

## GUEST EDITORS' COMMENTS

This special issue of the *Canadian Counsellor* presents nine papers on school counselling in Canada. While these papers do not provide a comprehensive outlook on school counselling, they do suggest certain critical issues—both in the training of school counsellors and in the delivery of counselling services to children and youth within the context of schools. It is our hope that these papers will provide a constructive framework for thinking about school counselling. It is, perhaps, a truism to say that school counselling is at a crossroads, for school counselling seems always to be at a crossroads. It is not a truism, however, to point out that as the impact of significant social, economic, political and demographic factors are felt within institutions of education, school counselling and counsellor educators must maintain a critical and constructive attitude towards their respective roles and tasks. We say “must” because in our opinion the failure of school counselling to re-orient to shifts in the social-cultural milieu will lead to certain diminution of counselling services in schools or even worse, to their extinction.

High levels of unemployment, high levels of mobility associated with resource and industry development, the influx of immigrants into certain cities, family instability, the see-saw of school enrolments, economic austerity—these are the undeniable social realities within which education, in general, and school counselling specifically, must continue to be self-critical and reconstructive in order to maintain useful service to clients.

The initial paper by Hiebert, Martin, and Marx provides a provocative model for training counsellors—a model which is clearly grounded in education and which defines the counsellor as educator. Their key idea is that within their proposed orientation, “counsellors may govern their counselling activities by what is known about effective learning and instruction across a broad array of clients, problems, situations, and goals.”

Bedal reviews and discusses the results of a survey of provincial guidance service directors' opinions on school counselling/guidance services. While the data source for the study is limited, at least three important points are raised. First, “Why are counsellor training institutions so little engaged in in-service training for school counsellors?” Second, “Why is there such an apparent discrepancy between the training models used by training institutions (psychological, psychotherapeutic) and the approach envisioned by guidance directors (guidance-educational)?” Third, there seems to be little account taken by school guidance

programs (nor by training programs) of national priorities such as reduction of unemployment, bilingualism, and women's rights. It is not clear to us just to what extent the matter of national priorities *should* enter into either the training of counsellors or into counselling/guidance programs.

Hassard's examination of graduate-level preparation of counsellors in Canadian universities presents interesting data on various aspects of counsellor preparation programs including evidence that within the past five years a shift *has* been occurring in counsellor preparation programs toward more emphasis on career development and career counselling, and more articulation of school counselling efforts with other helping agencies in the community.

The papers by Borgen and by Allan and Der are descriptive of counsellor preparation at the University of British Columbia. Both papers describe how a university training program can cooperate with a school district to provide student counsellors with *in situ* preparation. The Buttery and Allan paper on journal writing complements the previous two articles with its value in demonstrating a practical, useful procedure which can be used by counsellors and teachers alike to stimulate and organize students thoughts about such topics as self, career aspirations, family, national issues, interpersonal relations, etc. Journal writing, properly conducted, can combine both instruction and counselling into a unitary experience in the lives of pupils.

*The Position Paper on School Guidance Services*, a document of the Canadian School Trustees Association, is important both as a national position paper by a group of considerable influence in education and for the issues, both true and false, which it raises. The CSTA document is critical of what is identified as (1) “lack of appropriate counsellor training programs”, (2) lack of requirements for certification of guidance counsellors, (3) discrepancies between school guidance goals and school counsellor roles, and (4) failure of counsellors (and those at higher levels) to take steps which result in adequate career education programs. While we certainly do not suggest that the document be naively accepted as *the truth*, we do believe that it should be carefully examined by all concerned with school counselling.

This issue concludes with reactions by Morris and Savage and by France to the CSTA paper. Interestingly, Morris and Savage suggest how the implementation of a K-12 career education program as suggested in the CSTA paper would not

only fail to "reduce high levels of youth unemployment" but in addition, must turn out to be *detrimental* to school guidance. The point cannot be made strongly enough that youth unemployment is a factor whose origin and solution lies in the economic structure of the nation and the world and *not* in the structure of guidance services. Even the *employability* of youth remains an elusive phenomenon not clearly to be much influenced by *any* conceivable form of guidance or career education program with conventionally organized schools. Even more—suppose that a "new" career education and guidance approach did effect the miracle of high levels of youth employability (which certainly would include the *expectation* of employment) while job availability (the real unemployment factor) remained scarce. Then who would be called upon to mitigate the widespread frustration which would be felt, and probably acted upon, by large numbers of employable yet unemployed youth?

Youth of today may be faced with numerous adjustments with regard to their careers as a result of the technically oriented complex world of work. France, in reacting to the CSTA paper suggests the real need is for attitudes of change and adaptability. Schools must become future oriented, preparing students to be flexible and adaptable to the changing world of work. Suggestions for developing a school guidance program that synthesizes an "individual's career aspirations along with life development" are included.

We invite you, the readers, to a continuing dialogue and research on school counselling in Canada.

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