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The author concerns himself with ten questions concerning guidance of the elementary school child: (1) What is effective education, (2) what sorts of schooling do children need, (3) how much of the child does the school seek to educate, (4) what are the guidance learnings, (5) what is the meaning of guidance, (6) does the school really need guidance, (7) what are the functions of the elementary school counselor, (8) what about the remedial versus the developmental approach, (9) what should be the preparation of the elementary school counselor, and (10) what of the future? (JS)

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
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ALBANY, New York 12224

THE GUIDANCE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Before one can talk sensibly and meaningfully about any aspect of the schools' work it is necessary to establish a point of view regarding the school, its program, its purposes.

What Is Effective Education?

That standards are needed by which to judge the worth of an educational effort goes without saying. What are these?

1. The educational program must be developmental. It must start where the children are - no, it really must start where the child is. For all education is individual, just as all business is local. Only as the program of a given school touches a given child at the point of development he has reached, can that program be said to be worthy of the term "excellent." Then this program must move this very particular, highly individualistic child along the path toward greater and greater maturity. This developmental process sponsored by the school must be in reasonable harmony with the developmental processes which are inevitably necessary for this child because of the nature of his nature and because of the demands of his culture.

2. The educational program must be integrative. It must hang together. It must keep the child as whole as possible. It must not be disjointed. When Joe starts school he must face and respond to an educational effort that views him as Joe - not as a brain for part of the day, a body for part of the day. It must be a program that makes sense to Joe because he sees life as a person of considerable complexity.

3. The educational program must be relevant. Here we are dealing with the relation between education and life. This should be an intimate, meaningful relationship. Our Joe should be able, in school, to find his experiences making sense to him. Sure, he will from time to time have to take Teacher's word for it that a new experience is worth trying. But, for the most part, these school experiences should lead him along paths that seem sensibly related to his past experience and excitingly promising of new things to come. Children who find their education without relevance are the ones who become what has been called "alienated." They are the ones who gradually develop an antipathy to schooling because it simply does not seem to help them to grow up - as they view growing up.

These are three simple, yet profoundly important, standards by which to judge what a school is doing to and with its children. But, this is not enough. We must also ask ourselves: What is the purpose of this school?

What Sorts of Schooling Do Children Need?

In any culture the children have two kinds of needs - and it is not always easy to harmonize these happily and effectively, First, they have needs which in a real sense are imposed upon them by the nature of their beings, their organisms. Second, they have needs which are imposed upon them by the culture within which they are growing up. In a very short

period of infancy these needs become inescapably intermixed, so that it soon becomes very difficult to tell which is which and to separate the personal from the cultural.

When one looks at Maslow's famous statement of human needs this appears. These, says he, are: the physiological needs, the safety needs, the love needs, the esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization.[1] One's organism, as a physiological entity imposes demands. One reacts promptly to threats to one's equilibrium, whether this be physical or psychological. One also hungers for affection and for the good will of his associates. And one seeks to do that which he believes he is fitted to do. This all sounds very simple, very familiar.

Havighurst has taken this concept of basic needs, examined the cultural setting of American children, and blended a statement of needs which he calls developmental tasks.[2] Look at them:

Developmental tasks of infancy and early childhood:

1. Learning to walk
2. Learning to take solid foods
3. Learning to talk
4. Learning to control the elimination of body wastes
5. Learning sex differences and sexual modesty
6. Achieving physiological stability
7. Forming simple concepts of social and physical reality
8. Learning to relate one's self emotionally to parents, siblings, and other people
9. Learning to distinguish right from wrong and developing conscience

Developmental tasks of middle childhood:

1. Learning physical skills necessary for ordinary games
2. Building wholesome attitudes toward one's self as a growing organism
3. Learning to get along with age mates
4. Learning an appropriate masculine or feminine social role
5. Developing fundamental skills in reading, writing, and calculating
6. Developing concepts necessary for everyday living
7. Developing conscience, morality, and a scale of values
8. Achieving personal independence
9. Developing attitudes toward social groups and institutions

Developmental tasks of adolescence:

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
5. Achieving assurance of economic independence
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation
7. Preparing for marriage and family life
8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence
9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior
10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior

These inter-related, increasingly complex, physically rooted, and culturally oriented tasks can well be seen as the basis upon which the whole process of general, compulsory education of our children is based. As one looks at such an overwhelming list he is very apt to ask: For how much of all this is the elementary school responsible?

How Much of the Child Does the School Seek to Educate?

