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ABSTRACT

This report on occupational planning for youth is divided into two parts. The first part examines the present situation in counseling and guidance and identifies the problems that persist. The second part discusses a futuristic planning effort of national scope that will by required by the potential reindustrialization of the United States. Also included are some of the expected outcomes and changes of this long-range occupational planning approach, many of which are already underway. (BM)

OCCUPATIONAL PLANNING FOR YOUTH:- NEW DIRECTIONS FOR COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE IN THE SCHOOL TO WORK ENTERPRISE

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I. Introduction

Policy planning by its very nature has two aspects; it has to take account of the present and predict the future. This report is divided into two parts that consider these requirements of policy planning.

In the first part of the report (Section II and III), the present situation in counseling and guidance is examined. While much seems to be working well, there are a number of problems that persist.

In the second part of the report, a futuristic planning effort of national scope that will be required by the potential reindustrialization of the United States is considered. This futuristic look is set forth in Section IV. Some of the expected outcomes and changes of this long range occupational planning approach, many aspects of which are already underway, are outlined in Section V.

II. The Present Situation in the United States

The formal counseling and guidance system in the United States is only one of the many influences in the transition of youth from school to work. Selection of a vocation is an individual choice that depends upon opportunities for choice that society permits among educational and occupational options. Although there is no formal educational policy on how vocational choices are to be made, current practices in education reflect the philosophy that vocational planning and decision-making are individual and personal responsibilities. Counseling and guidance is, to a large extent, an optional system to be used only if the individual wants it.

Guidance personnel are the only professional group whose principal objective is to foster freedom and competency of educational and/or occupational choice. In doing so they draw upon the behavioral sciences for an understanding of the motives, interests and needs of their clients, utilize current occupational data and information sources, develop innovative communication techniques when needed, and attempt to assess the effectiveness of their efforts.

A. Guidance and Counseling Concerns

1. Role - Overload

One of the concerns for the current guidance system is the unfeasibility of the role of the guidance or vocational counselor as currently structured in most schools and school systems.

First, guidance personnel are routinely given too much undefined responsibility for many peripheral aspects of students' behavior — among these the usually implicit responsibility to mediate discipline problems between students, teachers, administration, and often, parents; to "monitor" all phases of student progress through the school; to deal with the personal and motivational problems of the student, often to act as an informal and unrecognized social worker; and, often, to aid in the formation of the students' future educational and occupational plans.

2. Unrealistic Case Loads

The counselor to student ratio in most schools is 450 to 1 or more; no one individual could responsibly handle the average "caseload" given to guidance staff in the typical large school. The usual affect of this "case overload" is that attention can only be given to pupils who are either promising candidates for collegiate placement, or those whose behavior is considered "deviant" or "problematic" and thus secures for them a prominent place in the concerns of the staff.

3. Lack of Integration Into Total Program

A third area of concern is the ambiguous role of the counselor within the school. Often the guidance role is not well integrated into the educational program of the administration. Some teachers look down upon guidance personnel because they are not "real teachers," while administrators are often disappointed that the guidance staff are

unable to resolve discipline situations. A greater sharing of problems among school staff members is necessary both for constructive change in the schools and for the articulation of the guidance function with other schooling functions.

B. Aims and Goals

1. Relationships With Other School Personnel

There can be no improvement in guidance procedures nor in the increasing of its effectiveness without analysis and strengthening of the role of the guidance counselor in the school, particularly in terms of relationships with other teachers and administrators.

Whether or not counselors are formally charged with any or all of the following roles, counselors ultimately have responsibility for (a) advising and facilitating the future scholastic experience of pupils, (b) aiding them in discovering their own vocational interests, goals and competencies, and, (c) aiding the recognition of current problems individual pupils are having -- often in personal conduct, life adjustment, (which may necessitate conferences with other faculty or with parents) or in problems involving changes of course and program, and the assessment of competencies or deficits through administering tests or referring pupils to other appropriate professionals. Greater progress can be made in carrying out these functions when the entire staff participates in, agrees on, and supports the guidance role.

