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W.M O'Neil

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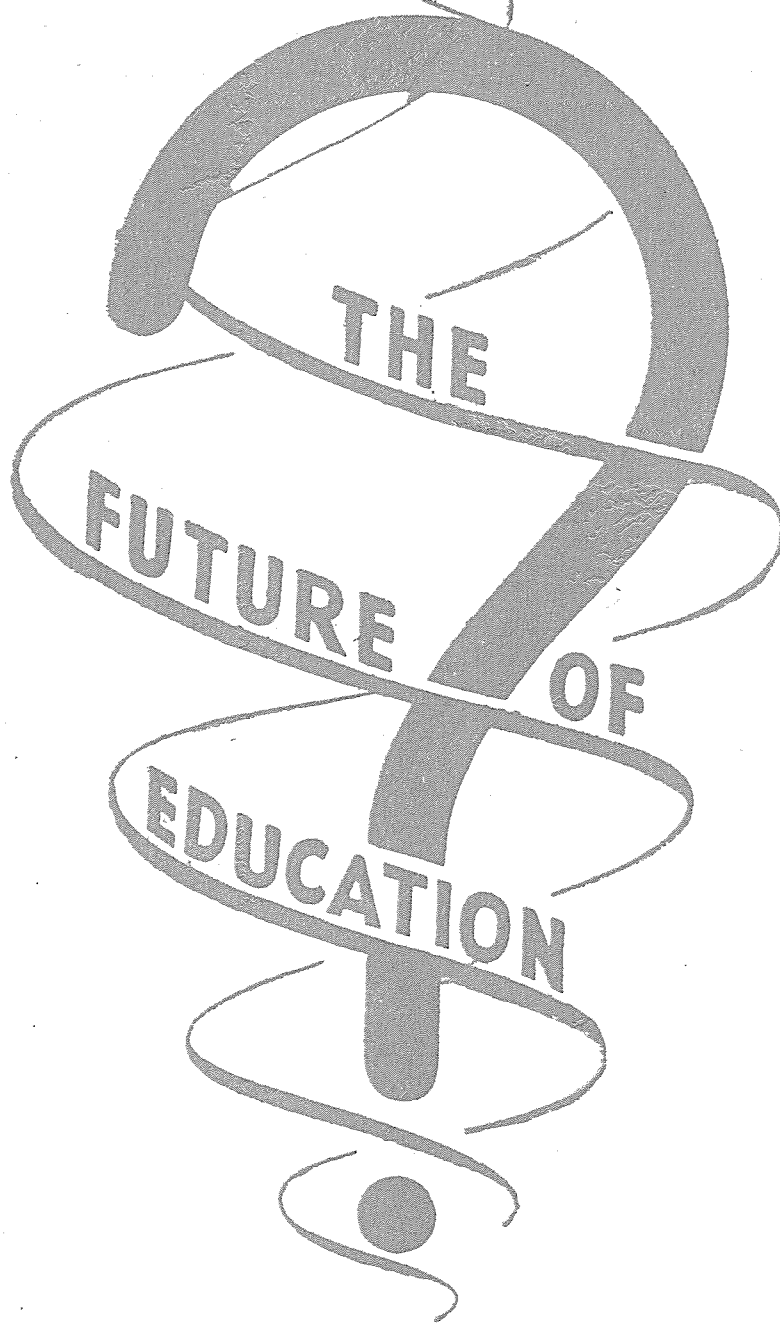
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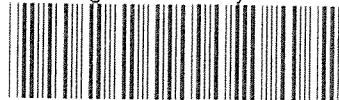


No. 6

**FROM SCHOOL TO WORK**

**W. M. O'NEIL**

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THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

No. 6

FROM SCHOOL  
TO WORK

A PLEA FOR  
VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

BY

W. M. O'NEIL



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL  
RESEARCH

1944

## FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

### 1. THE NEED FOR VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

**P**RACTICALLY every young Australian leaving school goes to work and the choice of that work is a momentous decision for both the young person and his parents. It is also an extraordinarily difficult one, for the boy and girl know little of any occupation and the parents little of any but the father's. Apart from this limitation of knowledge about occupations, there is the difficulty of knowing upon what bases the decision should be made. The bright child at school is ordinarily encouraged to think of entering one of the learned professions, the not-so-bright is guided by the erroneous if comforting hope that those not so good with their heads are necessarily deft with their hands. In both cases, however, there is still the problem of determining which learned profession and which manual occupation. Unfortunately there are many other factors which enter into parents' decisions. For instance, there is the polite prejudice that it is undignified to work without one's tie or in a way that will soil one's hands; on the other hand is the sturdier bias that a man without a trade is at the mercy of an uncertain world. Both are equally likely to contribute their share to the legions of unhappy, dissatisfied, misplaced workers; the man tied to a desk but longing to be out in the air working on something he regards as tangible, or

the man bored by the repetitiveness of the modern machine shop and craving work in which he can exercise his interest in meeting people and influencing them. But perhaps nothing is more ironic than the man who is a failure in a career chosen for the sole reason that it held so great a promise of a large share of the material benefits of life.

The importance of being in an occupation which makes full use of one's talents and gives ample scope for one's interests is not purely a matter of individual happiness. There is a social aspect to the issue as well. During the last three decades, progressive business managers have seen the economic losses inherent in excessive labour turnover. A firm which has continually to recruit masses of new labour in order to maintain its staff at a given size, is worried by the expenditure in money, time and skilled manpower involved in advertising, selecting and training a new man when a reasonable period of service cannot be looked forward to as a return for this outlay. Yet society has to enter in its labour turnover account more than money, time and fruitless use of skill. A simple inventory of the additional losses to society and to the well-being of its citizens would have to include three important items. First, there is the unhappiness and frustration which almost certainly comes to the men and women who either cannot hold jobs for which they are unsuited, or fail to do more than maintain a precarious foothold on the bottom rung of the occupational ladder. Second, there is the unstable way of life engendered by uncertainty and irregular employment, which is likely

to lead to a variety of grave social ills. Third, there is the failure to use human talent where it can best be used—and this in a world which is compact of technical, social, economic and political problems requiring the full use of all the talent we can muster.

