

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION FOR
THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

BY

JOHN M. SELF

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The greatest asset of this nation is the succeeding generations of young people. Upon their shoulders must fall the cloak of responsibility for continuing the democratic way of life instituted by the founding fathers and nurtured and fed by the continuous waves of Americans, generation after generation. The passage of time brings maturation to the young people and life's challenges help them meet the responsibilities to maintain and improve their inheritance before they, too, pass into the pages of history. The manner in which this story will be told is dependent upon man's preparation for his ultimate destiny. The ripening process based upon an educative background must equip him for a productive life. The good things in life as well as its responsibilities will allow contributions to be made to the life-stream of the nation, allowing it to flourish and grow. The strength of a nation must lie in its people and in the coherent ability to contribute to a living, growing society. Only as people realize the potentialities of their life's work can they make the maximum contributions, ultimately benefiting themselves, their families, and their country. Hence, making the choice of a career is of great importance to the young people of the United States.

The progress of this nation as a democracy is truly dependent upon the individual contributions of many. The individual is dependent, in turn, upon daily intercourse with other individuals. Only as people reach a happy, productive life is it possible to nourish a will to exist in the face of ever-threatening enslavement. As a result, aid

for the individual in selecting a field of work is paramount. It must be based upon understanding and enjoyment as well as productivity. Preparation of the student for life is an educative responsibility. It follows that occupational information classes should receive attention in the high school curriculum. It is necessary that the selection of an occupation be recognized as of prime importance to youth. Young people must select and plan what is for them the right path to individual happiness. If the choice of a career is made commensurate with one's ability and intelligence man and country alike will benefit.

Elaborate arrangements for counseling and guidance in occupational selection are not possible in many schools. However, information on the many occupations is available. The use of appropriate testing devices coupled with such counseling as may be available is an important first step. The utilization of federal, state, and industrial publications, many of which can be secured free, is a second step towards aiding a student in the selection of his life's work. Most important, occupational information reveals basic information not just the eye-catching glamour of a given profession. The requirements for proficiency, chances of advancement, years of study required, and salary must be considered.

In short, a happy, productive people are important to the future of the nation. To assure the wisest use of the intellectual potentiality of young people the educational system must equip each student to best utilize his natural endowments fully. This can be achieved by use of occupational information courses, supplemented by a guidance system able to use this tool as a means of planning for the world of work ahead.

Statement of the Problem

This study was made to determine the need for an occupational information program in the high school curriculum and how it can best meet the needs of the college-bound student, the non-college bound student and the dropout student.

Procedure

The procedure of this study was to examine literature in the library of Montana State College to determine the emphasis that leaders in the vocational counseling field place on the problem of providing occupational information in the high school.

Limitations

The limitations of this study were, first, the use of secondary sources in the Montana State College library; secondly, the scope of this paper; and, third, the review of literature to determine attitudes and beliefs of professionals in the field of occupational information.

A review of literature is presented in Chapter 2 to give beliefs and comments by leaders in the vocational counseling field.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature in the field of vocational guidance was made to determine how the high school youth can be helped to make an intelligent choice of an occupation or a career. Many of the smaller schools do not offer courses in occupational information. In fact, in Montana, many schools have had difficulty in establishing a basic guidance program. However, materials and information can be secured in regard to occupations. Making this information available in school libraries and directing interested students to it will better the situation, more so than if nothing is done.

The Role of Vocational Guidance

The sources for information relative to the problem of occupational selection are for the most part found in the journals pertinent to the field. Articles written by leading figures in vocational guidance may be found in other publications and often contain current information as well as presenting more recent thinking on the subject.

The task of presenting a vocational guidance program pertinent to the problem of providing occupational information now facing the high schools of the nation is receiving the attention of top men in the field. In addition, a great deal of research relative to occupational information is being conducted at leading institutions of learning throughout the United States.

Super¹ in discussing occupations and careers defines the two

¹Donald E. Super, "Problems in the Investigation of Vocational Development," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (September, 1961), p. 11.

basic terms stating that an occupation is, by definition, a group of jobs and positions and hence essentially a group of tasks performed by one person; a career is the sequence of occupations, jobs and positions in the life of an individual.

The importance of the selection of a vocation to an individual cannot be overemphasized, whether it is an occupation or in the longer range of view a career. Bell has approached vocational decision making from the idea of ego-involvement of the individual in the choice of work. His conception of vocational guidance as it is now practiced indicates he does not feel the right approach is presently being made in many cases, as given in the statement:

Vocational guidance has often been popularly described as 'fitting square pegs into square holes,' implying that all a counselor needs to do is to line up the individual's abilities and interests, through tests and interviews on the one hand, and the job requirements as described in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles on the other, and then mechanically fit the two into each other like the parts of the puzzle.²

His argument, that each person is an individual and cannot be mass-produced for the correct vocation, is based upon firm foundations. People are different and want to use freedom of choice, regardless of the issue involved. It is possible to guide a student in making a choice of vocations, but not to drive him. The avenues are open, but only he can make the right turns.