Here we face the basic difference of opinion among Americans. During the past few years a growing body of very articulate opinion tells the schools that their task is primarily intellectual. This insistence that we narrow our conception of educational purpose has been inspired in part by fear. The explosion of knowledge, the rise of the sputnik, the cold war race for the moon, the hot war threats around the world - all these have frightened us and alerted us to the massive need for more brain power.

Yet, at the very same time, riots in the streets, threats of civil strife, deep concern over what Conant called the "explosive" situation in our urban slums[3] have also created a second explosion. This is a genuine explosion of concern for the disadvantaged, the deprived, the alienated youth among us. This second explosion triggered the Economic Opportunity Act and the scores of its forerunners sponsored by state and local groups.

There has been a third explosion - one not so well noted by the general public, but one with powerful impact upon the profession of education. This has been the explosion of functional knowledge regarding children, how they grow up, how they learn, how they view life. The whole child concept is no longer a textbookish theory. It is an actuality which most professional teachers know to be so real that they cannot teach parts of children.

These three explosions have hit the schools with varying results. Some have followed the urgings of the "put brains first" school of thought. There can be no doubt that the intellectual aspects of education have been sharpened and improved immensely in the past two decades. Even so, a given man, no matter how eagerly he seeks to "keep up," grows daily more ignorant in relation to the dizzying speed with which new knowledge is created. Many schools have made much progress in better adaptation of their programs to children of widely varying cultural and economic backgrounds. Compensatory efforts have greatly enriched the educational experiences of many disadvantaged children. The skill with which teaching is being adapted to individual differences has, without doubt, greatly sharpened.

But one thing is perfectly clear: It is whole children whom any educational program is going to affect constructively; and these whole children are sharply different one from another.

What Are the Guidance Learnings?

If we see the school as seeking to help children grow up to become sane, balanced, productive persons, then we must see the guidance effort as an enrichment of the school's effort at encouraging this developmental process. It helps, in seeking meaning and purpose for guidance, to view our purposes in terms of that which the child must learn. Thus, we propose a set of "guidance learnings." These, in our view, are the real fundamentals.

1. The child must mature in his understanding of himself. Realistic self-appraisal can, and does, begin early in life. The tasks of infancy and the pre-school years impose upon the child the need for growing in self-understanding. But the tasks of middle and later childhood ask even more of him in this process of self-understanding.

2. The child must mature in his sense of responsibility for himself. Self-understanding is fruitless unless responsibility for what one is can be accepted. Children act as they think they <u>can</u> act. But they must also <u>want</u> to act to the best of their abilities if they are to grow into responsible and productive citizens.

3. The child must mature in his understanding of the world of education and the world of work. In this day and age education is the key to employability and productivity. From kindergarten on the child makes choices, day by day, which are determinative of the quality and level of his education. These choices, in turn, begin as he moves through the school, to determine where he can move in the world of work. This rapidly changing world of work he must get ready to enter as a creative adult, capable of change.

4. The child must mature in his ability to make decisions. Planfulness is essential and plans require choices. The number and the complexity of these will increase with age - yet, who has not seen a five-year-old as perplexed and as stumped by his childish choice problem as a fifty-year-old man?

5. The child must mature in the ability to solve his own problems. This ability does not suddenly bloom at some mythical age of reason. It grows from earliest childhood.

6. The child must mature in his understanding of human behavior, especially as regards his relations with others.

7. The child must mature in his ability to adjust to the demands of life, especially those which involve his relations with other people. Learnings 6 and 7 begin their development in the home. They need to be nurtured skillfully and patiently throughout his schooling.

8. The child must mature in his sense of values, the achievement of high ideals. No other learnings matter much unless they are infused with the quality of goodness, goodness seen as sensitivity to the rights of others, impelled by concern for achieving that which is better.

These are the true fundamentals of education. What are so commonly called "fundamentals" are really subsidiary, or contributory learnings if one looks sharply at the most meaningful aspects of life.

The Meaning of Guidance?

Guidance is best understood as an enriching aspect of the educational program if it is seen as threefold in its meaning: First, it is an idea - the idea that each child differs from the next child. Each is unique. Second, it is a concern - the acceptance and concern for all children that views each child as an important human being. Third, it is service - that which is done to adapt and individualize education so that its impact upon the individual child is effective and appropriate to him.

These three meanings can be enriched by many examples drawn from daily occurrences in any elementary or secondary school. Teachers, principals, counselors, parents, other pupils recognize the unique needs of a given child, care enough about this child to act upon what they see, and provide services which help this child along his way.

