

DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EDUCATION — AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

It is suggested that psychological education represents a potentially useful medium through which important developmental counselling goals might be realized in the school setting. While this concept appears to hold considerable promise for counsellors and teachers, there is at present a need to clarify the place and contribution of psychological education in the context of school related factors contributing to pupil development. Given this need for clarification, an integrated conceptual framework for psychological education is presented and discussed.

Résumé

Cet article suggère que l'éducation psychologique peut s'avérer un moyen utile pour réaliser dans les secteurs scolaires les buts de la consultation du développement. Quoique ce concept paraisse prometteur tant pour les conseillers que pour les éducateurs, on se doit de clarifier la place et la contribution de l'éducation psychologique dans le contexte des facteurs scolaires qui contribuent au développement de l'élève. Vu ce besoin de clarification, on présente et discute un schème conceptuel intégral pour ce type d'éducation.

The philosophy of developmental counselling as articulated by Blocher (1966), Dinkmeyer (1966), and Sprinthall (1971) has had, from the time of its inception, an undeniable appeal and a good deal of face validity. Dinkmeyer (1966) has described this emphasis in counselling as follows:

Developmental counselling, which can be contrasted with adjustment or crisis counselling, is not always problem-oriented in terms of assuming that the child has some difficult problem. Instead, the goals are the development of self-understanding, awareness of one's potentialities, and methods of utilizing one's capacity. Developmental counselling truly focuses on helping the individual to know, understand, and accept himself. (p. 264)

Notwithstanding the desirability of, and the need for, this orientation, the means required for its meaningful and effective translation into practice in the school setting have been lacking. This state of affairs has tended for many practitioners, including the writer, to be a source of some considerable frustration and exasperation. In recent years, however, the concept of deliberate psychological education has emerged as a promising medium through which important goals which have traditionally been identified with developmental counselling can be realized. The broad parameters of psychological education are at present reasonably well established. Cottingham (1973) has described the concept as follows:

The nature of psychological education assumes that

the primary goal is the personal development of the clients through educative or preventive experiences. This goal is a central objective in the total school program offered through regular curriculum courses, units, or systems. (p. 341)

In a similar vein, Sprinthall and Erickson (1974) have suggested that central to psychological education is "a curriculum in personal and human development — a comprehensive set of educational experiences designed to effect personal, ethical, aesthetic, and philosophical development in children, adolescents, and adults" (p. 397). Attempts are being made to articulate more succinctly the goals of psychological education. Ivey and Alschuler (1973), for example, stress the central significance of individual decision making in their interpretation of the concept. In their view, "The metagoal of psychological education is to increase individuals' intentionality: their capacity to anticipate alternative experiences, choose among them, and attain their desired goals" (Ivey & Alschuler, 1973, p. 592). Alschuler and Ivey (1973) also focus their attention upon the process of internalization by stressing that, "The tactics and strategy of psychological education should be designed to help individuals internalize their own goals, their own ideals, their own use of skills, and their own definitions of self" (p. 607). The similarities between these descriptions of psychological education and the philosophy of developmental counselling are self-evident. It is further apparent

that psychological education is very much concerned with the achievement of objectives in the affective domain.

While the concept of psychological education is still in the process of crystallization, there are definite indications that well rationalized attempts are being made to implement and evaluate various approaches and programs, both at the elementary (Poitras-Martin & Stone, 1977; Enright & McMullin, 1977; Cooney, 1977; Eldridge, Witmer, Barcikowski, & Bauer, 1977; Harris, 1976; Eldridge, Barcikowski, & Witmer, 1973; Koval & Hales, 1972) and secondary school levels (Galbraith & Jones, 1977; Bernier & Rustad, 1977; Cognetta, 1977; Rustad & Rogers, 1975; Mosher & Sprinthal, 1970).

Psychological education shows considerable promise in terms of being a medium through which the philosophy of developmental counselling and the full range of educational objectives can be realized. However, there is presently a need to ensure that program and material proliferation is balanced by continuing efforts to articulate more precisely the rationale underlying it. Given the need for additional clarification, the remainder of this article will be devoted to presenting and discussing an integrated conceptual framework for psychological education.

