Collected Works in English Language:
Published Journal and Newsletter Articles
(1968 - 2003)

by

Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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(Listed in Chronological Order)


**Sources Unknown Articles**

40. Peavy, R. V. Modification of speech patterns: An example of a cybernetic training design. Source Unknown.

41. Peavy, R. V. Setting counselling free from domination by psychotherapy and scientific psychology. Source Unknown.

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THE COUNSELOR AS COMMUNICATOR

For a very long time the counseling interview has been considered the heart of the counseling process. The interview is the vehicle used by the counselor to bring knowledge about the counselee into focus; to explore perceptions, feelings and attitudes; to gather information about the client's ability and personality characteristics; to observe the client's interactions with himself and the immediate environment. In the early literature on interviewing much was written about specific interview techniques and how these techniques were related to the theoretical training of the counselor. The interviewer was often encouraged to be directive or non-directive, Freudian or Adlerian, interpretive or didactic; each emphasis was contingent on the theoretical orientation of the training program. The interview was described as deep or shallow; as probing or clarifying. Counselors were told of the various types of relationships which would develop between themselves and their client and were coached on procedures for managing these relationships. Often they supposedly learned how to link such relationships to counseling outcomes. Heavy emphasis was placed on the content of the interview, that is on what was said during the interview and on techniques designed to influence and direct interview content.

In the 1950's various studies began to cast serious doubt upon the importance of a counselor's theoretical beliefs. Content studies proved to be somewhat disappointing. Uncertain results also followed from studies of counseling and psychotherapy outcomes as related to interviewer techniques. Investigations by Fiedler (1950a, 1950b) and Strupp (1955, 1960) led to the general conclusion that what happens in an interview is more a function of experience than of theoretical learnings on the part of the interviewer. Further doubt was cast on the particular value of any given school of therapy as a result of Eysenck's (1952) classic survey and conclusion that the data available at that time failed "to support the hypothesis that psychotherapy facilitates recovery from neurotic disorder (p. 324)."

One alternative to examining the content of the interview and the ideological preferences of the interviewer is to examine how the counselor talks and to look at the effect his talking style has on the interviewee. This shifts the interview focus from content to form and permits a reconceptualization of the interview as a communication process. Thus the effectiveness of the counselor as a communicator assumes primary importance rather than his basic beliefs as a Rogerian, Adlerian, eclectic, and so on.

Support for this view has grown steadily in recent years. Tyler (1961) lists communication as the basic skill of the counselor. Schofield (1964) has written that sensitive communication skills are shared by all gifted counselors, psychotherapists, and other adept conversationalists regardless of ideological allegiance. According to Biocher (1966), "the interview must provide maximum communication between counselor and client . . . (p. 166)." Matarazzo (1965), together with colleagues, has carried out a program of research into contentless interview variables for more than a decade and contends that when attention is given to how people say things in an interview, "the interview, either alone or . . . in series, is amenable to fruitful investigative work (p. 210)."

At least five modes of communication have been identified as being relevant to human interaction: speech, communicating through patterns of learned vocal response; tactile, communicating through touch; kinesic, communicating through body movement; proxemic, communicating through use of space; and paralinguistic, communicating through non-linguistic aspects of speech such as voice quality, inflection, and pitch. Most interviewers are at least vaguely aware of these modes although little conscious attention is given to them in many interview settings. Touching behavior has strong emotional meaning but has not received much attention. Frank (1957) surveyed the literature and pointed up the importance of further study into touching. More recently, Jourard (1966) studied who touches whom and under what circumstances. Counselors have varied opinions on the propriety of touching although most engage in ritualistic handshaking. Touching exercises have been introduced into sensitivity training procedures but are probably not used widely at present.

The use of space to communicate (Hall, 1966) should be well-known to counselors. Considerable care is usually taken to arrange the furniture in an...
office so as to achieve a spacing of client and counselor which is most comfortable to the counselor. Some people stand in order to “look down” on others. There is the curious convention that in some circumstances certain persons must stand while others sit. Counselors are at times admonished by their supervisors to “keep your distance.” Such manoeuvres are designed to communicate superior status, protect dignity, and send other subtle messages. Some interesting experimental study has been made of the use of space. For example, Burns (1964) reports a study which shows that social separation between men in an office setting can be determined by observing certain key movements within an office space. Although many of the details are presently unknown, it is well established that people use space to communicate with one another.

Kinesic communication, or movement, has powerful meaning under some circumstances. Recent work by Eckman (1964) shows that both trained and untrained observers pick up valid cues through observing head and whole body movements of others. He concludes that both body position and facial expression “have specific communicative value related to the verbal behavior (p. 301).” Thompson and Meltzer (1964) found that subjects were able to effectively communicate emotional states through facial expression at a rate far above chance. Love, happiness, and fear were all communicated about seventy-five percent of the time. There are other important non-linguistic cues such as gaze, style of talking, and the various physical qualities of speech utterances. Gaze is used to signal intimacy, reproach, puzzlement, and other messages. Joos (1962) has distinguished four speaking styles: casual-personal, social-consultative, formal, and frozen. While this has not been studied to my knowledge, I would guess that counselors use the first two when they are attempting to establish and maintain communication and use the latter two when attempting to thwart or terminate communication.

Certainly the most extensively studied form of human communication is speech. Research has pretty well established that one person’s speech style has a pronounced effect on another’s speech productions. Matarazzo (1968) in summarizing a decade of research describes three important speech variables: duration of speech utterance, interruption of speech utterance, and reaction time latency. In an interview
when the counselor utterance frequency goes up, so does that of the client. As the counselor increases his interruptions of the client, the client output either stops or noticeably increases. The counselor can effectively reduce client talk by increasing the time lapse between the end of client response and the initiation of his own utterance. In the same vein, rapid speech apparently signals anxiety (Mahl and Schulzke, 1964) and quite likely has an inhibiting effect upon client verbal output.

Other communicative signals which have well-known effects upon client talk are the verbal reinforcers such as "mm-mmm," "yes," and the non-verbal reinforcers such as head-nodding, smiling and encouraging hand gestures. These cues seem simple enough at first glance but often take on complicated secondary meanings. A good example of this was demonstrated by a female interviewer in a recent study which I conducted. The study was designed to show that the use of verbal reinforcers could be modified through a brief training procedure. In addition to speech analyses, the interviewers in the study also were being rated for warmth by the clients. The first three clients interviewed by the young woman in question all rated her quite "cold." We reviewed the audio tapes and discovered that she was using a double reinforcer, "mm-mmm," mm-mmm." Under examination this automatic response was interpreted by each client as "you are not listening to me," "you are just hurrying me through the interview." Interestingly enough, when this was brought to the trainee's attention she was able to eliminate the double reinforcers, which resulted in an increased rating of warmth by subsequent clients.

Another variable which has importance in facilitating communication in an interview is the questioning skill of the counselor. Questions have a gating effect on response alternatives. Specific questions focus attention on details and open-ended questions permit the respondent a wider range of communicative alternatives. This phenomenon has been investigated by Pope and Siegman (1965) who demonstrated that client output was governed by specificity of questioning. A more recent study (Peavy 1968) showed that questioning skill could be effectively modified in a brief, intensive training procedure and confirmed the finding that client output is strongly affected by question specificity.

In conclusion, I have briefly tried to show that in
addition to viewing the counseling interview as a content transaction with emphasis on what is said, it is also possible to see the interview as a communication process. In this process how messages are communicated receives primary attention. Thus the counselor might well be encouraged to develop a natural counseling style (McGowan, 1962, p. 371). To become aware of one's impact as a communicator on others promotes changes in communication style. To improve and extend one's own sensitivities rather than adopting a technique derived from a particular therapeutic school may lead to better counseling outcomes.

Man, it has been said, is the only creature who can talk himself into trouble. As counselors, if we pay more attention to how things are said and open our own communication receivers to the silent languages of space, body movement and paralanguage we may greatly increase our capacity to "get the message."

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ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The intensive group experience, Carl Rogers (1970) has suggested, is one of the most powerful and rapidly spreading social inventions of this century. The intensive group experience goes by many names: encounter group, sensitivity group, T-group, self-analytic group, personal growth group, marathon group, Synanon group, survival group, Recovery Incorporated, etc. Despite real differences in format and procedures which characterize the different groups, most do share certain common features: their small size (six to twenty members) allows face-to-face interaction; focus is on here-and-now behavior as it unfolds in the group; spontaneous emotional expression is encouraged; openness, self-disclosure, honesty and inter-personal confrontation are group values; participants are not labelled "patients"; and most groups strive to increase personal awareness and change outward behaviors. For convenience of expression and without intending to ignore genuine differences between various groups, in the rest of this essay I will use the terms encounter group, small group, and intensive group experience interchangeably.

Group leaders (often called facilitators or trainers) use diverse procedures: talking, silence, creative movement and dance, role-playing, dramatic techniques, exercises in imagination, sensory stimulation and deprivation, massage, craft work and artistic expression, just to mention a few of the more widely used methods. Group leaders are drawn from many professional and lay groups: psychiatry, social work, psychology, education, ministry, and creative disciplines such as art, music, dance and writing. Some group leaders have no professional or institutional affiliation.

Group meetings (sessions, workshops, institutes) may last as briefly as an hour, continue over many hours, take up an entire weekend or even last for weeks. The majority of group members are young and middle-aged adults from middle and upper-class backgrounds. Some groups are made up of total strangers, others are for married couples; professionals such as engineers and physicians are frequent group members as well as bored housewives, harassed businessmen and the identity-searching young. While group goals vary from entertainment to the development of a highly refined personal skill or even a different life style, most groups value change: change in behavior, change in values, a changed way of being in the world.

The basic encounter group, mainly through the use of talk and silence, emphasizes personal growth and improvement of interpersonal communication and relationships. Experiential learning is encouraged through personal sharing and feedback. The T-group (T is for training) is a two week human relation skills laboratory designed to enable a participant to learn about himself, others, groups, the working or organizations, and to "learn how to learn." Body and sensory awareness groups stress physical awareness and expression through the use of movement, dance, massage, concentration, and

sensory stimulation and deprivation. Sensitivity groups usually combine elements of the encounter group, T-group, and sensory awareness groups. Gestalt groups utilize a Gestalt therapeutic approach with a "therapist" focussing on one person at a time from a diagnostic point of view. The leader in a Gestalt group usually plays a more prominent part than in many other groups. Synanon groups were originally developed by the Synanon organization to treat drug addiction. Several Synanon communities are now in existence in California. Synanon groups function to change unwanted behaviors, to develop honest, straightforward relations and to develop new life styles. Synanon "games" may seem highly abrasive to the uninitiated and employ direct, unrelenting attacks on the defences and self-defeating behaviors of group members.

Growth centers are a highly visible index of the encounter group movement. At last count there were over one hundred such centers scattered throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, England, and Japan. Esalen at Big Sur, California, is the best known growth center; well over fifty-thousand persons have now participated in group sessions at Esalen. While the growth centers are not presently confederated, center directors began meeting annually in 1969 to discuss programs, the sharing of leaders, funding, fees and other common interests.

Why so many small groups? What factors seem to explain the rapid emergence of the intensive small group experience? Throughout history small groups have appeared in times of social disruption and change, when values were thrown into doubt. As people achieve a firm basis of literacy and material possession dissident groups arise around the issues of hypocrisy and discrepancy between values and behavior. Moreover, groups have always performed healing functions: supplying hope, morale, emotional support, protection, a sense of security and intimacy.

The contemporary surge of small group life seems to have arisen in response to pressing personal needs which are going unmet in ordinary daily living. Essential human needs for intimacy, support, realness and belonging do not change much. The situation people live in does change—our present rapid societal change is in the direction of being less liveable. Increasingly, people move around breaking ties with family, neighborhood, friends, family doctor, church and working associates. In short, sources of intimacy and belongingness are drying up. This, of course, without any reduction in the need of the individual for affection, acceptance, stability and intimacy. Modern family life, school life and work life stress efficiency, productivity, competition and require a restricted range of acceptable social behavior—factors which further oppose the individual's need for stability, belongingness and intimacy.

In contrast to the impersonality, social distance and separation which characterize contemporary family, school, and work life, the encounter group offers intimacy, confirmation, and belongingness. A group provides the person with an opportunity to grow and affirm himself in relation to others. In the words of one encounter group member, "lots of people with no symptoms at all are dying" Many people hunger for genuine interaction, honest feedback and shared feelings of closeness. For young participants the small group is a safe place to explore confusion about roles, values and personal identity. For older adults, the small group is a social oasis where facades
and societal restrictions can be shed. For all it is a place where loneliness can be replaced with shared, intimate fellowship.

Education is clearly implicated in the encounter group movement. Birnbaum (1969) has pointed out that the intensive group experience, when properly employed, can produce substantial educational change both in individuals and in organizations. As a potent experiential learning procedure, the small group is capable of creating a revolution in instruction by helping teachers to better utilize the classroom group for learning. For some years Robert Bales and colleagues have worked at Harvard University to develop an educational learning group for adults called the self-analytic group (1970). The aim of the self-analytic group is to achieve an understanding of individual behavior and self; and to “develop values, norms, leadership, emotional resources, and a theoretical point of view which makes further effective analysis possible, as a cooperative process” (pp. 523-524).

With prevention of later difficulties in mind, Bessel and Palomares (1970) have developed a series of group experiences suitable for children. They provide conditions for children to learn interpersonal skills, to learn how to share experiences and to learn and develop confidence, social awareness, and understanding. George Brown (1970) has reported on the Ford Foundation-Esalen project to humanize education at all levels of schooling—a project which made extensive use of the intensive group experience. Eugene Gendlin (1970) forecasts that “we are close to the time when every school system will teach skills of personal problem solving and helpful interacting to everyone . . .” (p. 553), much as writing, reading, and physical skills are now taught.

Psychiatry is clearly involved in the encounter group movement: psychiatrists themselves are group participants and leaders, their patients are often group members, and many of the procedures used by encounter group facilitators overlap the procedures of group psychotherapy. The relevance of encounter groups for psychiatry has been officially recognized by the American Psychiatric Association’s task force report on Encounter Groups and Psychiatry (1970). Briefly stated, the report lists the following implications of the group movement for psychiatry:

1. Encounter groups aim at behaviour change, personal growth, and often employ techniques overlapping with psychotherapy;
2. Participation in encounter groups by psychiatrists both as group members and as leaders is on the increase;
3. Numerous individuals receiving psychiatric treatment are also members of encounter groups. The interplay of the two experiences may significantly effect the person either positively or adversely;
4. Psychiatrists are often cited as authorities on encounter groups when in fact there has usually been nothing in their residency to prepare them to act in a capacity of authority on growth groups;
5. Technical innovations by encounter group leaders may be applicable to therapy groups. Sensitivity training procedures have already contributed significantly to group psychotherapy.

In summarizing the implications of encounter groups for psychiatry, the report emphasized: 1) the small group field is rapidly expanding, 2) it clearly interfaces with mental health, 3) it is based on a solid foundation, 4) it is well established and will not fade away, and 5) it is in the best interests of both psychiatrists and their patients to “foster a research approch
to the understanding and application of the intensive group experience" (p. 25). Moreno (1953) first used the term "group therapy" in about 1920. He had been preceding in practice of group therapy methods by Joseph Hershey Pratt, a Boston internist, who undertook group procedures to treat the psychological aspects of tuberculosis in 1905. A New Britain, Connecticut workshop in 1946 under the guidance of the renowned social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, gave birth to the T-group. Since 1950 the development of both group therapy and encounter (including T-groups) groups has been rapid, at times parallel and at times overlapping. The current relationship between the two fields has been recently examined by Yalom (1970), who points out that the therapy group is "a method for effecting therapeutic change in individuals" rather than being primarily "a vehicle for human closeness and contact" (p. 385).

Counselors in increasing numbers are being educated in group methods. Nearly all graduate training programs in counseling now provide the counselor-in-training with experience both as an encounter group member and as a facilitator. The increased interest in how encounter group methods can be applied in counselling settings is reflected in a major report on the encounter group which was published in a recent issue of The Counseling Psychologist (2, 1970). It seems likely that the influence of counselors trained in small group methods will become increasingly apparent in schools and universities as well as in community agencies such as mental health clinics, rehabilitation centers, YW-YWCA's and churches. Beyond the training and practice of professional counselors, a recent development in the field of counseling and therapy has been the advent of lay-counseling groups. Persons involved in this healthy effort to "bring counseling to the people" are using small group methods for both training and delivery of service.

The dangers of intensive group experience are much discussed but little known. It is fairly well established that T-group procedures have a highly beneficial effect on some individuals, no apparent effect on others, and are upsetting in the extreme for some. The same statement, however, can be made about virtually every kind of human interaction. About the only generalization which can be made at this point is that the group experience can be dangerous for some individuals, in the hands of some leaders. The safety of an encounter group is certainly directly related to the skill and sensitivity of the leader. Just how to determine or insure this sensitivity is enigmatic, given the present state of knowledge. Both informed psychiatric authorities (APA, 1970, p. 17) and psychological authorities (Corsini, 1970, p. 32) recognize the extreme diversity of the encounter group field and caution against hasty evaluation. Beyond these considerations, it must be recognized that, in large part, the small group movement has grown out of the people in response to the needs of people. It has never been under the direct influence of any professional group or institution, it is not now, nor does it seem likely that it will be in the foreseeable future. After much agonizing, the National Training Laboratories (1969) issued a set of standards to be used as guide lines for their institute programs. Other professional organizations are currently working on statements of standards for their own membership to be used in group work.

In conclusion, what is presently needed is for thoughtful, interested persons to continue an examined approach to the understanding and use of
the intensive group experience. It has powerful implications for education, psychiatry, counseling—for everyday people. We are living in a difficult time with withering sources for caring, intimate fellowship. It is truly pathetic that many persons either remain profoundly lonely or else have to plead sick (get therapy) or have (or pretend) a hobby interest in order to belong to a group. We are, I believe, moving in disparate ways toward Gendlin’s (1970) prediction that one day soon,

we will provide people with a quiet closed group in which they can move in depth, tell how things are, share life, so to speak, perhaps say little at times, perhaps do major therapeutic work when needed, but always with a sense of belonging, the anchoring which a group provides (p. 557).

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GESTALT THERAPY AND THE COUNSELLOR

ABSTRACT: The article briefly describes the principal values in Gestalt Therapy and outlines some of the practices commonly employed in Gestalt work. The development of Gestalt work is briefly described and implications for counsellors are suggested — both as a mode of counsellor training and as an approach to be used by counsellors.

INTRODUCTION

Gestalt therapy, relatively unknown before 1960, had attained a position of major therapeutic prominence by 1970. The Directory of the American Academy of Psychotherapists now lists Gestalt therapy as the sixth most common affiliation. During the sixties, lectures and demonstrations by Gestaltists such as Dr.'s Frederick (Fritz) Perls, Laura Perls, James Simpkin and others, stimulated professional interest in Gestalt amongst psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, and educators. By 1971, an estimated one thousand therapists had received Gestalt training at Gestalt institutes and growth centres in North America. Thousands more had participated in Gestalt therapy workshops and awareness training.

The purpose of this essay is to explore certain aspects of the Gestalt therapy approach: What is the Gestalt Good Life? How is Gestalt therapy conducted? What is the Gestalt view of change and growth in personality? Has Gestalt value for counsellors? Certainly there are no conclusive answers to such questions. It may be, however, that Gestalt thinking and practice in its various aspects has both value and limitations for a counsellor — in his own life and in his work with others. It is in a spirit of exploration that this article is written. The terms Gestalt, Gestalt therapy, and Gestalt work are used interchangeably.

Until his death in 1970, Fritz Perls was the foremost therapist-teacher in the Gestalt therapy movement. Educated in Germany, he received an MD from the Frederick Wilhelm Institute in 1921. After receiving psychoanalytic training in Berlin and Vienna, Perls practised psychiatry in South Africa for a number of years. During this period he departed from many of the tenets of his own training and began to develop a Gestalt theory of personality and therapy. Among others, he credited Wertheimer, Goldstein, Tillich, and Buber with inspiring his own theory. Following World War II, Perls moved to New York City and established a private practice. Gradually, other psychotherapists became involved with him, leading to the establishment of Gestalt Institutes in New York, Cleveland, and Los Angeles. However, it was Perls' move to Esalen Institute at Big Sur, California, in the mid-sixties that signalled the phenomenal expansion of the Gestalt therapy movement. Shortly before his death, Perls had founded the Gestalt Institute of Canada on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

Perls contrasted his "here and now" approach with what he called the three "isms": "aboutism," "shouldism," and "isism." For example, science is concerned with about. The scientifically oriented counsellor or therapist talks "about" his client, about himself, about the logical and intellectual order of things, thus missing the real person before him. Then there is "shouldism." One who is focused on what "should be" is either dissatisfied with, or unaware of, the present. By dwelling on "shoulds" one is absent and misses what is actually going on in the present. Third is "isism" which Perls identified with certain existential thinkers. While the existentialist correctly concerns himself with the present and what is, he often takes the fateful steps of asking "why?" and thus gets lost in the fruitless search amongst antecedents of the present. For the Gestalt therapist (at least à la Perls) it is the vivid present that matters. For it is only in the present that responsive, creative living occurs. Past and future are important only to the extent that they are part of present experiencing.

Gestalt therapy has taken certain concepts directly from classical Gestalt psychology. Figure/ground, unfinished situation, and Gestalt are obvious examples. The German word, Gestalt, for which there is no exact English equivalent, approximates what is meant by the phrase "meaningful organized whole." When we look at a person, we do not see arms, legs, trunk, neck, and head as unconnected juxtaposed elements. We see an organized whole, a "person." Thus a Gestalt is certainly more than the addition of the parts. Of course, we often have inaccurate or otherwise faulty Gestalten whose meanings do not serve us well. Gestalt formation invariably accompanies awareness. Gestalt therapy works toward accurate and complete Gestalt formations, the sine qua non of mental health and growth.

An incomplete Gestalt leaves us with "unfinished" business. When we are interrupted in the midst of a meaningful conversation, we have an "unfinished" feeling. This has the potential for lingering on to become a source of irritation, phantasy, mis-understanding, and consumes vital energy. Most importantly, unfinished situations "fix" us in the
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past. These few examples indicate how Gestalt therapy is, at least tenuously, connected with the Gestalt psychology of Wertheimer, Kohler, Lewin, and Goldstein.

Based on awareness and a change-theory of personality, Gestalt therapy is closely allied with the "third force" movement in psychology and education. Third force thinking calls attention to the "wholeness" or "humanness" of the individual. It also provides a viewpoint within which a therapist or counsellor can approach clients from the vantage point of well-being and growth rather than remedy and sickness as in traditional theories of personality. Third force psychology validates the common observations that individuals are able to grow to greater health; can increase the range and flexibility of their behaviors; have a capacity for creating solutions; even though functioning "normally" can learn to function with even greater enjoyment and effectiveness; and are able to transcend their "average" living habits. It has been in this context of growth and increased personal functioning that Gestalt therapy has taken root and flourished.

Many schools of counselling and psychotherapy stress one or the other of two themes: phenomenology or behavior. As the science of experiencing, phenomenology attends to the inner processes and states of the person and examines how inner processes are made explicit and how they relate to external events. The phenomenologically oriented therapist focuses on the individual's feelings, perceptions, imagery, and cognition and tries to understand how these inner states enable (or fail to enable) a person to emerge, create, solve, and live effectively. For the phenomenologist, behavior has secondary importance for it follows from experiencing.

The behavioristic therapist, on the other hand, often regards perceptions and inner processes as insignificant or even irrelevant. His interest is in observable behavior and the external schedules which establish, maintain, and extinguish specific behaviors. In therapy, he attends to specific behaviors and attempts to set up conditioning schemes which will develop desirable behaviors and eliminate undesirable ones.

Each theme has obvious value. Phenomenology directs us to first-order reality — human experiencing. It is from living experience that everything else derives its meaning. Behaviorism calls to our attention the importance of immediate, specific behavior. Yet each theme developed by itself becomes doctrinaire and absurd. Gestalt therapy is one attempt to join the two themes into a unified approach. "If you put these two together — the phenomenological approach, the awareness of what is, and the behavioral approach with its emphasis on behavior in the new — then you have in a nutshell what we are trying to do in Gestalt therapy (Perls, 1970, p. 14)."

Perls developed a working guideline of personality process during therapy. The different personality layers or spaces he termed: phoney, phobic, impasse, implosive, and explosive. Each region suggests different therapeutic problems and strategies for the therapist. Though presented as layers of personality, they are not intended to rigidify or
specify a particular therapeutic effort. The *phoney*, or Eric Berne layer, is that aspect of ourselves where we play games and present roles. We act *as if* we are something which we are not. Here we present a concept of ourself rather than ourself — we spend a great deal of energy trying to be what we aren't. The second, or *phobic*, layer is where one discovers the objections to being what one actually is. *Here* one feels *dissatisfied* and *resistant*. One's "shoulds" and "should nots" are encountered. Perhaps the greatest phobia of all is the fear of change.

In *impasse* one feels empty, stuck, unable to move and not knowing where to move. In the *implosive* layer, one's energies are used to compress, rigidify and hold one's self in. This is being a corpse, the extreme state of being which is conventionally labelled "catatonia." The fifth layer of personality is the *explosive*. Quite dramatically, an individual may "explode" to life. Explosions can be small or large depending upon the amount of energy which has been held back in the implosive stage. What has been *compressed* is now *expressed*. Anger, grief, joy, sexuality, and creativity are the main explosions.

Certainly, the first four: phoniness, resistance, being stuck and implosive are commonly observed in the therapeutic situation. In Perls' opinion a progression through all five layers is required for truly authentic living.

Gestalt represents an effort to bring a person’s inward, subjective processes and his outward behaviors into a unified Gestalt which is complete, free of blocks and holes, and which has adequate energy for response-ability and effective living. An important concept in Gestalt personality theory is that a person is actually a process of continuously forming and dissolving Gestalten. How a person perceives his life-situation at any moment determines his actions. Incomplete or poorly organized perception (Gestalten) leads to ineffective, self-defeating behavior. Ineffective behavior is part of the total Gestalt which is the person. By working with both the perceptions and behavior of a person, the therapist encounters the person *as he is*. By keeping the Gestalt of the "person" constantly in mind, the false dichotomy between "outer" and "inner" can be overcome.

Gestalt, like other theories of personality and therapy contains implicit values on what is a "good" life, and offers recommendations on how to achieve that life. Gestalt therapy depicts a life style in which the individual responds as a whole person in the actual present with full awareness of how and what he is experiencing. This amounts to saying that living in the vivid present is being most fully human; that "*present-centeredness is natural*, (Naranjo, 1970, p. 57)," and that deviations from this are either avoidance or compulsive sacrifices. In Gestalt therapy constant attention is directed to what one's body is doing, what one's mind is doing, and what is or is not going on between individuals, thus underscoring the importance of present, actual awareness on the motoric, symbolic, and interpersonal levels of behavior.

Gestalt proponents assume that there are natural values which persons are aware of through the process of their own living and by
observing others. Such awareness varies from clear vividness to extreme vagueness. The important point is that awareness is the property of all and not just a chosen few. Further, it is assumed that as one increases awareness of these natural values and the behaviors through which they are manifest, one's life becomes more integrated and "whole." A partial listing by Fagan and Shepherd (1970) of the valued behaviors and processes which emerge in actual living and which form the fabric of the Gestalt Good Life include: ease and versatility in relating, sensory awareness, freedom of bodily movement, spontaneity, emotional responsiveness and expressiveness, enjoyment, creativity, intimacy, open direct contact with others, competency, immediacy, presence, self-support, and experiencing-in-depth (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970, p. 2). In the literature of Gestalt therapy, there are numerous prescriptive statements about the desirability of certain attitudes and actions which point to the Gestalt Good Life. They may be thought of as injunctions on how to move in the direction of the valued behaviors given above. Such statements are not to be taken as "musts" but as statements pointing to what "is."

Responsibility is not a "must," but a fact; we are responsible doers of whatever we do — there remains only for us to accept or deny responsibility. Naranjo (1970) has presented a brief set of prescriptive statements which undergird the typical gestalt therapist's efforts:

1. Live now. Be concerned with the present rather than the past or future.
2. Live here. Deal with what is present rather than with what is absent.
3. Stop imagining. Experience the real.
4. Stop unnecessary thinking. Rather, taste and see.
5. Express rather than manipulate, explain, justify or judge.
6. Give in to unpleasantness and pain just as to pleasure. Do not restrict your awareness.
7. Accept no should or ought other than your own. Adore no graven image.
8. Take full responsibility for your actions, feelings and thoughts.
9. Surrender to being as you are (Naranjo, 1970, pp. 49-50).

