

STAFF-GROUP CONSULTATION WITHIN A DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

In light of a perceived need to provide pre-service and practicing school counsellors with practical guidelines for functioning as consultants within a developmental framework, the writer: presents a nine-step in-service model suited to developmental consultation, describes a developmentally focused in-service workshop, and discusses how developmentally oriented in-service work can be evaluated.

Résumé

Afin de répondre au besoin de fournir des aides pratiques aux conseillers scolaires de pré-service et praticiens leur permettant d'oeuvrer à titre de consultants à l'intérieur d'un cadre de développement, l'auteur présente: un modèle de recyclage à neuf étapes orienté à la consultation en développement, une description d'un atelier de recyclage orienté sur le développement, et une méthode d'évaluation pour les ateliers de recyclage orientés sur le développement.

The importance of developmental guidance is increasingly being recognized. Indicative of this recognition is the endorsement of developmental guidance as a needed and legitimate function of the school counsellor by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). A 1978 ASCA position paper was introduced as follows:

During recent years a number of counselor educators and school counselors have advanced the proposition that counseling can and should become more proactive and preventative in its focus and more developmental in its content and process. Viewed in the context of an evolving societal emphasis upon personal growth and expanding professional expertise, developmental guidance has resulted in a potentially dynamic and promising approach to the helping relationship of the school counselor. (p. 270)

Not surprisingly, Canadian counsellors and counsellor educators have in recent years also become more developmentally oriented. Even a cursory examination of Canadian guidance and counselling literature and professional conference programs will provide evidence that developmental guidance is being seriously considered as a needed complement to traditional guidance models.

Further indicative of the recognition of the importance of a developmental emphasis in guidance and education is the emergence of thrusts that have as a common focus the personal development of the individual and his preparation for living satisfyingly and productively in the future. Exemplifying such thrusts are: Developmental Counselling (Blocher, 1966; Dinkmeyer, 1966), Life-Career Development (Moore & Gysbers,

1976), Deliberate Psychological Education (Cottingham, 1973; Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971; Van Hesteren, 1978; Van Hesteren & Zingle, 1977), Psychoeducation (Authier, 1977), Affective Education (Miller, 1976), and Developmental Education (Gazda, 1977).

While counsellors appear to be receiving a great deal of encouragement to become more developmental in their orientation, and to become involved along the various dimensions just described, there has, in the writer's perception, not been sufficient attention paid to articulating the practicalities involved in proceeding along developmental lines. The position taken in this article is that consultation through the medium of staff-group in-service work constitutes one of the most useful and effective means of reaching developmental guidance goals. Given the need for practical guidelines for guidance within a developmental framework, the remainder of the article will be devoted to: (1) presenting a nine-step in-service model that the writer has used as a developmental consultant; (2) describing a developmentally focused in-service workshop that has been successfully implemented; and (3) discussing how developmentally oriented in-service workshops can be evaluated.

An In-Service Model

What follows is a description of a nine-step model which has proven to be useful in conducting in-service work with groups of teachers and administrators.

Step 1: Personal consideration of priorities. Prior to seriously undertaking in-service work, it is necessary for the counsellor, in his role as a developmental consultant, to personally consider what are important priorities and possible in-service topics. The counsellor needs to have a proactive perspective which is formed by his knowledge and understanding of pupil needs in various developmental areas and his appreciation of present and anticipated conditions in society. It is certainly not suggested that the counsellor should attempt to superimpose his values and priorities upon teachers and administrators—far from it. Caution must be exercised to avoid having the counsellor's personal biases and preferences interfere with tuning in to the needs and preferences of the school staff. However, the counsellor must have a reasonably clear perspective on the general directions in which he wishes to move and what kinds of in-service topics and activities are likely to help him to progress. A proactive perspective is, by definition, a prerequisite for counsellor functioning within a developmental framework.

Step 2: Administrative consultation. Administrative support is vital to the success of in-service work. Before preparation is formally begun, the counsellor should discuss the concept of in-service with the principal to ensure that he understands what is involved and that his support is forthcoming.

Step 3: Discussion with individual teachers. There are several advantages to discussing the concept of in-service and topic possibilities informally with teachers on an individual basis. Among the benefits of proceeding in this way are: (1) it provides an opportunity to explain, more fully and accurately than is possible in a general staff meeting, the nature of in-service sessions and how they might be useful to individual teachers; (2) it provides an opportunity to find out what kinds of topics are of most interest and practical relevance to teachers; and (3) it sometimes results in more open communication than is typically achieved in a full staff meeting. Teachers value and appreciate being individually asked for their opinions and suggestions. Solicitation of their input can result in greater enthusiasm for, and ownership of, the in-service concept.

