A survey of the theory and technique of interviewing

Burrill, Dorothea Charlotte

Boston University

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A SURVEY OF THE THEOREY AND TECHNIQUE OF INTERVIEWING

by

Dorothea C. Burrill

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PREFACE

In writing this thesis, I have used as a background my experience in the three phases of interviewing in which I have had experience. I have tried to emphasize the techniques which I feel are most applicable and valuable for actual use, and also the pitfalls which should be avoided.

For my guidance in case work interviewing, I owe a deep gratitude to Mrs. Mathilda Staman of the Bureau of County Welfare, Adult State Aid Department, Los Angeles, California. Her personal help and direction given to me from her background of years of noteworthy service is invaluable to me.

To Miss Katherine Potts of the Bureau of Vocational Service in Los Angeles, I wish to express my appreciation for her direction while I was associated with her as an employment counselor. Her skill in interviewing awakened an interest in the further study of the interview.

To Dr. Charles Zahnizer and Professor Warren Powell I wish to express my gratitude for their personal interest and help during the development of this thesis.
INTRODUCTION

"The interview is a joint quest - not an inquisition nor an imposition. There is little satisfaction in reaching a verbal agreement; what we are looking toward in an interview is starting a process."

Goodwin B. Watson

This paper does not by any means presume to exhaust the theories and techniques of interviewing. The question even arises, is it practical to study techniques and theories and can they be taught? After a worker has studied these, is he so interested in techniques that he loses sight of his goal and the spontaneity of the interview is lost? One cannot state dogmatically the rules and instructions to govern interviews, but there are fundamental principles which can be pointed out in an effort to lead the way to improvement in professional standards. Many people criticize this analytical approach on the basis that it is an art and cannot be standardized, that its success or failure depends upon the personality of the interviewer. However, other processes, just as intangible have been analyzed and improved. It has often been found that by
learning to do a thing by the trial and error or common sense method is not always practical. Take, for example, learning to use the typewriter. We frequently struggle along with the "hunt and peck" method but how much more progress and accuracy we see when the touch method is learned and employed. Therefore it seems logical that we could shorten the trial and error process of learning to interview and analyze techniques and point out pitfalls.

The first step in this investigation was a survey of the printed literature, of techniques employed by authorities in the field, studying the various ways in which the interview as applied, and reading numerous actual interviews and their analysis and criticisms.

The second step was a background of interviewing. This was done in three fields. First in the field of social case work, I interviewed applicants for Adult State Aid in their homes and at the office. These applicants were primarily American born, educated persons. In this same field, I interviewed relief clients where the primary problem was unemployment. These interviews were with foreign
born clients - Jewish, Russian, and Mexican. Secondly, I interviewed about 5,000 unemployed business and professional girls and women. Thirdly, I interviewed college students who were seeking help in orientation to college life.

It is the aim of this paper to analyse, through this background, the theories and techniques employed by interviewers throughout the country. All of the various techniques could not be included but there has developed in recent literature a fairly definite agreement as to the best procedures.

It is difficult to discuss interviewing under one general head because interviews conducted by different persons differ in purpose and in technique. Interviews are conducted by lawyers, psychiatrists, physicians, detectives, priests, journalists, social workers, psychoanalysts, deans, research workers, employment managers, anthropologists, sociologists, and others. The physician needs a clear statement of the disturbing symptoms; the priest wants a confession; the newspaper reporter wants an unusual or sensational story; the social worker is anxious to discover social relationships; employment managers are on the lookout for traits
which would make a man a valuable employee. The sociologist is interested in the environment while the psychiatrist is interested in the mental mechanisms uncovered. Each purpose requires to a certain extent its own technique and it is difficult to describe them under one heading. This paper obviously does not include a complete survey of all the techniques employed in each of the three fairly representative fields - social case work, employment, and the college personal interview. The writer uses these three selected fields to illustrate outstanding general techniques and theories of interviewing which she feels could not be studied by concentration on any one field.
THE SOCIAL CASE WORK INTERVIEW

We read in DeSchweinitz, The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble, that anyone who can skillfully assist a fellow being in overcoming the barriers he is constantly meeting and can make him capable of keeping his life running more smoothly - he is an artist. The use of the work technique in connection with case work is comparatively recent. The dictionary says, "technique is mechanical skill in artistic work", or, "technique is the details of mechanical performance in any art or science." Therefore the use of the word technique in conjunction with case work helps to make case work an art. Techniques were always used but not until about ten years ago were they analyzed and identified. Miss Richmond gave the greatest impetus to the study of techniques in social work when she wrote Social Diagnosis. This has been used since for improvements in the technique of the case work interview.

Interviewing is the method through which most of the information used in social case work is secured and through which most of its results in treatment are insured, according to the Milford
Conference report on generic social case work. Un¬
coubtedly interviewing is the only specific, definite
tool the case worker has for winning confidence
and changing attitudes in the task of social treat-
ment and betterment. With such an important emphasis
on the interview then, it seems imperative that
an analysis of this tool should be undertaken. The
case workers themselves must analyze their processes
and techniques which have led to conspicuous success-
es or failures. A few outstanding leaders in this
field have done this and it is from these analyti-
cal techniques that most of the material in this
thesis is drawn. It seems that there is more value
in these theories and techniques because they are
actual experiences of case workers employed in the
field of social work all over the country. Certain
of their techniques are found to be similiar and
therefore it stands to reason that these procedures
might be studied by students of the subject as ways
and means which have been tried and proven to be
valuable in the working out of social situations,
and might be considered to be fundamental princi-
ples in the art of interviewing.
Pauline Young says that there are three major functional types of interviews. First, the diagnostic. She states that the primary aim in this type of interview is to determine symptoms, discover needs, resources and possibilities in each particular case. The diagnostic interview involves the "....attempt to make as exact a definition as possible of the situation and personality of a human being in some social needs -- of his situation and personality, that it, in relation to the other human beings upon whom he in any way depends or who depend upon him and in relation also to the social institution of his community....." Miss Young further says it is easy for the diagnostic interview to drift into a mere formality of a question and answer method of securing data for the face sheet. When a case worker has a very heavy case load, she feels that too much time cannot be spent in securing this type of data. She urges one to remember, however, that attitudes, personality, group relationships, etc., cannot be discovered by any such method of interviewing.

(2) Richmond, Mary E., Social Diagnosis, p. 357.
In the second place she says there is the research interview which is more concerned with the analysis of the fundamental processes involved in social situations and human behavior than in their diagnosis. The interest does not lie in the person being interviewed, believes Symonds, except as he can contribute data helping to solve a particular problem. The research interviewer, as such, has no immediate interest in finding solutions for the practical problems that are uncovered but approaches background and attitudes in an objective manner. A good example of this type of interview is furnished by the work of Charters in making job analyses, as for example, when secretaries were interviewed to discover the operations which they performed with attention centered on the jobs and not on the person being interviewed.

The third type of case work interview, as listed, is the therapeutic or treatment interview which aims to redirect the behavior of individuals through a change of attitudes. The social case worker is interested not only in obtaining facts

regarding her client, she wishes also to persuade him to change somewhat his family situation or other adjustment. Frequently if the interviewer can explain to the client the advantages of one plan over another or lead him to see the irrationality of his original plan or action, new attitudes can be built up and the social plan followed. Miss Young lists three steps in carrying out this treatment:

1. Providing an opportunity for mental release through sympathetic interest.
2. Supplying certain information to the client which serves as a basis for seeing the situation in a different light.
3. Motivating the client to meet an urgent medical problem promptly.

In her book she says that the group interview is frequently used in social case work and may be used for diagnostic, research, or treatment purposes. Case workers find it advantageous to bring together several members of a family or social group. Through group discussion points are brought out which may have otherwise not have been brought to

(1)Young, Pauline V., op. cit., pp. 41-42.
the surface. Change of attitude in such inter-
views "grows out of intercommunication which pro-
ceeds at a rapid rate in such a group until unanim-
ity on some particular policy is arrived at." (1)

As in perhaps no other field of endeavor, the
interview has an indespensible place in the field
of social case work. When the ordinary person
first considers social work and its processes, he
thinks of an investigator certifying a family for
financial relief, giving food orders, supplying
medical aid or jobs whenever possible. Such is
the average man's viewpoint, but true social work
goes much farther than that. Case workers are
realizing that something that goes deeper than
material and external factors are needed if the
client is to have any permanent adjustment made.
The client's social and personalized attitude is
taken into consideration by social case workers
of today.

"Every case work plan may be said to attempt
a reintegration of the individual and his environ-
ment into a most acceptable pattern, or into an

(1)Thrasher, F. M., "How to Study a Boys' Gang in
the Open," Journal of Educational Sociology, I,
arrangement that promises improvement; both the individual and his social setting and the social worker as well, are constituting dynamic agents in the process."

Social workers today are beginning to see then, the broader view of case work and to study the psychological basis for their relationship with clients. They are realizing that it is the personality of the client which is of primary and lasting import. In such a plan, the individual is considered, not only in respect to his economic and environmental needs but as an individual with characteristic attitudes, instincts, motives, wishes, and a set of ethical standards unlike any others. How do these emotions, behavior, attitudes, prejudices of clients and social workers, as shown in their actions, affect the processes of case work? These processes are all vital factors in every interview and yet how many of us realize their presence? They are always inherent in the interplay of personalities as this interplay appears in the conversation between worker and client. It is essential that we control these processes, that we become objectively conscious of

them, and yet how is this to be done? Lucia B. Clow feels that a case worker should treat the individual as a dynamic personality, acting and reacting towards his environmental associations either succeeding or failing to make satisfactory adjustments. Where he fails, there the case worker is needed—not to dominate the situation or in anyway remove the element of volition but to guide the client's choices in his life adjustment problem. (1)

Virginia Robinson claims that the difficulty of inferring the content of another's mind through conversation and external reactions is an age old problem because the worker can only surmise this, using as a basis his knowledge of psychology and his background of experience with people. His objective is to help the individual see himself in relation to his situation and, by helping him change his point of view and habit of thought, become a more effective social being. (2) She says that this necessitates also, a consideration and adjustment of the various external social factors affecting the individual in order to achieve the

(2)Robinson, Virginia, A Changing Psychology in Social Work
psychological and spiritual effects. Her suggestion is that the case worker must use not only social resources but also his own personality as tools to obtain his ends, the most important one being the effect of his personality, attitude and manner upon the client. However, unless his manner, attitude and speech exemplify knowledge and sincerity of spirit, no amount of skillful technique will be of avail. His mind and the client's will not meet and the results will be superficial.

In order to bring about social adjustments without the use of force, it is the consensus of opinion that motivation be the tool. Joanna C. Colcord in her study made of interviewing technique, believes that in every relationship we see the need of motivation. Even if a case worker does do a great deal of his work away from the client, still there are adjustments to make. It is known that the very acceptance of relief sent out by the agency involves mental and social readjustments to the idea of dependency and that this in some families is one of the most difficult and trying situations they have to face.

Continuing, Miss Colcord says that a case worker needs to motivate action and understanding on the part of not only the client but relatives, employers, physicians, and friends and it is largely through the interview that this is accomplished.

Furthermore, the case worker is always in the process of working out some plan with and for the client. In this process he, upon occasions, meets with resistance. The client does not always accept suggestions or think that ideas presented are logical. The same may be said for the case worker regarding the client's ideas. All through the interview there is the intermingling of psychological processes. Emotions, attitudes and feelings are constantly arising to prevent the smooth working out of the plans for the client. The worker does not always know just what is handicapping his plan but if he studies the case objectively and deals with it intelligently, the psychological processes involved will begin to be classified.

