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APPLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS AND THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE OF THE GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR IN MODERN EDUCATION*

ABSTRACT: School counselors soon become out of touch with Applied Psychology even though they function daily in the behavioral science component of the education process. The modern counselor is urged to re-examine his role and image as a professional with special skills that are valuable to teachers and pupils. A review is attempted to re-acquaint the counselor with some current notions of professional role clarifications of team membership, accountability, and recommendations for action.

INTRODUCTION

It is always difficult and I believe unwise to try to tell other people what they should do, or how they should act, or how they should go about their lives. A few of us, however, find ourselves in this position from time to time. We have elected to practice our occupational specialty in the area of the behavioral sciences. In education, we are called the school counselors, the school social workers, the school attendance officers, and so on. Perhaps since we engage in helping others see themselves from various points of view, we will not mind a bit of needed introspection now, in a period of crisis in education. This period of crisis involves a gigantic continent-wide appraisal of just what it is we are doing in education with our students. Countries have come to realize that education is perhaps the biggest business they have with possibly the least well-developed set of operationally efficient patterns. And, as we have moved toward a greater recognition of the dignity of all persons and the individual worth of every child, we are forcing ourselves to find out if this democratic theoretical base is working.

Today we are asking ourselves to glance into a mirror of sorts to see what we look like. The question of our symposium-workshop is . . . "What should be the Professional Image of the School Guidance Counselor?" I would like to attack or perhaps embrace this question briefly from five points of view within the limited space allotted to me:

1. **Plugging-in** to the problems of role and image as the behavioral science representative on staff.

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2. Some recent concerns from the field of Applied Educational Psychology.
3. A brief focus on a recent Ontario study . . . and its findings re: Guidance Services.
4. The counselor as a professional with special skills and contributions apart from those of the teacher.
5. The counselor as a team member not an isolate, and
6. The counselor's self-image.

After developing these points, I would like to finish with a few suggestions which I have called "recommendations for action."

Plugging-in to the Problems of Role and Image as the Behavioral Science Representative on Staff

As indicated in the introduction, many of us see the role of the guidance counselor in the school as a functioning applied behavioral scientist. Of course he is not the kind of person who is absent-minded, running around the halls in a white coat, and being completely oblivious of the school and its family . . . doing his own thing. I would like to think he is a responsible, educated, intelligent, and sensitive person trained to understand and help people. He has the skills and knowledge that come from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and education which enable him to be seen as a valuable person. But, are we seen as some kind of extension? . . . Do we see ourselves as some kind of extension? Perhaps the question is . . . Guess Who Came to Dinner?

This question was prompted in my mind as I read Virginia Bennett's (1970) article entitled "Who is a School Psychologist and What Does He Do?" For people in Guidance Counselling Services it might be of some consolation to know that fellow team members called school psychologists are also going through an identity crisis precipitated by the ubiquitous trend of examining very closely education, schools, their purposes, and their services these last years. It is her view that psychologists, for example, in the house of education are "guests." As she explains:

Regardless of their category or way of functioning, psychologists are "guests" (if well paid guests) in the home of education. Rarely do they have real authority, which lies with the school administrator. Some psychologists complain bitterly that they lack authority in the schools, and see the schools as rigid, inflexible establishments with out-moded practices interpreted as unbreakable rules and regulations. The ability of the psychologist to change the schools lies not in an authoritarian role, but in his ability to influence others. Psychologists might also realize that the role of influence is more valid than that of authority. When we try to tell people what to do, we either meet with resistance or else we foster dependence if we are accepted as an authority (p. 171).

As Bennett points out so forcefully, the authoritarian role does not help school personnel develop their own problem-solving abilities. Guidance personnel must also examine whether they can make their contribution without abusing the perception that perhaps they are

indeed guests in the education house. Or, I would prefer that guidance and counselling staff and psychologists strive to show how they must be considered family members, not outsiders who have to protect their right to "stay on."

Perhaps Virginia Bennett's view of "guests," if we can equate ourselves with another branch of helping services, the psychologists, can apply to us as counselors. Sometimes teachers and principals look at us as appendages, as frills, and sometimes as stooges.

In a recent article (Reddin, 1972), in a newspaper, I was struck by the writer's question relating to the perception of a person in his job. The question was... How effective are you? He then included a simple list of questions with which a person could test his job effectiveness. I believe a few of them might be of value to us in the schools, especially Guidance Service people, since we are now talking about professional image. The central question that I have extrapolated is: What is the job?... or what is a Guidance Counselor?

- What is the position's unique contribution?
- Why is the position needed at all?
- What would change if the position were eliminated?
- What will change if I am highly effective in that position?
- How would I know, with no one telling me, when I am performing effectively?
- What authority does the position really have?
- How do I spend my time?
- How would I like to spend it?
- What would I be most likely to concentrate on over two or three years if I wanted to make the greatest improvement in my guidance staff, in my school, in my school district?

