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ABSTRACT
                Systems technology has much to offer as a tool which
can help counselors in guidance departments to develop their own
goals, to establish their own priorities, and to develop monitoring
techniques to evaluate their progress toward these ends. The lists of
projects under development involving computers, printed materials,
and multi-media materials are extensive and extremely exciting.
However, the very introduction of sensational sub-systems may well
divert attention from the critical problems in guidance departments
for longer periods of time. It takes a system to help decide what
questions to ask systematically, and until the strands of the
guidance operations are woven together in the minds of practicing
counselors computer operations can never be more than attachments to
already existing resources found in guidance offices. The counselor's
role will be enhanced when he asks for help in establishing his
department's "system." When he does establish this dynamic framework
of priority-placed objectives, he will be in an excellent position to
use the information sub-systems developed by others. (Author)

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By: David B. Youst

The situation in guidance offices around the United
States today is analogous to that of an undergraduate
student who completes a major term paper early in the
morning of the day on which it is due. He responds in
time with the required assignment, and, with some
trepidation, awaits the assignment by someone else of
the next date when requirements are due. Now some
undergraduate students go on to become scholars, and
even when term papers are required of such students in
Graduate school and beyond, they, more often than not,
develop a time and sequence plan for carrying out the
activities required. They generally produce results of
which they can be proud. They must have time to revise
first statements and paragraphs; to obtain editorial

assistance from others; to do a good job in final typing
and document preparation. Final proof-reading can't be
done well when one is "bleary-eyed" and without breakfast.
In short, the <u>successful</u> scholar, businessman, or educator
generally learns to develop a systematic plan for carrying
out his research activities.

<u>The truly successful scholar does not equate his
personal education with the completion of such require-
ments, but is able to fit his over-all development into
and around the framework in which he must exist.</u> <u>He
controls his own development.</u>

I believe that the situation in guidance and
counseling now is similar to that of the undergraduate,
who responds so completely to the pressures, which the
all-knowing professors place on him, that he exerts
little effort or influence in establishing control over
the development of his own programs.

This is particularly incongrous behavior, because
counselors say they are trying to develop this very
competence in counselees. I am strongly suggesting that
what is known as Systems Technology or Systems Approaches
have much to offer as tools which can help counselors in
Guidance departments to develop their own goals, to
establish their own priorities, and to develop monitoring

techniques to evaluate their progress towards those
ends. When counselors sit back and do not take leadership
in developing guidance roles and functions for their
schools, they are forced by nature of their defensive
postures to then react to the existing world.

We are living in an exciting era of rapid change;
much of this change brought on by technological innovations.
Many new systems (sub-systems) are being developed in the
field of guidance and even counseling. Gene Wilson, our
chairman today, has spent many hours during the past few
years developing a marketable computerized aid to students
and counselors in the processes of college selection and
career decision making. Joanne Harris has been directing
a Project at Willowbrook High School which makes extensive
uses of computers with cathode ray display panels. The
San Diego County Board of Education in Project VIEW has
developed and proliferated the use of microfilm in
handling occupational information. New procedures in
writing career briefs have been under way in California
and New York State by their respective Employment Services.
David Tiedeman has been trying to get his computer to
talk back to a student the same way the student talks to
the machine! The lists of projects under development

involving computers, printed materials, and multi-media
materials is extensive and extremely exciting. However,
these projects have been under development, in general, by
groups with special interests, and it is not reasonable to
necessarily expect the concerns which project developers
have to be identical to those of a given guidance office or
system. Of what value, for instance, is a computer
counseling system for an Urban student who does not read
well, and who has had a history of failure in every such
activity he has attempted?

For years, people have become enthusiastic about
new products and materials. This is fitting, but the
job which needs to be done in education today will not
be accomplished solely through development by outsiders
of gadgets, curriculum guides or guidance materials.
There is, in fact, a tremendous danger present with the
introduction of such information and/or counseling systems
into existing schools. When the roles of guidance programs
are unclear, it is very easy to assume that any activity
which might be called constructive is good. In fact,
I am suggesting the opposite; that the very introduction
of sensational sub-systems may well divert attention
from the critical problems in guidance departments for

longer periods of time. An example, which comes quickly
to mind, is that of standardized testing procedures. As
machine-scored answer sheets became widely available in
centralized testing and scoring operations, and developed
at prices which schools could afford, a tremendous burden
was lifted from many people, some in guidance, who had
carried such responsibilities. In short, it became
easier to test more people.

