

**THE CASE**  
**for**  
**PROPER GUIDANCE**

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**1943**

". . . . a specialised vocational guidance service would supply a real need, particularly in cities and towns and parents and young persons are entitled to and would be grateful for the help which such a service could give them" [par. 95, Report of Commission on Youth Employment, under chairmanship of Most. Rev. John C. McQuaid, D.D.].

**1969**

"The Department's summer course is not in fact a worthwhile training and the Department knows this" [Rev. Professor E. F. O'Doherty to Guidance Seminar, 29th March].

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## The Case for Proper Guidance

Seventy years ago few people would have thought that vocational guidance was necessary either for themselves or for others. Jobs were limited and people generally lived and died where they were born. Many did not have occupational choice, since the job one would take was determined by the family and the neighbourhood.

Today, industrialisation plus geographical and social mobility have made more jobs available and also there is a change in attitudes towards choosing a job. The principle that *the choice is the individual's own right and responsibility* is gradually being appreciated and accepted. This healthy approach is placing considerable emphasis on the individual. However, that branch of applied psychology we call guidance has come to aid this growth to responsible choosing.

### Historical Development

Like any of the applied sciences guidance had its own evolution. From 1908 to the 1930s it was based mainly on the theories, formulated by Frank Parsons (U.S.A.). These could be summarised as follows

The priority consideration in guidance must be the student's need to find a job (any job). Thus guidance is simply a matter of matching the student's abilities with the skill needed to do the job successfully.

This has been termed the Matching Process/Talent Matching Model, and rested on the following techniques:

- (a) Supposedly accurate measuring of supposedly static abilities.
- (b) narrow type of job analysis which sought to isolate the skill requirement of jobs.
- (c) A logical imposition of the results of one on the other.

The guidance practitioners were strongly influenced by selection devices in industry: just as employers used psychometric devices for finding the right man for a particular job, so it was thought that guidance could use similar techniques for finding the right job for a particular individual.

Also, at the time, the state of psychological knowledge was such that human abilities were seen as being largely fixed and immutable, and there was considerable confidence in techniques which were judged to measure innate potential. Because of this oversimplification of choosing, it was possible for Clark Hull (1928) to design a machine which would accomplish this matching automatically.

The “vocational advisor” of those times was supposed to fit the following stereotype:

(1) He was an “*expert*” in occupational information, techniques of individual assessment, and in giving gentle persuasion (because the client was told what was best for him). Darley describes this as a Sales Situation.

(2) *Only one specialist* was needed due to the possible damage of conflicting advice.

(3) The *best time* for giving advice was just prior to the client’s ‘Choosing a career.’ (Now termed the “crisis stage”.)

(4) Once the client had *a job* the service ceased.

(1) It ignores the established fact that in choosing a career one **is** also choosing a way of life, and is not simply catering for the single need to have bread. Whatever the job one chooses, it will determine to a large extent the way in which other people perceive him, which in turn, will influence the way he perceives himself.

(2) It can now be stated categorically that **the ultimate object in career choosing must be *maximum satisfaction*** for the individual concerned, and this is *relative to his unique personal needs*. For example the motivating principle behind a satisfactory and satisfied worker could be satisfaction of some or all of the following personal needs; from the skill itself; from the material gain; from association with the other workers; from status; from the variety provided by a constantly changing environment; or from some dominant personal value e.g., desire to preach the faith.

All this adds up to the fact that motivation is a key factor in the pursuit of satisfaction in work and we know from the classic research studies of Elton Mayo that an individual's performance can increase considerably if the whole work situation provides an answer for his motivations. Even if he lacks skill, efficient industrial training methods can more than compensate for an initially low attainment given high motivation, and this is particularly true of the young who have great potential and are highly adaptable.

(3) Psychologists are now aware of the flexibility of human abilities and needs, and know that an individual's measured intelligence now might be very different in five years time, depending on his experiences. So the emphasis in guidance must be on having an indirect effect *on all future decision-making*, in the same way as teaching is orientated towards that same future.

### **Guidance Functions**

The implications of the above findings, which are now universally held, are so far-reaching as to cast considerable doubt on the value of any form of piecemeal fragmented "guidance".

Proper guidance consists of:

- (a) Helping the person to develop self-understanding - giving him information about himself so that he can form a realistic self-image.
- (b) Helping him to understand his environment - giving him educational and occupational information as and when he needs it.

In practice this involves providing all the following services - which must be seen as interwoven, integrated and complementary - concurrent with his studies and parallel to the succeeding stages in his development.