"Psychological processes consisting of action and reaction between worker and client, constitute
the structure of the interview. Whether the interview is held for the purpose of obtaining information needed for diagnosis or treatment, or whether the purpose of the interview is concerned primarily with reconciling the differences of viewpoint between the worker and the client, and structure of the interview consists of such actions and reactions which may be considered as complicated psychological process."

Odencrantz, in studying case work interviewing, reports two definite divisions in the structure and says regarding them that first, there is the establishing of a satisfactory relationship regarding the content of the interview, and second the development of understanding regarding the aims of the interview. These both overlap each other. The development of the desirable receptive attitude is a continuous process throughout. She says that this receptive attitude is a part of rapport which may not always continue to be present during the latter part of the interview even though it had been established early, but it is the interviewer's place to regain it when lost wherever

(1) American Association of Social Workers, op. cit., p. 13
(2) Odencrantz, Louise C., The Social Worker, p. 72.
possible. This relationship between the client and the interviewer is one which has been given much consideration. It is further stated that the interviewer should keep in mind at all times that the client is not an inanimate object but an important factor in developing the plan; that the case worker should avoid all conceptions of the client as an impersonal subject, but should keep in mind that the client is an individual reacting to his every statement and action.

In all types of interviews, authorities seem to agree that one word, rapport, is the key note. Park and Burgess define this vital element as follows: "Rapport implies the existence of a mutual responsiveness, such as every member of the group reacts immediately, spontaneously, sympathetically to the sentiments and attitudes of every other member." (1)

Through the years, experienced social workers have collected some specific ways of gaining rapport which they have tried and found to be helpful. In this short treatment of the subject, a survey of only a few of the more common methods can be

(1)Park and Burgess, An Introduction to the Science of Sociology, pp. 893-94.
included and explained briefly.

In the Whittier Social Case History Manual, they say that identification is a common way of laying the basis for rapport. A casual reference to personal experiences may serve as a bond of identification. The validity of this method may be seen in the following illustration. A well educated, matronly woman came into the writer's office after being accepted on a relief fund. The writer was to interview her and find social, vocational and mental aptitudes for placement in volunteer work. She was bitter and resentful and refused to give any information until the writer mentioned the coming trip to Boston. She had formerly lived here and this identification with an experience of her own was the means whereby the interviewer aroused old emotions and experiences which gave a spontaneous insight into the life of this woman.

The observance of conventions and conforming to the accepted way of acting is mentioned in the Manual as a method of creating the desired atmosphere which is an element in rapport.

In establishing rapport it is essential that we help the client maintain his status according to the survey made by the American Association of Social Workers. Case workers have called this device "face saving". In the course of an interview the client may feel that his life history or social problem may be degrading in the eyes of the interviewer. The consequent embarrassment may result in the loss of rapport or the cause of an inability to establish it. They feel that the interviewer needs to be keenly sensitive to this and could even help the client by giving a face-saving formula. Only after the person's sense of security has been regained can the case worker hope to deal satisfactorily with him.

Many outstanding critics in the field of interviewing say that one of the most vital elements in case work technique is the ability to listen. Mrs. Deihl, Miss Myrick and Mr. Wilson all emphasize it as one of the most successful of these processes. It is so easy for case workers to become the dominant element in the situation instead of listening to

(1) American Association of Social Workers, op. cit., p. 15.
the client's story. The importance of "creative or dynamic listening" is expressed well in the following:

"The role of listener describes a far more dynamic relation to the person in trouble than the passivity ordinarily associated with the term. In the listening interview, the one receiving the disclosures gives a curious impression of aliveness. Passive silence gets only the client's speech, a kind of surface behavior. Dynamic listening connotes listening to the client's total personality. Listening of this character seeks the subtle meaning - hints of motivations, reactions to experience, interpretations painful to articulate - conveyed by non-verbal gestures (such as movements or expressions of eyes; posture; pitch, inflection, and speed of voice, hand movements) as much as by speech."

(1) Deihl and Wilson, op. cit., p. 100.
Case workers have also found that meeting people on their own terms is one of the most valuable ways of securing rapport. Miss Buell in her survey of the most widely used successful techniques found this to be true. She feels that the interviewer will go far in creating a proper attitude in the interview if he can show sincere interest in his client's plans, experiences, habits and point of view.

Miss Buell also found that most case workers felt that a sense of security must be experienced by the interviewee before he will reveal himself completely. The case worker must assure the client that he need not tell anymore than he wishes, that his ideas and attitudes will not be criticized or ridiculed. The writer feels this point is especially valuable when foreign born people are concerned because they are conscious of the differences in their mores and feel that we as Americans are not sympathetic with them.

Successful interviewers say that the golden rule should be applied at all times. They say that questions should not be asked to others

(1) Buell, B., "Interviews, Interviewers, and Interviewing", The Family, May, 1925, p. 87.
which we would not be willing to answer about our-sleves. There is conflict in opinion regarding the value and extent of honesty in the interview. Some interviewers say that one must be shrewd and outwit the interviewee. Walter Bingham and Bruce Moore say that the above procedure is not only an undemocratic exchange of ideas, but a positive danger to a free give-and-take process. They fail to obtain confidence and cooperation; they induce conceit and misunderstanding. Furthermore, when the interviewer tries to be more clever than his interviewees, he overlooks the fact that he induces the same effort in them. Such strategy proves a boomerang when it puts the interviewee on the defensive.

Pauline Young presents another means whereby one can secure rapport and one which we rarely think of using and that is to let the client feel that we are seeking his help in working out the situation. Too often case workers are the cause of pauperizing clients because of our ready offers to help them; to dictate to them and to run their lives without taking into consideration

(1) Bingham and Moore, How to Interview, pp. 8-9.
(2) Young, Pauline V., op. cit., p. 78.
what they can do for us, for the agency and for their community.

"One of the most common things a case worker must do is to meet objections", adds Miss Young. Rapport is very often lost if these objections are not met skillfully.

A few of the more common ways of establishing rapport have just been discussed. Experienced workers say that after rapport has been established, the interviewer must be alert to the way the interview is moving. The client should not be allowed to go off on too many tangents. There are certain emotional points in this connection which need very careful consideration.

"When the conversation turns to more intimate subjects, and particularly when it deals with crises in the life of the individual, emotions may be displayed. The interviewee may wince when sore spots are touched: the blush, the nervous laugh, pallor, anger, embarrassment, show his attitude. This behavior is itself important data. However, it may inhibit the conversation, and it
may be necessary to act promptly to
avoid losing an important part of the
story. The inhibition is due either
to the fear that the listener will not
understand or the fact that in the
telling of the story, the material is
not in its proper sequence. The inter-
viewer, therefore, should in the former
case, resort to some further device to
build up rapport. In the latter case,
the subject can be dropped for the
time being and another line of conver-
sation pursued for a time, so that a
less direct approach to the subject can
be made later. Often when it is ex-
plained to the interviewee in simple
terms that exploration of one's own
self, thinking over one's own life,
and reflecting on activities and desires
may be strange and difficult but can
be attained and has been attained with
gratifying results by others, he may
reveal his story."

(1) Young, Pauline, op. cit., p. 81.
In discussing important factors in the background of a social worker, Louise Odencrantz (1) says that it is important for a case worker to understand the psychological theory which is present in the interview. She feels that more frequently than not, these processes or interactions go on without either party realizing or understanding just what is happening and that it is possible for adjustments to be made without this understanding but through a study of these processes a greater insight is attained and the interviewer is given a greater chance for leadership. Earlier in the paper, social work was spoken of as an art. The writer feels that this may be assumed to be true and that a more exact technique should be developed if the interview is to progress scientifically.

There are many schools of psychology, many advocated approaches to this study of human relationships. Social work has been searching for various helpful theories taking from each theory that which is valuable and apropos to a

(1) Odencrantz, Louise, op. cit.,
given situation. Mary P. Follett's book, *Creative Experience*, presents one theory which authorities seem to feel is helpful. Her theory of Circular Response which she says is always a response to a relating or, I plus the-interweaving-between-you-and-me meeting you plus the-interweaving-between-you-and-me clarifies the relation between the response and that to which the response is being made and is, she says, the basic truth for all interviewing. Her explanation of the Gestalt doctrine of wholes is also considered helpful. When it is said that we are to study wholes, this does not mean not to study parts, for analysis is as important a branch of psychological or social study as integration. The interviewer, she says, must always keep the unifying process in mind. Experienced directors have usually advocated the specialist in social work. However, she feels that the case worker must not let his client suffer as a result of too much specialization. In a Child Guidance Clinic, reports were brought in by a doctor regarding the child's health, by a

Follett, Mary P., *Creative Experience*, p. 65.
social worker in regard to the family conditions, and by a psychologist who had made certain tests. But there seemed to be no technique for uniting these approaches. The supervisor simply went through what he considered they should do next and sent them out again, never correlating the results of the various aspects of their experiences. Miss Follett feels that we must have all of the client's experiences in mind and to keep them as a "whole a-making" and unified. To clarify this conception, a quotation from her book will be helpful.

"In order to rid ourselves of the temptation to think there is such a thing possible as a static whole, we had better always ask, what is the whole doing? It is not a quiet Bene­ficence watching benignly over its busy children. It does not live vicariously in its "parts". The parts are neither its progenitors nor its offspring. There is no influence of wholes on parts in a vague, mystical sense, neither by "rationalization
of autocrats", but only through circular behavior. When we say "keep the man whole," "keep the experience whole," "always study the whole," we must bear in mind just what we mean by that, for we certainly do not mean that we are not to study parts... What the psychologist must do in his field and the social scientist in his is to study the whole a-making; this involves a study of whole and parts in their active and continuous relation to each other. A psychology which studies integrative processes is a dynamic psychology, that it, is concerned with activities; when we are watching an activity we are watching not parts in relation to a whole or a whole in relation to parts, we are watching a whole a-making.

"But there is an additional point to be considered: environment too is a whole a-making, and the inter-knitting of these two wholes a-making,
creates the total situation - also a whole making. "The psychological situation" is always a total situation. No penetrating psychological study, no penetrating study of social conditions, is possible without a study of these three wholes making."

Traditional psychology gave us experience as composed of images, sensations, etc., but today we are realizing that experience evaporates in analysis. In these dynamic theories of human conduct, the various factors of biological or organic drives and trends, or group influences and suggestions are integrated and a particularistic emphasis avoided.

Since the interview is the key to treatment in social case work and is the starting point in investigation where one follows the "half-forgotten, ill-observed road into the past", it is necessary by studying the interview to find out how people are led to take certain steps which to the general observer seemed like insurmountable barriers. The art of

persuasion is the answer to the "how" in many cases.

Jean M. Lucas, in her article on "The Interview of Persuasion" says:

"Persuasion is dependent on an appreciation of the power of personal desires and of purposes which control the direction of every act. Persuasion is possible when the distasteful and alienated things of life are consciously related to our interests. It is as if one connected the small silent wheel of an idle machine with the belt that brings power to the whole plant. The wheel moves as if by magic.

