

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 049 499

CG 006 311

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TITLE Overview of Needs, Programs, and Implementations of Vocational Counseling and Guidance.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Regional Conference on Career Guidance, Counseling and Placement in Furbank, California, April 30-May 1, 1970.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Counseling, Career Change, *Career Planning, Counseling, *Counseling Effectiveness, Counseling Goals, Counseling Services, Counselor Performance, Counselors, Job Placement, Occupational Guidance, Vocational Adjustment, *Vocational Counseling, *Vocational Development, Vocational Interests

ABSTRACT

The author begins by over-viewing some recent criticisms of the vocational guidance field: (1) too little collaboration with industrial personnel; (2) an emphasis on processing masses of people rather than on the individual; and (3) the need for a systems approach to counseling. His impressions, from the vantage point of industry (i.e. the placement end of the vocational counseling sequence), suggest flaws in the educational-counseling system, resulting in inappropriate, inexperienced and unqualified job applicants. The differences between a counseling approach and the industrial personnel approach to job seekers/holders are enumerated. Trends and circumstances which may affect the intrusion of counseling into industrial relations systems are discussed. The paper concludes with a consideration of "lifelong counseling" wherein adults would have vocational counseling throughout their work histories and even into retirement. (IL)

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OVERVIEW OF NEEDS, PROGRAMS, AND IMPLEMENTATIONS
OF VOCATIONAL COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

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U. S. Office of Education

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OVERVIEW OF NEEDS, PROGRAMS, AND IMPLEMENTATIONS
OF VOCATIONAL COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE*

We are most fortunate to be the beneficiaries of an enormous expenditure of time, effort, and thinking of many people in preparing for this and the other regional conferences.

Over a year ago, Norm Gysbers of the U. of Missouri, Dave Pritchard of HEW, and six people with diverse backgrounds in counseling and guidance planned a national seminar that took place last October.

Five papers, some of them outstanding contributions to this profession, were written to provide a background, to focus attention onto major issues, and to provide controversy.

The national seminar generated a volume of additional material consisting of felt needs, on-going problems, and implementation efforts throughout the United States. This material was sifted through, evaluated, integrated, and summarized by the steering committee, and is included in the proceedings you have received.

In this paper I will raise some issues that, in my opinion, could benefit from further exploration and development -- some of these having to do with content of the papers you have received, and others that might be construed as omissions in these same papers. Others are the product of my experience in industry having to do with the selection and placement of adults.

As a starter, in his paper, Osipow refers to the existence of many career

* Presented at the Regional Conference on Career Guidance, Counseling and Placement, sponsored by the University of Missouri and the U. S. Office of Education, April 30-May 1, 1970, at the Lockheed Education Training Center, Burbank, California.

development studies. In the same vein, Townsend holds that there is now available to be put to use, research findings on career development, and on the more general subject of counseling. He tells of models and exemplary programs waiting to be utilized; and expresses the opinion that a strong desire to do something with the findings and resources now available may be the motivational thrust necessary to get much needed programs underway. It is my hope that the excellent papers and the thoughtful declarations of the national conferees will enable us to move forward with confidence into the areas of programs and implementations.

Both Osipow and Herr gave clearcut suggestions about the kinds of sessions, job information content, and audio-visual aids that could be in K-12 vocational guidance development programs. Norm Gysbers also treats this subject well in a recent paper "Elements of a Model for Promoting Career Development in Elementary and Junior High School." Here again, good information appears to be available. Does someone here have an example of an effective program on the West Coast?

A statement of Osipow intrigued me, partly because in industry we are coming up independently with the same opinion. He writes: "There is a tendency in our culture to make choices consistent with interests and hope or even assume that abilities will prove to be adequate when, in fact, most of the data indicate or lead to inferences that abilities far override interests in influencing vocational attainment." There is a growing recognition in industry of the importance of aptitudes and abilities in most occupations above the semi-skilled level.

This last subject, having to do with counselors and employment people, pinpoints another need -- to get counselors and industrial personnel people together in some more direct and permanent way than is now the case.