2. Relationships With The Industry-Business-Labor Community

Professional career counseling services in schools should not attempt to function without input or feedback from its ultimate client group - basically industry, business and labor. However, this has been, and continues to be, the case in many schools in the United States. Business, industry and labor must be shown the advantages that more confident and skillful potential employees, can return on the investment of their time in the schooling process. Counselors and school officials must in turn accept that the experts on business and industry and its needs are businessmen; the experts on labor and its needs are labor officials.

Guidance and counseling will continually be accused of "irrelevance" unless linked with the eyes, ears and voices of the communities where students are likely to seek further education or employment. It should not be the responsibility of guidance alone to create these kinds of linkages.

3. Career Guidance as Part of the Curriculum

The relationships that students develop with teachers are perhaps more extensive than those developed with any other single member of the school staff. Although students in a secondary school or post-secondary institution have several teachers in contrast to a single teacher for children in early elementary grades, the role of teacher remains the one affording the most extended contact with the child or youth.

The curriculum in any subject area, be it music, art, literature, mathematics, social studies, science, or physical education, includes references to facts and knowledge. But most students are capable of learning more than facts and knowledge. Students are not only better motivated but more likely to learn when facts and knowledge relate to their everyday lives and to the lives they hope to live in the future. The integration of the curriculum with career guidance implications has been one way of expanding a students' ability to learn more about self, the subject matter under consideration, and the relationship of academic knowledge to future goals and plans. Counseling and guidance personnel have been instrumental in assuring that career development is facilitated through the curriculum.

C. Information Mechanisms and Resources

1. Development of National and State Occupational Information Systems

Realizing the vital need for a national occupational information system, the United States Congress in 1976 created a National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) and a system of State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (SOICCs) to fulfill this task.

It is the prime responsibility of NOICC to develop and implement a national occupational information system which will meet the needs of vocational programs and employment and training programs at the national, State, and local levels. NOICC is not a primary data collection agency, but is creating a structure for the inclusion of occupational (supply and demand) data.

The SOICCs are collecting occupational data and structuring it to fit the NOICC framework, in the implementation of occupational information systems at the State level. The State occupational information systems will meet the common needs for planning and operating programs of the State board of education and administering agencies

under the employment and training administration of the U.S. Department of Labor. In essence the the Occupational Information System embodies all planning elements related to job training and job market needs projections so that individual States may plan for their specific needs within the framework of a nationally-aggregable data collection and information system for job supply-demand projections.

2. Data and Career Information Systems

One of the most important elements in any career guidance program is information resources. Career information systems have been undergoing development with support from the U.S. Office of Education, National Institute of Education, and U.S. Department of Labor. There are, basically, two types of career information systems which are different in nature. One type, developed by the Department of Labor, consists of a computerized listing of major employment opportunities within a particular State or local area. These systems are currently operating in eleven States. Another type of career information system is the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) model.1/ This model does not provide actual job information data but rather provides an organizational structure for the inclusion of career information resources. The AEL system is comprehensive, and able to encompass within its structure all of the approximately 13,000 distinct occupations in the United States identified by the Department of Labor. In essence, the two types of career information systems are complementary rather than competitive.

III. Problems that Persist

While almost all young men and most women enter the workforce, and while existing counseling and guidance approaches contribute to the general transition from school to work, a number of problems persist. For too many young persons the transition is uneven or erratic, and the eventual placement is inefficient.