"But how can we know where power lies? By thoughtful consideration of the story made up of the spoken explanations adorned by the brief glimpses of hidden purposes and interests. Often these moments

of self-revealing occur during conversation, but sometimes they stand out in the process of investigation. We have an apologetic attitude toward this process. But though some of the creed may be outworn, we must not turn aside. Let us breathe new life into routine. Let us cease to be satisfied with facts and follow the footsteps of purpose into a living reconstruction of the past. A past so revealed, illuminates the present. With such knowledge one may attempt persuasion, if it be conceived as the leading of thought to a vision of life as a whole. With such vision, the immediate obstacle obscuring the horizon is easily surmounted.

One of the purposes of the interview must include, therefore, the definite aim of obtaining insight into the mental processes of the client. This means the need of developing the interaction of client and worker
so that the greatest amount of understanding of the mental processes of the client is obtained by both. This is a prerequisite to developing effective methods of helping the client to deal constructively with the situation which presents itself.

Attitudes as Affecting Processes

Authorities agree that attitudes are powerful forces in interviewing. It seems apropos, therefore, before attempting a more specific analysis of actual, practical and usable techniques to look first at what they say regarding the worker's own attitudes. Our attitudes are conditioned by our religion, our life philosophy, our training and experience. Miss Wright believes that it is imperative for case workers, if aiming to be truly successful, to search for significant states of mind, rather than stringently applying rules and specific learned techniques to the facts of the situation. She writes as follows:

"What are the conditions under

which the attitude we most desire, which might be called the creative attitude, toward one's self, one's fortunes and other people is likely to express itself? Creative possibilities depend upon the same factors for client and worker alike. Briefly expressed, the creative attitude expresses itself in social case work in two ways: first, the skill is used, in individualizing, i.e., in seeing the man behind the handicap, or the individual human beings in their relationships to the situation. And second, in relating the situation and the people in it to some vital concept of social work and of life. I should like to suggest five ways in which skill in individualizing may be increased: (1) by flexible imagination; (2) by being "non-shockable", keeping a light-touch; (3) by working steadily through the positive, that is by finding and building on the strength rather than on the weaknesses of human
nature; (4) by seeking skill in using the forces of expertness and authority rather than relying on the whiphand; and (5) by developing a capacity to learn out of failures, evaluating them with one's self and the client."

Miss Wright continues to explain that a "flexible imagination" is a vital factor for anyone who aims to understand the mind of his client and that the interviewer must be able to put those personal factors which are crowding his mind out of the way and have a clear path for a receptive hearing of the client. She believes that the interviewer must have the capacity to love a great many kinds of people, to realize that there is good in every kind of person, and that it is essential to be able to transcend yourself to the client's situation so that your approach and your attitude will be suitable to his personality.

Since coming to Boston, the writer met a man who through many glorious years has mastered this sense. As Miss Wright says, one has to not only realize that the aged are especially sensitive to ways of approach but one has to have a flexible
imagination and an adroit tongue that can change with each personality set. Mr. Francis Bardwell, who will retire next year from the position of Inspector of Almshouses for the State of Massachusetts, illustrates vividly how important the right approach is in contact with dependent people. In his book, *The Adventure of Old Age,* he relates the following:

"Aunt Ann was through! She had so announced yesterday and, having delivered her ultimatum, retired to her room, opened the lower drawer of her bureau, took out a bundle pinned up in a white sheet, and presto! the best dress came forth. Never before had she dared wear this garment, in all the forty-odd years of its being, save at funerals, and during some of the years of her life, 'buryin's had come thick and fast.

"So all day she had sat in her room adorned in her best, sat and primly rocked. She had gone to her meals it is true, but hurried back to the sanctuary of her room and the rocking chair. And now, today, she knew there would be a caller, one who would inquire into the reason of the revolt, and she waited, a rather disdainful smile on her face. Then came the expected knock, and she bowed with serenity as the caller came in; from her formal and dignified attitude she deflected not one iota. In state, the best dress as an armor for aged dignity, she received her caller. 'My, but you're dressed up, Aunt Ann!' 'Yes, from now on I'm always going to be.' 'No more help?' the caller queried. 'No!' the monosyllable was

(1)Bardwell, Francis, *Adventure of Old Age,* p. 54 ff.
snapped out. 'Is that fair?' 'Yes! Ain't it time? How long should a body work? Is there never to be a time of rest and best alpacas? If I'm to rest ever, it must be from now on.' This was delivered serenely and in measured tones. She would not weaken, although she began to wonder at the courage she had somehow acquired; she would see it through. 'You're too young to quit, Aunt Ann. Just a few years longer, a little help here in the hard places, and then the best dress and the folded hands.' 'Go on,' she taunted; 'the best dress and folded hands and a handful of people saying, "Her smile is natural. Oh! I've heard it at many funerals where I've helped. Perhaps you don't know where I've helped; you haven't looked me up in the book. If you had you would know I should have quit years ago. I know I don't look my age--stout folks seldom do after seventy, but I'm eighty-four. Isn't it time I quit? If I am ever to sit and rock and rest, isn't it from now on? Fourteen years I'm living on borrowed times. So I'm through!' She paused, looked out the window, saw the near-lying meadow, and beyond, the low cape foothills. A tear welled to her eye and slowly rolled down her wrinkled cheek. The spirit of revolt was gone, she was in retreat; she was a woman again and wept. With effort she controlled her emotion and quite calmly said: 'I want to be took care of, only that.' And the caller said, 'Tell me all about it, Aunt Ann'; and laid a kindly hand upon her shoulder...... And then Aunt Ann told her life story, whereupon the caller said, 'Yes, Aunt Ann, I understand. You see you have somehow wandered away from us all, going up and up, over the low hills, until at last you have gained the mountain tops, where so few of us ever get. And then you are on the highest peak among the clouds, and so near to the God who has taken such good care of the baby. It is because you are so far above us all and
are hidden by the clouds that we have lost
sight of you. And now we all want to do
what we can for you. We want to take
care of you, Aunt Ann."

In contrast to the case of Aunt Ann, we have
the opposite technique employed in the tale which
Mr. Bardwell entitles "Raisin' Dates".

"Timothy had demanded an audience.
Timothy evidently had a grievance, the
nature of which, however, I could not
fathom. So when I stepped into the
smoking room for my audience, I found Mr.
Murphy alone, occupying an armchair and
evidently in an anticipatory mood. I had
resolved to confine myself to the strict
language of diplomacy, so at the door I
stood and bowed, saying: 'Mr. Timothy
Murphy, I presume?' 'Your "presume" is
right,' was the answer. 'Oh', I replied,'I'm pleased to renew an acquaintance',
and shook hands. 'You may not be so
pleased when I'm through with you,' 'I
understand you have a bone to pick with me,
Mr. Murphy, and I'm hoping it's only a
chicken bone.' 'Tis not--'tis the hind
leg of an elephant.' 'Oh, I am relieved.'
(You will notice my use of the language of
diplomacy), 'for it might have been the
wishbone of a mastodon!' 'Never mind all
that--'tis a big bone. If I knew my
"geography" as well as you do, I'd be
back at you with a dragon's backbone, but
that's neither here nor there.' 'Well?'
I questioned, resolving to let him state
his own case in his own way. The old
man shuffled his feet, twitched his hands
on the arms of his chair, cleared his
throat and began: 'Do I look like a man
who raises dates? I ask you that, man to
man, do I?' 'No', I answered deliberately,
'you do not look like a man who raises dates.
If any one asked me what was your specialty,
I should have suggested something exceed-
ingly tropical, but not dates, even if
dates are raised in hot climates.' If I had thought for a moment that this would go over Timothy's head, the delusion was of short duration. He nodded knowingly, with a 'Yes, I know all that'; and then, bringing his huge fist down on the arm of his chair, exclaimed: 'Tis you told the Pelican I was raisin' dates'. 'Sure, Timothy?' I questioned. 'Of course; it comes down to either you or the Pelican being a liar—and I've known the Pelican isn't one, for over twenty years.' I vehemently protested innocence and then it dawned upon me—the conversation I had had with the Pelican on a previous visit. I had been anxious to get inmates' ideas as to the causes of dependence. On the aftermath of my talk as to the Pelican's individual case, the conversation had switched to intemperance, thence naturally to the total abstinance societies. Why had they come? And naturally I pointed to my friend Timothy and the Pelican being French Canadian I had used the expression 'raison d'être' in relation to Timothy, meaning his type, of course. And the crafty Pelican saw his chance to stir up the Celtic disposition and the 'raison d'être' became to Timothy 'raisin' dates'. So I explained as best I could..........." (1)

Mr. Bardwell gives one as no one else can, a sense of the possibilities of give-and-take in ordinary conversation and an ability to appreciate the interviewee's situation.

One thing which many of us are prone to forget but one that Bingham and Moore feel is important is that of looking for the strength

(1)Bardwell, Francis, op. cit., p. 102 ff.
end fine points in a character and building on that rather than approaching human nature with a negative attitude. They say that if we are to do constructive work, we must build on these stronger traits, so it is very essential that we seek them out. Even though it may be only in the smallest details that we realize this good, it may be by capitalizing on this, that our solution will be reached. There is an apocryphal story, recalled by the writer, of Christ and his disciples walking down a very dusty road one day. They came upon a dead dog and the disciples shuddered and stepped aside. Christ went over to the creature and in his tenderness said: "Come and see what beautiful teeth the creature hath".

Bingham and Moore further say that a thing that every person in authority must be cautioned against is the abuse of power. Authorities feel that this is frequently used by beginners to achieve their ends but the use of force is rarely wise. Virginia P. Robinson in *A Changing Psychology in Social Case Work*, has questioned the advisability of the use of control in the interview

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 138
(2) Ibid, p. 21
and restated a fundamental issue regarding the purpose of the interview. She maintains that training in the techniques of "stimulation", "motivation", "leadership", "breaking down the defense mechanism" and other like means, implies that the worker knows what is good for the client and that his task is to see that he does it. He attempts to manipulate the client helpfully to his own ends. She feels that today, however, we are developing an increasing respect for the person interviewed and having a greater reservation about taking an active part in his affairs. (1) She writes:

"Technique lies rather in creating a relationship environment in which the individual growth process of the client can be released....There is little known and everything to be learned about the elements in relationship which favor such a growth process. Experience points to understanding and acceptance as the most essential factor in attitude of one individual towards

another to permit the expression and release of his own impulses."

There should be ever present in the interview the idea of give-and-take and nothing should be done without the knowledge of a clear understanding on both sides. We know that the greatest skill of all lies in knowing how and when to use force or authority, and how to apply that force well when used and as Miss Robinson says, one should always remember to be expert in the use of authority.

Miss Wright quotes in her article that "treatment of personality actually occurs only in proportion as worker and client accomplish that give-and-take in points of view upon which human understandings are based. We arrive at these understandings not when we think of life in terms of social case work but when we think of social case work in terms of life." (1)

The First Interview

Much has been written in the field of social case work regarding the first interview and no

(1) Wright, Lucy, op. cit., p. 11.
treatise on the subject of interviewing would be complete without some mention of its importance and a few cautions and clues for its treatment. Here again we turn to Miss Richmond who has treated this subject in such a scholarly manner.

Before attempting any treatment in the first interview, Miss Richmond says that there are four circumstances which modify the technique. 1. The nature of the task about to be undertaken, whether probation work, family work, protection from cruelty, etc.

2. The origin of the application or request for service; whether from an agency or individual already interested, or from an applicant in his own behalf.

3. The place of the interview, whether in the clients own home or at the social agency's office.

4. The recorded experience available. Any possible previous record in the agency's files concerning either the person applying or others of his family.