It cannot be denied that much of the labour turnover which is commonplace in our community must be attributed to seasonal work, special short-term employment demands, unfavourable working conditions, unattractive and unhealthy local housing and the fluctuations of employment demands with booms and depressions. Nevertheless, a share must be attributed to the unsuitability of many people for the work they find themselves trying to do.

Unfortunately, this business of choosing a career has become progressively more difficult. Three changes may be mentioned to illustrate this. In the first place the increasing variety of modern occupations has created a larger field from which selection has to be made. Increasing specialization has broken many occupations into a number of new and separate occupations. Consider such skilled trades as fitting and machining, and cabinet-making, where in fact several distinct sub-trades are now to be found in modern mechanized factories. In most cases, the choice has to be made at the outset between these subdivisions. In the second place, modern mechanized production has taken much of the skill of the old craftsman and put it into the machines. This has created a large band of semi-skilled operatives and has led to a constant demand for efficiency which has spread like contagion to all neighbouring occupa-

tions. All this has changed the emphasis to the need for positive success in one's work from the older need for not being an outright failure in it. In the third place, few occupations with the exception of the learned professions can be entered with any readiness by any but the adolescent. Even when specific age limits are not set, as they are for instance for entrance to clerical work in the public services, there is an effective age limit engendered in many cases by award wage payments to adults, which lead the employer to regard the untrained, inexperienced adult as an unattractive employment commodity.

Apart from these considerations, however, it must be conceded that the occupation in which everyone finds himself demands a greater amount of his time than any other single activity, with the possible exception of sleeping, and a greater amount of his energies, for we regard most other activities as relaxations. It is capable of giving him more satisfaction or frustration than almost any other segment of his life with the exception of his domestic relationships. It is thus a part of his life that he cannot afford to enter lightly without careful planning and informed choice.

In the last three decades vocational guidance, a new branch of applied science, has grown up, often in the face of lukewarm governmental support, to assist young people in the problem of choosing and planning their careers. It is imperative that our schemes for the post-war world include adequate provision for this service to all young Australians who need it. One State of the Commonwealth has



already a healthy system in operation, but others have done practically nothing so far to provide vocational guidance.

It is equally important to remember, however, that this is a young and growing science; not only should its fruits be exploited but its continued growth must be cultivated and directed. For these reasons, we must carefully consider the objectives of vocational guidance and the general conditions necessary for its proper functioning. Until we are clear on these matters, no detailed consideration can be given to the problems of either its techniques or its administrative set-up. It is inevitable that these special matters be touched upon, but no deliberate attempt will be made here to prescribe specifics for them. It is of little use to decide how we are to proceed until we have decided whither we wish to proceed. The present time, when the case of the proponents of systematic vocational guidance appears to be gaining more general support, seems a proper one for the discussion of objectives. Too ready an adoption of a set of techniques, possibly the accretions of many different labours, without a clear vision of desirable ends, leads not only to faulty work and misapplied energy, but also to a considerable amount of effort expended in directions not in keeping with desired social objectives. This danger appears to me no greater anywhere than in vocational guidance, which can readily induce in the person who gives it a dogmatic and bureaucratic attitude incompatible with the democratic way of life to which we as a social group claim to aspire.

## 2. WHAT VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AIMS TO DO

In any statement upon the functions of vocational guidance in a community such as most of us want ours to be, emphasis should be placed upon *guidance*. Tentatively we may say that vocational guidance is helping a person, usually a youth, in the planning of his entrance to a career. This planning will ordinarily occupy some period of time; it is not something to be settled in a day. Nor will it have ended when the person has decided upon the career which appeals to him most; it will continue until he has actually established himself in that career. As entrance to many careers is considerably affected by what is done in the secondary schooling of the entrant, guidance in planning a career may be needed as early as the end of the primary schooling. Obviously the assistance needed by the twelve-year-old boy trying to decide upon his course of study in the secondary school will be different from that needed by the eighteen-year-old youth trying to decide upon the steps he should take to assure his status in his recently-entered clerical position and from that needed by the sixteen-year-old who has finished his junior technical course and has the problem of deciding what specific job he should seek to enter. With the transition of the young person from late childhood to middle or late adolescence, the vocational problems which confront him, whether recognized or not, become increasingly specific and the guidance offered to him will rightly tend to become increasingly specific too. An academic course of study including foreign languages may be the outcome of the twelve-

year-old's decision, bearing in mind the possibility of such careers as law. It would, however, be obviously out of place to press upon him the need for deciding whether, in the event of his being articulated later to a solicitor, he will undertake to qualify through the Solicitors' Admission Board examinations rather than through attendance at the University Law School. Guidance in particular matters should be given when those problems come up in the total campaign of entering an occupation.

In all that has been said in the preceding paragraph, it has been emphasized that the person whose career is being planned should do the planning himself and make his own decisions. Any form of vocational guidance which purports to *tell* the person what is best for him is hardly appropriate outside a dictatorial and authoritarian culture. Yet that is exactly the temptation to which any vocational counsellor is likely to succumb. The very attitude of most parents and their sons and daughters, who come for his assistance, entices him to abandon his proper role of counselling for the easier one of directing. The patent limitations of their knowledge on all the vital points at issue and their readiness to defer to the professed expert, together with his chronic trouble of more cases than he can adequately handle, conspire to trap him into saving time by becoming oracular. In his leisure moments he cynically reflects that his clients like him better that way. A clear appreciation of his true function and a firm stand against his non-professional superiors are his safeguards.