The Gestalt approach points individuals toward the goal of "to thine own self be true" and provides many practical tools for the journey. The value-orientation of Gestalt opposes traditionalism with its reliance on subordination of the present to the past. Also contradicted is the future-planning mentality of the technocrat. Moreover, the self-responsibility theme of Gestalt therapy counters the assumption of authority outside the individual and questions the contemporary cultural perception of individuals as the pawns of accident or circumstance. Gestalt living is present-centered response-ability.

Effective day-to-day behavior results from the accuracy and completeness with which a person's perceptual Gestalten are formed. Not only are there faulty perceptions but an individual may also lose contact with his sensory and motoric being — thus acting in a "senseless" way. When experiencing personality-splits, blocks, and energy tie-ups, the individual loses his "sense" of natural being and effects avoidance, compulsive, phobic, and inflexible behaviors.

For example, during therapy a client who is a teacher may be-
come aware that his limited ability to respond is at least partially the result of having incorporated the belief that he "should always be in control." This attitude will manifest itself in various ways. Symbolically, he will believe that he must be in control, he may have fantasies about being in or out of control, he may even dream about control. Certainly, his speech will be of the command, authority, and rejection variety—either directly or subtly. Motorically, we might observe such signs as stiff posture, abrupt movements, piercing looks, loud voice, angry looking gestures, and so on. On the interpersonal level, the attitude may show itself in rigidity and distance in relationships, dominance or submission, and insistence on respect. Now this is a very difficult Gestalt to maintain and will tie up a great deal of energy. In order to aid the individual "break-out" of this difficult-to-maintain perception the effective Gestalt therapist assists the client increase his awareness on all three levels: symbolic, motoric, and interpersonal. Only then is it possible to discern what is missing, what seems out of place, how the client is in a cramp, how he is keeping himself tied up and incapable of moving in a more effective direction.

The general approach of Gestalt therapy requires that a client recognize, at least vaguely, those changes in attitude, behavior, or feeling that he wishes to change. Then the therapist works with the client to increase his awareness of how he is defeating himself. With increased awareness the therapist engages the client in mini-experiments to enable the individual to learn, grow, and change in the direction he has chosen. The therapist may confront, probe, challenge, use awareness exercises, listen carefully, point out signs of awareness or its lack, do dreamwork, and, at times, do what appears to be nothing. He is usually an astute observer of non-verbal communication and pays careful attention to certain words such as "but," "wondering," "probably," "should," all the while playing down the need for words. Generally, Gestalt therapists do little theorizing, discourage explanations, and may even prohibit questioning.

Awareness of self, others, and relationships has a central place in Gestalt work. This emphasis along with constant attention to inner blocks or energy tie-ups and concentration on immediate behaviors constitute three major aspects of Gestalt therapy. The therapy relationship in Gestalt is an encounter between two individuals. The therapist does whatever he can to develop the client's awareness and self-support skills.

The therapeutic goal is for the client to grow in capacity to solve his own life-problems and not to become dependent on the therapist for advice, interpretations and explanations. A Gestalt therapist seldom answers questions, especially those which express a need for dependency. Rather, the client is asked to restate the question as a positive statement. For example, Cl: "Do you think that I will ever get over being afraid to talk to you?" Rather than attempting to answer such a question, the therapist asks the client to restate the question and take responsibility for his feeling of fear. The restatement would be something like: "I'm afraid to talk to you." Gestalt therapists tend
to be active. They confront what seems to them to be phoney behavior. They suggest or even teach their clients skills or awareness and how to distinguish the real from the imagined. The client is encouraged or even forced to take responsibility for what he says, thinks, feels, and does. The use of detached or hypothetical language such as “one says,” “it would seem,” and “if” is actively discouraged.

Many Gestaltists prefer to use the Workshop Method of conducting therapy. Sometimes all the workshop members will be engaged in awareness exercises, but more frequently the therapist works directly with one person while other members watch. The others may become quite involved in watching the encounter but what occurs cannot be said to be group therapy. Rather it is individual therapy in front of a group. In order to gain some impression of the on-going experience of Gestalt therapy, we can consider some of the “rules” and “games” of Gestalt. The rules are few in number (Levitsky & Perls, 1970, pp. 140-144).

**Principle of the Now.** Statements such as “What is happening now?,” “Right now I am aware of . . .”, and “I imagine that you are feeling something,” focus the client on the content and structure of present experience. The therapist frequently points out to the client how easily he “leaves the now.”

**I and thou communication.** True personal communication involves both the sayer and the listener. Clients often speak as though they were delivering lectures to the wall or “reeling off” to the group at large. By being asked “Whom are you talking to?” a person is made to face his reluctance to address, directly and unambiguously, his thou. The client is made aware of the difference between “talking to,” “talking at,” and “talking with.”

**“It” and “I” language.** A person frequently has learned to avoid taking responsibility by using detached references. For example, “It is really cold in here” is translated into “I” language as “I am really cold.” Using “I” language is more involving and puts the client into closer contact with the specific behaviors in question.

**Using the awareness continuum.** By using the awareness continuum, a therapist can aid the client to move from an outer, labelling level of awareness down to the bed-rock of his actual, bodily experience.

Cl: “I feel nervous.” (The word “nervous” is a label).
T.: “How do you experience your nervousness?”
Cl.: “What do you mean?” (Blocking).
T.: “Where is the nervousness in your body?”
Cl.: “Uh, my hands are sweaty . . . my throat feels tight.”

As the client is led “back to his senses,” he is helped out of the confusing use of labels and learns to distinguish between out there, the scary fantasies he is inventing, and his actual experience.

**No gossiping.** This is defined as talking about a person in his presence when he could be addressed directly.

X: (turns to therapist and says) “I think that Bill doesn’t like what I just said.”
T: "I hear that as a gossip, speak to Bill."
X: (turning to Bill) "I have the impression that you don't like what I said."

Questions. A great many questions are not questions at all — they are a disguised way of giving one's opinion. For example, "Do you think that...?" is usually a dishonest way of saying, "I think that..." Nine out of ten questions fall into three groups: 1) they are dishonest statements of opinion; 2) they are direct attacks on the other person; or 3) they reveal passiveness or dependence on the part of the questioner. Of course, there are genuine questions like, "Are you aware that...?" or "What is happening...?" or "How are you doing with that...?" With the exception of the relatively rare genuine question, a client is usually asked to turn his question into a statement.

These rules reduce destructive indirect games and facilitate the direct expression and reception of feelings. They are not to be construed as dogmatic pronouncements, but as operating guidelines. They are usually presented directly early in work and are given as tools with which each person can experiment and explore his resistances, his awareness, and his realness.

Games, of which there are an endless number, are proposed by the therapist or workshop leader in a spontaneous and unplanned fashion. The most effective game will be one which "fits" the situation of the moment. Games are based on creative responsiveness rather than systematic planning. This does not mean that the therapist creates a brand new game each time he sees fit to propose one. The experienced therapist will have an extensive repertoire of games stored in his memory which he is able to call upon and modify to meet the demands of the moment.

Inner dialogue. A person often experiences "splits" or separated aspects of his person. For example, a client of mine was divided in the following manner. One part of him wanted to return to England to spend the summer with his girl friend. The other part wanted to stay in Canada to continue on his university work during the summer. He was really stuck and felt unable to do either. He was able to develop a dialogue between the "tough, get ahead" part of himself who wanted to stay in Canada, and the "lonely little boy" part of him who wanted to go back to England, and in time thus bring his two splits face-to-face and dissolve the "stuckness." An inner dialogue can be applied to any split within the person such as top-dog, bottom-dog; masculine, feminine; nice guy, rascal; or even body parts such as right hand versus left hand. The client simply addresses one part as if he were speaking to the person, imagines the response, replies to the response and so on.

Making the rounds. Cl.: "I don't think anyone in this group likes me." T.: "Can you say that to each person?" The client then goes around addressing each person in turn saying, "I don't think you like me." Often another statement will be added on, like: "I don't think you like me and I feel left out." Making the rounds can be done with touching, hugging, looking, speaking, pantomiming, screaming, etc.
**Unfinished business.** Most of us live with unfinished business. We haven’t learned how to say goodbye either to people or to tasks. Often in therapy, we say “You probably have something on your mind that you have wanted to say all evening. Now go to the person you wanted to say it to, and say it.” When we don’t finish an encounter, we leave filled with lingering fantasies and various goblins such as resentment, indecision, and unstated affection. To “finish business” releases us to turn to new events as they take place. Unfinished business is synonymous with living in the past.

**I am that.** Individuals are directed to carefully examine the room for an object which appeals to them through their sense organs. They are then asked to feel it, smell it — to become acquainted with it. Next, an individual is asked to imagine that he is the object which he has selected and begin to speak as though he were that object. This permits the individual to project out aspects of himself that he might not otherwise disclose.

**Exaggeration.** Frequently an individual will say something which sounds to the therapist as though it had special significance but also sounds as if the client was really unaware of what he said or had glossed over it quickly. The client will be asked to repeat it, often again and again, louder and louder. The same procedure can be used with gestures and body movements. This often leads to a genuine recognition on the client’s part of what he was saying or doing.

Games are mini-experiments to assist an individual in working on and growing through actual-life-problems. Other examples are described by Levitsky and Perls (1970). Beyond constantly pointing out indications of awareness and unawareness, the Gestaltist may directly teach awareness skills. The individual is taught to improve his observing skills and to discriminate between various mental processes.

Awareness requires careful distinction between observation and assumption; that is, between what the individual sees, hears, smells, tastes, and what he assumes or imagines. For example, Jack says to Jill, “You are insecure.” Such a statement is one of assumption. What is Jack actually aware of? Jack may see Jill’s clenched fingers. He may hear Jill’s swallowing. From these observations he then imagines an inner state which he calls “insecurity.” Gestalt awareness training teaches discriminations between what is observed and what is imagined. Such training also reveals the fallacy of “labelling” and the accompanying assumption that the label is reality. When Jack says to Jill “You are insecure,” he is attributing a characteristic to her which may only be a fiction of his own imagining. In effect, he is making her as he believes her to be rather than seeing her as she is.

A typical training exercise for this discrimination is to have one partner of a training dyad make an observation about the other and then say what he imagines as a consequence of the observation. An example is, Jack: “I see your fingers scratching your head, I imagine that you feel puzzled.” Switching, Jill might then say: “I smell a cologne scent, I imagine that you shaved this morning.” Using different sensory modes, individuals can increase their skill and aware-
ness in discriminating between what is real and what is fantasy and can reduce labelling and attribution. Awareness is increased by differentiating such processes as imagining, sensing, attributing, projecting, thinking, remembering, comparing, blaming, and anticipating.

For whom is Gestalt therapy appropriate? Gestalt is especially applicable to adults who are dissatisfied with their life-situations, who are willing to spend some effort on their personal development, and who are experiencing internal blocking and restrictions, and who act with compulsion or avoidance. Clearly, Gestalt therapy is not for every person — in this it does not differ from other therapies. It is my experience that at least half of the clients seen in the typical college or university counselling center can be considered as likely candidates for Gestalt therapy, at least in modified form. There are various reports of the application of Gestalt work to adolescents and children. An example of the latter is Marilyn Rosanes-Berrett’s (1970, pp. 257-262) report of a nine-year-old child who had been diagnosed as myopic and who could not clearly see the school blackboard. By encouraging the boy to stay with his inner experiences and by getting the boy to experiment with his vision in co-ordination with his contacted feelings, it emerged that his was not a visual problem at all. Rather the boy had constructed a perception of himself as wicked and did not wish to see or be seen. In due time his self-gestalt was reorganized and the boy could hold clear sight.

Many of the awareness training techniques can be directly applied to the training of human relations workers such as counsellors, caseworkers, nurses, members of mental health professions, and to teachers. In this field the applications of Gestalt techniques seem unlimited. Of course, it is not possible to produce Gestalt therapists by merely involving individuals in awareness training. However, such training has the potential for greatly enhancing one’s awareness of self and others and for promoting autonomy, responsiveness, and presence.

An important limitation of Gestalt therapy is the skill, judgment, and experience of the therapist. Gestalt work does release intense affect at times and the therapist must be neither fearful nor inept at these moments. A prime requisite of the Gestaltist is to have an unusual capacity for responding in the immediate present and to be able to provide a solid presence. Much Gestalt work is in the form of the I-thou encounter which requires a creative responsiveness in the here-and-now, which is where and when genuine encounters occur. There is a certain Zen-like quality to here-and-now work which requires that a person be unwilling to be pushed off-centre by the unusual, by intellectualizing, by questioning, and by conditioned resistance. Since much of the work in Gestalt is toward self-support, there is not as much group or leader generated warmth as is found in supportive therapy and affection-oriented group counselling. Gestalt therapists often exhibit a need-structure which definitely is not inclined to supportive warmth but is in the direction of extreme self-responsibility. The Gestalt Good Life is manifest in honest awareness and expressive, autonomous presence.
For the school counsellor, Gestalt theory and therapy offer some valuable aids and raise some cautions. One of the great values of the Gestalt approach is the insight that the whole is more than the mere sum of its parts. The counselling situation is more than just the statistical, twenty-minute event of counsellor plus client. It is a person to person meeting of counsellor and client — of one person with another. This participative meeting, if it is genuine, is far more than just the two bodies and the counselling hour, it is an I-thou encounter.

The average person has been reared in an atmosphere full of splits, divisions, and phoniness. His natural wholeness is blurred and he has learned to express himself cautiously and then in either/or, passive ways. His thinking function has usually been conditioned and developed beyond his feeling, creative, and expressive abilities. He has been “averaged out” and deprived of his spontaneity. The counsellor who, in his full adult life, expends the effort and the time to re-awaken and develop his awareness through awareness training and related activities may regain a measure of his original spontaneity, naturalness, and responsible expressiveness. In doing this, he becomes a more healthy, creative model for his clients.

Many of the awareness exercises which have been developed in Gestalt work are valuable not only for the counsellor’s own training, but can be used by a counsellor in direct work with children, adolescents, and adults in all counselling settings. Awareness is hardly the special province of some elite, but is applicable and valuable to persons of all ages in all walks of life. School counsellors, especially those who work with adolescents or adults, frequently find that they are faced with issues of realness, self-dissatisfaction, and resistance in their clients. These are certainly important growth areas for the adequately trained counsellor to be working with.

On the other hand, there is need for caution in attempting to work on the implosive and explosive layers of personality change in various counselling settings. Most school counsellors, for example, work within limitations imposed by the school itself. Further, the training which the school counsellor has received is often insufficient to produce the adeptness, sensitivity, and presence which this level of therapeutic work requires.

In conclusion, Gestalt therapy has undergone amazingly rapid development in the last decade. Gestalters tend to be doers and not writers, so that the development of Gestalt literature has in no way matched the development of therapeutic strategies and efforts. The classic text is undoubtedly Perls’s *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality*, first published in 1951. The first portion of that book outlines eleven awareness experiments which a careful reader will find to be a helpful introduction to the basic aims of Gestalt work. *Gestalt Therapy Now* (Fagan & Shepherd, 1970), a book of readings, is a second extremely valuable source of both theoretical and practical statements. Kogan (1970) has compiled a list of aids in Gestalt therapy which includes books, articles, films, and tapes.
Inasmuch as Gestalt is based on what might be called a psychology of the obvious, (immediate experiencing, behaviors and interactions) many of the theoretical concepts and practical procedures are directly applicable to counselling contexts and, even more broadly, to classroom learning. Excellent examples of the latter can be found in the writings of Janet Lederman (1969) and George Brown (1971). However, Gestalt procedures such as dream-work and intense confrontation which aims to effect deep emotional release seems clearly inappropriate for certain clients and for some institutional settings.

There is a Sufi saying: "When you have found yourself you can have knowledge. Until then you can have only opinions. Opinions are based on habit and what you conceive to be convenient to you (Tari-gavi)." For the aspiring counsellor, Gestalt training seems well-suited to assist growth from the subjective state of opinion to the objective state of self-knowledge.

RESUME: Cet article décrit brièvement les aspects les plus valables de la thérapie gestaltiste et esquisse quelques unes des méthodes les plus courantes de cette approche. On décrit brièvement la nature du travail et ce que peuvent en tirer les conseillers, tant comme méthode de formation à la consultation que comme technique de pratique.

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Creative Helping*

The purpose, meaning and difficulties of personal existence are always imbedded in the culture of which the person is a member. Person and context are constantly interacting. Now one, now the other appears to dominate. Transcultural studies provide many examples of how individuals shape and reshape their context through ideas, inventions and even psychic processes which may be externalized and made into conventions or institutions of the culture. As Ruth Benedict once remarked, "Culture is personality writ large."

In turn, individuals are certainly influenced by various aspects of their cultural milieu such as customs, laws, institutions, organizations and ideologies. It is important to remember that each aspect of culture originated as an invention or complex of inventions, or as a projection of cognitive or emotional aspect of personality. In due time, however, these individually created contributions become legitimated themes, norms, rules or institutions of a society and exert varying degrees of influence on its individual members.

One very interesting example of how a psychic process can become a cultural institution and thus radically influence the behavior of individual members of the society is that of the Seneca tribe and the dream (Wallace, 1958). Modern psychol-

* The modern individual's widespread submission to technical processes blocks him from his own creative source. "Creative helping," as an interfusion of therapeutics and the creative arts, is both an attitude and a working method for bringing the person back into contact with his own creative energies. "Creative helping," can be thought of as both preventive and regenerative.

ogy holds that a dream is an individual, subjective psychic phenomenon or process, albeit an important one. The dream is considered by many to be a highly significant occurrence somewhat on the order of the individual sending himself a message. If understood or interpreted properly, the dream may thus have great importance to daily living or to self-understanding.

The Seneca, however, went so far as to institutionalize the dream. To them it was a divine power, and as such it exerted great influence over individuals, not as a psychological tool, but as a divine and prophetic institution. They tried, therefore, to follow the divinatory message of the dream with exactitude. Clearly, an effort to understand the personality and personal behavior of an Iroquois would have required understanding of his cultural context, including the importance of the dream as an aspect of that context.

From transcultural studies we may similarly conclude that educational and therapeutic efforts to develop, correct or improve personality and personal existence must take into account both the uniqueness of the individual and his cultural context if they are to be successful (Kiev, 1972).

The cultural context in which most of us live can be described as "technological" or "technicized." A central characteristic of this context is the "physical machine take-over of the destiny of people" (Yablonsky, 1972). That is, technology aims at its own maximum efficiency and utilization. Choice becomes technical: i.e., automatic and based on efficient, precise, logical progression. The human agent with his ability to create and choose is not needed, nor even wanted. Technique itself chooses the proper means to be employed in order to achieve maximum progression and minimum cost and wastage. The cultural conversion from personal choice to technical choice leads to what Ellul (1967) has referred to as "automatism."

Automatism has been increasing since the beginning of the industrial revolution. In the last four decades it has accelerated greatly due to the advent of such technological institutions as nuclear energy, computerization, planetary television, jet travel and destruction systems, as well as space travel and communications. The technicizing of Western society is now proceeding at a rate hardly calculable, and its companion, automatism, contributes subtly but steadily and ever more swiftly to the reduction of personal significance and to what Morgan (1968) terms the "banishment of the person."

A machine which acts like a person is called a robot. Conversely, a person who tries to act like a machine may be termed
Creative Helping

*a robopath* (Yablonsky, 1972). In a technicized society, special, technical interests are separated and elevated above concern for the whole—either the whole man or the whole of mankind. Thus the robopath is specialized and fragmented. His activities are atomized; a specific technical activity or a role is not considered in light of what it does to the remainder of his personal existence. His actions and his moral sense are split; he is "value-free." Doing is elevated over understanding and reason and emotion are regarded as mutually exclusive categories. "Divorced from nature and from other men, the [robo-pathic] individual is estranged and isolated—bereft, despite all activity, of what is essential to becoming and being a whole person" (Morgan, 1968).

Individuals living in a technicized social order often exhibit a *severe state of personal underdevelopment*. Personal growth is seldom encouraged by such a culture; rather it is usually directly blocked, especially in work and family settings. Even in education, the motto "Full development of individual potential" is seldom more than a platitude.

The personally underdeveloped individual is organized and centered around weakness, uncertainty and emptiness, rather than around strength and significance. This is the existential state referred to as *anomie* (McClosky and Scherr, 1965). For the anomie, "everything is so uncertain," "things aren't like they used to be," "old friendships are gone"and "one just doesn't know how to act from one day to the next." The anomie believes that "no one knows what is right," but nonetheless thinks that other people are more likely to know what is right than he is. Fundamentally, the anomie has lost, or has never developed, either the ability to differ with others or the ability to create personal meaning and significance. The anomie suffers from a collapse of values and, we might say, has lost his way in the world.

Even though it is man's ability to imagine and create that has given rise to the societal conditions which now threaten to extinguish him, a compelling solution for anomie and blocked creativity is to re-establish contact with creative energies; for in each instance it is just this energy which is needed to invent new selves capable of surviving in a technicized society.

Man invented machines. Unfortunately, after inventing them, he began to ape them. The more an individual's activities are modelled after the machine—standardized, automatic and repeatable—the more he loses his spontaneity and vital ability to create. Some years ago J. L. Moreno, father of psychodrama, pointed out that submission to technical processes and reliance
on techniques always causes the individual "to neglect and abandon the genuine and outstanding creative process in him" (Moreno, 1953).

As Richard Schacht (1971) has shown, a distinctive personality is not simply a lofty ideal, but amounts to an existential imperative. Among researchers into alienation from Hegel down to the present, there is almost unanimous agreement that "a person is not as he should be to the extent that he fails to develop a distinctive personality" (Schacht, 1971). Without distinctiveness the individual attains only to pre-personality, or, even more unfortunate, de-personality.

If the society of which we are members is indeed becoming rapidly more technicized, and if this produces conditions conducive to anomie and loss of creativity, then we need educational/therapeutic/personal growth strategies which will assist the individual to organize his life around a center of personal significance and to assist him to create that new self (or selves) capable of surviving in a technicized context. One way to proceed is to work for the release of creative energies which will make such inventions possible. Through bringing creative energies to bear on the activities of everyday existence, the re-integration of the fragmented self into a meaningful, distinctive personality becomes a real possibility.

Nicholas Berdyaev (1952, 1955), the Russian existentialist and mystic, has argued that the development of true personality and the expression of creativity are deeply interwined:

The creative act is a free and independent force, immanently inherent only in a person, a personality. Only something arising in original substance and possessing the power to increase power in the world can be true creativity, ... Creativity is an original act of personalities in the world (Berdyaev, 1955).

How ought we to regard personality? In Berdyaev's view not merely as a psychological or sociological entity but as something more—an ethical category. Personality is really a break with the world order. Through deciding, through acting, through creating, a person breaks the closed circle of the natural world. The person is a moral agent capable of self-affirmation through moral choice, acts of freedom and creative expression. Personality, elevated to its proper status as moral agent, is not just an organism with intelligence, nor even just an individual; personality is freedom, is creativity, is spirit.

Man has the power to imagine, and with this he is able to break in on causal chains, and to break out of conditioning. At
every moment, personality has the potential capacity to imagine, think, feel and act in ways which cannot quite be explained on the basis of what has gone before. Man is constantly seeking novelty, yet this in itself does not set him apart from other organisms. What sets him apart and lifts him to the category of moral agent is that he can generate novelty. Personality as freedom, creativity and spirit transcends the limits of logical and biological necessity. In fact, through invention and creation, man transcends himself.

Carl Rogers has described certain inner conditions which he believes are characteristic of the creative or potentially creative personality. One is openness to experience:

To the degree that the individual is open to all aspects of his experience, and has available to his awareness all the varied sensings and perceivings which are going on within his organism, then the novel products of his interaction with this environment will tend to be constructive both for himself and for others (Rogers, 1962).

A second important “inner” requirement for constructive creativity is that the individual has the feeling of being “me in action.” Rogers refers to this as internal locus of evaluation. This suggests that the value of what the person is doing or is feeling is determined by himself more than by praise and criticism from others. This does not imply total lack of awareness of others’ judgments or evaluations. What is important is that for the creative personality the primary site of evaluation is within. He is able to trust his body, his emotions and his imagination. He is willing to risk being open to experiencing in all aspects of his organism and he is able to trust judgments formulated on the basis of his experiencing.

A third dimension of the creative personality is the ability to play spontaneously with ideas, relationships and elements of the environment. Playfulness means being able to express the ridiculous, to be amazed, to see something from unbelievable angles. The creative personality toys with possibilities, is willing to try out and to “waste” time and effort. By playing around, the creative personality lets go; he permits his imagination and the world of practicality to test each other. By playing, the creative person frees himself from conventions, habits and conditionings. Thus he is able to let the New emerge.

To facilitate the development of distinctive personality, to reduce anomie and to release creative energy: these are the tasks to which Creative Helping sets itself. Creative Helping does
not refer to a single method but to a learning/creating/helping/realizing/growing process—a synthesis of experiences through which a person may re integrate himself with his world in such ways that he makes himself whole, renews himself through creative energy and creates a more meaningful personal existence. The need for Creative Helping increases with the growth of technicized social orders which are inimical to personal development.

“Helping” refers to a range of activities including counseling, therapy, personal growth and psychological education. “Creative” emphasizes that the process attempts to vitalize individuals by engaging them in the creative arts. “Creative Helping,” then, attempts to interfuse the discipline of helping with the disciplines of the arts. In so doing, Creative Helping engages the individual in various modalities and expressive forms: sensory and body awareness; movement/dance; dramatic arts; music; writing and film; introverted and extroverted attention; talking and keeping silent; creative problem solving; and meditation.

Personality changes constantly, whether in the negative direction of de-personality or in the positive direction of a richer and more distinctive personality. In order to state more specifically how Creative Helping gears into personality change, we follow, with some modifications, a model of personal growth as formulated by Rossi (1968, 1972).

To the extent that an individual's life is influenced by technicizing influences, at least the following conditions which are inimical to personality development can be defined:

a. Channels for creative experience are lacking. Children have the universal channels of play and imagination for the expression and experience of creativity. However, in a technological culture with emphasis on precision, repeatability and practicality, adults have extremely impoverished channels for the expression of original, creative impulses and experience. The typical individual is not without creative potential. The problem is that he has learned to deny or suppress creative impulses in deference to conventional, standardized expectations of others: parents, teachers, peers, employers. A large number of contemporary adults can neither play nor imagine. Many have become afraid of their own inner life.

b. Over-identification. In order to fit into technicized life, many persons over-identify with mechanistic aspects of society. This contributes to an inability to recognize and contact creative impulses which present themselves from
time to time. Unrecognized, these urges lose potency and the possibility for a new direction or action is lost.

c. Over-reliance. Dependency on others is one of the most frightening aspects of technological living. The individual learns this fact of existence very well and may organize his whole life around finding out what others expect so that he can conform. Such an individual has a pathetic inner world; he lacks self-awareness and self-orientation.

d. Passivity toward the New is reinforced. One of the characteristics of the technicized organization is that most new ideas "die a-borning." The primary training ground for this passivity is the classroom where the teacher must "keep things under control," "cover the ground," and see that the "right answers" are memorized and repeated. Programming is not only for computers! By the time the individual has finished schooling he has learned to passively accept rather than to risk. He is afraid of exploring the unknown and is unwilling to risk retaliation for differing from what is "right."

e. Prosaic attitude. Life takes on a standardized, "average" quality. This is reflected in the "I'm just doing my job" attitude, or the "Thank God It's Friday" lament of the teacher. The individual is merely a part of the social machine. Worse, he is an interchangeable part.

As the individual tries to adapt to a context which is inimical to growth, he develops blocks to growth within himself. Such blocks do have a survival function, but in a restrictive and defensive sense in that they are formed to ward off hurts, threats and fears. While they enable the individual to survive in a depersonalizing context, they negate his impulses to grow, create and transcend. Some of the more prominent blocks are:

a. Lack of awareness. Limited awareness of self, others and environment means that large areas of experience are being denied or distorted.

b. One-dimensional view of self. This self-view stresses literality, practicality, "I'm just doing my job." The one-dimensional person depends upon advice, rules and practical logic. He has no realization of himself as a being in depth. Emotion, imagination and inner life are negatively valued and suppressed.

c. Feelings of inability or inadequacy. The individual experiences himself as just barely being able to cope and as not having the power to do much about his circumstances.

d. Negativity to the new and novel. The individual cannot
trust himself—especially his creative impulses or sensings of newness within himself. This lack of trust is usually projected as a negative attitude to creativity in general. What is not “practical” is not appreciated.

e. Tiredness, depression. The individual is often weighed down by his life. His yearnings for a better life are usually expressed as, “If only . . .” Things are too much, he feels chronically tired and is unable to reach his own inner sources of renewal. “I feel so hopeless.”

f. Body blocks. These usually take the form of rigidity, tension or lack of body awareness. Muscular blocking is closely related to depression. The individual is out of touch with his bodily self. He may have no image of himself as an embodiment or have a partial and distorted sense of body. He feels “tense and tired.” He experiences body pain which is not grounded in actual physical disorder. He has poor use of his body—weakness, rigidity, tension, immobility predominate. Muscle contractions are used to deny feelings and awareness.