To encapsulate these ideas with the behavioral science aspect, I would say there needs to be a bringing together of what tangible things we know we can do that emphasize our behavioral science or social science training and apply ourselves to remaking a more clear professional image.

Some Recent Concerns From The Field of Applied Educational Psychology

As busy day-to-day counselors we are often bogged down with routine work to the extent that we are unable to keep up with modern trends in our field. Some of us find it hard to read the journals in our field, and we do not know what is going on. We tend to lack the time or the habit which would permit us to put into practice recent findings in educational research, applied educational psychology, and social and anthropological literature. Is not what the schools are doing people? Or is just courses? Goodwin (1970) speaks of collaboration between the university and the school, and calls it a joint venture. But, what I would like to bring to you from that writer's emphasis is this: He sees three innovative trends in education, and describes them as contributing most significantly to the demand for change in the

psychologist's role: an emerging behavior-change technology, the applications of a systems approach in evaluation, and the increasing movement toward individualized instruction. I believe the point of who it is that changes role here is not the important point. We as counselors must see the climate we are operating in... An emerging behavior-change technology, the applications of a systems approach in evaluation, and the increasing movement toward individualized instruction. Another reviewer of the trends, Sprinthall (1971), discusses some of the concerns related to the idea of leaving the person out of education. We are aware that there are many of us who do not think our educational programs include enough of the personal dimension. We are too hooked on course content and rigid subject-matter objectives. Sprinthall deals with some of the preliminary issues involved in personal or psychological education as an objective for school programs. As he points out, a taxonomy for personal education has yet to be developed. One of the major failures of education has been the inability to conceive of objectives that are more broadly based than subject-matter mastery. One of Sprinthall's suggestions is the desirable appropriateness of developing programs that would allow an adolescent, as he enters the period of formal operations, to focus on himself, his ability to differentiate his own mental construction from others, and his concern somehow to put all these new parts of himself "all together."

In Denver, Colorado, there is a program called Emotional Skills. By 1971, this new course had spread to several dozen public and private schools from New York to San Francisco, and many school districts were mandating some form of classroom instruction in mental health. The goal: helping children forestall the emotional scars that lead to drug abuse, delinquency, and adult unhappiness. In this program there is a series of grade-four through grade-six textbooks called *Dimensions of Personality*. What these classes do is to help young children cope with their feelings.

An example of behavioral change can be found in a description by C. D. Catteral (1970). In describing more meaningful, direct service to children, Catteral stresses a behavioral approach in which two agencies collaborated. They were the Psychological Services Department of the Santa Clara Unified School District and the School Psychology Training program at San Jose State College. Under their approach, the guidance worker became less of a diagnostician, on the one hand, or counselor, on the other, and worked more to arrange the conditions which are conducive to effective learning. According to Catteral:

Instead of taking the student who was having difficulty out of the classroom and into the psychologist's or counselor's office, the emphasis began to be on assisting the teaching and on helping the child in the classroom demonstrate both improved behavior and progress toward a specific goal (p. 216).

The present writer, with Bob Cairns, Guidance Consultant in the Kingston area, is presently testing out some preliminary efforts with affective curriculum innovations which focus on self and improvement

of the child's perceptions of this school environment.

A word should be said about learning and classroom contributions. With the battle going on about learning in the classroom and non-learning, more stringent methods of setting goals and objects and evaluation are being introduced. I believe there are some ways for counselors to be active. With their background of educational psychology, measurement, child development, sociology, as well as teaching, most counselors are in a position to help children within the classroom, and help teachers within the classroom. It may require in some cases a more flexible organization, but that is precisely what we may have to think about... some new formats in the Guidance Service profile.

A Brief Focus on a Recent Ontario Study Re: Guidance Services

In a recently published study of innovative secondary schools King (1972) presents a rather interesting collection of impressions relating to Guidance Services. After reading this study, I decided it might be a good idea to report a few pieces of data and what I think these data might be saying to us as interested behavioral scientists in the schools. First of all, the study was done to attempt an evaluation of the impact of innovation on the learning experiences of students in schools. The focus was on the responses of the people directly affected by the changes: the students and their teachers, the guidance personnel, and the school administrators. Four schools were involved. A brief description can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Schools and Description

Name	Description
Clearview High School	One of six innovative schools recognized and supported by the Ontario Department of Education. Individual timetables, subject promotion, credit system, etc.
Ivy Heights High School	Same city as Clearview but more traditional academically oriented program. Emphasizes university preparation.
Gold Center High School	Located in major community in Northern Ontario. Individual timetables, credit system, provision for assigned and unassigned free time, flexible modular scheduling, etc.
Lakeside High School	Located in an industrial community near a large city. Individual timetables, credit system, wide variety of options, etc.

