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ABSTRACT

A study to determine the degree of vocational awareness of Australian students leaving school and entering the world of work was carried out using a printed questionnaire. A sample of fourth formers in four different schools was used (281 boys and 162 girls): (1) 53.0% of the sample--co-educational school, largely executive-type suburb outside Wollongong; (2) 21.9% of the sample--co-educational school, in a good socio-economic area of Sydney; (3) 12.4% of the sample--boys' school in largely executive-type suburb of Sydney; and (4) 12.6% of the sample--boys' school in a working class area of Sydney. Results are presented in percentages for the total sample, followed by note of major deviations from the total group. Where subgroups existed percentages of those who answered the question or section are reported. The results include age, country of birth, family composition, fathers' occupations, subject studied, subject levels, attitude toward school, subject preferences and perceived level of difficulty, decision regarding further schooling, main reasons for leaving school after fourth form, types of career choices, awareness of institutions of higher education and entry requirements, information on apprenticeship (awareness of its nature, attitudes toward), and how the subjects perceived school guidance services. Conclusions and a bibliography are included. (WL)

NO. 14

VOCATIONAL AWARENESS IN STUDENTS- ARE THE SCHOOLS DOING ENOUGH?

by E. Richardson
and L. Clayman

VOCATIONAL AWARENESS IN STUDENTS- ARE THE SCHOOLS DOING ENOUGH?

How large is the gap between school and work? In the past some effort has been made to smooth the transition from sixth form studies at school to first year studies in tertiary institutions through such procedures as "orientation weeks". This transition from academic studies at school under the guidance of university oriented teachers to academic studies at university is much less substantial than the gap between third or fourth year studies at school and the formidable world of work where school studies are frequently viewed with suspicion and at times open hostility. Until recently few major attempts have been made to ease this school-work transition although some important but small scale "works-experience" periods have been introduced in a few schools. The materials available in many schools for career guidance and the facilities available to train specialist staff in this important area have also been given lower priority than that given to traditional academic areas.

In the United States of America the transition from school to work and general vocational preparation have received higher priority and career orientation programs have received substantial Federal support. The approach taken, however, is not to regard such career oriented studies as extra curricular and hence by implication less important or peripheral but to weave them into the fabric of the normal school subjects as important threads stretching throughout the elementary as well as the high school curriculum.

Recently the Schools Commission and the Technical and Further Education Commission in Australia have identified the need for vocational preparation programs to ease the school-work transition and to make young school leavers more familiar with vocational opportunities. Various State Education Departments have also formed committees of enquiry. A study by the O.E.C.D. has also been commissioned by the Federal Government and submissions from interested members of the public have been invited.

The aim of the present study is simple - to determine how familiar students about to leave school are with the options open to them both for immediate employment and further educational studies.

The authors wish to thank the principals, staff and students of the schools used in this study.

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INTRODUCTION

Before the 1960s, vocational guidance in New South Wales was an advisory service provided by specialists who attempted to match the talents and interests of school leavers against what was known about the nature and availability of jobs. (Alternatively in many cases, schools included, additional advice was given frequently at school by well informed amateurs.) In neither case did practitioners believe that there was anything of importance to be taught directly in the schools related to the vocational thinking of the school leaver: their function was seen as impressing and directing the pupil's attention to occupations which seemed suitable and steering him away from ill fitting or dead-end jobs. Such an approach implied the gathering, organisation and distribution of occupational literature and the ad hoc provision of advice which could not be classed as "education" and hence did not warrant financial resources, status, time within the working day of the school, or systematic provision for training of its practitioners.

Ginzberg and others have emphasised that effective vocational guidance is based upon the ability of the individual to understand his own values and goals. Ginzberg's theory contains four basic elements: occupational choice is seen to be a developmental process typically taking place over a period of years, being largely irreversible, and ending in a compromise between interests, capacities and values and the opportunities available. Three periods may be identified: the early period of fantasy choice which is influenced to a great extent by the wish to be an adult; the period of tentative choice, based largely on interests, later to be modified by knowledge of capacities and values; and, finally, the period of realistic choice, characterised by successive exploratory crystallisation and specification phases. Super, in developing Ginzberg's model, identified as central features of the choice process, the development of the self-concept and an awareness of the occupational roles available in the field of work which provide an opportunity for implementing this self-concept (Hayes and Hopson, 1971: 16).

