

REPORT ON SABBATICAL LEAVE 1969-70

STUDY OF VOCATIONAL COUNSELING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES  
OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN THE U.S.A.

by

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to

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
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INDEX

	Page
I. Acknowledgement to Mt. San Antonio College District. . . . .	1
II. Preparation for Sabbatical Year. . . . .	2
III. Purpose of Sabbatical Leave. . . . .	3
A. Primary: To investigate counseling methods and techniques of community colleges in various sections of the U.S.A.	
B. Secondary: Travel To see America from "Sea to Shining Sea"	
IV. Report on Investigation. . . . .	4
V. New Horizons in Community College Counseling . . . . .	16
VI. Statement indicating how sabbatical will help me to render more effective service to Mt. San Antonio College. . . . .	17
VII. Attachments	
#1. U.S.A. map showing route	
#2. Questionnaire used to guide interviews	

## I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is great to be a member of a community college that believes in its people and has enough faith in them to have a Sabbatical Leave Policy admired by many faculty associations throughout the United States. I would like to thank the Board of Trustees, the people of the Mt. San Antonio College School District, and the Administration for granting me the opportunity to undertake this Sabbatical Leave after fifteen years of service to this District.

I anticipated great personal growth from visiting other community colleges and investigating their vocational guidance procedures; I hoped to replenish my teaching batteries with a new enthusiastic energy that has been drained after twenty seven years of continuous work with young people of school age; and I expected to fulfill a life-time ambition to see America first from "Sea to Shining Sea"! I believe that my expectations have been overwhelmingly fulfilled and hope that my work as a counselor will reflect personal growth, renewed vitality in teaching, and a better understanding of youth and their personal problems in today's society.

## II. PREPARATION FOR SABBATICAL YEAR

One does not just apply and take off for a year's leave. A great deal of preparation must be made in advance. The first decision must be which year to go. Then convenience and personal financial considerations have to be figured carefully. An application to the Board of Trustees with the statement of proposed plan to be followed and the anticipated end result must be submitted. At least two years went into my planning for this year's leave and I sincerely believe that the benefits I have derived from it were well worth the careful planning and I hope that the District will be adequately compensated for their faith in this policy by the increase in my effectiveness and enthusiasm as a member of the faculty of this fine educational institution.

Mrs. Provost and I chose a 21 $\frac{1}{2}$  foot travel trailer which would be economically feasible and give us the flexibility in our travels to go where and when we wished. Our itinerary called for us to travel North first, then across the Mid-West to the East Coast, south along the East Coast to Florida, then across the South to the Southwest and back to California. (See attachment #1 for map). We traveled over 20,000 miles, through 35 states, made two separate trips into Canada, and crossed the border into Mexico briefly. We visited four National Historic Sites, one National Historical Park, four National Memorials, one National Military Park, seven National Monuments, seven National Parks, two National Seashores, Washington, D.C., and five Canadian National Parks. I visited over seventy community colleges in thirty of the thirty-five states that we traveled through.

I talked to the Personnel Managers of four large industrial firms during my leave. I was interested in their views on what they were seeking for the employment of the two-year vocational graduate. All stressed that the two year student needs to develop his skills in communication, reading, writing, and speaking. They were looking for people who are able to think for themselves and have the ability to work as a team. Opportunities in lower management positions exist for those able to accept responsibility and willing to work. One of the areas greatly in need of personnel was machine maintenance where the ability to tear down and to repair machines as well as the ability to do general machine maintenance is needed. It was pointed out by one of the personnel men that draftsmen need more understanding in the field of three-dimension design and the ability to place their ideas on paper. All four managers stressed the necessity for closer relationship between the needs of industry and the curriculum offered by two-year educational institutions. One said that he felt educators should come out more and talk to the people in industry.