The framework to be described (see Figure 1) represents an attempt to integrate the concept of

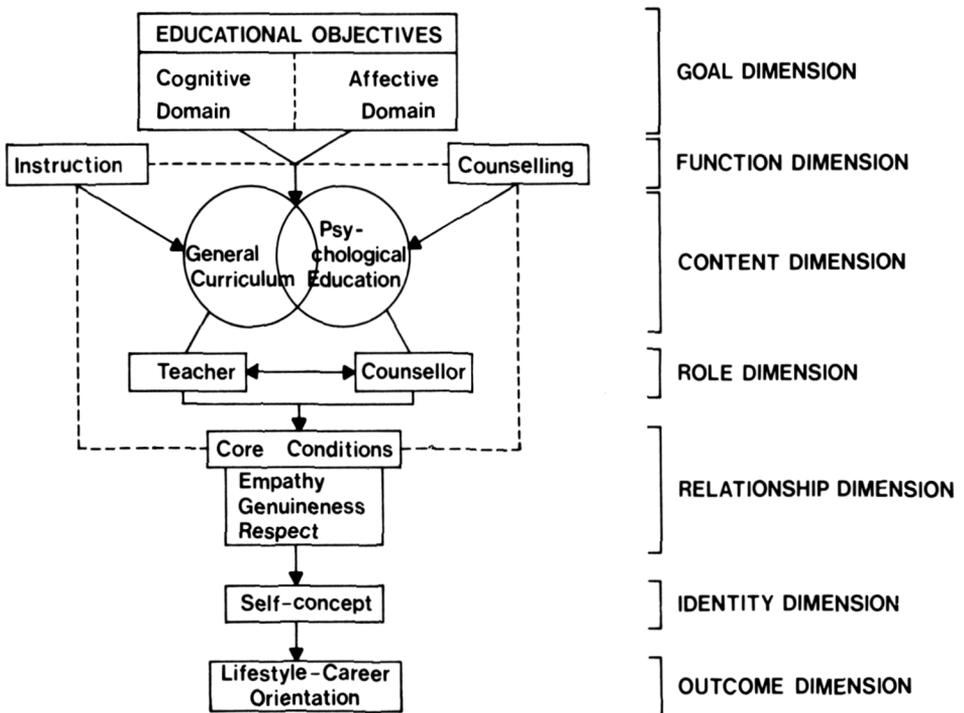
psychological education with a variety of school related dimensions and factors that have a bearing on pupil learning and development. It is intended to pertain to both the elementary and the secondary school levels. Although the framework is not meant to be a final statement, it is hoped that it will assist those interested in psychological education in understanding more clearly its place and contribution in the total education context.

Assumptions Underlying the Conceptual Framework

- (1) The cognitive and affective domains are highly interrelated and in continual interaction.
- (2) Both the general curriculum and psychological education are concerned with learning in the cognitive *and* the affective domains.
- (3) The functions of instruction and developmental counselling are complementary in relation to pupil development.
- (4) The function of instruction and the role of the teacher are closely identified with the general curriculum.
- (5) The function of developmental counselling and the role of the counsellor are closely identified with psychological education.
- (6) There is a significant degree of overlap between the general curriculum and the

FIGURE 1

AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EDUCATION



content of psychological education and a corresponding overlap, or similarity, in the roles of teachers and counsellors in fostering pupil growth.

- (7) There is a close working relationship between teachers and counsellors in facilitating pupil development (i.e., both teachers and counsellors are involved in helping relationships with pupils).
- (8) Relationship factors (i.e., the core conditions of empathy, genuineness, and respect) are significant in relation to both instruction and developmental counselling.
- (9) The interpersonal relationship, as characterized by the core conditions, is of central importance to the development of a pupil's self-concept.
- (10) There is a close relationship between an individual pupil's self-concept and his life style-career orientation.

DISCUSSION OF FRAMEWORK DIMENSIONS

The Goal Dimension

A fundamental assumption within the framework is that cognition and affect are highly interrelated. A corollary of this assumption is that educational objectives in the cognitive and affective domains are also very much interrelated and, by no means, mutually exclusive. The inseparability of cognition and affect has traditionally been acknowledged by those concerned with the development of the "whole person". Combs, Avila, and Purkey (1971) point out that, "The attempt to treat knowing and feeling, or cognition and emotion, as though they were unrelated matters obeying different laws can only lead to confusion and misunderstanding. We do not experience cognition and emotion as separate entities" (p. 100).