Hayes and Hopson have noted the influence of employment choice on life style, and point out that potential selection opportunities are greatest during the secondary school years. This has important implications for career work, in that it should enable young people to choose a life rather than a living; that the chosen occupation will globally shape the person and his life style; and that the careers teacher and his colleagues have the obligation to encourage young people in developing knowledge of themselves and wise decision making, in time to handle major decisions required by subject and course options and by school training (Hayes and Hopson, 1971: 6).

The constraints on free choice have been discussed by many authors. Social class and family background have been shown by Ginzberg, Carter, Himmelweit and others to largely determine the child's educational achievements by their influence on his verbal development, access to educational resources and his values and aspirations. (Hayes and Hopson, 1971: 6). Educational achievement in turn defines the available limits of occupational choice in particular groupings very largely as a result of the educational guidance and selection exercised throughout the school system. (Department of Education and Science, 1965: 16). Thus there is in fact relatively little room for choice and self determination. Moreover, young people are frequently required to make certain choices early in their school career, before they have in fact had the opportunity to develop a self-concept.

Guidance procedures assume a readiness and an ability by pupils to make decisions, but frequently these skills are thwarted rather than encouraged within schools, for example by adopting authoritarian teaching methods. In addition, some pupils have personal inadequacies, such as deficiencies in social skills and insight, and habits. Help may be needed for them to recognise the demands working life will make. (Hayes and Hopson, 1971: 7; and Newsom Report, 1963: 27). The inculcation of school values which often conflict with those of industry also causes confusion and hence for many students is totally unrealistic. (Dainton Report; Swann Report).

Careers assistance is frequently interpreted as the dissemination of as much occupational information as possible. This practice is based on the assumptions that the student is able to sort through the mass of information; that all occupational and educational information is of the same type, so that each piece can be compared to others; and that careers work in schools is essentially concerned with occupational placement and that it has little or no connection with the general school curriculum. The first two assumptions are not supported by evidence and the third is being increasingly questioned in other countries, as the demands for relevance in secondary education are increasing.

The term "career" is now used by some authorities in a broader sense to refer to a person's total life pattern, which gives careers work an entirely new emphasis. Career awareness has been designated in recent United States Government publications as a critical part of school guidance, and understanding of the psychological and sociological features of work is also cited as an important part of education. Career choice is identified not as a decision that is made at one time and career development is seen as a substantial educational commitment that must be vertically and horizontally integrated throughout the curriculum. The creation of new materials is seen as imperative (Willingham, Ferrin and Begle, 1972: 9). Individualised and maturity matched services, designed to fulfil educational and careers functions that all students recognise as useful and realistic, form a high priority. Development of real understanding of the meaning of

education and work, rather than simply their outward characteristics, is a major aim of the whole process, which represents a new approach to vocational guidance as carried out in schools.

High school students in New South Wales are expected to decide fairly early in their school career, where their abilities and interests lie, what their strong subjects are and whether to continue at school beyond fourth form, taking into account likely opportunities which are normally outside their range of experience. This places an extra burden on the existing guidance services.

A dual guidance system exists: within schools teachers are designated to be responsible for the dissemination of career information, provision of outside speakers and any other careers work that is carried out. More specialist guidance is carried out by the Vocational Guidance Bureau, which provides psychological testing services within the schools and at the offices of the Bureau. Since the average city school adolescent may see a guidance officer only twice within the school during his secondary school career, most of the day to day advice and provision of information especially in the early stages must be carried out by the Careers Adviser who is always present in the school.

The Commonwealth Government recently has substantially increased aid for the training of trade apprentices. Success of the scheme, however, depends on school leavers, as well as on employers, since, if insufficient school leavers are interested in trade training, then however good a subsidy scheme may be, it must be doomed to failure. Interest in trade training depends in turn upon the impressions held by boys and girls regarding apprenticeship and its status as compared with other occupational options. Thus school leavers must have ready access to information regarding the trades, what trade jobs entail, the conditions applying to apprenticeship, educational level necessary for success, opportunities for advancement and so on.

