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RESEARCH NOTES

From all indications we can expect (in the next 10 years) a phenomenal increase in the use of counselors in elementary schools. It is generally agreed that we need them—but we are not at all sure what such counselors will actually do.

From a traditional point of view, the answer is rather obvious—work with children whose learning or emotional problems prevent satisfactory classroom participation and who require more specialized knowledge and more attention than the harassed classroom teacher can give.

But increasingly we are becoming aware that a new younger generation is growing up in our midst—an affluent generation questioning our values and behaviors, rebelling for more active participation and involvement, and travelling widely to meet their fellow man. It is a generation at times exasperating, at times baffling, yet fundamentally challenging and exciting.

Yet it is a generation seeking new guidelines and new social structures. As seldom before, it is a generation needing skills to identify and solve the problems of living. It is a generation requiring a sense of competence and a perceptual openness. To facilitate the development of such a generation may well be the most important function of our counselors—and especially of the counselors in elementary schools.

In order to explore some of the dimensions of counseling in an elementary school, for the past two years graduates in our Centre for Counselor Education and Research at the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, have sought tentative answers to such research questions as:

1. What are the perceptions and attitudes of children toward their world?
2. What functions could be served by counseling groups in elementary schools?
3. What counselor behaviors facilitate the development of effective group participation by children in grades 5, 6, and 7?
4. Should the counselor be a teacher in the school, a teacher-counselor, or a visiting counselor?

Although our studies are still mostly exploratory it might be of interest to include some of the work being done in order to encourage others to explore the questions in their own locale. Another, and important, reason for the inclusion of such tentative research is to introduce in the journal a section where we may share in our questioning and searching in areas of mutual concern but where our probing as yet is neither definitive nor conclusive.