1. "Early School Leavers"

One major concern is the large number of "early school leavers" or dropouts who withdraw from the educational system before they are prepared to assume a responsible, constructive place in the workforce

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1/ Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., Career Information System Professional Manual (Bloomington, Illinois: McKnight Publishing Company, 1978).

or in society-at-large. Each year in the United States, enough students drop out of school to populate a city the size of San Francisco. Between October 1976 and October 1977, an estimated 870,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 fell into this group. A large proportion of these dropouts are from minority groups--Black or Hispanic--or are women. Unemployment among them is significantly higher than among students who finish school. 2/

It is clearly profitable for young people to complete at least a minimal education and training program. Yet, the dropout magnitude has not changed appreciably over the last ten years. There are several reasons, a number of them beyond the influence of the current counseling and guidance system. Many of these young people are from disadvantaged homes, from homes where parents are not in the workforce and where family income is near or below the poverty level. Many are from minority groups not yet in the working mainstream, with all that accrues to this situation--lack of mastery of standard English, and lack of the social and motivational skills related to attaining and holding employment. Some students drop out because school programs lack "relevance," or do not appear to be technologically current and integrated into their communities or employment opportunities. Social, economic, and educational conditions such as these are often beyond the scope of the present United States counseling and guidance systems. Recent Department of Labor programs to aid early school leavers or potential early school leavers (particularly the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977) have placed a great emphasis on work experience backed up by supportive services such as counseling and guidance and basic skills remediation.

2. Need for Current Information

The task of identifying occupational options for post-high school education and vocational training grows more and more complex. In part this is the result of obsolesence due to technological progress and innovation, and is also due to the constantly changing mosaic of occupational possibilities in any particular urban complex or rural area. Through NOICC and SOICC, a beginning has been made in filling this identification need, but has not yet reached the state in which timely information on labor market trends prepared in a usable format has become an integral part of occupational offerings in secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.

2/ Office of Occupational Planning, Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education, "Early School Leavers: Position Paper," December 1978.

3. Matching Interests and Occupational Options

Traditional categorizations of occupational "families" (including the U.S. Office of Education's sixteen occupational clusters) often does not take into account the reasons for the interconnectedness of the students' interests. This situation often results in students being misdirected with regard to the search for occupational options which match their personalities, interests, talents and goals.

For example, students are often directed into occupational families concerned with medical treatment, with the effect that a student who wants to become a doctor, but can not succeed because of poor grades, could be counseled into a lower-level "medical-support" occupational ladder as though "anything medical" were her or his occupational choice, when, in fact she or he might be interested in vocations that involve "caring for others," (which could include occupations such as social worker, rehabilitation therapist, etc.). Also, many occupations become confused in the minds of students because they are bombarded by the media with advice to enter one of several very different occupations with similar sounding titles. For example, recent research has found students to be very confused as to the differences between such job labels as "electronics," "engineering," "electrical contracting," "data processing," and "programming."

4. Credibility of Job Options

There are, increasingly, problems of students' motivation and the credibility of job options which must be taken into account. Though guidance personnel have sensed this for a long time, emphasis must be placed on the fact that the mere existence of job possibilities in the world outside of school does not mean that the student really believes these opportunities do exist for him. And even if he can be helped to see that they do exist, he may not have any idea of how to take advantage of them.

Also, "motivational problems" which may prevent constructive vocational decisions actually are often the result of students making choices because of familial pressure, or through being channelled to fill certain occupational roles, which they may not really want, but which parents, teachers, and the general public impose upon them. At other times, counseling practice may contribute to students' ultimate alienation at work by not preparing them for the fragmentation, atomism, and specialization which many jobs involve.

In sum, because the realities of work are often so discrepant from the concepts and information which are provided, it seems clear that we must find means to give students a more realistic and dynamic concept of occupations than is presently the case.

5. Preparing for a New Industrial Age

One final problem arises from efforts to attain the future while we remain tied to the past by many intellectual, emotional, and economic threads. The United States is entering a new industrial age some have the "re-industrialization" of America. We face basic qualitative and conceptual changes in the nature and functions of the workforce, including creation and expansion of high technology, communication, and information transfer, and a focus on new energy development and use. While the characteristics of this new industrial society are becoming more clear, our current counseling and guidance system is not fully set to prepare students for constructive careers in it. It is even less ready to help them create it. This issue will be developed in the next section.