She feels that the tendency too frequently

(1) Richmond, Mary E., Social Diagnosis, pp. 103-33.
in the first interview is to get the family's history, facts regarding past employment, attitudes, etc. by direct questioning. Too often this method is considered a short cut for getting all of the required information. Little or no rapport is established and the client feels that he is being cross-questioned and regarded with suspicion. Miss Richmond has found that although it takes longer, the establishing of a friendly rapport, getting acquainted with the client and really understanding the situation, is the shortest way in the end to solve the problem and get accurate facts.

"The really intimate and enlightening revelations are given when the client feels a need to reveal himself, when he perceives that solution of his difficulty hinges on a mutual understanding of past events; or they are offered spontaneously when he knows and trusts the worker." (1)

In discussing the first interview, Pauline Young gives the following points to be observed: (2)

(2) Young, Pauline, op. cit., p.
1. Before going out on a case, it is best to plan the interview using such facts as you may already know.

2. All possible clues should be gathered and where possible, previous case histories should be read to avoid duplication of work and to relieve families of the embarrassment of going over the same ground again.

3. It is generally agreed that the best place for the first interview is where the sense of strangeness may be worn away quickly.

4. The interviewer owes the interviewee proper introduction of himself and of the agency represented, and whenever possible, he should tell why the interview is sought. Forced cordiality should be avoided but nothing can take the place of a smile in showing people that you intend to be cordial.

Analysis of Techniques

In a survey made from 1925 to 1927 the Twin City Chapter of the American Association of Social Workers made a study of the techniques of interviewing.

They isolated and named 86 different techniques in ten interviews; two of the interviews were drawn from the experience of the committee members. It was found that these techniques grouped themselves into general classifications as follows: (1) the techniques used for lessening tension in the interviewee; (2) the techniques used for bringing or keeping the interviewee to the main issue; (3) the techniques used for breaking defense mechanisms; (4) the techniques used for helping the interviewee make difficult admissions; (5) the techniques used to help the interviewer gain time; (6) the techniques used for influencing the judgment of the interviewee; (7) the techniques used to help the interviewer recover from a bad start.

They found that one of the most common questions that arises is how can one successfully treat the emotionally disturbed. In times of stress, people are tense and upset and before anything more than a superficial interview can be held, resistance must be met and tension alleviated. Rannells has analyzed the

various situations which cause tension and resistance on the part of the interviewee as follows:
1. Causes arising from environmental feelings.
2. Causes arising from differences between the social worker and the interviewee.
3. Causes arising from the interviewee's intellectual or emotional reaction to the particular subject or situation under consideration.
4. Causes arising from the habitual reaction pattern of the interviewee.
5. Causes arising from the uncertainty of response.

"Fear of disfavor in the eyes of the social worker or the community; the danger of ostracism from a particular social, religious, or professional group if the adherence to certain non-conformists' views is discovered; the apprehension of inadvertently betraying another's confidence; the desire to avoid legal entanglements which might result from the disclosure of certain facts—all of these may act as an impediment to the setting up of a
natural and friendly relationship." (1)

The following is a summary of the most common ways which Miss Salsberry found to relieve tension:

1. Simulated agreement. There are times when it is worthwhile to agree, when a disagreement would bring about greater tension and perhaps bring about the termination of the interview.

2. Minimizing the seriousness of the interviewee's position. To illustrate: "A client was much wrought up because it was necessary for him to apply to the Family Welfare Association, and the interviewer said: 'But, Mr. Crawford, it isn't so terrible for you to come; why, this society had 2500 families come to it last year for just the service you are asking.'"

3. Analyzing a general statement into its specific parts.

4. The opposite of 3, introducing a general consideration instead of the specific details which bring the emotional storm. A visitor from a children's bureau was investigating the

(1) Rannells, M. E., op. cit., p. 92.
(2) Salsberry, P., op. cit., p. 155 ff.
Bazori family. The children were employed in a cannery. Mrs. Bazori had been warned by her neighbors and would not tell anything about her children and so the worker began, after alloying Mrs. Bazori's fear about government fines, to talk about children - just children in general and later about work, school and the health of Mrs. Bazori's children.

5. Actual physical contact. A touch on the arm, a linking of arms, or a handshake often serve to reduce tension.

6. The use of "jollying" and "flattery" may be open to serious objection on ethical grounds. However, in a survey made, both methods seemed to be included in the techniques of interviewing.

7. Humor and the use of the commonplace and whimsical occurred rarely in the interviews studied. This fact gives rise to the question as to whether we are skillful in humor and whimsical as we ought to be and whether too much of our interviewing is done on the plane of deadly seriousness.

8. Explaining the agency. This is a technique employed in almost every interview
studied. If the client understands more intimately the purpose and plan of the agency, frequently fears are alloyed and tension is lessened.

9. Hostess technique, where the interviewee has such a pleasant impression of the interviewer and the agency that he forgets about his complaint. The interviewer may shake hands, invite the interviewer to sit in the most comfortable chair, face him away from the light and out of the draft, give him something to read -- in short do all the things the hostess does for her guest. Mrs. Salsberry says:

"Perhaps some of you have had the same experience I have had. When someone complaints about work done, I find I am apt to be on the defensive. I begin the interview on the supposition that the interviewee is wrong and the agency is right. However, if I have kept the hostess technique in mind, I find myself being so busy as a hostess that I haven't time to be on the defensive."

10. Appeal to pride. This is akin to flattery but not open to the same objection on ethical grounds.

11. Concession and building up "yes responses", sometimes form the basis for successful interviews with emotional interviewees. (1) Bogardus has listed several mechanisms of mental release. He feels that it is an important part of an interviewer's technique to understand these.

1. The naive type. This type of person is very willing to talk and glad for an opportunity to tell their story or make a confession and is always glad to talk about himself.

2. The egotistical type. This type requires an appeal to pride or vanity to unlock the door.

3. The confession type. A release of pent-up tensions here will give relief.

4. Scientific type. This person takes the objective viewpoint concerning himself and scorns much of the conventional attitude of

"right" and "wrong" and is even willing to "sacrifice" himself for the "sake of science".

5. The sophisticated type. This is the experienced, toughened individual who knows too much to "spill".

Mrs. Salsberry lists eleven techniques which were used to break down defense mechanisms.

1. Anticipate ultimate outcome.
2. Abusing for defense. (The old familiar method of agreeing that Mr. Smith is a pretty bad husband and then have his wife fly to his defense - deciding he isn't so bad after all.
3. Puncture
4. Rushing
5. Swaying by oratory
6. Taking client off his guard
7. Using acquired information
8. Putting cards on the table.
9. Chasing into a corner
10. Instilling fear
11. Negation

(1)Salsberry, F., op. cit., p. 155.
She lists another group of techniques which help to bring or keep the interviewee on the main issue.

1. Closing avenues of digression
2. Avoiding distractions
3. Dominating the situation
4. Failure to answer digressive questions
5. Bringing back to the main issue by direct questioning.
6. Sharing of personal experiences of the same nature as the main issue.
7. Authoritative, didactic amplification of statement to refute conclusion.
8. Yes response.

Those techniques which she found were used for "influencing judgment" include:

1. The transition from the known to the unknown.
2. Reasoning from general to specific and from specific to general.
4. Forestalling objectives.
5. Using interviewees phraseology
6. Following his leads
7. Restating the case.
Case workers find that many times, in order to obtain the facts, there is involved the making of difficult admissions, crimes committed, untruths told, facts which have been kept close to the heart and mind of the interviewee and these are very hard to tell. Any techniques which would lessen the tension should be employed. The success of the interview sometimes depends on the strength of this technique.

1. Knowing the objections. Sometimes if we know beforehand the objections that may arise, it is easier to forestall such objections.

2. Minimize the seriousness of the admission. This sometimes helps lower the emotional strain accompanying the admission.

3. Looking away

4. Appeal to religious or ethical motives

5. Thinking out loud

6. Telling the client’s story for him.

7. Encouraging reminiscences
8. Using terms of affection
9. Actual physical contact
10. Silence. This is a technique in itself which is not employed as frequently as it might be. There are three kinds of silences. (a) Those which give the interviewee time to think things out for himself; (b) Those that force the interviewee to make the next move; (c) Those where the interviewer may be absent, in affect - the kind of silence which make difficult admissions easier.

The above is a summary of actual successful techniques employed by interviewers. Their value to an interviewer depends upon his ability to use them and to make them part of his artistic skill.
THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

When studying the employment interview, (1) Bingham and Moore consider three functions which should be kept in mind: namely, securing information, giving information, and establishing a friendly relationship. Obviously, the interview is the chief means whereby the interviewer can obtain information and facts about the applicant. It is also the means whereby the applicant can obtain a picture of the job. The third function is to make a friend of the applicant.

Any study into the actual situation prevailing in most offices shows how imperfectly these three functions are performed. Especially during the past seven years, employers have been too busy to spend very much time on any one interview. One hears of too many cases of brusque employers who only spend from three to five minutes in the interview after an applicant has

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 58.
waited in the outer office for several hours. However, a study of the problems which confront employment interviewers are more complex than one would at first realize. Experience has shown that factories and business houses which employ thousands of workmen and have a corresponding influx of applicants must make the preliminary interview very brief and a severe process of elimination must be carried out. A subsequent interview may be a little longer but time is necessarily very limited. Authorities seem to agree that well devised blanks giving routine detailed information help to save time in all types of interviews and in an employment interview especially; that no satisfactory appraisal of these applicants would be made in so brief a period if it were not for such blanks. Bingham and Moore say that another time saving element is to be thoroughly familiar with the job specifications. Time need not be spent with an applicant who obviously does not meet all of the requirements of the job and there is scarcely time to refer to the files or to call department heads or employers.

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 63.
"The interviews have to be crisp and to the point, and only an interviewer can make them who knows intimately the different sorts of work for which he is hiring, and who has mastered the techniques of drawing out from the applicant the salient indices of his real qualifications." (1)

It is often wise to study the function of the interviewer before attempting to classify the techniques which he is to employ. According to V. V. Anderson who says of this: "It is the function of the interviewer to bring together, analyze, and digest all of the information that bears upon the suitability of an applicant for a given job, as well as his general value as a personnel risk for other possible positions." (2) Anderson feels that the interviewer is the most important element in the interview as it is his duty to sum up and analyze the total information, and although many tools are used for guides in employment interviewing they alone will not give sufficient information for the choosing of employees. The interviewer has a basis of understanding

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 63.
(2) Anderson, V. V., Psychiatry in Industry, p. 183.
and uses the interview as a means for interpretation of the problem of adjustment in life situations and thereby has an insight into the factors which cause failure or success in business. "If sound progress in employment work is to be attained we must cast aside theories of inborn mystical ability to 'size people up' or 'to read character'. What all honest investigators are after is a discipline that presupposes a knowledge and a technique - a discipline that offers something more solid than guesswork." The writer feels that the issues that are encountered in employment problems are not apart from life situations and that employment problems can be faced in the same scientific manner in which we approach natural phenomena in general. Anderson infers that we no longer have the feeling that behavior disorders are inherent, that nothing can be done for them. So too it is felt that good or bad employees are not "just that way" but the whole subject of employment can and should be treated more objectively. It is no longer believed either, that there is no way of telling

(1) Anderson, V. V., *Psychiatry in Industry*, p. 185
just how an applicant will behave in a given job situation. All of these things can now be approached in a scientific manner the same as we have tried to approach other human problems.