### III. PURPOSE OF SABBATICAL LEAVE

The primary purpose of my sabbatical leave was to visit community colleges throughout the United States in order to investigate their methods and procedures used in the vocational guidance of students. My secondary goal was to discover the wonders of our great country such as the majestic redwood forests, the thundering torrents of Niagara Falls, the everlasting geysers of Yellowstone, the stalactites and stalagmites of Carlsbad Caverns, the awesome depths of Grand Canyon or

the man-made canyons of New York City. It was a real thrill to visit our Capitol and see the center of our democracy surrounded by the beautiful monuments to the great men of the past in our country like Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and many more. Also exciting, was the visit to many of the historic areas like Jamestown, Colonial Williamsburg, Valley Forge, Philadelphia and Gettysburg where the pioneers of our country overcame great physical hardships and developed and fought for the democratic principles upon which this Republic is founded.

#### IV. REPORT ON INVESTIGATION

Because the dynamic changes in the world of work since World War II have created such a challenge to vocational counselors, it is imperative that new innovative career guidance techniques be developed. There are so many new and changing opportunities in occupations today that the dissemination of pertinent occupational information has become a monumental problem. The method used to study current practices and to identify the most effective techniques and methods used by vocational counselors was to visit various representative community colleges throughout the nation and to talk personally with counselors or Dean's of Counseling. A structured interview procedure to elicit specific responses as related to vocational guidance practices was used. (See attachment #2 for list of specific questions used during interviews). The investigation concentrated upon those vocational guidance techniques that were utilized to inform students of the curricula offered, various methods used to screen students in the appraisal of their aptitudes, procedures used



to help the students in the selection of their vocational goals, and what services were available to the students for gathering information for exploring career opportunities.

Two basic counseling philosophies were encountered: First, where the emphasis was upon psychological counseling by trained people in the field of psychology. Second, was the general counselor, where the emphasis was upon educational and vocational guidance with specialized training in this area and also some advanced work in the techniques of personal counseling. There were more schools where the emphasis was placed on general counselors than upon the psychologically-oriented counselor. Established schools with enrollments ever increasing were adding more general counselors to the college faculty. It was generally accepted that there is a definite need for a school psychologist or a member of the psychology staff so designated to handle the psychological hang-ups that are being encountered more and more by today's college student. Most community colleges outside of California have a psychologist on the staff designated to handle referrals by the faculty. Even within the philosophy of general counselors there are two schools of thought. One is a general counselor with no special area and the other is to have each counselor become a specialist where faculty advisors for academic advisement is used supplemented by a few full time general counselors or in some cases only the psychologist. But where old established schools had been using faculty advisors the trend was to employment of full time general counselors.

But now to the specific methods and techniques employed by counselors in community colleges as found through a random sampling

of these schools around the United States. Some type of State or National academic aptitude test was given in almost every community college visited. Some required all who planned to attend to have test scores, though many only required the student planning to transfer on to the four year college to take the test. Also, there were a few schools that had no test required at all. Generally, the test required by the specific state college system was the one the community college used. Some states have established their own tests but most use some form of a nationally administered test. The College Board ( C E E B ) and the American College Test (ACT) were universally accepted by most four year colleges. The open-door policy in community colleges is standard throughout the nation. All community colleges I visited charged tuition to their local students with a somewhat higher rate for out-of-state residents. California was the only state that did not charge their two-year college students any tuition. All have agreements with the four year colleges to accept their graduates with at least a 2.0 average in the courses being acceptable as transfer. Some states require the non-eligible high school student to obtain the Associate Arts Degree as the entrance requirement from the community college. Most community colleges have a higher percentage of transfer students than non-transfer or vocational-technical so the curriculum in most schools is heavily geared to the transfer student. The percentages ranged from 60-40 percent, (transfer to non-transfer), to 90-10 percent. But everywhere I visited, there was either more vocational-technical programs being added or increased substantially, or the school districts were in the process of developing



these programs to meet the needs of industry for more technically trained students.