IV. Futuristic Policy Planning of National Scope

A. Technology Assessment and Future Economic Development

The world of jobs and careers is changing at an ever accelerating rate. Technological advances in computers, microelectronics and engineering are rendering many existing job classifications and skill and knowledge requirements obsolete. Some experts in the United States believe that the industrial era is at an end, and that many functions traditionally filled by unskilled and marginally skilled laborers will simply disappear.

Social changes have also been occuring at a rapid rate. Women's role in society has been changing to the point where presently most women work in a job outside the home. Further, as a result of concerted efforts to reduce sex bias and sex stereotyping of jobs, many more females are chosing careers and professions which were traditionally held by men.

Minority and ethnic groups are also seeking and obtaining employment in areas which have heretofore been closed to them. Counselors and all educators must recognize and become prepared to deal with these changes.

We are entering an era where vastly increased productivity may be accompanied by a drastic decrease in the number of employees necessary for that productivity. Although corporate output is generally thought to be expanding, corporate employment needs are static, or even contracting. According to a recent study conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 66% of the new jobs generated in the United States are generated in businesses employing twenty or less employees.3/ The skills that industry and small business employees will need are not necessarily recognized by traditional training or counseling programs.

Competition for existing positions in industry is increasingly intense. It is likely that most job openings in the future will be for managers, adaptable specialists, and human service providers. The United States is approaching a post-industrial, service-oriented economy, barring direct efforts to change that direction. Brock Adams, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation, in discussing the economics of the next decade, has said that America must choose between rebuilding its aging industrial and technological base or continuing the movement toward a service economy. He believes that what we are addressing is nothing less than the re-industrialization of America. He also insists that this new industrial revolution will not happen by itself.4/ It is clear that this new industrial society will be very different from the one in which we now live and work, and for which we have developed many counseling and guidance approaches that, for all their shortcomings, nevertheless generally accomplish the tasks for which they were designed. But our future will demand serious changes in these approaches and systems.

The employment ramifications of entering into an era of new technology are immense. For example, futurists predict that a communications technology revolution is upon us. As it reaches its peak, many present-day jobs will become obsolete. Clerical and secretarial labor will be displaced by electronic devices. Traditional aspects of the teaching profession will alter drastically as video brings master teachers live via satellites into every home. Many of the repetitive tasks performed by factory workers will be accomplished by robots on assembly line jobs. But, as in earlier years with automation, new jobs will be created. There will be the need for a large pool of persons qualified to work with, repair, refit, redesign and upgrade the electronic communications and information processing equipment that will become prevalent in the United States society. The question we face in the United States, however, is whether there will be a sufficient number of individuals technologically literate and vocationally fit to perform these tasks.

3/ The Job Generation Process, Birth, David, 1979, Conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology under a grant from the Economic Development Administration, Department of Commerce covering the time span between 1969 - 1976.

4/ Brock Adams, "First Chrysler--And Then?" The New York Times, September 9, 1979.

Future counseling and guidance professionals will have the responsibility for making the best assessments possible of the effects and consequences of the technological revolution and transnational events on the skills that children, youth, and adults will need to complete in the changing work world.

B. Specific Areas that Future Policy Planning must Address

1. Training Within Education

Training is the appropriate function to employ when the instructional system is designed to achieve one or more terminal performance objectives:

1. where the behavior is specified;
2. the situation wherein the behavior will be displayed is described; and
3. the standards for judging the behavior are available or stated.

In Training-Within-Education, the school becomes the workplace, in part, where students learn the disciplines of work required for the school to work transition. A critical feature of Training Within Education is an accountability system that indicates clearly the extent to which students are acquiring the necessary tools to function in the future society...both personal and work.

2. Technological Literacy

As the future industrial society develops, there must be a massive attack on the educational problem of technological illiteracy to assure that youth and adults obtain some minimum level of technological competence along with educational achievement. We reject the notion that education should not be concerned with practical matters such as getting a job.

