

GUIDANCE AND CHARACTER

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School systems in the United States that have set up guidance programs recognize several kinds of guidance. The most important of these are: (1) educational guidance, (2) vocational guidance, and (3) personal guidance. Educational guidance aims to assist the student in his choice of schools and curricula. Vocational guidance furnishes the student with "information, advice, and experience which will assist the individual in choosing an occupation, preparing for it, entering it, and progressing in it." Personal guidance concerns itself with the personal problems that individuals meet in their efforts to adjust themselves to their social environment.

This article will attempt to treat of the third. It will try to discuss the relation between guidance and character.

Guidance is as old as humanity itself. When, long before the dawn of history, man showed his child how to hunt animals for food, how to protect himself against his enemies, or how to make garments and build shelter in order to keep the body warm and protect it from the fury of the elements, man was engaged in guidance work. To guide means to show the way, to direct, to lead. Guidance implies the presence of one party who does not know which way to take in order to reach his destination and another party who not only knows the way but is also familiar with its dangers such as deep ravines, treacherous streams, and the like.

In our day and age the guidance of children begins in the home. It is here that the child's ideas regarding his social relationships are first formed. It is here that his first concepts of right and wrong are fashioned. In the course of his dealings with his brothers

and sisters and his parents he gains his first notions of politeness and cooperative living. Because of the mother's constant association with the child, she is his first teacher and guide. When he is just learning to walk, she takes him by the hand and steadies his faltering steps. Then she encourages him to walk all by himself, at first for a few feet but gradually increasing the distance as he develops in strength and confidence. Later on she shows him how to act and what to say in the numerous situations which he meets at home, such as greeting his parents and other members of the family in the morning, bidding them good night before going to bed, asking for a piece of candy, and a host of others. As the sphere of his social contacts broadens and extends into the neighborhood, the mother again gives him the necessary guidance. Patiently, day in and day out, she explains to him why it is a good policy to be considerate of the rights and feelings of other children and to practice the Golden Rule. Of course, the father has his share of the work of guiding the child, but since he is out of the home much of the time his contribution is often correspondingly less.

The prominence which the Constitution of the Philippines has given to the matter of molding the character of the youth has served to emphasize the importance of guidance or counseling. As everybody knows, our Constitution has made the development of character the principal objective of education. This means that all else is secondary. One is reminded of a quotation from an article which once appeared in the *World's Work*:

"Teach the fundamentals in education: interpret life in terms of life; combine books and things, work and

study. Teach honor, duty, courage, faith, hope, love of home and country, reverence for God. Teach self-denial and self-reliance, love of work, joy in service, satisfaction and strength from difficulties overcome. Teach reading, writing and arithmetic, of course, but not as fundamentals. Teach geography, but only that to world knowledge may be added world sympathy and understanding and fellowship.¹

In view of the clear and categorical statement of purpose on the part of the Filipino people in respect to the schools, as embodied in our Constitution, our teachers will need to consider more seriously the guidance aspect of school work. The statement that the teacher takes the place of the parent is not a figure of speech. It is a plain statement of a simple fact. The teacher is in reality a second parent because she continues the guidance work begun at home. She shows the child the proper behavior in his daily associations with his teachers and with the other children in school. Using the materials in reading, literature, history and the other subjects of the curriculum, she inculcates in him the ideals and attitudes which in life serve as the main-springs of conduct. In this way guidance practically becomes synonymous with teaching.

For most pupils the guidance ordinarily given by teachers in the course of teaching will be sufficient. It is presumed that the parents will continue guiding and counseling the children at home so that the efforts of the teachers and the parents will reinforce each other. However, there may be a very small number who cannot adjust themselves satisfactorily to the regimen of the school. These are the problem pupils who, in spite of all the trouble and the mischief they cause, cannot be

ignored or neglected. The teacher needs to look into each child's personal history, his aversions and his preferences, his weaknesses as well as his special talents, his intelligence, and his home environment in an effort to find out the causes that have led to his inability to become adjusted to his school environment. Complete data should be secured on all of these items. Without his knowing it, he should be carefully observed in his behavior and reactions toward other children. Every case of misbehavior should be recorded and studied for the light that it can give on the child's character and personality. Anecdotal records should be kept and examined.