More specifically, how can there be implemented (1) a communication system involving counselors, unions, and employers, (2) a greater collaboration between manpower and employer agencies, and (3) a continuity of counseling services as

clients progress through their life spans.

In most large-scale vocational education and training programs the attention is still on to the processing of masses of people rather than on the individual, his preferences and talents. One of Robb's premises is: "It is possible to reconcile national purpose and individual fulfillment. But the growing demand for attention to individuals requires a reassessment of national goals and of procedures needed to achieve them. If necessary, a redeployment of resources and a realignment of priorities can guarantee that individuals will not be neglected in carrying out the massive programs now underway and in the offing." The employability development team now used in the WIN program is an effort to implement this recently re-instituted concept of individual differences. Does anyone here know how WIN is making out or have another example of a shift of attention from group to individual processing?

Felix Robb tells of tendencies to keep training programs long after they are needed, and for our educating people for non-existent jobs. Who has an example of a program in which occupational info is geared into a vocational program -- one that works, that is? Can counselors help vocational educators determine when vocational education programs should start, stop, or increase or decrease in enrollment? Are counselors any better prepared to do this than vocational educators?

Herr contends that one way to eliminate the existence of discrete, compartmentalized, and splintered guidance, counseling, and placement programs is to use a "systems analysis" study of the entire process in terms of objectives or outcomes desired, the processes necessary, the resources available and needed, etc. This suggestion was received enthusiastically in a general session at Missouri, but I have not yet heard of such an effort.

Related to a systems approach to counseling is the growing acknowledgment among some counselors that they do in fact change their client in some way, and

that behavioral change can be used as a criterion of counselor effectiveness. The old notion that a counselor doesn't change people, he simply influences them and they change themselves is ready for the round file because it takes necessary responsibility off of the shoulders of counselors and makes the measurement of counselors' efforts virtually impossible. I like the conception of the counselor as one who, if he's doing his job, intervenes in a person's life process and modifies it in some meaningful fashion. This means that counselors run into calculated risks -- but on the other hand they may, by teaming up the behavioral change concept with a systems approach, find a measure of their effectiveness.

As you can see, I like to indulge in America's favorite parlor game, that of criticizing someone else's profession. Yet I believe I like constructive criticism of the industrial training field, I'm so involved in counseling that I accept any deficiency as my own, and more importantly, I see counseling as one means of getting at causes of and for preventing some of the nation's manpower ills: imbalances of labor supply and demand, unemployment, underemployment, and misplacement. I believe that better and more counseling 10 to 15 years ago could have prevented some of today's unfilled demand for technicians, scientists, administrators, and many kinds of professional people. Good counseling could have reduced some of the coexistence in the nation of over a million job vacancies and of over 3 million unemployed people.

In its second report, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education referred to the federal government's substantial expenditure in 1968 for manpower programs for the unemployed, and then to the relatively small funding of programs designed to slow down the stream of people entering what it called the unemployment pool. The Council concluded: "The allocation of far more federal dollars to the problem of the pool than to the problem of the flow is wasteful and inefficient. This nation will never reduce its pool of unemployed until the federal government

gives as much attention to reducing the flow as it gives to trying to reduce the pools."

An interpretation of the Council's statement is that we're trying to remedy present manpower circumstances without giving sufficient attention to down-stream causes. This nation must give adequate attention to preventive measures if the remedial or rehabilitative ones are to work. And to me, good counseling can be a potential remedial measure.

Now, I'd like to switch from the papers to some impressions I have of counseling gained from my position in industry. A person in the midst of industrial relations activities -- of employment, job counseling, training, placement, and promotion -- views career development from a different vantage point -- from the placement end of the sequence -- thus permitting observations not enjoyed by most counselors.

I believe some observations by our employment to be significant. They find "too many applicants":

- . Unprepared to secure work for numerous reasons: lack of occupational information, inadequate or inappropriate preparation for what they want, absence of marketable skills.
- . Unable to make career decisions -- perhaps because of no or few opportunities to make such decisions.
- . Unrealistic in their requests -- perhaps because of little opportunity to relate to the world of work.
 - .. Ask for jobs out of immediate reach, or for jobs far below immediate ability.
- . With histories of incompatible work experience (this applies particularly to older young people 20-25 years).
 - .. You might ask how we know?
 - .. We don't in any one case. There are enough cases where

selection methods suggest this and applicants' responses confirm. We speculate that some applicants have lost many years in their career development because of non-contributory work experience.