Even though many persons suffer severe personal underdevelopment and have acquired blocks to personal growth, nearly everyone at times exhibits what may be called “impulses” to growth. Each of the conditions listed below can be regarded as signs of pathology. Such feelings, however, may also be regarded as indicators of potential change. Each expresses a state of unease, of dissatisfaction, and, as such, may symptomize an impulse to growth. Five such impulses are:

a. Confusion. When experiencing mental and emotional confusion, an individual may become aware of possibilities for action which had been denied or unnoticed before. Confusion thus has positive as well as negative implications.

b. Crisis. A crisis is an upending experience. What was working is not now working. The unbelievable is happening. Like confusion, crisis has a potential for growth. Indeed, the impulse to growth may itself throw the individual into turmoil that his existence becomes crisis-ridden.

c. Self-contradiction. Technological society tends to fragment the individual into many “parts” and roles. When a person senses various aspects of his fractured personality as “conflicting” or contradicting each other, he experiences dissonance, and self-contradiction. These experiences do not necessarily, but indeed may signal an impulse to growth and urge to integration.
d. **Rebelliousness.** Rebelliousness represents, among other things, an impulse to struggle free from oppressive conditions.

e. **Tension.** Tension is a signal that important inner-outer contradictions are being ignored or that the wisdom of the body is not being listened to. The tense person is living in such a way that his body "freezes." Tension may draw the attention of the individual to the fact that his existence is sickening, and thus start a process of positive change.

f. **Thoughts of differentness.** Thoughts of doing something different or of being different are not always repressed. When such thoughts leak by the individual's censor, they are often accompanied by feelings of embarrassment, guilt or self-consciousness. Again, while such events can be regarded as pathological, irrational and symptoms of disturbance, they can also be viewed as early signs of impending and the emergence of an impulse to grow.

Even though an individual may be deeply imbedded in a technicized environment which restricts and even opposes personality growth and the use of creative energy, and may have developed severe blocks to creativity and growth within himself, he will still experience the impulse to grow. Unfortunately, these growth symptoms usually occur in forms which are regarded as sick. By recognizing these symptoms as signs of potential development, the Creative Helper can take steps — therapeutic and educational — to assist the individual to recognize, verify and use his own original experiencing toward the goal of constructive personality change and development. Examples of original experiencing which may be contacted through expressive therapeutic and educational methods include:

a. **New and expanded awareness:** the role of perceptual, cognitive, emotional and body awareness in creativity and personality growth can hardly be overemphasized.

b. **Transformation:** recognition of constant inward change — using the insights from dreams, hunches, intuitions as grounds for taking different life-action.

c. **Break-out:** the moment or act of breaking with conditioned ideas, feelings, beliefs, values or behaviors which have suppressed creative energies and limited personal development.

d. **Original thinking:** epitomized in personal reflections on the new and the different; ability to reformulate life plans and actions in the perspective of the New; permitting
oneself to think "astonishing" ideas, to have insights, to be surprised, even amazed. Original thinking breaks with established, conditioned patterns and include both intuition and vision.

e. Excitement: the standardized quality of life is broken out of — the individual begins to experience excitement and feels vital rather than bored, passive, and tired. The body steadies, the mind wakes up, life takes on a distinctive quality.

Experiencing oneself as having a creative center, as being able to respond spontaneously as well as habitually, as being alive and vital is an incredible experience. Our conception of the successful, enjoying, healthy personality is that of the organic whole, or Gestalt. The well-being of the personality is dependent on the harmonious interplay and integration of the symbolic, affective, motor and visceral components of the individual into a total unity. Personality development is a totalization process. We think and imagine, we feel and express, we move and experience our bodies. When these processes are fluidly interactive and attuned, free of blocks and denial, then we imagine deeply, we feel well, we think clearly, we move vitally — we are well.

To confirm the individual's contact with his own creative sources, and to encourage the building of a viable self, Creative Helping tries to facilitate:

a. Experimenting with new awareness in various life situations.

b. Integration of the new with the old; of inner and outer, of body and mind.

c. Testing — identifying, practicing and trying out new behaviors, plans, ideas in the learning or therapeutic situation and in other real life situations.

d. Appreciating the New — actively valuing and relating to novelty in self, in relationships, in tasks, in other.

e. Allowing oneself to experience pleasure, happiness, playfulness.

By engaging the individual in symbolic, affective, motor and visceral spheres through a variety of expressive means, as well as silence and dialogal encounter, Creative Helping tries to guide and stimulate the creation of personality which trusts and which has access to its own creative source. Much of the educational and therapeutic effort is aimed at removing the blocks to personal growth and creativity which have been built up in both the mind and the body. The individual is encouraged to use himself and the objects in his environment to
formulate a stronger, more trustworthy personal identity; to build effective relationships and achievement; to become initiative, participative and involved; in short, to make of himself, in relation to his world, more than he has ever been or has ever been encouraged to be.

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by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Counselling and Emancipation:
Twenty-three Theses

R. VANCE PEAVY

Introduction

This paper was originally presented to a working group of the International Round Table on Counselling at the 7th World Congress on Counselling held at Wurzburg, Germany in August 1976. The author is a continuing member of the Round Table which concerns itself with issues which are significant to counsellors from all over the world. The theme of the 7th World Congress was, Counselling: Adjustment or Emancipation.

The counselling encounter is a face-to-face situation in which one person tries to "help" another. Counselling, being more contemplative than active, does not seek primarily to alter social structures, although they may not be ignored, by any means. Rather, counselling is directed more to the individual as an agent with capacities for reflection, emotion, decision and action, but who is nearly always constrained from exercising these capacities in a full and creative manner.

Paradox: Man creates his social order; the social order shapes man. The dialectic of man and society — of the individual and the other — is endless. Each requires the other; determines and is determined by the other. The paradigm from which counselling operates is dialectical: changing individuals in changing societies.

The basic argument of this paper is that counselling is (or should be) an educational practice which aims to emancipate the individual from dehumanizing restraints. Counselling should personalize rather than depersonalize.

The remainder of this paper is in the form of a series of theses which have not been developed with an inter-connecting logic, but which argue for the emancipatory function of counselling.

I

Counselling is an educational practice. Education in the broadest sense, provides a context for examining counselling as a specific form of educational practice.

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23

II

The individual and his society always exist in some degree of tension. It is in this "field of tension" that education occurs. Further, it is in this "field of tension" that issues of freedom and unfreedom arise. The individual who is hindered seeks counselling.

III

Emancipation is the goal of humanistic culture:

The goal of culture is to emancipate man from the forces — physical, psychic, or sociological — which alienate him . . . so that he may be helped to become fully himself. Such "personalization" must successfully overcome the two opposite forms of alienation represented by the crowd on the one side and individualism on the other. (Barbotin, 1975, p. 25).

IV

Throughout history educational theorists and visionaries have claimed the fundamental pedagogical ideal to be synthesis of the individual:

The physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man. . . . (Faure, 1972, p. 156)

V

Humanistic culture, education and counselling share the common goal of individual liberation and fulfillment: to liberate the individual from restraints: material deprivation as well as the totalitarianism of the "group" on the one hand, and "individualism" on the other.

VI

Yet we know that in most modern societies the individual has very little hope of concrete fulfilment. He is hindered by discord, injustice, lying and division on all sides.

VII

One of the most fundamental and pervasive social conditions of modern existence is fragmentation (Bohm, 1970) which shows itself:

in nation arrayed against nation, race against race, religion against religion, group against group, and man against man. And in turn, each man is fragmented into different and incompatible loyalties, aims, desires, etc. (p. 160)

VIII

The division of society into classes, the status distinction between intellectual and manual labor, alienation from work and its fragmented nature, social structures that defy economic and political justice, clash of ideolo-
gies, and the alleged dichotomies between mind and body, spirit and material—all encourage the dissociation of personality into fragments and frustrate the impulses toward integration, synthesis and wholeness (Faure, 1972).

IX
The individual seldom achieves any strong measure of "emancipation" at the hands of general educational practice. Slavery does not end, it merely erupts into violence.

X
Specialized educational practices such as psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and counselling have been developed. Each of these educational practices has at least one characteristic in common: They are applied in a remarkably concrete way to the individual. Each has the potential to either emancipate or oppress; to liberate or adjust.

XI
Numerous distinctions may be drawn between psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and counselling, such distinctions have not been in fact, empirically demonstrated (Patterson, 1974). A common educational function is given to each. Each may seek to remove hindrances and augment the individual's freedom; or each may be used to adjust the individual and curtail fulfillment.

XII
In humanistic1 counselling a "solution" is a liberation from some restraint. Of course, just what constitutes a "restraint" is, in part, socially determined and thus implies value. Thus counselling is an activity directed toward a certain value.

XIII
In counselling we confront very basic values: even the question of what is our personal or social reality, as well as the issue of valuing a common reality. There are many avenues open for departing from common reality: fantasy, rationalization, avoidance, deception, etc. Not that such departures are themselves "unreal" nor may we deny that such departures are at times beneficial to the individual. They are, however, departures from common reality.

1 "Humanistic" counselling is based on the assumption that the individual does have the freedom to create reality for himself and the humanistic counsellor uses methods which do not negate this assumption.
Counselling, like other therapy, is an activity which aims at getting the individual to value common reality. This is the foundation upon which responsible choice rests. Personal effectiveness requires an ability of the client to choose and to assume the responsibility for the consequences of choosing.

Counselling is not a process which lobbies for a particular ethic or value. Rather it aims to establish the precondition for any choosing. To the extent that an individual can integrate the external demands which he experiences with his internal impulses and identity, he will have a basis for choosing amongst many alternatives.

In counselling we work with a client so that he may have insight or understanding into his dilemmas. Counselling does not value a particular insight, nor specific advice, nor a particular value. Rather it advances the possibility of any and all insight whatsoever. As Szasz (1965) has pointed out:

Psychoanalytic insight or understanding may be put to many uses; the choice rests with the patient. Once more this is like giving a tourist a map of a strange city. The analytic traveler may, with a map, orient himself, but not find out where he should go. (pp. 51-52)

The point of therapy is not merely to interpret life, but to change it; "to give the patient's ego freedom to decide one way or another" (Freud, 1961); "to augment the client's capacity for self-determination and making choices ..." (Szasz, 1965, p. 6); "to teach certain strategies that allow one to act more autonomously" (Engelhardt, 1973).

The individual is constantly under the shadow of captivity. His life is a tension between autonomy and institutionalization. Institutionalization locks the individual into a narrow range of set responses to the world. Yet we know that institutions can be so designed as to cause alienation or to eliminate it. Counselling must opt for the latter.

Treated as helpless, one becomes helpless; to act helpless is to become helpless. "Helping" must negate traditions which promote "helplessness."
XX
The counsellor may obstruct emancipation in two fundamental ways: declare a client's ideas or behaviors to be the result of conditioning; or claim that a client's ideas or behaviors are caused by "secret" internal mechanisms. Both tactics deny the primacy of choice.

XXI
The individual's actions, thoughts, imaginings are not merely arbitrary nor simply determined. Rather they are purposeful. They reflect his choice and they enable him to act in a world he has chosen regardless of how that world may differ from ours. To ignore this fact is to rattle the chains of imposition.

XXII
Using methods which are distinctly human: humanistic counselling aids the client:

i. to face the contradictions in his life,

ii. confirm choice as the basic reality of his life, and

iii. reflect and act deliberately toward the goals of fulfillment, both personally and interpersonally.

XXIII
Choice rather than compulsion is a possibility for all.

To live is to feel ourselves fatally obliged to exercise our liberty, to decide what are we going to be in this world.... Even when in desperation we abandon ourselves to whatever may happen, we have decided not to decide.

(Ortega Y. Gasset, 1932)

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L'ORIENTATION D'AIDE MUTUELLE DANS LE COUNSELING POUR ADULTES

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Abstract

Adults Helping Adults (AHA), as a form of cooperative counselling for adults, has been preceded by Harvey Jackins’ Re-evaluation Counselling, John Southgate’s Karen Horney Counselling, and John Heron’s Reciprocal Counselling. All of these counselling approaches have one thing in common: the principle of help-giver/help-seeker role exchange. AHA is an approach to adult counselling which is organized around the mutual aid orientation. The concept of orientation is very important. If we have a helpless orientation, then we are on a deteriorating path in life. On the other hand, if we have a helpful orientation, then we are on a reward-finding path which helps us become more able rather than less. The mutual aid orientation has five elements: the existential (focus is on the concrete problems people actually have); transformation (copying and learning to benefit from change); reciprocity (“I'll help you and you help me.”); helper principle (how can the help-seeker get the benefits of the helping process usually experienced only by the help-giver?); democratic ideal (every person, including the help-seeking, should have a right to say yes and no to what happens to them); creativity (getting free from frozen patterns). AHA is a series of regular, reciprocal exchanges between two persons which helps both to (a) gain emotional mastery; (b) get and give useful guidance about acceptable problems and possible responses to them; and (c) provide self- and performance-validating feedback.

Résumé

AHA en tant que forme de counseling pour adultes a été précédé et s’est inspiré du Counseling de Ré-évaluation d’Harvey Jackins, du Counseling de Karen Horney créé par John Southgate et du Counseling Réciproque de John Heron. Toutes ces approches de counseling ont en commun une chose: le principe d’échange des rôles “donneurs d’aide” et “soliciteurs d’aide”.

AHA est une approche de counseling pour adultes basée sur une orientation d’aide mutuelle. Le concept d’orientation est très important. Si par exemple notre orientation dans la vie en est une d’impuissance, la qualité de notre existence va se détériorer et s’amoindrir. Si par contre nous avons une orientation d’aide, nous prenons une voie qui nous apportera des gratifications et nous aidera à améliorer la qualité de notre existence.

L’orientation d’aide mutuelle comprend six éléments: existentiel (elle se centre sur les problèmes réels et concrets des gens); transformation (apprendre à faire face au changement et à en tirer le meilleur profit); reciprocité (“Je vais t’aider, ensuite tu m’aideras); principe de l’aidant (comment le donneur d’aide peut-il bénéficier du processus de counseling, privilège habituellement réservé au solliciteur d’aide uniquement?); ideal démocratique (toute personne y compris le solliciteur d’aide, devrait avoir le droit de dire oui ou non à ce qui lui arrive); créativité (se libérer des modèles fixes et déterminés).

AHA est une série d’échanges réguliers et réciproques entre deux personnes qui les aide (a) à maîtriser leurs émotions; (b) à donner et à recevoir une orientation profitable quant aux problèmes possibles et aux différentes façons d’y réagir; (c) à se donner un feedback qui renforce leur image de soi et améliore leur performance.

Le sort d’une civilisation dépend, à la limite non pas de son système politique, de sa structure économique ou encore de son pouvoir militaire. Toutes ces choses en effet, dépendent peut-être à leur tour de la foi des gens, de nos convictions et sentiments par rapport à l’Homme; des possibilités de la nature humaine . . .

Joseph Wood Krutch

158

Introduction

Depuis les cinquante dernières années, le counseling s’est développé et continue à le faire, parallèlement au travail social et à la psychothérapie. En counseling, une personne tente d’aider une autre personne à résoudre un problème de sa vie, et cela au moyen d’un dialogue expérientiel. Il n’y a qu’une différence de degré entre le counseling et la psychothérapie. Et l’on peut dire que le counseling ou la psychothérapie ne sont que des exemples particuliers d’application des principes du travail social, à la différence que ce dernier intervient au niveau du milieu social alors que les premiers se centrent sur l’individu. Ce développement parallèle du counseling, de la psychothérapie et du travail social signifie, entre autres, que le counseling conventionnel a évolué dans le sens d’un processus par lequel des experts apportent de l’aide à ceux qui en ont besoin.

Je veux proposer dans cet article, une orientation du counseling qui s’éloigne des formes conventionnelles. Cette approche différente, j’ai choisi de l’appeler l’orientation d’aide mutuelle en counseling, dont la caractéristique essentielle est le libre échange des rôles dans la relation de counseling. Je vais tenter de démontrer qu’une telle orientation minimise le besoin de dépendance des experts tout en utilisant et accroissant les tendances naturelles à aider des citoyens moyens. En d’autres mots, ce que je veux dire, c’est qu’une orientation d’aide mutuelle en counseling non seulement réduit le sentiment d’impuissance mais en fait a le pouvoir de changer les “solliciteurs d’aide” en “donneurs d’aide”.

L’aspect de mutualité en counseling


Le counseling à responsabilité égale

Boy et Pine (1976) ont récemment avancé l’idée que “La mission du conseiller... est de créer un environnement de counseling dans lequel la relation avec le client est à responsabilité égale (p. 20).” Par relation “à responsabilité égale”, on veut dire une relation dans laquelle chacun des participants contribue au processus, buts et résultats de la relation de counseling. Pour créer un environnement propice à une telle relation, Boy et Pine recommandent certaines procédures de counseling: (1) sensibiliser le client à la possibilité d’une telle relation; (2) mettre l’accent sur le volontarisme du client; (3) démystifier le counseling; (4) mettre l’emphase sur le rôle de facilitation du conseiller; (5) développer une théorie du counseling qui privilégie la responsabilité égale dans la relation de counseling. Comme dans le cas du counseling centré-sur-le-client, l’approche de Boy et Pine met de l’avant le principe de mutualité mais apparemment s’arrête là où il s’agit de proposer une relation d’aide mutuelle dans laquelle les rôles de “solliciteurs d’aide” et de “donneurs d’aide” sont facilement interchangeables.

Le counseling par les pairs

Le counseling par les pairs est apparu au counseling d’aide mutuelle mais n’y est pas identique. Le counseling par les pairs pourrait être défini comme étant un système de counseling dans lequel des gens sont formés aux habiletés essentielles telles qu’écouter, donner du support et identifier différentes alternatives de façon à pouvoir offrir de l’aide à leurs pairs.


On a utilisé des pairs-conseillers en détention pour sensibiliser les nouveaux détenus à la vie de prison (Hannum et Warman, 1963). On a également démontré l’efficacité du counseling par les pairs chez les veufs et les veuves (Abrahams, 1972; Silverman, 1972). Quel que soit le milieu, les caractéristiques essentielles du counseling par les pairs comportent une expérience commune, un désir d’aider, un engagement personnel, une action constructive axée sur un but accepté par les deux partis et une certaine formation aux habiletés du counseling.

Je tiens à remercier Gail Woods qui, tout au cours du projet Adults Helping Adults (AHA) m’a fourni une assistance compétente ainsi que Christiane Dreher, pour son aide comme assistante de recherche.
Le counseling par les pairs n'est pas reconnu comme un service à caractère professionnel; il se différencie cependant du counseling d'aide mutuelle en ce sens qu'on n'y échange pas habituellement les rôles conseiller-client.

Le counseling coopératif

D'une façon générale, est qualifié de counseling coopératif tout counseling dans lequel on échange les rôles de conseiller et de client. La forme la plus connue de counseling coopératif est le Counseling de ré-évaluation (Jackins, 1965) ou, comme il est souvent appelé, le co-counseling. Fondé par Harvey Jackins à Seattle, Washington, le Counseling de ré-évaluation s'est répandu dans plusieurs villes de l'Amérique du Nord et a été exporté à Londres, Angleterre, principalement grâce aux efforts du sociologue Thomas Scheff.

Un groupe de Counseling de ré-évaluation se réunit ayant comme leader, un conseiller de ré-évaluation expérimenté. Chaque rencontre de groupe hebdomadaire se compose d'une discussion, d'une démonstration et d'une expérience. Les membres apprennent ainsi les concepts, valeurs et procédures du Counseling de ré-évaluation. Outre cette rencontre de groupe hebdomadaire, les membres se groupent par paires pour une session de co-counseling de deux heures, dans l'intervalle entre les rencontres. Pendant la première heure, l'une des deux personnes écoute et aide l'autre; les rôles sont ensuite inversés à la deuxième heure. La personne qui reçoit l'aide choisit son sujet de conversation, fonctionne à son propre rythme et détermine jusqu'où elle veut aller. La tâche principale de l'aident est d'écouter. L'objectif global du Counseling de ré-évaluation est de révéler à l'autre des expériences douloureuses sur le plan émotionnel, expériences dont on veut se libérer dans le cadre de la session de counseling.

Le Counseling de ré-évaluation est à la fois une activité de groupe et de deux personnes. Les praticiens du Counseling de ré-évaluation et spécialement Harvey Jackins ont développé certaines méthodes qui sont enseignées aux participants pendant les rencontres de groupe. Les deux outils principaux du co-conseiller sont l'écoute et l'attention parfaite; l'aspect théorique est minimal. Les extrait modifiés suivants, tirés d'un manuel de formation au Counseling de ré-évaluation (Jackins, 1970, 9-10) indiquent le genre de suggestions que l'on fait au co-conseiller novice. "Ne te laisse pas déranger par les difficultés du client", "Ne l'interromps pas", "Ne lui donne pas de 'bons conseils' ou ne lui suggère pas de réponses", "Essaie de passer la plus grande partie de ton temps à écouter plutôt qu'à parler". "La seule bonne attitude à adopter vis-à-vis ton client et ses problèmes: sois intéressé tout en étant détendu".

Le Counseling de ré-évaluation est vraiment une innovation en counseling et servira sans doute de modèle à d'autres formes de counseling coopératif. Le "contrat" du co-counseling constitue une contribution tout spécialement importante: "La moitié du temps tu es le client, tu choisis la direction que tu veux prendre et je vais te prêter mon attention totalement; l'autre moitié du temps, je suis le client, je choisis la direction et tu me prêtes ton attention entièrement."

John Heron (1974) a développé une autre méthode de counseling coopératif qu'il appelle le Counseling réciproque. Dans le cadre de cette approche, les partenaires font à tour de rôle le conseiller et le client. Le rôle principal du conseiller est de prêter totalement son attention, de donner du support et d'être présent au client. Le conseiller peut intervenir lorsque le client semble s'être égaré ou lorsqu'il est "pris" dans un pattern d'auto-défaite comme par exemple un client qui passe son temps à se faire des reproches pour tout ce qui va mal dans sa vie. On montre au conseiller à ne pas analyser, interpréter, donner les conseils ou bien critiquer. C'est le client qui détermine la direction que prend le counseling.

Tout comme dans le Counseling de ré-évaluation, l'un des buts principaux du counseling réciproque est de permettre la liquidation de douleurs émotionnelles passées. Aider la personne à déterminer ses objectifs, à planifier son action, à réexaminer sa vie et à penser de façon créatrice sont d'autres objectifs du Counseling réciproque. Cette forme de counseling est moins structurée que le Counseling de ré-évaluation et comprend une plus grande variété d'interventions de counseling dont plusieurs techniques transpersonnelles empruntées à la psychosynthèse (Assagioli, 1971).

Une troisième forme de counseling coopératif a été développée par John Southgate sous le nom, à l'origine, de "Counseling didactique par les pairs" (1974) et maintenant appelé le Counseling de Karen Horney (1976). La procédure de co-counseling a été empruntée au Counseling de ré-évaluation et intégré à un nouveau rational, composé de certaines idées de Hegel et de Marx et des ouvrages de Karen Horney "Self-Analysis" (1942) et "Neurosis and Human Growth" (1950). Le Counseling de Karen Horney, à l'encontre du modèle de co-counseling de Jackins est empirique d'une théorie plutôt élaborée, composée d'un curieux mélange de pensée marxiste et de psychanalyse. Les tenants de cette approche se sont clairement donnés comme objectif de rendre accessible aux citoyens moyens l'analyse de soi mutuelle en utilisant à la fois des méthodes de groupe et individuelles.

Il est trop tôt pour prédire le succès de ces mouvements "dissidents" du counseling coopératif.
Il est possible de préciser les ingrédients psychologiques qui démontrent l'importance de l'aide mutuelle pour le counseling.

Selon Caplan (1974), le concept de système de support implique un ensemble de liens intermittents ou permanents qui jouent un rôle important dans le maintien du bien-être physique et/ou psychologique d'un individu dans le temps. Un système de support peut aider un individu à faire face à des situations de crise et des changements à court terme de même qu'à des tensions, épreuves et défis à plus long terme. Un système de support comprend au moins trois formes d'aide psychologique (Caplan, 1974a): (1) il favorise la maîtrise de ses émotions; (2) il apporte une assistance utile en ce qui concerne les problèmes possibles et les différentes façons d'y réagir; (3) il renforce l'identité d'un individu et améliore sa performance au moyen de feedback sur son comportement.

Si l'on applique les caractéristiques du système de support au counseling d'aide mutuelle, on peut supposer que les échanges réciproques entre les partenaires les aideront à faire face à leurs problèmes en (a) favorisant la maîtrise de leurs émotions, (b) en leur donnant une certaine direction pour comprendre et résoudre leurs problèmes et (c) en donnant du feedback qui aura comme effet de renforcer leur moi et d'améliorer leur performance.

L'orientation d'aide mutuelle

Outre le fait qu'elle procure des bienfaits psychologiques spécifiques (et parfois physiques), l'aide mutuelle dénote une orientation particulière. Le concept d'orientation est bien important. Lorsqu'une personne a une certaine orientation, elle est portée à "voir", à "remarquer" ou à "percevoir" certains aspects de la réalité plus que d'autres. Par exemple, une personne orientée vers la coopération va remarquer et mettre en valeur certaines choses chez elle et chez les autres que la personne centrée sur la compétition ne remarquera pas et/ou dévalorisera. Avoir une orientation d'aide mutuelle signifie, entre autres, remarquer et être réceptif aux occasions multiples de la vie de tous les jours, de donner et de recevoir de l'aide des autres. Le concept d'orientation a une épistémologie, axiologie et ontologie définies, à savoir que l'orientation d'une personne est faite de "ce qu'elle croit être vrai, valable et réel" (van Mannen, 1976, 15). La personne dont la vie est fondée sur une croyance en ses pairs va solliciter leur assistance et va essayer de les aider lorsqu'elle perçoit qu'ils en ont besoin. L'orientation particulière d'un individu a vraiment de l'importance. Je vais maintenant identifier six éléments de l'orientation d'aide mutuelle.
L’élément existentiel

Je crois qu’il est juste de dire de l’orientation d’aide mutuelle qu’elle est existentielle i.e. qu’elle se centre sur les problèmes réels, concrets auxquels les individus sont confrontés dans leur existence quotidienne. Qu’est-ce qui l’en empêche? Chacun a dans sa vie, des situations de crise et des sources de tensions innombrables — la perte de personnes aimées, le manque de satisfaction dans son travail, les décisions, les conflits, les problèmes d’excès dans la nourriture et la boisson, les problèmes maritains, l’adaptation sexuelle, le changement de carrière, le manque d’information, les transformations de rôles etc. . .
L’orientation d’aide mutuelle implique une réceptivité à ce que les gens pensent, sentent et font en réalité et elle s’oppose à l’utilisation d’étiquettes et de classifications employées en psychothérapie et en médecine.

Une autre raison pour qualifier d’existentielle l’orientation d’aide mutuelle, c’est qu’elle choisis le langage courant de référence au vocabulaire technique que la psychologie et la psychiatrie utilisent pour décrire la personnalité et le comportement des personnes dites “malades”.

Naturellement le langage courant contient des erreurs tout comme il fournit des insights. Mais sa qualité principale est qu’il sert à communiquer une compréhension de l’expérience et de l’existence personnelles pouvant être partagée par tous. Le langage courant est “un dépositaire de tout un trésor d’expressions appropriées qui se sont formées progressivement pour décrire la variété infinie des situations humaines (Ricouer, 1973, 169)”. Le langage courant est le moyen par lequel les gens réussissent à comprendre et à communiquer les faits de leur existence personnelle, ce qui, précisément intéresse le counseling d’aide mutuelle.