There are three groups or classifications for employment interviewers, based on their techniques of selection, according to E. J. Benge. The first is the man who has a good common sense background and selects the employees on that basis. He believes the second type, the laboratory psychologist uses useless methods. This psychologist swallows the information from a battery of tests, "hook, line, and sinker" and hires on that basis. By combining the best points from these two methods, Benge makes his third classification and a wise interviewer will try to follow this combination. Symonds feels that the interview, if properly conducted and intelligently interpreted, reveals considerable knowledge regarding the applicant's past history and ways of behaving which furnishes data for the best judgment of the client's future behavior.

(1) Benge, E. J., Standard Practice in Personnel Work, p. 73.
(2) Symonds, op. cit., p. 453.
On the other hand, he says, psychological tests disclose abilities and disabilities that, when properly interpreted by the well-trained interviewer in the light of all the other information about the applicant, contribute an addition to employment technique that is invaluable. This combination method of selecting employees may be illustrated by an experience which the writer had in an employment bureau in Los Angeles. A young woman came to the office one morning asking for work. She was well groomed and had a "placeable" appearance. She had been employed for several short periods as a secretary but was never very successful. She disliked secretarial work but yet she knew of no other field in which she was qualified to secure work. After carefully checking past employment references, the writer found that her personality was attractive, she cooperated in all ways but obviously showed her dislike for stenography which resulted in her doing poor work. The writer called her back for a second interview and gave her a psychological "interest" test. This revealed a distinct dislike for office routine of all sorts but a decided interest
for millinery and dress alteration and fitting. After making what job contacts advisable, an opening was found for an apprentice which would develop into a permanent position if the applicant proved successful. As a result of this combination method of approach a satisfactory job adjustment was made.

Griffitts believes that for an interviewer to predict in any satisfactory degree the success or failure of an applicant in any given job, he must know the job situation, must be acquainted with what the applicant is expected to do. Not only is this true from the point of view of the routine work but from the possible affect of the work upon the individual employee. He says further that an interviewer must develop the skill of relating the applicant's personality to the particular job and that this cannot be done satisfactorily unless he has a thorough or complete knowledge of the work which the applicant is to do. This makes one realize that even those jobs which it is thought have so little variable in them as clerical positions, present problems of

individual fitness which the interviewer cannot handle successfully unless a complete knowledge of the job is at hand. Not only do the details of work vary but the type of supervision, environment, number of diversified duties within the job, etc., all have a bearing upon the success or failure of the applicant. Minute differences of course cannot all be remembered but it is essential to keep in mind the generalities - the outstanding differences.

Griffitts continues by saying that each employment interviewer should have first hand information about as many types of people who do just this sort of work, what sort of equipment from a physical and mental point of view is needed, what sort of social status is the group drawn from, and what ages seem pertinent to that type of work. The more he knows regarding the type of personality that succeeds or fails in this particular field of work, the more intelligent will be his placements. Very frequently an institution will have a very definite type of personality which they always employ. As the interviewer becomes more familiar with the
job, he will often find that other factors are of more primary consideration than the actual work itself such as the kind of persons who are supervising the work, whether idleness is tolerated, or the employees are being driven continually, whether working conditions are conducive to healthy living, or whether a good balance prevails between supervisor and employee.

Anderson gives three headings under which the employment interview may be conducted.

The first is the personal history phase. Under personal history he considers: (1) developmental history; (2) health history; (3) educational history; (4) work history.

He says that the developmental history deals largely with the important facts relating to the normal physical and mental development of the individual and is not often of vital practical value to the interviewer in connection with employment technique.

The health history, according to Anderson, is most important and in fact essential for the applicant's future success. The history is not

(1)Anderson, V. V., op. cit., p. 162.
only important from the actual physically healthy standpoint but because it might explain mental or personality disorders - the two being inseparable.

The school career and educational history, he believes are also important and throw light upon many issues that determine the choice of work and sometimes success or failure in certain jobs. Such a history, when properly taken, also gives a picture of what opportunities the applicant has had and what use he has made of them.

Anderson thinks that the work history should be the starting point in the interview, that it should begin with the applicant's first regular job, its nature as well as the type of concern in which the applicant was located, the salary received, the length of his employment, reasons for leaving, length of period of subsequent unemployment, etc. Through references, if not in the interview with the applicant, his attitude toward the work and toward the people with whom he associated should be obtained. It seems that most authors feel that the work career has a great bearing upon one's ability
to estimate the personality and characteristics of the individual as it not only indicates whether or not there has been a purpose or goal toward which the individual has been striving, but also what degree of success or failure he has met. The work career, Anderson contends, tends to bring out specialized interests and experiences, and becomes a valuable index to the future work ability and adjustment of the applicant, and this history should be taken thoroughly and scientifically for there seems to be no better source available in the entire investigation for forming judgments concerning the individual's work adaptability. Taking the work history tends to set an applicant at ease because it enables him to talk about himself and his job—something which he is entirely familiar with and usually vitally interested.

Anderson's second phase in the employment interview is the personality study and he writes that the inquiry into the personality make-up of the client is the most important phase of the interview. Many characteristic reactions can only be observed through the social environ-
ment but the interviewer will have to draw his conclusions from the individual's attitude toward certain problems he has met. According to this author, the personal history, when studied by the trained investigator brings to the surface motives, attitudes, and characteristic traits of the personality which are the driving forces in the applicant's behavior and the reliability of these conclusions will depend upon the ability of the interviewer in his evaluation of physical appearance, facial expressions, mannerisms, bodily movements, mental patterns and the general symptomology presented in each case. He lists the intellectual activities, motor characteristics, temperament, self-expression and sociability as the main traits of personality to be taken into consideration.

It is reasonable to believe that in studying the general intelligence of the interviewee that a person's intelligence quotient is not a necessary indication of their success or failure in business. A person with a high intelligence might make low grades in school or be very unsuccessful in business. It has been seen too,
that a person with a dull intelligence but with a determined "drive", can come forth with a good scholastic record and attain a fair degree of success in business. In other words, inferring from Anderson, adjustment to life problems does not necessarily imply possession of intelligence, cleverness or a keen memory. The force or "drive" behind the personality has much more to do with a person's success or failure than his intelligence. Anderson says regarding the intelligence of the interviewee:

"General intelligence may be considered to be that ability or special trait of the personality by reason of which the individual learns and comes into possession of knowledge of his environment. It may be termed the individual's 'problem solving ability', or 'reasoning capacity'. Like the physical growth of the individual, the intellect should progress from year to year in its development." (1)

(1) Anderson, V. V., op. cit., p. 193.
Anderson further suggests that an interviewer keep in mind the following points when judging the employability of a person:

1. Is that applicant's education commensurate with his opportunity for it?
2. Is he alert?
3. Has he seemed to learn from experience? or is he naive and gullible and does he repeat the same mistake over and over?
4. Is he attentive, and does he seem to fix and hold his attention well?
5. Does he give a consistent, intelligent, well-related story?
6. Does he seem distractable?
7. How suggestible is he?
8. Has he any special aptitude, or special interests?
9. Is his memory good?
10. Does he show good common sense?
11. Does the applicant display tension or "push" in his activity?
12. Is he restless or over-active?
13. Does he seem inert?
14. Does he seem static?
15. Is he over-talkative or under-talkative?
16. Would you judge his activity to be persistent and steady or capricious?
17. Does his life history indicate he has or has not finished his undertakings?
18. Does he seem sluggish or lazy? Does he slouch as he walks or sits?
19. Would you judge him easily fatigued?
20. Do you think that he could be speeded up easily or easily slowed down?
21. Do his movements seem well coordinated?
22. Are his posture and gait good?
23. Does he appear energetic?
24. Would you judge him to be tenacious and persistent in the face of obstacles and discomfort? (1)

In their chapter on Interviewing, Tead and Metcalf say that for many kinds of jobs, motor activity is a vital factor. The interviewer must be able to estimate in some fairly conclusive manner, whether the person is over-active, under-active or whether a good balance prevails. Frequently it has been observed that the indivi-

dual who rushes through his task and is always bristling around giving the appearance of being very busy only does his task in a slipshod manner and completes no task thoroughly. On the other hand, the static, slow moving, under-active individual who cannot keep up with the average worker should be placed in a position where a thorough piece of work is required at no pressure of time. They say that the interviewer should be on the alert for moderate, well-directed movements, coordinated and free from unusual spurts of activity for the best results in any job.

As J. D. Hackett observes, one of the most difficult things an interviewer has to do in formulating his technique is to have a thorough, usable or applicable background in psychology and pathology for a very potent force in job adjustment and success is temperament. He feels that a man's emotional outlook and his degree of control colors his whole life and job adjustment activity and that the interviewer

(1) Tead and Metcalf, Personnel Administration, p. 142
should be able to judge this and bear in mind at all times to avoid the selection of applicants who exhibit too marked degrees of temperament and mood - the depressed, melancholy type or the extremely cheerful, over enthusiastic types. These extreme types are unusual and almost invariably make poor personnel risks.

Too often interviewers fail to recognize the importance of the home situation, writes (1) Anderson. Whether the applicant lives with his parents, the health of the family, the dependency of the family upon the applicant - all these factors have a bearing upon the mental life of the employee. A very attractive young woman was employed in the writer's office as receptionist and switchboard operator. She was eager and intelligent but seemed to have little power of concentration and was easily confused. After a few months the writer investigated possible factors which might be causing this difficulty and found that the girl had been raised by parents who were deaf and dumb. This factor alone had caused an abnormal mental set in the girl. At

(1)Anderson, V. V., op. cit., p. 197.
the time she was in this office, her father, to whom she was deeply devoted, was very ill. Her responsibilities both financially and physically in her home life prevented her from accomplishing what was demanded of her at work.

The most important final aspect in the technique of the employment interviewer, concludes Anderson is the ability of the interviewer to sum up the most important issues in the applicant's own particular situation. Such judgments cannot be accomplished in a mere superficial interview but must be achieved through a systematic diagnosis of all the facts apropos to the situation and a balancing of every factor that goes to make up the total picture.

Although the interview is the dominant factor in the choice of employees, authorities feel that there are many unreliable factors in it which should be guarded against. H. E. Burtt writes that one of the most common fallacies in an interviewer's technique is that he is prone to use generalizations about such things as physiogamy. An interviewer's previous unpleasant

experience with a person or persons with thin, tight lips is likely to carry over into his attitude toward the interviewee with similar characteristics and cause a prejudiced generalization. It is assumed that many persons have some almost unconscious generalization of this sort which doubtless influences their judgment of people whom they observe. Burtt says that such generalizations may, upon occasion, be sound but should not be considered reliable enough for final judgment. Another common mistake that interviewers seem to make is, he says, to assume that habits are general rather than specific but we have no assurance that a habit formed in one field in one kind of a situation will work out equally well in other fields. An applicant who dresses neatly will not necessarily be neat in his work. It is known that the neural pathways in no two instances are the same and many factors enter into every situation making generalizations valueless. Burtt further believes that carried to any extreme, these generalizations may lead to difficulties because the applicant's reactions are often symptoms of significant habit patterns.
which would make him an unsuitable employee. He
goes on to say that even after allowance is made
for a strain on the applicant, there are certain
positions where nervousness would make the appli­
cant unsuitable. Attention has often been drawn
to the fact that pleasing personal appearance is
vital in a position where the applicant is to
make an impression on other people. No one
likes to buy clothes from a sales person who is
very distastefully dressed or be approached by
a person with a disfigured face or a slovenly,
dirty appearance. Consequently, it would be
inferred that the interviewer should not consider
the physiogamy and appearance of the person for
the purpose of character reading but it must be
considered when deciding how this applicant will
impress the people whom he is to meet in the
business world.

