
Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Introduction to the Special Theme Issue

Bryan Hiebert

University of Calgary

Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling is more than a method for organizing counselling in schools. It is a philosophy that places the needs of students at the centre of a total school approach to providing services for children and adolescents. Since its introduction more than a decade ago, Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling has gained in popularity as the preferred way for schools to address the guidance needs of students. The few studies that exist indicate that schools who adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to meeting the whole-person needs of students, enjoy a high degree of commitment from students, more regular student attendance, higher academic achievement scores, greater student satisfaction with school, and greater student perceived relevance of the subjects they study (see Hughey, Gysbers, & Starr, 1993; Lapin, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997). Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling approaches have a way of increasing the impact of guidance programs in schools. They also help to make counsellors a more integral part of a school's sense of self. This special issue of the *Journal* is devoted to profiling Canadian initiatives within the spirit of comprehensive guidance and counselling programs.

The articles in this special issue provide a cross-section of personal accounts, research reports, helpful suggestions, and calls to action by counsellors and university educators. The lead article by Janice Graham-Migel provides a compelling narrative describing her personal experiences in establishing a comprehensive approach. Janice was the recipient of the Canadian Counselling Association's Counsellor of the Year award in 1999 and her first-hand account of the process she followed in establishing the program that led to her award will be an inspiration to others working in similar circumstances. John Sumarah and Ron Lehr describe one of the few Canadian studies to investigate the impact that Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling programs are having on counsellors and students. The article by Lisa Ciccocioppo and her colleagues at the University of Alberta provides an interesting glimpse of the career aspirations of young women. Shari Couture provides a picture of the needs of teenagers and how those needs change as adolescents develop. Tamara Gordon examines how the perceptions of students, parents, and school personnel differ and points to the need for collaborative approaches to addressing the needs of students. The collaboration theme is highlighted and elaborated by Sandra Collins. Finally, the paper by Kelly Ernst and myself points counsellors to a different way of viewing the context for the services they provide that may help in presenting stronger arguments to support a comprehensive approach to delivering guidance and counselling services in schools.

Society is changing rapidly and children and adolescents face challenges that their parents could not even imagine. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling approaches continue to hold much promise for helping today's youth deal more successfully with the challenges associated with making transitions into adult living. This special issue of the *Journal* will be a valuable resource to counsellors and others helping to prepare young people for their future life roles.

References

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- Lapin, R. T., Gysbers, N. C., & Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 75*, 292-302.

About the Guest Editor

Bryan Hiebert, Ph.D., is a Professor and Associate Dean in the Division of Applied Psychology, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta. Dr. Hiebert has published an extensive number of articles in program evaluation, comprehensive guidance and counselling in the schools, stress and wellness, counsellor training processes, and career counselling.

Address correspondence to Dr. Bryan Hiebert, Division of Applied Psychology, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4.