Since guidance arrangements are coming under greater scrutiny overseas, we considered it of interest to carry out a study to determine the level of information possessed by New South Wales urban children concerning potential careers. Our study was oriented towards apprenticeship, since it is one of the major forms of formalised training open to early school leavers. Apprenticeship moreover has been the object of recent reforms and provided an ideal opportunity to determine the currency of the information held by a sample of fourth formers. Their attitudes towards apprenticeship and also their attitudes towards the guidance they had received in the process of occupational choice were also studied.

To avoid biassing the study and to retain the interest of those who were planning to enter higher education information was also sought on their knowledge with respect to entry to university.

PROCEDURE

A sample of fourth formers in four different schools was used, which comprised 281 boys and 162 girls.

The following schools were used:

1. 53.0% of sample - Co-educational school, largely executive type suburb outside Wollongong.
2. 21.9% of sample - Co-educational school, in a good socio-economic area of Sydney.
3. 12.4% of sample - Boys' school in a largely executive type suburb of Sydney.
4. 12.6% of sample - Boys' school in a working class area of Sydney.

The study was carried out using a printed questionnaire. Since we had found previously that ability to read adequately cannot be taken for granted and to avoid any misunderstanding, the researchers or where physical arrangements necessitated, a suitably instructed teacher, were present to read out each question and answer any queries made by the students, without making comment. The wording of the questions was clear and uncomplicated and the reasons for conducting the study were made clear to the students and their assistance requested. All groups within the same school were conducted on the same day to avoid as far as possible any consultation.

The results presented are percentages for the total sample, followed by major deviations from the total group. Where sub-groups existed percentages of those who answered the question or section are reported.

RESULTS

Age

The predominant age range was 15.0 - 15.11, 73.1 per cent of the sample falling into this group.

Country of Birth

The majority (81.9) were born in Australia or New Zealand, 8.8 per cent were born in the United Kingdom or Ireland, and 5.2 per cent were born in other European countries. School 2 had the largest proportion born in the United Kingdom (12.4) and School 4 the lowest (3.6). School 4 also had the largest proportion born in Europe (14.3) and School 3 the lowest (1.8).

Of those born overseas, 29.6 per cent came to Australia under 5 years of age, 32.1 per cent between 5 and 9 years, 35.8 per cent between 10 and 14 years, and 2.5 per cent aged 15 or more.

The majority had parents born in Australia or New Zealand, but a substantial group had either fathers (14.5) or mothers (13.0) born in the United Kingdom. School 4 had the greatest proportion of European children and those born here of European parents (19.6 father European, 17.9 mother European). Thus School 4 could well contain a group of educationally disadvantaged pupils, depending among other things on the extent to which knowledge of the English language presented a problem in their earlier or present schooling and on factors such as streaming. (Roper, 1970.)

Family Composition

Family composition was as follows:

Boys with all male siblings	16.9
Girls with all female siblings	7.2
Boys more than girls	25.1
Girls more than boys	24.0
Boys = Girls	21.4

Fathers' Occupations

The largest group (25.5) had fathers who were in managerial or supervisory positions or self-employed. This differed among the schools, from 51.9 per cent at School 3 to 13.2 per cent at School 4.

The next largest group (18.1) had fathers who were skilled tradesmen. This again differed among the schools, being highest at School 4 (30.4) and lowest at School 3 (3.3). Professional fields accounted for 14.7 per cent, School 3 having the largest group (25.0) and School 4 the lowest (5.7). Fathers in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations represented 9.6 per cent of the total group, highest at School 4 (20.8) and lowest at School 2 (2.1).

There are thus obvious overall socio-economic differences in the areas feeding the four schools; fathers' occupational types differ, so do patterns of working mothers. In total 52.6 per cent had mothers who were working, individually this was highest at School 2 (62.9) and lowest at School 1 (46.4). Of the group 59.1 per cent worked full-time, this proportion being highest (66.7) at School 4 and here more frequently in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs (62.1). Office jobs were occupied by 28.4 per

Awareness of Institutions for Further Education and their Entry Requirements

When asked to identify the university nearest to their home 80 per cent of the total group could state it correctly. There was, however, marked variation from school to school. (School 1 - 91.1, School 2 - 69.1, School 3 - 78.2, School 4 - 53.7). This could in certain cases perhaps be a feature of the geographical position of the area; however, at School 4, 44.4 per cent stated that they did not know which university was the nearest geographically and were not able to hazard a guess.