Since so many studies have been made concern­
ing the unreliability of the interview, logically
then, ways and means of improving the technique
should be a matter of concern to the interviewer.
Bingham and Moore say that the first step in

(1)Burtt, H. E., op. cit., p. 415.
this improvement process is to find out what facts can be learned from the interview and what cannot be. They quote W. A. Charters as giving some facts which the interviewer can and cannot determine:

"He can form opinions on the appearance and manners of the prospect, his likeableness, his attitude toward the organization, kind of work, his outside interests and hobbies, his forcefulness, his brightness in conversation and any disagreeable mannerism. He cannot, however, tell how dependable, honest, persistent, or loyal a person is. Traits which do not actually function or enter specifically into the behavior of the interviewee during the interview cannot be judged with any accuracy. In other words, the interviewer can get useful impression of only a limited range of personality traits—namely, those traits which are significant in so far as people are impressed by them." (1)

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 71.
A survey of current literature shows that rating scales and tests have been used with more or less success to increase the dependability of employment interviews. Drawing conclusions from various experiments, it seems that the benefit derived from the use of these tests varies according to the kind of thing the interviewer is trying to test, the way in which the scale is constructed and the intelligence and experience of the one giving the test. It may be assumed that the rating scale should by no means be substituted for good judgment because as yet no accurate means of testing or measuring personality has been devised. At its best, the well constructed, time proven rating scale brings certain relevant traits to the attention of the interviewer and gives him a chance to correlate his own judgments and record his estimations with more accuracy and consistency than would otherwise result.

Mr. J. Mills describes his method of determining basic aptitudes which he used while interviewing college men who were considering careers in the Bell Telephone Company. He says
that selection is based on three groups of factors: the interests and urges of the applicant, his technical foundation, and his personality, including physical and character traits. In the first part of the interview he tries to discover the applicant's method of self-expression, whether the man finds his self-realization chiefly in dealing with ideas, men, things or dollars. He then tries to bring out interests in college courses and classifies them as interest in theory, manipulation, design, methods of operation by physical equipment, engineering costs and economies, or artistic, literary, and non-professional interests. The third part of the interview is considered most important. Here the man is judged as to his supervisory abilities and his technical abilities. The last part of the interview is concerned with basic urges - whether they can be depended upon to drive the man on to success. An attempt is made to discover whether the most potent urge is a desire for economic success, or the attainment of ambitions and honors, or the satisfaction found in workmanship. It would be impossible to make such
a thorough survey in an ordinary interview but
Mills has devised a list of illustrations for
each group and has the applicant rate them in
terms of his reactions. This simplifies the
process making it a more usable procedure.
This and other objective methods of ranking per-
sonality have been devised with a relative deg-
ree of success and do help to judge the vague
and ambiguous traits of personality. Bingham
and Moore say of the rating scale:

"......as an aid to the personal
interview in industry it has its ups
and downs. It is now commonly recog-
nized to be a rough tool rather than an
instrument of precision, a device to
focus attention on essential character-
istics and insure their careful consid-
eration rather than a means of measur-
ing with exactness small differences of
personality. Casually assembled scales
are worse than useless, leading only
to an appearance of precision which
does not exist. A scale, on the other

(1) Mills, J. "Engineering Aptitudes: An Interview-
er's Method of Determining Basic Aptitudes of
Engineering Graduates", Journal of Personnel
Research, pp. 197-207.
hand, which has been judiciously constructed and tested is often a genuine help to the interviewer in making up his mind and in recording his opinions for future reference." (1)

Percival Symonds, one of the foremost authorities in the field of testing, feels that there is no unanimity of opinion regarding the use of scales, tests, or questionnaires. One group, according to Symonds, is told to follow no fixed schedule of questions, no tests or set formula but to endeavor to get his subject to converse naturally and to use "artificial" means only when all other attempts have failed. On the other hand he says there are those who advise planning the interview carefully ahead of time. The questions should be framed, preferably in a printed schedule, perhaps rehearsed. G. V. Hamilton in his book *Research in Marriage* made a study of marriage relations and was so fearful of having the inclination of his voice be revealing that he gave his questions out on printed cards. Symonds writes that Snedden has prepared

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 73.
(2) Symonds, Percival, op. cit., p. 453
disguised intelligence test in the form of an interview, while O'Rourke, in his "Measuring Judgment and Resourcefulness - an Interviewing Technique", has prepared problems in interview form for testing the judgment of applicants for the position of prohibition agents.

In conclusion, Bingham and Moore believe that no matter how many scales and tests that may be used by an interviewer, the process is still one of diagnosis. The interviewer looks for symptoms that indicate fitness or unfitness for a job. It is a process which makes the mental picture of the applicant complete and which either sees him as fitting into the position or rules him out. They say that there are four steps which should be taken before the picture is complete: (1) a preliminary interview, (2) a psychological examination, (3) a physical examination, (4) and a final interview. An appraisal of acceptance or rejection should be made if possible, on the sum total of these points.

(2) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., pg. 75.
For an employment interviewer to master a thorough technique, he cannot come into the possession of wisdom suddenly. It must be a slow, laborious practice where the interviewer is constantly seeking his ideal goal - to make the employment interview an art.
THE COLLEGE PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Much has been written in the fields of social case work and employment about the art of interviewing - considerably more than is to be found in the field of education. This probably is due to the fact that the interview as a part of the technique of personnel procedure is comparatively recent when viewed from the standpoint of the length of time it has been used in the other fields just mentioned. The general principles governing conduct in the college personal interview are much the same as those that govern the case work and the employment interview but there are differentiating features.

As was stated earlier in the thesis, there is nothing new in the interview as a tool. College administrators have recognized its value and employed it from the beginning. The physician, the lawyer and the minister find it one of the essentials in the practice of their profession. While all interviews, no matter what the fields, have certain common psychological factors, pro-
cesses are not identical because purposes are varied. Counseling and advice have been the individual's fortune during the entire period of his formal training, but it has been only within the past few years, since the development of personnel departments with their programs, that the interview has developed as a special phase of procedure calling for a group of workers who can devote more time to the individual student than the more casual approach to his needs can offer. And so the increasing appreciation of the importance of the interview as a tool for understanding and assisting the student is being recognized and with this is appearing a small body of writing, analytical and interpretative of interviewing as an art.

We have questioned before the advisability of analyzing the interview. Someone has said that the art of interviewing is much less difficult than is the analysis of how the art is practiced. Another has questioned the value of analyzing the interview at all, only to be faced with the fact that certain processes are used by all in whole or in part, and why, there-
fore not bring them to the front where we may
direct attention to them. (1)

Miss Helen Bragdon explains that before
any school administrator or member of the per-
sonnel department can understand the social prob-
lems he is confronted with, the wishes and atti-
tudes of the persons involved must be brought to
light. This, she says may be secured by the
personal interview method. Bogardus lists
two main ways in which material may be obtained.
There is the primary or direct method which re-
lates to what has actually happened to one. Then
there is the secondary or indirect method which
is what one has learned from print or heard.
Sometimes, he continues, the latter are almost
as influential as the former. Bogardus says of
the personal interview: "The personal interview
is penetrating. It goes to the main sources,
namely, human experiences and attempts to make
these sources objective and usable. Personal
experience is an index to attitude and opinion." (3)
Bogardus further says that it is important to
know what you are after; that one must have a

(1) Bragdon, Helen, Counseling the College Student, p. 72
(2) Bogardus, E. S., op. cit., p. 69.
(3) Ibid, p. 70;
sense of the relative values of materials to distinguish basic urges or wishes, attitudes and opinions as facts not only are important but the basic meaning of facts.

(1) Miss Young says that the easiest materials to obtain by interviewing are facts—ordinary information which appears readily on the surface such as names, dates, geographical data, economic circumstances, etc. Bogardus explains that in an interview the study of opinions is important but even more important and more authentic than opinions are tendencies to act or attitudes. Often a person does not realize why he is so eager to act. This "readiness" has developed without the knowledge of the person. He acts and is sometimes surprised by his own attitudes. This author feels that the interviewer must get at the attitudes of the person because they are very important.

However, he continues, an interviewer must be very careful to distinguish between attitudes and opinions. The former are more reliable than

(1) Young, Pauline, op. cit., p. 25.
(2) Bogardus, op. cit., p. 71.
the latter because they are usually the result of a person's own experiences whereas an opinion is usually formulated on the basis of other peoples' experiences. They are farther removed from the persons true self than are attitudes. Frequently opinions are used when rationalizing about an attitude. It is important for the interviewer, after realizing the importance of attitudes to discover their origin and thereby he will be able to more intelligently work out the processes by which they are changed.

In general authors seem to feel that one of the most fundamental elements in the personal interview is the interviewee's personal experience. Personal experiences are the sources of attitudes, and knowledge and serve as a background for personal opinions. One's feeling and emotions, and undoubtedly one's beliefs and life philosophy, are grounded in life experiences. Bogardus says that

"Social conflicts are often due either to personal differences in knowing what the facts are or in interpreting the facts. Both the facts and the
interpretations of them originate either in primary or secondary personal experiences. A person often has only partial knowledge of the causes of his own actions and attitudes, because he has rarely analyzed all his experiences. Consequently, his explanations and interpretations may be wholly sincere but worthless as means of determining causes. A simple illustration of this point is found in the statement of a woman to an electrician that a fuse had burned out. When he asked her to describe what had happened, she repeatedly insisted that a fuse had burned out. Finally he succeeded in getting her away from her interpretation of the matter to an actual description. 'There was a flash near the end of the electric cord', indicating that the trouble was in the cord and not in the fuse. The interpretation was false, but the description of the actual experience cleared up the difficulty. It is often necessary to examine personal experiences
in order to understand the meaning of the facts because the facts are understood differently by different people. We do not act primarily according to the facts, but primarily according to our experiences." (1)

It is Bogardus' idea that to correctly analyze an interview, the interviewer must be cautioned against the tendency of people to generalize from one or a few particular experiences. People receive a first impression which is usually the most lasting impression and generalize all future experiences, attitudes and opinions in the light of this one incident. The interviewer should be able to transcend above the import of one related experience and place the situation in relation to the whole of which they are a part.

