientated towards the middle class student, the person presenting occupational information must do so in a way that is meaningful to the lower class child. Occupational information should not be "...perceived as a collection of occupational facts and job market data. It needs to be perceived as a student's feelings about an occupation as a result of his contact with it" (25:87).

There are now more than 40,000 separate job titles listed, and the provider of occupational information must somehow acquaint students with these alternatives. This is a complex but important problem, for estimations are that three fourths of the psychiatrists' patients are there because of dissatisfaction with their work (12:292).

The general need for competence in dealing with variable perceptions of occupational information is increasingly recognized (2;3;4;5;6;20;21;22;23;25;26). This could indicate the need for a person trained in counseling.

The school's responsibility toward local manpower needs will play an important role in occupational choice. Some are convinced that the school is as responsible for the welfare of the community as it is for that of the individual (1;2;9;19;20;32).

Other pressures for specific fields on the national scene are such as our need for scientists and mathematicians to keep our world position. That our government feels this is important is made evident by the emphasis placed upon these areas by the National Defense Act (20:8).

The nature of the occupational change in this country is brought out by the fact that there are increasingly more white collar than blue collar workers. This shift has caused a great deal of concern. The feeling is that many blue collar worker's sons will be forced into occupations different from their father's by the nature of the work world when they enter into it. The statement that only well trained counselors can do anything about this situation might indicate that untrained persons would be of little use (32:301).

The common concept, calling for a person trained to distinguish community welfare, national welfare, and individual welfare, points to the importance of the counselor as the person dispensing occupational information. On the surface this would seem to be the answer, but let us examine one specific school situation. It is probably not unusual.

There are 6 counselors in a school system of 6,000 students, 2 in the high school, 2 in each of the two junior high schools. Even if they worked night and day they would be hard pressed to spend an appreciable amount of time with each junior and senior high student. What then is the answer? Ignore occupational information, as it takes training to do the job of presenting it properly? This has been done. What other solutions might there be?

Evidence has indicated that a person providing occupational information needs to be trained in the technical aspects of such in the manner of Carol Shartle (27), in the perceptual psychology of occupational choice, and in the sociology of occupational information. If counselor's

numbers, hours, and energies are too few to handle the job alone, perhaps its doing calls for a person trained in guidance and counseling work. He could administer a program of occupational information, provide in-service training of the faculty and take care of the cases so special that the faculty cannot handle them.

Ginzberg was possibly suggesting this solution when he made the following statement:

If in the future, counselors are to contribute to preventing the difficulties from arising in the first place, they will probably have less direct contact with the adolescents in the process of decision making and much more with his parents and teachers (10:247).

Ginzberg might be suggesting an in-service program, with the counselor giving guidance to teachers and parents so that they might present occupational information in an intellegent manner. This possibility is surported by W. W. Tennyson. He found that most counselors' days were divided into three areas: counseling students, administrative duties, and collecting occupational information for their files. Counseling students required by far the major portion of the counselors' time. His conclusions were that the teachers assume the greater part of the counseling duties and the counselor act as a resource person and counseling expert dealing with problems the teacher was unable to solve (30:129).

The in-service program has the merit of training the school staff in guidance practices. It is quite well presented in Norris's The Information Service (20:505).

If the in-service program could possibly be the answer to making occupational information a part of the school curriculum, then it might



be logical to examine the organization of Norris's in-service program.

### III. A PROPOSED ROLE FOR THE COUNSELOR

This section's source of reference is almost wholly The Information Service (20:506). It has what would appear to be a workable plan for presenting occupational information.

The administrative leadership is divided into two categories, executive and technical leadership. The executive leader would be the principal or superintendent, whichever was more appropriate. This would depend upon the size of the system. The duties of the executive leader would be staff selection and procurement of equipment. He is also responsible for the effectiveness of the program, although others will be actually carrying on the program (20:506).

The technical leader would be the counselor or guidance director, again depending upon the size of the district. He is appointed to this role by the executive leader. His responsibilities will be outlined by the executive leader, but the success of the program will depend upon the capabilities of the counselor or technical leader, for he is responsible for developing the information service program (20:506).

That the occupational information service is only a part of the whole guidance program prompts this listing of basic principles for the development of a program of guidance services:

1. Guidance services must be adapted to the needs and facilities of a given school.
2. Every staff member has a role to play in the program of

guidance service.

