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A Brief History of School Guidance and Counseling in the United States The history of school counseling formally started at the turn of the twentieth century, although a case can be made for tracing the foundations of counseling and guidance principles to ancient Greece and Rome with the philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle. There is also evidence to argue that some of the techniques and skills of modern-day guidance counselors were practiced by Catholic priests in the Middle Ages, as can be seen by the dedication to the concept of confidentiality within the confessional.

Near the end of the sixteenth century, one of the first texts about career options appeared: *The Universal Plaza of All the Professions of the World*, (1626) written by Tomaso Garzoni. Nevertheless, formal guidance programs using specialized textbooks did not start until the turn of the twentieth century. The factors leading to the development of guidance and counseling in the United States began in the 1890s with the social reform movement. The difficulties of people living in urban slums and the widespread use of child labor outraged many.

One of the consequences was the compulsory education movement and shortly thereafter the vocational guidance movement, which, in its early days, was concerned with guiding people into the workforce to become productive members of society. The social and political reformer Frank Parsons is often credited with being the father of the vocational guidance movement. His work with the Civic Service House led to the development of the Boston Vocation Bureau. In 1909 the Boston Vocation Bureau helped outline a system of vocational guidance in the Boston public schools.

The work of the bureau influenced the need for and the use of vocational guidance both in the United States and other countries. By 1918 there were documented accounts of the bureau's influence as far away as Uruguay and China. Guidance and counseling in these early years were considered to be mostly vocational in nature, but as the profession advanced other personal concerns became part of the school counselor's agenda. The United States' entry into World War I brought the need for assessment of large groups of draftees, in large part to select appropriate people for leadership positions.

These early psychological assessments performed on large groups of people were quickly identified as being valuable tools to be used in the educational system, thus beginning the standardized testing movement that in the early twenty-first century is still a strong aspect of U. S. public education. At the same time, vocational guidance was spreading throughout the country, so that by 1918 more than 900 high schools had some type of vocational guidance system.

In 1913 the National Vocational Guidance Association was formed and helped legitimize and increase the number of guidance counselors. Early vocational guidance counselors were often teachers appointed to assume the extra duties of the position in addition to their regular teaching responsibilities. The 1920s and 1930s saw an expansion of counseling roles beyond working only with vocational concerns. Social, personal, and educational aspects of a student's life also needed attention. The Great Depression of the 1930s led to the restriction of funds for counseling programs.

Not until 1938, after a recommendation from a presidential committee and the passage of the George Dean Act, which provided funds directly for the purposes of vocational guidance counseling, did guidance counselors start to see an increase in support for their work. After World War II a strong trend away from testing appeared. One of the main persons indirectly responsible for this shift was the American psychologist Carl Rogers. Many in the counseling field adopted his emphasis on " nondirective" (later called " client-centered") counseling.

Rogers published *Counseling and Psychotherapy* in 1942 and *Client-Centered Therapy* in 1951. These two works defined a new counseling theory in complete contrast to previous theories in psychology and counseling. This new theory minimized counselor advice-giving and stressed the creation of conditions that left the client more in control of the counseling content. In 1958 the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was enacted, providing aid to education in the United States at all levels, public and private.

Instituted primarily to stimulate the advancement of education in science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages, NDEA also provided aid in other areas, including technical education, area studies, geography, English as a second language, counseling and guidance, school libraries, and educational media centers. Further support for school counseling was spurred by the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik and fears that other countries were outperforming the United States in the fields of mathematics and science.

Hence, by providing appropriate funding for education, including guidance and counseling, it was thought that more students would find their way into

the sciences. Additionally, in the 1950s the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) was formed, furthering the professional identity of the school counselor. The work of C. Gilbert Wrenn, including his 1962 book *The Counselor in a Changing World*, brought to light the need for more cultural sensitivity on the part of school counselors.

The 1960s also brought many more counseling theories to the field, including Frederick Perl's gestalt therapy, William Glasser's reality therapy, Abraham Maslow and Rollo May's existential approach, and John Krumboltz's behavioral counseling approach. It was during this time that legislative support and an amendment to the NDEA provided funds for training and hiring school counselors with an elementary emphasis. In the 1970s the school counselor was beginning to be defined as part of a larger program, as opposed to being the entire program.

There was an emphasis on accountability of services provided by school counselors and the benefits that could be obtained with structured evaluations. This decade also gave rise to the special education movement. The educational and counseling needs of students with disabilities was addressed with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. The 1980s saw the development of training standards and criteria for school counseling. This was also a time of more intense evaluation of education as a whole and counseling programs in particular.

In order for schools to provide adequate educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, school counselors were trained to adapt the educational environment to student needs. The duties and roles of many counselors began to change considerably. Counselors started finding

themselves as gatekeepers to Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and Student Study Teams (SST) as well as consultants to special education teachers, especially after passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.

The development of national educational standards and the school reform movement of the 1990s ignored school counseling as an integral part of a student's educational development. The ASCA compensated partially with the development of national standards for school counseling programs. These standards clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of school counseling programs and showed the necessity of school counseling for the overall educational development of every student. Major Roles and Functions for School Counselors