There was also uncertainty regarding entry requirements. A Higher School Certificate was thought to be necessary by 22.2 per cent, Matriculation by 6.7 per cent, and 44.1 per cent stated that they did not know. At School 4, 59.6 per cent of the group did not know the requirements; in contrast the percentage at School 3 was only 33.3.

Technical College

Overall there was greater awareness of the location of the nearest technical college; 92.7 per cent could locate it correctly.

As far as entry to technical college was concerned, 48 per cent thought one needed a qualification to gain entry, 31.6 per cent stated no qualification was necessary, and 19.5 per cent did not know. Of those who stated that there was an entry requirement, 31.6 per cent stated that this was School Certificate and 45 per cent did not know.

Technical College Certificate Courses

Since one of the opportunities for further education for those leaving at fourth form is provided by the Certificate courses of the Department of Technical Education, we wanted to ascertain knowledge regarding these courses.

In answer to this set of questions, 71.7 per cent stated that they knew nothing about entry requirements for these courses; for those planning to leave at fourth form the figure was 62.4 per cent.

As far as the length of course was concerned, 67.4 per cent expressed total ignorance and 14.7 per cent stated four years, other responses ranging from one to six years, this question being obviously more open to a guess. The standard of such courses was unknown to 88.4 per cent of the group.

These figures indicate a distinct lack of awareness in this area of further education for school leavers.

Remaining Subjects

Levels on all or most remaining subjects are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

REMAINING SUBJECT LEVELS - SCHOOLS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND TOTAL

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	Total	Girls	Boys
All or most at A level	42.6	48.5	52.7	23.2	42.7	52.5	37.0
All or most at Credit level	18.3	3.1	0	8.9	11.5	14.2	10.0
All or most at O level	14.0	32.0	25.5	42.9	16.7	26.7	23.0

Attitude to School

Approximately half the sample (51.9) were indifferent in their attitude to school, stating that they neither liked nor disliked school. This percentage was highest at School 3 (60.0) and was higher for boys than girls (56.6 and 43.8 respectively).

Subject Preferences and Level of Difficulty

A technical subject was liked most by 36.4 per cent of the total group. This was the least variable among the schools and was far ahead of other subject preferences. For girls the figure was 25.8 per cent, still ahead of other subjects.

Subjects liked least were English (22.6), and Mathematics (20.5).

Subjects found easiest were English (24.3), although a sex difference was apparent (boys 18.0, girls 35.2), and a technical subject (22.2) (highest at School 3 (40.0) and lowest at School 1 (15.7).

The subject found most difficult, as has been found in other studies, was Mathematics (35.5), with some differences among schools (School 1 - 40.9, School 2 - 20.6).

Decision Regarding Further Schooling

Slightly more than half indicated that it was their intention to continue on to fifth and sixth form. This was highest at School 3 (69.1) and lowest at School 4 (37.5). More boys intended to continue than girls (55.2 and 49.1 respectively). Of the twelve students who had not yet decided, ten were girls.

A decision to continue appears to be related to father's occupation. A greater proportion of those with fathers in professional, managerial, supervisory, technician occupation and self-employment were planning to continue at school, compared with those who had fathers in trades, clerical and sales, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. (χ^2 = 39.05 significant at .001 level.)

Ginzberg found that boys from high income families in the United States of America tended to assume even at an early age that they would go to college and later at a more realistic choice stage, restricted their choices to occupations of a professional-executive kind. In contrast he found that boys from lower income families tended to think in terms of skilled jobs offering better remuneration than that of their fathers. The latter finding was also supported by an earlier study we made of apprentices in the final stage of their trade course in six Sydney Technical Colleges. (Richardson and Clayman, 1974).

A decision to continue was also related to Mathematics level studied. Greater numbers of those studying Mathematics at Advanced level were planning to continue beyond fourth form. (χ^2 = 96.38, significant at .001 level.)

General level of ambition, assessed by applying a multiple choice of options schedule, was positively related to Mathematics level attempted. Of those with Mathematics at Advanced levels many more indicated a high level of ambition, while those with Mathematics at Ordinary level indicated satisfaction with a good secure job at a lower level. (χ^2 = 55.81, significant at .001 level.)

