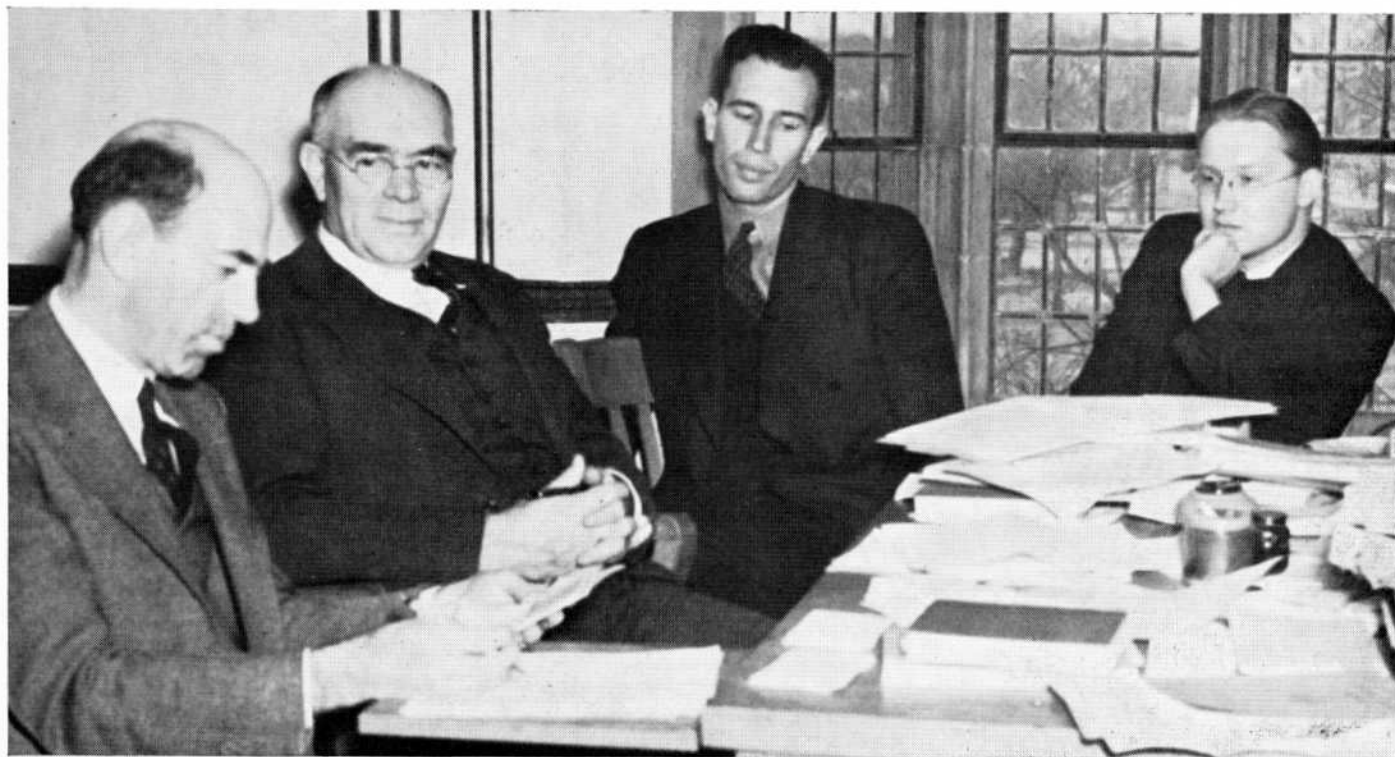


Straightening Mental Kinks

By Lucille Moore Gilstrap



The clinic staff at work. Left to right: Dr. M. O. Wilson, professor of psychology; Dr. L. B. Hoisington, head of the department; George A. Kramer, Tulsa, and John W. Gittinger, Norman, both graduate students in psychology

IS this the Psychological Guidance Clinic?"

The quiet looking young man who asked the question was quite obviously a freshman, and his manner and appearance labeled him immediately as the familiar bookworm type.

The story he told the member of the clinic staff who talked to him verified the superficial diagnosis. He admitted that he did not care for association with other students, preferring to be alone with his books. He was unable to determine what occupation he wanted to prepare for, because he was equally interested in a great many things, which of course, led to confusion in trying to set up an objective.

Aptitude tests showed that he had an interest in many fields of study, and made almost equal scores in them. He had no outside interests, and he had never had a date. He did not dance, play bridge, or take part in any form of real recreation except occasionally seeing a moving picture show.

The clinic committee studied the findings and the problem. Then the consult-

ing psychologist called in the student and gave him some straight talk.

"Cut out the books as a form of recreation," the psychologist advised. "Learn to dance. Take part in campus activities. Get acquainted with some girls. Learn how to play and have a good time with other people."

This theoretical advice was supplemented by some practical aid and a member of the clinic staff made some contacts for the young man, assisted him in gaining membership in several campus organizations, and gave him a few tips on how to go about getting instruction in the latest swing steps.

After a few months the young man visited the office again. But this time there was a Joe College air about his clothes, and his attitude toward college, toward his fellow students, and life itself had changed remarkably. His grade average had shot up, he was satisfied with his choice of a field of work, and his outside interests were giving him more enthusiasm for study.

Of course this young man was a special

problem, but the way in which the University Psychological Clinic helped him is typical of the program carried on by this strictly modern unit of university personnel service.

