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The Dental Student

APPROACHING GRADUATION—1962

By

Douglas M. More, Ph.D.

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Preface

This is a report to the dental profession on some major features of students about to graduate and enter professional status in this field. At the inception of the study in 1958, it was hoped we could obtain detailed information from all persons entering dental schools then. Ideally, we wanted thorough sociological data, social-psychological materials, and depth psychological measures. Further, we wanted to carry the study on in each succeeding year, preferably through intensive interviews and participation with students, to follow step-by-step the important, meaningful, personal experiences during those four years that contribute to making a professional man. The effort accomplished has been a much more modest one; we were able to do extensive interviewing in 1958-59, and to collect two fairly massive surveys completed by virtually all entering students in 1958, and by those same students who were remaining in 1962 (the Class of 1962).

The support for the initial and final surveys has come from the American College of Dentists. Additionally, members of the staff of N. K. and Associates have given generously of their time to aid this work during these four years. The limitations of time, personnel, and finances have led to a concentration on summaries of outstanding features of these students, to the extent that these can be derived from questionnaire materials. Elaborate statistical testing at one pole and intensive psychological interpretations of personality material at another pole have been beyond our current resources. I am confined to reporting fairly gross sociological and social-psychological findings. Nonetheless, these may serve as a framework on which future studies can build.

The student of professions who is working in the behavioral sciences will see readily in these pages the debt I owe to many who have pioneered in the analysis of occupations. To acknowledge the source of each notion would lead to bristling footnotes on many of the pages to follow. I can only hope to avoid such typographical monstrosities and discharge in part my intellectual obligations by mentioning here those men whose ideas and teaching have most been influential in forming my thinking for this work.

The concept of learning an occupation and becoming oriented toward a productive career as being a major developmental task of