Super is critical of the ways in which occupational and career

²Hugh M. Bell, "Ego-Involvement in Vocational Decisions," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (May, 1960), p. 732.

programs are carried out. He believes more attention should be paid to the value of relating test scores to occupational status in order to predict occupational choice or occupational status, commenting as follows:

The classical problem in vocational guidance, as I have pointed out elsewhere, has been that of predicting occupational choice or occupational success; the classical method has been that of relating test scores obtained prior to entry into the labor market to occupational status sometime later.³

This method neither takes into account the learning which has gone on while a man is on the job nor does it consider factually the items of interest, pay, promotion, happiness, and the many other factors involved when human subjects are considered. This same problem appears in relation to the college-bound student. Often lack of information relative to vocational aspirations will cause a person to flounder as he seeks educatively to prepare for a career. The lack of information as well as the misunderstanding of educational requirements and the amount of plain hard work involved need consideration. These factors when ignored by young people entering college can create a problem. Much time and more money are wasted in learning by experience that which an adequate vocational counseling program would have brought out in many instances.

Man's tenure on earth is short, in a comparative sense. Each generation makes its contribution to its time and succeeding generations add their bit before passing from the scene. Of great importance to the individual during this cycle is the manner in which he

³Super, op. cit., p. 11.

provides for himself and his family. It follows that he has every right to expect his formal education to prepare him for a productive and happy life. The importance of career planning by young people cannot be stressed too strongly if the nation is to benefit from the potentialities that lie within each individual. From the youth of today will come the leaders of tomorrow. Within the walls of the classroom must lie the opportunities and understanding which will enable young people to plan for their future. It is of great importance to an individual to be able to make the right choice of an occupation and a career. The workman can do no better than his tools. It is imperative that full use of the tools of occupational information be made available and fully utilized in the high schools.

Tiedeman has pointed out that it is difficult to base career success on educational and vocational endeavor. His contention is put in this manner:

For almost 50 years the vocational psychologist has attempted to view vocational development through the keyhole of success in educational and vocational endeavors. Career is practically invisible from the angle of vision. The career is more apparent in relation to educational and vocational choices.⁴

Success in any field is a personal thing. Certainly one's success in an area of work is no guarantee of another's similar success just because it is desirable. There are too many instances in society where a specific vocational choice, especially in certain professions, is forced upon young people by hopeful parents. Every institution of higher

⁴D. A. Tiedeman, "Decision and Vocational Development," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (September, 1961), p. 15.

learning contains young people who would rather be elsewhere following their own dictates and interests. All too often parental wishes, with little regard for aptitude, ability, and interests, enforce an unrealistic choice upon a child. In this situation vocational counseling is not only important to the person involved, but it must be extended to the parents if the best choice of career is to be made by an individual.

Influences on Career Selection

The influence of the home on vocational choice is best illustrated in a study of Steinke and Kaczowski,⁵ reported in the research paper by Sinick and Hoppock. Following an eight week unit on occupations in two ninth grade health classes attended by 100 girls at Wilbur Wright Junior High School in Milwaukee, in which questionnaires were employed prior to and following the unit, results indicated that agreement between daughter and mother, in terms of level, activity, or enterprise, reached 76 per cent.

Uzzell, in discussing the influence of the home on vocational choice, notes there is a relationship between a person's interests and his environment in regard to occupations. His study indicated the following:

A definite relationship is revealed between respondent's occupational aspirations and their knowledge of occupational models. In addition to models, occupational aspirations were influenced significantly by other sources. Notable among

⁵Daniel Sinick and Robert Hoppock, "Research by States on the Teaching of Occupations," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (November, 1960), p. 164.

these were mass media and persons in occupations other than those of respondent's choice.⁶

The effect of wishful thinking on occupational choice is not known. But there are many instances of glamour hiding the dark, ugly fact that in most instances 99 per cent perspiration and one per cent inspiration may be required for success. Only when a person has an understanding of the requirements for success in a field of work may he wisely choose a vocation.

Bell,⁷ in his discussion of ego-involvement in vocational decisions, illustrates the way in which a student's vocational decisions become so ego-involved that it is difficult for him to take an objective view of his vocational assets and liabilities. It is his belief that in many cases of this nature, psychiatric help may be needed. However, there is little doubt that the majority of students in the high school today need and will benefit from help in solving the problem of making the right vocational choice. Parents as well as vocational counselors must provide guidance in the making of this most important decision by a young person.

There is a consensus among many in the vocational guidance field that courses and information on occupations should be made available early. Late junior high school or early in high school, dependent upon the school plan, seems preferred. There is much to be said in favor of the theory which proposes such courses at the ninth grade level.

⁶Odell Uzzell, "Influencers of Occupational Choice," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (April, 1961) p. 668.

⁷Bell, op. cit., p. 736.

Sinick and Hoppock⁸ in a nation-wide survey of student attitudes toward occupational information courses found that students invariably favored a one semester course in occupations to be required on the ninth grade level or sooner.

Emphasis on developmental tasks throughout life as a measure of vocational maturity is discussed by Super. He believes maturity takes different forms with changing life stages:

For example, planfulness appears as a rather general factor in the Career Pattern Study ninth grade indices of vocational maturity, and that operationally, planfulness in grade nine involves looking ahead to decisions which need to be made about the high school course and the post-high school career.⁹

Career Identification Needs

In a number of states young people are free to leave school upon reaching the age of 16. As a result a number of dropouts are recorded following the ninth grade. Vocational guidance will not serve as a means to retain all of these youngsters in the school, but undoubtedly it would at least provide them with more information as to what can be expected upon entering the labor market.

Job survey information indicates it is becoming increasingly difficult for the unskilled worker to find employment. According to available information not only is this section of the labor force increasing, but the number of unskilled jobs is rapidly decreasing because of the advances of science and technology. Labor and craft unions control most of the trades and their requirements for member-

⁸Sinick and Hoppock, op. cit., p. 218.

⁹Super, op. cit., p. 14.

ship, based upon the apprentice plan, are strict. Every skill and each trade requires a basic education on the part of the worker. Vocational guidance can provide an understanding of the apprenticeship plan as it applies to occupations and careers alike, as well as the possibilities of entering a trade.

In his paper, "The Critical Ninth Grade", Super further emphasizes his belief as to why vocational information offerings are of importance at this level. He believes that exploration without job commitment is needed to acquaint the student with the world of work, arguing his point as follows:

. . . the identification of vocational potential in ninth graders should be designed to help with the making of decisions for vocational exploration rather than decisions of vocational preparation. Vocational exploration involves a commitment to find about oneself and about some aspect or segment of the world of work . . . This fact has implications for the organization of education in the high school: it should facilitate exploration, should not require a commitment as to field although it might as to level (i.e., college or non-college), and should not be occupationally preparatory in any narrow sense, at least in the first years of high school.¹⁰

Sinick and Hoppock quote results obtained by Rubenfeld at New York University in 1960 in his study of the desirability of occupational information courses. In his unpublished thesis, Rubenfeld states that in a followup study of Newark, N. J., secondary school students who had entered the ninth grade in September, 1951, and remained in school at least one year of the 808 respondents, 693 were

¹⁰Donald E. Super, "The Critical Ninth Grade: Vocational Choice or Vocational Exploration," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (October, 1960), p. 109.

graduates and 115 dropouts.¹¹ Sinick and Hoppock, in discussing Rubenfeld's study of reactions to occupational information courses, find a majority of the students favor the course, as indicated in the following comment:

The questionnaire in part, sought their reactions to an occupational course, required of all ninth graders, which met five days a week for one semester. Eighty per cent of both groups favored a required course. Recommendations for improving the course included, in order of frequency: visits to schools and places of employment, guest speakers, interested and qualified teachers, special groupings, realistic approaches to occupational choice and job finding, intensive investigation of fields of interest, timely information about opportunities.¹²

The recognition by former students out of school eight to nine years of the importance of occupational information accentuates the need of help in preparing for the world of work. Even education's problem child, the dropout, in an overwhelming figure of 80 per cent recognized the need for occupational information when entering the labor market.

A study by Scholastic Magazine which was reported by Sinick and Hoppock in the article referred to previously, is also indicative of the felt need of young people for help in their choice of an occupation. This publication collected questionnaire responses from 11,416 students in grades 7 through 12 in 284 junior and senior high schools, both public and private. When asked what school subject would best fit them for a final career, 10,935 responded, 13.2 per cent (23.1 per cent of the boys and 4.1 per cent of the girls) choosing occupational courses

¹¹Daniel Sinick and Robert Hoppock, "Research on the Teaching of Occupations, 1959-1960," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (October, 1961), p. 165.

¹²Ibid., p. 165.

rather than the usual subject matter courses.¹³

The need for vocational counseling in the high schools is recognized by outstanding authorities in the field of education. Too, the number of masters and doctors theses prepared on the subject in recent years is evidence that this need is receiving continuing attention. The nation is barely at the threshold of an era of science and technology that cries out for the skills of young people. Only with adequate preparation and aid in the high school in selecting occupations and careers can the waste of human resources be reduced. In this manner the needs of society and civilization can be met.

The views and opinions found in literature concerned with providing occupational information for the high school student, indicate a felt need for such a course on the part of young people. A movement to achieve this goal throughout the nation is recognized as a desirable addition to the secondary school curriculum by authorities in the field of vocational counseling. The research being done at educational institutions in the United States for both the masters and doctors degree in the use of occupational information as a tool of vocational counseling testifies to an expanding interest on the part of educators.

Occupational information in the high school and its relationship to the college-bound, the non-college-bound, and the dropout student is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹³Ibid., p. 165.

CHAPTER III

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The hopes and aspirations of all young people are involved in occupational and career plans which will, for them, provide the answer to adulthood. It is in the pursuance of these plans that deviation in goal searching is noted. One student will consider college as a requirement for success in life; another student will conclude he is prepared for the world of work upon completion of high school; the third student will drop out of the high school situation prior to graduation, assuming he can make his way in the labor market. There are many factors involved in such decision-making and the ability of youth to consider his qualifications for an occupation in the light of the rapidly changing age of science and technology the nation is undergoing will determine success.

The value of having pertinent vocational information for job selection in each instance will tend to make career choice more realistic. The college-bound student is more concerned with preparation for a chosen field through selection of an educational institution which will best fit his needs. The high school graduate who has terminated formal education for a career is desirous of determining how to utilize skills he has acquired in the high school situation for entering the labor market. The dropout student, on the other hand, has little background in the sense of formal education, but must utilize what he has acquired from the school situation in conjunction with native ability and available job opportunities. It is in occupational information classes in addition to vocational counseling that

the tools available to help young people in career selection can be used effectively. If occupational information courses appear early enough in the curriculum direction can be provided for the college-bound youth in regard to educational preparation for his chosen field; to the youngster who will leave school upon graduation, directing his activities in preparation for embarking upon a career; and for the dropout student whose formal education may end upon completion of the ninth grade or reaching the age at which he no longer is required by law to attend school. Nelson¹⁴ pointed out that one of the functions of counseling is to help student select curricular and co-curricular activities that are appropriate for them as individuals, and occupational information as a tool for career selection can best be utilized in the school situation.

A great deal of information is needed if real help in career selection is to be provided by means of vocational counseling in the schools. Traxler,¹⁵ in a discussion of techniques of guidance, lists at least ten areas of history and development of the individual pupil within which information for vocational purposes is needed. By use of the student's background information, added to a comprehensive occupational information course, it is possible to help students obtain a better understanding of job requirements and employer expectations, according to Murphy who stated:

¹⁴A. G. Nelson, "The Role of Counseling in the Secondary School," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, (November 1954), p. 34.

¹⁵Arthur E. Traxler, Techniques of Guidance, p. 29.

Placement of pupils and graduates in gainful employment demands (a) more emphasis on quality performance in high school, (b) more authentic information from employers to the staff about what is expected of employees for specific jobs, (c) more systematic procedures in counseling with pupils and parents about employment opportunities and requirements, (d) and more help be given the instructional staff in providing necessary curricular experiences for a wide variety of abilities, capacities, and interests.¹⁶

The potential college student can begin his plans for a career early and take advantage of high school offerings to meet his requirements; the youth who plans to end formal education upon graduation from high school can also better plan a future; and the probable dropout will have an opportunity to see his potential earning capacity in relation to his educational preparation.

The College-Bound Student

A study by Gallup and Hill¹⁷ has revealed that more young people want to attend college than will be able to continue their formal education. The nation needs bright young people, but according to this survey many will not continue in the school situation due to financial conditions, family problems, and like factors blocking attendance at a college. Their research brought out that compared to 85 per cent of the high school students who would like to go to college, only 53 per cent actually plan to go. Of this number one-third of the boys and one-fifth of the girls anticipate some problem in attending the college of

¹⁶J. Fred Murphy, "The Guidance Program and Curriculum Improvement," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, (May 1961), p. 33.

¹⁷George Gallup and Evan Hill, "Youth, the Cool Generation," Saturday Evening Post, (Combined Issues, Dec. 23 & 30, 1961), p. 70.

their choice. Scholastic standing, finances, job opportunities all contribute to this feeling in regard to attending a specific college.

Occupational counseling should seek to reduce this feeling in regard to attendance at any one college. The student whose desires for a career in a field are in line with his background and potentiality through guidance can find more than one institution which is capable of meeting his requirements. Numerous educators have pointed out that overcrowding is primarily a problem of the large eastern colleges. Conant in commenting on overcrowding in the eastern college echoes this belief:

I have been assured by just such counselors that there exists such a wide range of private and public institutions that almost any boy who reaches the senior high school class in a suburban school can obtain admission to some four-year college.¹⁸

While the reference is to the suburban school because of its acknowledged excellence in secondary education, the same comment is applicable to any high school with a good, sound college preparatory curriculum.

It is necessary that educational institutions keep pace with the accelerated growth of the nation if needs are to be met. Many fine colleges in the nation have facilities for students at present and are planning for increased enrollments in the future. An adequate occupational information program keyed to provide information for the college-bound student should be able to direct young people in the best paths to further ambitions for a career.

Assuming the student has the aptitude and desire for higher

¹⁸James B. Conant, *Slums and Suburbs*, p. 98.

education and has been accepted by a college which can provide the desired background, the all-important problem of finances comes into play. Many young people have worked and saved during high school years in order to attend college. Parental plans for meeting the costs of higher education will finance many young people. Gallup and Hill found, in determining the manner of financing a college education, that some students plan to work their way through college while others will have financial help. The survey indicated:

Well over half of the college-bound high schoolers plan to work their way through college (70 per cent are willing to do so); nearly a fifth hope for scholarships. Nearly two-thirds of the girls and more than one third of the boys expect their parents to pay the bills.¹⁹

The use of the counseling and guidance program early in high school to acquaint students with the possibilities for scholarships will provide a goal for students who otherwise might be eliminated from higher education. While it is true that there are not enough scholarships for all deserving students, the best selling program for additional scholarships is increased competition for those now available. Federal aid to worthy students in additional fields such as is now available in the nursing program is a probability just ahead.

High school students throughout the nation are critical of preparation in high school for college work and the opportunities for a career that the degree opens to them. As a group, they wish they had been forced to take more courses in foreign languages, literature,

¹⁹Gallup and Hill, op. cit., p. 70.

science, mathematics, history and philosophy.²⁰ Poor teachers are a common complaint of the high school student who feels that the teachers are not concerned with creating an interest in subject matter. As a result little or not interest is created on the part of the student. On the other hand, some students wish that additional courses had been required in order that they might be better prepared for college work.

Counseling and guidance programs through the use of available occupational information should impress on the student ways of acquiring and cultivating interests in the selection and preparation for a career, in addition to a course designed to help in career selection. Interest generated in this fashion would be reflected by the student and in turn would be noticed and expanded by teachers who will nourish the seed of interest once it has been planted. It is important that young people realize that every facet of education can have a dollar and cents value career-wise. Learning for the sake of learning stimulates a small area of student ability. Overall, the process of learning is laborious. However, results in educational status are in ratio to effort expended by the pupil. The student often must be shown the fruit his efforts can produce before he can be motivated to work to capacity.

Occupational information courses can assist the college-bound student in preparation for college. Fleischer lists the following criteria used by colleges in the selection of students:

- (1) Graduation from an accredited secondary school; (2) Average of secondary-school marks/rank in class; (3) Recommendation

²⁰Gallup and Hill, ibid., p. 70.

of principal or teachers; (4) Aptitude, achievement, and psychological test scores; (5) Personal interviews; and (6) Evidence of good moral character. Probably the most important single criterion is class rank.²¹

Successful guidance of college-bound young people will result in a greater understanding of what is expected of youth when they enroll in college. In addition, the more serious students, especially those who will be dependent upon scholarship aid, can be expected to increase their efforts. The study by Gallup and Hill relative to scholarship aid and time and effort required to do assigned homework, indicates many students are not working at capacity. This point is brought out in the survey as follows:

They report that they spend about one to one-and-a-half hours a day on high-school homework, with college youth spending twice as much. And while they don't ask for more work, 88 per cent of them admit they can do more; 45 per cent say they can do 'a lot more'.²²

It is apparent that additional stimulation both by teacher and counselor can bring about further development in student study habits. However, classroom work must be challenging. Enrichment programs based on "busy work" will not provide better students for college programs. Motivation in the form of goal-directed activity with an opportunity to realize the feeling of success is a requirement for career realization.

The non-college-bound as well as the college-bound student is an

²¹Robert D. Fleischer, "High School Graduates and College Admittance," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals, (May 1961), p. 95.

²²Gallup and Hill, op. cit., p. 70.

important part of the nation's economy. It may prove desirable to induce a part of this group to further its education, thus providing the nation with additional highly skilled persons so badly needed in this age of science and technology. However, it must be kept in mind that it is neither possible nor desirable that all youth seek higher education.

The Non-College Bound

Approximately 42 per cent of the young people graduated from the nation's high schools will not continue formal education. This group contains a number of bright, capable persons whose potentiality has not been realized and thus is not being utilized for the best interests of the person. Members of this group lack finances, have no desire to attend college, fail to realize their capacities and understand the benefits of a college education, physical defects, as well as other problems. Regardless of the reason, within this group are young people capable of achieving if properly motivated. What is needed is a means of adding the capable members of this group who would like to attend college, but for some reason will not, to the college-bound group. The realization that 85 per cent of the high school graduates would like to attend college in comparison with the fact that approximately 40 per cent will actually enroll suggests that the nation is wasting human resources badly needed in this age of science and technology.

To achieve this goal it is necessary to help young people direct their activities toward fuller utilization of their potentialities. Occupational direction by the ninth grade and earlier if possible to

foster looking ahead, as proposed by Super²³ would result in better preparation for adulthood. More scholarships are needed. A means of financing education through loans is desirable. These features of a program to finance capable persons in college will be attained. But, first of all, occupational information programs will have to help provide an impetus which will create a desire to achieve in the many students who have aptitude and ability but lack opportunity to use it. Kohler and Fontaine, in discussing the waste of young people's talents in a series of articles, determined statistically a breakdown on the number of young people who will continue on to college, the number who will end their formal education upon graduation from high school and the number of students who will have dropped out of high school. Their conclusions are as follows:

In 1960, 2,500,000 youngsters reached eighteen, the age when most are graduated from high school. These were divided, roughly, into thirds: one third went to college, one third quit school after graduation, and one third had already dropped out. Those who went on to higher education have some sort of organized way to move on from school to work, uncertain as it is. The other two thirds do not.²⁴

It is this category in which two-thirds of the eighteen year olds are found, those who are not going on to college, where maximum vocational guidance is needed. This group also includes many bright youngsters who would like to continue on to college but for some reason will not do so; youngsters with aptitudes for skills so badly needed by the

²³Super, op. cit., p. 14.

²⁴Mary Conway Kohler and Andre Fontaine, "We Waste a Million Kids a Year," (Part I), Saturday Evening Post, (March 10, 1962), p. 16.

nation. Occupational counseling cannot create jobs, nor can it fit young people to non-existent common labor which is becoming a rarity in society today. It can steer young people toward vocations in which a need exists; it can help young people understand the need for certain skills in the labor market; and it can help youth plan a way to secure the skills for a field of work. Caravello presents evidence suggesting that the counseling of high school students by a vocational guidance specialist, or full-time counselor, during the senior high school years might produce the following results:

1. More high school graduates would continue training beyond high school;
2. More students would make decisions about their vocational goals earlier in their high school careers.²⁵

Many of the young people leaving high school after graduation find that the diploma is not an automatic key to success. There are labor shortages in the United States, but these are in the skills. To get a job, the high school graduate, like the dropout, first turns to family and friends. High school placement services are of some help and state employment agencies more and more are providing job services which include a testing program and some guidance in vocations. A job for the beginning worker will always be a problem. An eighteen year old just out of high school faces a service obligation. It may be that his scholastic background will not fit in with the work that is available. As a result his situation is discouraging. Many of the trades and crafts are organized into unions which require apprenticeship before

²⁵Santa J. Caravello, "Effectiveness of High School Guidance Service," Personnel and Guidance Journal, (January 1958), p. 325.

one can qualify as a journeyman. In many instances the ratio of apprentices to journeymen is unrealistically small and unless one has the right connections entrance into a certain union is most difficult. This is an important area, however, in which the vocational counselor should be completely familiar. Public employment service offices do excellent work in finding jobs for young people and alleviate the problem to a degree. But, there aren't enough such offices to modify the fact that hundreds of thousands of unskilled youngsters can't get jobs.²⁶

There is justifiable criticism that thirteen or fourteen is too young for youngsters to decide on a life work, that is, that they should be enrolled in either a general, academic, or vocational curriculum. However, it makes good sense that they begin to consider occupations and careers and that they gain some direction in a choice of work. School curriculums should be set up to enable a youngster to change from vocational to college, or vice versa, without great loss of time. Occupational guidance is not good if it attempts to lastingly label a ninth grade student for any one occupation. Los Angeles, California school officials have studied the question of vocational experiences for students in the junior high grades and conclude as follows:

School officials believe that youngsters in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades, more than any other age group, need shops for the exploration of their interests.²⁷

²⁶Kohler and Fontaine, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁷Mary Conway Kohler and Andre Fontaine, "We Waste a Million Kids a Year," (Part II), Saturday Evening Post, (March 17, 1962), p. 54.

For the 20 per cent of the students who can't learn by usual methods Los Angeles uses special schools designed to overcome problems of social maladjustment and to reach youngsters unable to respond to regular classroom instruction. When the child has overcome his problem he is then returned to the regular class routine. As a result, these young people also have the opportunity for career exploration.

Conant²³ in discussing the pattern of higher education which he feels would best suit the nation's needs accepts the California plan referred to previously for higher education in the next half century. He leaves little doubt but that this system of education which provides students with vocational experiences will best serve the college-bound, the non-college-bound and the dropout student in their quest for a career.

The world of work is a great challenge to a young man recently graduated from high school. Without as much preparation as it is possible to provide, his road can be dishearteningly discouraging. If on the other hand a basic occupational information program has been utilized the youngster has had some direction. In many school systems a program concerned with vocational needs can encourage graduation from high school and provide direction in ways to acquire work skills. This is a step in the right direction - the movement to conserve our valuable human resources.

In past years the high school graduate and the dropout student made up the bulk of the labor forces. In this, the space age, the nation needs more capable, educated people. While many young people of

²³Conant, op. cit., p. 99.

above average intelligence have dropped out of high school for one reason or another, a good occupational program could reduce this number and encourage a portion of this group of bright youngsters to continue their education at least through high school.

The Dropout Student

The dropout student poses one of the major problems of mass education. Volumes have been written in proposed solutions, but the problem continues. The wasted abilities of approximately one million youngsters²⁹ a year constitutes a serious threat to the nation. In an era of science and technology where brains and skills are invaluable if we are to maintain world leadership, many jobs requiring high ability remain unfilled. Kohler and Fontaine state the problem in this manner:

As we once wasted natural gas and forests and topsoil, today we waste our most valuable natural source - the productive power of young brains and muscles, the creative power of young imaginations and emotions. We waste them because we neither keep them in school nor give them jobs.³⁰

According to Conant³¹ the situation of so many young people unable to find work is fraught with dangers which can best be termed social dynamite. In a recent study of a large city slum Conant found nearly six out of every ten male youths between sixteen and twenty-one were out of work. He noted that for the most part the inhabitants are negroes

²⁹Kohler and Fontaine, op. cit., p. 50.

³⁰Ibid., p. 50.

³¹Conant, op. cit., p. 2.

who have entered the city from a southern state anytime within the last month to the past three years.³² Some of the best minds in the nation may be found in the dropout group. Two studies of dropouts support this contention:

An Iowa study found that nearly one out of five dropouts had an IQ of more than 120. Another by Glen Stice of the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, showed that about 50,000 of the dropouts in any one year were among the nation's most potentially able students.³³

These young people, the dropouts, although out of work and with nothing to do, are not juvenile delinquents. Some factor in their lives caused deviation from the normal average life of the American school boy. Unhappy school experiences are likely. It may have been lack of a goal, poor environment, inability to learn from usual teaching methods, or peer group problems. But, whatever the cause bright, young people are being wasted.

It is readily apparent that more occupational information is needed. More motivation must be instilled in young people before they veer into the wastelands. Preventive measures on the part of school systems can contribute much, especially during elementary years when seeds of dissatisfaction are first sown in young minds. The exploration of careers and occupations during the seventh to ninth grade levels, prior to the sixteenth birthday which often means freedom from school, can provide direction toward goals. Occupational counseling and the provision of information on careers can acquaint young minds with

³²Ibid., p. 13.

³³Kohler and Fontaine, op. cit., p. 16.

concrete, easily understood life goals. It can help potentially able young people realize the values gained from some sacrifice today for benefits tomorrow. A study by a high school dropout who returned to finish high school and then college indicates few young people will return to the school situation once they have dropped out of it. He states that statistics show that of the millions who make the decision to quit school, only a small handful will ever return.³⁴

This writer believes one of the primary reasons young people drop out of school is because of boredom. They are unable to generate any motivation. The immediate things, a few dollars, a car of some kind, clothes, and independence seem more important at the moment of decision than a nebulous something in a distant future. Vocational counseling can help curb the impatience of youth by providing goal-directed activities of occupational experimentation similar to that discussed previously which has proven successful in Los Angeles.

Giese, in discussing the problems he encountered as a dropout before returning to school, sums up the job-finding and job-holding problems of the dropout, noting jobs are hard to get, hard to hold, and subject to increasing competition as the pool of unskilled workers continues to expand. He states:

But they will soon find, as I did, that nearly all employers today demand employees with a diploma. If dropouts get jobs, they will be the first to be laid off when business slumps; they have between two and three times the unemployment rate of high-school graduates. Competition among dropouts for the few jobs

³⁴Donald John Giese, "I Was A High School Dropout," Reader's Digest, (December 1961), p. 207.

open to them is getting tougher. By 1965 there will be three dropouts competing for every two unskilled jobs.³⁵

This is a direct challenge to our educational system. While every three dropouts will be competing for the two unskilled jobs available, many skilled openings will remain unfilled because of the lack of competent workers. To solve the problem and bridge the gap there is but one alternative. Somehow the nation must salvage the needed brains and skills from the potential dropout and the student who stops after completing the twelfth grade. They must not be allowed to fall by the wayside. Effective vocational counseling programs and effective means of implementing such programs are a necessity. It is neither feasible nor desirable to funnel all young people into the colleges of the nation. It is, however, desirable and necessary that young people with capabilities who would like to continue their education be encouraged and helped to attend college. In a like manner, a program to bring out the full potentiality of the non-college-bound would also best serve the needs of the nation as well as its citizens.

The number of dropout students in California³⁶ has decreased since the inception of the six new sequences in curriculum which are designed to give students certain basic, salable skills. Some of the sequences will qualify the student for entrance to college as well as provide vocational preparation. They are broad enough to enable a youngster to acquire an understanding of basic trade skills; thus allow-

³⁵Ibid., p. 207.

³⁶Mary Conway Kohler and Andre Fontaine, "We Waste A Million Kids A Year," (Part III), Saturday Evening Post, (March 17, 1962), p. 68.

ing him to enter apprenticeship training in a field if that is his decision. As a result, California with a 24 per cent dropout figure, has the fifth lowest rate in the nation.

Wisconsin, with a dropout rate of only 7 per cent has the lowest rate in the nation.³⁷ The outstanding school system in Milwaukee is credited with being the major force in combating the dropout problem. The weapon which has proved successful in keeping the young people in school has been the underlying philosophy of the whole system in the city that a youngster must not be allowed to fail.³⁸ This philosophy is accentuated when it is realized that the one thing dropouts have in common is failure.

The outlook for reducing the number of dropouts from the school systems in the nation is dependent upon the willingness of educators to formulate and implement plans realistically keyed to the problem, and their subsequent acceptance by the people. The techniques and ideas which are proving successful in California and Wisconsin can be adapted to systems in other states. Utilization of occupation information as the major tool in a sound vocational counseling program can reduce the waste in human resources. Large pools of unemployed persons, regardless of educational status or reasons for unemployment, constitute a breeding ground which could spawn violent opposition to the democratic way of life upon which the nation exists. Forward looking programs dedicated to meeting the needs of young people, implemented in the nation's

³⁷Ibid., p. 68.

³⁸Ibid., p. 68.

school systems, offer the best solution improving the lot of the people and the nation.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

A review of opinions of authorities in the field of vocational counseling indicates they favor some sort of a course in occupational information be added to the school curriculum. The consensus is that late junior high school or early in senior high school would best serve student needs. The ninth grade is the favored school year for such a course according to articles on the subject written by men prominent in the field of vocational counseling. Surveys conducted by Sinick, Hoppock, and others indicate a growing awareness of young people that a realistic course concerned with occupational information can be of great value to them when entering the labor market in search of a career.

The California plan of vocational experimentation at the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades seeks to provide some experience in career-planning. Whether the student will continue on to college, complete high school and enter the labor market, or drop out of the school situation before completing high school it is designed as a basis upon which the student can make an intelligent decision in regard to life plans. Wisconsin with an educative program designed to reduce the element of school failure has made great strides toward solving its dropout problem. The result is a more competent labor force of young people.

Vocational counseling using occupational information as a tool seeks to reduce the waste of human resources. There is a reservoir of potential skills in the growing number of dropout students and young

people who end education upon graduation from high school. An acquaintanceship with occupations and an understanding of one's potentialities and how to best utilize them in career-planning is necessary. Young people who want to better prepare for a career but lack opportunity must be helped to obtain their objectives. Additional scholarships, loans, grants, even some type of federal aid can be justified if human resources are to be expended for the betterment of the nation.

Conclusions

Occupational information courses as a part of the curriculum can be utilized as a means of providing young people with direction in preparation for a career. Not only the college-bound student can benefit, but the student who plans to end formal education upon graduation from high school and the dropout student can be helped in making a decision. Such courses which outline educational requirements for various occupations could be an important instrument in inducing many young people to continue in the school situation, especially if coupled with vocational offerings designed to allow student experimentation in work situations.

Recommendations

The nation must be made aware of the tremendous waste of its human resources. Educators are the best salesmen for this task. Every effort to prepare young people for a productive life must be made. To achieve this, schools must be given, and accept, the responsibility to prepare youth, according to ability, in order they may make realistic contributions to society. Vocational counseling utilizing occupational

information to help determine abilities, provide motivations, enhance desires, embellish hopes, overcome fears, and aid in career-seeking situations must be expanded. Once the older generation realistically prepares the younger for the task ahead, the longevity of Democracy will be assured. Education, vocations, jobs for those in the gray world between childhood and adulthood must be provided if the American way of life is to endure.

The growing pool of young people unable to find work because they cannot qualify for the work which requires certain skills is already a social problem in the large cities. Two states, California and Wisconsin, have programs as a part of their school systems which are proving successful in reducing the dropout census by encouraging vocational preparation and completion of high school. In addition, a resulting factor is that more young people are entering college to prepare for careers. The result of such programs is the conservation and wiser use of the nation's human resources.

More competent people are needed in the field of vocational counseling to help in career planning and provide occupational information. Funds are needed for counselors, teachers, and programs within school systems. The public must be brought to see the needs and to understand the dangers in continuing in the present course. If federal aid to schools is the answer, then the nation must have federal aid. However, if citizens can recognize the need and will meet the problem on the local level there is little doubt that this kind of support would serve the need.

The problem exists now. It is steadily worsening. Only a de-

cision by enlightened people to cease the waste of human resources
can, for generations to come, assure this nation of continued leader-
ship as a free people.

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