Transformation

Le principe de transformation est le deuxième élément de l’orientation d’aide mutuelle. Il n’y a probablement pas, dans la vie humaine, de fait plus fondamental que celui du changement continu. Pour la plupart des gens, la question n’est pas tant de changer ou de ne pas changer, mais bien: “Puis-je influencer les changements qui se produisent dans ma vie?”. Par exemple, je sais et m’en rends compte constamment que les rôles que je joue dans la vie sont actuellement en train de changer ou bien vont changer. Pendant plusieurs années, j’ai été un père avec des enfants à la maison. Je suis aujourd’hui ce que l’on pourrait appeler un père ex-officio. Mes enfants sont maintenant adultes et mènent leur propre vie. Ce fut pour moi une transformation majeure dans ma vie. La question fondamentale est à mon avis la suivante: “Comment puis-je réagir à cette transformation de façon à ce que les résultats soient satisfaisants et non malheureux. L’orientation d’aide mutuelle reconnaît le fait que (a) la vie est faite de crises, de transitions et de changements brefs, que la vie est un processus de transformation et (b) que les gens peuvent s’entraîner à faire de ces transformations une expérience constructive.

Réciprocité

Un troisième élément de l’orientation d’aide mutuelle est l’aspect de réciprocité. Dans le counseling d’aide mutuelle, les rôles de conseiller et de client sont interchangeables. Le contrat fondamental est le suivant: “Je vais d’aider, ensuite tu m’aideras”.

Le principe de réciprocité appliqué au counseling d’aide mutuelle et au counseling conventionnel est résumé dans le tableau 1; il s’agit là d’une modification des comparaisons qu’ont faites Hurlitz (1970) et Deans (1971) entre la thérapie de groupe d’aide personnelle et la psychothérapie orthodoxe.

Tableau 1. Le Principe de réciprocité et le counseling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counseling conventionnel (Conseiller et Client)</th>
<th>Counseling d’aide mutuelle (Pairs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Le conseiller est un professionnel, il est l’autorité, l’expert.</td>
<td>1. Le counseling est fait par des pairs, non-professionnels, sous forme d’échanges alternatifs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On utilise parfois des tests pour recueillir de l’information.</td>
<td>2. On n’utilise pas de tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. On fait généralement un dossier.</td>
<td>3. On ne fait pas de dossier (autre que le journal personnel).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. On présume que le conseiller est normal, qu’il n’a pas de problèmes.</td>
<td>4. Les pairs ont tous les deux des difficultés personnelles qu’ils essaient de résoudre.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Le conseiller n'est pas un modèle de rôle, il ne sert pas d'exemple personnel.

6. Le conseiller est neutre, il ne juge pas, il écoute.

7. Le client est le seul à parler de lui, à s'ouvrir.

8. Le conseiller est celui qui offre du support, le client, celui qui reçoit ce support. Telles sont les attentes de l'un et de l'autre.

9. Le client ne peut pas obtenir parité de rôle avec le conseiller, les deux rôles ne sont pas interchangeables.

10. Les problèmes de la vie de tous les jours jouent un rôle secondaire par rapport aux plans de "guérison" à long terme et aux diagnostics compliqués.

11. Le conseiller accepte le fait que le client soit une personne "malade"; il absout le client de tout blâme s'il se comporte de façon incohérente ou dérangeante.

12. Le conseiller convertit le langage courant en vocabulaire technique et "psychologisé".

13. Les conseillers déterminent le succès du counseling d'après des critères externes.

14. Les conseillers se sentent obligés de "résoudre" les problèmes du client.

On pourrait apporter l'objection que les caractéristiques de réciprocité que j'ai identifiées ne s'appliquent pas à toutes les formes de counseling conventionnel. C'est vrai. Mais mon intention est de déterminer des traits généraux plutôt que d'attribuer à des écoles de counseling particulières leurs caractéristiques propres. Quelqu'un s'est moqué de moi en disant que tout ce que je fais, c'est défendre la cause de "l'aveugle conduisant l'aveugle". Il peut y avoir un élément de vérité dans cette critique. Je soupçonne cependant qu'une telle remarque est le résultat d'un certain "protectionnisme" professionnel mêlé à une ignorance du potentiel d'aide souvent méconnu, des relations naturelles.

Le principe de l'aidant
Un quatrième élément de l'orientation d'aide mutuelle: le principe de l'aidant. Ce dernier fut énoncé pour la première fois par Reissman (1965) qui voulut attirer l'attention sur le fait qu'en counseling, c'est l'aidant bien souvent qui bénéficie le plus de la rencontre de counseling. Il a proposé (en référence au travail social) une stratégie destinée à "transformer les récipiendaires d'aide en dispensateurs d'aide, renversant ainsi les rôles et à structurer la situation de façon à assigner aux récipiendaires d'aide des rôles qui exigent de donner de l'aide" (p. 28). Les groupes d'aide mutuelle tels que les AA et Synanon se sont clairement rendus compte qu'en donnant au réformé le rôle de réformateur, il prend de l'expérience dans ce rôle et se sensibilise aux valeurs jugées désirables par le groupe. Le système "Buddy" pour arrêter de fumer s'inspire de l'idée selon laquelle lorsqu'on donne à un fumeur la responsabilité de renforcer chez son copain le fait de ne pas fumer, cet individu renforce par le fait même son propre comportement de non-fumeur.

Dans son effort pour rationaliser le principe de l'aidant, Skovolt (1974) a résumé les effets bénéfiques qu'ont expérimentés les aidants comme suit: (1) le fait de compter dans la vie de quelqu'un d'autre crée chez
soit un sentiment de compétence interpersonnelle accrue; (2) le fait de donner et de recevoir de l’aide de façon adéquate favorise un sens de l’égalité; (3) un aidant efficace apprend généralement beaucoup de choses valables sur lui-même en aidant une autre personne; (4) un bon aidant reçoit généralement de celui qu’il aide une approbation sociale et un feedback revalorisant.

C’est un phénomène bien connu et accepté de longue date que ceux qui reçoivent de l’aide bénéficient du processus de counseling. Aujourd’hui, il y a pas mal de preuves supportant le fait que le conseiller, lui aussi, puisse en retirer des bénéfices importants. En fait, il se peut que les mêmes effets bénéfiques désirés pour le client soient expérimentés par l’aidant. L’orientation d’aide mutuelle en counseling s’efforce de prendre cette idée en considération et de maximiser les bénéfices de l’action de donner et de recevoir de l’aide; cela, en créant une approche dans laquelle les rôles sont interchangeables, en faisant donc des solliciteurs d’aide des donneurs d’aide. L’engagement personnel est la pierre angulaire de toute activité d’aide mutuelle (Katz, 1970). En général, l’orientation d’aide mutuelle, et plus spécifiquement le principe de l’aidant incite chaque participant à s’impliquer dans les deux actions de donner et de recevoir de l’aide et ainsi, à travailler pour le bien des autres autant que pour le sien propre, au meilleur de ses capacités.

Idéal démocratique

Un cinquième élément de l’orientation d’aide mutuelle est une expression de l’idéal démocratique. Au lieu de dépendre des “experts” pour des cures ou prescriptions, les participants impliqués dans le processus d’aide mutuelle ont un rôle direct à jouer pour soulager la souffrance humaine, pour répondre aux besoins de leurs frères humains et, à la limite, pour essayer d’acquérir leur propre indépendance. Le mouvement d’aide personnelle a généralement des liens avec les divers groupes de défense des citoyens et de contrôle du consommateur qui ont émergé au cours de la dernière décennie. Le counseling d’aide mutuelle en tant qu’expression de l’éthique démocratique, affirme que le pouvoir, dont celui d’aider ceux qui ont des difficultés émotionnelles, devrait être réparti à peu partout dans la société plutôt que de demeurer l’apanage d’un ou de groupes professionnels. Cela ne veut pas dire que les professionnels n’ont pas un rôle important à jouer en counseling. Cela veut dire qu’ils ne sont pas les seuls à avoir ce rôle. Dans un système démocratisé de soins psychologiques, le counseling d’aide mutuelle serait, présumément un type parmi d’autres de soins disponibles au consommateur.

Créativité

Le principe de créativité est un sixième élément du counseling d’aide mutuelle. Arthur Koestler (1964) dans sa théorie de la “bisociation” a avancé l’idée que toute activité créatrice constitue une sorte d’auto-thérapie. Les activités créatives représentent des efforts pour relever certains défis, y compris des difficultés. Au sens large du terme, la créativité est la capacité de faire, de produire ou d’exprimer quelque chose qui, en partie du moins, origine de nous-mêmes. Tous les êtres humains ont la capacité de créer et c’est la créativité qui fait que la vie vaut vraiment la peine d’être vécue. Ceci est spécialement vrai lorsque nous réalisons l’étendue des activités humaines pouvant être touchées par la créativité comme par exemple, converser, cuisiner, élever des enfants, aider, être en relation et ainsi de suite. Il n’est pas nécessaire que la créativité débouche sur une production artistique, esthétiquement belle. L’art constitue une forme seulement, bien que hautement désirable, de l’expression créatrice.

L’élément créateur dans l’orientation d’aide mutuelle consiste à explorer, élaborer, essayer et communiquer des idées nouvelles, des comportements nouveaux, des expériences nouvelles, des réalisations nouvelles (Peavy, 1974). La création est une éruption à partir d’un modèle stéréotypé. Une des fonctions importantes du counseling d’aide mutuelle est de confirmer tous ces efforts de créativité.

Ces six éléments: existentiel, transformation, réciprocité, le principe de l’aidant, l’idéal démocratique et la créativité s’unissent pour former ce que l’on appelle l’orientation d’aide mutuelle en counseling. Ces éléments peuvent être vus, entre autres, comme le résultat d’une croyance dans le pouvoir (potentiel et actuel) des gens ordinaires de s’entraider de façon mutuellement satisfaisante en temps de crises, transitions et difficultés.

En résumé, les principes théoriques importants dans un modèle de counseling d’aide mutuelle sont les suivants. L’élément le plus essentiel est l’échange de rôles qui permet de distribuer aux deux personnes les bénéfices de l’action de donner et de recevoir de l’aide. Un postulat important: le counseling d’aide mutuelle est un système de support à deux personnes. Ce postulat nous permet de dire que le counseling d’aide mutuelle utilise les échanges réciproques pour aider les individus à acquérir une maîtrise de leurs émotions, à se procurer une orientation utile quant aux problèmes possibles et aux différentes façons d’y réagir, et à obtenir un feedback qui renforce leur moi. Un autre postulat important est que le counseling d’aide mutuelle est pour le citoyen moyen et peut être appris aisément par ce dernier. Le rôle d’ “expert”
L'ORIENTATION D'AIDE


Upracht, M. *Undergraduate students as academic advisers.* *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* 1971, 49, 827-831.


Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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EXISTENTIAL REFLECTIONS ON COUNSELLING

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Abstract

The main contention in this article is that philosophy, especially as it is lived, is indispensable to counsellors, as well as to clients, in their search for ever more efficacious life situations. How can the counsellor be of service to others in the formation of their life projects if the counsellor himself has not substantial ideas of his own on the subject of how to live? This question is examined from an existential perspective including a commentary on a case example from the author's own counselling practice.

Résumé

La thèse principale de cet article soutient que la philosophie, surtout quand elle est appliquée au plan de la "vie vécue", s’avère indispensable tant aux conseillers qu’aux clients dans la recherche de situations de plus en plus valables par rapport à leurs modes de vie. De quelle manière le conseiller peut-il être de service à d’autres personnes dans le développement de leurs projets de vie, si le conseiller n’a lui-même aucune idée précise de son propre mode de vie? On étudie cette question selon une perspective existentialiste. Enfin, on inclut un commentaire sur un exemple tiré de l’expérience personnelle de l’auteur comme conseiller.

Philosophy is a path along which we may strive for rescue . . . the significance of philosophizing is that it is our attempt to confirm ourselves.

K. Jaspers

INTRODUCTION

Consciously or not, all counsellors are also philosophers in that they espouse a specific life style based upon a personal philosophy. Some counsellors have carefully examined and articulated the philosophy which guides their life, many have not. There are even counsellors who deny the importance of philosophy to counselling without realizing that this very denial is a philosophy, albeit of a lowly order. Philosophy is a way of thinking critically about oneself, others, and the world. It is a type of thinking “that seeks to discover connected truth about all available experience” (Brightman, 1963, p. 7). As such, philosophy is indispensable to counselling.

Common sense, science, and philosophy all contribute to man’s knowledge of himself. All three are, therefore, important to counselling. Of the three, however, it is philosophy, and especially existential philosophy, which strives to sustain human consciousness as an open possibility and which supports the individual’s struggle to attain a selfhood informed by hope, freedom and responsibility. Assuming that one is technically competent as a counsellor, in the end it is one’s “orientation” which determines efficacy in the counselling encounter. This “orientation” is an expression of the kind and degree of one’s own self-illumination and personal philosophy.

About the need for a personal philosophy, Maslow (1962) once wrote:

The human being needs a framework of values, a philosophy of life . . . to live by and understand by, in about the same sense that he needs sunlight, calcium, and love. (p. 192)

Maslow (1962) went on to predict that one day counselling and therapy might even be defined as “a search for values”. He held that the condition of being confused about values, or having inappropriate or inadequate values is a pathogenic state of existence. The search for one’s values is, in essence, the search for identity.

Counselling, especially counselling with adults, is frequently an occasion for discussion about values. Not only does the adult client want to find out how to do something, but also wishes to decide what ought to be done. Not just how can I live my life, but more fundamentally, how ought I to live it? It is in discussion such as these that the counsellor’s own philosophy takes on crucial importance. In discussing with clients what is real, true, and good in daily life, counsellors must have something substantial to contribute to the dialogue. Further, counsellors want clients to change; this means that they must have some guiding ideas or value convictions about the

direction change should take. As Robert White (1973) has observed:

Whatever procedure the counsellor adopts, he can hardly be of service if he has no guiding ideas of his own on the subject of how to live. (p. 3)

In the matter of values, then, what is good for the goose is also good for the gander. Value clarification is not just for clients, but also for counsellors. What can a client expect from a counsellor who is unconscious of his own world view? Confusion? Artifice? Self-deception? These are hardly qualities useful to clients who are themselves in a crisis about values. The concept of objective, value-free counselling has been largely exposed as a myth. The counselling interview is an encounter of reciprocal influence, and it is inescapable that counsellors will influence clients in the real of values. What is important about value discussions in counselling is: first, that counsellors not impose values on clients by coercive means; second, that counsellors refrain from unconsciously imposing upon clients values which they learned during their own childhoods but which have not been examined since. With respect to values, a further important consideration is that the counsellor's personal philosophy is an essential precondition for the efficient use of counselling techniques. This idea is nicely expressed in the saying of an ancient adept:

If the wrong man uses the right means, the right means works in the wrong way.

(quoted in Jung, 1952, p. 83)

If counsellors are to be an important influence on the "cultural and moral changes in twentieth-century western society" as Paul Halmos (1965) has predicted, then one can hardly escape concluding that the counsellor must offer something more than behavioural technology, or human relations expertise. That "something more", the writer submits, is a consciously articulated personal philosophy which informs and orients, binds one to others, and is itself full of substance. Put another way, that "something more" is the set of guiding ideas which one attempts to live by.

In introducing this essay the writer has briefly emphasized the importance of philosophy, and especially the counsellors' personal philosophy, to counselling. This is especially so in adult counselling where decisions, questions of commitment and responsibility, and value discussions are often in the forefront. In the rest of the essay the writer will undertake an existential reflection on the significance of "guiding" ideas in counselling. This is not to imply that an "existential" perspective is the best orientation for counselling. Rather this perspective has been chosen to illustrate the writer's more general contention that a personal philosophy is a crucial precondition for effective counselling. Specific counselling techniques and methods will not be discussed. Rather, the writer wishes to stimulate readers to think about their own personal framework of values and guiding ideas which orient action in the counselling encounter.

The Existential Perspective

Existentialism must be lived to be sincere. To live as an existentialist: means to be ready to pay for this view.

J.P. Sartre

There is an enormous literature on existentialism, going back at least to Pascal (1623-1662). Shaken one day by a profound realization of his finiteness, Pascal (1666) composed the following prototypical insight into existential loneliness:

When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in eternity before and after, the little space which I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of space of which I am ignorant, and which knows me not, I am frightened, and am astonished being here rather than there, why now rather than then? (pp. 157-158)

Two centuries later, Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche ushered in the era of modern existential thought. Lonely, brilliant, prophetic, these two revolutionary philosophers were determined to establish the priority of the individual over and against all social forms, ideas and practices which deny or suppress human fulfilment. Philosophers of crisis and liberation, they were convinced that the very fact of human being is in itself the presence of possibilities for human betterment. Their common enemy was dehumanization, which they were convinced, would increase under the future impact of institutions, bureaucracy, mechanization, technology, militarization and increased powers of the state. While material progress would surely occur, the individual's ability to become, and remain, an authentic person would continue to be thwarted by growing collectivization. In psychological terms, man's problems would increasingly become those of alienation, over-conformation, helplessness and collapse of values and meaning to live by.

Nonetheless, both of these thinkers were convinced that within each individual there resides a true, authentic self ("this is really me") as opposed to the false, inauthentic self ("this is the me which they' require"). The true self must fight its way to responsibility and freedom against the commands and constraints of prosaic social life. About the individual who struggles for responsible fulfillment as an authentic self, Kierkegaard (1956) wrote: "There is but one fault, one offence:
disloyalty to his own self or the denial of his own better self" (p. 140). From Nietzsche (1966) came a similar declaration: "Higher than 'thou shalt' is 'I will'; higher than 'I will' stands 'I am'" (p. 495). Kierkegaard's "own self" and Nietzsche's "I am" is the powerful, creative, unique identity to be attained by self-actualization. The "I will" is the means to grasp "I am". To the existentialist, life's fundamental character is "process unto death"; "authentic" living is a self-surpassing process whose internal agency is will. Will brings on self-surpassing by apprehending possibilities and transforming them into actualities: I will take command of my life by recognizing my possibilities and by taking actions to fulfill them. These few references to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche suggest the orientation which is given by modern existential thought. As Maurice Friedman (1967) has written, "existentialism" cannot be thought of as a single unified system of philosophy. Rather it is:

- a mood embracing a number of disparate philosophies: ... the temper which unites them ... can best be described as a reaction against the static, the abstract, the purely rational, the merely irrational, in favor of the dynamic and the concrete, personal involvement and "engagement", action, choice, commitment, the distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic" existence, and the existential subject as the starting place of thought. (Friedman, 1967, p. 244)

Numerous noteworthy attempts have been made by Frankl (1965), Gendlin (1966), van Kaam (1964), as well as others, to develop an existential approach to counselling and therapy based on principles of existentialism.

In reading these accounts of existential approaches to counselling one finds very little said about counselling "technique". This is not simply an oversight. Part of the existential perspective is the belief that one of the main hindrances to the understanding of human beings is an obsession with techniques and methods. The classic stance of the existential counsellor is that one's first task is to understand the client and then, perhaps to apply methods. The writer believes that the attempt to understand the client is primary, but that two further steps could be added to arrive at a more comprehensive orientation to counselling from the existential perspective. This extended orientation may be stated as follows: Counselling is a process within which both client and counsellor participate to:

i. develop an understanding of the client's self and life situations,

ii. make a critical evaluation of the client's situations including a review of the client's actual and possible actions within his life situations, and

iii. initiate a conscious and goal-directed use of the client's possibilities.

The statement reflects three key points from the existential perspective. First, that understanding is essential and precedes everything else. Second, that a counsellor must find out just where the client stands in the world: that is, find out what the client's life situations actually are. Third, that both counsellor and client must strive to uncover possibilities for betterment of the client's troubling situation. These three points can be summed up in three questions: What is felt (understood at the effective level) in this situation? What is actual in this situation? What is possible in this situation? These questions establish the ground of hope and are informing principles capable of orienting action for both client and counsellor.

Life raises crisis-questions for most of us at various points in our adult lives. Each of us must struggle to find ways to consent to life. Sometimes we succeed, but inevitably we will also fail to do so. Many fundamental questions are not answerable, or if they are, we fail to find satisfactory answers to them. Often, however, existential crises are outgrown. Others are simply accepted and lived with. Whether in the midst of a crisis, or in doubt about values or meaning, or embroiled in some other predicament, one often turns to another human being for help. In the past, this would have been a priest, a family elder or respected member of the community. Today it is likely to be a counsellor who is appealed to for help and guidance.

An Example

This essay will conclude by presenting an example of one such person-in-crisis from the writer's counselling practice together with an existential commentary which indicates some of the guiding ideas which inform certain responses to this client.

A man previously unknown to me had called early in the day to make a five o'clock appointment about a "problem". He said that Dr. R , had advised him to call me for counselling. I listened to his voice — quiet, simple, restrained. I heard an undercurrent of heaviness and urgency. At five he arrived; I saw a working man, solidly built, about fifty years old. We shook hands, I invited him to sit down. Without prompting he began to speak haltingly at first and then steadily for nearly an hour. His eyes, dark, hurt and tired, looked at me occasionally and then dropped away. As he spoke, I began to feel his existence — honest, troubled, heavy:

Something has gone wrong, I don't know what it is. You see, I am a ashe operator for more than twenty years now. I have always been good with the machine, I know its secret. But now, now I no longer want to do this work, I don't know why but I just don't want to go to work anymore. I don't know how to say this — my pride is gone. What I loved for
all those years, it means nothing to me now. I never was one of those guys who waited for Friday. I waited for Monday. Now, one day is the same as the last, the next. What difference does it make? Tell me, what difference does it make? My wife is pretty wrapped up in her friends, you know. And my son, it's three years now that he's been gone.

Well you see what I've been thinking is that suddenly I don't have much left. Mostly, I've just got the same thing that I've done every day for a long time. Even the paycheck doesn't matter to me anymore. I could take it or leave it. When I get to thinking "what is my life all about?" I start feeling pretty strange. There's the house, paid for, big, nice but so what. Mostly, it's empty. And we've both got cars, no real money problems. But, twenty years! Is this what it all adds up to? Tell me, what has happened. Where has the meaning in my life gone?

This man before me, honest and simple, is in an existential crisis. The surface of the life which supported him for many years has broken like ice on a winter pond and he has fallen through into the dark water below. His routine life, for so long predictable is no longer so. Where there was purpose, now there is meaninglessness. His life project is no longer sufficient. The surface broken, he must re-discover meaning. The failure to do so is too foreboding for even this simple man. He does not want a broken life, or worse yet, death. The superficial will not support the weight of his realization. He wants a new ground. He wants to locate himself where he can again feel joy in life, where he can feel at home. He wants what Nietzsche (undated) wrote of:

O may I pray,
What doth the deepest midnight say?
From sleep, from sleep
I woke — where dreaming deep I lay: —
The world is deep.
With depth not dreamed of by the day.
Deep is its woe —
Joy's deeper still than woe can be;
Woe saith: Go!
But joy doth want eternity,
Want deep, want deep eternity. (p. 305)

In another era, this man might have turned to God with much the same request as the twenty-second Psalm:

My God, My God why has thou forsaken me? . . .
Do not stand aside: trouble is near . . .
I have no one to help me!

This heart-rending existential cry, once so powerful, could not pass the lips of this client. For him, God had never existed. He turns, instead, to a counsellor for help with his distress. As the counsellor, I must ask of myself: "Am I prepared to answer the call of this man? If so, how?" What guiding ideas are to inform me as I struggle with this man to re-locate him in a meaningful world?

Some of these ideas are outlined in the following paragraphs.

I must realize my limitations. After all, I can make no gesture to any final knowledge of anyone, least of all of this man before me. Can I, should I, clarify his immediate experience and his biography? This man has already descended into depth. Can I meet him there, or will my own shallowness prevent this? Is this man confronting a problem outside of himself or a mystery within? He appears to be tense, even anxious. Yes, I know how to reduce anxiety, but should I? It seems at first glance that to dispel anxiety would be a universal therapeutic aim. Yet, is it, or should it be? Consider Gebsattel's dictum: "We are as doubtful whether we really want a life without anxiety as we are certain that we want a life without fear". What price would this man pay for relief from anxiety by pill or by desensitization? Perhaps anxiety, if not overwhelming, will be on his side — to take it away might result in an even greater loss of heart. Yes, that's it, loss of heart.

I do not wish to be foolish enough to expect counselling or therapy to bring about something that only living itself can bring. If this man is reaching with his heart, and I believe he is, what is he reaching for? A way to go home, perhaps. There is an old saying that "Home is where the hat is". In this client's case, though, "Home is where the heart is". I am remembering another passage from Nietzsche (1966):

The genius of the heart . . . whose voice is capable of reaching down into the depths of each soul . . . the genius of the heart, who silences all that is loud and complacence and teaches how to listen, who smooths the rough souls and lets them taste a new desire — to lie quietly like a mirror so that they may reflect the deep sky; the genius of the heart who divides the hidden and forgotten treasure . . . underneath the turbid ice and is a divining-rod for every grain of gold . . . the genius of the heart whose touch sends everyone away rich with the power of himself . . . burst open, caressed by a warm wind, sounded out, less certain perhaps, but full of hopes that have as yet no name, full of a new will. (p. 245)

How to reach through the heaviness of this client's existence so that his experience will be " . . . burst open, caressed by a warm wind, sounded out, less certain perhaps, but full of hopes that have as yet no name, full of a new will".

In counselling with this man I will remember that even in his dark and heavy state, he remains an open possibility. My efforts are sustained by Jaspers' (1951) words:

Man is always something more than he knows of himself. He is not what his is simply once for all, but he is a process; he is not merely an extant life, but is, within that life, endowed with possibilities through the freedom he possesses to make of himself what he will by the activities on which he decides. (p. 139)
As we meet together in the hours ahead my client and I must find a way to pose the questions: "Who am I?", "What am I doing here?", and "What about all these other people?" Answers to these questions come from all aspects of his being: thinking, feeling, behaviour, what is not done or shown as well as what is. In short what he experiences in his life, and how he experiences will tell us both who he is, that he is, and that it matters that he is. Our joint therapy aim will be to actualize a new existence from what is now only a dim possibility.

In our existential meetings I will bring to concentration my power to listen, to speak, and to use whatever counselling procedures I have learned and which will assist to bring about understanding, clarification and actualization. I will try to weave this concentration, together with my faith in the client and in myself, into a therapeutic dialog of word and silence which says:

I meet you with as much clarity as I can muster; it matters that we meet. I will help you to find out 'where in the world' you are; to discover that I care who and where you are; even more fundamentally that you care who and where you are. I will do my best to develop this understanding. And, I will help you discover, and take, those concrete steps required for going home.

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

Permission was not received to include Peavy, R.V. (1976), Mutual aid counselling: The helper principle at work. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 2(2), 97-108. This article has been removed from the collection.
Collected Works in English Language

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Therapy and Creativity:  
A Dialogue

INTRODUCTION

Counselors and psychotherapists explain their positions and activities from various frames of reference: behavioral, client-centered, psychoanalytic, and so forth. The purpose of this paper is to propose that creativity is a useful frame of reference for counselors and psychotherapists, at least in some aspects of their work, and to consider certain implications that follow from adopting creativity as a therapeutic frame of reference. I use the term "therapy" as a shorthand method of referring to either counseling and/or psychotherapy.

The image of man as creator is a hopeful image. As creator, an individual may be construed as capable of building up his life and forming himself out of endless possibilities which surround and permeate his existence. From this we may say that "man is what he creates." I do not have in mind only the great talent, the genius whose creations of music, poetry, or art are admired by all people of culture; rather my notion of creativity is much more humble. It is that creativity is to be found potentially and actually in the daily lives of ordinary persons as they go about solving the many problems of everyday work and relationships. It is these very problems of daily living which bring the individual to seek aid from counselors and therapists. Why not try to maximize the latent and actual creativity of the individual within the counseling situation?

THE SURPLUS IN MAN

The Indian visionary, Rabindranath Tagore, pointed to the source of all creativity with his concept of the "surplus in man." According to Tagore (1961), the individual has a surplus of mental and vital energy "...far in excess of the requirements of the biological...." This surplus is the limitless potentiality of the human per-
sonality. In the ordinary individual, as well as the genius, this surplus is constantly seeking expression and realization. Expressions which originate in the surplus of man impel the individual towards creative life thus aiding him to transcend limitations and overcome incompleteness (Tagore, 1960).

While Tagore was a great poet, musician, and artist himself, he conceived of the creative potential in all human activity. In Creative Unity (1962) he wrote:

...we are the dreamers of dreams, we are the music-makers! This dreaming or music-making is not a function of the lotus-eaters, it is the creative impulse which makes songs not only with words and tunes, lines and colors, but with stones and metals, with ideas and men (Italics added).

