

JOHN G. PATERSON,  
*Department of Education Psychology,  
 University of Alberta.*

## A CASE FOR TEACHER TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE FOR SCHOOL PUPIL PERSONNEL WORKERS

Pupil personnel workers are recent additions to the education team in Canada. Services such as school guidance and counseling, school psychology, school social work, etc. had their beginnings in the 1890's and early 1900's in the United States. These educational specialists were not accepted readily in the United States, although now a very high percentage of urban school systems employ speech therapists, school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers (*NEA Research Bulletin*, 1967). Growth of pupil personnel services in Canadian public schools is still proceeding very slowly. It was not until 1965 that a national professional association was formed which recognized counselling as a profession—Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association.

It has become fashionable in both the United States and Canada to blame shortages of qualified personnel on "outmoded" requirements demanding teacher certification for pupil personnel workers. Arbuckle (1967) has taken this position and stated that there was no empirical evidence to support the argument that being a teacher makes one a more effective counselor. Yet Arbuckle, along with many writers, has been concerned about growing divisions between disciplines in pupil personnel services. This writer has taken the position that the major reason for communication blocks has been the lack of common goals and purposes.

If a psychologist, social worker, or counselor chooses to practice his profession in a school setting, he becomes committed to goals of education. All pupil personnel workers should be working together to help each child in school "achieve in line with his potential." It is true that workers in one discipline will be better prepared, by virtue of their training, to deal with certain types of problems. For this reason an interdisciplinary approach is essential for maximum effectiveness. Teamwork, rather than duplication of services, is essential among pupil personnel workers. Yet similarities in function often outweigh differences. There are common elements in all pupil services, such as Smith's (1964), outlined below.

- (1) Each noninstructional worker is engaged in a supportive role to the teacher;
- (2) All pupil personnel professions are educationally based in the behavioral sciences;
- (3) Each uses in a professional relationship, the one-to-one or small group situation in its practice;
- (4) Each pupil personnel worker, to be effective, must interrelate closely with the teacher and the principal, or other designated administrative personnel.

Such common elements indicate a need for all pupil personnel workers to have knowledge and experience with teaching and learning. Again the writer

would contend that knowledge about teaching can best be obtained through teacher training and/or classroom experience.

One would expect professional associations to be most concerned about competency within their discipline. Surprisingly, there is evidence that these associations also recognize the need for skill and knowledge about education, for specialists planning to work in schools. The National Association of Social Workers (1962) has recognized the problem and acknowledged:

. . . the necessity for an orientation to and knowledge of the school as a social institution. This understanding . . . may be obtained in various ways: (1) Orientation and inservice training provided through the employing school system; (2) Field work placement in a school setting; (3) Relevant courses in education.

The American Psychological Association (1962) has recognized that "the school counselor, like other qualified specialists in the school system, should have a thorough knowledge of schools and the educational setting (p. 149)."

The position that teacher training, or as an alternative, extensive, though selected course work in a Faculty of Education, is a popular one. Recent writings of Johnson (1962), Kell (1961), and Nesbit (1964), referring to school social work, and Gray (1963) and Cays (1964) referring to school psychology, have made this clear.

The case for the desirability of classroom teaching experience for pupil personnel workers is not as well supported, Rosecrance and Hayden (1960) and Kell (1961) have supported this position. The major argument against teaching experience has been practical rather than theoretical. Members of associated professions have been concerned that a requirement of teaching experience would keep competent people out of pupil personnel work. This reasoning is not relevant to the issue. At the present time it is not reasonable to expect every counselor to have a Master's Degree, or every psychologist to have a Ph.D., or every social worker to have an M.S.W., yet these are the goals of the professional associations. If teaching experience would greatly assist the pupil personnel worker, then this would be the goal for training of such people. The writer would support the position that teaching experience would be desirable, although not always essential.

The research evidence on this question is indeed sparse. However, Fredrickson and Pippert (1964) did find school personnel and particularly administrators preferred counselors with teaching experience. These findings were supported by Peterson and Brown (1968) who also noted respondents with teaching experience seemed able to provide better vocational information than their counterparts who had not been in a classroom.

In Canada now numbers of pupil personnel workers are receiving training at an ever increasing rate. In some instances relationships between University faculties and public schools are so poor that practicum training in schools is impossible. Education in our country has undergone major changes in the past decade, yet in some instances University instructors in Social Work and Psychology have not been in a public school since their own graduation. Teachers and administrators are justifiably wary of reports "couched in professional jargon," particularly if pupil personnel workers are completely unaware of what can and cannot be done in a classroom situation. Counselors in schools must understand educational problems, as well as "long term cases." School psychology is different from clinical psychology,

so professional people in these separate fields must not receive the same training. School social workers must be different from agency caseworkers. The hope for cooperation among disciplines is a common concern for children, and a knowledge and understanding of education. Every pupil personnel worker in education must contribute to children's learning either directly or indirectly. As Graham (1961) asserts, no child goes to school merely for the sake of attendance or psychological studies; he goes to school for the educational and growth experience that will help him to be a more competent and better adjusted individual in the society. Thus, pupil personnel workers must understand not only children, but children in a school setting, and their common base should be an understanding of, and experience with, the educative process.

#### REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association, Committee on Counselor Training. The scope and standards of preparation in psychology for school counselors. *American Psychologist*, 1962, **17**, 149-152.
- Arbuckle, D. S. Counselor, social worker, psychologist: Let's ecumenicalize. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 1967, **45**, 532-538.
- Cays, F. M. Sub-doctoral training in school psychology: A lesson on failure. *Psychology in the School*, 1964, **1**, 215-223.
- Fredrickson, R. H., & Pippert, R. R. Teaching experience in the employment of school counselors. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 1964, **4**, 24-27.
- Graham, R. Contribution of social work to the field of pupil personnel work. *International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers Journal*, 1961, December, 5-14.
- Gray, S. W. *The psychologist in the schools*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1963
- Johnson, A. *School social work*. New York, NASW, 1962.
- Kell, I. R. Pre-service training for pupil personnel workers. *International Association of Pupil Personnel Workers Journal*, 1961, December, 30-31.
- National Association of Social Workers, *Professional qualifications for school social workers*, New York: The Association, 1962. (Mimeo)
- National Educational Association Research Bulletin. Special professional personnel. *N E A Research Bulletin*, 1967, **45**, 105.
- Nesbit, E. Goals, recruitment, training and staffing. *School Social Work*, U.S. Department on Health, Education and Welfare, 1964, **15**, 43-54.
- Peterson, B. H., & Brown, D. Does teaching experience matter? *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 1968, **46**, 893-897.
- Rosecrance, F., & Hayden, V. *School guidance and personnel services*, Boston: Allynand Bacon, 1960.
- Smith, H. Pupil personnel services. *School Social Work*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1964, **15**, 16-25.

## LES MEMBRES DES SERVICES PERSONNELS AUX ÉTUDIANTS ET L'EXPERIENCE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

J. D. PATERSON

Doit-on avoir enseigné devenir membre du personnel des services aux étudiants. C'est là, bien sûr, un sujet de controverse bien connu.

L'auteur maintient que l'expérience de l'enseignement est désirable, bien que non essentielle. Cependant les membres des services aux étudiants doivent comprendre non seulement l'enfant, mais l'enfant en milieu scolaire. Ils doivent aussi, en plus de la connaissance du milieu où évolue l'enfant, être au courant de tout le processus éducationnel.

Attendu que tous les membres des services personnels aux étudiants doivent travailler en étroite collaboration pour que l'enfant se développe au maximum de ses possibilités, chacun doit donc, selon sa discipline, apporter le meilleur de lui-même.