Main Reasons for Decision to Leave School after Fourth Form

Exactly half of the early leavers stated that they intended to leave school after fourth form since their chosen career did not require them to continue (60.0 at School 4 and 38.9 at School 2). The notion of being unable to cope with fifth and sixth form work was given by 19.0 per cent (31.3 at School 3 and 14.3 at School 4).

TYPES OF CAREER CHOICE

The largest group, 27.5 per cent, indicated that they were undecided on a career. This percentage was highest at School 3 (30.9) and lowest at School 4 (17.9), and was greater among boys (29.5) than girls (24.1).

The next largest group, 22.8 per cent of the total, stated that they intended to train as skilled tradesmen. This figure was highest at School 4 (46.4) and lowest at School 2 (10.3). For boys this choice represented 33.1 per cent, but for girls only 4.9 per cent. Desire for a professional occupation accounted for 17.4 per cent (School 1 - 10.6, School 2 - 26.8, School 3 - 27.3, School 4 - 19.6).

Most popular choices for girls were secretarial and other types of office work - 24.1 per cent, and 22.8 per cent for teaching or nursing.

Only slightly more girls (45.3) than boys (44.1) planned to leave school after fourth form. A small number had not reached a decision on this, 5.6 per cent of girls and 0.7 per cent of boys. Of those planning not to continue at school, 12.7 per cent had not made a tentative career choice, while this figure for those planning to continue at school was 38.9 per cent.

The tentative career choices of both the continuing and the discontinuing groups are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

CAREER CHOICES - CONTINUING AND DISCONTINUING STUDENTS

Occupational Choice	Frequency		Percentage	
	Not Continuing	Continuing	Not Continuing	Continuing
Trades	98	3	49.8	1.3
Technician and Supervisory	8	18	4.1	7.7
Professional	1	73	.01	31.2
Management in Industry or Commerce	1	0	.01	0
Clerical, Sales, Service	9	2	4.6	0.85
Other	12	13	6.1	5.6
Secretarial - Girls	36	3	18.3	1.3
Teaching, Nursing - Girls	7	31	3.6	13.3
Not decided	25	91	12.7	38.9

Overall these figures imply that a percentage of those who continue beyond fourth form do so because they have been unable to make a decision regarding a career.

Differences in occupational choices among the school populations were tested for statistical significance. A chi square test yielded 25.07 significant at .01 level. Greater numbers at Schools 1 and 4 wished to enter trades, while more pupils from Schools 2 and 3 wished to enter professional and managerial type occupations.

For the choices of boys only a chi square value of 21.21, significant at .01 level, was obtained. For girls, the resulting cells were too small for the test to be meaningful.

Comparison was also made among the school population on a general measure of level of aspiration, previously shown to be related to Mathematics level. A chi square test yielded 23.27 significant at the .001 level of probability. There were generally lower levels of aspiration at Schools 1 and 4, and at School 4 a desire for trade status and in the case of a small number of pupils professional status, rather than managerial or self-employment. Percentages are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

LEVEL OF ASPIRATION AND SCHOOL

Indicated Level of Aspiration	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	Boys	Girls	Total
1. Trades, clerk, good secure job	41.4	22.9	37.0	58.2	42.5	32.5	38.9
2. Junior management or self-employed	18.9	21.9	27.8	10.9	24.6	11.3	19.7
3. Professional	37.4	51.0	29.6	30.9	30.5	52.5	38.7

Ginzberg found in his studies that one of the major constraints on the vocational development of boys from lower-income families was their modest level of aspiration. He found that boys from this group who possessed mechanical interests and abilities showed no inclination to think beyond becoming mechanics or electricians. Our results tend to support this finding.

cent of the working mothers, with this proportion highest (39.7) at School 2 and lowest (17.2) at School 4. A small percentage (14.2) worked in teaching and nursing. This proportion again was highest at School 2 (19.0) and lowest at School 4 (3.4).

Subjects Studied

Differences were found among the schools in the subjects studied and their levels. A minority, 20.8 per cent, were studying a foreign language. At School 4 14.3 per cent were studying French, with no pupils taking a two-language course.

Approximately 30 per cent of the total group were studying Commerce, for girls the figure was 36.4 per cent.

Technical Subjects

Of the boys 62.6 per cent were taking at least one technical subject (School 4 - 73.2, School 3 - 43.6). Graphic Arts was only available at School 4.