A brief examination of the literature on creativity will convince one that here is an extremely complex phenomena. Creative functions appear to follow from a complexity of interacting physiological, psychological, environmental and, possibly, genetic factors. A detailed discussion of the research into creativity is beyond the scope of this paper. However, three paradoxical characteristics of creativity which have importance to therapy are: (a) creativity functions tend to remain unexpressed or even recede unless their use in adaptational tasks is required (Krutetsky, 1972); (b) creativity functions may be suppressed by excessive adaptational demands (Kuble, 1958; Hargreaves, 1974); and (c) creativity functions appear to require the ability to detach (at least momentarily) from adaptational demands and effect a passive, rather than active, concentration or frame of mind (Luthe, 1970; Rugg, 1963).

For the purpose of this paper the following working definition of creativity has been adopted: The ability to make and/or express something that, at least partially, originated from oneself. This definition is meant to apply to a wide range of human ideas, productions, and activities as they may arise in the context of counseling and psychotherapy.

If we accept Tagore's thesis that each of us has energy far in excess of our basic biological requirements, and that this surplus is the origin or impulse to all creativity, we may wonder why we are not overwhelmed with creativity on all sides. What stops creativity? There are both situational and internal blockages to creative activity. Table 1 contains some examples (there are many more) of blocks to creativity which have been identified through research in the field.
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<th>Situational</th>
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<td>10. Depreciation or underestimation of the importance of creativity in everyday activities (Maslow, 1967).</td>
<td>10. Worries, anxiety, internal dialogues with foes, real or imagined (Stievenart, 1972).</td>
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The factors listed identify common situational and personal conditions aversive to creative functions. The professional therapist surely will recognize most of these hindrances inasmuch as they appear again and again in therapeutic encounters. The point I wish to make in this paper is that each of these conditions, if successfully ameliorated or removed through therapy, may give the individual access to his own surplus of vital energy. They are not merely symptoms or restraints to be removed. More importantly, their removal has the instrumental value of placing the person in touch with his own creative source.

Empirical and clinical research in the field of creativity has identified a large number of psychologically-oriented conditions which favor creativity functions. Table 2 lists some, but by no means all, such procreative factors.

Inspection of both antirective and procreative factors of a psychological nature suggests that, in therapy, procedures can be used which take both types of conditions into account. I propose that in order to mobilize creativity functions, procedures can be employed by the therapist which stimulate and develop creativity functions across a range of modalities i.e., problem solving, fantasy, art activities, dance/movement, drama, etc. From this perspective therapy becomes much more than conversation, although therapeutic dialogue continues to play an essential part in the counseling encounter.

In an earlier paper I have emphasized that when creativity-oriented procedures are used in the counseling encounter, what is being implemented is not a single method but a synthesis of experience; “a learning/creating/helping/realizing/growing process” (Peavy, 1974).

Thus far I have indicated that each individual has a potential of vital energy far in excess of that required biologically and adaptationally. This “surplus” is the source of creative functioning, not only for those of genius but also for ordinary folk. And I have briefly summarized factors both favoring and obstructing creative functioning.

I will now briefly discuss the interplay of creativity and personality, drawing mainly from Rogers (1962) and Kubie (1958). According to Rogers one of the most critical considerations in determining the creative ability of individuals is the degree of openness to experience which is possessed. Can individuals register and identify the various sensings and perceiving which occur within their organism? If the answer is that they are able to contact their internal processes to a high degree, then their
TABLE 2  Psychologically-oriented procreative phenomena.

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ability to interact constructively and creatively with their environment, including other people, is likely to be quite pronounced.

A second important characteristic of the creatively functioning individuals is their definite *internal locus of evaluation*. This means that they assess the value of their ideas and actions as much or more than they are influenced by the opinions others may have for their efforts. This indicates *trust* of self: emotions, imagination, body, ideas, and judgment.
A third dimension of the creative personality is the ability to *play spontaneously* with ideas, relationships, and the environment. Through play the individuals test out realities and experiments with imaginings. To Rogers, three characteristics — openness to experience, internal locus of evaluation, and playfulness — are the critical ingredients of creative functioning. Are not these elements also important in the counseling encounter?

Kubie (1958), in his famous study of neurotic and creative processes, wrote that the essence of health and normality "is flexibility in all...vital ways," and "the essence of illness is the freezing of behavior into unalterable and insatiable patterns.” In fact he defined as "neurotic" any moment of behavior emitted from processes which "predetermine its automatic repetition, and this irrespective of the situation, or the social or personal values or consequences of the act.”

Kubie outlined his creativity/neurosis theory by referring to the essential interplay of three mental processes: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. The conscious refers to the ordinary mental state of awareness; the unconscious refers to those aspects of self such as conflicts, painful memories, acute fears, etc., which remain beyond ordinary awareness; and the preconscious refers to a fluid state between the conscious and unconscious perhaps most clearly indicated by metaphorical thinking, daydreaming, insight, guesses, etc. A simplified portrayal of the three processes is found in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

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Conscious
Mind

Preconscious Mind

Unconscious
Mind
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Most people are reasonably familiar with the concepts of conscious and unconscious, but not so familiar with the designation, "preconscious." Yet it is Kubie's claim that this form of mentation is the essence of all creative thinking, of intuition and insight, and is the source of humor, poetry, the dream, and the symptom. If unfettered, the preconscious process—through metaphor and with great speed—is able to gather, assemble, compare, and reshuffle ideas. The preconscious is a translator between conscious and unconscious. Of course this is true only so long as it remains free of undue influence by either the conscious or the unconscious. Under domination of the conscious, the preconscious loses its flexibility and ideas become merely literal, narrow, and compulsively practical.

If snared by the unconscious, then the preconscious rigidifies in the direction of irrationality: fear, rage, power, depression, etc. It is beyond the scope of this paper to follow in detail Kubie's extremely interesting discussions of the interplay of the three mental processes and his interpretations of the importance those processes have for creative functioning. What I wish to emphasize, however (and here his views accord with those of Rogers) is this:

1. We do not need to be taught (indeed cannot be) how to think creatively. When unhindered, creative mentation is automatic.

2. However, in almost every individual, the creative process (especially preconscious functioning) has been seriously distorted or blocked.

3. We must seek to free preconscious processes from the obstructions imposed upon it. Perhaps the best we can do at present is use therapy for this purpose.

4. We may someday learn how not to interfere with the inherent capacity to think creatively.

As a therapist, I may find myself in general agreement with the position put forth so far in this paper, yet I may also be quite at a loss as to how I should proceed in a practical sense. First, I will list some of the goals which the creatively-oriented therapist can aspire to in working with clients. Just which goals to be chosen would have to be determined in each specific instance for no two clients ever present identical problems.

Notwithstanding the need for individual therapeutic response, ten general goals from the creative perspective which augur for therapeutic improvement are:

1. To establish facilitative, noncompetitive, nonevaluative conditions in the counseling encounter;
2. To reduce mental and bodily tension;
3. To develop psychological openness toward stimuli, new ideas and new experiences as well as "old" experiences;
4. To engage the client in effortless, no-thought, free-flowing activities and experiences;
5. To reduce fears, inhibitions, defensiveness; increase spontaneity;
6. To develop realistic self-appraisal and task-related adaptation of one's functional abilities;
7. To express self, gain self-reliance through using materials and engaging in activities;
8. To identify, express, and control emotions;
9. To develop self-reliance;
10. To use and appreciate imagination: visual imagery, deliberate fantasy, poetics, playfulness, humor, and dreaming.

The therapist, if properly oriented, has a number of avenues open in working with clients from the perspective of creative functioning. Some of the more significant "creative arts therapies" are: dance/movement activities, art activities, role-playing/improvisation activities, writing (especially poetry) activities, relaxation/meditation activities, music activities, and drama/psychodrama activities.

No therapist is likely to be skilled in more than one or two of these; indeed, many therapists are without competency in any of the areas and would have to take further training themselves before using any of the creativity mobilizing methods with clients. Furthermore, the use of any of the creative approaches does not in any way preclude the use of conventional counseling and therapeutic skills such as empathy, confrontation, honesty, warmth, ability to lead a group, and general ability to carry on a therapeutic conversation.

There is a great deal to be said for activity in the search for solutions to problems. In everyday life, when faced with adaptation tasks which may be solved through creative problem solving, the client may be more successful when helped to mobilize creative functions, willingness to search and perform, and an ability to survive unexpected failures or disappointments. The client must not only come to see new possibilities (not all of which can be actualized) but must persist in trying out the new as well as the re-formulated old.

As experienced therapists will have discovered, the most original solution to a problem may come from skillful elaboration of a
past experience. What is not so frequently recognized is that at
times an individual will come to the most useful or elegant solu-
tion by engaging himself in activities more or less completely
detached from what could possibly be developed on the basis
of past experience. It is important for the counselor to be able
to accept this paradoxical aspect of creative problem solving, so
that a client can be supported in probing the dialectic of the
known and unknown.

To conclude this paper, I will briefly describe a method to mobilize
creativity through no-thought mess painting as developed by
Luthe (1976). I am not suggesting that this form of creativity en-
hancement is either preferable or more effective than other
methods of creative arts therapy. It is, however, well-defined and
has been carefully documented and will serve as a clear prac-
tical example of creativity development within the therapeutic
context.

According to its founder, W. Luthe (1976), Creativity Mobili-
zation Technique (C.M.T.) is a technical procedure with three aims:

1. to stimulate creativity-related functions of the right
   hemisphere of the brain;
2. to unblock and facilitate self-regulatory functions
   known to be related to creativity; and
3. to manage problems arising from the interplay of
   creativity stimulation and adaptational demands.

The method, while not overly complicated, does require care-
ful attention to detail. A paint-brush-paper technique is used with
a clear emphasis that the painting is not intended to have artistic
or aesthetic value. The practical task goals are to aim at a non-
striving performance which results in covering 70 to 90 per cent
of a two-by-three foot paper surface in about two minutes. This
will result in the production of about 15 brush-and-paint exercises
in each one hour session. At least four painting sessions per week
should be managed over a period of six to eight weeks.

Simple materials are recommended. Unfolded newspaper
is desirable—rough surface, highly absorbent and costless—
the print discourages individuals from painting "pictures" as
they might when using blank paper. Poster paints, wide-mouth
containers, one-half inch to one inch brushes, and an easel com-
prise the other materials needed.

The painting sessions may be carried out either individually
or in a group. In either case, a comfortable, tranquil room of suit-
able temperature and adequate ventilation should be provided.
Failure to take adequate technical steps can cause the whole
procedure to fail.
The client is asked to keep a diary throughout the duration of
the painting sessions. Although initially disliked by most clients,
the diary proves to be an invaluable tool for ongoing self-evaluation
and dialogue and also is useful in detecting technical errors.
It is to be stressed that the diary is kept primarily for the client’s
sake and not for the therapist.

Typically, an individual evolves through a series of stages over
a six-week period. These stages have been thoroughly outlined
and documented by Luthe (1976) and I will merely recapitulate
several main points here.

Initially, regularly painting a mess provides a release from ten-
sion and begins the process of gaining some detachment from
rationalistic or thematic thinking, planning, and painting. This is
called shifting from active to passive concentration. The same
phenomenon may be observed in learning the Taoist move-
ments known as Tai Chi (Huang, A., 1973) or in doing Zazen.

After several weeks of no-thought-mess paintings, a second
stage, self-involved painting, is encouraged. Self-involving
painting continues the same voluntaristic, no-striving quality of
the mess painting. However, the no-thoughtness is eased slightly
to permit nonpremeditated natural impulses (preconscious)
of creative self-expression such as choice of colors, spatial arrange-
ment, etc. Care is taken not to urge clients to return to, or move
toward, rationalistic painting. The following is a diary entry in the
third week and illustrates a reaction to self-involving painting:

I am surprised about myself, I am not particularly keen
to do a more careful painting. I do not want to go slowly
and in a deliberate manner. Anyway, when I try to get a
beautiful result, I miss. I prefer by far certain paintings I
did in a hurry without thinking. When I work hard at a
drawing, I don’t feel at ease, there is almost no sponta-
neity. I “search” too much. I am fascinated by geometrical
figures. They are hot and cold at the same time
(reported in Luthe, 1976).

During painting sessions one may expect a variety of reactions:
humming, grunting, sighing, crying, low-key cursing, crumpling
up paper, pacing, laughing, etc. Interaction in the group setting
is kept modest but supportive. Privacy is much respected.

Characteristically, the C. M. T. process generalizes to mobiliza-
tion of interests in a wide range of non-painting activities
such as:

- artwork, craft, hobbies, cooking;
- interior decoration and related activities;
- musical activities;
- writing, reading;
• meditative, spiritual activities;
• social relations;
• job-related activities;
• self-image; apparel and appearance;
• self-awareness;
• psychodynamic reactivity; and
• nature, outdoor interests, gardening.

The C. M. T. process moves in the direction of actualizing and affirming the "Natural Self." This is an open-minded tuning into all kinds of "messages from within"; a self-accepting, appreciative, supportive attitude toward self-originating impulses, ideas, and insights. It is important that seemingly insignificant gestures, activities, decisions, and insights which are in harmony with one self be appreciated, respected and given support.

This "discovery" of one's natural self indicates a generalization of creative attitude toward a wide range of ordinary life activities— even to making delicious celery soup! Another diary report from a female teacher doing C. M. T. illustrates the benefit to daily life:

Everytime I used my brushes, I noticed I slept better after and I was more relaxed. This experience represents a pause in my life, a moment of reflection. My husband declares himself "happy" because I'm more myself, that's his opinion. I did not ask my children for their opinion but as far as I'm concerned, I bother them less, I monopolize them less...From a professional point of view, it was time for me to question things and to ask myself whether my students like what they are asked to do...I am very pleased....

Luthra (1976) has found that a majority of individuals engaged in C. M. T. report feelings of self-confidence, inner freedom, more naturalness, less tension, etc., especially from the third week of painting onwards. Through the practice of "noninterfering" activity, latent impulses to creativity become mobilized.

**SUMMARY**

In this paper I have argued for a creativity orientation as a frame of reference in therapy. While not minimizing the importance of therapeutic conversation, I have indicated how various creative activities such as dance/movement, drama, painting, etc., can be used in the therapy context to activate creativity in the life of the client. This permits the clients to tap their own creative source in coping with problems in everyday living. As an example, I presented the Creativity Mobilization Technique which is a nonverbal (right hemispheric) no-thought mess painting activity which may be used to facilitate a shift in mental activity from active, rational,
goal-directedness toward effortless, passive concentration. This is thought to activate creative processes within the individual.

I am not suggesting that a creativity orientation should replace all other therapeutic modalities, nor am I implying that a creative orientation is the best one for most clients. Rather, I am arguing that creativity as a process has strong parallels with therapy as a process, hindrances to one may also be hindrances to the other. Most importantly, the ability to engage in creativity-stimulating activities within the therapeutic context increases the range of useful therapeutic responsiveness on the part of the therapist and enables the therapist to be useful and “intelligent” to clients in a mode too often neglected. Yes, the image of man as creator is hopeful!

Finally, it should not go unnoticed that efforts to mobilize an individual’s creativity emphasizes and parallels certain long-standing therapeutic goals including increased self-reliance, problem solving, self-understanding and self-acceptance, reduction of tension, and mental flexibility. That man is and becomes what he creates is seldom better illustrated than in therapy that embodies a creativity orientation!

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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Group Counselling: Critical Moments and Counsellor Reactions

R. Vance Peavy

Group counselling as a part of school counselling services is fairly widespread at present and will quite likely increase even more as the level of professional training for counsellors is raised in British Columbia. There are various advantages which result from group counselling in contrast to individual counselling. First, the group approach is more economical than individual counselling. Second, the group experience is closer to social reality than the private counselling experience. Third, the group brings together individuals with a variety of backgrounds, attitudes, needs, and behaviors, thus creating a rich experience context within which to examine and discuss individual problems and responses. Fourth, group counselling and guidance more closely parallels classroom experience than does individual counselling. Fifth, group counselling enables the counsellor to counsel more students for longer periods of time. Finally, group methods can also be used with teachers and parents. This might take the form of a professional development workshop on reducing disruptive behavior; or to use another example, parent study groups on career choice or adolescent problems.

There are also disadvantages to group work. The group cannot provide the single concentrated relationship which can be provided in one-to-one counselling. Some individuals are too shy or fearful to take part in group counselling. Some individuals regress in group situations and resort to the primitive behaviors which brought them to counselling in the first place. Nonetheless, provided that the counsellor has group leadership skills, the advantages of group counselling clearly outweigh the disadvantages. Within the school situation all group counselling activities, including group approaches with pupils, teachers, and parents should be rationalized on the common principle of enhancing students' educational experiences. The importance of group counselling methods has been underscored recently by two B.C.S.C.A. committees (Edwards, 1977; Klassen, 1978).

Most school-situated counselling groups can be placed in a four-fold classification:

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therapy groups with an emphasis upon emotional clarification, behavior change, and personal problem-solving;
discussion groups with an emphasis on problem-solving, planning, sharing, comparing, and developing decision-making ability;
training groups with the focus being the learning of skills and development of insight; and
guidance groups oriented toward informational services, objective discussion of various role difficulties, and identification of options.

Critical Moments in the Group Counselling Process

Certain dynamic, "critical moments" tend to occur almost universally in counselling group discussions. Such moments are sometimes triggered by the content of the group discussion, but more frequently result either from dynamics of the group process or are manifestations of individual group members' styles of communicating and coping. Even when all of the members of a counselling group are mature adults and possess high levels of verbal competency, many difficult, critical moments still occur. It is no wonder, then, that critical moments in group interaction and process are abundant when the counselling group membership is composed of adolescents, many of whom do not have a very high level of interpersonal competency.

Of course, the variety of critical moments which crop up again and again in group counselling is encyclopedic and it is beyond the scope of this article to review them all. Thus, I have selected twelve group critical moments which are well known to most experienced group leaders. These events or moments are: group start-up; over-talkativeness; group silence; individual silence; crying; late arrivals; confidentiality; excessive politeness; conflict; group attack; expression of sexual feelings; and physical violence.

Self-Diagnosis

I have organized the next section of this article as a learning exercise in the following manner. First, I have listed the twelve critical moments in the form of open-ended sentences. I invite you as a reader to become involved in the exercise presented in this article by first reading each problem statement and then writing in how you would react to each of the problem situations. After you have articulated your own reactions, read the remainder of the article to see how three experienced group counsellors (experts) reacted to each suggested critical moment. Two of the experts (X, Z) have doctorates in counselling. Of these, one has had ten years of actual group counselling experience, including children, adolescents, and adults. The other has had twenty years of counselling experience and has been a group counsellor with both adolescents and adults, including three years of group counselling with juvenile delinquents. The third expert (Y) has had practical training and group lead-
ing experience in group personal counselling with young adults, but has not had advanced graduate training.

I believe that reading what other group leaders say they would actually do in the face of these twelve incidents and comparing one's own reactions to the responses of the experts has a good potential for stimulating insight and learning on the part of readers. Further, doing this exercise may lead to dialogue with colleagues about the various ways different group counselors intervene in similar group dynamic events. In order to save space, the sentences in the “12 Critical Moments: What Would You Do?” questionnaire have been placed rather close together. You may wish to write your reactions on a separate paper.

12 CRITICAL MOMENTS: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Instructions:
Imagine that you are faced with each of the following twelve situations in a counselling group for which you are facilitator (leader). Write in your response which can be regarded as an intervention, drawing upon your experience and ideas about counselling interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Moment</th>
<th>My Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When starting the group, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When someone talks too much, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. When the group is silent, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. When an individual is silent for a long period of time, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. When someone starts to cry, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When people come in late, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When someone introduces outside information about family or friends, I usually...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When group members are excessively polite and unwilling to confront each other, I usually...</td>
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<td>9. When there is conflict in the group, I usually...</td>
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Critical Moment

10. When there is a group attack on one individual, I usually...

11. When the group members discuss sexual feelings about each other or about me, I usually...

12. If there is physical violence, I usually...

My Intervention

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

1. When starting the group, I usually...

"X" state very clearly what my agenda is; that is, I let others in the group know what I would like to accomplish or what the intended purpose of the meeting is, and I solicit reactions or alternative "items" to be placed on the "agenda". This start is used regardless of whether the focus of the group is a specific task ("today, I'd like to discuss Gordon's theory of interpersonal dynamics") or on the group process ("for tonight's session, I'd like to hear your reactions to what's been going on in the group"). I also, at the start, make eye contact with every group member, and express my need to begin ("I'd like to get started...").

"Y" encourage identification, expression and give support of feelings about this being a new group. I usually will model by self-disclosure — e.g., "I'm feeling a bit nervous right now — when I see all these unfamiliar faces around me", and hope this will hit home with some members and encourage reactions.

"Z" if it is a first-time group, I use a warm-up exercise such as asking each person to find out the name of the person on their left and after several minutes of pair-conversation, I ask the pair-members to introduce each other to the rest of the group. With an on-going group I take a matter-of-fact attitude and prompt group members to bring their attention to the business of the group. I will usually say something like: "Well, I'd like to get started", or "Who has something to start on today", or "What's the first thing we should do today?"

2. When someone talks too much, I usually...

"X" paraphrase the talker's last response (or summarize, if lengthy) and then express my need to hear from someone else. I will interrupt if necessary, saying, "I need to interrupt because I want to take time to hear from..." or, "I am interrupting you because I am worried about the amount of time we have left, and I have not heard from...". If this "too much" is chronic, that is, if the person is dominating on a consistent basis, I will express to that person my opinion about the effect of that behavior on the functioning of the group and I will solicit a response to my view.
"Y" try to summarize briefly the talker's key issue (to show understanding) and then turn to the rest of the group and ask what reactions they have to encourage greater participation.

"Z" exercise one of several options if the person is talking a lot because they have a strong need to "talk-out" some experience or personal episode. I will just be patient and do nothing but listen. If the person is a compulsive talker I will intervene by bringing his attention to the fact that he is dominating the group's talking time and solicit feedback reactions from other members to give the talker data on how other people are affected by the talking. In the case of a person who constantly interrupts others and begins talking, I will directly intervene and ask him to hold on until the other person is finished as well as reiterate the basic group rule that listening must be practiced and protected by all members.

3. When the group is silent, I usually...

"X" read the nonverbal behaviors, such as eye contact, posture, facial expression, etc., to determine the nature of the silence (contemplation, puzzlement, annoyance, hostility, embarrassment, reflection). If the silence is helpful to the group working on a problem, I will remain silent; if the silence is avoiding unnecessarily the group's work, I will remark that "it is silent" and provide an opening for comment such as "Carol, I wonder what this silence means for you?"

"Y" go with the silence if it seems to be a reflective one — one to ponder or feel what's going on. If I sense an awkwardness in group members, I would usually ask what they are feeling about the silence. I may state how I'm feeling if it is a strong feeling in me and encourage others to express theirs too — are they the same as mine? different?

"Z" try to diagnose the type of silence and then act accordingly. Some silences are a sanctuary. That is, thoughtful, restful, reflective. With such a silence I do nothing except remain silent. If the silence is, in my opinion, a signal of apathy, boredom, or lack of incentive, then I will intervene, often suggesting a change of pace, a suitable activity, or in some way prompt verbalization. The silence may be a harbinger of underlying resentment, hostility, or power struggle. In this instance I will attempt to bring the underlying feelings out by some form of confrontation or self-report such as, "I get the feeling that some of the group are feeling pretty...".

4. When an individual is silent for a long period of time, I usually...

"X" say directly to the individual how I am experiencing his or her silence: "Dave, you have been silent for twenty minutes, I am concerned about what you're feeling (thinking, etc.)", or if I am unaccepting of the silence I will state what the person's behavior means to me: "When you are silent, Dave, I get worried that you are judging what's going on here (said here) as not worthy of comment".

"Y" depends on the circumstance:

(a) if they've just been talking and I sense they're stuck and trying to find words, I'll say something like: "I guess it's really hard for you to express just how you feel about that".
(b) if the person seems comfortable and is just thinking — I give them room to do that.

(c) if the person has said nothing up till now in the meeting I'd say something like "I'm not feeling very much in touch with you, Mary — I'd like to hear what your reaction is", or "You appear really separate and silent — I'm wondering what's going on with you right now".

(d) if the person is suddenly silent after talking and nonverbally seems to be expressing a lot of feelings, I would likely say something like: "You are describing how angry you felt about Larry, and then you went silent. I'm wondering what you're feeling right now".

"Z" watch for nonverbal cues such as leaning forward, clearing throat, shifting in seat which may indicate an impulse to speak. If I notice such cues, I will prompt the silent one by saying something like, "You look as though you were about to say something", or "Would you like to comment now?" Frequently this prompting will help the person to work out of the silence. However, I am careful not to apply pressure to someone who is not ready or willing to speak. Also, sometimes a silent person is paying careful attention to the group discussion and is engaging in vicarious learning.

5. When someone starts to cry, I usually . . .

"X" am silent for a moment, hand them a kleenex, and reflect what I hear them saying (nonverbally) in their crying (pain, frustration, rage, impotence, pity, etc.). From a dynamic viewpoint crying is an expression of behavior with many layers of motivation beneath it. A person may cry to get attention, to distract, to feel release, to express the intensity of a feeling, to disrupt, etc.

"Y" am initially silent. If I am close by and if I sense this person would like to be held or have some physical closeness, I'll reach out and touch them or hug them. Often times, group members sitting immediately beside the person will do this. Sometimes I sense the person just wants to cry/talk/babble and not be held, so I would just continue to listen empathically and give support. What I have a hard time responding to is people who apologize after they've cried — apologizing for crying. I don't know what to say to that.

"Z" protect their right to express their feelings if someone else in the group moves to stop the person from crying. Occasionally, a group member will cry repeatedly as a learned way of countactrating stress, gaining sympathy, or avoiding some difficult situation or conflict. If I am convinced that the crying is an avoidance behavior, then I will confront them with my perception of their crying reaction, but usually not while they are crying. On balance, I'm inclined to view crying as a therapeutic or "healing" event.

6. When people come in late, I usually . . .

"X" decide whether I am accepting or unaccepting and send a message accordingly. Accepting: Signal nonverbally to make space or room for the person (gesture, move body) and state, "I'm glad you're here; I was getting worried . . . and I didn't want to start without you", etc. Unaccepting: scowl, furrow, firm voice tone, "When you arrive after
I’ve gotten started, I get annoyed because I get distracted and have to take time to... (repeat myself, introduce you, etc.)”.

“Y” ignore it. If I’ve just brought up a concept (more to do with teaching) I may take a few moments to sum up to the other person what we’re doing or what he should be doing (if, for example he comes in after we’ve broken up into pairs — tell him to find a partner and do such and such). Lateness with adults doesn’t bug me. I assume all of us are responsible for our lateness (for good or bad reasons). I don’t need or want to hear about them though, unless a person is distressed and can’t attend to the task a hand, then I want the group to listen to that.

“Z” ignore it. I usually also ignore excuses. I don’t like to reward counterproductive behavior. In the case of a setting like a school, hospital, or prison, where time is always a constraining factor, I try to get the group to agree on some “rules”, one of which is often a commitment to come to group meetings on time. Occasionally I confront a late member, especially if the late comer “times” an entrance so as to interfere grossly with the action taking place in the group. Following such a confrontation I attempt to provoke group discussion and engage in self-disclosure.

7. When someone introduces outside information about family or friends, I usually...

“X” wait until the person completes his sentence (or paragraph, or narrative), reflect the feeling (“It seems very important to you to tell us about...”), and solicit a reference point from the other person (“I’m wondering how your comments relate to the group”).

“Y” depends: If it’s germane to the group task, fine — accept it. If it’s breaking confidentiality, I would caution the person about respecting privacy. If it comes out of nowhere I’d want to explore why the person felt a need to express it.

“Z” intervene by asking the person to stop if the outside formation has a gossipy, conspiratorial, or secretive sound to it. I think that the possibility of group members bringing in such information underlines the need for a group leader to initiate discussion about the need for confidentiality, respect for privacy, and responsibility for one’s own actions. “Telling stories” about non-group members is almost always destructive to group goals. On the other hand there are many instances when a group member has very valid reasons to introduce information about others, especially when the information also bears on the group member reporting it.

8. When group members are excessively polite and unwilling to confront each other, I usually...

“X” point out that such is occurring in the group, and ask the group if it is their intention or in their interests to continue being polite. This usually solicits expressions of apprehension and fear about talking about deeper personal issues. I will also model, giving specific, nonjudgmental feedback to individual group members.