It is not to be inferred from these comments that

the counsellor should adopt a negative part. His attempts to avoid the errors of dictation may in fact bring him to just that. In endeavouring to leave the decision to the person most affected by the decision, he may tend to bring nothing to that decision but by silence seem to confirm a plan which in fact he regards with no enthusiasm. Nor should he wait for problems to be brought to him. Through his greater experience he should be able to see problems where his client cannot of his own accord, and of course he should be able to suggest the possible solutions of these problems.

Briefly the positive assistance the counsellor can give comprises five activities: first, bringing the client to face the problems which actually confront him; second, helping the client to marshal the relevant information that he has already in his possession; third, conveying to the client such additional information as the counsellor can produce; fourth, helping the client interpret, in terms of vocational plans, the assembled information; and fifth, helping the client to appreciate the likely outcomes of the plans upon which he intends to act.

Although no attempt will be made to examine the various techniques the counsellor may employ, it does seem appropriate to amplify, with occasional reference to technique, the services the counsellor renders.

### 3. REVEALING VOCATIONAL PROBLEMS

One aspect of good planning consists in anticipating problems. Unfortunately, when a human being devotes his energies to the attainment of a cherished

objective, he finds it difficult to contemplate possible obstacles which may completely block his way. The next step of considering alternatives to his objective, should an insuperable obstacle be encountered, is even more difficult for him. In the uncertain world of vocations, optimism of this kind can lead to disaster and the counsellor should check it, even at the risk of being accused, as he often is, of hindering rather than helping people. Three brief instances serve to illustrate this point, by presenting three facets of the one vocational problem.

A young man of twenty resorted to a vocational guidance agency after his third attempt at the Leaving Certificate Examination, upon the results of which departmental trainee teachers are selected in New South Wales. His first attempt failed to produce a pass, his second and third resulted in bare passes in the examination. His sole vocational aim was teaching, cherished over five years, and it now appeared to him to be unattainable at an age when most other careers within his scope were closed to him. At the age of sixteen, an unbiased examination of his history, supplemented by such prognostic techniques as aptitude tests, would most likely have suggested the possibility of his present situation, and the wisdom of considering other plans.

A seventeen-year-old youth came to discuss with a counsellor which of two related professional courses he should undertake. An examination of the kind recommended above, was made. The youth's prospects of success in either of the courses appeared to the counsellor to be distinctly poor. The need for

a wider investigation of the whole question was urged and help to this end proffered. The counsellor was virtually denounced for his pains, on the grounds that he had shattered the hopes of a widowed mother who had made great sacrifices to enable her son to enter the profession in question. The constabulary life is not the only unhappy one!

A father sought confirmation (guidance would be a misnomer) for his plans for his sixteen-year-old son who had recently presented himself for the Intermediate Certificate Examination. A successful business man, the father nursed a frustrated desire to be a medical practitioner; his son, with no more than average talent, an indifferent school record and little spontaneous interest in any way related to medicine, was predestined to achieve what his father had not. An attempt to present the case in this light met with hostility. Reference to other youths left high and dry through time vainly spent on unsuitable objectives was answered by the statement that sooner or later a person with sufficient financial resources could achieve anything. Three years later, a second attempt at matriculation satisfied the minimum requirements. At the end of another two years, the youth had struggled through first year medicine. So far the father's judgment seems to be sound, although the marathon has been temporarily interrupted by the elimination of weak students as a war measure.

The major problems to which the attention of young people must be drawn may be briefly listed as:  
(1) *Problems arising from prescribed or customary*

*ages of entry to various occupations.* Closing the door to possible occupations through pursuing some other objective to an age beyond that required by those possibilities has already been mentioned. The simplest example, perhaps, is that of applying for certain positions at the right time, for example in the Railways service, where age limits and a specific closing date for applications operate.

- (2) *Problems arising in the choice of educational programmes.* Certain secondary school courses do not permit those entering them to qualify for any or all university courses, a fact sometimes overlooked in choosing a secondary course. Students in certain agricultural high schools in New South Wales may proceed to the Leaving Certificate Examination without taking higher standard mathematics, as agricultural, veterinary and general science matriculations for the university and entrance to the Agricultural College do not require more than lower standard mathematics. However, some of these students decide at a later stage to enter such occupations as surveying or industrial chemistry (through Technical College courses), for which higher standard mathematics are essential, except in certain circumstances not always operative in their cases.
- (3) *Problems arising through special features of certain occupations,* for example, limited opportunities for entrance, competitive entrance, and insecurity of employment. Wherever there is

purely competitive entrance, as in many governmental positions, only the very able can be in any way certain of appointment. Such a situation clearly demands wider planning than the choosing of a single vocational objective.

- (4) *Problems arising through the characteristics of the individual*, e.g., colour-blindness, physical disabilities, intellectual and temperamental characteristics. For some years the Education Department in New South Wales has felt obliged to point out to teachers that candidates for the teaching service are often disappointed by rejection on account of colour-blindness, a disability which they did not previously know they had. There is equal necessity to raise the possibility of other difficulties in the way of fulfilment of vocational aims.

#### 4. MARSHALLING THE CLIENT'S OWN KNOWLEDGE

Even those who have given no serious thought to planning their entrance to a career, have at their disposal a considerable amount of information relevant to that planning. Much of this needs more critical interpretation than almost any young person is spontaneously able to make, but it must be appropriately set out before that interpretation is made. In fact the very setting out of it in a systematic way is likely to demonstrate the need of extensive re-valuation.

Amongst the relevant data which the client can produce are his age, the standard he has reached at school, the activities upon which he prefers to spend



his time, and the occupations of other members of his family (all matters about which he can give reasonably objective answers), together with such matters (about which he can give only subjective and personally coloured answers) as the basis of his interests and his success at various scholastic and other activities. It is important of course that he be brought to realize what data he is able to produce are 'observations' and what are 'deductions.' For instance, his statement that he wishes to enter a trade because he would like to be a tradesman may turn out to be based upon very sketchy knowledge of what is done in any trade, a vague notion that tradesmen are 'well-paid,' or an even vaguer idea often linked to a purely artisan family tradition that other occupations are insecure. The uncovering of this material will not necessarily invalidate his earlier tentative planning, but it will serve at least to render it more effective.