Of the girls, 66 per cent were studying Needlework, Home Economics or both. Of these 70.1 per cent were studying Home Economics. No girls were taking any of the traditionally male type technical subjects, nor were any of the girls studying Technical Drawing, which was being undertaken by 54.5 per cent of the boys.

Levels of Subjects

Mathematics

TABLE 1

MATHEMATICS LEVEL - SCHOOLS 1, 2, 3, 4 AND TOTAL

Mathematics Level	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	Total Group
A level	46.0	33.0	50.9	25.0	41.1
Credit level	28.5	22.7	5.5	14.3	24.8
Ordinary level	15.7	42.3	43.6	51.8	29.6

Apprenticeship

An interest in becoming a trade apprentice was shown by 39.6 per cent of the group. This interest was highest at School 4 (66.1) and considerably higher for boys than girls (52.9 and 16.7 respectively). The main reasons given for this interest were security and eventual good pay (26.3 per cent, highest at School 4 (30.6) and lowest at School 3 (4.5)), closely followed by interest in technical subjects (25.7 per cent; 36.1 at School 4 and 4.5 at School 2) and thirdly, that it is the best way to learn a trade (24.6 per cent; 36.4 at School 2 and 20.9 at School 1).

Those who claimed lack of interest in apprenticeship gave as their main reasons, firstly, that they were interested in doing something else (51.5) and secondly, a desire to do something better and gain a qualification (17.8).

Information Regarding Apprenticeship

Where did the pupils obtain their information regarding trades? The responses to this question are significant and are shown in the table below.

TABLE 5

SOURCES OF MOST USEFUL INFORMATION ON TRADES

Most Useful Information on Trades	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	Total Boys	Total Girls	Group Total
School Counsellor or Careers Adviser	6.0	2.1	5.6	12.5	7.9	2.5	5.9
Guidance Officer	25.2	17.5	22.2	16.1	24.0	18.5	22.0
Father, mother, brother, etc.	23.5	19.6	18.5	21.4	23.7	18.5	21.8
Friend	6.0	7.2	9.3	3.6	5.4	8.0	6.3
Visitor to School on Careers Night, etc.	2.6	6.2	1.9	5.4	3.9	3.1	3.6
More than 1 of above	9.8	0	7.4	8.9	7.5	6.8	7.3
Commonwealth Employment Service, Armed Forces recruitment, etc., outside sources, films, etc.	6.8	13.4	18.5	10.7	10.8	9.3	10.2
No-one they could recall	19.2	34.0	16.7	21.4	16.5	32.7	22.4

Awareness of Nature of Apprenticeship

There are obvious gaps in the knowledge of these fourth formers regarding apprenticeship under present day conditions: 40.2 per cent of the group did not know the length of an apprenticeship term, 68.1 per cent were not aware of the Shortened Apprenticeship Scheme for those with Higher School Certificate and 40.5 per cent stated that apprentices must attend technical college in the evening to learn some of their basic subjects, apparently being unaware of the day-release system, which is a modern feature of apprenticeship in New South Wales.

The pupils were asked to indicated from a list of seven trades requiring technical college attendance from apprentices how many of these trades required such attendance. Results are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6

AWARENESS OF TECHNICAL COLLEGE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	Total Boys	Total Girls	Group Total
7 Trades Indicated	17.9	12.4	9.3	16.1	16.4	13.7	15.4
6 Trades Indicated	16.7	25.8	18.5	16.1	20.4	16.1	18.8
5 Trades Indicated	19.7	13.4	16.7	23.2	16.8	21.1	18.4
4 Trades Indicated	19.7	23.7	25.9	19.6	19.8	24.2	21.3
3 Trades Indicated	11.5	17.5	14.8	12.5	15.4	9.9	13.4
2 Trades Indicated	2.6	2.1	1.9	3.6	2.5	2.5	2.5
1 Trade Indicated	3.0	4.1	0	8.9	4.6	1.9	3.6
Don't know	9.0	1.0	13.0	0	4.3	10.6	6.6

Only 45.8 per cent of the group knew the length of the average trade course at technical college. There is thus obvious confusion regarding concurrent educational requirements.

Even if allowance is made for the females of the group who have traditionally less interest in trades and less openings available, these results point to inadequate knowledge of this area of employment.