. Who dropped out of school

- .. Some for reasons other than academic potential. Former students who could have made it -- at both high school and collegiate levels.
- .. Some didn't get into higher academic grade levels and should have. We find an occasional apprentice applicant who, based on test results, could probably have breezed through college. We have found disadvantaged minorities with outstanding talents of every description.

These examples suggest flaws in the educational-counseling system. Unfortunately, to these deficiencies are added those in the industrial placement system so that the adult in industry is subjected to the buffeting of employer needs, preferences of bosses, and chance circumstances.

Guidance has been disregarded to a great extent by industry as a possible personnel service to employees. We find prevalent in industry, personnel and other staff people whose job it is to provide information to employees -- information about company job opportunities, training programs, transportation, housing, health, conditions of employment, retirement, and money and legal matters. Such information-providers, usually called placement, personnel, employee service, educational, medical, labor relations, or retirement representatives (advisors or counselors) differ from guidance or counseling people in that they:

1. In answer to questions are apt to give the same information to all people with little or no reference to individual differences of

the people interviewed and their particular circumstances.

2. Are prone to think of the immediate rather than the long range. For example, the placement or personnel representative's primary effort may be to help an employee move from an incompatible job to one, at that time more desirable, rather than to help him formulate career plans. A personnel representative's influence will, in the main, be consistent with his company's objective of maintaining its workforce, whereas some influences of counselors will be to cause clients to look elsewhere for work -- beyond the occupational confines on that particular company.
3. Are not apt to analyse, interpret or assess psychological or other relevant information to gain insight into the interviewee before providing requested information.
4. Are not apt to use a clinical approach, record information comprehensively, keep developmental records, attempt to help the interviewee gain self-insight, define his problems, or follow up on results.
5. Rarely make an effort to help prepare the person for future career decision-making.

A study of Henry Eilbert* disclosed that 17.8% of the 134 firms he canvassed employed personnel counselors. He reports, "An observer must conclude....that the use of personnel counselors is distinctly infrequent.---" Eilbert noted the occasional employment of psychologists, but found most were used for research, testing, and executive selection, promotion, and consultation. Evidence, although meager, does not suggest that counseling has risen of late in industry popularity or that any substantive change in practice is in the making.

*Eilbert, H., A Study of Current Counseling Practices in Industry, The Journal of Business, pp. 28-37, 1956.

Trends and circumstances are prevalent that may affect in one way or another the infusion of counseling into industrial relations systems:

- . Present information-providing services are now considered necessary and will in all likelihood be continued. Such continuation delineates substantially the functions and responsibilities a counselor would possess in industry (unless a major redesign of personnel positions were to take place).
- . Tuition-reimbursement, work-study, school cooperative, and rotational programs permit employees to explore different subjects and jobs through direct experiences. Further, training programs in which case studies, simulation, films, and role playing are used often have value as occupational information media. Such programs can cause inbreeding of employees, may stifle their interest in occupations outside of the employer's milieu and would not be representative of the opportunities available to all people on any one company's payroll. Here again, the job information provided by its own staff may have the effect of stabilizing and retaining the workforce, whereas the influence of a counselor may have the opposite effect. As we have suggested, one function of a counselor is to provide occupational information as one means for increasing a client's career options, rather than to bring about a satisfaction with present circumstances or potentialities.
- . Publications in the training and development field reveal that courses in interviewing, attitude determination and change, communicating, motivating, and counseling are being offered by some companies. This may suggest again that counselor's functions are being assigned to line and staff people.

- . There appears to be an awareness by industrial management of the value of its own workforce; and this awareness finds expression in manpower forecasting and planning efforts, training programs, and in various practices to keep a workforce intact (to bring in or send out production, to move people internally, to go into overtime rather than to hire temporary labor).