The idea and the concern are, or at least should be, the property of any educator. The provision of the needed service may fall to the teacher or it may fall to a specially trained person whose expertness in understanding of children and of working with them - plus the assigned time to do this - enables them to help the child in ways not commonly possible for the teacher. This special service worker in hundreds of elementary schools over the nation is most commonly called a "school counselor." His presence on the school staff varies from the hundreds at work in California, to a mere handful at work in the schools of some other states. The amended N.D.E.A. and the E.S.E.A. have created scores of new positions occupied by these school counselors in pilot projects to test the validity of the counselor function in the elementary school.

What is emerging as the nature and scope of these guidance services in elementary schools? While there is no uniformity or concensus in practice, the following program emphases have developed as the dominant elements of service in elementary school guidance:

1. The enrichment and enhancement of the child study programs of the schools. Enrichment has been achieved by re-examining the common means of testing and studying children and by improving these, especially at the point of interpretation of the findings so that they become functional in the work of the teacher and in the planning of the child. Child study has shifted gears - from the study of the child as an object of our attention to the study of the child as a partner in his maturing growth in self-understanding.

2. Earlier and more effective identification of children with special needs and with special potentialities. The disadvantaged and gifted have been seen as children whose potentialities can be realized only if early effort is expended. Special skills in identifying these children have been applied with fruitful results.

3. Enrichment of a developmental program for self-study, decision-making, and problem-solving through highly personalized attention. This has entailed individual and small-group counseling with children - and not just with problem children. The assumption is, and experience is validating this assumption, that all children profit by the kind of personalized attention good teachers have always provided. But many children need this also from the more detached and unhurried service of a trained counselor.

4. Enrichment of classroom experiences in planned, recurring study of the world of education and of the world of work. This will require a careful study of the social studies program, of basal readers and other textbooks, the planning of appropriate units of instruction, their presentation, and evaluation of the learnings achieved. In all this the trained counselor can be an invaluable resource aide to the teacher, although the teaching will usually be done by the teacher. (See Hill and Luckey, Ch. 10 for an elaboration of this. Ref. 3)

5. Planning and coordination of home and school relations, especially as this involves particular children or groups of children. The mobile counselor will serve as helpful liaison with the home, counselor with parents, referral and resource agent with community resources which work with the homes.

6. Utilization more fully of the community agencies concerned with children.

7 Sharpening of the critical assessment of the instructional program and its adaptation to the individual child. This is an all-staff responsibility. The counselor's special role in this is that of one who studies the children, knows their special needs.

8. Enhancement of the school's program of research and evaluation. The guidance point of view insists that research regarding the children, their community, their needs is basic to a good school program. Counselors are trained in these processes. Evaluation, from a guidance standpoint, is in terms of total-impact assessment of the school's influence with particular children.

9. Inservice education that is geared to the children and their needs. Again, the guidance point of view is that constant staff study of children is the basic element in staff growth.

Does the School Really Need Guidance?

As one looks at the nine guidance emphases which have been developing in the elementary schools, one may well ask: What conditions, changes, or special needs have given rise to these emphases - and especially to the addition of school counselors to the elementary school staffs?

The need for expansion and extension of guidance services in elementary schools stems mainly from the fact that services long regarded as necessary can no longer be left to chance or to incidental attention. The nine elements of services listed above are not, for the most part new, or novel in good schools. But no school can any longer afford to leave any of these to chance. No longer can the quality of a school's program be what children need if only incidental attention is given to any of these nine matters. The pressure is on for excelence. And excellence means that the schools total effort really reaches the individual child - every individual child. Every child - no matter how limited his abilities nor how minimal his prospects - is a national asset. As one speaker put it "All God's children are gifted!"

The explosions of knowledge, of concern, and of sensitivity to the nature of good child development and good childhood education have put the heat on the schools, as never before, to do a maximum-quality job of helping children grow up. In this midst of the "heat," this pressure, stands the classroom teacher. If she is a true professional, and if she is in charge of a self-contained classroom, she never felt more inclined to deny her self-sufficiency. She never welcomed more warmly assistance that would make her teaching as meaningful and as potent as possible for every child in her room. If she is a team member of a team-teaching program, she is even more concerned that the intimate, warm, and helpful relationship which children need with fine adults be maintained in a program that is apt to entail less of these fine qualities in the child's school experience.

