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Student Counseling Program in Twenty Iowa Colleges

LYLE K. HENRY AND DONALD R. ORTNER¹

Abstract. A survey was made of certain student personnel practices in twenty Iowa colleges by submitting a questionnaire and obtaining follow-up data one year later. While most colleges provide student counseling service, specific measures and procedures vary widely. There is no uniformity in regard to the testing program or the means for assisting students with "How to Study" problems. Generally speaking, any professional counseling effort is supplemented by adviser service rendered by regular faculty members.

In an endeavor to determine what could be done to provide a more effective student personnel program at its college, the Guidance and Counseling Committee of Morningside College decided to study the guidance practices of similar colleges in Iowa. Of particular interest were the areas dealing with help classes in "How to Study," the prevalence of full-time counseling services, the use of standardized entrance examinations, and the utilization of regular faculty members as advisers.

PROCEDURE

In the spring of 1960 the following questionnaire was sent to nineteen other Iowa colleges.² The data were brought up to date as of March 1, 1961, by a follow-up survey.

SURVEY OF PERSONNEL PRACTICES

1. Do you have a course in how to study?

If "yes," answer these questions: a. What length? b. Is credit offered? How much? c. Is it required of anyone? When? d. Does it include remedial reading?

If "no," answer these questions: a. Is there any special provision for teaching students how to study? If so, what? b. Is there any specific provision for training in reading improvement? If so, what?

2. Do you have a Dean of Students, a guidance counselor, or a director of student personnel as a full-time position? Half time? Less than half?

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² The writers acknowledge the assistance of the deans or other administrative personnel in the following institutions which cooperated in the survey: Buena Vista, Central, Coe, Cornell, Drake, Dubuque, Graceland, Grinnell, Iowa Wesleyan, Loras, Luther, Morningside, Parsons, William Penn, St. Ambrose, Simpson, Upper Iowa, Waldorf, Wartburg, and Westmar.

If "yes," answer these questions: a. What tests does he administer at beginning of year to entering students? b. Does he operate a counseling program? c. Do faculty members serve as student advisers?

If "no," answer this question: a. Who does student counseling?

3. Are you contemplating any immediate change in above procedures? If so, what?

Signed----- Position ----- Institution -----

RESULTS

Unusual success was had with the questionnaire in that all schools queried submitted replies. On the follow-up one year later, all schools but two replied. In their cases, data supplied the first year are used in this summary. The present situation is as follows.

How to Study

A Course in effective learning. In reply to the questions concerning the existence of a course in "How to Study," exactly one-half had no such organized instruction. Of the ten offering formal assistance in effective learning, the following summary statements can be made.

Six schools offer a course of half a semester or longer, whereas four schools offer a course of less than eight weeks. One college offered one hour credit for the course; the others, none.

The course is required in six schools, as follows:

- All first semester students at one college.
- All first semester freshmen in two colleges.
- All marginal admissions in two colleges.
- All freshmen who "score low on study skills test" in one college.

Five schools include remedial reading in their How to Study course.

One college includes remedial reading only in the case of "some, where indicated."

Alternate to a course. Of the ten schools not offering an effective learning course, five stated that they provide an alternative. Of these five, two spend several hours during orientation week teaching students how to study, whereas three simply stated that something "poorly organized," "something not well organized," or "individual instruction" is in operation.

The Counseling Program

Full-time counselor. In regard to a full-time counselor, eleven schools replied that they have a full-time or "almost full-time" person in this area. Three colleges have someone working half-time in this field. Three others report less than half-time. The remaining three state that they have no one officially carrying out these tasks.

Entrance tests. Tests administered at the beginning of the year to entering students vary greatly. The manner in which they are reported generally seemed to indicate wide variance in the use of the measures in question. The details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of the 20 colleges polled using specific tests.

<i>Name of Test</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
School and College Ability Tests (S.C.A.T.)	8
American College Testing Program	7
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (S.T.E.P.)	4
American Council on Education Psychological	4
Strong's Vocational Interest Blank	3
College Entrance Examination Board (part not specified)	2
Otis Self Administering Intelligence	1
Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament	1
Kuder (form not stated)	1
California Test of Mental Maturity (C.T.M.M.)	1
Ohio State Psychological Test	1
Edwards Personal Preference Schedule	1
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (M.M.P.I.)	1
"An academic placement test"	1
"A study skills test"	1
"A vocational interest test"	1
"English tests"	1
"English placement"	1
Robinson-Hall reading test	1

A counseling service. In seventeen of the twenty colleges polled, a counseling program is in operation. This does not purport to be a qualitative analysis; a quantitative picture, however, is reported under *Full-Time Counselor* and under *Entrance Tests*, above.

Student advisement. All colleges reported the use of faculty advisers. The extent to which they were used is shown in Table 2. Only two reported "all." The mode is 90 per cent.

Table 2. Number and extent of the 20 colleges polled using faculty advisers.

<i>Per cent of Faculty Utilized</i>	<i>Number of Colleges</i>
75-100	14
50-74	3
25-49	2
0-24	1

Changes, 1960 to 1961. The following changes were reported since last year:

One school added psychiatric service on a referral basis to its student services. (This school had previously reported as its goal the employment of a clinical psychologist).

One school continued its goal of a year ago to create a counseling bureau which would coordinate all testing and counseling, beginning next September.

One school reported the employment of a full-time Director of Counseling.

One school expanded its "How to Study" course from three to eight weeks.

One school added a "How to Study" course.

Contemplated changes. Two colleges reported that they are reevaluating their present student personnel program. Two colleges stated that they plan to add College Entrance Examination Board tests for 1961-1962. One each of the following was contemplated: a full-time reading specialist; a course in guidance; a counseling bureau; a Director of Student Affairs; a How to Study course; better counseling by the faculty during fall orientation week.

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

Eleven colleges have a person devoting full-, or almost full-, time in the area of student personnel. This is an increase of three over the previous year. Three colleges have a person devoting half-time in this area, a decrease of three.

In seventeen colleges a counseling program is operated by the Director of Student Personnel or by another person acting in this capacity. This is an increase of two.

The percentage of the faculty who serve as advisers covers a wide range, the mode being 90 per cent.

"How to Study" and remedial reading are now taught as formal courses in half the schools reporting. Last year, these were generally reported as part of orientation training of new students.

Contemplated changes vary widely. On the basis of this study it appears that the Iowa liberal arts colleges are interested in a movement called "counseling" and are able to make some progress from year to year. The extent to which this progress is made should, however, be measured against criteria such as

the "Policies and Criteria for the Approval of Secondary Schools" published in the interest of its member high schools by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1960. Speaking of future requirements, it states:

All member high schools should employ at least one professionally trained counselor or director of guidance services. The ratio of students to qualified personnel should be approximately 300 to 1 . . .
(p. 17)

While this is a criterion for high school, it indicates to some extent the importance of this program for education. Any school that does not provide for counseling for all students may find itself in a position difficult to defend.

Literature Cited

The North Central Association, Policies and Criteria for the Approval of Secondary Schools, 1959-60.