Now in Urban primary schools the elimination of
procedures like intelligence testing with their inherent
cultural biases, and, more often than not, their inappro-
priate uses in school systems, has been a tremendous
step forward. It should also be noted that the actual
testing procedures in Urban primary schools are being
cut back, not primarily because of counselor and
administrator concerns, nor because the objectives of the
testing programs were not being met adequately, but
rather because of the pressure from people who were being
systematically discriminated against (minority group
members and inner-city representatives, etc.). The
introduction into your school system of the project VIEW
microfilm occupational information file could actually

be damaging if you, as a guidance counselor, began to assume that the job of providing occupational information was being carried out by this comprehensive file. I am afraid that the danger to which I am referring is a pervasive and very insidious one. I'm suggesting that the systems developers may have one point of view, the counselor training institutions another perspective, and that still different pressures may be applied by the actual school settings in which guidance departments function.

The field of guidance counseling is very young, and the introduction of sub-systems is calling to our attention a great many unresolved conflicts. Consider the case of a man in training to be a guidance counselor. If he works in a senior high school, he has a feel for what counselors do on the job. College applications, schedule changes, course planning, meeting with failing students, information-giving activities, preparing honor-roll lists, etc. While in the university training center, he more often than not hears practicum, practicum, practicum. The realms of therapy and affective sensitivity coupled with theoretical approaches often dominate the training content.

All of the computerized guidance systems that I know of justify, in part, their funding by use of the phrase, "...with our system...the counselor can now be "freed" to perform more counseling and other face-to-face human contact activities..." The major thrust of such new systems is typically described in terms of providing occupational information. It is implied that with the new system, the counselor won't have to concern himself with these matters any more. In fact, in far too many schools, little is done anyway.

In school after school, guidance counselors say they value the counselor part of their job title as the most important. While it is not the purpose of this paper to argue the merits of either counseling or guidance, it can be stated that if we continue to neglect guidance planning to honor our therapeutic activities, no substantial progress will occur within the guidance movement which will enable it to respond and thereby develop its rightful place in the school systems of the coming decade.

William Cooley, in an excellent article, called Computer Systems for Guidance, states that, "...it is probable that by the time computers are available for guidance, ...schools will be different enough to present guidance personnel with problems that are qualitatively different from those problems which are their

responsibility today. Guidance functions certainly cannot be considered independent of other aspects of the school."[1]

Recent articles in the _Phi Delta Kappan_ stressed the changes which will be occurring in school systems over the coming decade and beyond. The key words were individualization, continuous progress, and so on.

Cooley, in another article, said,

"...there seems to me to be a great opportunity to design a guidance system which is at the heart of an individualized educational system. Many educators would place guidance at the center of the educational process, but most schools have given only token responsibility to guidance services. Although guidance programs have often been assigned the responsibility for helping each student to develop a plan for his educational and vocational future, the technology to implement such a program of individualization planning has not been developed..." "...In an individualized school, the curriculum will be charged with the responsibility of helping the student develop a sense of responsibility and confidence to plan and execute his own educational program. An interesting twist is that although some guidance philospohers have been calling for this for some time, the new kind of school will not only force the issue, but will facilitate accomplishing this goal. Taking the responsibility for learning off the teacher and placing it on the learner on a day-to-day basis will facilitate the emergence of a self-directed student unlike the current dominant school organization. Certainly, as schools individualize their instructional programs, counselors will not be the only ones working with individual students."[2]

It is not easy for us to develop applications to guidance programs based on the change in emphasis from

teacher-centered to learner-centered educational procedures.
For years, many guidance counselors have "represented"
the student in his dealings with the institution or es-
tablishment. Undoubtedly, changes have occurred as a
result of this intervention, however; the changes of the
coming decade will be on a much larger scale, and I am
concerned with counselors responding actively to plan
their own futures. Perhaps it is time for an example:

In the waining months of 1969, an inner-city high
school in a city of about 300,000 was offered the follow-
ing involvment in system resources: a comprehenisve,
up-to-date microfilm file of all existing printed infor-
mation on 600 jobs; the corresponding reader-printer
equipment in whatever quantity necessary to handle the
student demand with no expense for equipment or printout
supplies; a computer terminal usuable with an existing
program in guidance (the terminal also could be util-
ized for existing math programs and CAI programs in use
in other schools); the part-time resources of a staff
member from a prominent local industry; two days a week
of a guidance consultant's time; the part-time services
of a representative of the State Employment Service,
and a full-time guidance aide.