Step 4: Topic questionnaire design and circulation. Once the counsellor has discussed the possibility of in-service work with teachers and administrators and solicited input from them regarding needs and topics, it becomes possible to design a Topic Questionnaire that can be administered to the entire staff to determine which topics are in greatest demand. The counsellor may decide to construct the questionnaire himself or, alternatively, he may decide that there are

advantages in his situation to enlisting the help of a small teacher advisory committee.

A list of topic possibilities should be made up, giving consideration to whether or not the necessary resources are available to deal with them in a competent and meaningful manner. If a particular topic is beyond the expertise of the counsellor, but nevertheless clearly relevant to the needs of pupils and teachers, serious consideration might be given to enlisting resources either from within or outside the counsellor's school system. Some examples of topics listed on a questionnaire that the writer has used are, "Stress and Anxiety in Teaching and Learning," "Enhancing Self-Concept in the Classroom," "Dreikurs Applied in the Classroom," and "Emotional Needs of Children."

After the questionnaire is made up, it is distributed among the staff. Teachers are asked to return the form within one week and they are, furthermore, encouraged to raise any questions that they might have concerning the questionnaire or the forthcoming workshops.

Step 5: Feedback compilation and summary. When the in-service topic questionnaires have been returned, the counsellor needs to ascertain the topics in which the greatest interest was expressed. It is useful to rank-order the topic selections. Once this is done, it is possible to accurately summarize the questionnaire input in such a way that it can be shared with teachers in the next step of the process.

Step 6: Feedback sharing. Teachers appreciate being informed as to what the in-service topic choices of other staff members were. Such feedback is perhaps best provided in the context of a regular staff meeting. Ideally, such a meeting would take place as soon as possible following the return of the questionnaire. The overall input summary can be a stimulus for discussing ways to proceed that would best meet the identified needs of staff members. As a result of discussing topic preferences as a group, the priorities might change somewhat compared to those indicated in the original input summary. At this point, consideration again needs to be given to the human and/or physical resources that are required to deal with the priorities established. If the resources required to deal with a particular topic are not available, it is advisable to replace it with one for which resources are at hand.

Step 7: Finalizing topics and setting dates. When the questionnaire input has been adequately discussed, it becomes necessary to finalize topics and to set dates for the in-service workshops. Some consideration should be given at this point to how much time is needed to do justice to the various topics selected and to how the topics might best be sequenced. For some topics, an hour and a half

during the mid-afternoon or after school might be sufficient. For other topics, however, at least a half-day or perhaps a full day may be required. Some of these scheduling matters are probably best discussed with the principal and, possibly, senior administrative staff within the school system.

Step 8: Conducting the in-service workshop.

Step 9: Evaluating the in-service workshop. Conducting and evaluating the in-service workshop are the remaining steps involved in in-service work. Perhaps the most meaningful way of describing these central aspects of in-service work would be to provide an example of a workshop that the writer has conducted and to indicate how such sessions are evaluated.

*A Developmentally Focused
In-Service Workshop*

The topic of self-concept is an excellent point of departure from which to proceed in terms of

developmentally oriented consultation. Self-concept is currently acknowledged by teachers and administrators as being a significant factor in relation to pupil learning and development. The topic, therefore, tends to be regarded as having immediate relevance and credibility. From the counsellor's point of view, a self-concept emphasis is clearly foundational to developmental guidance and the increasingly important and popular career education thrust.