The questions this study asked about Guidance were:

What is the main purpose of the Guidance Department in your school? (The following six items were possible answers.)

1. To help students choose the right courses
2. To help students with personal problems
3. To supply information on job opportunities
4. To help students with difficulties in subjects
5. To supply information on universities and colleges
6. To help students who have personality conflicts with teacher

Students were also asked:

7. Do you feel you can get to see a guidance counselor if you want to?
8. Are you most likely to talk to a guidance counselor if you have a problem?
9. Have you met with a guidance counselor this year?
10. Did you feel that you benefited from your counseling experience?
11. Did the guidance counselor influence you the most in your choice of subjects?

Now let us take a look at the response realizing that a thorough analysis is not possible at this time. But I think one can see enough ideas inherent here to think more about ourselves. Table 2 is a compilation of student attitudes about the Guidance Department.

It is apparent that students perceived the main purpose of the guidance department as helping them choose the right courses. They did not see helping students who have personality conflicts with teachers as a high priority purpose, nor helping students with difficulties in subjects, nor helping students with personal problems, as high priority items.

It must be pointed out that in a school where program and choice is "the" innovative issue, it does follow that students will see the counselor as a key person. But the question to be raised is, "Are the guidance personnel establishing an image that they would like to see, or are they being carried along simply by the winds of administrative exigency?" Perhaps we should be concerned that in this study, in answer to question number 8, "Are you most likely to talk to a guidance counselor if you have a problem?" the percentages were rather discouraging. Does this indicate a lack of trust, confidence, or distortion in the counselor's role? I would like to see more counselors sit down with administrators with studies such as this done by Alan King at Queen's, to see just what we can begin with as problem areas in the question of professional image of the Guidance Counselor as counselors see it, as administrators see it, and as students see it.

The Counselor as a Professional with Special Skills and Contributions Apart From Those of the Teacher

Unless we are careful, we as counselors in the schools may be seen as teachers who are safely tucked away in the Guidance Cubicle doing a private thing away from the arena. If counselors allow themselves to be conscripted for routine clerical jobs or duties "just any teacher

TABLE 2

Responses to Questionnaire in Percentages. for 4 Schools

Item	School			
	Clearview	Ivy Heights	Gold Center	Lakeside
1	47	5 yr.*48 4 yr. 49	5 yr. 49 4 yr. 41	5 yr. 70 4 yr. 61
2	17	5 yr. 13 4 yr. 16	5 yr. 14 4 yr. 22	5 yr. 8 4 yr. 12
3	5	5 yr. 12 4 yr. 12	5 yr. 7 4 yr. 8	5 yr. 5 4 yr. 8
4	17	5 yr. 5 4 yr. 8	5 yr. 18 4 yr. 23	5 yr. 7 4 yr. 12
5	9	5 yr. 19 4 yr. 11	5 yr. 8 4 yr. 3	5 yr. 7 4 yr. 4
6	5	5 yr. 3 4 yr. 4	5 yr. 4 4 yr. 3	5 yr. 3 4 yr. 3
7	1969 75 1970 80	85	5 yr. 93 4 yr. 82	5 yr. 83 4 yr. 79
8	196 21 1970 25	9	5 yr. 31 4 yr. 37	5 yr. 19 4 yr. 20
9	1969 88 1970 86	87	5 yr. 99 4 yr. 99	5 yr. 76 4 yr. 72
10	1969 78	58	5 yr. 86 4 yr. 81	5 yr. 61 4 yr. 59
11	1969 11 1970 21	4	5 yr. 6 4 yr. 16	5 yr. 9 4 yr. 9

*5 yr. means students who have completed Grade 13; 4 yr = Completion of Grade 12.

can do," then the question can be asked, "Are they really necessary?" Until counselors demonstrate their usefulness in promoting better behavior, and implementation of human programs for human betterment, we are in trouble. I believe teachers ought to feel they can depend on counselors and school psychologists and school social workers to help them with aspects they are not trained to handle. I do not think counselors should spend seventy or eighty percent of their time on course selection, for example. A key in this connection is the Counselling Services brochure. The Guidance Department owes it to the school and pupils and parents to state publicly what they are about and why. If a school has no official statement about Guidance Services then the guidance staff is at the mercy of all kinds of warranted and unwarranted sniping, and possible eventual extinction as a professional group.

The Counselor as a Team Member Not an Isolate

Counselors do not have to be reminded that they are a member of a helping services team which includes people like the teacher, the school psychologist, the school nurse, the attendance worker, and possibly a school physician or specialist in pediatrics (Hoxter, 1967, 1968). Frequently it is the counselor who serves to coordinate and integrate the various helping efforts designed to ameliorate students' learning and/or behavioral difficulties. Reaching beyond the immediate school family, the counselor is the key person in the link between the child in school and his family, and between the child and community resources such as hospitals, clinics, and social agencies.

