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THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN COUNSELLING AND HUMAN RELATIONS IN THE CANADIAN SETTING*

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to show that the teacher has an important part to play in the development of counselling in the schools. Many a counsellor has failed as a result of his inability to involve teachers in the process of developing human relations since he does not know how to involve teachers and significant others in this process.

The paper emphasizes a model known as the integrative approach showing the characteristics that are necessary for sound relationships. Definite ways for implementing this model are presented, and it is emphasized that the counsellor should be the agent for developing this approach. The counsellor ought to educate the teacher in the understanding of the functions for developing positive human relations, not in the sense of adding to workloads, but as part of the process of learning and teaching.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the paper is to show that the teacher does have an important part to play in the development of counselling services in the school. Traditionally, the tasks of counselling, guidance services, and human-relations training have fallen on the counsellor. This task is too onerous for a single person to fulfill in the setting as we have it today.

In our Canadian setting the practice of pupil personnel services is sporadic. In Atlantic Canada in particular, the concept of a variety of professional services performed by specially trained personnel cannot be realistic in terms of the funds available. Therefore the counsellor must of necessity approach his function single-handedly. Of course this is the rigid and "letter-of-the-law" interpretation.

The present paper seeks to point out that the counsellor ought not to approach the task alone. Many counsellors have not attempted to involve teachers in the process of developing human relations. Many counsellors do not possess the ability to involve teachers and significant others in this process. The study points out how the counsellor can incorporate teachers in this process, and shows this possibility by an examination of a school district in New Brunswick (District 19, Rothesay).

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THE STUDENT AS CYNOSURE

That the classroom teacher has a role to play in counselling services in schools is not contended by us. The teacher has definite functions to perform that will help the counsellor, and the counsellor's main strategy is to help the teacher. In effect, the tasks of the teacher and counsellor are complementary rather than contradictory. And the focal point or cynosure is the student. In fact, neither is the teacher helping the counsellor, nor the counsellor, the teacher; the assistance given is to the student.

The rationale for the teacher's assisting in the counselling function is in a way a selfish one. The counsellor, if he is worth his salt, wants to help the student to grow and develop fully. The counsellor leads the student to become a full person, capable of making decisions, and willing to take responsibility for his actions. The counsellor wants each student to develop cognitively (subject-matter) and also in a humanistic way (positive personal growth and human warmth). This is exactly what I, the teacher, want. Therefore we are agreed that in helping the counsellor in certain ways, which should not detract from the teaching-learning function, I am helping to pursue my own aims in the facilitation of a meaningful education for my students. If looked upon in this manner, then a major hurdle and confusion between teacher and counsellor is overcome.

Problems

There are some problems in viewing the role of the teacher in guidance. These problems do not arise on the part of the teacher. They may result from the counsellor who is not well-suited for the task and is not *au courant* with approaches in the field. The problems are as follows:

- (1) The counsellor's functions are not at all clear and cannot be interpreted by students, teachers, or administrators. This is one reason for the fear of counsellors in our province and the unwillingness to set up the minimum possible service in schools.
- (2) The counsellor lacks ability, skills, or ideas to clarify functions. Elsewhere I have emphasized the major skills that counsellors should possess, namely: counselling techniques, group techniques, knowledge of measurement and evaluation, the psychology of vocational development, diagnosis and remedial techniques, an applied knowledge of the psychology of reading, techniques in special education, and elements of behavior modification suitable for schools. On the other hand, a working knowledge of the field has a positive effect on colleagues.
- (3) The counsellor lacks the capability to initiate communication and interaction with teachers.

When these problems are controlled, the way is paved for the cooperation of teachers in the programme of counselling which in effect is the facilitation of learning and development in an environment of which the individual is aware and in which a certain amount of reality is maintained. The role of the teacher will be optimal if the conditions noted above are positive.

In a system where developmental guidance is preferred to crises-oriented counselling, the role of the teacher is on-going and in many cases an automatic one. The teacher can perform a number of functions that will have positive effects on the guidance of students, without having to spend extra time or sacrifice any of his academic pursuits with students. This cooperative characteristic is termed the Integrative approach to Guidance.

THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

The basis of the integrative approach (Zaccaria, 1969) which highlights the teachers' role in guidance is summarized as follows:

- (1) *The Principle of Reciprocal Activity*
Integration is achieved when the parts have freedom to interact with each other and with the whole. The mutually relating parts (counsellor and teacher) reciprocally affect the activity of each other and set up a chain reaction constantly in operation.
- (2) *The Principle of Responsible Participation*
Opportunities for the school community (teachers) to participate in the functional whole will lead to integration. Such participation is active and responsible contribution. It satisfies human need since it is accompanied by feelings of belongingness and self-esteem. Teachers will value the total enterprise to which they contribute their beliefs, decisions, energies.
- (3) *The Principle of Shared Concern*
Concern for the total situation must be held by each member of the whole. Mutual concern cements the relationships among staffs and blends efforts in a common loyalty.
- (4) *The Principle of Mutual Respect*
Integration will occur where there is mutual respect. Respect for all members of the team is embedded in the conviction that the individual contributions are both unique and worthy of consideration. There are differences such as in interests and abilities but these should be made to enhance the quality of the process.
- (5) *The Principle of Communication*
To make the team approach work, individuals (counsellor and teacher) must be able to communicate with one another, regardless of position in the social system. Communication is a necessity for interaction.
- (6) *The Principle of Cooperation*
To develop integration a sense of "We-ness" is necessary. Cooperation frees individuals to rise to high levels as they work together toward mutually accepted goals (pp. 117-118).

To obtain cooperation of the counsellor and teacher in the process of integrative guidance, the above principles must be implemented. It is the counsellor's task to set the stage and the environment for an approach that will allow teachers to express themselves fully in the total educational process. The enlightened teacher who may hopefully have been introduced to counselling as part of his training should seek ways to support the counsellor willingly since this support will be beneficial for the students and indirectly for the teacher.

The Role of the Teacher

Some definite ways in which the role of the teacher can be seen in guidance are noted (Hatch & Costar, 1961):

- (1) To modify the classroom environment of the student when counselling shows a need for change.
- (2) To furnish the counsellor with pertinent information about students through anecdotes, reports of parent interviews, autobiographies, and other measuring devices.
- (3) To adapt instructional techniques to meet the unique needs of individual students (special education, emotional cases, physically handicapped cases).
- (4) To assist in laying the foundation for vocational choice and maturity by giving occupational information, sharing experiences, interpreting interest tests, and providing simulated experiences.
- (5) To work with a given pupil with whom you were able to develop a bond of confidence not shared by any other member of staff.
- (6) To participate in a continuous evaluation of the curricular and co-curricular activities offered by the school and guided to a significant extent by the school counsellor.
- (7) To help with the organization and administration of the guidance programme in the school through a team approach (pp. 21-22).

The teacher functions as a member of the helping relationship profession within his own classroom. This is done whether he likes it or not, but if he does not, the results will be deleterious. The teacher should be able to field some of the following questions about each student (Hatch & Costar, 1961):

1. How secure is the student's social position in the class?
2. Are his personal goals the same as others?
3. How is he like the other children in the class?
4. How is he different from other children in the class?
5. Does he ever assume a leadership role?
6. Is he a member of a sub-group in the class?
7. Does he ever act independently of the class?
8. Does he have difficulty in getting along with some class members?
9. Is he accepted by both boys and girls?
10. Does he seek companionship outside the class? (p. 24).

It should be noted that the most efficient programme of guidance is one in which the teacher is able to provide the maximum number of guidance services to students with a minimum amount of effort. Some developmental activities that the teacher could perform are as follows:

- (1) Coordinate guidance services for his own students.
- (2) Participate in case conferences of his students.
- (3) Coordinate guidance activities of his class with those of the home.
- (4) Interpret the school guidance programme to the community.
- (5) Participate in the in-service training programme to improve the quality of the service offered.

