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GUIDANCE SERVICES FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper outlines the development of a new bilingual programming (French immersion) for our schools. It documents the lack of development of adequate guidance service for these programs and presents a needs assessment for the development of guidance and counselling services. It provides a rationale why counsellors should address the following issues in bilingual education: (a) the need for guidance services in elementary schools, (b) the need for additional guidance services in secondary schools, (c) the need for training of fully qualified bilingual counsellors, and (d) the need for in-service training of all counsellors in French immersion schools.

Résumé

Cet article trace les grandes lignes de l'élaboration d'un nouveau programme de bilinguisme (immersion en langue française). En rapport avec ce programme, l'auteur présente de façon documentée le manque de développement d'un service d'orientation approprié et propose une évaluation des besoins en termes d'orientation et de counselling. On trouve aussi un fondement au fait que les conseillers doivent s'interroger sur les aspects suivants de l'éducation bilingue: (a) le besoin de services d'orientation à l'école primaire, (b) le besoin de services d'orientation additionnels à l'école secondaire, (c) le besoin de préparation de conseillers bilingues parfaitement qualifiés et (d) le besoin de formation à l'endroit de travail de tous les conseillers oeuvrant dans des écoles dotées de programmes d'immersion en langue française.

Within the past decade, a new curriculum has been developed for the English speaking schools in the form of bilingual education. These programs commonly known as French immersion curricula have emerged from

Canada's official language laws which seek to foster bilingual, French and English, speaking Canadians. The demand for this curriculum has been overwhelming. It has evolved from a single model program (early French immersion) to multi-phase programs that encompass over 500 schools with approximately 80,000 students (Canadian Parents for French, 1981).

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The expansion of guidance services for these programs has not matched this growth.

This is partially due to the perception that guidance is not seen as an essential service in elementary schools and hence rarely provided, and partially due to the lack of financial resources for new programming in pupil personnel services. Moreover, it is also due to the profession's past indifference and lack of understanding of the critical factors and specialized guidance services that are needed in an educational program to foster the growth of second language studies. Quite simply, to most counsellors the process of bilingualism is a mystique. Other than directing a student to specified language courses, they have minimal training on how to assist French immersion students to become fully bilingual. This paper addresses these concerns and urges counsellors and educators to address the following issues in bilingual education:

- (a) the need for guidance services in elementary schools,
- (b) the need for additional guidance and counselling services in our secondary schools,
- (c) the need for the training of fully qualified bilingual counsellors,
- (d) the need for in-service training for counsellors in French immersion curriculum.

*French Immersion Programs:
definition and effectiveness*

The most successful of the bilingual programs has been the elementary school early full French immersion program, the St. Lambert, Quebec model (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Its design is based on the principle of utilizing French as the language of instruction in comparison to other secondary language models which utilized French as a language lesson. In the St. Lambert model, a child begins the immersion process with French as the language of instruction in senior kindergarten, grade one or two. English is introduced in grade two or three as a language lesson and becomes 50 per cent of the curriculum by grade five or six. At the junior high and secondary level, the curriculum becomes bilingual utilizing both languages of instruction. Other forms of French immersion curricula include full middle immersion (over 50 per cent French instruction) entry point grade four; and late full immersion programs, entry point grade seven or eight. Still, other programs, include partial immersion programs (less than 50 French-English split), and extended French (one or more subject taught in French).

Research on the effects of bilingual education have indicated that pupils develop a high

level of language proficiency in French and English. Swain & Lapkin (1981) found that all forms of extended French programming enhance bilingualism; however, the most dramatic gains in French proficiency were found in the early French immersion programs. Compared to equivalent students in the English curriculum program, early immersion students attained the same or higher levels of achievements in mathematics, science, and English proficiency.

Educational researchers attribute this high academic achievement record to students attainment of a greater level of cognitive development (Cummins, 1978, 1983; Swain & Lapkin, 1981). Other social scientists suggest that high academic standing can be explained in terms of social class characteristics. Two sociologists, Burns and Olson (Note 1) and Olson & Burns (1983) examined how bilingual programs have been implemented in school boards in Northern Ontario. They found student enrollees as a group had very selective characteristics, (a) middle to upper class membership, and (b) high academic achievement records. As a result of their findings, they attribute the program's success not only to the immersion curriculum but to the ecology of the programs and the characteristics of the student body. They content that French immersion children de facto constitute an elite cohort inside the public and separate school systems.

Another important finding of their work was the importance of political influence upon school boards in the implementation of French immersion programs. They found that the implementation process was highly controversial and likely to divide the community and school staff along linguistic interests, and that a large percentage of school boards have established restrictive implementation policies which have resulted in limited access, de facto enrollment quotas, and selective retention policies. In particular, they found that new French programs were in direct competition for funds with established English programs. Implementation questions regarding the location of an immersion program, allocation of teacher assignments and resources, and public school bussing have become highly contested. From these studies it is clear that most school boards have been reluctant to expand these programs. One way to restrict the demand is to limit the amount of information and placement services available to prospective students. An examination of

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school board practices in the guidance and counselling services reveals no new availability of services for these programs.

Present guidance services in bilingual education

An examination of the current status of guidance services in bilingual education indicates an urgent need to improve its services. The elementary schools are without guidance services for the most part; a glance at the secondary schools reveals that no new initiatives or resources have been provided. For the most part, it has been business as usual with one or more counsellors designated as the immersion specialist.

A similar examination of the role of counselling in the bilingual literature (Swain & Lapkin, 1981) indicates that this subject is ignored and not seen as critical to the educational process. A review of the counselling literature reads similarly. This is a serious omission for the profession of counselling. It ignores both the importance of the new programs and the facilitating role counsellors can play in the development of second language competence. The following sections of this paper highlight the guidance needs of these programs and recommend new priorities in the delivery of guidance services.

Information and placement services

One of the first major concerns of the guidance counsellor is the availability and the adequacy of guidance information services for bilingual programs. Research in Ontario (Burns and Olson, 1981) indicates that there is a lack of availability of these services particularly in elementary schools. For example, in most Ontario elementary schools parents must obtain information from their local schools. This system often means that parents receive incomplete information (no information on alternative bilingual programming) or biased information (English program is better). It also may mean that parents are received by a school that may be at times reluctant to promote bilingual programming and in some cases resistant to recommend placement. It may also mean that the most qualified counsellor for prospective parents are parents who have older children enrolled in these programs. These experienced parents often become counsellors by default since they are often the most knowledgeable persons in helping new parents choose between various curriculum programs. This format of

curriculum decision making may be endorsed and mastered by a highly educated and informed parent, but it is hardly a conducive plan for immigrant and working class parents. Moreover, it is not a format for equal accessibility by all children.

Without counselling services in the elementary school, many parents and students do not receive sufficient or adequate information. For example, many school boards offer more than one type of French immersion curricula in the elementary schools. However, few parents or counsellors are able to identify them or to denote the differences in the respective program formats, the curricula, or the expected level of full or partial bilingualism. Consequently, most parents and students are often left with the impression that all programs are similar and that all enrollees will become fully bilingual. Moreover, questions as to the possible advantages and disadvantages of enrolling in early, middle, or late French immersion or possibly a Francophone school are rarely addressed.

Furthermore there is a general need for information to counter the myths and negative attitude toward learning a second language. Many adult Canadians have experienced a negative attitude toward learning French due to their core French training. As parents, they may not be aware of the new approaches in teaching a second language and may not consider the immersion method as an option for their child. Certainly, at the elementary level, they are entitled to receive this detailed information from qualified counsellors before making this important choice for their child's educational future. Furthermore, issues relating to the impact of immersion curriculum on the psychological functioning of the child and the climate of the classroom also need to be explained to parents. Specific questions regarding how this may affect a child's self-esteem, confidence, and curiosity need to be addressed.

In the area of placement services, most school boards have no counselling placement services for the elementary schools and few services for secondary schools. Instead, placement practices are based on the principle of availability. Sign up at your district school for whatever is available. First come, first served, till the quota is filled. Burns and Olson (1981) characterize this policy as "passive." They found that school boards rely on the word of mouth; they rely on interested students and parents to seek out these

programs. Other boards use more novel placement practices such as the use of a lottery. The Toronto Board of Education utilized this method for selecting students for its middle immersion program when demand outpaced the quota. These methods make a mockery of the established guidance and counselling practices of insuring that all students are placed in academic programs according to their needs, interests, and abilities. Surely, counsellors need to question these practices.

Referral and special services

There is an urgent need for school boards to provide for referral and special services in guidance for French immersion students. As these programs expand, the new "second generation" of students have a larger array of particular individual needs in the following areas: (a) diagnostic, (b) remedial, (c) appraisal, and (d) learning exceptionalities. Presently, most school boards offer limited guidance services in these areas. The majority do not offer diagnostic services in French, or remedial services such as those of a remedial French reading specialist, or special programming for gifted or learning disabled students (Guttman, Note 2). Furthermore, appraisal measures are often conducted in a limited manner to serve research purposes, and they are not generally available to the counsellor or classroom teacher for monitoring a child's progress. Moreover, in schools where there are guidance specialists, they are rarely bilingual or specifically trained to provide these special services. In practice, this policy means that most students do not have the resources of a bilingual counsellor or staff personnel who understands the curriculum and/or teaching method, who can identify personal and academic problems and who can apply remedies or collaborate with the classroom teacher. Instead, school boards employ the practice of selection retention, retaining only the students who achieve and dropping or "tracking out" students who do not achieve (Burns & Olson, 1981). Moreover, without the help of a counsellor, parents and teachers cannot always consult satisfactorily on these issues and often parents are left with no alternative than to withdraw their child. Other examples of students whose special needs are not served are gifted students. Recent data from the North York Board of Education (Guttman, Note 2) indicates that identified gifted students are switching from French immersion to gifted English curricula due to failure to meet special needs.

Consultation and counselling

Other guidance needs of these programs are (a) the need for increased liaison between home and school, and (b) the establishment of an on-going parent support group. Linguistic research indicates the importance of positive attitudes in language development and the use of the second language outside the school. These needs make the home-school link particularly important, and make parents very important players in providing positive motivation and extracurricular opportunities for their children to engage in second language activities. Some links exist now such as parents and teachers conferences, but for the most part these contacts are not sufficient to provide parents with appropriate general knowledge of second language learning. Hence, it would be very desirable for counsellors in larger centres to help establish a home and school French immersion parent association which would deal exclusively with concerns of these programs and develop this continuing education program.

There is also an urgent need for counselling services for parents to discuss specific issues regarding their child's progress. Such issues as specific learning problems, behavioral attitudes, remedial and enrichment opportunities need to be discussed. Since most parents are new to this curriculum, they are in need of additional opportunities to understand how to chart the child's progress and how to interpret the child's achievement reports. Presently, the only available consultative services in most elementary schools is the school principal. Often this resource is not helpful to parents since the principal is unlikely to be bilingual or to have any specific training in bilingual education. Moreover, he or she is also unlikely to have any specific training in counselling. More likely, their priorities will lay in balancing the needs and resource of two different linguistic programs rather than attending to the counselling needs of students.

Program advising

Presently, most school boards offer some form of program advising in junior high and high schools for enrolled French immersion students but offer little or no specialized assistance to prospective students not enrolled in immersion schools. For the former group, this limited service is often inadequate since students receive advice from untrained and unilingual counsellors. Research (Cummins, 1982, 1983) reveals that there are important prin-

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principles of second language learning that must be sufficiently understood by counsellors and integrated into the practices of program advising. For example, it is now known that students with advanced second language skills must maintain a high degree of intensity and skill development in their studies if they are to retain their early investment of eight years of early French immersion training (Swain & Lapkin, 1981). Counsellors must now advise these students appropriately to insure they take sufficient courses to maintain their French language skills.

Additional counselling services need to be offered to help students sort through the maze of different immersion formats and specific curricula. Presently, counsellors (let alone students) are hard pressed to identify these courses according to their language skill development levels and proficiency measures. Counsellors need to be more knowledgeable on this subject in order that students can make more informed choices. For example, students who wish to have a high level of bilingualism may choose full immersion programs whereas students who only want minimal competence may choose partial immersion or extended French programs. Counsellors must give special attention to course selection and sequencing of subject matter to insure that students' overall academic needs as well as language needs are met. Also, counsellors need to better inform students how this curriculum can impact on other subjects areas such as social science or mathematics. Due to scheduling conflicts and lack of availability of options, French immersion students may have a restricted course selection. For example, only one mathematics or science course may be offered in French; other specialized courses may be available only in English. Also, counsellors must give special attention to the teaching of English language courses. Recent literature in this area suggests that one's first language does not automatically develop (Cummins, 1982, 1983). Special individualized help must be given to students to plan for their English language development. Lastly, counsellors need to give special attention to advising bilingual students on their choice of universities. Here, graduates must be informed of the need to consider their choices according to the availability of bilingual instruction or extended French instruction. Presently, some universities are developing these new programs and counsellors need to inform their students regarding this new resource.

Coordination of guidance services

There is an urgent need to coordinate and provide information on bilingual education to all secondary students. Presently, there is little coordination among immersion schools regarding guidance services particularly in the area of information and placement, program advising and transfer information. This makes for difficulties in assuring for appropriate placement policies in transferring students to different programs and different schools. For example, students with advanced skills are sent to programs where language competence is minimal and vice versa. Moreover, lack of coordination means lack of knowledge and information for counsellors. For example, students are now being placed in secondary language courses in grade seven or nine without appropriate reference to their years of language training. In many schools, students with nine years of French are being "placed" with students of three or five years of training (Swain, Note 3). No school personnel or counsellors are questioning these practices as to the effect they have on overall language development of each student.