“Y” try to listen to what’s behind their politeness and identify that and clarify it. Try to model confrontation using direct feedback in a caring
way—confronting or describing their behaviors. I would also teach them how to give feedback helpfully to each other.

"Z" urge the member to state what he thinks, perceives, or feels in order to deal more directly with reality rather than using excessive politeness as a substitute for actual feelings. However, I have not found excessive politeness to be much of a problem with adolescent group members. It often is a problem with adult clients. I also point out that telling another person you are "sorry" effectively excuses you from having to change your behavior. For example, when someone acts offensive or swears at me, and then apologizes, I usually say, "I don't want an apology, I want a change in behavior".

9. When there is conflict in the group, I usually...

"X" legitimize it as a necessary part of the group’s activities by acknowledging or describing the conflict: pointing out to the group that a problem exists. Depending on the maturity of the group (psychological skill) I will either direct the group as to how to resolve the conflict (low group maturity), support and encourage the group in conflict resolution (medium maturity), or stay out (delegate) of the group’s resolution attempts (high maturity).

"Y" try to ensure both sides or all sides are expressed and heard, exploring issues and feelings. (How do they feel when someone’s values or expectations are different from their own? How do they feel when there is conflict? How do they handle it? Get the group to examine the process.)

"Z" do very little as long as the members in conflict continue to work at it. After a conflict episode, I sometimes take a teaching role and demonstrate one or two conflict resolving methods such as negotiation, no-lose solution, or role-playing. It is my experience that most people have very poor skills at resolving conflict. They take such roles as "rescuer", "pacifier", "aggressor", "play stupid", "hit and run", "humiliator", etc. I see my role as a teacher of skills to resolve conflict.

10. When there is a group attack on one individual, I usually ...

"X" intervene only when the "attack" is judgmental and is not owned by the members as their own experience or perception. Sometimes I will suggest that the group may have a need to scapegoat the member, that is, express their own frustrations or anxiety as "caused" by a member.

"Y" usually one or two other members will give support (ah, the powers of a group), and I will encourage exploration of how that person feels, what they would like to do, request others to do. Basically, give my full attention to that person, possibly sitting by or in front of them. Protect listening, separating judgments from feeling/behavior description.

"Z" stop it. In my view this is nearly always primitive and destructive—like a pack of dogs turning on their weakest member. If one group member has been acting in a very disgusting or provocative way, I think that getting firm and to-the-point feedback can be helpful to get him or her to have second thoughts about the behavior in question. However, as group leader I believe that I have a responsibility to intervene in group attacks and always act to prevent victimization.
11. When the group members discuss sexual feelings about each other or about me, I usually . . .

"X" allow the discussion to continue as it is often an expression of deeply experienced and felt concerns, and the sharing of sexual feelings demonstrates the level of trust and openness which exists in the group. Often sexual feelings are confused with strong feelings of love and compassion or feelings of domination and avoidance of deeper personal contact: therefore discussion of sexual feelings can enable group members to learn to differentiate or educate themselves to different sets of feelings.

"Y" (a) about each other: I have never experienced this. My guess is I'd feel really stuck — I'd want them to deny their feelings, yet I don't know what is gained by saying, "I find you really attractive and would like to go to bed with you."

(b) about me: have never experienced this per se, again what to say? "Oh?" or "That makes me feel really embarrassed?" I do find it helpful when someone constantly rescues another, and sometimes it's helpful to reveal the possibility of sexual feelings.

"Z" support the discussion since sexual feelings are real, important, and much healthier when expressed in a safe, clear way than when they are denied, repressed, or distorted. My basic rule is: sexual feelings are valid and expressible — they are not to be acted on in the context of the group, however. It is a very important learning in life to learn that sexual feelings and their articulation are valid, but one does not have to act on them in ways which are socially offensive or destructive either to self or to others.

12. If there is physical violence, I usually . . .

"X" ask group members to help me immediately — and firmly restrain those involved. I will restate very clearly one of the ground rules of the group: "No physical harm to myself, other members of the group, or property".

"Y" I've never encountered this. I think I would be afraid. I think I would try to be as supportive as I can, e.g., "You're so furious you've tried to punch John. I'm really scared you're going to hurt John and yourself. I don't want that to happen. Would you sit down please and I'll try to understand and hear just how it is for you and how you feel about John". This is just a guess. If it happened in real life, I hope I could say something like that. I think that's a pretty honest reaction/statement.

"Z" bring it to a halt immediately, calling on other group members to help me if necessary. In most contexts physical acting out will not occur if the group leader is sensitive to (a) nonverbal warning cues, (b) the limits and needs of individual members, and (c) previous propensities to violence on the part of any group member. I also insist on a group norm of "no physical stuff" with immediate expulsion (either temporarily for cooling off, or permanently in some cases) of a group member who violates this norm. I also use objects such as pillows, balloons, and bobo the clown as suitable targets for physical acting out instead of punching-out people.
Discussion

While there are various sets of guidelines for effective group leading which can be found in texts and articles on group counselling, I believe that the really effective group leaders usually develop guidelines which are consistent with scientific knowledge about group dynamics, which are consistent with ethical principles (Edwards, 1977), and which support their individual leadership styles.

Group leaders must take stands on many important issues in group work: how much and what kind of structuring is beneficial for the group in question; what kind of self-disclosure is appropriate; what the support-confrontation ratio should be; how much of what goes on in a group is the leader's responsibility and how much is the responsibility of individual group members; and when should the group leader take on a teaching function, and for how long, just to name a few important issues.

My purpose in preparing this article has been to identify a few concrete group process problems together with the reactions of three experienced group leaders to these problems, and to present this information in a format which invites you, the reader, to consider your own group leading style and interventions. If I were going to organize a study group or seminar on the issues raised in this article, or if I just wanted to study on my own, I would find the books by Corey and Corey (1977), Johnson and Johnson (1975) and Merritt and Walley (1977) very useful.

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by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
SIGNIFICANCE OF COUNSELLING

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I would like you, the reader, to let a slightly amended Sufi aphorism be part of your mental preparation for the following essay:

"Man lives in a state of imagination, in a dream.
No one sees things as they are. To him who says to you, 'What do you do?', say to him:
Do not do as you have always done
Do not act as you have always acted
Do not think as you have always thought
Do not speak as you have always spoken
Stop these things, listen, find the zero point and begin again and
Again, and again, and again..."

WHAT DO WE FACE?

I will begin by saying that, in my opinion, the field of counselling is tormented by ideas that do not work. In some cases ideas about counselling are simply mistaken. An example of mistaken notion is the idea that counselling can be separated (and should be separated) into different functions such as vocational counselling, personal counselling, educational counselling and so on. This mistaken idea discounts and contradicts the unity of persons. Behind every behaviour, no matter what realm it occurs in, there stands a person. Many other ideas about counselling are too small to permit counselling to gain a good rapport with the larger social context within which it is embedded. For example, consider the idea that counselling is best carried out in an office. This idea arises from the bureaucratic organization of work and not from a consideration of where, when and under which conditions counselling can actually best be done.

My purpose in this essay is to identify the cultural conditions which give rise to counselling in the first place and at the same time to argue that (a) counselling is a necessary and significant function; and (b) that if we are to accomplish the tasks which counselling can best do in contemporary society, a reconceptualization of counselling orientation is required. I have identified four dimensions of a revised counselling orientation and will describe them to you, first briefly, and then in more detail.

What are these dimensions? First, counsellors who are to make a difference must be able to stand before others as an existential presence. It is not sufficient to merely "do one's job" as a functionary. Second, counsellors who have a genuine desire to initiate effective change with others can best do so educationally. Thus, I believe that it is necessary to establish that the counsellor is a specialized educator or teacher. Those who seek counselling are not sick and are not seeking a cure, rather they face life-problems and need to learn more useful coping methods. Third, counsellors who wish to have their work join with the general evolutionary process of culture may best do so a mobilizers of creativity. It is not enough to be a counsellor to be a technician; counsellors must alien themselves on the side of the help-seeker's emancipation from unnecessary restraints, especially restraints on the personal's creative capacity. Fourth, in order to appear before others as an existential presence, and in order to educate and in order to mobilize creative counsellors must, first of all, develop and express an examining, clarifying, critical consciousness toward the social order. I believe that if counselling is to respond to man's contemporary world, the counsellors are going to have to move forward four planes at once. They must stand before others as existential presence, as educators, creativity mobilizers and as agents of critical consciousness. It is around these four points that I have attempted to organize the ideas which follow.

FINDING A ZERO POINT FOR COUNSELLING

I am concerned that the majority of counsellors hold views of their roles in society who are far too trivial. As a basic human activity, counselling has a dignified origin in antiquity. It is, and has always been, a method of getting and giving personalized help to people so that they can cope better with daily problems, especially decision-making, frustration, and social death. And in more formal contexts, a counsellor is a child of this century, and arises from a profound and pervasive human need. This is the need of each and every person to find and maintain a valid and constructive footing in society. The central human problem of our present age is fragmentation. This is our zero point. We are confronted on all levels of society with the question: How are the members of our society to find and keep liveable bonds with the social order? The difficulty in finding a valid foothold in a society intensifying by an increasing urbanization, institutionalization, mechanization, and bureaucratization of our social order. The old resources for coping with things such as neighbourhood friendships, close families, church participation and monitorings by elders have been largely replaced by impersonal institutions in life and negotiations with bureaucratic procedures and functionaries. It is the disturbed and uncertain relationship between individuals and the social order, including the loss of personal resources for self-concept which accounts for the dramatic emergence of counselling in the post world war II period.

FUNDAMENTAL DECISION POINTS
Historically, bonding between individuals and their social order has taken shape from three existential decision-points:

1. With whom will I mate and build a family?
2. What work can I take up which will sustain me materially and as a valid person in my society? and
3. In the end, what will be my fate?

No one today needs to be reminded of the many disturbances and transformations which are occurring within the realm of the family and relations between the sexes. When we consider the question of "what will be my fate, in the end?" it is now a tenable conclusion that the past century's great experiment to live without religion has failed. However, what the next step in spiritual life will be remains unclear. And so far as vocation, career, work and job-getting are concerned, the plan of action, and surely recognize how complicated these matters have become in our time. Today the quality of workmanship and the accompanying pride of doing good work together with the spiritual significance of work for the individual are troublesome issues. Simone Veil, then director of the assembly line of the Renault Auto Works during the 1930's, wrote just prior to her death in 1943 that "Our age has its own particular mission, or vocation, the creation of a civilization founded upon the spiritual nature of work." We are not doing very well with this mission.

COUNSELLING IS FACE-TO-FACE EDUCATION
Within the human service fields; that is, social service, health, and education, it is the counsellor restless of all who is charged with the responsibility of meeting face-to-face and working with individuals for the purpose of assisting them to solve problems in daily living, make decisions about important life issues, sort out feelings, form plans of action, and learn concepts, skills, and behaviours which are required for social competence.

To carry out their special face-to-face mandate, counsellors, within the limits of their actual work situation must attempt to provide those who seek counselling with three resources: for supporting forward movement in life: First, a shelter, or sanctuary as it were, within which it is possible to "talk things over", to feel safe from criticism and derogation, and to find emotional recuperation; second, an educational means for help-seekers to learn problem-solving skills, relating behaviours, and concepts which will render them more competent to solve the problems and life-tasks they face; third, critical dialogue which is consciousness-arousing and thus provides the means for making a critical evaluation in one's life situation.

These three offerings may be summarized thusly: The counsellor exerts an educational influence on the other by becoming vitally present to the other, by taking the side of the other in a compassionate, negotiating, tutoring way and aids the other toward constructive social engagement and self-coherence.

Now I wish to come back to the four dimensions which constitute the counselling orientation: I'm outlining and discuss them one by one in more detail.

THE COUNSELLOR AS EXISTENTIAL PRESENCE
It is our fate as sentient beings to live in two worlds at once: The living world of existence and the material world of objectivity or factuality. If, as a worker, I am fired from my job - that is an objective fact. And when my paycheque stops, that is a fact. And if my wife feels poor provider, that is a fact. These and other "facts" are part of the material world of objective factuality. I feel about these events - how I inwardly experience no job, no paycheque, falsely criticism, and the existential realm and tell me what means to exist at this very moment. How I feel about things or what events mean to me - this the place where "I am" in existential terms.

When a counsellor is able to arrive at, or reach, or be there with another, then he or she becomes existentially present to the other. What, more precisely does it mean to be there with another. We can speak of being close to another for both understanding one's ideas and expressions and feeling close in emotional or affectional or compassionate terms. Even further, being there entails empathy. By listening, looking and imagining, the counsellor can gain a close, approximate understanding of "how things are" for the other. Such understanding can never be assured, but must in all instances be acquired and tested. The true understanding of another requires that the counsellor be able to concentrate on the other in a full and undistracted manner.

Beyond arriving at or being there with the client, the counsellor must stay with the client as counselling unfolds. Many counsellors, it seems, quickly come to conclusions about the other. They form judgements about the other such as "Jack is irresponsible," "Mary is irresponsible." Or they classify the other - Jill is a "people pleaser," Anna is a "slow learner," Bill is an unemployable. In staying with another, it is important for the counsellor to resist to impose judgements or classifications on the other. To judge or to classify is to leave the other by making him or her an object. The instant a counsellor resorts to classification, diagnosis or interpreting the other, existential connection is abandoned.

When a counsellor is existentially present or connected to another, it can be said that the educational component of love has come into play. When we are existentially present to others, we refuse to reduce them to something less than what they are, we do not take the "objective" attitude, and we do not classify or bring down judgements on them. On the positive side, we let our own person shine through the overlayment of "roles." We use our best self for understanding the life situation of the other, and we try to stand beside the other, not above nor away from him. In this way a human shelter is provided within which it is safe to "talk things over." In this way also a sound basis is provided for using educational means to touch the client those things required for the remedy of whatever situation the client is faced with.

THE COUNSELLOR AS EDUCATOR
One of the ideas which bodily therapists and limits counselling is that counselling should be like psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is taken as treatment for mental or emotional disorders.
In other words, psychotherapy attempts to cure individuals of disorders. While there are a wide variety of psychotherapeutic methods, each of which has some merit, all rest on the assumption that clients or patients are sick and suffer from a disorder. In this perspective, the person is reduced to an aberration, a pathologized entity, a victim.

I think that this model is not suitable for counselling at all, and should be made to disentangle counselling from psychotherapy. I have several reasons for taking this position. First, most people who seek counselling are unable to solve some problem in daily living. It is incorrect to assert that they are sick and disordered. It is more accurate to say that they need to learn more useful coping methods, better insights, more effective behaviours. In most cases where persons seek help, they are expressing deficits. What is missing in their behaviour potential are skills, concepts, attitudes or behaviours. When learned, the new skills and concepts enable the individual to cope more successfully with the dilemmas of his life.

Second, even where an individual's behaviour is considered irrational or "neurotic", as for example in violence, laziness, phobias or compulsions, it is just as reasonable to explain such behaviours as ineffective or unsocialized attempts to cope with overwhelming or oppressive social or subcultural conditions. What we are faced with is not a "sick" person but one who is compromized and who has not learned more effective means for coping with external oppression.

Fortunately, a good deal is known about how people learn, so the conception of counsellor-as-educator is very helpful. As an educator, the counsellor can teach coping behaviours within the counselling relationship itself, or build up of small groups or through classes. Moreover, it is possible for the counsellor-as-educator to utilize radio, television, micro-computers, printed materials and even the telephone as educational media. Counsellors-as-educators can, and should, extend their counselling activities to include training through classes such as Life Skills Training, Parent Education, Peer Counselling, Learning Style Identification, Support Skill Training, Relationship Enhancement Training, Career Development classes for students, parents and others as well.

Education generally, and certainly education within counselling has two great tasks. One task is to prepare individuals for changes. This preparation includes enabling people to adapt, and more importantly, finding out that one can profit from change. Another aspect of this preparation is the development of a "dynamic, non-conformist, non-conservative frame of mind". Secondly, at least within so-called democratic societies, education has the task of providing a remedy to the depersonalization and anonymity of the modern world. This second task emphasizes that the only true education is life-long education and indicates the imperative that education has a role to play in reducing economic insecurity. Counselling's unique contribution as an educational means lies in the capacity of counsellors to create and develop learning experiences, activities, and environments which are responsive to the specific needs, frustrations, and capacities of individuals. More than any other model of education, the counsellor engages in face-to-face work with people and thus is in the best position to stimulate and direct learning which is precisely tailored to the needs of the individual.

THE COUNSELLOR AS MOBILIZER OF CREATIVITY

Although it is not customary to do so, I believe that it is important to conceive the counselling relationship as a creative one and to understand that both the counsellor and the counselee are creative. The quality of each new being is brought into existence, something which did not exist before. This "something" may be a new behaviour, a new insight, a new idea, a new solution or decision. Even more fundamentally, we may say that counselling is an activity by means of which a client learns to be himself/herself with the assistance of the counsellor. Creativity has two sides and two meanings. There is the inward creative realization and there is the outward manifestation of the inward creative formation. Every creative impulse is first inwardly realized and occurs within existential time and experience. This existential insight may then translate into an objective act or product in the material world.

As an example in counselling, a student may have learned by imitating others a certain way of requesting which is offensive. Whenever he or she asks for something, a resistance is aroused in the other. The request is thus lessening the chances that the request will be granted. This interaction is not satisfactory to either party but repeats itself endlessly since it has not been consciously apprehended for what it is. The counsellor can help in this respect. If the new creative impulse has started and it now remains for the client under the coaching influence of the counsellor to create a language for the request which does not engender disgust in others. Further, the counsellor must construct ways of practicing this new form of requesting until it becomes a spontaneous and integrated element in the client's everyday language. Through this process, the counsellor has acted to mobilize the other's creativity both in its inward birth and its outward manifestation. In one sense, a person has been created who operates in his or her environment with other people in a new way.

Creativity, whether that of a Beethoven or of the everyday person, always arises out of a state of dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction must be disidentified with an aspect of reality for the creative impulse to have its initial start. This suggests that counsellors need to develop a respect for dissatisfied persons and should view dissatisfaction as a crucible from which to create new insights, solutions and behaviours. Too often in institutional life, the dissatisfied person is simply pressured to forget or suppress dissatisfaction and to adapt to things as they are without the expectation of either protest or creativity.

Berdyayev long ago observed that there is nothing "more astonishing, more touching, and more disturbing, than the efforts of the human spirit to break through darkness towards the light, to turn what is meaningless, towards a meaning "...towards freedom."

Further, "... that the rise of images of something better, or something truer, are of fundamental significance in life." This then, is the creative task of the counsellor: With the shelter and the dialogue of the counselling relationship, to aid the other to see life as
is, as movement and change, rather than as compulsive and necessity, and to ignite the inward creative impulses which then require translating into visible actions or products, thus, creating new life-forms. Not only does a creative conception of counselling point to its benefit for the individuals who are counselled, but just as importantly for the counsellor. The counsellor helps to bring about new concepts, insights, and behaviours at the level of the individual. This has, in principle, a wider effect. First, on the social groups of which the other is a member, and then, by extension, to the society and civilization. Thus the counsellor through his or her creative and cultivating-sensibilizing actions is fostering not only constructive movement and change for the other but is also making a specific contribution to cultural evolution.

I am quite aware that this insight may be difficult to grasp. The anesthetizing power of prosaic, workday experience is great indeed, and incultuates into many a naively realistic acceptance of the world in its pragmatic and materialistic aspects as "all there is". Or, as some put it frequently if not convincingly, "this is the real world". This visible world, this world of the senses and materialism exercises a great compulsion on many counsellors. They are subjugated by this "real world" and find it difficult not even likely that many will break through it, existentially, to find that their concrete actions as counsellors have a much greater, deeper and higher meaning then they usually give credit. But, may I say that for those who do, and for those who help their clients to do likewise, the experience and effects are indeed "astonishing, touching, as well as disturbing".

THE COUNSELLOR AS AN AGENT OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The point of counselling is not merely to adjust clients to the established order of things, nor simply to provide a better interpretation of life, but rather to change life by altering the social order or by developing, through learning, the client's resources as a person. Counselling should be structured so that the counsellor and the help-seeker can freely discuss the fundamental contradictions which the client faces without fear of retribution, condemnation, or betrayal. This ensures the client has the freedom to decide one way or another; further this ensures that the other's capacity for making choices is augmented; finally this means that clients have opportunities to learn coping strategies that will allow them to act more autonomously, and less like victims.

In order for counselling to be structured as I have just outlined, the counsellor is called upon to be an agent of critical consciousness. There should be no doubt that the full development of individuals, a far-in-the-future goal which most democratic systems at least give lip service to, depends very much upon the rationalization of society. A rationalized society is one in which the ordinary citizen is able to claim a valid foothold for himself or herself as a significant person. The alternative is one which we are dangerously close to now, a society of two classes: institutional captives and social engineers. The best political tool which exists for the individual to use in negotiating and striving for a valid foothold in society and which can be developed in people by educational means is a critical consciousness. That is, a consciousness which is capable of not only adaptation to demands of the social order, but also capable of taking a critical attitude toward aspects of the existing social order and developing methods and cooperation with others in order to negotiate, alter, and at times, if necessary, to change the anonymity depersonalizing and oppressive features of institutional life and the social order. Out of dissatisfaction, a critical consciousness strives to formulate and implement more satisfying forms of life.

It seems to me to be essential that counsellors carry on dialogue with the counselle to undertake a critical evaluation of their life situation including an identification of any oppressive and unnecessarily restrictive elements of one's own threatening to overwhelm. Also, the development of a critical consciousness can help both the counsellor and the counselle in other respects. The first is to resist the mechanism of "blaming the victim" - a tactic common to institutional life. Unemployed are blamed for not trying hard enough; find work, delinquents are blamed for their unsocialized behaviour, a failing child is blamed for failing, all the while the social conditions which give rise to those behaviours are unacknowledged. Critical consciousness will manifest a critical consciousness.

In order to assist clients in this dimension of counselling counsellors themselves have to also aid both the counsellor and the counselle to resist the claim that clients' ideas or behaviours are caused by "secret" internal mechanisms such as reaction formations and inferiority complexes; conversely to resist the claim that the behaviours only results from conditioned blaming the victim, stigmatizing the person by claiming that something is wrong with his or her internal mechanism or claim, that conditioning explains everything are all tactics which deny the primacy of choice and the interactions between personal and institutional and bureaucratic oppressiveness which blocks and overweighs individual action. As a working model, the conscientization method of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Friere, may be considered. This is built upon the principle that individuals can, and should, learn to perceive social, political and economic contradictions which impinge upon them and to take action against the opposites of realty. How far the counsellor should go in this aspect is certainly open for questioning and discussion. However, what seems to me to be abundantly clear is the premise that counsellors should provide the means whereby clients can acquire a critical evaluation of their life situation so as to gain a conscious and goal-directed use of their possibilities.

Now I will close by asking you, the reader, "how important are the issues I have raised with you anyway?" I cannot possibly anticipate your reply, so I will repeat to you the passage from Berdyayev to which I have added a final line:

Nothing is more astonishing, more touching, more disturbing,
Than the efforts of the human spirit to break through darkness towards the light,
Through what is meaningless, towards a meaning.
To break through the slavery which compulsions and necessity imposes,
Reaching toward freedom, and love, and a compassionate life.
Yes counsellor, you can be somebody in this world.

This is a revised version of Dr. Paavy's keynote address to the Ontario School Counsellors Association Annual Conference, October 1980.
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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Guest Editors’ Comments: Counsellor Education in Canada

In producing this special issue of the Canadian Counsellor we have had three goals: (a) to bring together in a single volume, for the first time, various points of view and research reports on counsellor training in Canada; (b) to distribute to all counsellor educators in Canada the results of a research study designed to test the competency preferences of a national sample of counsellor educators, counsellor supervisors, practicing counsellors and counselling students; and (c) to present a condensed “state-of-the-art” literature review on counsellor education. To achieve this third goal, we have cited studies from a wide range of North American sources. This review confirms that the state of counsellor education reflects a number of unresolved issues. In an edition of The Counseling Psychologist addressing the issue of “Professional Identity”, Shertzer and Isaacson (1977) suggested the most striking feature of counselling psychology today is its disarray. They contend that “incredible controversy abounds about its identity, licensure, practises, training models, clients served, effectiveness, to cite a few issues” (p. 33).

The rest of this editorial essay is devoted to a condensed review of approximately the last decade of literature and attempts to identify trends and conclusions in counsellor education that can be reasonably supported by the available evidence. Those issues selected for review include: definition and identity; characteristics of the counsellor; counsellor competencies, standards, training modes, and practicum and supervision. The essay closes with a few predictions for the future.

**Definition and Identification:**

“For what are we training?”

Since 1952 (American Psychological Association) counsellor education programs have undergone continuous review (Berstein & Lecomte, 1976; Carkhuff, 1969; Ford, 1979; Matarazzo, Weins, & Laslow, 1966; Rogers, 1956). On the one hand counsellor education programs have been criticized as unsystematic, poorly defined, and reflecting subjective or ideological bias. On the other hand, as Ford (1979) points out, in contrast to training programs in psychoanalysis, psychiatric social work, and clinical psychology, it has been primarily in the counsellor training literature that “innovative, systematic, empirically-based and technologically-advanced instructional methods and educational evaluation procedures have been discussed and researched” (p. 89).

One difficulty in assessing counsellor education is that examination of particular aspects (e.g., skill-training) to the exclusion of other aspects of training programs can easily provide a distorted and misleading view of the total picture.

In the long-standing controversy as to “What is counselling?”, attempts at clarification most often contrast it to psychotherapy. Belkin (1975) points out a number of authors who strongly hold there is no general distinction or at most a very fine distinction between counselling and psychotherapy (Albert, 1966; Ard, 1966; Balinsky, 1951; Curran, 1968; Patterson, 1973) but numerous others who hold strong convictions to the contrary (Audrey, 1967; Blocher, 1965; Bordin, 1968; Mahler, 1971). There are a number of criteria on which counselling has been differentiated from related roles.

Attempts to differentiate on the basis of setting have not proven satisfactory (Brown, 1974; Lewis, 1970; Pallone, 1977; Wren, 1977). In terms of clientele similar lack of consensus is evident (Lewis, 1970; Manning & Cates, 1972; Pallone, 1977; Steffire, 1965).

Training has also been a focus for differentiation. Although better trained counsellors are scarcely distinguishable from better trained psychotherapists (Steffire, 1965), two myths appear to be entrenched in the minds of many: that counsellors are less skilled and that psychotherapy is more effective. When reviewing training programs no clear differentiation is obvious (Hamilton, 1977; Hewer, 1972; Lewis, 1970). Where Belkin (1975) reviews effectiveness he “set the record straight” with regard to the second myth in his statement “There is no evidence psychotherapy is any more efficacious in the treatment of any disorder than is counselling” (p. 31). The issue becomes more than a point for academic dialogue in light of the implications for licensure and certification as a psychologist (Stigall, 1977).

There is little controversy about the desirability of clearly defining the differences between clinical, counselling, and clinical-school roles since doing so would provide clearer guidelines for training. The feasibility of doing so might be disputed on the grounds that it is premature. Of equal importance is a clear understanding of the commonality of the skills necessary for each role.

Gottman (1974) establishes that a major obstacle in teaching people how to do psychotherapy has been a reluctance to define psychotherapy, to believe or endorse it as an elusive, intuitive process. The statement might well be generalized to other related roles.

Such avoidance is reminiscent of Eysenck's amusing definition, “Psychotherapy is an unde-
fined technique applied to unspecified problems with unpredictable outcomes. For this technique we recommend rigorous training" (Steffire, 1965). This attitude is no longer acceptable. The process of evaluation, a vital necessity for improving the profession, demands specificity of techniques and goals. What Reisman suggests, therefore, although not totally satisfactory, is a realistic base point, "it is preferable to have a definition that approximates the 'truth' than to have nothing at all" (p. 9).

The "truth" has apparently changed with time. Major shifts have taken place in counselling psychology since its emergence in 1951. Shertzer and Isaacson (1977) report the shifts noted by Tyler (1972):

During the 1950's, counselling psychologists saw themselves primarily as therapists, who helped clients clear away personal conflicts produced by complex feelings and emotions. During the next decade, another shift occurred and the counselling psychologists saw themselves as architects of behavioral and organizational change. The most recent shift, according to Tyler, came during the 1970's as counselling psychologists became experts on group interactions. (p. 34)

A professional identity should not be thought of as "absolute, immutable, neverchanging" (Shertzer & Isaacson, 1977, p. 35). Yet, questions regarding identity, role and definition are important to the issue of training. They generate additional questions: To what degree is the counsellor a specialist and to what degree, a generalist? Is the emphasis on counselling or psychology? Is the counsellor an educator or therapist? Is counselling a process of learning or curing? What training is "core" to all roles? For what do we as a profession stand? The educators of counsellors must struggle, apart from suggested differences between counselling and related roles, with the question of whether the character and the skills required of the counsellor differ from those required of related roles.