As psychology is unfortunately associated in the public mind with various mystic cults and fortune-telling procedures, there is a tendency for many persons to yield a minimum of information about themselves. They take it that the business of the counsellor is to tell them all about themselves. There is often a note of keen disillusionment in the overheard remarks of parents to their waiting-room acquaintances to the effect that the counsellor only said that Johnny's plans were on the right lines—'All he did really was to say what to watch out for and where to get further information.' To combat this kind of expectation and to

facilitate the client's role of information-giver, it is imperative, of course, that the true function of guidance be explained, unless the counsellor wishes to gain great reputation by developing the fortune-teller's tricks of finding out without being found out in the process.

#### 5. GIVING INFORMATION AND AIDING INTERPRETATION

There is knowledge which neither the parent nor youth can be expected to have unless they have already devoted considerable time to investigation. The counsellor needs to be equipped with as much information as it is possible for the outsider to gain about all common vocations. He should be able to give reasonable descriptions of what various kinds of workers do in their jobs, and he should be able to supply information on such points as modes of entry, any age limits and educational pre-requisites, prospects of promotion and of continuity of employment, physical and health disqualifications, available and desirable modes of training both before and after entering the vocation. For instance, knowing that architecture may be entered in several ways alternative to graduating from a University School of Architecture, may completely recast the client's plans. Where, of course, the counsellor is uncertain or doubts his own competence to give certain data, he should know to whom his client can appeal for sounder information.

In addition to this information about occupations, the counsellor has techniques which enable him to

obtain and pass on to his client information about the client which he himself does not possess in sufficiently precise or usable form. Fully effective guidance cannot be given if these techniques are not used. The best-known forms of them are aptitude tests. To urge that guidance should be given on the basis of such techniques does not imply, as some think it does, that nothing else should be considered. More will be said of this in a later section dealing with the training and qualifications of vocational counsellors.

Finally, the counsellor's help is required for the interpretation of the assembled information about the client and a variety of occupations. Much of the information the client supplies about himself cannot be taken on its face value, nor can the more obvious conclusions be necessarily drawn from it. This is especially to the point in any statement by the client on his interests and the implications of these stated interests in terms of possible vocations.

A lad of fifteen years came with his parents for confirmation of his choice of aeronautical engineering as his life's work. For some two years, it was reported, he had been an active and reasonably dextrous builder of model aeroplanes and a member of the Air League. His parents believed the latter to be an outcome of the former. Aptitude tests indicated no marked practical or constructive talents, and an investigation of his history of hobby activities revealed that model aeroplane construction, in which it turned out he was aided by fellow-leaguers, was the first serious practical hobby he had had. From

quite an early age, however, social activities had appealed to him. A smallish, trim youngster, he had great satisfaction from the recognition of others and from their acknowledgment of his status; the Air League with its uniform, its opportunities for leading others and winning office, provided an ideal field for him. Building model aeroplanes was a small price to pay, until the confusion by his parents of the price with the goods almost induced too great a payment.

Sentiments which are the unrecognized outcomes of family occupational traditions normally require objective, impartial outside evaluation. The deeper rooted they are, the less likely are they to be treated as other than axiomatic and above critical examination. They may be positive in that they restrict the youth to the general fields of work in which his father and elder brothers have found employment, or they may be negative in that they prevent the youth from making the 'mistakes' of his father—a variant of distant fields being greener.

The foregoing observations should suffice to show the kind of service the vocational counsellor should intend and is able to give. The illustrations of problems should have indicated the need for this service. Although one cannot stress too much the danger in the external planning of other people's lives to a truly democratic set of social objectives, one cannot afford complacently to assume that true freedom can best be served by leaving young people completely to their own devices, to their own lack of information and to their own failure to appreciate the problems inherent in choosing a career.

## 6. NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Like most other human endeavours, vocational guidance requires, for its effective operation, trained minds and the external facilities for them to work with. The counsellor must have a clear view of the objectives of his service and a full, critical knowledge of the techniques available for the attainment of those objectives. He can attain very little, however, if he has not sufficient time for his work, a constantly accumulating fund of knowledge to draw upon and such material facilities as accommodation and equipment.

Underlying all this is a demand upon the community in which the counsellor works. Unaided he cannot provide anything but his own mentality; the community must pay for his training, for his maintenance, for the facilities he needs for research, and for his equipment and accommodation. However, those members of the community responsible for this financial provision will not and cannot do their part adequately, unless they are informed and convinced on two basic points—what guidance really is and what conditions are essential for its operation.

In my experience, psychological work in both education and industry is hampered less by a scepticism which leads to open opposition than by a credulity which tends to regard it as a magic of some sort. This attitude takes it as a fixed and final set of procedures which can be applied to problems less for their solution than for their dissolution. The ordinary paraphernalia of psychological work is

deceptively simple. The industrialist, for example, having been convinced that psychology is a good thing, has no hesitation in purchasing a set of tests and applying them to all and sundry in his organization, often with results which shake his faith in psychology. He would be hesitant to purchase a set of test-tubes and reagents in order that he, unaided by anyone with special knowledge, should introduce chemistry into his business. If he did proceed in this way, and if his results did not approach his expectations, his faith would be shaken in himself as a chemist rather than in chemistry as a science which had relevance to his industrial problems. Even if the degree of enlightenment happens to be greater than this and the industrialist concludes that he needs an adept to apply the procedures, he nevertheless expects, as any buyer of magic has a right to expect, immediate results. The idea that the problems have yet to be solved is an intolerable one to him, so he refuses to provide proper facilities for their investigation. The same attitude is to be found in many educational administrators and even more commonly in public administrators generally.