How does the community college help the student who is undecided, has yet to discover his abilities, aptitudes, and interests as related to his vocational field? Most counselors start with the Kuder Vocational Preference Record Test or the Strong Vocational Interest Blank as an instrument in helping the undetermined student in selecting his vocational area of interest. These tests were always used in counseling students in conjunction with available test scores, high school grades, and other information. Without exception, counselors found that no one test gave the answer to this age old question of "What am I best suited for?", or "What do you think I should major in?". The most widely used single test was the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB). This test was developed by the United States Employment Service in 1956 and revised in 1962. An impressive body of data has been accumulated and a continuous research program is in progress. The reliabilities of the factor scores are generally satisfactory. Certain limitations of the GATB should be noted as the coverage of aptitudes is somewhat limited. But it was almost unanimous among the counselors that I interviewed that this was the best single test for the two-year vocational student. It is very helpful and reliable in the technical area but is not of much use in the four year transfer programs. This evidence substantiated the research conclusions of Dr. Robert R. Morman, Professor of Education, California State College at Los Angeles. The most common Intelligence Test given was the Otis Quick Scoring Test. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale

(WAIS 1955) was quite common and given by community colleges in all sections of the country but on a limited basis, generally by referral of counselor or psychologist. The Wechsler scales are used as a measure of general intelligence and as a possible aid in psychiatric diagnosis. All community colleges have some type of personality tests available but again are given on a limited basis. All schools used some type of instrument that has much in common with interest tests, attitudes scales, and other measures of personality variables. The most widely used instrument in this category is the Study of Values prepared by Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey. The use of personality tests was very limited but the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey was mentioned as being used much more than any other single personality test. Many of the community colleges gave some type of test to incoming freshmen to determine their effectiveness in Study Skills.

The typical policy at most two-year colleges was to use scores on various entrance examinations for placement in English classes. The placement examination most used was the SCAT test or the Cooperative English Test. However, a few were using the SAT Verbal exam and many were planning to use it during 1969-70. ACT is used extensively by the California State Colleges but is not used very often on the East coast.

Another area generally tested for placement was Math. Most schools required designated grades or above in high school math courses plus certain scores on Math tests. Such a variety of tests and scores were used that a separate study would be needed to determine any pattern if such would be the case. A few community colleges, and these were ones

of small enrollments (under 500) had no restrictions and were proud of their faculty dealing with two or three levels of students in the same class. Class sizes were under 15 and the faculty had to be willing to put more effort in preparation to make it successful. Only one college, of all I visited, had a completely free atmosphere of letting the student choose his courses with no restrictions though certain pre-requisites were recommended but not required. Their philosophy was to let the student find out what he could or could not do by himself. It would be interesting to compare the eventual accomplishments of these students with those who had been counseled.

Statistically, studies of students counselled have shown that the counselled student had higher grade point averages, had wage earnings that averaged higher, and they attained their vocational choices earlier. Throughout the country, the transfer student with the accepted academic grades in high school did not present the same problem vocationally to the counselors as did the student with average grades who was uncertain of his vocational aptitudes. The average and below average student who had not established his vocational goals or the student who had done poorly academically--for a variety of reasons--presents the real challenge to the counselor in helping guide this student on the best path to the fulfillment of his potential in relation to his assets.

The collection and display of vocational material in the library easily accessible to the student was used by all schools. A few schools had a small room in the counselling center where this information was made available. Most counselors felt that it was a decided advantage

to have this within their building but the availability of a room and a library clerk to staff it did not seem to be financially feasible in most budgets. The problem seemed to be to get the students to use this material and also to keep up with the ever-changing opportunities that are being presented everyday in our world of work. A quick survey of the vocational material in the libraries of various colleges found it to be pretty much standardized. A couple of copies of the latest Dictionary of Occupational Titles and Occupational Outlook Handbook, United States Civil Service Commission briefs, local State Agencies, private industry brochures, public utilities, and local community job opportunities. All counselors agreed that to help young people to arrive at appropriate vocational choices, they need valid information about jobs, job functions, job opportunities and changing job requirements. Then they need to be able to relate this information to their own interests, abilities, and level of educational achievement.