From the available information, a major point can be derived: Women in general, like many minority groups, now have little knowledge of the technology of our society. From the educational point of view, these findings all point to one thing: There is a need to upgrade the curricula

offered with regard to its technological content (the principles and systems on which our technology is based) and to encourage girls and women to enter a wider range of educational and skill training programs, including those previously reserved for boys and men.

Comprehensive programs of counseling and guidance for girls and women which pay proper attention to the life planning process need to be instituted in our schools. Finally, we must encourage the development of print and non-print educational materials to improve the image of girls and women as rational, mature human beings, ending the stereotypical images of women and girls and providing new and enhanced role models for women with varieties of life styles and occupational roles.

3. Reconciliation of Cognitive and Affective Approaches

A major, broad shift in values among American youth over the last decade has been in the direction of insistence on personal fulfilment in one's activities--at school, socially, and at the work place. A clear trend exists toward the belief that work and the work place should be enjoyable as well as profitable. Counseling and guidance professionals must take this shift into account as they help prepare youth to enter the workforce. They must develop new guidance concepts including values, aspirations, uniqueness of personal attributes, and expectations, and must find new ways to integrate these concepts into the classrooms and other school experiences of students..

4. Interdependence Between School and Work

A clearly strengthening trend and one of the most encouraging aspects of the counseling and vocational education dilemma is the increasing viability and support for industry-education-labor cooperation in revising curricula and counseling programs to include input from business and labor segments of society. Joint efforts of this sort are already breaking down some of the barriers that exist between schools and the world of commerce and industry. Future planners should develop policies that will encourage cooperation among these groups, and that will provide for dissemination of successful models of cooperation.

V. Expected Outcomes and Changes

A. Technology Assessment as Providing Information for Education and Economic Development

Technology assessment needs to be made part of an effective methodology for dealing with a longstanding weakness of occupational education: Education and training for obsolescent occupations which utilize outdated skills. Education and guidance must be made aware of the likely future pattern of job hiring and skill utilization. Educators and guidance personnel must have access to appropriate projections of man power needs. Projections of the development of education and training technology are needed. Technology assessment information for these purposes depends upon the development of a futures-oriented data base that will provide convenient, readily comprehensible, suitably comprehensive information about the past, present, and anticipated future relevant to planning and development in occupational education.

A series of regional conferences are to be conducted by the U.S. Office of Education to consider the role of education as part of the economic development strategies of states, regions and local jurisdictions. These conferences will also focus on long-range planning efforts to develop data bases for technology assessment information.

B. Improved Forecasting of Employer's Needs for Human Resources

In the relationship of employment to education, first, business, government and labor must gear up to do a more effective job of forecasting employer's needs for human resources, ideally on 1, 3 and 5 year bases. Second, these needs must be communicated, in advance, to possible sources of supply such as schools, and other training systems, to meet the needs of the market place. Finally, motivation of individuals is crucial.

In carrying out this forecasting effort, stress must be placed on the high cost of human resources whether in the area of personnel costs, unemployment or underemployment. Productivity can be increased through improved mechanisms for planning, developing, utilizing and managing people with the requisite skills, knowledges and abilities, along with opportunities to utilize them in the market place.

C. Improved Flow of Information for Short and Long Range Planning

Approaches to the gathering and analysis of data and information are currently being re-evaluated. Bringing better and more reliable data to bear on policy issues at the Federal and State level is of high priority. The purpose in this analytic planning effort is to improve the capacity to identify and analyize alternative courses of action and act on problems of human resource utilization.

D. Linkages with Communities/Local to International

Programs of public schools must be relevant to the real world. Though people may differ in their interpretation of what constitutes "relevance," for the guidance role, the notion of relevance clearly involves aiding young people to find ways of defining and developing their talents in a rapidly changing and highly technological society; a society in which many individuals and many groups are increasingly apt to feel shortchanged.

School guidance personnel must consider the near community where many students have their first experiences with occupational choice, and the larger community which may be international in scope.