#### 7. GIVE THE COUNSELLOR TIME

From the earlier discussions, it is clear that vocational guidance is a service which should be proffered to a person over a lengthy period of time. For guidance to be lifted above mere direction and yet to be a positive service, it must be provided as a continuing service. This in itself restricts the number of clients the counsellor can handle. Further, as the

counsellor is there to help his client formulate his problems, marshal his information and arrive at a series of tentative resolutions subject to modification and increasing definition, greater time is required than that necessary for simple diagnosis and prescription only.

Upon these considerations depend not only the amount of time the counsellor is to be given to render his services but also the location of the counsellor. The issue concerning the location of the counsellor in institutions where his clients are to be found or in some central office is one that will be discussed at a later point. The issue of how much of his time the counsellor is to give his client is of such importance that it deserves an emphasis which cannot be given here.

In planning guidance services, the non-professional attitude too frequently omits a consideration of what is really involved. A programme which makes allowance only for such technical matters as giving tests, collecting personal data about the client and giving him some interpretation is certain to be insufficient. Overlooking as it does the fact that a satisfactory outcome for the client depends often upon an extensive change of emotional attitude, a mental reorientation, it is certain to leave the counsellor with a strong taste of frustration and the client disgruntled or misled. On the face of it, a personal problem should yield to as quick a solution as a mechanical problem when it is one of a class that has already been fully investigated. The engineer experienced in the designing of gearing can produce

a satisfactory design for gearing to fulfil certain specified requirements. The counsellor may be able to see the way out of his client's problem just as readily; but because a personal problem is a much more intimate one than a mechanical problem, the client will naturally feel unduly hustled if he is forced to proceed at the counsellor's rate. The situation is analogous not to the mere designing of a new mechanism but to the adoption of that mechanism by workmen unaccustomed to it. And unfortunately the industrialist and the administrator are equally impatient, and their impatience makes them equally inadequate.

Further, there is nothing more inimical to the effectiveness of the counsellor than an oppressive feeling of urgency. He is prevented from exercising his best judgment, from following up subtle clues which in his haste he has passed by unnoticed, and from conveying to his client an impression that he is entirely at his service, an impression basic to the establishment of proper *rapproch* between client and counsellor. A guidance service operating upon a strictly regimented time schedule is in grave danger of becoming an empty shell of formalities—inquiries made for the sake of making records upon a card, information given in an unilluminating way, and problems turned away with a shrug, satisfying nothing other than some administrative master-plan.

#### 8. GIVE THE COUNSELLOR TRAINING

The whole process of guidance is too special, complex and subtle to be effected by good intentions.



Yet there is all too common an optimistic view that guidance services may be provided by earnest persons employed primarily on the basis of some other qualifications. Although we must acknowledge the debt to teachers and engineers who, with little technical equipment for the work, did so much to initiate occupational psychology, the day has now dawned when special technical knowledge and skills have reached such proportions that to suppose anyone can pick them up in a matter of weeks is too great a folly.

As in other forms of clinical work, personality is the prime requirement. Mere technical proficiency is insufficient. There is a place in research, of course, for the able mind with little facility in human contact. In the actual practice of guidance special personality traits are essential. It is not easy to describe these qualities without appearing trite. It is clearly a field in need of research itself. One of the major problems, as I have found it, resides in the fact that the human qualities of the counsellor must enter into the counsellor-client relationship and in doing so may serve to colour the situation in a way that transforms it. Personal tastes about people, for instance, are varied and the counsellor has difficulty in refraining from liking or disliking his client. Yet as soon as feelings of dislike and distrust emerge, the possibility of achieving a proper relationship between counsellor and client vanishes. Effeminacy, priggishness and affectation in the youthful clients have clearly lessened the effectiveness of different colleagues. When a counsellor working as one of a team becomes aware of the intrusion of his own personality

as a complication in the relationship, he can contrive, of course, to pass the client over to one of his fellows. Where the weakness, however, is so extensive as to render the person incapable of either inspiring confidence or seeing into those who come to him, there can be no place for him in actual guidance work.

The technical aspects of a counsellor's personal equipment can best be acquired in a systematic course of psychology supplemented by other appropriate university studies. A thorough knowledge of general psychology is by agreement a necessary background. The more specialist studies should include detailed training in psychometrics and either the psychology of personality or the psychology of childhood and adolescence (perhaps preferably both). The diagnostic instruments, with which guidance cannot dispense, cannot be properly manipulated without a detailed knowledge of their construction, significance and range of usefulness. One can cite the common misunderstanding of intelligence tests in the schools. Many teachers using tests are shocked to discover the variability in the measures yielded by them when applied at different times to the same pupils. It is well, of course, that they are ultimately shocked, for until this illumination occurs they are likely to distinguish between children on the ground of differences in test scores, when in fact those differences are not significant or basically 'real.' Aptitude tests, questionnaires, and other clinical aids, including the interview, are not to be used lightly. A thorough understanding is indispensable both to get the most out of them and to avoid the major weaknesses in them.

Such academic training is not at present available in every Australian State; in fact only two universities have full systematic courses in psychology. Yet the number of people who have the academic training exceed those who have had the opportunities for gaining the second kind of experience the counsellor should have had. The counsellor works in a framework of occupational requirements. The opportunities for his gaining thorough familiarity with this framework are strictly limited. The relationships which have existed in Europe and America between academic institutions and places of work have not yet been achieved in Australia. The counsellor-in-training does not find a welcome from the controllers of industry and commerce. They are ready enough to let him look at their workers at work and to ask questions, but he must on no account interrupt the process of winning profits. It is as though the hospitals were to let the physician-in-training watch and ask but were to refuse him any opportunity for supervised practice. Even so, much may be learned by watching and asking, but agencies concerned with the provision of vocational guidance can rarely see their way clear to permit the newcomers to their staffs proper opportunities for systematic observations of industry.