In the writer's view, it is important that affective learning come to be regarded as important in its own right and not only, or merely, as a by-product of cognitive learning. In this context, those involved with the education of the young need to seriously examine the tenability of the assumption that if enough is done in relation to the realization of cognitive objectives, affecting learning will concomitantly occur. Amplifying this point, Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1973) argue that, "The evidence suggests that affective behaviors develop when appropriate learning experiences are provided for students much the same as cognitive behaviors develop from appropriate learning experiences" (p. 20). Psychological education represents both a medium for the provision of affective learning experiences for pupils and a means for optimizing the integration of cognition and affect in the context of the general school curriculum.

The Content Dimension

If psychological education is to become and remain a viable developmental counselling concept, its relationship to the general school curriculum needs to be defined as clearly as possible. Caution must be exercised to ensure that materials and programs pertaining to psychological education do not come to be regarded as frills or as expendable extensions of the established curriculum. The content of psychological education would ideally be highly integrated with, and be perceived as being an integral part of, the general curriculum.

The generation of content falling under the rubric of psychological education represents genuine progress for the school counselling profession. At the same time that such content is being developed and tested, there appears to be among those involved with the general school curriculum an increasing acceptance and recognition of affective learning objectives (Cogan, 1976; Cogan & Litcher, 1974; Gray, 1972; Klein, Novotney, & Tye, 1972). Rubin (1974), in an article titled "Whither Goest the Curriculum?", states:

Decisions depend upon a body of underlying values. As a consequence, value education must also have a large place in the curriculum of the future . . . The curriculum we need must transmit, at least for consideration, the dominant values of the present society and — at the same time — afford practice in the fabrication of new value systems. (pp. 117-118)

This broadening in orientation on the part of those involved in the development of the general school curriculum provides a potentially splendid opportunity for counsellors and counsellor educators to enter the educational mainstream through the sharing of their professional knowledge and expertise.

The Relationship Dimension

It is assumed within the framework that the quality of the interpersonal relationship between teachers and pupils and counsellors and pupils is of central significance in relation to pupil learning and development. The pioneering theoretical work of Rogers (1957, 1962) and its extension by Truax (1966) and Carkhuff (1969) has made it possible to, in large measure, operationalize the meaning of the concept of relationship in terms of the so-called core conditions of empathy, genuineness, and respect. Being able to conceive of the interpersonal relationship along these dimensions has proven to be very useful in the context of counselling and psychotherapy and is proving to be increasingly so in education.

It is maintained that, ideally, content would be presented or dealt with by teachers and counsellors in the context of a learning climate resulting from the presence of facilitative levels of

empathy, genuineness, and respect. It is further maintained that the presence of such a climate would be particularly crucial if the explicit purpose of dealing with content was the enhancement of the pupil's self-concept. It is not suggested here, however, that all content and learning experiences should be mediated by an interpersonal relationship. Pupils, so varying degrees, depending upon the subject matter, individual learning style, etc., also learn and develop independently of relationships with others. The conceptualization emphasizes those school learning situations in which the pupil is exposed to content or provided with learning experiences through relationships with teachers and counsellors. It is held that the core conditions are significant in the educational context in much the same way as they have been shown to be in relation to counselling and psychotherapy (Truax, 1966). In summarizing the research in this area, Gazda, Asbury, Balzar, Childers, and Walters (1977) have concluded, "Research investigations indicate that a teacher may especially either facilitate or retard the emotional and cognitive growth of students and that the teacher's level of functioning on core interpersonal conditions significantly influences student emotional and cognitive growth" (p. 13).

The Identity and Outcome Dimensions

It is suggested that a primary common purpose of teachers and counsellors is to assist pupils in developing a positive self-concept. Within the framework, self-concept is broadly conceived and closely related to personal identity. It is assumed that there exists a close relationship between an individual's self-concept and his lifestyle-career orientation. In fact, it is maintained that the development of the self-concept, broadly conceived, is, in good measure, a prerequisite to the development of a personally meaningful career orientation. This point of view is consistent with the theorizing of Super (1957) who claims that, "In choosing an occupation one is, in effect, choosing a means of implementing a self-concept" (p. 196).