Attitudes Towards Apprenticeship

Attitudes of the group towards apprenticeship were generally not unfavourable. Only 10.2 per cent saw apprenticeship as a means of providing employers with cheap labour while 18 per cent saw it as a means of keeping a boy with the same employer for a certain period of time. Only 2.5 per cent said they had been told by apprentices they knew that facilities for training provided by employers were bad, whereas in contrast 22.2 per cent were told they were neither good nor bad, 35.5 per cent, good, and 8.6 per cent very good. A large proportion (29.6 per cent), however, stated that they did not know any apprentices.

Perhaps their attitude was at times rather unrealistic, since 44.6 per cent believed that apprenticeship is a good choice of career for a person who wants to enjoy good living standards without having to work much overtime; less were of this opinion at School 2 (28.9). These youngsters also apparently did not see apprenticeship as limiting promotional prospects - 74.1 per cent stated that apprenticeship does not confine people to lower levels of promotion in industry.

Did They Consider Guidance Adequate?

Of the sample, 58.6 per cent stated that they felt that guidance received had not been adequate in helping them to make a satisfactory choice regarding a career. There is a possibility that more were of this opinion than said so, since if they responded "No" to the question they were asked to make constructive suggestions for improvement. Since they were nearing the completion of a lengthy questionnaire, some may have opted for the easy response requiring no elaboration. Greater dissatisfaction was expressed by the girls (67.5) than by the boys (53.4).

Suggestions for improvement were made by 52.8 per cent of the sample. These were somewhat predictable and included better or more individual guidance (23.1), more detailed information on jobs, especially requirements and levels (22.2), more visits to schools by representatives from varied industries (14.1), and class discussions or time spent in some way in class on careers work (11.1). A further 17.5 per cent made the above suggestions and others.

CONCLUSIONS

It would appear from our survey that considerably more of those planning to leave school at the end of fourth form had made plans for a future career than those planning to continue at school. An interesting field for further study involving the interaction of motivation and ability would undoubtedly be to look at career choices at fourth form levels and follow the students through to Higher School Certificate level and beyond to ascertain how many are able to fulfil their early ambition, how many have perhaps been unrealistic and how many are still unable to formulate a satisfactory choice of career. In the short term, comments in the "Australian" newspaper and the "Sydney Morning Herald" in March 1974 made by educators and an officer of the Commonwealth Employment Service indicated that large numbers of students arrive at the end of their school life uncertain as to the field of employment they wish to enter. The important point was made that the vocational decision process should take place over a number of years. The operational implications of this have yet to be accepted in Australia although substantial efforts have been made in the United States of America through career orientation programs funded by the Federal Government, which extend almost from the kindergarten years to the upper secondary school.

Of significance in our study are the reasons given for a decision to leave school after fourth form, the main reason being that a chosen career did not require continuation at school; for a small further group, foreseen inability to cope with fifth and sixth forms; with only small percentages giving financial necessity and dislike of school as reasons. The question then arises as to whether those planning to continue at school are essentially staying on as a prerequisite to a future career or whether any substantial proportion stays on simply because of failure to make a career choice.

Results from our study point to inadequacy, or at least a felt inadequacy, in the guidance services provided. Since nearly 60 per cent of a sample from four schools stated that their careers guidance had been inadequate, the situation needs some remedy either in the provision of additional services or of an awareness program to make students more familiar with what is available. Suggestions for improvement indicated a need for individual guidance from a person they could see regularly or preferably a qualified person located permanently in their school, more detailed information, more visits by outsiders to the school, and more time to be spent on this aspect during their school life. These suggestions do not appear to us to be the irresponsible comments of apathetic young people: they are reasoned and constructive and no doubt to workers in guidance fields all too obvious.

There are gaps in the careers information so far received by this sample of students. The lack of knowledge of key aspects of trade training is of particular concern in view of Government schemes to increase training in this field, especially since short term apprenticeship can be a viable alternative mode of entry into engineering and other fields for a boy who has continued on to Higher School Certificate only to find that he cannot gain entry to the job or course he had in mind.

According to the 1963 publication of the International Conference on Public Education, "vocational needs of the day require that increasingly effective use be made of human resources, not only by the recruitment of manpower and qualified personnel for the different vocations, but also by avoiding the waste due to mistaken choices and to the individual's maladjustment in his occupation". This principle appears a sound one on which to base increasing efforts to improve guidance services. The term "career" now used in a broader sense than previously requires different decisions to be made in the choice process. The point is made by Gribbons and Lohnes (1968) that the counsellor needs to be concerned with the reasons for a vocational choice and with the "fit" of the preference to the individual's vocational self-concept.