The teacher who plans seriously to assist in the guidance programme should prepare himself in a modest way at least by:

1. Learning about students
2. Providing occupational and education information
3. Counselling pupils and parents
4. Administering guidance services

In short, the teacher's place in guidance takes on the following roles (Hill & Luckey, 1969):

1. The Supportive Role — Lend active oral and participatory support to functions.
2. The Consultative Role — Provide advice, information, and personal involvement in the team's effort to understand and help the child.
3. The Referral Role — Identify and refer children who need help beyond his time and skills.
4. The Service Role — Counsel with children, study them, identify and work with parents, and do many things which are not unlike some functions of the counsellor (p. 62).

Kenneth B. Hoyt in an article, "Guidance: A constellation of services (1962)", spoke of the teacher as the counsellor's chief ally, as follows:

The classroom teacher must be viewed as the school counselor's chief professional ally in the attainment of guidance objectives. I am convinced that we cannot afford to do away with the concept of the classroom teacher as a guidance worker nor can we afford to relegate him to a passive or a minor role in guidance. When one considers the definition of guidance I have presented here, the counselling opportunities teachers encounter daily for making direct contributions to meeting guidance objectives, and the limited ability of counseling to accomplish these objectives simply within the confines of the counselor's office, I do not see how we could reach any other conclusion. The classroom teacher functions directly and actively as a guidance worker in identifying students in need of counseling, in student appraisal procedures, in increasing student self-understanding and understanding of environmental opportunities through classroom activities, and in follow-through of counseling carried out by the school counselor in terms of environmental manipulation within the classroom. Teachers have both a right and a responsibility to be regarded as guidance workers. We cannot take these rights and responsibilities away and expect guidance to survive.

When I picture the teacher as the counselor's chief ally in attainment of guidance objectives, I am certainly not saying the counselor should not work actively and intensively with all other pupil personnel specialists. What I am saying is that the counselor will find, in his concern for all pupils in the school, more opportunities to work with teachers than to work with specialists concerned with only certain designated minorities of the school population (p. 692).

APPLICATIONS

The integrative principle and the approach of counsellor-teacher collaboration are used in a school district in New Brunswick, District 19, Rothesay. The principles of integration were applied with favourable feedback from teachers.

The co-authors collaborated in involving a group of Master of Education interns (U.N.B.) for three weeks in counselling and special education. The opportunities to work in classrooms and with teachers were of a high order. Counsellors and interns worked from classrooms, not from offices only. Inservice training and exchange programmes were regular features. An evaluation study of the district revealed the significance of teacher involvement in guidance.

Four practical procedures for developing involvement of counsellors and teachers were emphasized. The counsellor must be a strong public-relations officer, keeping teachers constantly informed of developments, a factor amply demonstrated in the school district. The counsellor must initiate and maintain two-way communication with teachers, a major practice in this school system upon which a great deal of success depends. Teachers make a direct contribution through case conferences. This is a regular feature of the district. Lastly continual evaluation of the programme is being made with input by and feedback to teachers. Teachers find this part of the programme to be very revealing and informative. This leads to adjustments in teaching, in developing relationships and in curriculum building.

The role of the counsellor is changing in terms of that of the teacher. The counsellor will have to be responsible for the involvement of teachers in the humanization of the school.

RESUME: Le but de cet article est de montrer que le professeur a un rôle important à jouer dans le développement du counseling dans les écoles. Etant donné que le conseiller n'a pas toujours les habiletés requises pour impliquer les professeurs et autres personnes significatives dans le processus de développement des relations humaines, il en résulte souvent un échec.

On met en relief le modèle d'une approche d'intégration qui illustre les caractéristiques nécessaires à de bonnes relations. On présente des moyens précis de réalisation de ce modèle et on souligne que le conseiller devrait être le promoteur de cette approche. Le conseiller devrait amener le professeur à comprendre les fonctions permettant de développer de bonnes relations humaines, non pas dans le sens d'une ajoute à sa charge de travail, mais comme partie intégrante du processus d'apprentissage.

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