
The Role of the Guidance Director in Encouraging Students to Enroll in Science Courses

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At no time in the history of our country has there been greater need for intelligent guidance in our public high schools than at the present time. In this day of expanded curricula and free electives, the high school student is almost bewildered by the many subjects that he is eligible to take; and too often, he will just drift along and follow the path of least resistance, thereby avoiding some of the most important subjects that he needs in preparation for his future career.

In no other subject is this more true than in science. Without proper guidances, students who ought to take all the science courses they can get, fail to do so and the students whose time could be spent to better advantage in other courses are sometimes subjected to it. At no time in the history of the world has there been a greater need for people with scientific training. Also the need of science in general education is greater than it has ever been before.

At the present time, with compulsory school attendance, practically all children go to high school. As a result, there is today a much greater range of abilities and a greater diversity of interests than 20 or 30 years ago. This fact also points up a need for more adequate counseling on the high school level. In an article in the Dally Oklahoman of October 31, Dr. Cross stated, "More attention should be put on counseling in our state highschoools, and more thought should be given to the student's selection of courses." The amount and nature of guidance will vary with the size of the school. The large high schools of the state offer a full five year program of science, and of course, need to steer the right students into this program. It is also generally true that the larger high schools have a fairly adequate guidance program. I am a guidance director in a high school which ranks fifth in size in our state. If you will pardon my

being personal, I would like to give you a few statistics on some of our former high school students who are now attending Oklahoma University. At the present time we have 22 students attending O. U. as freshmen. Of this number of the 21 who were freshmen at O. U. last year 10 of these made a B average or better.

1955 Graduates

Students	Science Courses
6	1
1	1½
4	2
9	3
2	3½
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22	

1954 Graduates

10	1
5	2
6	3
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21	

The smaller high schools more often lack the facilities and the trained personnel to carry on an extensive guidance program. The science teacher alone can do a great deal in the matter, but many teachers teach as many as 150 or 200 students, and, of course could not possibly give much attention to each individual student. Also teacher's marks alone should not be depended upon to furnish the necessary information for guidance. Hence a good guidance program requires the help and wholehearted cooperation of the school administration, and the necessary tests and materials for the program must be furnished by the school. Our school is fortunate in having both of these for proper guidance, use should be made of two or more of the following: teacher's marks, intelligence or mental ability tests, aptitude or prognostic tests, reading tests and even interest inventories and personality ratings may be of some help.

Needless to say, guidance involves more than telling students what to take. He must be sold on the idea and often his parents also need to be convinced. Sometimes a whole community has to be sold on the idea that it is more important for their children to take some of the subjects with substance than it is to qualify to play on the basketball team.

Try as hard as we may to direct our students into science courses and science activities, how can a guidance director or science teacher combat the evil effect of such adverse publicity given scientists and the science profession on November 21 in one of our statewide newspapers? In my opinion, the least thing this reporter could have done was to be fair enough to present both sides of the issue and not give the false impression that remarks from a few students express the opinions of such a vast number as was indicated in the bold headlines. I am quite sure the progressive-minded individuals who founded the new organization known as "Frontiers in Science" must feel anything but encouragement from such biased news articles. Can't we, as educated people, do something to get a fairer presentation of all the facts?

There is much help available to the teacher in carrying out his program of guidance and of selling science. Our guidance department has several hundred career pamphlets available to the students. The University of Oklahoma has compiled an extensive list of GUIDANCE MATERIALS AND SOURCES OF GUIDANCE MATERIALS IN SCIENCE which is available to schools without cost.

There is also much material available on various multi-sensory aids that help create interest in science. In the final analysis, however, the greatest influence in awakening and maintaining interest in science is the teacher who is himself thoroughly sold on the subject, and whose enthusiasm and skill in teaching inspire a similar enthusiasm in his students. Without a good teacher science could be a dull subject.