Yet so far, the counsellor with a clear conception of the requirements of his clients appears the most suited person to introduce them to some understanding of the world of work. It is to be regretted that the worker in any field seems amongst the least fitted to tell young people the kinds of things they should

know about his occupation. He rarely sees his own occupation in perspective, he lacks objectivity and is likely to use the opportunity of furthering his own special interests. If he finds his vocation a competitive one, he makes the burden of his message a warning about the folly of entering an already overcrowded field; it pays him to dissuade possible competitors at the outset. If his interests are well served by a constant influx of able young men, he is too likely to highlight the opportunities of the few and leave the impression that those opportunities are available to all. The attitude is well illustrated in the determination some years ago of a group of employees in a large institution to circularize the schools in order to warn boys against entering their occupation. The grounds lay in the decision of the arbitration court to lower the ceiling of their automatic incremental scale, providing nevertheless for scales of pay up to the old ceiling for specified levels of work. Although this alteration of conditions was a matter for consideration, the information could be valuable to young people only if seen in relationship to an array of other data.

#### 9. WHERE SHALL GUIDANCE BE GIVEN?

Two major patterns of guidance services are to be observed both locally and overseas. On the one hand, there is the service provided in the institution with which the client is primarily associated—for instance, the school; on the other hand, there is the service provided in some central agency. The former

pattern has the distinct advantage of placing the counsellor continuously near his client. He has opportunities for bringing to the notice of the client various matters just at the time when they should receive consideration, whereas in a central agency there is much greater likelihood of waiting till the client or his guardians feel that guidance is needed. It has already been shown that guidance may be needed before it is consciously wanted. Further, the institutional counsellor being on the spot is much more likely to raise issues and defer their resolution until the client has given them some consideration. The agency counsellor is urged by mere regard for travelling on the part of the client, to attempt a complete resolution of issues there and then; at most he is likely to have follow-up discussions after some lengthy interval of time has elapsed. The institutional guidance service offers greater facilities for a continuing guidance, whereas the central agency guidance service is more likely to develop a once-and-for-all-time direction.

However, in this, as in so many other cases, all other circumstances are by no means equal. Certain features of institutional guidance tend to offset all the advantages mentioned. Foremost amongst these are other demands upon the counsellor's time, the probable background and training of the counsellor and the limited research facilities in many institutional services. In all but the largest schools, there is not ordinarily considered to be sufficient guidance work for a full-time counsellor; this is usually a false assumption, but nevertheless it seems the ruling

one. The counsellor is also most probably a teacher and very likely his ultimate avenues of promotion are in the teaching service. His teaching duties are of prime importance both in his own eyes and in those of his superiors. This in itself is sufficient to diminish his efficacy as a counsellor. Even if he regard his guidance activities as of greatest personal concern, his other duties are not likely to give him adequate time for the proper discharge of his guidance responsibilities. By the time he has complied with the official requirements of completing his records, he finds no time left for the proper use of these records. The very fact that he is confronted with all his clients all the time leads him to attempt some guidance for all of them, which, with inadequate time provision, results in fully effective guidance for very few of them.

This deficiency is readily overcome, once the controlling authorities regard the guidance service as a proper field in its own right and provide sufficiently attractive career opportunities within it. Too often the few able and enthusiastic young teachers drawn to guidance in the schools, find their contemporaries, many of whom are less able and less enthusiastic, leaving them behind in the promotional stream; in order to gain the promotion they rightly deserve they must leave the field of guidance. They probably make all the better senior teachers through their guidance experience, but the gain of the general teaching service is at the expense of the guidance service.

The question of adequate time for his guidance

work in the school is to be solved only by a loosening of the public purse-strings.

A much greater source of inadequacy in an institutional guidance service is the background of training and experience of many of the institutional counsellors. These remarks are applicable, of course, only where the service is a part-time one, administered by counsellors who are primarily teachers. There is always a tendency to relegate minor functions in a school to members of staff who are weakest in the performance of the major function of the school. Where the school principal is left to nominate one of his teachers as the part-time counsellor in his school, he is likely to be faced with an awkward choice. He may select the most qualified man and thereby disorganize teaching arrangements in the school, or he may select an unqualified man who can be freed with least disorganization of teaching. He will naturally choose the latter. Although training for and experience in teaching form a valuable background for guidance work, they are not sufficient in themselves. The very techniques of inquiry, for instance, are basically different in teaching and guidance because they are directed towards different objectives. The teacher's questioning of his pupils is to determine what has already been learned and to establish a starting point from which further learning is to take place, whereas the counsellor's questioning of his client is part of a mutual inquiry. If the counsellor can be likened to any teacher in this respect, it is to the individual tutor, not to the class teacher. Further, the teacher as such does not necessarily possess the technical

knowledge which enables him to interpret psychological measurements with proper subtlety and caution. Finally, the teacher does not ordinarily possess an adequate stock of information about occupations and their requirements. As already pointed out, this is a source of weakness in most counsellors, but it is one much more likely to be overcome, at least in part, by the counsellor who is trained as such and who devotes his whole time to counselling and looks forward to doing so for a considerable period.

This issue is so complex that all aspects of it cannot be considered here. The limited resources of trained personnel would seem to indicate that the central agency must be developed fully in Australia and that close liaison between it and the schools must be fostered. It would also have a valuable place in a guidance system with well-developed institutional services, first as a specialist centre for difficult cases and second as an experimental station for the development of new techniques and for the continuing investigation of occupational problems.