The data thus secured are then carefully analyzed in a sincere effort to get at the root of the difficulty. Like the physician, the teacher will regard the child's outward behavior as symptoms. Her main concern is to determine the cause in the light of the information she has been able to gather. She formulates probable hypotheses and after a process of elimination guided by her knowledge of psychological principles, decides on the most probable cause.

The teacher proceeds in this work with broad sympathy and understanding. She knows that the situations that cause a child to misbehave are not simple and unitary. In most cases complex factors operate in the total situation. Sometimes the child is torn between opposing loyalties. For example, the teacher tells a child that he should sleep with windows wide open. At home his mother wants all windows to be closed because night air is harmful. What is the child to do? The teacher makes it a requirement that children come to school on time, but sometimes a child has to be sent on an errand which causes him to be late. The child is told in school that gambling is bad but outside he sees many people indulging in various questionable forms of recreation. Then there are tempta-

¹ Quoted in Agnes Boysen, *First Thing First*, p. 34, Chicago: Associated Authors, 1938.

tions from friends and playmates. What would they say if he does not join them? What would his parents do if he gives in to them? The teacher considers all possible angles before deciding on the proper remedial measures to be adopted.

In the elementary schools problem cases have to be handled by the ordinary classroom teachers since no extra teachers are available for assignment as counselors. Some elementary school principals have interested themselves in conducting case studies of problem children and have done well. In the smaller secondary schools it may be possible to so arrange the program as to have one teacher do part-time work in counseling. In some schools home rooms have been organized for purposes of guidance. To each home room a sponsor is assigned. The sponsor takes particular interest in the personal problems of all members of her home room.

During the school-year 1939-1940 full-time or practically full-time counselors were assigned to every one of the four high schools in Manila. They were called deans of boys and deans of girls, and their work was to advise students who came to them voluntarily for help in solving personal difficulties. They also handled problem cases referred to them by the classroom teachers. They interviewed the students to hear their stories and to secure pertinent information from them. They visited homes of students in order to interview the parents and to enlist their cooperation. The counselors kept complete records of each case. They did their work with such enthusiasm that they succeeded in minimizing disciplinary cases in the schools and in bringing about better understanding between teachers and students.

A possible objection to the assignment of special counselors lies in the possibility that the other teachers might feel relieved of any responsibility for giving advice to their students regarding their personal problems. It would, indeed, be unfortunate if they would take the attitude of wishing to "pass the buck" to the student counselor. This, however, is a matter for the principal to forestall. Classroom teachers should be made to understand that the task of character building belongs to the whole school and not to one teacher exclusively. If special counselors are assigned, it is for the purpose of making it possible for every case of a more or less serious nature to be studied intensively. The gathering of relevant data about each case requires much time which the ordinary teacher with a full teaching load can hardly spare. With this understanding the assignment of teachers as full-time or part-time counselors can be justified.

It now remains for us to consider very briefly what qualities would fit one for personal guidance work, whether one be a regular classroom teacher, a principal, a home-room sponsor, or a full-time counselor. It goes without saying that this kind of activity needs a person of understanding who can win the confidence of the pupils so that they will voluntarily and without hesitation go to her for advice whenever they meet adjustment problems they cannot solve. It needs a person who knows children and their characteristics, who is endowed with much patience and a good measure of common sense, and who can gain the love and respect of the children. Finally, we need one whose example of correct living and upright conduct will exert a wholesome influence upon the lives of the children who have been entrusted to her.



The Teacher's Creed on Guidance

I believe in learning. I believe that the young should strive to perpetuate in themselves the accumulated learning of the race. But over and above learning is the dignity and character of man.

I believe in wisdom. I believe that man is man because he can think and have wisdom. But I know too that over and above the wisdom of the head is the wisdom of the heart.

I believe that to influence a student for good, I must teach him not only to think right but to feel right. To make him good, I must make him not only understand goodness but love and practice goodness. And to make him practice goodness, I must make him see that goodness is good.

I believe in the essential goodness of the human heart. I believe that the student who is undisciplined is merely misunderstood. I shall strive, therefore, to understand my students, to befriend them, to win their confidence and trust, so I may be fit to guide them toward the good and useful life.

I believe in the subject I teach, but I believe too that over and above my subject is my student. I must know him as a boy so I can make him a better man. I must understand her as a girl so I can make her fit to mother the future race. Little, very little, is this little subject of mine compared with the big subject that is Man, his Personality and his Eternal Soul.

—J. C. LAYA

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