After generally introducing the topic, an overview of what the workshop is going to involve is provided. It is pointed out that we are going to focus upon two interrelated self-concept emphases—understanding self-concept and facilitating self-concept development. It is then indicated which specific aspects of self-concept will be examined. The staff is provided with an overview of the workshop which is explained briefly. The workshop is geared to having at least a half-day (i.e., 3 hours) to conduct it and is structured as follows:

UNDERSTANDING AND FACILITATING SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	
Approximate Time Allocation	
5 minutes	INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
15 minutes	FIRST THINGS FIRST--THE TEACHER'S SELF-CONCEPT -Small group discussion activity
40 minutes	UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD'S SELF-CONCEPT -Meaning of self-concept and self-esteem -How the self-concept develops -Selected characteristics of the self-concept -Signs of a negative self-concept -Self-concept and school learning
15 minutes	Question and Discussion Period
10 minutes	COFFEE BREAK
15 minutes	FACILITATING SELF-CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT -General strategies for enhancing self-concept
15 minutes	-An example of a developmental guidance program
30 minutes	-Force-field analysis activity -Articulating plans for future work relative to self-concept
10 minutes	-Resource sharing
15 minutes	MEETING THE TEACHER'S NEEDS -Sources of stress in teaching -Ways of dealing with stress in teaching
10 minutes	WORKSHOP EVALUATION

With this overview as a reference point, teachers know what to expect during the session and they have some idea as to the interrelatedness of the various session components. An attempt is made to maintain an optimal level of interest and involvement. One way of doing this is to strike a balance between the provision of input on the counsellor's part and small group work. Furthermore, pacing and variety are particularly important considerations in conducting a half- or whole-day session. It is useful to begin the workshop by having the teachers engage in an activity designed to help them to become aware, in a non-threatening way, of their own self-concepts. This individual activity is followed by a group discussion activity which focuses on three questions: "How does a child's self-concept develop?" "What factors are most influential in the development of a child's self-concept?" and "Are there any stages or times in a child's (person's) life that are particularly important in relation to the development of the self-concept?" Beginning with these kinds of activities serves at least two very important purposes. First, it stimulates teachers to think about self-concept in a personally significant way and, second, it begins the process of group building by providing an opportunity for sharing views pertaining to self-concept development.

Once the ice is broken in the ways described above, the counsellor is in a position to provide input relative to understanding self-concept to a generally involved and receptive audience. At this stage, the counsellor adopts a definite teaching role relative to concepts that he, by virtue of his training and experience, is singularly well equipped to handle. Teachers are often especially interested in knowing about signs of a negative self-concept. In this context, emphasis is placed on the recognition of masked depression and selected other concepts and factors that tend to be either misunderstood or overlooked by teachers in their efforts to meet the emotional needs of children.

During the session, participants are made aware of a variety of materials and references that are available which deal in greater depth with the ideas presented and discussed. Providing teachers with an annotated list of references has been found to be very worthwhile. Among the most useful of such references are: *Encounters with the Self* (Hamachek, 1978), *Self-concept and School Achievement* (Purkey, 1970), *Inviting School Success—A Self-concept Approach to Teaching and Learning* (Purkey, 1978), *Teacher and Child* (Ginott, 1975), *Encouraging Children to Learn: The Encouragement Process* (Dinkmeyer & Dreikurs, 1963), *Peoplemaking* (Satir, 1972), *Looking out/Looking in — Interpersonal Communication* (Adler & Towne, 1978), *100 Ways to Enhance Self-concept in the Classroom* (Canfield

& Wells, 1976), *Human Characteristics and School Learning* (Bloom, 1976), and *Schools without Failure* (Glasser, 1969). With some foresight, it is possible to have multiple copies of books such as these on hand so that they might be readily available for teacher examination and possible use.

After dealing with various aspects of understanding self-concept, a coffee break is usually in order. This break can provide a natural opportunity to talk informally with some teachers about questions and issues raised during the first part of the session.

The second half of the workshop is mainly devoted to examining general strategies that can be used to facilitate self-concept development in the classroom. More specifically, it is suggested that self-concept can be enhanced through: (1) positive interpersonal relationships and communication; (2) implementation of selected affective teaching models; (3) positive approaches to classroom management and discipline; and (2) programs and materials specifically designed to enhance self-concept.

The importance of practicality and concreteness when conducting in-service sessions for teachers can hardly be overstated. Continuous attention needs to be given to striking a reasonable balance between theory and practice. To ensure an optimal degree of practicality, teachers should be provided with specific ideas and examples relating to each of the general self-concept enhancement strategies previously described.

An in-service session dealing with self-concept provides an excellent context in which to introduce school staff to developmental guidance programs that can be used to enhance self-concept in a deliberate and systematic way. There are several such programs currently available and most of them appear to be designed for the elementary grade levels (Elardo & Elardo, 1976; Medway & Smith, 1978). Examples of programs that have demonstrated considerable usefulness include: *The Human Development Program* (Bessel & Palomares, 1976), *Toward Affective Development* (Dupont, Gardner, & Brody, 1974), and *Developing Understanding of Self and Others* (Dinkmeyer, 1970, 1973). Such programs, with their explicit emphasis upon self-understanding, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making skills, can be readily incorporated into career education thrusts at the elementary grade levels.