The use of VIEW that was developed through a Federal Grant by the San Diego City Schools has spread in that area and is being expanded in one school to include some tapes of individual technical programs offered by that two year college. This program is new and how successful or helpful it is, cannot be evaluated so soon but the counselors found the material being used so much that they feel that it is worthwhile. Again, keeping the material up-to-date and adding new material as it becomes current presents special problems.

The community college was organized to bridge the gap between the high school diploma and the baccalaureate degree. The world of work is changing so rapidly that one is unable to obtain a really good job

without up-to-date knowledge and modern skills in such specialized areas as business, engineering, health, public service, and science. It is estimated that in this new era one-half of all jobs in the nation will require two or more years of college-level preparation. Many incoming community college students do not know what they want to do with their lives or where they would fit in best in the maze of job opportunities that are spread before them. Here is where the counseling services may assist the student in the determination of his specific goals which best fulfill his interests, aptitudes, and needs.

The methods and techniques used in vocational counseling by counselors in community colleges across the nation are very similar with no one procedure dominating. A variety of tests are available and all agree that the purpose of whatever test used is to help clarify alternatives toward which the individual's thinking about his vocational choices should be directed. Almost without exception, counseling staffs believe that vocational counseling is pretty much an individual matter and that there is no one procedure to reach that goal. The initial interview sets the pattern for what techniques will be employed for that particular client to meet his individual needs. The Kuder Preference Record and Strong Vocational Test are the two most common interest tests used. It is pretty well agreed that interest tests tell only how much interest a client will have in any particular field. Kuder is much better in the technical areas and Strong is geared primarily for the professional, managerial, and clerical occupations. Kuder came out with a new form this past year and most schools using Kuder had started using the new form but could not give

any appraisal of it at this time.

Interest tests are only one aspect upon which good vocational decisions must be based and are not a predictor of success. Counselors in general felt that the younger and less able the student, the more need there was for an interest inventory. Other types of tests used are intelligence, academic achievement, vocational aptitude, and personality. The use of intelligence tests for vocational counseling was very limited; in fact, counselors generally were very reluctant to use so called I.Q. tests for this purpose. Most felt that it was far more possible to predict failure from a low intelligence score in certain Academic fields than it was to predict success from a high score. The Otis Quick-Scoring Test and WAIS were the two most common intelligence tests used, but each area of the country seemed to have a preference for its own particular form of intelligence test.

Intelligence tests are used more by counselors for estimating a given student's prospect of success in college or specific profession rather than in his vocational selection. The most common evaluation of academic achievement was high school grades. Still the best predictor of college success is the grade point average attained in high school.

What about the vocational-technical areas? There are a number of national achievement tests given: CEEB, ACT, SAT, and SCAT. These are all evaluated and the norms based on the grades achieved by students in the four-year college programs. Until recently, the two-year pre-professional student had no such test available. The College Entrance Examination Board has just come out with a Comparative Guidance and



Placement Program exclusively for two-year colleges. It has been developed in the past two years and was to be available for general use in April 1969. Grossmont College in San Diego was one of the schools to use this test in its developmental stage and they were very enthusiastic about it and believe that this is the first instrument geared to the community college student and should be very helpful to the counseling staff in assisting the two year college student. San Bernardino Valley College was also one of the schools used in the development of the CGP but has not used it further, but admitted that the reason was mainly financial.

The focus of the CGP is on guidance and placement rather than selection. The combination of collection of data by the CGP on interests and background measures are enhanced by the basic skills and special abilities tests that are included so that the student will be able to consider himself in relation to the kinds of abilities required for success in, and satisfaction with, the variety of curriculum choices open to him. It is too early to evaluate the results but the enthusiasm generated by this one school interviewed would tend to have one watch this instrument carefully as it may be a long-needed break through for the assistance in the decision-making of the two-year college student.