An example of carrying through the thought of the single experience in view of the whole situation may be found in the following illustration. A woman was heard to make the statement that she hated the "Japs" because they couldn't be trusted. When asked upon what basis she made

(1) Bogardus, E. S., op. cit., p. 73-74.
the statement she replied that she had had a Japanese caretaker in her employ and he had deceived her. She based her attitude toward the entire race upon that one situation. In this particular instance, the interviewer investigated the situation more thoroughly to find its relation to the whole. It seems that the Japanese took an opportunity one day while the woman was away to pack his trunk and leave. When the man was interviewed, he explained that he had a wife and children fifty miles away and he had felt isolated and wanted to work near them. If this were all the evidence, the case would be against the Japanese because he should have been courageous enough to explain the situation to the woman. However, the interviewer found that true to Japanese patriarchal tradition, the man believed it to be a sign of weakness for a man to be ruled by his wife and so couldn't explain the real situation to the American woman since he refused to lie. He however, was accused of lying, the very sin he tried so hard to avoid. This example shows the importance of penetrating attitudes and opinions clear through to their origin in experience.
Not only should interviewers have a thorough understanding of the wishes and attitudes involved in interviewing but the artist in any field must realize the important part that the environment plays. The interviewer will seek to create an environment which will react favorably upon the individuals who enter it. In part the art of interviewing involves the place in which the interview is held. Much can be accomplished in the interview by attractive surroundings. Miss Lytton, Symonds, Bingham and Moore and many other authorities stress this in all types of interviews. A summary of these reveals the following reactions to this vital phase of interviewing technique. The student must not feel on guard nor hurried. Ample time should be provided for the interview as little is accomplished if the student feels rushed. The office should be attractive, comfortable and neatly furnished. Glaring windows, stiff and uncomfortable chairs should be avoided and bare walls are not usually conducive to a friendly atmosphere. The interviewer should avoid a cluttered desk, secretaries rushing in frantically or any other appearance of
being rushed as the student quickly senses his infringement upon the time of the interviewer with his problem and immediately a barrier is set up.

Miss Lytton makes an interesting observation in her article when she speaks of the interview as involving two people, and says that its success is as dependent on one as on the other. She cautions interviewers to remember that the interviewee is as eager to interpret the personality of the interviewer as the latter is to more thoroughly understand the former. It may be inferred from this that long range observations which every student makes of the administration will either be strengthened or weakened by the interviewee's intimate contacts with them and that the counselors too frequently fail to fully appreciate the great extent that the affect of their personality has on the student.

Symonds pays particular attention to the fact that evidence of the personality of the interviewer is very frequently revealed through personal appearance and feels that there must be nothing in the appearance or approach of the

interviewer which will tend to offend or disgust the other person. If so, very little counsel or advice given by the interviewer will be of much avail. Neatness, cleanliness and good judgment in personal attire are of much importance. Talking with several college administrators who do a great deal of interviewing, they feel that an interview should not be undertaken when one is overly tired, difficult though this may be. A tested schedule of the number of interviews which can be made easily and thoroughly in one day should be conformed to whenever possible is the consensus of opinion.

Miss Lytton brought to the attention of a group of Deans that sincerity and a sympathetic understanding were important characteristics for interviewers to possess as the student is very conscious of the interviewer's reaction to his statements. The student's freedom and spontaneity during the interview depends very greatly upon his feelings when he has found someone who will understand him.

The interviewer, continues Symonds, must be genuinely interested in the problems and
troubles of other persons, and he ready to listen attentively to a long-drawn-out tale of woe. To quote:

"He should be able to see the other's viewpoint and to share the other's hopes and fears whole-heartedly, without a tendency to ridicule or criticize them. Kindness and tolerance rather than coolness, austerity, and superciliousness should characterize the interviewer. He should neither approve nor condemn the errors and lapses of his subject nor should he exhibit surprise nor maudlin sympathy, but genuine whole-hearted understanding.... The person interviewed must be convinced that he is talking to a friend who will not betray him and who is primarily interested in his welfare.

Miss Lytton wants the interviewer to balance his more serious qualities with a sense of humor which not infrequently will prove his

(1)Symonds, P., op. cit. p. 457
greatest asset. Often in an interview tensions and inhibitions will arise which block the free development of the story. Miss Lytton points out that the interviewer must be on guard for these emotional blocks and stand ready to ward them off; a sense of humor sometimes will help one in smoothing over a situation which is developing in an uncomfortable manner. Also, she says his calmness and poise must suggest to the student that there is no time limit to the interview with him, no matter how great may be the pressure of other duties; that he may remain as long as he wishes and talk as freely as he desires.

It is essential, feel Bingham and Moore, that the interviewer maintain an objective professional attitude but not to the exclusion of the personal element which is so vital in this type of interview. It is frequently found that a tendency prevails to minimize those elements which are unpleasant but an interviewer must have a determination to face the facts. It is felt that the personal interviewer is

(1)Lytton, Mabel, Cl, op. cit., p. 87.
(2)Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 9.
not really a friend if he does not face the fact frankly that John's voice is painfully nasal and will be a life long handicap to him if it is not corrected. The interview should not be primarily concerned with sparing people's feelings, but at getting at the facts and problems in the situation.

Charters wants his interviewers to be "logical minded". What does this mean except that they should be generally intelligent and keen-witted to sense the forces at play in the life of the person whose story is being unfolded? Charters also wants his interviewers to be able to "dig in", by which he means able to follow up promising clues to elaborate some point on which the subject fails to go in detail.

Griffitts speaks of a knowledge of psychology as being essential to the equipment of the interviewer. Earlier in the thesis psychology in relation to interviewing was discussed and it was felt that certain forms of

(2) Griffitts, C. H., Fundamentals of Vocational Psychology, 94.
academic psychology are little more than useless. It is believed by Griffitts that a detailed knowledge of mental mechanisms - the attitudes, rationalizations, and motives that guide men's behavior should be of aid in interpretation.

Psychiatrists tell us that the interviewer should be well adjusted himself; that one cannot interpret successfully the mental actions and reactions until his own adjustments have been made. Griffitts assures us that an interviewer should be poised, emotionally stable, not prone to show undue excitement and that he should understand himself. Some say that one must actually have lived through various forms of experience before he is able to clearly recognize and diagnose them in others.

Interview Voluntary

The interview will always be more successful which is sought by the student voluntarily (1) because, believes Symonds, when the interview is voluntary, initial resistance is lacking and one may expect the answers to be on the whole more truthful. In the case of the first

Symonds, Percival, op. cit., p. 458.
interview, particularly, it may be assumed that
the element of compulsion is apt to produce a
feeling of fear of the experience which brings
about an unwanted restraint. If the student
seeks the interview, the interviewer is relieved
of any suspicion on the student's part that the
former is acting in the capacity of a discip-
linary officer.

Even in the voluntary interview, however,
experience has shown that the student may color
his remarks to give a favorable impression
or withhold information that would affect the
judgment of the interviewer. Symonds says
that it is in the involuntary interview that
all the skills and techniques of the interviewer
must be employed. Bingham and Moore say of
this:

"....the student being interviewed
must himself want to talk with the
interviewer regarding his plans and
problems. A "compulsory interview"
as Ben Wood has said, is as much
a contradiction in terms as "compul-
sory education". The student must
feel throughout that the interview

(1)Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 136.
is a joint concern; that the interviewer is not trying to suggest in either subtle or forceful ways some thoughts or line of action of his own fabrication; that nothing is being kept from the interviewee."

Interview Private

Miss Lytton reiterates an old truth when she says that the reaction of the individual to his environment when he is alone is not the same as it is when he is accompanied by another. Therefore the presence of a third party in the interview is undesirable, since this one becomes a factor in creating a very different situation from that in which no people are found. The result is that there is an evident lack of freedom and spontaneity during the progress of the interview. Both parties are conscious constantly of the presence of the third.

Factors Affecting Reliability

It is generally recognized that the personal interview exists by virtue of the fact

Lytton, Mabel C., op. cit., p. 88.
that something still needs to be done for the student after all other resources used for his and society's welfare have been exhausted. Physical examinations, intelligence tests, batteries of vocational tests, achievement tests, all represent expertness in scientific procedure in appraising the individual student. In nearly all interviews, judgments of personality are being made. The interviewer is appraising the interviewee as to his intelligence, honesty, etc. and even though these tests have been devised to rate these traits, personal judgment will always have to play a large role in the final conclusion. Bingham and Moore feel that every interviewer should keep in mind the fact that our judgments are handicapped because of several factors, which, unless considered consciously, will inhibit the best judgment of the interviewer in giving his estimation of the applicant's personality. One of these factors is what Thorndike named the "halo" effect. This is the error in which the interviewer's judgment regarding some

(1)Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 182
(2)Thorndike, Educational Psychology, p. 93.
specific trait or traits is warped by the general impression given by the interviewee.

Another element in the factors affecting the reliability of judgment of personality they say, is the effect of intimate acquaintance. Upon first thought, it might be suggested that a superficial acquaintance with a person afforded no accurate opportunity for judging personality. However, familiarity has its drawbacks too. Familiarity frequently brings about over-ratings and makes judgments less critical and analytical.

Still another element which interviewers must be cautioned against is the influence of stereotypes upon judgments of personality. Quoting from Bingham and Moore:

"...The interviewer should ask himself seriously how carefully he guards himself from the subtle influence of his stereotypes in judging the interviewee and in managing the interview. Too often a person has been misjudged or dealt with arbitrarily in an interview in which prejudices or preconceptions
associated with stereotypes have played the mischievous part." (1)

They continue by saying that a common tendency in estimating character and personality traits is to place too great an emphasis upon physical characteristics. However, we know that sound estimates of character rest on knowledge, not of physical structures, but of acts, accomplishments and social responses.

A much better solution to the problem can be seen when both student and counselor have a situation in which "things can be talked over". All authorities will agree that to establish a close, confidential relationship, rapport must be established. As was stated before, when the student enters the office, the interviewer's first problem is that of helping the former feel at ease in the situation. If the student has not learned something about the interview from others, he may be apprehensive or he may approach it with indifference. Any preconceived notion of it may be favorable or unfavorable.

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 184.
Miss Lytton thinks that the interviewer should be aware of this fact, her awareness being perhaps the first step in the direction of meeting the situation. The details of "getting set" for the interview will never be the same, because the factors present will vary from time to time. There will be various ways of establishing rapport with the student, depending upon the personality of the student and of the interviewer.

"Often if there is suspicion or hostility on the part of the subject, definite technique must be employed to disarm him, gain his confidence, and secure rapport. One must bring himself down to the subject's level, use slang or colloquial language where possible. One must not "talk down" to a student. The interviewer should convince the subject that he is an insider, worthy of confidence, rather than an outsider... If possible the interviewer should tie himself up in some way with the subject's past experience. A
reference to common friends often makes an excellent bridge with which to span the gap... If possible the subject should be made to feel that he is leading the interview. This can be done by giving him free rein in expression and asking questions which follow up leads already opened."

**Notetaking**

The problem of notetaking is encountered in all types of interviews. Authorities fail to agree as to the advisability of notetaking but it seems to be the consensus of opinion that the ease of the situation will be disturbed by the interviewer's notetaking during the progress of the interview. They seem to feel that note-taking is diverting to both the interviewer and the person interviewed. If the interviewer jots down parts of what the student is saying, the latter is apt to be fearful that he has said the wrong thing. Such a feeling would result in a caution that would interfere with a continued freedom of

Symonds, Percival, op. cit., p.
expression. Of course, no interview is complete until the vital elements in it are reduced to writing. It is in this latter phase that the interviewer's discriminating skill is exhibited. Many writers urge that the interview be recorded with the exact language used and that the report should be in the first person with exact quotations of the conversation. Symonds believes that opinions which the interviewer has formed during the interview may be suggested for his future reference, but should be written up sparingly in any written reports. It is conceded that wherever possible, time should be allowed for the writing up of this interview before another interview is started. It is unfair to the student to have any but the most accurate statements recorded and preserved. It is quite impossible for the interviewer to recall accurately what any one student has said if he has conducted several interviews in succession before he has had time to summarize each one.

