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# How an American head counsellor handles vocational guidance – A useful book, in spite of a few quirks: [Review of the book Methods of vocational guidance by Gertrude Forrester (Boston: D.C. Heath)]

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**1960-09**
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https://hdl.handle.net/10539/24314
Rose, E.P. (1960, September). How an American head counsellor handles vocational guidance – A useful book, in spite of a few quirks: [Review of the book Methods of vocational guidance by Gertrude Forrester (Boston: D.C. Heath)]. Symposium: A Journal for Education in Southern Africa, pp. 82-83.

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# BOOKS REVIEWED

England and Australia, but higher than those in America except in the top universities. A long chapter which will be a delight to statisticians handles all contributing factors most meticulously.

This volume is, as was mentioned earlier, only one half of the full investigation, but certain conclusions could be drawn, or at any rate observations made, at the half-way stage, and these will be noted briefly.

The largest single group of first years at university had spent five years in high school, i.e. they had spent an extra year at school **after** obtaining their university entrance; the next largest group had spent the normal four years. The next observation is one that would be probably borne out in S. African universities, namely that second and third year students writing first year courses fare much better than freshers; that full-time do better than part-time; that women do better than men. Entrance Scholarship candidates proved themselves the best group, and students who failed to gain accreditation were below average. The lowest 9% of accredited students did as well at university as the lowest 6% of those who passed the entrance examination. Though there was a positive correlation between school attainment and university performance, it was only moderate. (For the statistician: the median tau coefficients of correlation between School Certificate and the various criteria of university performance were:- first-year full-time .36, advanced years full-time .15.)

Other observations: There is "not a very close relation between a student's subsequent performance and the level of his prior ability." This may merely reflect the highly selected nature of the student group relative to the whole population . . . The findings of this investigation **do not support the view that the basic reason for failure was that students were not well equipped to enter the university.** From this comes the further conclusion: "In New Zealand it would not appear practicable to adopt selective measures severe enough to bring about any marked improvement in university performance, unless alternative instruction were set up to provide for the large proportion of rejected applicants who on present standards could have successful university careers." This is a thought-provoking conclusion, as is the query whether the stiffening of entrance examinations would prove an adequate incentive to higher standards.

This book must be highly commended to educationists, both in school and university, who are interested in the maintenance and raising of academic standards. There is obviously no easy solution to the problem, the very real problem, of university failures in the first year, but this investigation can set thinking on the right lines. From the point of view of English-medium education in S. Africa, it may be said that the English teachers' colleges cannot afford the wastage of potentially good teachers in the first year of university. We might go further and say that universities should not be proud in any sense of the number of failures in their first years. They must do something about it.

H.H.

*How an American Head Counsellor handles Vocational Guidance: a useful book, in spite of a few quirks.*

**Methods of Vocational Guidance,** by Gertrude Forrester. (D. C. Heath, U.S.A.).



The author describes methods of helping youngsters plan their vocations; she does not deal with principles or theories of vocational guidance. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the giving of information about occupations. This is done in great detail by (a) Making information available about the occupational world. (b) Pointing out sources of information about opportunities, trends and requirements of various occupations. (c) Informing pupils about conditions of work. (d) Giving pupils mastery of techniques to be used in investigating occupations. (e) Informing them about schools, colleges or courses which will fit them for vocations. (f) Cultivating an understanding of the inter-relationships among occupations and the contribution of all forms of work for the welfare of society.

There is a short section on helping the student to assess his fitness for a particular occupation. The author also surveys literature on placement and follow-up services. As this is an enlarged edition of a previous book published in 1951 which catered for the teacher of business subjects in a small school, chapters directed towards the counsellor of a school of 2,000 or more pupils have been added, together with exercises and questions for class and/or individual assignments.

With the co-operation of business leaders, the pupils visit offices and observe a day's routine in various departments: ex-pupils of the school return to give lectures and answer questions about their experiences after leaving school. Much stress is laid on "the dignity of all forms of work" and the inter-relationships of various occupations. The pupils are further encouraged to acquaint themselves with a variety of occupations by using the radio, motion pictures, visual aids, readings, group discussions and interviews with experienced workers.

Trips are planned to organised exhibits such as a fair or museum, and often excursions are made to distant places of historical or political interest. A detailed list is given as to conduct for pupils "who visit industrial plants", as well as suggestions of questions to bear in mind while being shown over such a plant. The teacher also has his list which aims to make such a visit as effective and helpful as possible. There is a useful list of films and filmstrips dealing with vocations, as well as a discussion on the use of radio and television programmes, pamphlets and posters, bulletin boards and displays. The assignments for pupils at the end of each chapter should serve as a useful guide to the inexperienced teacher.