The DUSO program is usually introduced as an example of what can be done in terms of deliberately enhancing self-concept in the classroom. Due primarily to time constraints, no attempt is made to provide an in-depth exposure. Rather, the intent is to help the staff to become aware of what is

available. The program can be adequately introduced by describing its rationale and objectives, by explaining its organization, and by providing some examples of specific materials and activities. Each counsellor needs to personally discover the most comfortable and effective way of introducing a program of this kind to a school staff. An interesting way to launch into the program is by introducing the dolphin-puppet, DUSO — who is its central character — in much the same way as he would be introduced to a group of children.

Exposure to such a program usually generates considerable interest and enthusiasm, with the result that teachers express a desire to learn more about its contents and its implementation in the classroom. This need can then be met either through arranging an in-service session dealing specifically and in depth with the program or through more intensive follow-up consultation with individual teachers. It is important to allow sufficient time and opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the program.

Throughout the session, teachers are encouraged to comment and ask questions. The self-concept component of the session is brought to closure by providing an opportunity to share ideas and resources and to articulate specific plans for future work in the area of self-concept.

There appears to be a natural tendency for the enthusiasm generated on in-service day to drain off to varying degrees in the days and weeks following it. One reason for this tendency may be that teachers are not helped sufficiently to come to grips with what, in practical terms, can be done to move in the directions established in the workshop. An excellent tool for optimizing the degree of follow-through subsequent to a session is the force-field analysis technique (Collison & Dunlap, 1978; Eiben, 1976; Kimpston & Stockton, 1979). Describing how this technique is used in the context of a workshop might be useful to counsellors who have experienced concern about lack of follow-through once in-service sessions are completed. The writer will briefly and in general terms describe an activity that he has used.

After a brief explanation of the force-field analysis technique, teachers are provided with a worksheet on which forces for and against achieving the workshop goal can be identified. Participants are then asked to become involved in the following force-field analysis activity:

WORKSHOP GOAL

To maximize the extent to which the child's experience at school results in the development of a positive self-concept and the experiencing of a generally high level of self-esteem.

1. What are the forces in your situation that favor moving toward the achievement of this goal? (driving forces)

2. What are the forces in your situation that tend to operate against the achievement of this goal? (restraining forces)
3. Rank-order the driving and restraining forces in terms of their influence in your situation.
4. In your small group, share your views regarding the goal and arrive at a consensus concerning the three most influential driving forces and the three most influential restraining forces in your situation.
5. In your small group, generate some ideas that you think can be put into practice in order to maximize the influence of driving forces and to minimize the influence of restraining forces. (i.e., What are some specific things that could be done in the future that would assist teachers in this school in the area of self-concept?)

The first three parts of this activity are done individually. It is wise not to make the activity too complex. Teachers often have a difficult time at the outset knowing what is meant by terms such as "driving forces" and "restraining forces." It is, therefore, useful to indicate that we are simply interested in becoming more aware of what is helping and what is getting in the way of reaching the goal that we have set for ourselves.

There are several advantages to incorporating this activity into the latter part of a workshop: (1) Teachers, individually and collectively, become more sensitized to the realities that need to be taken into account if the ideas examined during the session are to be put into practice. (2) As a result of investing time and energy in trying to meet a common challenge, a greater degree of staff cohesiveness and solidarity is achieved. (3) Ideas are generated and needs are identified that can lead to a demand for additional in-service work in the future. (4) Teachers and administrators become mutually appreciative of the ways in which such factors as professional roles and institutional constraints affect the attainment of educational goals such as enhancing self-concept.

Concluding a workshop by acknowledging and emphasizing that teachers also have needs has proven worthwhile. Some time is spent discussing sources of stress in teaching and a number of concrete suggestions as to how teachers can manage stress more effectively in their classrooms and in their personal lives are provided. Emphasizing the humorous side of stress through the use of carefully selected cartoons has turned out to be an excellent way of rounding out an in-service workshop on a positive note.