The five counselors in the school, who have a student ratio of one counselor to 225 students in grades 8-12, after careful and serious deliberation, decided that they could not afford the time which the introduction of so many "sub-systems" would consume. They felt that the needs expressed by the students whom they were trying to serve were so overwhelming that they could not afford time for these guidance activities. Moreover, while they acknowledged that they did have a responsibility to perform these activities, they said they did not plan to carry out such activities in the coming months. These same counselors knew and have discussed the fact that if they continue to respond only to the pressures which student needs place on them, and as they retreat more and more into the exclusive one-to-one role, that the situation in their guidance office will continue to deteriorate, placing greater and greater burdens on them each day. I must stress that these counselors are highly qualified, and deliberated at length with professional seriousness; it's just that I don't happen to agree with their conclusion. But, had I been in their spot (in the system), I'm not completely sure how I would have voted. I do believe that this same type

of shortsightedness keepsus working harder and harder
to solve today's and yesterday's problems, but holds back
the development of the systems of the next decade. Had
the counselors rejected the extra resources because they
did not fit into their plan for their guidance office,
the situation would be perfectly acceptable. Their
decision was made, however, on the basis that they could
not afford to take on any more pressures in their ex-
ceedingly busy workdays.

How many guidance departments and counselors can
answer the questions: Where do you expect your depart-
ment to be in three years? What are your long-range
objectives? How do you plan to help counselors in this
department to develop themselves more fully? The same
systems type of reasoning which has been used so well to
develop some automated information systems should be
applied to the larger concept of guidance education.

It takes a system to help decide what questions to
ask systematically, and, until the strands of the
guidance operations are woven together in the minds of
practicing counselors, computer operations such as
college and occupations selection, can never be more
than attachments to already existing resources found in

guidance offices. The fabric of maximum strength is never woven, never materializes.

How can direct action be taken by counselors now to enhance their profession through their use of "systematic" thinking. The "in" terms of the systems and management worlds include accountability, independent outside auditing, cost effectiveness, PPBS budgeting (outcome budgeting), PERT applications in education, R and D indefinite amateurization, contingency management, milestone techniques, flow diagrams, etc. These words represent techniques which, to some degree, have in common the systematic and orderly progression from where we are now to someplace (specified) in the future.

But to make these concepts more than just words, each counselor must allocate some time for planning, even when, especially when, four hundred counselees are pounding down the doors because they need new shoes tonight! We all know that work expands to overflow the position, but counselees do make it without psychological band-aids when the counselor is sick, at conventions, having long coffee breaks or participating in other less enjoyable meetings. Priorities need to be established.

Since most educators are poorly prepared (by

virtue of our experience and preparation) to engage in
systematic management, other resources are needed. In
one large Urban area, an interim city government
successfully utilized experts from the business and
industrial community by organizing them into task forces
to deal with specific problems. Such a procedure could
be exceptionally helpful to guidance departments.
Counselors would need to be brave enough to ask, and
fearless enough to accept the implications of the
planning work in which they participated. Only occas-
ionally have the fairly sophisticated management
techniques now available been applied to the educational
environment. Leaders from local businesses and indus-
tries, in general, are willing to volunteer to help school
systems (guidance systems) to define problems, establish
priorities, set long and short range goals, and to
establish the mechanism for continually monitoring pro-
gress towards those goals.

The counselors' role will be enhanced when he asks
for help, not just money, in establishing his guidance
department's "system." And when he does establish this
dynamic framework of priority placed objectives, he will

be in an excellent position to use or <u>not use</u> the
information sub-systems and equipment developed by others.