**Personal Characteristics**

The key to the helping process is reflected in two dimensions of the counsellor — personal characteristics and professional skills. In other words, as Hackey (1971) suggests:

The skilled counsellor must be able to establish rapport and a facilitative relationship, and beyond that, he must possess a repertoire of counselling strategies that can be used to help the client achieve his goal. (p. 102).

There appears to be unanimous agreement that the personality of the counsellor is one of the most crucial variables in determining the effectiveness of counselling behaviour (Allen, 1967). "The importance of counsellors' characteristics to counselling outcome has long been recognized" (Shertzer & Stone, 1974, p. 98) and, "The counsellor is the single most important single factor in counselling." (Webb & Rochester, 1969, p. 313) are typical of statements throughout the literature. The American Personnel and Guidance Association Committee on Professional Preparation and Standards recognizes the importance of the personality of the counsellor in its statement, "Criteria for selection should include personal qualifications for counselling as well as the ability to master academic requirements and acquire professional skills" (McGreedy, 1967, p. 69).

The qualities indicative of the potential and actual effectiveness of the counsellor have been the object of much attention in counselling theory and research. The answer is important in that if "effectiveness" of counsellors can be predicted, counsellor educators could develop new methods by which to select prospective candidates for the counselling program. Secondly, it would provide reason to strengthen those qualities which relate to effectiveness. Theoretically, different trainee personal characteristics may be presumed to interact with different training procedures to produce differentially effective training.

Investigation of characteristics of counsellors has been the focus of numerous studies, the basis of which is the assumption that some combination of personal qualities are highly related to counsellor effectiveness. There has been a hope that some form of measurement of such qualities might consistently identify prospective effective counsellors.

Many studies, when viewed in isolation, offer promising possibility as to the nature of the "effective" counsellor. However, Shertzer and Stone (1968), clearly described the situation 10 years ago: "at the present time, the counselling profession is unable to demonstrate consistently that a single trait or pattern of traits distinguishes an individual who is or will be a 'good' counsellor" (p. 126).

Walton and Sweeney (1969) concluded that "results of research indicate that indices of academic ability and achievement are rather poor predictors of counselling effectiveness" (p. 32). Other studies confirm their findings (Anthey, Gormally, & Miller, 1974; Felker & Brown, 1970; Jansen, Robb, & Bonk, 1970, 1973; Jones & Schoch, 1968). It is of interest to note that Myrich, Kelly, and Wittmer (1972) report academic test scores and G.P.A. remained the most frequently used criteria for determining admission to graduate school programs. Despite information suggesting that these traditional criteria have little or no correlation with effectiveness, G.P.A. still remains the most used criteria for admission (Redfearing & Bisaco, 1976).

A number of studies have suggested the 16 PF may have predictive value (Donnan, Harlan, &
Thompson, 1969; McLain, 1968; Myrick, Kelly, & Wittmer, 1972; Shelton, 1973; Wehr & Wittmer, 1973). However, call for the use of the 16 PF as a predictor of effectiveness appears premature, based on the considerable variation which exists in the findings of the various studies, particularly in the desirable attributes associated with male and female counsellors (Rowe, Murphy, & Csipkes, 1975).

A similar conclusion can be stated regarding studies using the MMPI (Bergin & Jasper, 1969; Demos & Zuwalif, 1966; Johnson, Shertzern, Linden, & Stone, 1967; Jones, 1974; McGreevy, 1969; Mills & Mencke, 1967; Truax, 1970). The overall conclusion of Heikkinen and Wegner (1973) who reviewed studies using the MMPI was that "at this point, we simply cannot say the MMPI is a proven discriminator between effective and ineffective counsellors" (p. 276).

Measures of psychological adjustment have been used to explore the possibility of isolating effective counsellors by measurement of some personal characteristic. Foulds (1969) produced promising results using the POI as a measure of self-actualization. Disappointingly Winborn and Rowe (1972), in replicating his study, were unable to produce similar promising results. Trotter, Uhlig, and Fargo (1971) found none of the POI scales significantly related to counsellor success. Anthony (1973), using different measures, found some justification for use of self-acceptance as an important criterion.

Dogmatism, authoritarianism, and openess have been the focus of other attempts to identify characteristics of effective counsellors. A number of studies support a relationship of low dogmatism and/or high openness and effective counselling (Allen, 1967; Graft, 1970; Messano, 1969; Tosi, 1970). However, a strong case is provided to question the results of the suggested positive relationship (Foulds, 1971; Milliken & Paterson, 1967; Passons & Olsen, 1967; Wright, 1974). Studies investigating tolerance for ambiguity have met with similar inconclusiveness (Gruberg, 1969; Jackson, 1971; Jackson & Thompson, 1971; McDaniel, 1967). Self-concept and self-confidence studies are promising but too few to be even minimally conclusive (Eberlein & Park, 1970; Jackson & Thompson, 1971; Schmidt & Strong, 1970; Tien-Teh Lin, 1973).

A number of other measures and variables have been the focus of research but with little, if any, conclusive evidence to support their use as predictors of effectiveness. These have included undergraduate major recommendations, and work experience (Hurst & Shatkin, 1974); sociometric ratings (Gade, 1967); verbal activity (Scher, 1974); verbal responses (Freedman, Antenen, & Lister, 1967); experience (Scher, 1974; Schmidt & Strong, 1970; Trotter, Uhlig, & Fargo, 1971) and sex (Haase, 1970; McLain, 1968; Rochester, 1972; Scher, 1974; Shelton, 1973).

Several articles have even questioned the desirability of the "ideal" profile pointing out the possible flaws of the so-called "ideal" (Johnson, Shertzer, Linden, & Stone, 1967; Knowles & Barr, 1968; Rickabough, Heaps, & Finlay, 1972; Wicas & Mahan, 1966).

In summary, these results with little doubt, confirm the introductory statement that "at the present time, the counselling profession is unable to demonstrate consistently that a single trait or pattern of traits distinguishes an individual who is or will be a 'good' counsellor" (Shertzer & Stone, 1968, p. 126).

Counsellor Competencies

Counselling implies that in some way the client will be helped through the process. It also implies that the counsellor, the person to whom the client is coming for help, has competencies which will be useful in helping him/her to realize the outcomes he/she desires. A broad definition of competence includes "all the personal qualities relevant to the counselling process, such as knowledge, attributes, skills, personality characteristics and education" (Menne, 1974, p. 20).

There are several difficulties in determining what competencies should qualify a counsellor. Cotttingham (1976) points out that there is a proliferation of individuals from various disciplines performing counselling functions in different settings. As well, controversies over what is effective and therapeutic are far from being resolved (Berstein & Lecomte, 1976; Dreyfus, 1967; Fiedler, 1951; Hubbard & Grayson, 1975; Patterson, 1973; Raming & Grey, 1976).

A variety of sources provide information regarding the competencies required by counsellors: professional standards and recommendations; competency-based programs, and research specific to competencies.

Standards. The AGPA Standards reflect a 1964 statement of the Professional Preparation and Standards Committee which declared "There is a core of preparation and professional role which should be common to all counsellors" (Loughary, 1965, p. 13).

The core approach was based on the rationale that there are more areas of similarity than difference among counsellors, regardless of the particular agency or setting in which they work.

The specialty of counsellor education which first reached formal arrangements relating to accreditation was school counselling. In 1964, the first Standards for the Preparation of School Counselors was published. The last revision took

In the majority of cases competency in the suggested areas is assumed to take place through certain courses. Bernstein and Lecomte (1976) point out that “The courses although selected to meet APGA and APA standards, frequently offer uncoordinated training in theory, practice and research as discrete areas of counsellor functioning” (p. 29). This confirms other similar observations that no organizational framework exists to promote the integration of learning (Jakubowski-Spector, Dustin & George, 1971; Shertzer & Stone, 1968; Wrenn, 1962).

It can be noted that the official APGA standards do not stipulate personal characteristics in any way even though research has placed a strong emphasis on characteristics and awareness. Attention to the personal qualities of a counsellor is dealt with only in a brief policy statement calling for a counsellor “who has beliefs, commitments and interests which enable him to work in an understanding way with individuals” (Loughary, 1965, p. 9). The policy statement identifies six basic qualities believed to characterize the effective counsellor.

Competency-based programming. Dash (1975), in discussing the standards approach, suggests that to implement the recommendations of the standards policies the objectives need to be written in such a manner and with due regard for evaluation that they are based on demonstrated competencies of the learner. There is presently a trend toward competency-based programs. Basic to the competency-based curriculum is the assumption that the student in training will be able to master and demonstrate certain important skills in order to function effectively as a helper. There is more and more acknowledgement of a core of counselling skills. Brown, Sewall, and Linstrom (1977) report that nine states (Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, West Virginia) have competency-based certification requirements for school psychologists.

Some educators are recommending exchanging traditional college-credit-based programs for systematic performance-based counsellor training programs. (Brammer & Springer, 1971; Hendricks, Ferguson, & Thoresen, 1973; Horan, 1972; Jakubowski-Spector, Dustin, & George, 1971; University of Washington, 1975; Windborn, Hinds, & Stewart, 1971; Zifferblatt, 1972). There is a clear trend toward competency-based, or performance-based programs. An overview by Jones (1976) reports 53.6% of state certification to be competency-based and 76.1% of counsellor education institutions to be moving toward competency-based programs.

The strength of the competency-based standards or programs lies in the recognition of specified competencies rather than the accumulation of course hours or semester credits. No assumption is made that successful completion of particular courses can be equated with competency.

Research on competency development. Menne (1974) indicates that the initial impetus toward research on competencies can be traced to Rogers:

For over 2 decades studies of competencies have been limited to individual or small clusters of competencies, mainly, those suggested by Rogers. Rogers (1951) listed 7 conditions he believed were necessary for a therapist to be facilitative in client-centered counselling. (p. 7)

Later, empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence were put forward as the “necessary and sufficient” ingredients for effecting positive client outcomes. Extensive research has been directed toward the development and validation of scores to measure Rogers’ conditions. However, the measures which have been used extensively in process and outcome research have often yielded conflicting results. Horwitz (1977) concludes “The objective measurement of empathy is admittedly crude and subject to numerous sources of error” (p. 295). Menne (1975) points to several sources of difficulty: the possibility of research error; the possibility that empathy may not be a stable quality; the effect of situational or relationship variables; the competency of the rater or evaluator.

Specific competencies involved in the counselling process per se are suggested by particular models or training procedures. Carkhuff would have helpers learn specific skills (i.e., attending, reflecting, confrontation) which facilitate the “explore, understand, act” model. Ivey (1971) in his micro-counselling training procedure also breaks the process into specific skills (attending, listening, paraphrasing, interpreting). Brammer (1973), too, concentrates on the counselling process, suggesting particular skills appropriate for particular stages of the process. These skills have been the subject of considerable research. This research, however, has been restricted to investigation of their effect as means of training.

Effort to obtain verification of required competencies has recently resulted in research of a broader nature. Menne (1973) undertook a major study in which 376 experienced professionals from a variety of settings rated 132 competencies for
importance. From the analysis of the ratings received, 12 factors or dimensions of counsellor/therapist competency were isolated. In order of most important to least important, they were: (1) professional ethics, (2) self-awareness, (3) personal characteristics, (4) listening, communicating, (5) testing skills, (6) counselling comprehension, (7) behavioural science, (8) societal awareness, (9) tutoring techniques, (10) professional credentials, (11) counsellor training, and (12) vocational guidance. Lechowicz (1973), via the Delphi procedure, investigated the competencies required specifically of a group counsellor. The value of identifying and clarifying required competencies appears obvious. Until the competencies are specifically identified, counsellor education will continue to be a "hit and miss" process in which the educator has no grounds by which to select or develop methodology, or to validly and reliably assess each of the competencies. Without such base points, it is doubtful whether counselling or counsellor education can dispel the misgivings that now plague the profession.

Training Modes

Once again, the field of counsellor education offers more in terms of assumptions, presumptions, and generalities than hard data based on empirical investigation. No widely accepted model for rationalizing counsellor education has yet been developed.

Not only are there apparently no common counsellor education objectives but different programs stress different activities as essential. Some programs produce behavior modifiers, others graduate existential counsellors. Some emphasize a sound philosophical/personal base, others strongly believe in the acquisition of skills as a focus. Others insist on the importance of the practicum. Bernstein and Lecomte (1976) also point out the methodology of achieving even any one of the chosen emphases is also not necessarily common:

For example, Brammer (1973), Hackney and Nye (1973) and Ivey et al. (1968) believe that the acquisition of skills should be the focus of the training. Bordin (1968) and Lister (1967) have emphasized the importance of theory in the education of the counselor. The experiential aspect of learning has been seen by Rogers (1956) and Tyler (1961) as the most significant element of counselor training. Finally, the practicum experience has been hailed as the ultimate training vehicle in many programs (APA, 1952; Cross, 1968). The divergence of views regarding the most essential elements of counselor training contributes to the difficulty in acceptance of a training paradigm. (p. 28)

One reaction to the traditional approach is found in the efforts to develop the "person" of the counsellor. Research on person-centered training, although not extensive, has suggested value in the approach (Hurst & Jansen, 1968; Malcolm, 1971; McClain, 1969).

Comprehensive Training Programs

One potentially valuable research direction on trainee characteristics and training procedures is indicated by Rosenthal's (1977) demonstration that direct contact with trainers was significantly more effective than a self-instructional approach for "low conceptual" trainees undergoing "structural learning training." In contrast, the self-instructional and direct contact methods were equally effective with "high conceptual" level trainees. This study indicates the possibility of matching trainees with training method through the use of carefully controlled behavior samples and previously defined training methods to achieve optimal training effects.

The use of specific interviewing skills can be taught in as brief a period as one hour (Stone and Stein, 1978; Uhlmann, Lea, & Stone, 1976), but combining discrete skills into a learnable counselling style is another matter. The most noteworthy comprehensive training programs which attempt to teach integrated sets of skills are Systematic Human Relations Training (Carkhuff, 1969); Microcounselling (Ivey, 1971); Interpersonal Process Recall (Kagan, 1972); and Integrated Didactic-Experiential Training (Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Comprehensive training programs include several or all of the following processes: (a) didactic instruction (e.g., programmed texts, readings, seminars), (b) modeling, simulation, and instructor cueing, (c) a self-change project in which a trainee designs, carries out, and evaluates a learning project to modify his/her own behavior, (d) micro-counselling, (e) guided practice in a real counselling situation with the supervisor "sitting-in" and providing immediate feedback and guidance, (f) guided practice and cueing by supervisor from remote observation, and (g) continued guided practice but from audio or videotape, or session notes and follow-up discussion.

The rather large number of research studies of comprehensive program training for discrete counselling skills development has been critically reviewed by Mahon and Altman (1976) and, more recently by Ford (1979). What conclusion can be drawn? Mainly that comprehensive training programs, when carried out with parametric precautions (e.g., facilitative, immediate, and performance specific feedback) are effective in helping trainees learn discrete counselling skills. Unfortunately, studies of the impact of training procedures on counsellor trainees offer tentative rather than conclusive results because (a) dependent variables are insufficiently validated, (b) training procedures are usually too briefly de-
scribed to permit replication, (c) discrete skills do not a complete counsellor make! (many studies use undergraduate university students rather than real counsellor trainees), and (d) evidence is shallow regarding transfer of skills from training to practice and the intended effects of counsellor skills upon various categories of real clients.

Krumholtz (1967) suggested 10 years ago that there is a need to experiment with a number of different models of counsellor preparation and activity and to allow research and experience to arrive gradually at improved training. Whatever the model, it appears the present challenge is to avoid the generalities and ambiguities characteristic of counsellor education, and to define the process and outcome in such ways that they can be measured and compared with other training modes and models.

**Practicum and Supervision**

**Practicum**

The counselling practicum is looked forward to with enthusiasm and trepidation by the would-be counsellor. It is the beginning of what he/she entered graduate school to learn — counselling. The majority of academic exercises of theory and philosophy are past. The practise of counselling has begun. The beginning counsellor, by virtue of his scholarly preparation, knows he/she is to be warm, empathic, accepting and genuine as he moves his/her client through a process previously described and perhaps even demonstrated. In reality the beginning counsellor is often ill-prepared, as a person, to be relaxed and genuine, and as a professional to be, in any way but minimally, facilitiative or competent.

Even if we allow the counsellor in training his/her inadequacies, Patterson (1968) suggests that the first concern is an ethical one of protection for the client. After citing research indicating the fact that counselling or psychotherapy may make people worse as well as better, he concludes, "It is no longer possible to say, as many of us have said in the past, that student counsellors may not help their clients but they cannot hurt them" (p. 322). "The supervisor then has dual responsibility. Delaney (1972) similarly insists he must help the counsellor develop necessary counselling skills and must maintain ethical and professional responsibility for the client.

It would be comforting to be able to say that students are so well supervised that such danger is minimized. The implications of a recent survey, however, are disquieting. Jones (1976) reports the overwhelming majority of institutions graduated more students than they have staff to train adequately. This implies a contradiction of APGA (1973) recommendations that "a qualified faculty and staff with adequate time allocated to supervision is provided for laboratory, practicum and internship experiences" (p. 10).

Increasingly, the deficiencies of the "sink or swim" approach to practicum are being recognized. The introduction of "pre-practicum" experiences is on the upsurge. In nature, the practicum experiences vary considerably (Dunlop, 1968; Hackney, 1971; Muro, 1968; Peronne & Sanborn, 1966). With wide differences in the requirements of the practicum, it is likely that similarly wide variations exist in the skills of the graduating counsellors.

**The Counsellor Educator**

An important dimension of the counselling practicum is the supervisory relationship. What is the role of the supervisor? Better asked first is, "Who is the supervisor?" What skills and expertise does the counsellor educator bring to the relationship? Only one study (Scott, 1971) was found which gave any descriptive data on the counsellor educator. It was based on 1964 data and examined education level, professional organization memberships, employment, certification, and professional interests. It is likely far more will be known about the counsellor educators of the future (APGA, 1977; Weitz, Anchov, & Percy, 1976).

**Supervisory Styles**

Payne and Gralinski (1968) summarize the knowledge available to that time concerning supervisory styles:

In reviewing basic approaches to supervision, Truax, Carkhuff, & Doulds (1964) contrast the "didactic" to the "experiential". Didactic supervisors (e.g., Krasner, 1962; Krumholtz, 1967) stress the counsellor's need for feedback regarding his performance and the techniques which must be mastered for successful work. On the other hand, experiential supervisors (e.g., Arbuckle, 1961; Patterson, 1964; Rogers, 1957) are averse to such mechanistic approaches and emphasize the counselor's need for security so that he may explore his own feelings and learn from his own experience. However, most writing on supervision has been of a theoretical nature and little has been done to measure the effects of either of these approaches upon counselor performance (p. 517).

Ten years later the situation appears no more decisive. Bernstein and Lecomte (1976) indicate "little is known about which supervisory activities best promote certain goals, particularly in view of the ambiguity in definitions and training objectives" (p. 28).

There appears to be a transition in supervisory style that can be traced through the last two decades. Basically, the movement appears to have been towards a more structured involved role. The
early sixties had the supervisor in a counsellor role (Arbuckle, 1963; Johnston & Gysbers, 1966; Parker, 1967; Pierce & Schauble, 1969). Johnston and Gysbers (1966) summarize the dilemma of the supervisor in that role:

Left unanswered is the question of how practicum supervisors can be self-congruent in a democratic, minimally structured relationship and still handle common supervisory roles, such as instruction and evaluation, or administrative roles, such as endorsement for certification. (p. 10)

A new trend appears to have been gathering strength. Arbuckle (1965, p. 91) points out what he sees as the reality of the situation: "The supervisor is a supervisor, and as such he carries the weight and responsibility of judgment and evaluation on his shoulders." This was more in line with expectations students had of supervisors (Delaney & Moore, 1966; Foreman, 1967; MacGuffie, Jansen, & McPhee, 1970). The new trend recognized that if the practicum evaluation was to reflect the level of competence of the counsellor, the evaluative function of supervision had to be faced and the supervisor must be more than a counsellor. The new trend has found considerable support (Bauman, 1972; Birk, 1972; Blane, 1968; Delaney, 1972; Lambert, 1974; Payne & Gralinski, 1968; Payne, Winter, & Bell, 1972). However, the data is not conclusive (Austin & Alterkuse, 1972).

A number of other issues, besides the supervisory relationship, are of interest with regard to practicum aspects of training. Who is the best source of feedback — clients, peers or supervisors? What techniques and experiences are most effective for learning (or teaching) which skills? How shall the effectiveness of supervision be measured — by the student counsellor's behavior or the behavior of the student counsellor's client? To reach insight into such issues, more systematic comprehensive research is needed.

Hansen and Warner (1971) admit in their "Review of Research on Practicum Supervision" that, to that time, little conclusive can be said about the practicum:

What have we learned from these studies? The answer is almost as obvious as the question: very little. . . . We have some contradicting ideas about the role expected of supervisors, and we know very little about how this role affects counsellor trainees. We know about some new methods being used in counsellor preparation, but we do not know whether these methods are any better than past methods. (p. 271)

Hansen, Pound, and Petro (1976) note that although the sources of invalidity in supervision research have been reduced by more rigorous designs, compared with research reviewed five years ago, serious questions about current research persist:

In several instances, the lack of an adequate sample size and the lack of specificity in variable definitions limit the generalizability of findings. The experimental situation is generally not sufficiently rigorous to control for the effects of variables other than the treatment. Caution is warranted in the interpretation of application of results from supervision research. Furthermore, a more complete description of procedures to permit replication and improve application is needed for further studies. (p. 113)

Finally, the Future!

Examining the literature of the last decade permits us to make certain predictions, albeit with some temerity, about four future trends in counsellor education in Canada. Futurists are of three types: extrapolators, who project the future from history and the status quo; romantics, who believe that changes take place primarily as a result of individuals creating and adopting new life styles which in turn bring about societal changes; and system thinkers who believe that change comes about because change is governed by humans who create the methods to move from the present to the future. Probably, one needs to use all three modes of futurizing with counselling — a process composed of elements both evanescent and permanent. Perhaps the urge to predict about counselling comes most of all from dissatisfaction with many elements of the current status of counselling together with a desire to bring about a future, which as counsellors and counselling educators we prefer to choose, rather than to have foisted on us through neglect and default.

Prediction 1. The emphasis on self-awareness in counsellor education will continue to be strong. The reasons for this are long-standing and evident. Ancient dicta such as "Know Thyself" and "To Thine Own Self Be True" document the timeless recognition that self-knowledge is a precondition to maturity, good judgment, and sensibility, all of which personably characterize the efficacious counsellor. We cannot expect self-awareness, like Minerva, to spring full-grown from the head of Jupiter. In fact, much work must be done on the delineation of the content of self-awareness as well as on the development of educational procedures for increasing self-awareness levels in counsellor trainees. Uhlemann and Jordan's (1981) article, "Self-Awareness and the Effective Counsellor — A Framework for Assessment" in this issue is a promising step in this direction.

Prediction 2. Increasingly, the counsellor will take on consulting functions. Through increased consultation, counsellors are able to contribute to prevention of difficulties, extend the impact of counselling by training others in the use and skills of counselling, and work indirectly with the client populations being served by consulting directly with those who interact daily with clients. Carr's
(1981) article, "A Model for Consultation Training in Canadian Counsellor Education Programs" in this issue is an excellent critical summary of the literature on counselling and consultation. Carr outlines a model for training the counsellor as consultant.

Prediction 3. Career counselling will continue to increase in importance and may even become a major force in counselling theory, research, and practice. Because of the changing nature of careers, the labor market, and societal goals and values, career counselling will extend to an ever greater range of clients: youth, young, middle-aged, and aging adults, handicapped persons, correctional populations, immigrants and, possibly, increasing numbers of refugees. Career counsellors are likely to be increasingly engaged in combatting sex, age, and ethnic bias and stereotyping in education, training, careers, and employment. The Jevne (1981) study reported in this issue found information services to rank next to last in order of importance. Within the general category of information services, vocational/occupational information was regarded as most important. However, information on job search, occupational lifestyles, and work setting was less favorably ranked.

Career counselling may be one dimension of counselling which will change more from the influence of external pressures than from conscious effort on the part of members of the counselling profession. Eberlein's (1981) reaction to Jevne's (1981) study makes the point that counsellor education programs may be more of a reflection of the predilections of the faculties which teach in the programs than an attempt to meet the needs and requests of populations served by counselling (e.g., students, parents, employers). The Canadian School Trustees Association position paper on counselling, just distributed, expressed a sorry dissatisfaction with career education in schools and advocates a modernized, vital role for counsellors in both career education and the counselling and guidance activities which are corollaries to career education.

Prediction 4. Competency-based counsellor education programs will continue to be developed, refined, and implemented. Although there is a considerable literature on competency-based programs in counsellor education, such programs — at least in Canada — are in their infancy stage. A major criticism of competency programs is that they do not, at present, take sufficiently into account how counsellors use their "self." Focussing on skills is insufficient since counselling is a process which includes values, motivations, personal styles, and self-awareness as well as skills. To this point, no satisfactory taxonomy of competencies has been agreed upon in the profession of counsel-

ling. The paper in this issue by Marks, Kahn, and Tolsma (1981) addresses both the issue of deriving a useful taxonomy of competencies and the matter of adopting a standard format for constructing competency statements. Klas's (1981) paper examines the correspondence between the terms "counsellor role" and "counsellor competencies" revealing the confusions which arise in their usage, and briefly argues for an integration of counsellor competency and role.

The final article in this issue, Borgen's (1981) "Marketing Counselling Skills: Implications for Counsellor Education," directly examines counsellor role/competency inconsistency from another perspective. Are counsellors-in-training provided with skills deemed necessary by counsellor educators to raise them to the level of professional counsellor but not equipped with the competencies required for success and survival in the work setting? This provocative thesis used by Borgen to examine school counselling, can also be applied to other types of counselling (e.g., employment, rehabilitation, etc.).

It is our hope, as editors, that the articles in this issue will help to stimulate research and dialogue in Canadian counsellor education in the 1980's.

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Pragmatic Counselling: Working With Clients and Situations As They Actually Are*)

Introduction

Counselling is usually rationalized as a quasi-psychological activity requiring fairly sophisticated theories of personality, motivation and behaviour change. Some counselling approaches are even imitative of psychotherapy and one frequently encounters the contention that the difference between psychotherapy and counselling is really on a matter of degree. Psychology is widely claimed to be a science. Psychotherapy, too, yearns for "scientific" status. Further, some counselling specialists argue for a "scientific" status for counselling. I have argued elsewhere¹ that counselling is not psychotherapy, should not be construed as a "science", and should be de-psychologized.

The informed reader may well ask: "If you claim that counselling is clearly different from psychotherapy, and that counselling should be de-psychologized, then how on earth should counselling be oriented. What do you think that counselling is, anyway?"

My brief answers to these two questions are: First, "Counselling should be based on:

a) useful descriptive information about clients as they actually are; and useful descriptive information about their real life-situations; and

b) life-history knowledge and cultural wisdom which people already possess in one form or another."

My second answer is: "counselling is that social practice which is carried out to produce and clarify (a) and (b) above for the purpose of making decisions and acting in goal-directed ways."

Essentially, counselling is that social practice which can be brought into play when a person becomes uncertain about what to do next with some problem in daily living. According to my own research over 95% of all requests for counselling assistance arise out of an uncertainty about some issue in practical life. The primary dimensions of counselling are clarification, knowledge use, decision and deliberate action to achieve goals, purposes, and meanings.

For the purpose of trying to understand what I am conveying to you as a reader of this essay, I ask you to do the following: put aside your pet theories and conceptions about what counselling is or should be. Don't worry about whether counselling is best explained as client-centered, Rational Emotive Therapy, Behavioural, systematic, intuitive or what have you. Forget for the moment all of those skills and concepts you have struggled so hard to learn about the counselling interview—about how to be facilitative, warm, respectful, etc. Most of all, try to suspend your belief about the importance to counselling of psychological and scientific status, and suppress as well your ideas about possible connections between counselling and psychotherapy.²

Let's try to get a fresh start here without that enormous pile of conceptual and theoretical paraphernalia which you have managed to acquire and which you customarily use when discussing counselling. I know that this is a very difficult task I am asking you to perform—but try it, you might be surprised at the results.