E. Industry-Education-Labor Collaboration in Academic and Vocational Fitness

The U.S. Office of Education currently is supporting efforts to promote and strengthen Industry-Education-Labor (I-E-L) councils and activities in local, State and regional areas and to provide information and data feedback on the effectiveness of these councils. The goal of these efforts is to: (1) Establish more effective I-E-L mechanisms to serve as local catalysts in improving communication and collaboration between the educational establishment and employers, and (2) Insure a more effective approach to the utilization of human potential through better planning.

F. Changes in Counseling for Women

A number of objectives have been identified as of universal importance in the career development education and guidance of women.

1. That curricula in education at all levels be made relevant to the changing role of women today, and that textbooks and materials reflect non-stereotypical images of women and girls.

2. That educational television and other media and materials be developed to improve the self-image of girls and women as rational, mature human beings.

3. Girls should be encouraged to enter a wider range of high technology and skill training programs including apprenticeships.

4. Vocational guidance programs for girls should be instituted in all junior high schools or "middle" schools.

5. The secondary schools should offer special courses on the roles of women in our society.

6. Textbooks, including preschool readers, should contain role models of women and varieties of life styles.

7. Expanded programs of basic adult and continuing education should be available, in their own neighborhoods, for women who are young, poor, members of minority groups, or returning to the workforce after an absence of several years.

Sex equity efforts at the Federal and State level to reduce sex bias and sex stereotyping in vocational education have begun to see some progress in these directions. A great deal more remains to be done.

G. Strengthening Job Placement Practices

In their recent publication, "Vocational Education and Training; Impact on Youth,"5/ John Grasso and John Shea suggest that job placement in our society is accidental at best. Many youth seem to use a variety of means to seek out a job. Those enrolled in vocational education programs in public schools are often assisted in locating employment by their instructor who, for the most part, comes from industry and through his ties with employers is able to help place his students. A number of youngsters, both in and out of vocational programs, also register with the Local Employment Service arm of the United States Employment and Training Administration, write letters to prospective employers, respond to the want adds in local new papers, or utilize the contacts they make through family and friends in job finding.

No hard data are available on how many youth or adults use any single method of finding employment, but the recent report of the National Commission on Unemployment and Employment Statistics suggests that out of twelve students, perhaps two find employment through the public employment service, four through the school (either an instructor or the school counselors), and six through other means, principally family and friends.

5/ John Grasso and John Shea, Vocational Education and Training: Impact on Youth, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Berkeley, 1979.

Empirical evidence suggests that more and more the school counseling programs are including the functions of job placement as an important role they must perform. As career implications of the entire curriculum are interwoven into the instructional program, schools are extending their job placement energies to demonstrate the fact that they can play a greater role in the transition between school studies and the labor market. Such activities also demonstrate the practical value of studies often pursued in the past for their own sake.

VI. Conclusion

The kinds of chnages in guidance and counseling policy that have been described herein might well lead to improved job placement records and worker satisfaction with jobs. As data and career information systems are instituted, there will be better and more reliable information available on job possibilities, work experience and employment options. This improved flow of information could have significant impact on changes in curriculums so that programs of studies will be more relevant and more likely to lead to jobs.

With career and vocational guidance better integrated into the curriculum, students' preparation for and knowledge of occupations and their requirements will be improved. With smaller caseloads and the support of other school personnel, counselors will have opportunity to improve their techniques and build linkages with the community and industry. These improvements can all help make education and training, finding a job and job placement easier for students to achieve.

Clearly, more educational programs of high quality must be made available, including expanding the technological components of the school curriculum. The word "quality" should not be confused with the sophistication of the course content. "High quality programs" are those with adequate resources; well trained teachers who know the saleability of the content of their courses and can communicate it effectively to their students; suitable buildings; necessary income maintenance and human services; and appropriate curricula, educational and job placement methods. These are possible only through active, working partnerships between agencies of Federal, State and local governments, private employers and trade associations, labor unions, students and parents, and the community-at-large.