With the press of these important organizing duties, it is often a pitfall of the busy counselor that he finds himself unable to keep up with the contributions and applications of educational psychology. Depending on the complexity and depth of the school organization, two very crucial roles emerge as recent new challenges. One is the behavior modification process and the other is helping children with learning disabilities. It is to our distinct advantage to work more closely with teachers in reducing some of the actual classroom conditions that fall beyond the realm of teaching. Counselors are doing more behavior modification with individual students, and with several students in the classroom itself. As school districts move toward greater integration of the various phases of special education, teachers have increased need for counselors to help. The teachers find that as children with learning disabilities and other forms of exceptionality are integrated in regular classes, their own training is inadequate to cope with these youngsters.

If we are not to be considered isolates by the teaching group we must be ever alert to look for opportunities to be helpful to teachers. Some questions to be asked of ourselves, are: Do teachers and administrators see us as wanting to work alone with students? Do pupils and parents realize we have not just "come to dinner" but have skills and knowledges that can make school life better for the students and families?

It seems to me that introspection is quite necessary with respect to our image, but we must go a step further and insure that our colleagues read us as responsible professionals, who can deliver to an educational team a cooperative and helping function which will reduce the teachers' heavy load of understanding and reaching out to students they cannot cope with.

The Counselor's Self-Image

As modern counselors we must do more introspection by asking ourselves, "When was the last time I looked into a professional mirror of myself? What were the standards or criteria that I used? Do I get through in this school? Am I effective? Do my colleagues think I am any good? Perhaps I may need to try some behavior modifica-

tion on myself." Frequent meetings with other counselors in other school districts can be a help. A visit to a training institution such as a Faculty of Education in a university can improve the knowledge gap between what I learned in university then, and what counseling students are learning now. Consider taking a summer course or an inservice course for rejuvenation and up-grading of skills. As in self-theory, if the concept of your professional self is negative, evaluate the discrepancy between the real self and the ideal self and go to work. Help yourself while you are helping others.

Now that we have reviewed the six points of amplification in this paper, perhaps a few recommendations for action are in order.

Recommendations for Action

1. Every school with a Guidance and a Counseling staff should produce a brochure or folder describing its services in clear terms. It should be available to everyone in the school and to parents.
2. Guidance counselors must demonstrate to the students, teachers, staff, and community that the work they do matters and definitely helps students to:
 - a. Learn more effectively
 - b. Behave more rationally
 - c. See decision-making as a natural and non-fearful fact of life.
3. Guidance counselors, for themselves first, should establish priorities and goals for the clarification of their responsibilities within the school to such people as students, teachers, and administration.
4. In schools, the primary purpose of all that goes on is learning for better and more effective living. To the extent that Guidance and Counseling personnel contribute tangible, direct help toward pupil learning, they, the counselors, will be defined as valuable team members.
5. Guidance counselors frequently find themselves the only staff members with special knowledge of people as opposed to knowledge of classroom subject matter. The "person" is being left out of much of learning. Guidance service staff should be able to apply such applications of the behavioral sciences to the students' well being such as:
 - a. An informed and judicious use of behavior modification techniques.
 - b. Implementation of recent advances in the area of learning diagnostic curriculum development, in-class help for students with mild or severe emotional problems, in-class help for the slow-learners, low motivated, and low aspiration-level students.
 - c. Use of computer-assisted instruction techniques.
 - d. Spearheading in-service work with teachers to improve their understanding and handling of:
 - i.) classroom management problems,
 - ii.) precision teaching based on reinforcement principles.

6. Take every opportunity to work more openly and cooperatively with teachers . . . helping them to reach students who are identified by teachers as in need of help. A desirable goal is to have teachers appreciate the work of the counselor because he can do something to make teachers' lives better, not only students'.
7. The area of curriculum development suffers from the lack of creative planning taking into account individual differences, pupil motivation, learning styles, and teaching styles. Guidance personnel should become involved in these concerns because they are more able to view the child as a whole person, not simply as a container for course content.

RESUME: Les conseillers scolaires ont tôt fait d'oublier la psychologie appliquée, même s'ils travaillent quotidiennement dans ce domaine dans le contexte du processus d'éducation. On recommande au conseiller d'aujourd'hui de reconsidérer son rôle et son image comme professionnel ayant des habiletés spéciales utiles aux instituteurs et aux élèves. L'auteur esquisse une revue ayant pour but de familiariser le conseiller avec quelques notions courantes portant sur les rôles professionnels à l'intérieur d'une équipe et sur les responsabilités correspondantes.

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