Psychologists have set up various experiments in an effort to close the gap between man's real and unreal worlds, and they have tried to devise methods by which man can solve his mental meanderings and conflicts.

Psychological guidance service, which has been set up in a number of universities, is another new adjustment to the rapidly changing trends in institutional education.

Dr. L. B. Hoisington, head of the psychology department at the University, assisted by Dr. M. O. Wilson, Dr. Charles H. Bumstead, George A. Kramer and John W. Gittinger, the latter two graduate students, maintained the service in Norman during this year. It served both the student body and the people throughout the state who wish to take advantage of the work.

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The ideal of the service is to equip those taking the battery of tests with the proper information concerning their personal problems so that they will be able to make their own decisions and to acquire healthy mental attitudes that probably mean happiness in later life.

Of approximately one hundred students who took the psychological tests during the first semester, the majority sought a solution to vocational problems. The so-called bookworm type presents the most serious vocational problem because he has too many interests, in all of which he rates about the same score.

For the bookworm these University psychologists have some good sound advice: get out from between the covers of the musty old volumes, acquire experience in real living, get acquainted with people, enter into campus life and develop interests and enthusiasm outside books.

It has been found that the person who seeks most of his recreation within the printed pages of books finds it increasingly difficult to take his place in normal society and as a result, he eventually escapes the problems of life through the happy unreality of his books. Very often this unreality becomes more real and so much more pleasant than the realistic world that he will accept it as fact, a condition that leads to psychosis.

Another type of student who seeks vocational guidance and presents a real problem is the boy or girl who has been sent to college to prepare for some vocation which has been planned in detail by the fond parent, without regard to the wishes of the student. This group includes the man who is forced into medical training, or law, or some other profession, just because his father has been a success at that work and wishes to have his son carry it on.

In many cases, such students develop serious complexes that prevent their full enjoyment of society or of school because of failure to make good in a particular field of work chosen by the parents.

The complete battery of tests given by the University of Oklahoma service includes:

An intelligence test, college aptitude test, study habits inventory, adjustment inventory, personality inventory, study of values scale, vocational interest test, and sometimes an achievement test or special aptitude test in such fields as music, law, teaching or the sciences.

Eight or ten conferences are held between the student and psychologists before the tests are completed and very often several individual conferences must follow before the case is worked out. Tests are not the determining factor. They merely supplement other data that has been obtained during conferences.

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Interviewing psychologists make no attempt to decide for the individual. They leave the decision up to the student for that is half of the problem. The student is asked to consider all facts that have bearing upon his case, and thus learn in part the work of self analysis.

Although the department as yet makes no effort to follow up cases to ascertain how far-reaching the guidance work actually is, remarkable results have been reported in a number of cases.

The value of such work with students, especially freshmen, cannot be over-rated. University psychologists believe, because of its importance to individuals' happiness during the formative period of life, and the effect on later life.

Vocational conflicts, growing increasingly serious as the student struggles vainly for a foothold in some field of work for which he has no ability, more often than not lead to mental anguish and deterioration in some form.

Dr. Hoisington and his co-workers at the University hope to extend their work, with the co-operation of the counselor of women, the dean of men, and deans of the various colleges, as part of a well-rounded personnel program for the University, a program such as is being used in some of the leading institutions of the United States.

But the psychological guidance work does not stop with adults and students. It is extended to include child guidance work, a division directed by Dr. M. O. Wilson in co-operation with the Children's Joint Case Committee, the Sunbeam home and the United Provident association of Oklahoma City; the University nursery schools, the federal nursery school and the public welfare committee of Cleveland county. Behavior problems constitute the largest single item of the case histories of children with whom he has worked since this program was started about two years ago, Dr. Wilson explains.

To determine the cause of a child's misbehavior, whether it is a rebellion against parental control or against the child's teachers, a series of tests is given by Dr. Wilson and his assistants.

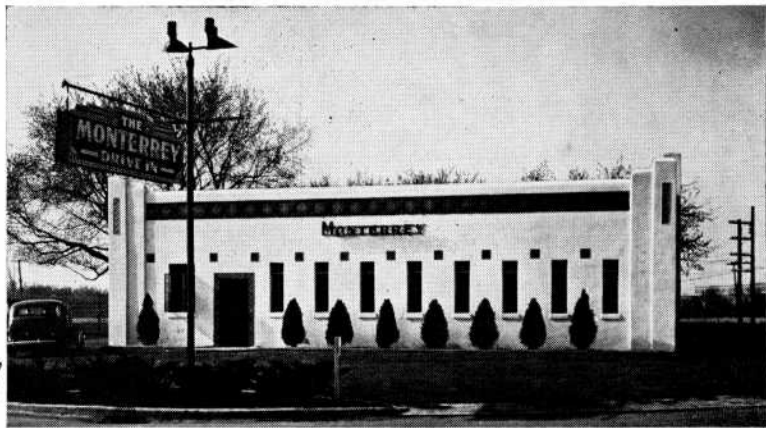
From the results of these tests a definite program is outlined that will help the parents or the teacher to correct the condition and that will aid the child in forming a more wholesome attitude toward life and his associates.

The actual cost of the tests used range from a few cents to a sum as high as \$65 each. But since the higher priced tests are adaptable for use many times, persons taking the tests are charged a fee of only \$1. The fee is charged only to cover cost of the material used in the test. There is no charge for the service which these psychologists render in addition to their regular teaching load.

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