Various factors have operated against successful careers work. There has been a leisurely pace of development of the career teacher's role, which in all too many cases still lacks the conventional marks of professional status - training, resources and sufficient time-tabled time. Should additional training at least equivalent in time to that given to teacher librarians be mandatory for teachers who occupy this vital position?

Another important factor operating is that of inadequate pupil experience; pupils are trying to reach a decision on matters which are beyond their usual range of experience, a situation parallel in fact to expecting a child to solve simultaneous equations before he has been taught the basic principles of algebra. In the United Kingdom worthwhile arrangements have been made in some schools in co-operation with local industry and commerce, by which pupils nearing the completion of their school education have work experience built into their curriculum. Similar links have been established with technical colleges (C.R.A.C., 1969) Pilot programs are available in Australia only in isolated areas.

A further problem concerns the way in which information is presented; as far as many pupils are concerned it is indigestible. The careers teacher needs time for the classification and presentation of a given range of publications in a career field to match the state of development of careers thinking of individuals. There should thus be opportunity for discussion prior to handing out of suitable literature (C.R.A.C., 1969).

Difficulties for the careers teacher may arise where guidance may impinge on school policy or appear to be in conflict with the strong background of "pure" or traditional education prevalent in many schools. The careers teacher needs maximum co-operation from his colleagues in the acquisition of information on academic performance and potential; he also needs a great deal of time and resources which are lacking in many schools.

A further problem is that of pupil immaturity. Secondary school students are usually eager to consider career planning, but to be successful this requires mature judgment and balanced views. In many cases subjects must be chosen early in school life and decisions, particularly for subjects of a hierarchical type such as the sciences and mathematics, have far reaching implications for future careers.

It must be recognised that career choice is a process, a longitudinal operation, and that the adviser will be interacting with the individual at one of many choice-points (Gribbons and Lohnes, 1968). In acknowledgement of this fact, subject choices should not be irreversible so that doors to future careers are closed at an early stage in the school life of the individual, and we must allow for his developing value judgments. A close personal relationship must also be established between the careers teacher and pupil (C.R.A.C., 1969).

The careers teacher in fact needs three groups of skills: he needs the skill of the teacher in being able to help a pupil find the information he needs, sift it critically and develop powers of understanding and self-knowledge. An associated skill is that of the head teacher who has known the pupils and their parents over a period of time, who knows the courses running in the school and can interpret reports from teachers. He also needs the skill of the trained and experienced vocational guidance officer so that he can make a balanced judgment based upon experience. In addition, he needs the skill of the employment officer who should be conversant with the working conditions encountered in the kind of job he recommends, having built up this knowledge by a systematic study of the jobs done and the factors which make for success and failure. The Newsom Report pointed out that it is essential for the student that teachers gain some familiarity with industry. Lewis Walton (Peters and Hansen, 1966) points out that there is a tendency on the part of school guidance workers to stress that with which they are most familiar; curricular and college guidance areas, and to neglect that which is not their "natural" interest, the vocational area. Some process of follow up should also be made by the careers teacher, since this is the only way he can validate his own efforts or seek to rectify errors.

The role of the careers adviser in New South Wales schools is not a clear cut function, and is difficult to isolate in view of the dual nature

of the present vocational guidance system. However, since secondary school students spend most of their time in school, associate that which is important with the permanent staff, and may in the course of their high school years see the Vocational Guidance Bureau Officers only two or three times, the careers adviser clearly has an important part to play. It would appear from this study that up to date information is not being passed on to secondary school students, or else not being assimilated by them.

It is not suggested that existing careers advisers are approaching their task with any lack of enthusiasm or dedication. What is suggested is that the system within which they operate is not as yet fully appreciative of the nature of the task to be performed. Careers advisers need training in the work they are to undertake and suitable facilities with which to function effectively. Probably above all a more realistic allotment of time is essential so that they may undertake a detailed study of different types of occupations, establish all important links with other guidance services, further education institutions and commerce and industry, and most important of all, succeed in establishing the close personal relationship with pupils of the school that should be an essential feature of any school guidance service.

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