

PIERRE TURGEON,
*Faculté d'Éducation,
 Université d'Ottawa.*

COUNSELOR EDUCATION IN THE NEXT DECADES: A CATHARSIS

Changingness is a reality we as counselor educators must accept as our creed in the next decades. Change is not to be viewed as an inhibitor stifling our initiative and giving us few guiding principles in our search for directionality in our preparation of counselors. It must be viewed rather as a source for creative decision making on the part of true professionals who are challenged by the present change situation.

In our search for direction I believe certain guiding principles should be considered by counselor educators in the future:

The next decade will be an age of professional dialogue. Dialogical experiencing will become one of the major characteristics between helping professionals. In order to justify our existence in an age of accountability there will need to be a clearer definition of roles within the total helping community. We will need to develop a true *psycho-social* mentality. The many potential helping agencies including school counselling services, guidance services, psychological services, social services, family counselling services, psychiatric services, etc., will need to cooperatively define and redefine their roles, and each will need to arrive at a positioning within the overall helping milieu. It is my major thesis that we can no longer continue to function as one agency apart from another or as one profession apart from another profession. We must begin to ally our efforts around the creation of an environment where each profession recognizes its unique potential within the overall helping framework. This collaborativeness in dialogue will shape the future of the helping professions in the next decades.

There will need to be an interdisciplinary dialogue in the creation of counselor training curricula. In an atmosphere of change we must be cognizant of the need to develop effective exchanges with fellow academics in related disciplines in order to shape the exposure our students will receive in a manner which is attuned to societal trends and needs. Active exchanges with sociologists, anthropologists, educators, historians, philosophers, and psychologists in continuing committee forms could, I believe, provide us with a global directionality in assessing, choosing, implementing, and evaluating curricula in our training of counselors. It is my belief that interdisciplinary interactions of this nature will be vital in the future if we are to provide education for counselors which is in step with the fluidity of social change.

As faculty members of universities we will need to develop and maintain continuous dialogue with the schools. In rendering a service to the school communities we will need to be actively engaged in continually assessing the counselor's role as perceived not only by

counselors but by other members of the school community including students, administrators, and teachers. Our role will become an emerging role designed to meet the emerging needs of the school. These needs will be cooperatively arrived at in dialogue with members of the school community. It is my belief that the role of the counselor defined in this manner will result in a clearer understanding of what the counselor does and can do in providing a service to the school milieu.

We will need to develop and encourage a "social involvement attitude construct" within our counselor trainees. The contribution of our counselors will have to go beyond the narrow confines of guidance departments, pupil personnel offices, or social work agencies. Our counselors will need the abilities and skills to become an impetus in the total community they serve. Involvement in academic and educational planning, involvement with industry and participation with management and employee groups, involvement with Children's Aid Groups, Drop-In Centres, Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. Groups, Welfare Services, etc., will provide our counselors with a repertoire of potential helping avenues which will entitle them to stand as integral parts of the helping community.

If we are to truly help the total school community we will have to provide our trainees with exposure to approaches suitable for working with large numbers of students. There are today promising trends which should be incorporated in our programs such as group counselling techniques, dialogue or communication groups, self-help programs, peer counselling, and the possible use of trained faculty and lay counselors for small group and student advising methods. I would like to mention, however, one strong caution in this overall area of group methods. It becomes vital that proper training with extensive supervision in practicum settings occur in our counselor education programs in the preparation of group facilitators. Working effectively with groups requires highly refined and integrated knowledge and skills. The active uses of these group approaches are actually in their embryotic stages of development and need to be researched extensively in the future to determine their actual effectiveness. They are, however, promising and could assist the counselor in reaching a larger number of students within the school.

As counselor educators we must prepare our counselors to work effectively with parents. One of the emerging trends in the many new educational concepts being introduced in our schools is the explicit involvement of parents in the educational course choices of their children. I recognize the parents' integral right to make this choice; however, I also believe the schools must accept their responsibilities in ensuring that parents have the necessary information at their disposal prior to making these decisions with their children. It may be that schools will need to organize programs and group interactions with parents in order to expose them to the academic and vocational ramifications of this responsibility. This trend can be viewed with real optimism in that it could result in the cultivation of a most rewarding dialogue for counselors, increasing the potential helping environment for

the child. As educators we will have to accept the responsibility for providing parents with information and interaction experiences, enabling them to understand their child and their child's educational and vocational development more completely.

As educators we will need to provide our counselors with continuous upgrading experiences. With changingness as a reality, academic and professional dialogues among colleagues become essential. Exchanges of this nature will result in a greater excellence in demonstrable counselor skills and abilities. Part-time as well as full-time academic graduate work, in-service training programs, continuous evaluation of counselling and guidance sessions in colleague dialogues, and coordinated evaluation of counselling effectiveness will need to be actively encouraged and conducted in the next decade. Any school counselor wishing to upgrade himself should have a diversity of possible upgrading alternatives at his disposal.

The next decade will witness greater cooperation and collaboration among counselor-training institutions. Is it not somewhat illogical to work at providing an ideal, complete, and comprehensive counselor-training program in every university which presently has a counselor-education department? Could we not better coordinate our effort, in a manner which would provide our students with a diversity and possible greater excellence of academic experiences (district-wide, province-wide, or nationally)? Could we not make better use of our total staff resources? Could there not be a greater possibility of coordinated staff exchanges, course exposures, etc? To me these are all interesting questions to ponder over and work at resolving during the next decades.

The next decade will witness a greater dialogue between professional counselor organizations and university counselor-training programs. It is my belief that the training of counselors will be a collaborative experience involving greater participation by the training institution and the professional body. Internship programs with the joint cooperation of both groups will become a reality. This joint collaboration will attempt to blend both the academic and theoretical realms as well as the practical and pragmatic in a more realistic fashion. In this age of accountability I believe cooperation of this nature will result in the training of true professionals who are able to stand and be counted as integral and distinct person-educators within the school community.

CONCLUSION

As counselors we have often experienced the miracle of dialogue in assisting youth with their developmental difficulties. Dialogue has often resulted in bringing direction to a state of changingness and confusion. It is my strong belief that we as counselors must begin the implementation of these same communication skills with our fellow professionals and other professionals in the helping community if we are to confidently arrive at sound directionality in our preparation of counselors.