### **1. Assessment/Appraisal**

This is advanced by pooling the results of the separate fact-finding techniques used by teachers and guidance personnel. On the one hand teachers contribute their evaluations, information and opinions - solidly based on an intimate knowledge of aspects, into which only they in their professional role are privileged to have insights; on the other hand the counsellor contributes his analysis of the student's abilities by means of psychological methods of observation and measurement coupled with information gained through the exercise of his particular professional skills. Continuous mutual exchange of information is the only way to integrate guidance with the actual teaching of the student. This assessment continues through the *cycle d'observation* in the first years of his studies.

### **2. Orientation**

Preparing the student for the next step in life. It may be a question of assisting adjustment to new situations; e.g. transition to different study course, transition to world of work. In practice it involves discussion of educational and vocational opportunities following on from educational choices, or learning to assess career literature and even extends to visiting factories, workshops, training centres to gain first-hand experience.

Again it will be obvious that both teacher and counsellor are actively involved in orientation, and comprehensive coverage of this area is effected through their complementary functions based on a team approach.

### **3. Information**

Making available and accessible factual information on either educational courses or what is generally called careers information. The aim is a properly stocked and systematically catalogued careers bureau, so that the information required by the student may be easily obtained. What is needed is a systematic classification of existing and incoming information.

Orientation and information can be furthered by exhibitions, talks by visiting workers, student projects etc. Career talks have limited value, and indeed it has been said that while they may help the few they confuse the many. This underlines the principle that even career information has value only relative to the personal needs of the individual. An extensive knowledge of careers is of academic value only, since only a limited number of fields at a certain level have any relevance to the choice. Information must be governed by a knowledge of the person so that he can find that which he needs. We are all familiar with that stage of development where the young person simply doesn't know what he wants. Feeding him with reams of career information and advising him to make up his mind is of no use here. To cater for such a normal phenomenon is one of the reasons why the guidance technique called counselling developed.

#### **4. Counselling**

This is the specialism of the trained counsellor. The purpose is to discover and cater for the personal needs of the individual. It is also a technique for dealing with conflicting pressures and strain in the total developmental process. In the counselling situation the student is helped to express and consider those very facets of his personality on which his life expectations and ultimate satisfactions rest. It is here that his motivations can be given realistic direction relative to his total self-image.

Here the student is provided with a stable permanent figure with whom he can develop a lasting personal relationship, and to whom he can turn for assistance in his normal problems.

Since one's personal life is often a matter of privacy the counselling situation is governed by an ethical code of strict confidentiality. Only with the expressed consent of the student may such personal information be revealed. This has been found necessary to ensure that the student may feel free to impart what may be the vital information necessary before he can be understood or helped.

## **5. Placement**

This is the service of helping the student to carry out the plans he has made to enter a career. In Ireland placement is to be the responsibility of the Department of Labour. It is very desirable that this service be integrated with the guidance services within the educational sector, and indeed it is imperative that channels of communication and methods of collaboration be defined forthwith, otherwise the young person entering the world of work through the placement services will be confronted with duplication or even conflicting practices. Such collaboration will also ensure that the principles governing education, which remain valid long after one has left a formal educational institution, will not be offended in his future learning situations. It is the vital safeguard against a philosophy which would see youth as pawns of the economy. Furthermore, the exchange of ideas will enhance the practical value of guidance given in the educational situation.

## **6. Follow-Up**

This is research in the first instance, which aims at providing a continuous flow of information on the value of the guidance given all along the line. It helps to determine how well the young person's plans worked out and how effectively the whole educational programme served him. It may also isolate those who are not adapting to the work situation, or are unable to cope and may need further counselling.

## **Guidance without Counselling**

Unhappily some countries have fragmented guidance into what they call educational guidance in the school situation and vocational guidance in the placement section. This is plainly contrary to the simplest theories of development. The educational guidance so-called seeks to build a guidance service on the following guidance functions - *assessment* (teachers record plus achievement tests, & without aptitude tests), *orientation* of a general nature and *information*. Such a pragmatic approach is nothing less than piecemeal education and guidance and

cannot hope to cater for anything more than everyday choices, and this in a very superficial manner. In practice it is difficult to distinguish between educational and vocational guidance, as most educational decisions will have vocational implications.

*Counselling*, as has been shown, is one part of an integrated guidance programme. *But guidance is effective only to the extent that counselling is recognised as integral to the service. All guidance work is informed by and performed against the background of specialised counselling skills.* Should counselling be omitted then “guidance” runs the risk of being positively misleading, since decisions of vital importance to the mental health of the individual are made, or even imposed, on the basis of insufficient knowledge of the person. Such a service becomes nothing more than the talent-matching model of the earlier practitioners, and in the light of facts at present available to us it is nothing less than calculated fraud to call it guidance.