Reactions to this in-service workshop have, in general, been very positive. One participant noted, "Having this workshop was an excellent way to begin a new school year. I feel that I will be able to have a much more positive approach with my students. I will take some time each day to tune in

to the feelings of children." Teachers have also found it helpful to have an opportunity to share ideas and resources with other staff members and to discover that others are dealing with similar challenges and issues. Finally, many participants have indicated that the session provides an opportunity for reaffirming familiar ideas and teaching practices and for some self-examination as far as relationships with students are concerned. For example, one teacher pointed out that, "The material covered in this workshop will be very useful to me. Workshops of this nature make me take a good look at myself and how I interact with my class."

Evaluating In-Service Workshops

A vitally important aspect of conducting in-service workshops is their evaluation by participants. While the counsellor typically receives some feedback informally during and after a session, there is also a need to solicit more in-depth and focused feedback. Sufficient time should be set aside at the end of a session to make this possible. The writer has adapted a feedback form developed by Zaffrann (1979) to suit his own purposes (see Appendix A). The form taps the major dimensions of a workshop and asks participants to rate these dimensions on a scale which has categories ranging from excellent to unacceptable. A definite strength of the form is the opportunity that it provides for the participant to reflect on whether or not the session is likely to affect his personal and job behavior. On the basis of such feedback, the counsellor is in a somewhat better position to judge whether or not the ideas examined during the session are likely to be implemented. Very useful feedback is also provided by participant responses to the questions, "What did you find to be particularly useful?" and "Is there anything you would change in order to increase the workshop's usefulness?" By incorporating these questions into the feedback form and by inviting participants to make additional comments, the likelihood is increased that maximal input will be provided.

There are at least three benefits of soliciting feedback through use of this kind of instrument: (1) Feedback solicitation helps to establish or maintain the counsellor's integrity and credibility. Most teachers have a real need to let the counsellor know what they thought of and how they experienced a session—whether the reaction is positive or negative. Providing such an opportunity conveys to teachers that the counsellor is confident enough to "lay himself on the line," that their opinion matters, and that the counsellor is genuinely interested in meeting their needs through the improvement of in-service sessions. (2) Participant feedback often results in receiving suggestions and

comments that can be used directly to improve various aspects of in-service session delivery. (3) Last, but not least, soliciting feedback often results in the counsellor's receiving a "pat on the back" for his efforts. Anyone who has ever prepared for and conducted an in-service workshop is aware of how much time and effort goes into carrying it off well. There are few things as rewarding as receiving compliments for a job well done! While some teachers will vocally express their appreciation following a session, others do not comment—even though they may feel very positively—unless they are provided with an opportunity to do so through a feedback form.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to provide guidelines and practical ideas for counsellors interested in functioning as consultants within a developmental framework. A nine-step model for planning, conducting, and evaluating in-service work with school staffs was described and an example of an in-service workshop format focusing on self-concept was provided.

Perhaps the greatest immediate challenge for the school counselling profession is the development of training programs geared to helping counsellors to acquire the knowledge and skills required for developmental consultation. There are definite signs that progress in this direction is being made (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1977; Miles & Hummel, 1979; Miller & Dimattia, 1978). While such a trend is encouraging as far as the training of pre-service counsellors is concerned, there is also a need to assist counsellors in the field in re-orienting and re-equipping themselves to function as consultants within a developmental framework. It is hoped that the ideas presented in this article will help to meet this need.

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Appendix A

IN-SERVICE WORKSHOP FEEDBACK SHEET

Directions: Please give feedback regarding the workshop by checking the appropriate column after each category.

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Unacceptable
1. Topic coverage	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Workshop organization	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Use of concrete examples	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Possibilities for practical application	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Original, creative approach	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Use of audience participation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Strengthened or renewed my interest in the topic	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Speaker's preparation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Use of handouts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Overall rating	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Yes	No	Undecided
1. This workshop expanded my <i>awareness</i> of the topic.	_____	_____	_____
2. This workshop increased my <i>interest</i> in the topic.	_____	_____	_____
3. This workshop may change my <i>personal behavior</i> .	_____	_____	_____
4. This workshop may have impact on my <i>job behavior</i> .	_____	_____	_____
5. I would recommend this workshop to others.	_____	_____	_____
6. I would attend other workshops by this presenter.	_____	_____	_____
7. I would attend other workshops on this topic.	_____	_____	_____

What did you find to be particularly useful?

Is there anything you would change in order to increase the workshop's usefulness?

Additional Comments: