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THE RENAISSANCE OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

A feature article in the April 18th issue of *Life* magazine stated, "At the age of 75, Mae West is about to have a renaissance." For those of you who are too young to remember Miss West, I would hasten to add that she publicized sex both literally and figuratively in her movies of the thirties. And now Mae West is making a comeback. In the "making" are a TV special, an LP record, and a new movie. In somewhat similar fashion, vocational guidance is making a comeback — experiencing a renaissance. After reaching its peak in the first decades of this century, undergoing a period of recession in the thirties and forties and falling into the doldrums in the fifties, vocational guidance has moved on to a revival in the sixties.

L'orientation professionnelle fait un retour — une renaissance. Le vieux modèle de Parsons a des faiblesses internes mais il a introduit une succession d'événements fortuits que l'on désigne sous le nom de Mouvement D'Orientation.

As with most new movements, vocational guidance began with some inherent weaknesses. Parsons' model was prescriptive: it was developed to operate in a relatively simple vocational environment; it gave information to a compliant client; it depended for its success on a knowledge of the requirements in different work situations; it expected the client to reason logically, given the facts. It was a relatively uncomplicated model, but at the same time it ushered in the Guidance Movement. The original concept of vocational guidance did not sufficiently recognize that the process of helping an individual solve his vocational problems is often an extremely complex one. It was not always accepted that the process of vocational choice took place over a long period of time; that it involved complex personality factors as well as logical reasoning; that the process dealt with a complex and rapidly changing work environment; and that it was a concomitant of other school guidance functions — namely, educational and personal guidance. These shortcomings are understandable considering the fact that little research had yet taken place to show how vocational choices come about. We are still far from a definitive model in this area, but considerable research by Super, Ginzberg, and others has given us glimpses into this complex process.

Counselors themselves began to lose faith in the vocational guidance movement. The complexities of the nature of the work world and the ever-changing kaleidoscope of jobs soon left behind even the most conscientious worker. School counselors had no technology to cope with this enormous information problem; they were short-staffed; and rather than be hypocritical about the function, they simply admitted they could not do it properly and ceased to function actively in this guidance area. They found a new emphasis in the forties and justified their withdrawal from vocational guidance in favor of a more subjective approach. Reality considerations, outside the educational institution, were treated as less important.

Vocational, as applied to guidance, became a "dirty" word. Barry and Wolf (1962) published *An Epitaph for Vocational Guidance*. There were those in the profession who, in an attempt to dissociate themselves from vocational responsibilities, promoted the idea that the word "guidance" should be dropped in favor of "counseling." At the same time, the subjective or mental health emphasis in counseling came into the limelight, although it seemed apparent that the development of a healthy and realistic self-concept could be encouraged by providing career counseling. This change in emphasis away from vocational guidance was reflected in the fact that the information service of school guidance was downgraded. And since group procedures employing information had been used in early guidance programs, these too were downgraded. Group procedures were replaced by individual procedures. One-to-one counseling flourished — group procedures withered. School counselors had heavier loads, in part because group procedures were no longer providing the information services so essential to the career choice process. The concept that the student should be allowed to make his own decisions was extended by implication to mean that he should also be responsible for seeking out his own information. In effect then, the counselor was turning over to the counselee a function which the counselor could not manage and did not want to do. As a result, vocational counseling assumed a status position at the bottom of the scale, far below educational counseling, which seemed to the counselor to be of somewhat more immediate concern to students and, I might add, to their parents. In fact, because of the multiplicity of post-secondary educational institutions, the school counselor may soon be unable to cope with this function too. Yet it is recognized that educational guidance cannot be removed from the context of the career development process.

Le temps passait et les conseillers eux-mêmes commencèrent à perdre confiance dans l'orientation professionnelle. Le conseiller n'avait aucun moyen de venir à bout de l'énorme problème de l'information; il était à court de personnel; ainsi, il admettait simplement qu'il ne pouvait faire sa tâche correctement et il cessa de fonctionner activement dans ce domaine de l'orientation. Au lieu de cela, l'orientation personnelle florissait; les procédés de groupe baissèrent car ils étaient associés, en grande partie, avec le service de l'information. L'orientation professionnelle devint un mot "sale," quelque chose à éviter, à oublier. La pénurie d'information professionnelle de première classe, et des prédictions que le travail serait bientôt suranné, furent d'autres raisons pour lesquelles les conseillers manquèrent d'enthousiasme pour la fonction d'orientation professionnelle. Cependant, travailler semble toujours attirer l'énergie de la plupart des gens; il fournit encore l'accomplissement de soi pour plusieurs et donc, la perspective de travail demande une décision de la part de nos jeunes gens.

The lack of accurate, comprehensive, objective and current occupational literature also contributed to the counselor's lack of enthusiasm for the vocational guidance function. In addition, scares of the effect of automation lured some counselors into believing that work was outmoded, that the counselee would somehow live in a world of leisure. This has not yet come to pass. Instead, new jobs are added to each edition of the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*; to an even greater extent, young women are looking

forward to careers in the world of work; occupations increasingly require more highly trained personnel and hence are inherently more interesting; and young people are more than ever eager to seek meaningful work. It is true that more leisure time is available in some occupational fields, but for many the reverse is true. However, work still seems to attract the energies of most people, it still has the potential of providing self-fulfilment for many, and it still sets the stage for a complex decision-making process on the part of most young people today. At a time when more and more individuals are concerned about their future careers in an increasingly complex work world, the vocational guidance movement had foundered. Only recently has the swing away from vocational guidance been reversed. The need is there — I would suggest that the emerging counselor in Canada has begun to accept the challenge.

What evidence have we that vocational guidance is entering a renaissance period? One has only to glance at recent titles to realize that guidance literature is more and more referring to the new movement. Kabak (1968) indicates that "elementary school counselors are increasingly interested in exploring the world of work with children . . . (and) would like to expand this area of their guidance services in their respective schools (p. 203)." Kroll (1969) states, "Only in the past few years has there emerged a resurgence of interest in career concerns (p. 4)." Rosenbreg (1966) points to a concern in counselor-education when he says, "to meet the student's needs the counselor will have to have a knowledge of automation and of the changes that are taking place in our economy . . . upgrading might well start with the retraining of our many school guidance counselors. As they learn of the realities outside the educational system, their value to the student and society will be greatly advanced (p. 151)." Storer (1966) refers to the junior college when he says: "The counselor must fulfil his obligation in seeing that the time provided is used to meet the needs of students — not just the relatively small number with severe adjustment or emotional problems — but the majority of students who desperately need basic vocational information and counseling in order to plan for optimal use of their talents and abilities (p. 42)."

Des preuves nous sont citées dans la littérature présente de l'orientation que l'orientation professionnelle entre dans une période de renaissance. D'autres preuves incluent les nouvelles techniques comme par exemple le "Jeu des Carrières," la simulation de la résolution d'un problème (Université de Stanford) et la voie de la prise d'une décision qui est recommandée par plusieurs autorités. La présence d'un nombre croissant de matériaux pour l'orientation des carrières sur le marché est une autre indication qu'il y a une renaissance dans l'orientation professionnelle.

Another indication of the revival of vocational guidance is evidenced by promising new guidance techniques that have been described in the last couple of years. *The Life Career Game* by Varenhorst (1968) is one example. It presents a device for group participation in which students plan the life of a hypothetical student for a period of eight to ten years in the area of job, education, family life, and leisure. The game is said to encourage interest and to offer value clarification in the decision-making process. Incidentally, the recent emphasis on the decision-making approach

to student concerns has application in vocational guidance. Certainly, occupational information is important to the counselee, but even more important is the process by which such information can be used by the student to arrive at important decisions. If this process can be understood by the counselee, the criticism that occupational information is fleeting is a relatively unimportant one. As a matter of fact, group procedures are increasingly being used in guidance for assisting youth to learn the decision-making process. We may yet see the renaissance of group guidance.

Another new technique, a problem-solving simulation experience, has been developed at Stanford University and described by Krumboltz and Bergland (1969). In kit form, it is self-administering and involves isolating representative problems encountered by a worker in a specified occupation. For example, in the appliance serviceman kit, a student must test electric circuits to find the defective component in a foil-lined schematic of a malfunctioning iron. It is asserted that this particular problem-solving approach is received best by students from lower socio-economic groups, that it is enjoyable for those participating, and that it motivates information-seeking on the part of students.

The presence of various types of career guidance materials on the market is another indication that there is a renaissance in vocational guidance. These include films, filmstrips, sound filmstrips, tapes, records, career games, books, and pamphlets. And this is only a beginning. A market for career information must exist in view of the fact that the number of these materials has increased at a tremendous rate in the last few years. The quality of these new materials is another matter. Frequently, a lively demand for a product taxes the resources of the supplier and quality suffers. Professional associations such as the CGCA have a responsibility in this area and I am glad to see that this Association has a Publications Evaluation Committee to consider such matters.

One of the most exciting indications of this new trend is the interest shown in computer-based sources of vocational and educational information. Although there are still a few skeptics, most authorities in the field are convinced that in computer technology lies the hope for vocational guidance. Several systems have been demonstrated; some are in operation. Costs of such systems are, at the present time, prohibitive but this would seem to be only a temporary impediment. In general, these systems would solve some of the major problems in vocational guidance which have persistently defied counselor solution. Computer-based systems are able to store immense quantities of information; the information can be kept up-to-date and distributed on request to one or many counselees who can be remote from the source of information; print-outs can be made available; and finally the counselee can select what, for him, is the most relevant information. These systems can provide information about educational resources, the work world, career patterns, and occupational outlook. For a discussion of the various approaches to computer use in guidance, the counselor should consult an article entitled *The Computer in Counseling and Guidance Programs* by Bohn and Super (1969). Obviously, the computer has a tremendous potential — it may well change the complete organization of counseling services. Incidentally, computer information will also

need to be checked for quality, in an even more rigorous fashion than the present printed information.

La plupart des autorités sont convaincues que les techniques de l'ordinateur électronique sont essentielles aujourd'hui pour assurer une orientation professionnelle suffisante. Les systèmes à base de l'ordinateur sont capables d'emmagasiner des quantités d'informations courantes qui peuvent être distribuées sur demande à un ou plusieurs clients qui sont loin de la source d'information, des épreuves peuvent être mises à leur disposition, et le client peut choisir ce qui, pour lui, est l'information la plus pertinente. L'ordinateur électronique *peut-être* bien changer l'organisation complète des services de "counseling". Les changements dans les programmes d'éducation du "counseling" sont en train d'être notés. Les cours pour le développement de la carrière, l'information vocationnelle, l'utilisation de l'ordinateur, et les procédés d'orientation de groupe sont typiques des offres du nouveau programme. Aussi, au niveau para-professionnel, des cours sont en train de se développer pour former des techniciens assignés aux ressources de l'orientation.

The regeneration of vocational guidance has been accompanied by changes in counselor education programs. Courses in career development, vocational information, computer utilization, and group guidance procedures are typical of the new course offerings. Some programs are beginning to include work-sampling or work observation periods for their prospective counselors. At the paraprofessional level, courses are being developed for guidance resource technicians. I would tend to agree with Vriend (1969) who in effect says that we need a division of labor in the profession and that we should create areas of specialization and establish levels of competency. It would seem then that there should be opportunities for group work experts, school guidance assistants, teachers of careers, supervisors of guidance services, and guidance resource technicians.

One may reasonably ask why there has been this trend back to vocational guidance. The following are some of my thoughts on this question. The rapidly changing nature of the work world has made it difficult for young people to become intimately acquainted with it; the low visibility of jobs is another factor; and the ever-increasing technical complexity of many jobs makes it almost impossible for the counselee to understand the work role. All of these factors combine to provide the counselee with a blurred image of the work world. He becomes concerned and this concern is brought to the counselor's attention — often coupled with other concerns. For example, the educational choices a young person is confronted with today are extremely complex, yet these in part determine later vocational choice. At the same time, course prerequisites at the post-secondary level change so rapidly that the student can plan only in tentative fashion. It is a well-documented fact that one of the major concerns of young people is their career choice. The Career Decision Project found that when students voluntarily visited the school counselor, their job plans were second on the list of the most frequently discussed topics (Breton & McDonald, 1967). The counselee's needs have been, I suggest, largely responsible for the counselor's re-awakened interest in vocational guidance.

Un ds plus grands soucis d'une personne est son choix vocationnel. A la

fois, une des critiques les plus persistantes du personnel de l'orientation est leur inanibilité de fournir des services d'orientation professionnelle. Le besoin est évident; la technologie de l'ordinateur a fourni la base nécessaire pour aider à rencontrer le besoin et la critique.

One of the persistent criticisms of recent years has been the counselor's inadequacy in providing vocational guidance services. Business and industry have been particularly critical, but more recently parents seem to have become concerned. Parents find it increasingly difficult to be informed about the work world, and yet they realize the important relationship between present educational choice and future career choice. The counselor is criticized for not having relevant information, for not becoming intimately acquainted with the work world. Fortunately for the counselor, hope is in sight. Computer technology, as mentioned earlier, has come to the rescue. In some respects the counselor has been something of a pretender with regard to vocational information. He just could not keep control of the expanding information. However, the hardware is now available to help solve this very real problem. And it is interesting to note that one of the first uses of computer technology in guidance was in connection with vocational counseling.

How can the schools in particular, best assume this re-awakening responsibility for providing vocational guidance services? In the first place, the counselor must feel the need for these services. If not, he is best advised to leave these responsibilities to others who are interested. At this point, the need for specialization of function should be emphasized. Call him what you like — career counselor, vocational counselor — we need a well-trained, creative and enthusiastic worker to take on this vital task. He will be versed in the various techniques of making occupational information available to young people. He will feel at home in working with groups of students as well as with individuals. He will be part of the teaching staff; he will have access to new and varied sources of occupational information. He will develop a workable system of providing such information to students as it is required. One such system is the Edmonton Career Centre described by Paterson and Nichols (1968) which is a resource library of educational and occupational information based on the premise that students are reached only through many types of approaches. Counselor-educators will increasingly anticipate the need for specialists and will adapt their programs in the light of this need. We may have come to the parting of the ways as far as the generalized role of the counselor is concerned. Present-day society is increasingly demanding specialization in the professions. In addition to the personal-social type of counseling which requires its own degree of specialization, there is vocational counseling which demands an equally specialized approach.

Comment les écoles peuvent-elles fournir les services d'orientation professionnelle? On suggère que la spécialisation dans une fonction est demandée en orientation, car sans cela il n'y aura pas de travailleurs créatifs et enthousiastes pour entreprendre cette tâche vitale. Nous sommes peut-être arrivés au carrefour en ce qui concerne le rôle général du conseiller. En plus du genre de "counseling" personnel-social qui demande son propre degré de spécialisation, voilà l'orientation professionnelle qui exige une

approche toute aussi spécialisée. La technologie a travaillé pour créer un besoin plus grand des services de "counseling" professionnel et au même moment a apporté avec elle la quincaillerie pour aider le conseiller à rencontrer ces grands besoins. Le conseiller des soixante-dix vea sans doute se préoccuper beaucoup plus de l'orientation professionnelle qu'aujourd'hui. Du moment que le rôle du travail reste d'une signification des plus importantes, l'orientation professionnelle sera une préoccupation du conseiller.

At another level, we now have in Canada, guidance resource technicians. Although their role is not yet sharply defined, there would seem to be much merit in having paraprofessional personnel as part of the team. One of their major functions would seem to be the selection, collection, organization, and utilization of vocational and educational materials.

The interest in vocational counseling has—like many other educational concepts today—gone full cycle since Parson's day. The model has changed—and the need for vocational guidance services has mushroomed. Technology has operated in such a way as to create a greater need for these services and at the same time has brought with it the means to help the counselor meet these increased needs. Computer-based systems of vocational information, new group guidance procedures, better vocational guidance materials, enthusiastic workers, and well-trained paraprofessional workers will all assist in meeting the need which is so vital to those we serve.

The emerging counselor of the seventies will undoubtedly be more concerned with vocational guidance than he is today. As long as the role of work is of overwhelming significance in the life of man, vocational guidance will be of concern to the counselor.

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LA RENAISSANCE DE L'ORIENTATION PROFESSIONNELLE

CARL L. BEDAL

Cet écrit trace l'histoire de l'orientation professionnelle, insiste sur les temps forts et les temps faibles de l'orientation et sur sa vitalité actuelle. On peut dire, en se basant sur les faits, qu'elle est véritablement en pleine croissance.

Les écrits dans ce domaine, le matériel en vente, les nouveaux programmes pour la formation des conseillers d'orientation, les techniques modernes mises en valeur en sont des preuves non équivoques.

L'auteur essaie de prouver l'importance grandissante de l'orientation dans ce monde du travail sans cesse en transformation, où les carrières se font nombreuses et évoluent rapidement, où la recherche a pris une place importante. Il souligne l'intérêt et la critique du public quant aux méthodes employées en orientation, les besoins accrus des jeunes et le renouvellement du matériel en information professionnelle.

Il s'intéresse à la façon dont les écoles secondaires pourraient assumer le mieux possible leur responsabilité en ce qui a trait aux services à rendre en orientation. Il touche au travail que l'on attend des conseillers-éducateurs, des conseillers d'orientation, des professeurs et de tous les professionnels rattachés au monde de l'éducation.

Il décrit bon nombre de moyens de répandre l'information professionnelle: informatique, jeux sur les carrières, moyens audio-visuels et autres.