The present low unemployment rate and the bright prospect of a continuing low rate will underline the value of a company's own workforce as a major resource. Career counseling and an upgrading of the various information-providing services by psychologists and counselors is not an improbable innovation by progressive companies. If such a trend is initiated, it will, in all probability be of minuscule proportions, and will have little effect on counselor supply and demand.

- . The collective thrust of the Manpower Development and Training Act, recent USDL Manpower Administration contracts with industry, and the National Alliance of Businessmen, has caused the introduction into industry of many programs for training the hardcore. Government and industry people close to these programs agree that counseling is a mandatory part of the processing of these people if they are to become dependable and productive employees.

The USDL - MA-4 program stipulates that counseling is required and defines counseling as follows:

This includes employee orientation in program objectives and responsibilities of employees, proper work habits, cooperation with supervisor, personal grooming, payroll procedures, safety, fringe benefits, consumer credit, transportation, etc. Also, includes preliminary

assessment of the vocational and personal attitudes and potential of each individual, and may include counseling assistance.*

These training programs constitute the first formal introduction of counseling into the industrial personnel system. The effectiveness of this kind of counseling is now being measured, and industry's experience with this rather specialized kind of counseling may have an influence one way or another with the future use of counselors and career counseling programs.

As a concluding topic, let's discuss for a moment "lifelong counseling." You are all aware of the tendency of some young adults to defer career decisions until graduate school and beyond. We have mentioned here today the inability of some applicants to make job decisions, and you know of the frequency of job change among adults.

Further, it is not unusual to find men and women 35 and over without goals or with inappropriate ones. Goals set at an earlier period and not modified may have become unrealistically high, too low, or unsuitable in kind for one reason or another. Such persons, with long established attitudes may have become settled, with resistance toward mobility at a time when personnel are becoming more mobile -- not necessarily upward -- but laterally, and if they cannot keep up with advancing technology, downward.

There is an obvious need for counseling to increase the decision-making ability and self-sufficiency of adults because of changing occupational composition and of unequal rates of employment growth and decline in different segments of the economy (government, manufacturing, business, services, etc.). The present cutbacks in the aerospace industry have necessitated new career decisions by many who had become settled in this field.

When a person's skills and experience are no longer adequate or needed, he/she

* USDL, Manpower Administration, JOBS, National Alliance of Businessmen, Request for Proposal MA-4, Washington, D. C. 20210, U. S. Government Printing Office: 1968-O-317-557.

is faced with a problem in which counseling can help.

- . Deciding whether to upgrade or update skills, acquire a new skill, or revert to a lesser skill.
- . Making a psycho-economic adjustment to a new field.
- . Generating motivation to "do it all over again" in preparing for a new career.

There are other reasons why more attention should be paid to the counseling of adults. Some young people acquire early preference for careers that have a long preparation time, and because of their capacity, family background, and academic circumstances realize these preferences with little deviation. They become locked into a career preparation program and generally have less need for counseling than others of their same age range.

On the other hand, industrial placement people find that many adults have from three to five different jobs before settling down to one job. In view of this, we might ask ourselves, would it not be wiser to focus on the flexibility, adaptability, and perhaps to a greater extent, on the circumstances and needs of individuals regardless of age? Is it not possible that a 50-year old person may need counseling more than a teenager? And to complete the age continuum, let's give cognizant to the growing necessity for retirement counseling.

Recent projections suggest that social security, pensions, and other forms of retirement income are not increasing sufficiently to counteract the present upward trend of the cost of living. Further, a recent study has found that a high percentage of early retirees believed that their retirement "was not entirely voluntary."* Also, there is evidence from industrial retirement counseling that psychological adjustments to retirement are often as difficult to effect as those of a financial nature.

* H. C. Pyron & U. Vincent Manion, The Company, The Individual, and The Decision to Retire, Industrial Gerontology, Winter, 1970.

From what I gather, K through 12 programs are improving and some are becoming very effective. Let's extend the age continuum for counseling with a K through K concept -- with K's representing Kindergarten and Kaputt -- the latter, the time when people throw in the occupational sponge and take up the serious business of enjoying life.

Karl R. Kunze