

THE DUAL-SPECIALIST: AN APPROACH TO REMEDIAL
READING AND GUIDANCE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by 7589

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine some aspects of remedial reading and guidance in the elementary school. Of primary concern are those children who, by the time they reach junior high school, are functional illiterates. James Allen, former U. S. Commissioner of Education, has placed a high priority on the "...eradication of reading failure in the public schools by 1980".(1) If this commitment is backed sufficiently by federal funds, then the time has come not only to expand special services to schools, but more important, to reexamine existing special programs. The specific aims of this research are:

1. To analyze the roles of elementary school counselors and remedial reading teachers.
2. To examine mutual problems of remedial reading teachers and elementary counselors.
3. To point out precedents for the recommendation that these roles be combined, resulting in the position of Dual-Specialist.
4. To delineate the role of a Dual-Specialist.
5. To examine implications of this research for training teachers in the future.

CHAPTER I

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
COUNSELORS AND REMEDIAL READING TEACHERSGuidance: Definition, Goals and Function

Guidance in the schools has as many definitions as it has proponents. Pantouillet regards it as the "... maximum development of an individual's potential for his own personal happiness and the welfare of society." (2) The school counselor was originally conceived of as one who "saved" the poor achievers and discipline cases on the secondary level by modifying academic programs and helping students to better understand themselves. Today, the role of the secondary counselor is more preventive than remedial, at least theoretically. With this change in emphasis, guidance programs have in some areas become developmental and therefore encourage the services of elementary guidance personnel as early as possible.

A distinction should be made between the tasks of elementary and secondary counselors, however. Both are concerned with the early detection of learning problems, maladjustment- both social and academic, and modifying conditions in order to facilitate normal development. The secondary school counselor deals with an adolescent, preparing to enter the adult world, who must cope with educational and career planning, personal relationships, and

self-acceptance. The elementary counselor sees the child at a stage of development when he is less inhibited, concerned essentially with the present, and is integrating his experience at home, at school, and with his peers.(3) Since the grade school student may lack the verbal ability to relate his difficulties, counseling must be initiated by the adult and is really not a voluntary process.

Techniques such as play therapy have been introduced for this reason. In practice, however, the role of the elementary counselor is remedial and preventive. A survey of the literature reveals that most counseling programs in the elementary schools include the following goals:

1. Directing and coordinating school testing program and evaluating results.
2. Responsibility for recording and maintaining pertinent information (cumulative records).
3. Identifying atypical children.
4. Referring children to appropriate agencies in and out of the school system.
5. Counseling children (group and individual).
6. Consulting with teachers and parents.
7. Interpreting the guidance program to the community.