There are a number of vocational aptitude tests available, but most counselors felt that these tests measure skills or knowledge already acquired rather than the ability to acquire them. These tests are widely used in selection by employers and are seldom used in counseling. As these companies keep their results to themselves, very

little published material is available. There is a wide variety of tests in the areas of typing, clerical skills, stenography, bookkeeping, manual dexterity, art, music, and mechanical skills.

It was the consensus of the majority of counselors interviewed that vocational counseling is an individual matter and that the best technique is strictly a one-to-one basis. The student must first come to the counselor seeking guidance with the desire to obtain better understanding of the basis of work and education as it leads to an appreciation of his vocational aptitudes. By personal interview, the student must be made to examine himself as to his occupational goal. Does he prefer to deal with people, ideas, things, or a combination of them? What has he liked so far in school, part-time work, and recreational activities? Are they centered in cultural, literal, mechanical, scientific, humanistic, or inter-personal interest? Has the student a realistic understanding of his abilities and skills that he possesses? Success and self-satisfaction in a vocation are a function of abilities, interests, and motivation.

Tests of various kinds may be employed to be of help in determining one's abilities. Interest patterns are recognizable and known in various occupational groups so that one's interests may be an important aspect upon which good vocational decisions may be based. One's motivation is just as deep and fundamental in vocational self-determination as are aptitudes and interests. How one sees his relationships with other people, his beliefs, values, anxieties, and physiological traits are important in the utilization of these traits in making a wise selection in the occupational field.

The counselor's position is to broaden and enrich the individual's exposure to occupational and educational resources and to assist him in developing meaningful conclusions best suited to his individual talents. A basic individual American freedom is the selection of an occupation of one's own choosing and full development of one's potentials. The vocational counselor can help the student develop purpose and direction in the choosing of his life's work. The counselor must help the student collect essential facts about himself until enough facts are on hand to make possible a valid evaluation.

The breadth of vocational counseling includes the concept of at least sixteen essential factors in career development. Besides abilities, aptitudes, and interests, one must consider age, sex, and race as well as physical characteristics and personality traits. The scholastic achievement and potential educational level of the individual must be considered. Environmental factors of family life as well as socio-economic factors affect the individual's sense of judgement. One's emotional reactions and attitudes will also affect the selection of certain vocational fields. What one likes to do during his leisure time activities also is a factor. And very importantly, is the extent of occupational knowledge gathered by the individual. Counselors must be resourceful in acquainting the individual with all of the factors affecting his selection of a vocational area. This selection has now become a dynamic process developing over a variety of occupations during one's working life time rather than a single career.

A recent study by the U.S. Labor Department pointed out that a 20 year old man could be expected to change jobs 6 to 7 times during

his remaining work life. It is important, then, that the individual be provided with a sound general education which will equip him for such job changes. The counselor's role is to stimulate self-study by the individual seeking vocational guidance in order that his talents may be identified, energized, developed, and utilized.

#### V. NEW HORIZONS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNSELING

Vocational planning is an integral part of the educational process. Today's college student has such a growing number of alternatives that it becomes increasingly important for him to give serious thought and intelligent planning to select the vocation that will bring maximum personal satisfaction, utilizing his abilities and education. In what new ways can the community college counselor help the student accomplish this?

First, there must be much more needed research and "follow-up" studies on results of tests as pertains to the two-year college student. The recent development of the Comparative Guidance and Placement Program by the College Entrance Examination Board exclusively for the two-year college student is the first big step in this direction. Throughout the colleges visited there was almost no research and follow-up studies on the technical-occupational student but many colleges were planning to set up some type of research program.

Secondly, Freshmen Orientation program objectives must be re-evaluated to acquaint the student with the college and facilitate his development along psychological, sociological and educational paths that will minimize his weaknesses and maximize his strengths.

Third, there must be an increase in financial help exclusively for the two year technical-occupational major. Private sources in industry have hardly been approached in sustaining scholarships for the needy student in this field.

The fourth concern is the increased development in the use of groups in counseling to work out educational programs for the three types of students normally attending the community college. The use of groups in attacking special problems such as everyday type of student "hang-ups", vocational selections, and improving study skills must be developed to further enhance the progress of the two-year community college student.

#### VI. STATEMENT

I believe that this Sabbatical Leave will be of unmeasurable help in making me a more effective counselor and that my service to Mt. San Antonio College will be greater because of it. My study of vocational guidance methods and techniques throughout community colleges in various sections of the United States has shown to me what other colleges were doing and from this I should be able to render a much more effective service to my students. A compilation of the various successful vocational practices will be used to add new techniques to my counseling procedures which should result in my being a more effective counselor and that my students should benefit from it. Also, finding that specific aids in vocational guidance have proven to be more useful than others will fortify my using them more and in turn making them more useful to my counselees.

A survey of the tests used by counselors has shown me that one

specific test - the GATB - is very effective in the vocational-occupational field and could be used more effectively here at Mt. San Antonio College. The study showed that community college students are very similiar in counseling needs and problems of making a vocational choice in line with their interests, abilities, and aptitudes. Again, through my study I have found that the approach to vocational guidance is a dynamic process guided by all of the factors that affect the choice of career and is developed over a period of time. I am sure that the results of this study have pointed out to me more vividly that my role as a vocational counselor will be to stimulate the student to better identify his talents, develop them to his utmost, and utilize these in relation with his interests to help him make the vocational choice that will lead to fulfillment of his individual needs and desires.

Further, from this year of visiting community colleges in sections of the United States, I have a better appreciation of the challenges presented to the counselors in the two year colleges. I believe that it will undoubtedly strengthen my abilities as a counselor and has rekindled my enthusiasum for working with the young people of our college district. From all of this, I expect to pass on to my colleagues in the counseling and guidance department my findings in vocational guidance techniques that should increase their effectiveness as counselors here at Mt. San Antonio College.



OUTLINE OF QUESTIONS OF STRUCTURED INTERVIEW DURING NATIONAL STUDY

What type of tests do you administer for vocational counseling?

Intelligence.....  
Interest.....  
Aptitudes.....  
Personality.....  
other.....

Have you identified any specific test or tests that has been found to be more effective in guiding students into appropriate career fields or specific vocations?

Do you give a course in Vocational Planning?  
or Occupational Information?  
or do you have any course where this type of material is covered?  
if so, how?

Do you use group counseling in vocational guidance? If yes, describe the techniques used?

If only individual counseling is used, describe the procedures used.

What techniques or procedures have you found to be most effective in vocational guidance? What follow-up procedures are used to find how successful these procedures have been?

What factors do you consider most important in the influencing of student's occupational choice?

What procedures do you follow in guiding a student who asks, "What should I major in?" or "What do you think that I'm best fitted for?"

Are test scores related to specific jobs? If so, please give details.

How do you use test scores in vocational counseling?  
.....statistically?  
.....intensive interpretation to student (written or verbal)?  
.....the use of a psychograph?  
or?

Does your school have an occupational center for materials and visual aids used in vocational information?  
Is it used? What way can you tell it is being used?

What method do you use to distribute career information to students?

How does the counselor get the information needed about sources, amount, and quality of training needed for specific employment?  
How is this passed on to the students?

questions continued:

Does your school have a job placement office? part-time jobs?  
off-campus? full-time?

Are any studies made to determine what jobs are currently available  
in the area, and What requirements are needed for these positions?  
Does this relate to curriculum being offered? Is the curriculum  
planned for present opportunities and how about the future?

How are job opportunities placed before the students?

Do you have any scholarship funds available strictly for vocational  
majors?

What do you feel is the greatest unmet need in providing for vocational  
majors?

Have you found any specific techniques or procedures that have enhanced  
your skill in vocational counseling?

Are you experimenting with anything new or different in the approach  
to guiding students in their selection of vocational goals?

What in your educational background do you feel has helped you to be  
most effective in vocational counseling?

What recommendations would you make in regard to training vocational  
counselors?