#### 10. THE COUNSELLOR MUST INVESTIGATE

The circumstances in which an institutional guidance service is ordinarily found provide little opportunity for research and investigation. This is a crippling condition. Vocational guidance is too young an activity to become stagnant and yet remain effective. There must be a continuing flow of new information about occupations which are continually undergoing change, and systematic investigation of procedures and aids must be carried on. Almost



all guidance services fail to maintain a regular follow-up of even a sampling of their cases. From time to time some follow-up study may be made to establish the value of the service they render, but this does not serve the purpose that a regular follow-up could. Not only would the latter enable the counsellor to redeem some of his earlier errors of judgment, but it would serve to indicate areas in which his services were deficient and so invite examination of the underlying causes of deficiency.

The general fields of investigation which should be cultivated by any lively and progressive guidance service may be designated *occupational problems* and *technical problems*. Amongst the occupational problems occur the need for proper occupational analyses and studies of occupational trends. A constant need exists for occupational analyses, for without them guidance cannot be fully effective. Most guidance services have, however, to make do with cursory examinations of occupations resulting from visits by counsellors to the places where men work. These are useful but are far from sufficiently exact. The history of industrial psychology is full of examples of misjudgments on the part both of casual observers and of the worker himself of what is in fact involved in the way of intellectual and temperamental equipment in an occupation. The detailed studies of occupational trends and absorptive capacity are not so important where the service touches but a segment of the total population of young people entering employment. Once, however, it expands to cover almost all of this population in a community, these

studies become a necessary condition of effective operation. If 3,000 young people annually enter skilled trades apprenticeships, the counsellor is both safe and sound in encouraging 500 youths he sees, in planning to enter apprenticeships; if he is part of a service which sees 20,000 young people annually, he must know how many of them can be expected to find apprenticeships. For this to be possible he must have working behind him a research organization with a thorough understanding of industrial and occupational trends and facilities for detailed investigations of a host of specific occupational problems.

The field of technical investigations will include all the techniques which the counsellor employs; these range from the complex and delicate matters of test construction to the more general matters of giving young people occupational information. The techniques for the assessment of talent or aptitude are, of course, already in an advanced state of development. There is still much to be discovered, however, concerning the organization of human aptitudes and their measurement. The new statistical methods of factorial analysis have been applied only to a limited extent in the investigation of occupational aptitudes. The investigations of such workers as Thurstone have done much to clarify the general position but so far little more has been done than to point to analogies in the occupational field. The matter of dexterities of hand which patently play an important part in many vocations is in a marked state of uncertainty.

Other techniques are in a much earlier stage of

development. The measurement of interests, begun so promisingly through the Strong technique, calls for further investigation, and the assessment of the less direct qualities of personality can be said to be no more than begun. The counsellor at the moment is forced to fall back upon that valuable but uncertain instrument, the interview, in this part of his work. And the interview itself is at present no more than an empirical technique.

These very difficulties in technique not only demand that any guidance scheme include within it full provision for research, but should incline the counsellor to eschew the oracular note in his dealings with his client. It is not to be taken from these frank confessions of weakness in existing guidance techniques that effective guidance cannot be offered until the techniques are further developed. The prevailing ignorance of what vocational guidance is able to achieve even in its present stage of development calls for a short discussion of its successes and failures both in Australia and overseas.

#### 11. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE EXISTING GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES?

Three groups of follow-up studies will be examined briefly in order to indicate the value of the service that can be rendered by vocational guidance as it has been given in the recent past.

*English Studies:* I. Over a period of years the National Institute of Industrial Psychology maintained a regular follow-up of as many of its guidance cases as possible. The evidence forthcoming up to 1937 may be summarized as follows:

Of a total of 941 cases followed up, 691 (73·4%) were found to be in occupations in accordance with the recommendations originally made by the Institute, whereas 250 (26·6%) were in occupations of a kind for which they had been judged unsuitable. Using as criteria such data as the person's satisfaction with his work and superiors' satisfaction with the manner in which he carried out his duties, the cases were divided into successful, doubtful and unsuccessful, as follows:

Group	No.	Percentage of Group		
		Successful	Doubtful	Unsuccessful
In jobs recommended	691	89	6	5
In jobs judged unsuitable . . . . .	250	44	25	31

II. A study from Birmingham (1932) deserves inclusion as it supplements in an interesting way the N.I.I.P. study. This study compares the value of guidance given on the basis of psychological methods and that given by an experienced placement officer in close contact with industrial requirements. Those children given guidance on the former basis may be referred to as the experimental group and those guided in the latter, the control group. At the end of two years' employment, a four-fold classification was established: (a) Experimental group (i) in jobs in accordance with guidance and (ii) in jobs not in accordance with guidance; (b) Control group (iii) in jobs in accordance with advice and (iv) in jobs not in accordance with advice. Several criteria of success were employed, e.g., youth's opinion of his job, duration of job, employer's opinion of youth's

efficiency. From whatever angle viewed, the experimental group in *accordance* jobs were more satisfactorily placed than any of the other three sub-groups. Evidence on two of the criteria of success for each of the four groups may be cited:

Group	Percentage of Group Holding for two years first job obtained	Percentage of Group Occupying one job for two years
(a) Experimental (advice based on psychological methods):		
(i) Accordance jobs . . . .	21	43
(ii) Non-accordance jobs . .	1	9
(b) Control (advice from ex- perienced placement officer):		
(i) Accordance jobs . . . .	7	27
(ii) Non-accordance jobs . .	15	30

*American Study:* The Minnesota study is reported here, because it is concerned with the guidance of adult unemployed admitted to rehabilitation training courses. A similar post-war problem will most certainly occur in Australia. A group of 189 persons given advice after a detailed personal guidance examination was followed up in the training courses. Of 126 who entered recommended courses, 75% were positively successful and only 6% positively unsuccessful; whereas of the 63 who entered courses not in accordance with the counsellors' recommendations, only 5% were positively successful and 67% were positively unsuccessful.