By virtue of its emphasis upon the self-concept and personal development, psychological education represents a potentially useful medium through which career development might be fostered.

The Function and Role Dimensions

It is emphasized within the framework that the functions of instruction and developmental counselling and the roles of teachers and counsellors are complementary and interdependent. While detailed discussion of the specifics of counsellor role in relation to psychological education is not possible here, certain broad

parameters of counsellor involvement in this context will be outlined. The writer has found it possible in his capacity as a school counsellor to work effectively in the area of psychological education in the following ways:

- (1) Through conducting of inservice sessions and workshops for the purpose of familiarizing teachers and administrators with programs and materials relating to psychological education and providing practical guidelines and suggestions for their implementation.
- (2) Through personal continuous implementation of programs in the classroom and in small group settings.
- (3) Through providing ongoing support and consultation to teachers and administrators once materials and programs have been introduced.
- (4) Through involvement in program development and evaluation.

Some of the writer's most satisfying, enjoyable, and challenging experiences as a practicing school counsellor have resulted from involvement in the various activities described above.

In the future, an increasingly important dimension of the counsellor's role will consist of direct involvement with curriculum development personnel in the planning and implementation of curricula that will serve to meet the needs of the "whole person" as he progresses through school. In order that school counsellors might function credibly and effectively in this regard, they increasingly will need to acquire knowledge and expertise beyond that typically provided in the context of traditional counsellor training programs.

If counsellors are to realistically expect classroom teachers to become central figures in the implementation of programs of psychological education, they obviously will need to share with or "give to" teachers their specialized knowledge and skills. There are definite indications that counsellors and counsellor trainers are beginning to share their expertise with the teaching professions (McMillin & Maurer, 1977) and that promising materials and programs are being developed for the purpose of training teachers in areas such as human relations and interpersonal communication (Gazda et al., 1977; Carkhuff, Berenson, & Pierce, 1977). Particularly encouraging is the evidence that deliberate training of teachers in these areas can be effectively carried out (Hawn, 1977; Hurt, 1977; Fraser & Vitro, 1975; Hartzell, Anthony, & Wain, 1973). If the trend in the direction of teacher training in interpersonal relating continues, it is self-evident that, in terms of certain basic skills, school counsellors and teachers will increasingly have much in common. Such commonality in the

training of counsellors and teachers need not constitute a threat to the school counselling profession in the sense that it might make the counsellor's function and role redundant. On the contrary, such common professional background could provide an ideal basis for optimal cooperation between teachers and counsellors in fulfilling their respective functions.

CONCLUSION

The writer has presented an integrated conceptual framework for psychological education and has discussed its various dimension in the hope that those interested in this concept might understand more fully its contribution to pupil development in the school setting. While psychological education appears to have considerable potential in terms of achieving developmental counselling goals, at least two things need to be done if this potential is to be realized. First, psychological education must be theoretically and conceptually grounded, for the most part, in developmental psychology. This need is increasingly being recognized (Sprinthall, 1971; Rest, 1974; Blocher, 1974; Kohlbert, 1975; Elardo & Elardo, 1976). A second requirement that must be met if genuine progress in the area of psychological education is to be made is that approaches and programs must be systematically introduced and adequately evaluated. This is an area in which counsellors, school system program evaluation personnel, departments of education, and university based personnel might cooperate to the advantage of all concerned.

If psychological education is to gain wide acceptance and genuine credibility and if counsellors are to play a significant role in its introduction and implementation, it is of paramount importance that much hard work continue to be done to ensure that teachers, administrators, and our various other "publics" come to more fully understand and accept the need for developmental counselling. The incongruence between our perceptions of our role and the perceptions of those we serve probably represents the most serious problem presently confronting us. This problem actually constitutes a challenge to the school counselling profession. Since psychological education represents a visible means by which developmental counselling goals can be reached, it could prove to be a valuable tool in effectively meeting this challenge.

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