Not a great deal is said regarding the

(1)Symonds, Percival, op. cit., p. 479.
conclusion of the interview. Bingham and Moore (2) however, do feel that the inter-
view should be terminated with both parties leaving as friends. Symonds suggests such phrases as "I am glad to have had this opportunity of talking things over with you", or "Let me know if I can ever be of help to you," or "Now that we are friends, come in and see me often," together with a hearty handclasp which he says helps to terminate the interview favorable. (3)

Healy feels that an interview should be followed up by others. He suggests several short interviews so as to avoid fatigue or boredom so that the interviewer may observe the subject on several different occasions when variations in mood can be noticed.

Although college personal interviewers have not as yet made such a scientific study of the interviewing techniques as have case workers, and although there is a great variation in the techniques employed, still there are certain rather definite standards to go by.

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 33.
(2) Symonds, Percival, op. cit., p. 474.
(3) Healy, W., The Individual Delinquent, p. 212.
After perusing many interviews and studying various techniques the writer found an outline which proved very helpful and which will be found in the Appendix. Dr. Helen D. Bragdon has made an intensive study of college counseling and interviewing and with the aid of an outline in the "Digest of the Interview from a Psychological Point of View" by Dr. Goodwin Wilson of Columbia University, and an outline by Mr. S. S. Board, quoted by Dr. Fryer in his article entitled "Objective of the Interview for the Vocational Counselor."

Some criticize the use and value of such an objective outline as this for the college personal interview, and it will be granted that if techniques and patterns are put first and the interview becomes a mere mechanical device added to our already mechanized organization of education, then such a procedure should be abandoned. If however, the primary motive in the interview is sincere interest in the students and their problems there need be no fears of dehumanizing the interview because a good interviewer in any field realizes
the value of constantly improving his skills and if another person is a poor interviewer a study of tried and successful skills is one way of improving his technique.
SUMMARY

In reviewing the various theories and techniques of interviewing, we realize more than ever the many limitations upon the utility of the interview. We see limitations imposed by the play of both personalities, by the nature of the facts sought, by attitudes, preconceptions, by the abilities of the interviewer and the interviewee, by the purpose of the interview and by the particular interviewing methods employed. However, we also know that, for all of its limitations, it is an indispensable tool in professions and occupations in which human relations are uppermost.

Social workers, realizing the indispensable importance of interviewing technique have done a great deal to define its objectives, both general and specific, and to improve their understanding of the interviewing process and their mastery of its technique. They have defined the aims of the interview with exceptional insight and are truly making inter-
viewing an art. They have studied in detail psychological processes affecting the interview which has been a contribution to everyone using it as a tool. They have recorded in more usable form a summary of techniques which have proved to be successful.

Research workers in the field of employment interviewing have studied process from a more technical viewpoint and have done considerable research in the field of improved forms and tests. They have attempted to approach interviewing objectively and to overcome weaknesses through this study.

Those college administrators who have realized the great extent and the great possibilities in a well planned interviewing technique have emphasized the human touch. They have contributed their greatest service in ascertaining knowledge, not about external physical facts and events but about the interviewee's attitudes and feelings and administrators have realized that attitudes and feelings have been forced to reveal themselves with considerable clarity and correct-
ness in the interview. The role the environment plays and the unquestionable importance of a person well qualified to do interviewing is stressed by them.

Bingham and Moore summarize in their book the true value of the interview:

"...the teacher's diagnosis of the discrepancy between a student's ability and his accomplishment; the counselor's help in planning a course of study or in choosing a career; the psychiatrist's aid in mastering an obsession or in establishing a normal balance between ambition and possible achievement; the social worker's consultation on a distressing family situation; the employer's appraisal of an applicant and his understanding of a worker's complaint— all require the interview. In each of these situations the effectiveness of the interview is proportional to the care with which it has been planned in advance and to the spontaneity and sympathetic understanding with which it is actually carried through, as
well as to the accumulated experience of the counselor. Such interviews are rarely for purposes of fact-finding alone; they clearly combine also the functions of instruction and motivation. Indeed, the facts brought out are of value chiefly as they serve to motivate the interviewee to self-guidance and self-decision in working out a solution of his own problem."

In conclusion, we see that technique in interviewing in each of its fields is an art, each field having its own peculiar emphasis resulting in its particular ways and means of achieving the desired goal. And again we read:

"Could a single interviewer combine in ideal proportion the core and training and objectivity of the interviewer in commercial surveys, the intuitive sympathy of the common sense and understanding of the employment interview, the patience and

insight of the psychiatrist, the educator's breadth of grasp, the self-immolation of the interviewer in industrial relations, with the enthusiasm and persistence of the reporter, he would be no longer in need of the interview as a means of ascertaining facts, for they would be known to him already." (1)

(1) Bingham and Moore, op. cit., p. 225.
APPENDIX

The "Musts" in the college interviewing process.

1. We must know what we are interviewing about. This involves, first, the ability to organize before the interview available information in usable form, and to gain needed new information quickly and accurately. It involves, secondly, the ability to help the student discover and define his problem, that we may know what is the vital subject of the interview.

2. We must know whom we are having the interview with. This in itself is a large order when we think of how little we know as certainty about personality and about individual differences in abilities, aptitudes, and interest. There is required, furthermore, a knowledge as objective as possible of the particular individual whom we are counseling.

3. We must know what we are counseling toward. Dr. Donald Paterson (1) gives the following as one theoretical basis for advisory work: Appreciation of the range of motives among college students, direct and indirect means of expressing these motives, the numerous possibilities of mental conflict arising from the multiplicity of motives, and possible methods of solving such conflicts in harmony with the student's best interests. Then, after this, are we not counseling toward purpose, awareness of problems, and self-guidance on the part of the student?

4. We must know when the interview should be over with. Many interviews are prolonged beyond the time of their usefulness; some are held which are unnecessary throughout; and we all know of cases where we have felt that another hour beyond the time we could give was critically needed before this process of mutual deliberation could properly be terminated with constructive help to the student.

5. We must set the stage so that something happens when we get through counseling. This demands, it seems clear, not only the motivating process we have mentioned above, but the drawing up of a program of action with the student. We are too apt to stop with diagnosis, but self-knowledge, although extremely valuable, does not seem to be the last step needed. It is valuable if the counselor and a student can decide that it is only lack of confidence which gives him a poor school record; but such knowledge will soon become valueless if it is not used in action planned to overcome that lack of confidence. (1)

(1) Bragdon, Helen, Counseling the College Student, p. 122-23.
I. Criteria for the Interview

Factors of Influence Preliminary to Actual Interview

1. Consider the attitude of student toward the interview, the interviewer, and the interviewing office.

2. Consider the attitude of adviser toward the interview, the interviewee, and students in general.

3. Consider the previous knowledge and information of both adviser and student concerning:
   (a) The adviser's knowledge of the student, from records and other resources.
   (b) The student's actual knowledge of the purpose of the conference.

4. Consider the setting and atmosphere for the interview:
   (a) The variety of settings possible for different kinds of situations - outside office, inner office, special conference room, even adviser's own home if situation is a delicate one.
   (b) The degree of privacy, comfort, "at-homeness", neatness, and easy access to needed equipment, in the setting.

5. Consider the counselor's manner of greeting the student.

The Interview Proper: Interacting Influences

1. Consider the counselor's method of approach, in conversation preliminary to the interview.

2. Consider the arrival at the purpose of the interview.
   (a) If a voluntary interview, the reason given by the student is often vague and even misleading.
   (b) If a regular scheduled interview, then conference may be one of mutual introduction and the exploration for the student's potential place in college life and the college's place in the student's life, and adjustments to be made toward that objective.
   (c) If a "referred" interview, there should be respect shown toward the student's statement of his side of the situation.
(d) All three types of interview should have the ultimate purpose of furthering the student's development, the ability to solve his problems, and to make his own adjustments.

3. Consider the development of the interview.
   (a) Up to the shifting-point, the development may be through the adviser's assumption of guidance and interested helpfulness, especially through his superior command of facilities and abilities and ability to initiate new moves.
   (b) The alternatives should be clearly talked over.
   (c) After the shifting-point, self-guidance should be stimulated and responsibility for action transferred to student.
   (d) All moves should be based upon developing responses of both in thought and fact; no previous detailed plan is possible.

Conclusion of the Interview

1. Consider the termination of the interview when it has served its purpose.
2. Consider the summing-up on the part of the counselor, and some tangible evidence of the conference for the student.
3. Consider the provisions made for follow-up if such is advisable.

2. Criteria for the Counselor

Preliminaries

1. Preparation of the counselor for the interview.
   Consider the counselor's customary preparation for the interview:
   (a) His ability to organize available information in usable form for the interview.
   (b) His ability to gain needed new information quickly and accurately.

2. Preparation of the student by the counselor.
   Consider the understanding of the purpose of the interview as given to the student:
(a) If on a voluntary basis, is the service offered clearly explained?
(b) If on an expected or compulsory basis, are the reasons fully given and cooperation asked?
(c) Are there incentives offered, such as the remedy for unsatisfactory situations or the securing of new satisfactions?

Physical Setting of the Interview

1. Consider the place provided for the interview.
(a) Do the details, such as lighting, ventilation, amount of quiet, and seating arrangement for the person interviewed give a constructive contribution to the setting?
(b) Does the place suggest neatness, comfort, and attractiveness to the extent of giving a favorable impression of the college and the interview, and of putting the person interviewed at ease?
(c) Does it furnish privacy?
(d) Do the counselor's attitude and the condition of his desk and office suggest readiness and willingness for an interview?

Greeting

1. Consider the counselor's approach to the student.
(a) Is he courteous in greeting?
(b) Does he put the student at ease? Or can he create the right atmosphere if the student is too much at ease?
(c) Can he conceal any marks of fatigue, pressure, or irritation?

Beginning the Interview Proper

1. Consider the opening of the interview.
(a) Is there enough informality to counterbalance the strangeness the student may feel?
(b) Is there an impression of cooperation rather than a display of authority?
(c) Does the counselor show an attitude of interest and consideration for this particular interview?
(d) In situations involving embarrassment or reluctance on the part of the student, are there touches of lightness, delicacy, humor, and ease which will create a constructive approach to frank and full discussion later?

(e) In situations where the student is in an antagonistic mood, is the counselor able to state the counselee's point of view as well as, or better, than, the student himself?

Traits and Skills of the Counselor

1. Consider as demonstrated in interviewing:
   (a) The ability to analyze facts and situations.
   (b) The capacity to deliberate carefully.
   (c) The quality of judgment shown.
   (d) The tact displayed.
   (e) Patience.
   (f) Sense of humor.
   (g) The ability to question.
   (h) The ability to incorporate new information into the interview skillfully, rather than conduct the interview on a preconceived plan.
   (i) The ability to counsel with simple vocabulary and concrete illustrations rather than with vague generalizations.

The Developing Interview

1. Consider the counselor's ability to discover the student's problems.
2. Consider the counselor's ability to define the student's problems.
3. Consider the counselor's ability to discuss with constructive effect facts and factors unfavorable to the student, but necessary to the solution of the problems involved.
4. Consider the counselor's ability to shift the initiative in the problem solution from himself to the student.
5. Consider the counselor's ability to arouse incentive of action.
6. Consider the counselor's ability to help the student to a clear and adequate understanding of the concrete developments of the interview.
Conclusion of Interview

1. Consider the counselor's ability to recognize the point at which the possibilities of that interview have been exhausted.
2. Consider his ability to terminate interview tactfully at that point.
3. Consider his ability to suggest and provide for a follow-up without requiring one, if one is advisable. (1)

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