Another major concern in bilingual programming is the need for the coordination of guidance services between French immersion and non-immersion schools. Presently, counsellors in non-immersion schools receive little or no information to give to students who are considering enrolling in French immersion programs for the first time. As a result, few secondary students consider this option. This is particularly disappointing since new research (Lapkin, Swain, Kamin, & Hanna, 1983) suggests that "late starters," grade seven, eight, or nine can benefit highly from late immersion programs.

Another critical issue which counsellors are asked to comment on is the need for new programs in French immersion. Should counsellors support the expansion of these programs? For example, should counsellors support parents in establishing transitional year French immersion programs which allow students to transfer into the regular immersion program after a full intensive year of study? Experience at the private French schools and the Montréal Protestant School Board suggests that these transitional programs can be successful. Other possible solutions to this problem is registration of children in middle and/or late immersion programs or private school placements for specific transitional year pro-

grams. Lastly, there is a genuine need to communicate with parents for the improvement of the present programs in French immersion. Guidance personnel could help interested parents develop means of communicating with the school board in the improvement of established programs and support services, ecology of the school, new curriculum materials, and classroom practices.

Staff development

Another pressing concern for guidance personnel in bilingual schools is lack of staff development and lack of in-service training. Research indicates that school administrators and counsellors are not required to have special training or bilingual skills. It is important that counsellors and school personnel have appropriate training and eventually appropriate bilingual credentials. In this way, bilingual teachers and counsellors will be able to make decisions based on their own perceptions and understanding of issues rather than a hypothetical understanding of second language development. Presently, lack of competence in French for school administrators and counsellors means that they have difficulty (a) in understanding factors which nurture French language acquisition, (b) in providing consultation on student's progress, (c) in offering leadership in curriculum development, and (d) in determining which issues receive priorities in student personnel services.

There is a crisis in the need for in-service training to facilitate cooperation between French and English teachers. Research indicates that these two linguistic staffs live side by side in one school, often in isolation, and often with conflict. Burns and Olson's (Note 1) findings revealed perceptions of conflict among the two linguistic staffs. They found that the majority of principals (68 per cent) and French immersion teachers (38 per cent) perceived that the non-immersion teachers were indifferent or non-supportive of French immersion programs in dual track schools. Counsellors can help teachers from both linguistic programs to examine their attitudes and perceptions toward each other, and develop an environment based on cooperation rather than competition, and on dialogue rather than conflict.

Role of counsellors

Presently, there is very little discourse in the counselling literature on the subject of bilingual education and in particular, the guidance needs of French immersion programs.

As a profession, we have been slow to realize the great interest and demand for bilingual education. Forecast of student enrollment such as the Ottawa-Carleton Board indicate that approximately 60 to 70 per cent of students will be enrolled in bilingual programs. Gallop poll ratings of average Canadians indicate that an overwhelming majority wish to have their children receive a bilingual education. There is still time to foster positive attitudes among counsellors toward bilingual programs. To do so, we must now make bilingual education a priority in the development of our counselling services. This can be done in two ways: (1) to advocate and establish new services and improvements in existing services for bilingual education as outlined here, and (2) to provide graduate and in-service training for counsellors. On the first point, it is important that we stress the development of new services particularly in elementary education. At the secondary level, it is important that we seek to reorient counsellor attitudes toward a more positive view of bilingual education while at the same time upgrading and increasing our services. To this end, it is important that all counsellors receive appropriate academic knowledge on second language learning, the immersion teaching model, and pertinent curriculum information. Moreover, it is important that all counsellors visit these programs and experience at first hand the full meaning of a bilingual program. For counsellors who are working in bilingual or immersion schools, more specific in-service education will be needed. Counsellors will need to be trained to give specific guidance services in the areas addressed by this paper. In addition, it will be important that the profession recommend for these positions counsellors who have bilingual language credentials or are willing to receive French language training. In this way, we, as a profession, can begin to formulate a perspective that clearly reflects the complexities of dual linguistic groupings. Moreover, the counsellors will be in a position to more directly assess the guidance needs of these programs and provide direction and leadership for the profession.

Counsellors can take leadership in bilingual education. Historically, we have been involved with issues of accessibility and disseminating information for various school curricula. As this paper suggests, counsellors have the necessary skills and training to disseminate this information; and provide placement, special services, consultation, counselling, and in-service training to staff. As counsellors, we

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must try to insure that all children have access to bilingual education. To insure this, we must place the development of guidance services for bilingual education as an important priority in our schools.

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