One chapter deals with familiarising the pupil with the "Dictionary of Occupational Titles" which has 40,023 defined titles, ranging from cost accountant to minstrel, from actress to statistician, judge to

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merry-go-round operator. These occupations have been classified into seven major groups, which are then divided and subdivided and coded by a system reminiscent of the Dewey system of the library. Each occupation has six digits. For instance the first digit represents the general classification: 0 for professional and managerial, 1 for clerical and sales, 2 for service occupations, 3 for agriculture, fishery and forestry, 4, 5 for skilled and 6, 7 for semi-skilled, 8, 9 for unskilled occupations. All this should prove most helpful to the pupil studying occupations in theory and learning the names of various jobs, but one cannot help feeling that many of the games and quizzes described to make learning easy and pleasant, hardly seem to belong to the already overcrowded high school curriculum. For instance: "Repeat three nursery rhymes which mention vocations, such as "Old Woman who lived in a Shoe" (Housewife), "Sing a Song of Sixpence" (Maid) etc., etc. or "Name the titles of three movies dealing with occupations."

Some more useful vocational quizzes are detailed in a later chapter, but here again, one feels that the subject is stretched to an unnecessary degree when one comes across such items as "Four songs will be played. What kind of worker is suggested by each?"

"Yes, We have no Bananas". Answer: Storekeeper or fruit vendor.

"Cancel the Flowers". Answer: Florist.

'In my Merry Oldsmobile". Answer: Auto mechanic.

"I've been working on the Railroad". Answer: Railroad worker.

In another section one learns that the rhyme "Jack be nimble, Jack be quick! Jack jump over the candlestick" represents an "Obstacle Course Director."

Here is a project detailed for those who are interested in music as a vocation: A prominent musician or singer is invited to play or sing a list of about thirty songs, which . . . of course describe occupations. For instance

"They cut down the old Pine Tree." Answer: Woodsman.

"There is something about a soldier." Answer: Soldier.

"I'm an old cowhand." Answer: Cowboy.

After the musician has conducted this game which will be "especially profitable, ease and informality having been achieved by the preliminary contest", the pupils may ask the musician questions about music as a career.

More and more difficult musical quizzes are described, but all are on the lines of the foregoing.

The link-up between vocational interests and avocational, or leisure-time, such as hobbies etc. has not been forgotten. The thoroughness which characterises Gertrude Forrester's work may be realised when one reads her chapter on "Helping students acquire specific information concerning occupa tions." In this section she advocates career conferences to which Rotary Club or Professional and Business Club members are invited to speak. Nothing is left to chance or the initiative of the speaker who, in addition to being furnished with a list of the pupils about to attend his lecture, is visited by the student chairman who gives him a list of subjects and a suggested outline. Later he is sent a reminder as to time and place with a list containing "Some suggestions for conducting your conference." These suggestions deal with the allocation of time to different sections of the address and the avoidance of giving a false picture of the prospects of the career being discussed. There is also a list of ten "Don'ts", such as "Don't wander away from the subject." "Don't moralise or preach" and rather incomprehensibly, "Don't lecture." There are some "Do's" too, such as "Do get right to the point — the period passes quickly." Similarly the student chairman, the student vice-chairman and the Faculty Host for each talk has a list of about a dozen suggestions covering behaviour, procedure and assessment of the address.

There is a chapter on the investigation of specific jobs by the students, with a detailed outline for making such a report. There is a brief treatment of the matter of fitting the pupil to a particular job, as well as suggestions for try-out, placement and follow-up studies.

One cannot but be struck by the great extent to which the community seems to co-operate with a vocational programme of this nature, in furnishing speakers, conducting tours, supplying pamphlets, allowing observations etc.

E.P.R.

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*A useful background book for Old Testament teaching.*



**Introducing the Old Testament** by Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. (Bruce).

This is a very sound and scholarly work. It sums up and digests the immense amount of research done in the last decade by archaeologists and scholars of all sorts. Father Moriarty is far from dogmatic in the general sense, and his reconstruction of the personalities of the great leaders of Israel has about it a sense of reality. A very fine chapter on Amos retains the real majesty of the poetry of the man. A chapter on the Psalms is also handled particularly wisely, the author considering the works of scholars such as Herman Gunkel and H. H. Ginsberg — who quite excitingly traced Psalm 29 (Hebrew version) to an old Canaanite hymn. Then there was the passage from Ugaritic literature:

"Lo, thine enemies, O Baal, lo, thine enemies wilt
thou smite,
Lo, thou wilt cut off thy foes."

Which makes interesting comparison with Psalm 92:

"Lo, thine enemies, O Yahweh, lo thine enemies
shall perish:
all evildoers shall be scattered."

To all who teach scripture this book will provide new lines of thought urged throughout with a profound respect.

B.W.R.