*Australian Studies:* I. In 1931, the Australian Institute of Industrial Psychology followed up 90 of its guidance cases, 78 of whom were found to be in occupations of the kinds recommended and 12 in

occupations against which they were recommended. On data concerning their degree of success in their work they were classified into *successful*, *doubtful* and *unsuccessful*, as follows:

Group	Percentage of Group		
	Successful	Doubtful	Unsuccessful
In jobs recommended . . . .	92	5	3
In jobs deemed unsuitable . .	8	25	67

II. In 1938 the Vocational Guidance Section, Department of Labour and Industry (N.S.W.), investigated 111 of its cases placed by the Juvenile Employment Section and associated agencies and for whom full records were available; 45 youths who had not been advised by the Vocational Guidance Section but who had been placed by the same agencies in similar occupations and in many cases with the same employers, were also investigated. Placement in the latter instance was effected largely in accordance with the youth's inclinations, affected to some degree by the placement officers' advice. As some of the tested cases had not been suitably placed in the view of the counsellors, the 156 cases really fell into three groups. The success of the youths, judged primarily on the basis of employers' ratings, was graded as follows:

Group	No.	Successful	Doubtful	Unsuccessful
Tested—				
Suitably placed . .	93	85	5	3
Tested—				
Unsuitably placed	18	4	7	7
Untested . . . . .	45	20	5	20

In examining the foregoing summary, it must be borne in mind that somewhat different criteria

of vocational success were used in each of the studies. In all cases, however, the guidance offered was based on a battery of aptitude tests, together with a lengthy personal interview, at times supplemented by special interest and personality assessment techniques. In general the guidance was based upon a single day's contact with the client. Making proper allowance for the varying conditions surrounding the studies, a number of conclusions can safely be drawn.

First, vocational guidance based upon the use of modern psychological techniques provides a sound aid in planning a career. The large majority of persons who enter occupations with the counsellor's approval do in fact succeed in those occupations.

Second, modern guidance techniques are not so highly developed that the counsellor can accept responsibility for telling youths upon what careers they should or should not embark. Although only a minority of those entering careers for which the counsellor deemed them unsuitable, did succeed, the proportion is much too great to give him the right to exceed the role of counselling.

Third, experienced placement officers, no matter how great their experience in placing youths and no matter how extensive their knowledge of industry, cannot unaided make a reasonable job of advising young people upon the choice of a career. One might reasonably hazard a guess that teachers untrained in guidance work and with much more limited knowledge of industry, would be no more successful, even though they had at their disposal tests and other techniques which they imperfectly understood.

## 12. PLANS FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

Vocational guidance can render an important and valuable service, and definite provision should be made for its growth in any plans for youth welfare in the post-war period. This provision cannot be adequately made unless its functioning within the wider aims of the community is clearly understood, and unless those ultimately responsible fully appreciate the conditions necessary for it to operate to those ends.

The present discussion does not aim to present such plans for the future development of vocational guidance, but it is fitting to conclude with a summary of the major facts upon which plans should be based.

The first and central fact relates to trained personnel for guidance services. Sufficient numbers of people with adequate training and experience are not available to offer fully effective guidance to more than a tenth of Australia's school-leavers. Only two States in the Commonwealth have full university courses in psychology; this much technical training must be regarded as a minimum. No facilities for experience of the more practical kind exist outside the already established guidance agencies which are practically confined to New South Wales. In the face of this situation, it is futile to contemplate the immediate provision of vocational guidance for all the boys and girls who leave Australian schools each year. In view of it, it is vitally important that immediate steps be taken to expand at least fivefold existing training facilities.

The second fact relates to the folly of trying to



provide some half-measure service on a widespread basis. Guidance, like health services, can be given either in full or in a misleading and ineffective way. The inexpert, the untrained, and, if he claims more than he is entitled to, the charlatan in either field is less a menace on account of what he can't do than on account of his not possessing the training and judgment which enables him to know what he can't do. The delegation of guidance responsibilities to an untrained and often not especially selected teacher or other officer cannot be advised against too strongly.

The third fact flows from the two preceding ones. Guidance services must be expanded on this basis—first, the establishment of small 'germination' centres; second, the expansion to other centres by carefully planned 'transplantation.' A small but effective initial centre catering for only a limited section of the population will serve firstly as a training centre and secondly as a basic research centre. The establishment of a State vocational guidance agency in each of the capital cities would thus appear to be the first step. From these mother agencies, daughter branches should be gradually developed in provincial and suburban areas when the resources of trained and experienced personnel and of occupational knowledge permit. Then and then only would it appear feasible to contemplate the establishment of counsellors in the institutions where young people are provided for in other ways, for instance, in the schools. The central agencies would remain as research stations, from which the field workers would be fed with information, techniques and inspiration,

and as specialist centres for difficult guidance cases.

The fourth fact and possibly the most fundamental of all is that vocational guidance must be treated as any other branch of applied science must be treated. It is not a mystic craft which has flowered full-blown in the mind of some seer. It is a constantly developing set of techniques, arising from rigorous and prolonged research and carried out by fully trained personnel who must possess talent for their special tasks and enthusiasm in the conduct of them. The conditions of employment must be such that the best are attracted to the field and such that having attracted them it must retain them. Facilities should be available for their self-improvement and for the cultivation of their field, through investigation, study and mutual discussion. Reasonable provision must be made for the counsellor to do his work adequately; he should have reasonable time, reasonable accommodation for testing and private interviewing, and reasonable equipment. Guidance on a catch-penny plan may turn out to be worth less than it costs; yet a good guidance service once established could be operated at a cost in the neighbourhood of five shillings per head of the young people served. This may be regarded as a small premium to insure for even a fractional reduction of labour turnover in the community at large, of personal unhappiness and discontent arising from occupational misplacement, of wasted and unused talent in a community that can ill afford to be prodigal with its talent, of juvenile delinquency and associated social problems and of the hard cash which all these cost Australia.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL  
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