To put these pressures in a slightly different way, the teacher faces a task which entails - More to teach than she has ever been expected to teach in the past. More concern for the prevention of underachievement, early school withdrawal, emotional and social maladjustment, and other unfortunate developments. More sensitivity to the true nature of the child and his developmental process. More certainty that the whole school team has to work in close ranks if the total program is to reach each of these children most effectively. More recognition of the increasing demands of a parent group who are the best educated, the best fed, the best clothed, and the most demanding the teacher has ever faced. All this adds to quick acceptance of the view that the guidance learnings are fundamental, that the teacher is not self-sufficient, that the team needs specialists in greater numbers and with greater accessibility than ever before.

It is into this setting that the elementary school counselor is stepping in more and more schools.

What Are the Functions of the Elementary School Counselor?

No one has the final answer to this question. Let us first note a few conditions of role definition for this new school team member:

1. The functions to be performed by the elementary school counselor may well be seen as constituting an attempt to systematize and insure the proper facilitation of certain functions that too commonly get performed

only incidentally. Thus the elementary school counselor is a building-related staff member who has the time and the competence to provide certain services and to coordinate and systematize other services. (See pp. 5-6)

2. There is now, and no doubt long will be, need for flexibility of role definition. Such flexibility grows from variations in local school needs, in pupil personnel staffing and organization, and even variations in philosophy and purpose.

3. The definition of the school counselor's functions must take cognizance of the presence, or absence of school psychologists, visiting teachers, school social workers, attendance officers, and various remedial and corrective agents. The entire staff will need, in any school, to study and formulate role definitions appropriate to their staffing. The counselor may well emerge as a coordinator of pupil personnel services for the building.

4. The school counselor's functions will involve relationships with the parents and with community agencies. To a greater extent than in the secondary schools, it must be seen that parental involvement in guidance is imperative in the elementary school.

With these conditions in mind, there follows a list of possible services the school counselor is performing in elementary schools. Not all of these are performed by any one counselor, and the pattern varies, but this inventory is reasonably inclusive:[4]

1. Provide services to pupils through counseling. To assist pupils to understand themselves in the contexts within which they live - home, school, community.

2. Provide assistance to teachers as they seek to meet the needs of the children. This may involve help with units of instruction, interpretation of facts regarding the development of children, counseling particular children, and test interpretation.

3. Provide assistance to children through small group sessions involving children with special common needs.

4. Provide teachers help in understanding children. This supplements the teacher's knowledge of child development and child study with the special understandings of the counselor.

5. Serve as a resource person with parents, assisting them to provide home environments that will contribute to the best development of their children.

6. Serve as a referral agent, assisting with the proper referral of children to health, psychological, social service and other special services in school and community.

7. Serve as an aide to other staff members in effecting proper referrals for children needing assistance from other specialists and agencies.

8. Serve as a resource person, with the principal and others, in the organization of a guidance program that is continuous throughout the entire system and that is properly articulated with other school systems. Includes records, testing, orientation, and other guidance activities at all grade levels.

9. Leadership in coordination of the total program of pupil personnel services through continued planning and cooperative work with the whole staff.

10. Resource person in planning and conducting inservice and planning activities that are needed to keep the school program, and the guidance program in particular, in a constant state of improvement.

In practice the elementary school counselor has come to be widely and warmly accepted by teachers, principals, other pupil personnel workers, parents, and children. A recent state-wide survey in California[5] showed that the teachers in schools having counselors were predominantly enthusiastic about their services. An Ohio study[6] has shown the same results with teachers and with principals.[7] It is probably only fair to say that, at their best, elementary school counselors can, and should, serve as disturbers of the peace! They should be special representatives of children, persons highly sensitized to the impact of all school practices upon children. They need not pose as curriculum experts; but they must be involved in curriculum study and curriculum change.

The functions of these elementary school counselors may be less than entirely fruitful, however, unless proper attention is given to a major problem. This is the problem of the remedial vs. the developmental emphasis.

The Remedial vs. the Developmental

When teachers discuss the possibility of a new, building-related, staff member called a "counselor" being added to their team, it is quite natural for them to view this new aide as the one who is going to deal with all their problem children. This is where they most keenly feel the need for help. Thus the new counselor can, if she does not watch out, find herself swamped with referrals of the slow learners, the reluctant learners, the behavior problem cases and the like. In fact, as Raines has pointed out,[8] this is exactly what happens when staffing elementary schools with counselors is done with inadequate attention to counselor case load. Thus, in many schools, the school counselor has become an agent for diagnostic study and remedial attention of the difficult children. In this role he becomes very much the same kind of pupil personnel worker as the school psychologist.