3. An effective guidance program requires an appreciation on the part of the staff of the values of guidance services and of the contributions that they can make to the improvement of the instructional and administrative aspects of education.
4. An effective program requires the encouragement and full cooperation of the administration.
5. An effective program requires trained leadership (20:507).

The administrative process has been broken up into the following phases:

1. Appraising and Planning.
2. Coordinating and Directing (grouping activities into functional units).
3. Staffing and Evaluating (obtaining personnel and checking accomplishment) (20:509).

The first of these, appraising and planning, indicate the first step as evaluation of the existing program. This would consist of determining the philosophy or purpose of the existing program, then checking and evaluating the occupational library (20:510).

The staff should be surveyed to find what they think and feel about the present program. This tends to bring out practices that are good and those that are poor. It also will make the staff aware of the need for trained leadership (20:511).

The objectives of the program should be developed by the staff. Then the staff will plan activities that will meet these objectives (20:512).

The in-service program, to be successful, should first concentrate

on evaluating the practices in other schools. Then their own district should be studied for its possibilities or limitations. From those findings an occupational information program can be planned (20:513).

The success or failure of any program hinges on the leadership of the program. The information service is no different.

The responsibilities for all guidance services should be specifically and clearly delegated. The coordinator as a technical leader should stand in an advisory relationship to the administrative head of school or school system and to the teachers. He should be responsible for the teachers. He should be responsible for the recommendations of needs and for the supervision of delegated activities (20:514).

The counselor or coordinator will determine the success of the program. His responsibilities are as follows:

1. Direct studies in occupational trends, educational opportunities, job opportunities, social relationships, and evaluation of the service.
2. Coordinate activities of other staff members who are contributing to the service, such as teachers of guidance units and courses, librarians, counselors and other guidance personnel, and administrators.
3. Develop and maintain working relationships with community agencies and organizations, employment services, schools for advanced education and training, and employers.
4. Obtain and organize materials by keeping abreast of new materials and their sources, working for an adequate budget, seeing that materials are adequate in scope and coverage, and organizing materials for easy use.
5. Promote the widespread and effective use of materials by keeping the staff informed of available materials and encouraging use of such materials, assisting students to obtain information not easily or ordinarily available, helping teachers to plan and teach guidance units and courses, and directing or supervising special presentations of materials (20:515).

The instructional staff will usually be the actual dispensers of occupational information (30:129) and Norris interprets their duties as follows:

2. The supervision of trips to agencies which have a social, educational, or occupational value to a group of pupils.
3. The teaching of information units or courses as a part of the regular teaching assignment.
5. The responsibility for utilizing every classroom opportunity to interpret information to young people which will assist them in their social relationships, their educational planning, or in attaining their vocational objectives (20:516).

That the program should be evaluated regularly has been brought out in the counselor's responsibilities. A possible course for evaluating is suggested by this list of criteria:

1. Increase in students' stated confidence to solve their problems.
2. Increase in voluntary use of the counseling service.
3. Increase in referrals to the counseling service by students and teachers.
4. Increase in use of the guidance service by graduates and drop-outs.
5. Reduction in requests for program changes.
6. Reduction in drop-outs.
7. Increase in job placement.
8. Reduction in scholastic failures.
9. Reduction in discipline problems (20:520).

These criteria do not separate occupational information from the rest of the guidance program. The guidance program is a cooperative

effort, however, and it is the whole effect that is important (20:521).

There has been a certain vagueness evident in this program, but this probably cannot be avoided since every program will have to fit its own environment. The administration of the program is the key to its success; the manner in which the staff is approached will without a doubt determine its ultimate effectiveness.

## CHAPTER III

## SUMMARY

The literature of the past few years has been surveyed in an attempt to determine the role of occupational information in counseling.

The review was broken into three phases:

1. Recent past and present positions toward and theories of occupational information in American schools.
2. The occupational information that would be presented in the schools.
3. The role of the counselor in presenting such occupational information.

It appeared that the most effective role for the counselor would be that of coordinator of an in-service program and specialist in occupational information. Teachers would be the actual dispensers of most occupational information, the counselor being responsible for providing the material, directing the program, and dealing with special cases.

There is evidence of a need for evaluating programs for occupational information. There is also evident need for more research before any positive conclusions can be drawn.

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