### **The Nature of Counselling**

If there is one absolute in this whole question it is the uniqueness of every single individual. Everything that may be said about guidance (or indeed about any other aspect of the educational process) must be judged against that fundamental principle.

Thus guidance must concern itself with the total life of the individual. His scholastic life is not a discrete part nor can his working life be separated from his non-working life. It is the responsibility of professional educators to redefine “career” as meaning the total life-expectancies of the individual. Thus - no matter what terminology we use - *to describe guidance* (educational, career or vocational), *we must not mislead the public into thinking that we can ignore the principles that govern education generally.* These principles alone can guarantee that the young person will be led into well-adjusted adulthood through the harmonious development of his total personality.



*Guidance is essentially a developmental process* and this involves an ongoing relationship with the counsellor. It cannot be limited to one nor to any set number of interviews, but continues until the individual wishes to terminate it. Nor can it be catered for by a flying visit to a psychologist from the Department. Guidance is *individual-centred* and thus must be *personal* and *continuous*, because these are vital facets of the developmental process.

Teaching does not consist of simply giving information, nor does guidance consist of simply giving advice. **The individual is encouraged to make his own decisions, to crystallise his own values and understand his own needs, to synthesise all the perceptions peculiar to his own self as a unique individual, in a specific environment, at a particular period in time, with the overall objective of choosing the career, which will be his way of life and in which he will find fulfilment.**

Counselling avoids haphazard hit-or-miss attempts to guide, because use is made of the special techniques which modern psychology make available for doing it in the most efficient way possible.

**“Counselling does not involve persuasion. At best it is the art of helping another person to understand himself better, to choose goals appropriate for himself, and to activate the motives necessary to achieve them. These have always been intrinsic to any adequate concept of education. For this reason the vocational guide, the counsellor, is not new to education. He is simply no more than the development of one of the roles of the good educationalist. He is simply one member of the education team”.** (Rev. E. F. Q’Doherty, Guidance Seminar, March 1968).

**In counselling emphasis is given to the positive strengths of the individual and there is thus removed the danger of fixating on his weaknesses.**

Counselling is *for all* (but optional) rather than for the abnormal who need psychotherapy instead. It is concerned typically with “normal” or “usual” persons rather than with those who exhibit abnormal modes of adjustment. Problems are normal in relation to development whether it be intellectual, social, vocational, emotional or physical, and the person who never has had problems must surely be abnormal. The necessity to provide a figure of support capable of helping their teenagers is something that parents readily understand.

### **International Thinking**

Guidance has attained a high degree of professional sophistication in America, Canada, Israel, France, Belgium, Sweden and many other countries (though there are wide differences in structure and administration, depending generally on their organisation of education. Over half a century of wrestling with the concept has resulted in a highly refined and impressive framework supported by many volumes of research. Council of Europe surveys and reports (1964, *et seq.*) testify that the concept of guidance has been going through a rapid evolutionary change in those countries which adopted guidance schemes without systematic planning. Many countries admit to some inadequacies in their schemes and state that they hope to send personnel abroad to take professional courses in guidance, or hope to make specific the professional status of their staff - e.g. Norway, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Switzerland, England (which has a number of professional courses and the only vocational guidance research centre in Europe).

On the question of the role of pupil guidance in teacher training it is generally agreed that their education must include orientation to guidance, but that the professional counsellor role must not be neglected.

From the Swiss report presented to the ***ad hoc* conference of European ministers of education (1967)** we quote: "In no case should the introduction of teachers to general and specialised guidance eliminate or reduce the role of the vocational counsellor". Our own Department of Education delegate (the present Secretary of the Department) at this conference subscribed to a resolution (no. 3) adopted at this meeting which affirms:

(a) "It is essential for teachers to receive training and further training for their task in this field. This training should include an introduction' to the methods and techniques of guidance psychology".

(b) "There is also a need for guidance specialists with whom teachers should work in close collaboration, etc."

**The Council of Europe report on Pupil Guidance** (1964, p.8), states in regard to specialising in guidance:

“The training of teachers even if it develops will not necessarily equip them to carry out all the functions of the educational process; but [that] the diversification of these functions should perhaps be met by a new diversification of staff to carry them out.”

Yet it is strange that the Jack-of-all-trades role fits neater with our administrators’ aspirations for our teachers now daring to demand recognition as professional educators.

An analysis of these European publications will leave one in no doubt whatever that a system of guidance can fall into such pitfalls as: total state control, proper guidance at private or state bureaux only, inadequate training for guidance personnel, chaotic structuring, *laissez faire* growth, *ad hoc* development, and even its introduction with complete ignorance of the theories of vocational development and counselling.