If, however, we look back at the guidance learnings, and if we give careful attention to the needs of all the children, it is clear that a broader view of the counselor's functions makes more sense. The counselor

in this broader role is an aid to the enhancement of children's development, not just a diagnostician and remedial aide, important as such assistance may be.

We view the elementary school counselor as a general practitioner, a real team member. He is especially competent in child study and in methods of assisting children to come to a better understanding of themselves. He is a person who knows how to work with teachers in developing ideas for the child's growing understanding of his educational opportunities and of his future role as a productive worker. He is an expert in establishing good liaison between home and school and between school and community. He is mobile enough to have time and freedom to provide this liaison service. He knows how to counsel children and he knows when to refer them to others.

Thus we see the elementary school counselor as a person of bradth and depth. He is a worker whose grasp of the school situation is sound and practical. He knows how teachers work and is atuned to the best in educational practice. He makes no claims to superhuman power or understanding; but he does seek to view his job in terms of all the children and their needs.

What Should be the Preparation of the Elementary School Counselor?

In the spring of 1964 only 44 universities claimed to have a program for elementary school counselors that was uniquely geared to their work and only three offered the doctorate in this field.[9] In 1967 the number of doctoral programs had increased to 19 but the number of masters programs had increased very little.[10] Today there no doubt are more. The need for adequate graduate preparation in this field is desperate. Without spelling out detailed recommendations, let us look at the emphases which today are to be found in graduate programs for elementary school counselors:

1. A strong emphasis upon the study of children and thorough understanding of the processes of child development. This is a major emphasis in all preparation programs.

2. Thorough preparation in the theory and in the practice of counseling, both individual and group, both with children and with adults.

3. Thorough preparation and experience in the field of measurement and evaluation.

4. Thorough preparation in the psychology of learning, of personality, and of mental hygiene.

5. Study of the exceptional children of various types, their needs, their identification and their education.

6. A sound and growing understanding of the elementary school, its instructional programs, its current needs, its future development.

7. A sound training in applied research methods, the interpretation of research, and the use of research in seeking to improve school programs.

Perhaps, above all, the elementary school counselor should be a person of poise, of warmth, of understanding. He will need to be able honestly to accept many unlovely children. He will need also to be able to cope with misunderstandings as to his work and with skepticism as to his worth.

Such a person and such preparation should involve no less than two years of graduate education. To date we have to be satisfied with half this much. But the job is too big for merely the masters degree in preparation. The major professional groups have already committed themselves to two years of graduate education for the secondary school counselor.[11] The elementary school counselor requires no less - in fact, probably more!

What of the Future?

Do we know enough to move ahead in this complicated and somewhat uncertain field? We have no choice, in my opinion. Forty years ago hardy souls pushed ahead with the development of guidance services in the secondary schools. A. J. Jones, in the late twenties, had no business writing a book about guidance. But he did, and it went into five editions.[12] So today the field of elementary school guidance will progress as we effect sound working relationships among all the team of the school staff.

The Leadership role of the school administrator cannot be overemphasized. I would not dream of encouraging a capable school counselor to work in a school in which the staff did not want him. Until the principal and his teachers have studied their needs, and decided they want a school counselor to work with them, it is best not to place one in the building. If the superintendent is skeptical, doubts the need, there is not much sense insisting that guidance services are needed in his elementary schools. But when superintendent, supervisors, and principals see this new team member as a real aid to their enrichment of the experiences of their children - then, and only then, should the counselor be brought into the school.

This view of the counselor's role in the elementary school and this concern for better, more systematized guidance for children is to be found in scores of school systems across the country.[13] There is no need for over-optimism, but it is my belief that the guidance movement in our elementary schools is proceeding with better sense, less uncertainty and greater results than did the guidance movement of the secondary schools in its earlier, formative years.

It should also be added that the parents will be keenly interested in the development of a better-planned guidance program in their schools. It has been my experience that guidance in the elementary school is easier to explain to parents than it often is to teachers and to administrators! I think this is simply because the parents are so keenly

concerned for their children and do not have the organizational structure and the many other matters on their minds.

The future of elementary school guidance, thus, is <u>now</u>. What we do to study the needs of our schools, the adequacy of our programs, the sufficiency of our staffs, will determine what, if anything, we do to systematize and enrich the services the child needs in this complicated and changing world.

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