Today what is true of Sweden’s plans, (“development from both the quantitative and qualitative point of view”) is true of the vast majority of other European states, despite the fact that there will continue to be differences re structure or focus of responsibility because of differing educational systems.

Yet in Ireland, while not many can fault the joint responsibility of the Department of Education and the Department of Labour for co-ordinating a total guidance scheme, one certainly can question the theories on which the Department of Education bases its proposed scheme, and also the aims of that scheme.

One can also question their reason for refusing to be host to the International Round Table of Educational Guidance and Vocational Counselling which wishes to meet in our capital in 1970.

One can also question why so many obstacles to their employment and proper recognition have been placed in the way of those who wish to take or who have taken the only professional training course for counsellors in Ireland. (that leading to Diploma in Careers Guidance, Department of Psychology, UCD). Viewed against the current demand for university level skills for all our educators it is

untenable that anything less than such a course is sufficient for the training of counsellors. A warning against dabbling in psychology was given by Rev. E. F. O'Doherty. at the recent seminar on guidance: "In the field of psychology, more perhaps than in other fields, the untrained or partly trained person is a menace

### **Within the School—Teamwork**

A peripatetic psychologist cannot meet the requirements of developing students. Counselling for all excludes such an approach, since to be effective the counsellor must be available even on the student's own initiative: otherwise the whole concept of guidance as being a personal, continuous, developmental process collapses.

Yet the Department that proposes such a travelling Counselling Service by psychologists only, refuses to allow qualified counsellors to serve the two or three small schools in the growth centres of education devised by the Department itself. One can certainly wonder when a community school is not a community school. And also why the C.E.O. cannot deploy his counsellor as he would any other member on the V.E.C. staff. Within the single school or the community school the counsellor is just one member of the staff. The key to successful guidance is teamwork and collaboration.

The professional counsellor cannot operate efficiently without the co-operation of the professional teachers. That is why guidance bureaux have limited value, since they lack the organic developmental guidance role all through school years and usually serve only those who come for "crisis guidance".

Recognising the need for such collaboration in a common endeavour the designer of the professional course at UCD saw to it that subjects peculiar to teacher training specifically were included on the course - organisation of education, principles of education, educational psychology, developmental psychology.

One further member of this guidance team (which includes parents also) is the psychologist, who forms the apex of the pyramid in the guidance service. That he be peripatetic can certainly be conceded provided each school is served by a counsellor.

Some of the principal functions of the psychologist in an area where proper guidance is available would be as follows:

Firstly he would be the co-ordinator of the guidance service. While the professional counsellor is at liberty to use any of a variety of aptitude tests, it would be valuable to research if all counsellors in his area would agree to confine themselves to certain tests for general use, since this would help in devising local norms more rapidly. Thus the psychologist would be the pivot for regional and national research. Direction of annual guidance workshops for practising counsellors would also be his forte. The counsellor's specialism is limited to the counselling of normal children and the identification in the first instance of those outside that range, while the psychologist is qualified to provide a service for those in need of special clinical assessment and treatment. He will provide more comprehensive information where necessary when dealing with normal students through using specialised and more discriminating instruments. Finally, the psychologist is the natural confidant for counsellors who need a second opinion in the interpretation of data collected, and more especially in a pioneering era this role of professional consultant will surely be most important and rewarding. It is around the psychologists whether employed publicly or privately that the whole service will crystallise into a coherent, organic, integrated whole.

### **The Student**

If theories and functions of guidance seem to colour this whole exposé, this is because it is addressed primarily to teachers who do not have to be reminded that the individual is paramount. It is obvious to them that the primacy of the guidance responsibility is the young person. The main difference between the classroom teacher and the counsellor is simply that the counsellor can be much more directly concerned with the mental hygiene of the students.

The net result of the guidance service we envisage would be: for the young person, a realistic self-concept; self-determined yet responsible choices at all stages as well as at career stage; a well adjusted adult who finds his maximum satisfaction in that way of life and personal satisfaction with life as a whole. Such a preventive service is surely the answer which society needs to meet most of its problems, whether mental, social, or economic. Therefore educators must lead the mounting criticism of the Department's scheme to ensure that a prostitution of education does not occur at any level.

### **Conclusion**

The Institute of Vocational Guidance and Counselling is concerned primarily with safeguarding the standards of professional educators in general. Because the majority of us have many years of teaching experience, we believe we can rely on you to assist us, knowing that only *an integrated guidance service* at all levels based on sound educational principles will serve "all our children" best.

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