Setting up the drama

In the drama which I am about to unfold, I will use two actors: Joe: who is an uncertain person; You a counsellor. Instead of the term counsellor, I may at times use "coach" for two reasons: first, using "coach" instead of "counsellor" is a device to help you forget about what you as a "counsellor" might or might not do; should or should not do; second, the term "coach" may fit more closely my notion of a re-conceptualized counsellor than prevailing definitions of "counsellor".

Also, the drama includes myself (after all I am doing the writing) as an observer-critic. I will comment on what You and Joe say and I will give certain explanations. Some of my comments will be in the text itself while others are contained in the reference notes.

Now, my purpose in the remainder of this paper is to show how Joe may be assisted with his "problem" by You as you work directly with Joe as he actually is in his life situation as it actually is. In other words, You and Joe will stay within Joe's "common-sense" world—which, incidentally, is very similar to your common-sense world. You will deal with Joe and his "problem" using the vocabulary of everyday speech. Further, you will draw upon the knowledge which You and Joe already possess as a result of living in a common social reality.

Joe is bringing to this discussion the knowledge and learnings he already possesses as a result of his life history so far. Being 30 years of age Joe has already solved an incalculable number of life dilemmas


on his own using the knowledge he had at hand at the time of each dilemma. Joe has a common-sense "psychology" for solving problems which he shares in common with You and virtually everyone else who lives in our culture. For each person this common-sense psychology comes into play when something goes wrong. It can be stated thus as a set of four steps, each with a function:

**Steps**

1. "What is actually going on here?"
2. "Who is responsible for what is happening here? Me? You? Others? or does this just seem to be happening?"
3. "What will happen if I do X, or Y, or Z, etc.?"
4. "What knowledge (and wisdom) do I already possess which will help guide my actions (also, what knowledge am I missing?)"

**Functions**

(Defining this situation)
(Determining responsible actors)
(Imaginary run-throughs)
(Basing decisions, actions and accounts on knowledge-at-hand; also, rule-directed action)

In other words, as a result of growing up, nearly everyone has already acquired a certain strategy for attempting solutions to uncertainties. Now, You may want to ask Me certain questions.

**You:** If a person already possesses a strategy for solving problems and has this knowledge in hand, then why does a person need help from someone like a counsellor in the first place?

**ME:** Good question. A full answer would take a lot of writing. Let me give you a few hints which may do for now.

First, the knowledge which any person has at any given time about some issue in life is usually not fully coherent. The knowledge which we have is always partially organized (within our consciousness) under plans of different kinds: plans for getting a job, plans for being a parent, plans for "having a good time" and so on. Such plans are continuously shifting and each has greater or less relevance in specific situations. The main point I wish to make is that the knowledge which a person has at hand is usually not very well organized with reference to any specific interest or difficulty.

Second, the knowledge which any person has at hand is only partially clear. Consider, for example, your own knowledge of hand about say, how a telephone works. You probably can say, "Oh sure, I know how a phone works, I know how to use it." Exactly, and you do know how it works—until it stops working. My guess is that at that point your knowledge about how it works (or rather, why it isn't working) is not too clear. You would probably be pretty hazy on a lot of details and would discover that you are far from clear about "how this thing works". Interestingly enough, quite a few people do have all the knowledge at hand to really know how a phone works but that knowledge is scattered around in the various plans in their consciousness. According to our first principle, it is not organized clearly into a competent plan for fixing the telephone, but it can be organized!

Third, a person's knowledge at hand is not at all free from contradictions, or, in other words, is not consistent. As a parent, an employee, a church member, a citizen, and a member of an athletic club a person may have vastly different and inconsistent opinions on moral, political, social and economic issues. This is not just the result of faulty logic, but a person may not be aware of the modifications in their own opinions [knowledge] which they must make to pass from one level of relevance to another or one plan to another.

**YOU:** So a person has a lot of knowledge-at-hand, but it is often not sufficiently coherent, clear, and free from contradiction to make it really useful in the specific situation-at-hand, is that it?

**ME:** You've got it!

**YOU:** And I suppose that you are also going to tell me that one of the counsellor's main tasks is to help the person to re-group his or her knowledge-at-hand so that it is clear, coherent and consistent with respect to the issue at hand.

**ME:** Exactly! A satisfied client says "Gee, I solved that one myself!"

**YOU:** But surely, a person must often need to know something more than what he already has in hand.

**ME:** Of course, and we can come back to that point later on. For now, what I'd like for us to keep in mind is this:

a) Knowledge-at-hand is vastly under-rated.

b) Knowledge-at-hand often must be re-grouped.

c) New knowledge will create additional confusion if it does not jibe with knowledge-at-hand-relevance structures in the individual's consciousness [in fact, this is why so much "good" information and advice is rejected by clients].

d) For new knowledge to enter in a useful manner implies cooperation of the counsellor and client. Speaker and listener must orient toward each other cooperatively rather than defensively or manipulatively if effective communication is to occur. Effective communication is a pre-requisite for both regrouping of existing knowledge and bringing in of new knowledge in consciousness.
Enter Joe

Joe is a thirty year old man who has been trying to find work. Joe has not had much education and his plan for finding and getting work is not very well thought out. However, not having work causes lots of trouble in Joe’s life and he is determined, in spite of changing from the status of unemployed to employed. Remember, you are the counsellor although I have asked you to suspend your at-hand conception of how a counsellor should act. You and Joe are seated in your office where the following fragments of conversation are to take place. Joe is a composite client, having been constructed by me from several clients I have talked to recently about work and career plans. Joe is not a YAVIS (Young, Attractive, Verbal, Intelligent, Successful) client.

You

Hi Joe, I was thinking about you this morning. I thought you might stop by.

What did you see, Joe?

You saw an ad in the paper for a job and you think maybe you should take a look at it. What kind of a job, Joe?

Oh, yes, the place that has wood for stoves and furnaces. I’m not sure what a woodcutter does, do you know?

Like different lengths, and some big pieces and then kindling, is that it? Is the splitting done with an axe or a machine?

Well Joe, you sound like you know what the woodcutter does—do you know how to do it? It sounds like hard work?

You’re lucky—a lot of people wouldn’t know how to split wood—at least they’d be pretty slow at it. How do you tell when you’ve got a cord split anyway?

The way we did it is we had 2 × 4s laid out against a wall so when we filled up as high and as wide as the 2 × 4s we knew we had a cord. I think a cord is a 4 × 4 × 8 foot stack.

Well, Joe, I know you’ve been looking for a job—how does this one sound to you, if you could get it?

Joe

Yea, I wanted to tell you ... I saw something in the ads this morning.

Well it was about this job and I was just wondering, maybe I should look into it.

Uh, it’s Foster Fuels, you know, over on Admirals Road, they’re looking for a woodcutter.

Well ... Yes ... You know how some people need split-up wood for their stoves—this guy splits up the wood into chunks.

Oh, a heavy kind of axe—real heavy—more like a sharp sledge hammer, I’d say.

Oh yeah, I’m real good at splitting. I used to do it all the time when I lived with Dad. I’ve split cords and cords of wood. I never used one of those machine splitters, though.

The way we did it is we had 2 × 4s laid out against a wall so when we filled up as high and as wide as the 2 × 4s we knew we had a cord. I think a cord is a 4 × 4 × 8 foot stack.

Yea, I really need some job badly—I hardly got enough money to pay for room and board. I felt pretty bad when I was let go at the greenhouse—they just didn’t have no winter job for me. I guess cutting wood wouldn’t be too bad, as long as it don’t get too cold.

Yea, that’s about it. What do you think I should do?

Joe’s want is confirmed. Joe has reasons for trying to get this job: 1. he needs money, 2. there is not chance at present that he will be able to work in the greenhouse, 3. he knows how to do this job. He has one reason at least, for not wanting it—the cold. [See Note 6 for further elaboration on Want parameters.]
At Joe’s request you are offering some “guidance” here. Also, you are testing out the strength of his want.

Yea, I guess so, I’m not sure what to say though—it’s kind of hard over the telephone, you know. Do I just say I want the job? What if they say no? How much do you suppose they pay?

At this point in the interview it is becoming obvious that while Joe seems to have know-how about wood-cutting, he probably doesn’t know-how to apply for a job. At this point you guide him through a simple, even crude, role-play which is what he can deal with and convey to him how to ask about the job, the pay, the hours, the output expectations, the duration, and so on. During this part of the interview you also learn about several of Joe’s Personal Characteristics (Note 6)—he is shy, he is willing to practice, he tries to put your advice to work, he is likeable, he is clumsy, etc. Your are also able to assess that the (possible) job has considerable significance (Note 6) for Joe and the efforts which you as coach (counsellor) are making on his behalf also have a lot of meaning for him.

Joe does get the job. About a week later you stop by Foster Fuels, You see Joe in the wood yard and ask him how he is getting along. He replies: “Not bad, not bad. I’ve been at it a week and it’s getting better all the time. They even gave me a real splitter yesterday.” He shows the “real splitter” to you. It is made of a rod with a splitting chisel welded on the base. A heavy tube slides up the rod and, when dropped, drives the chisel into the wood.

YOU: Say Joe that looks a lot safer and faster than the axe.

JOE: Right. I’ll get an extra cord today, anyway.

You speak with the manager (whom you have met before through your work in the city on employing handicapped adults). You ask about Joe. He replies, “I couldn’t ask for a better splitter. He knows how to do the job and works steady. I was worried at first because he seemed pretty shy and would hardly talk—but no complaints now.”

Through your visit to the fuel company you were able to check on the “Performance” parameter [Joe’s doing is highly satisfactory] and on the “Achievement” parameter [the stacks of cord wood attest to the outcome of his performance]. His employer confirmed both his performance and his achievement.

With respect to Joe in the “Wood cutting situation” You were able to check-out all eight parameters for an understanding of Joe’s behaviour in that Situation. Four of them, K, KH, W, P, are of primary importance and can be made graphic:

Outdoor Work vs Indoor Work
Wood-cutting vs Wood-hauling

K

a job, pay

W

P Use a splitter—A to split wood

 stacks of wood (meeting employer’s expectation)

KH

How to split wood

In other words does your client:

1. Know what is involved?
2. Know-how to do what is required?
3. Want to do what is entailed?
4. Do what is necessary in an acceptable manner?

I, A, PC and S parameters add further details which enable you to achieve a full, descriptive understanding of Joe’s Behaviour in the “wood-cutter situation”.

34
Policies to Guide Your Work With Joe

In this section of the paper, I am going to state policies which can guide you in your work with Joe (or any client). A counselling policy statement is a direct prescription for making choices within the process of counselling.

A policy is designed to apply across n-cases unless circumstances supply a better reason or reasons for not applying the policy. Ordinarily, no further rationale is needed to "modify" a policy to make it fit a particular case.

The adoption of policies for guiding counsellor actions, if such polices are reasonable and adequate, and providing that no stronger, contravening reasons exist, gives the counsellor a good chance of success in using a broad range of counselling interventions.

The policies are stated in ordinary language and are not intended to be derived from, no explanations of, any psychological or psychotherapeutic theory. Instead, they are coalesced from descriptions of what actually occurs when help-intending acts are carried out, and when in the judgment of those acting and acted upon, the actions are for better, rather than worse.

In the following tabulation I have entered the Policies together with a brief explanation in the left column, and associated counselling Interventions on the right. This tabulation is not meant to be conclusive; rather, it is suggestive.

**Policies**

1. **Be on the client's side!**
   [In its better form, counselling is a cooperative activity between counsellor and client. The counsellor should refrain from taking an adversary position against the client.]

2. **Affirm the client's strengths!**
   [Each client has some assets—which may either be manifest or latent—usually both. Try to confirm the client as a person of good character even though specific behaviours suggest the contrary.] Affirming the client's strengths also means: **Legitimize the Client!** [When a counsellor is able to show, and accept, that what the other person is doing within the prevailing circumstances makes sense, the client is legitimized. Even though a person is confused, mis-understands and is incept, still given their (mis)understandings and the circumstances what they are doing makes sense to that person; even though others don't see it that way.]

3. **Treat each client as a person!**
   Counsellors should challenge "victim" statuses. Every person who copes at all in daily life is in charge of some areas of his or her own life. Use person-in-charge interpretations.

4. **Assess what matters!**
   Focus on what may be put to use: practical skills, personal characteristics and relationships, including both deficits and strengths. Avoid using personality or character assessments as a basis for explaining client difficulties.

**Interventions**

a) Listen!
b) Provide time and space free from distraction.
c) Adopt a phenomenological attitude by suspending any prior conceptions or beliefs you may hold toward this client; try to perceive this client as he or she actually is, rather than what you assume.
d) Use ordinary language. Use the person's name. You are face-to-face. Act awake to the person in your speech and in listening.

a) Identify and emphasize areas of self-control in clients' lives.
b) Reinforce Initiative and self-responsibility—use examples, analogies, gentle challenges, restate your understanding of how this person is doing something responsibly for him or herself at the present time.
c) Use ordinary language. Speak of "needs", "achievements", "satisfactions", "barriers", "tryouts", "actions", "steps"; don't use terms like "neurotic", "non-entitled dependent", "in-adequate personality" and so on.

a) Clarify and question.
b) Use appraisal methods whose findings can be put to direct use in helping this client to achieve feasible goals. Don't do "routine" testing.
5. Begin with simple interpretations!
As you work with the client to evaluate client actions and present situation, begin with simple interpretations, stay with the “obvious.” Develop elaborations and work up more complex explanations only when actually required. Don’t “psychologize” obvious, direct actions and accounts.

6. Don’t make things up!
Stay with the particulars of the client and his or her situation. Don’t impose theoretical or speculative explanations. Don’t promise more than you can deliver and don’t offer suggestions or information which is “shaky” or for which you have no evidence or reason to believe yourself.

7. Don’t expect the client to be somebody else!
Try to avoid angry, blaming, or interrogative stances toward your clients. Clients may be uncertain about whether or not they want counselling: they may appear reluctant to engage in counselling; they may resist counselling either passively or actively; they may show outright hostility to the counsellor. If counsellors expect clients to conform to criteria which define the “good” client (YAVIS) then in many cases they are in effect expecting client X to be somebody other than whom she or he actually is. Such expectations lead to counsellor feelings of frustration, anger, hostility and betrayal.

8. Provide!
The client and the counsellor share responsibility for achieving the purposes of counselling. The counsellor has a responsibility to provide the overall framework of counselling within which discussion, learning, accessing information, deciding, planning and evaluation can occur. Providing means at least the following:

a) Convey information which is relevant to the task at hand in forms which are understandable to the client;
b) Clarify concepts, reduce ambiguity in how the client (and you) see the client’s situation.
c) Appeal to what is already important to the client, to what the client already understands and has had experience with.

9. Deal with the reality basis of emotions!
This implies two things. First, identify and confirm how the client does feel about self and situation and others in the situation. Second, don’t dwell on emotions unduly, but proceed to deal constructively with the circumstances which generate the undesirable emotions. Fear is usually related to definite perceived real-world threat; anxiety to dimly perceived real world threat; anger to provocation; guilt to wrong-doing; jealousy to actual or imagined acts of personal betrayal. It is important that the counsellor take responsibility for guiding the attention of the client beyond the experience and/or expression of emotion itself to the reality which generates it.

10. Avoid coercion!
Coercion breeds resistance. In the face of resistance, it is better to work for clear understandings of differences, negotiate, clarify mutual purposes, and put resistance producing topics on

a) Listen.
b) Use ordinary language.
c) Confirm understanding by:
   i. paraphrase
   ii. graphics
   iii. give-and-take discussion

a) Observe and describe client actions and utterances and check out with client.
b) Pay attention to how a client describes self and situation.

a) Try to “see” each person as he or she actually is.
b) Be prepared to radically alter your approach to clients who are reacting in ways which puzzle or frustrate you. For example:
   i. Change from a warm and accepting style to a negotiating style;
   ii. State matter-of-factly what you can provide in counselling and what you cannot, instead of questioning the client;
   iii. leave the client alone for a short period then return and begin on a different topic.
   iv. Ask the client what he or she would do if in your shoes.

Use:
a) Identification of alternatives
b) Plan formulation
c) Perception-checking
d) Graphic illustrations (draw or get the client to "diagram" the task or situation)
e) Information devices such as pamphlets, books, hand-outs, films, tapes, checklists, CHOICES, and so on.
f) Use role-play and simulation to clarify perceptions.

a) Use empathy and clarification.
b) Assist the client to understand what person or aspect of reality the emotion is directed toward; then focus on reality with the aim of changing the reality or removing oneself from unchangeable realities.
c) Explore the possibility of altering the client’s perception of the antagonistic reality so that the reality is seen in a "new light." The tactic is sometimes valid; however, caution should be taken not to guide someone into putting up with an intolerable situation. This is the tranquilizing approach to counselling.
the shelf where you can come back to them later when the relationship will support their discussion.

These ten policies overlap in various ways. Collectively, they are guides for: affirming the client as he or she is, within the situation as it is, and increasing the client's possibilities for thinking clearly and acting effectively to achieve goals. The policies really imply a general way of being with clients which is based on cooperation, negotiation, working on the basis of what actually is perceived to be the case, using ordinary language, drawing on practical knowledge and reasoning, and avoiding language and procedures which medicalize, psychologize, trivialize or victimize clients.

These policies and the other concepts presented in this paper are arguments that practical decision making [reduction of uncertainty] is more appropriately approached by staying in the everyday world of practical reasoning than through recourse to abstract models of decision making and use of psycho-therapeutic techniques.

I will conclude by saying that I regard this paper as an unfinished work.

What you need to know, you already know, yet fail to utilize.

Reference Notes


2 I am asking you to take the methodological attitude of phenomenology in which one refrains from making judgments for or against the existence of an entity (in this case: counselling as I am reformulating it in this and other essays) based on already inculcated beliefs, assumptions and concepts about what that entity is and should be. From a phenomenological perspective such a suspension of belief is required in order to "see that which actually stands before us, as it is, in itself."

3 A successful counselling conversation is not a series of disconnected remarks, but is an organized sequence of utterances achieved through the cooperation of speaker and listener. [Grice (1975) "Logic and Conversation" in P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (Eds.), Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3, Speech Acts, New York: Academic Press] has specified the cooperation principle in effective conversation by four maxims which can serve as guidelines for counselling conversations. These maxims appear to apply especially to communicators who are attempting to build up common knowledge.

1. Maxim of Quantity: Your contribution should be informative but not more informative than is required.

2. Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true. Don't pretend. Don't say things which you believe to be false or for which you have no evidence at all.

3. Maxim of Relation: Make your contribution (both speaking and hearing) relevant to the aims of the on-going conversation.

4. Maxim of Style: Be clear. Try to avoid obscurity, ambiguity, wordiness, disorderliness (for example, unfinished sentences, vague asides). Try to use ordinary language. Use confirmatory utterances (for example, paraphrase, ask for clarification).

The power of these maxims can be illustrated by the following exchange:

A: Will you be able to come for an interview tomorrow at two o'clock?

B: No, I must work.

A will accept B's reply as an answer to the question for reasons of informativeness, truth, relevance, and clarity unless there are stronger reasons for not accepting it. For example, A may believe that B is pretending to work in order to avoid the interview.

4 The concept of plan is crucial to the point of view presented in this paper. However vaguely it may be defined, nearly all people have a life plan. A person must more-or-less keep a multiplicity of social relations, time tables, and a plurality of careers organized in his or her mind. Not only does my life plan include my own careers as father, husband, professor, writer, leisure participant, and so on, but it also includes knowledge of numerous other careers both realistic and typified. My own life history out of which my life plan has evolved contains realistic conceptions of farmer, factory worker, janitor, hotel desk clerk, grader-operator, speech therapist in addition to my present work career as university professor for I have been in each of these careers in my life history. In addition, I have typified knowledge of a host of other careers. For example, although I have never been a delivery man for a retail store, I none-the-less have a pretty good notion about the typical life career of a delivery man. While I expect that it is quite unlikely that I will ever be in such a career, I have very little difficulty in imagining how I could have if my life had taken a different turn.

With respect to many careers, the family serves as a life-planning workshop. In reference to work-careers, the family does not fulfill this function so much anymore, the school does not either. The result is that many persons go into adulthood with a life-plan (often vague) which contains no particular useful work-career plans.

This state-of-affairs causes some intra-personal conflict and confusion for the following reasons:

For most people, at some point in their life, usually early adulthood, the principle institutional influence in life planning is the labour market and one's relation to it. In other words, most of the projects which one undertakes as part of one's life plan are organized around one's job. Other "careers" (parent, mate, citizen, student, etc.) typically revolve around and depend on one's "job."

The "life plan" refers to how knowledge of society is organized in the mind of consciousness of the individual.

The life plan is a primary source of identity. Most concrete life decisions are defined as a means to an end in terms of the over-all life plan or in terms of some life project which is made plausible through its connection to the overall life plan. Individuals tend to suffer two types of anxiety with reference to the life plan. If the life plan is fairly well articulated (most aren't) then each concrete decision in life brings on stress for it is perceived to have significance (or lack thereof) for the grand project.

More typically, the life plan is vague and incoherent. This brings on anxiety of a different sort: the person dimly perceives that he or she should have a life plan but doesn't. Not being able to define or articulate the life plan brings on frustration and anxiety. He or she is perpetually uncertain about decisions since it is not clear how any specific decision will influence one's overall, unarticulated plan. After all, if one doesn't have a plan, then how is one to know what to do?
5 Status is a critical concept in pragmatic counselling. The key elements of status as used here are:

1. status refers to a person's place in the real world.
2. when we know someone's status, then we know how it makes sense to treat them.
3. status can be assigned to us by others (for example, a teacher may assign a pupil the status of "slow-learner", "modified", or "gifted"); or we may assign ourselves status (I am an "invalid", I am a "nice guy", etc.).
4. status indicates what we are eligible to do (For example: "only a high school graduate may apply for this job."); and what we are ineligible to do.

5. statuses vary in importance and change. For example, I have been assigned the status of overweight by my doctor. This status has some importance to me, but not very much. However, I didn't have that status at all ten years ago! On the other hand, my status as "mate" is very important to me, although I have certainly not had that status all of my life. I have had the status of "male" all of my life, while I have had both statuses of "employed" and "unemployed" as well as "successful" student and "failing" student a number of times. In each of these cases, my statuses strongly indicated what I could, and couldn't do, what I was eligible and ineligible to do.

A person may have statuses within family, work, circle of friends, political party, union, church and so on. A person's status determines, in a logical sense, his or her possibilities for acting. A person's self concept is a summary of his or her behavior possibilities, a summary of the many statuses he or she has. Altogether, this adds up to a global or real world, person-status.

6. Acts or communications toward a person which reduce his or her eligibilities for behaving are degradations [You cannot do this task, you are too dumb]. On the other hand, acts or communications toward a person which increase his or her behavioral possibilities are accreditations. [You did all the routines very well. Now you can operate the machine on your own]. In either case a status (or revised status) is being assigned to the person.

The power of the concept of "status" resides in the fact that it is a concept which implies a dynamic connection between an individual and surrounding others.

7. In every day living we are engaged hundreds of times daily in what can be called parametric analysis. Parametric analysis refers to a method of discriminating one thing from another. For example, all norm individuals can tell red from blue, green from yellow, orange from brown and so on, using the parameters of hue, brilliance and saturation. We also discriminate persons and their actions using a parameic analysis. This is how we come to understand (in the common sense world) that Joe is not Jack, but Joe; and that action A is different from action B, C, D, etc. We usually do this unreflectively. However, as a wide-awake counselor, it is quite helpful to know what we are doing, when we are doing it.

Peter Ossorio ("Conceptual-Notational Devices: The PFC and Related Devices" in Davis, K. E. Advances in Descriptive Psychology, Vol. 1, 1981, pp 63–104) has both discussed the importance of parametric analysis and introduced the "Behaviour Formula":

<B> = <I, W, X, K, P, A, PC, S>

I = Refers to the "Identity" of the person whose Behaviour (B) is in question,
W = "Want" This is the motivational parameter (wants, needs, purposes, goals),
K = The "Know" or cognitive parameter,
XH = "Know-How", the competence parameter,
P = "Performance", parameter,
A = "Achievement" or outcome parameter,
PC = "Personal Characteristics" parameter,
S = "Significance", value, or meaning parameter.

To convert this behaviour to a sentence as you the counselor might use it with a client: Who is this client, wanting what, knowing what, knowing how to do what, doing in what manner, with what outcome, influenced by what personal characteristics, and with what meaning both for the client and for others?

The Elements of the Behaviour formula are a check-list to be kept in mind as one works with a client's dilemma.

8. The Original source of these conceptualizations is found in Peter Ossorio's paper: Clinical Topics: A Seminar in Descriptive Psychology, Boulder: Linguistic Research Institute, 1976. Dr. Richard Driscoll (Policies for Pragmatic Psychotherapy in Davis, K. E. [Ed.], Advances in Descriptive Psychology, Vol. 1, 1981, pp. 273–277), presented an outline of twelve policies for guiding the therapist. I revised (and provided examples for) these policies in Counselling Disadvantaged Clients, a paper presented at the International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling convened at Florence/Monacanati, Italy in April 1981. I have further refined the policy statements in an unpublished manuscript entitled: A Status-Dynamics Orientation to Counselling.

9. I believe that every effort should be made to establish the concept of person firmly in counselling literature and discussion. Why is the person concept so important? First, each human being (except in pathological instances) considers him or herself to be first and foremost a person (rather than an animal, a flower, an object, a number, etc.).

Second, paradigmatically, a Person is that entity whose history is a life-history of Deliberate Action (Ossorio, Peter, What Actually Happens, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1978).

Emmanuel Mounier (Personelism, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952) taught that (a) the Person is not an object that can be (without destruction) separated, reduced or converted to quantities; (b) the Person is actually a center of orientation, (c) the Person only exists toward others; it only knows itself through being known by them; this makes communication the primum fac dict us which we must start and to which we always return. Persons become uncertain and have trouble whenever communication is disturbed or corrupted. [See note 3 above about the four maxims of cooperative communication].

Perhaps the most compelling reason for using Person concepts in counselling is that only a Person acts, experiences meaning, and gives accounts (justifications, reasons, explanations). Deliberate Action [that is, distinguishing between two or more alternatives and then choosing one over others] is what distinguishes the Person from other living entities.

As I indicated earlier, counselling has been characterized by an ambiguity and, one might say, an on-going identity crisis for decades. While many factors have entered into the continuing redefinition of counselling, one of the most serious confusions has been the failure to discriminate counselling from therapy.

Conceptually, "therapy entails the application of conceptual machinery to ensure that actual or potential deviants stay within. The institutionalized definitions of reality (Barger and Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, New York: Doubleday, 1969, p. 113)." Every society faces the "problem" of deviants so that therapy in some form or another is a global social phenomenon. In different cultural contexts, it takes widely divergent forms including psychoanalysis, exorcism, witchcraft, imprisonment, brain-washing, personnel "counselling", and so on. Therapy requires theories of deviance, diagnostic apparatuses, and a conceptual system for "curing." Broadly speaking, all forms of therapy are forms of social control. Even personal
"growth" groups and the various "humanistic" therapies with their focus on self-enhancement and Utopian fantasizing may be conceptualized as tranquilizing procedures. As such they act to "contain" individuals within self-centeredness and utopian fantasies and keep persons from taking abrasive actions against those aspects of the society which give rise to their discontent to begin with and from which they long to deviate.

What can be said, then, to establish counselling as a form separate from therapy and [relatively] free from the mis-guidance of scientific psychology?

1. Counselling does not pre-suppose that persons who seek help from counselling are deviant. Something is going wrong in the everyday conduct of their life. That "something" is not located in their "character-structure" or their "personality" but is in the form of uncertainty about what they should do about some aspect of their life which is not working right. In a great majority of help-seeking instances, the crucial element is decision. Any disturbance is not in the deep structures of personality but in the ready-at-hand everyday world in which the person lives. [How to get a better job, what to do with a difficult child, how to build meaning in one's life, whether or not to have elective surgery, whether or not to attempt a reconciliation with one's estranged spouse, which career goal to adopt, etc.]

2. Counselling pre-supposes face-to-faeness. The counsellor experiences fellow-persons directly as they share a common sector of time and space, [implying a simultaneity of two streams of consciousness] a counsellor and fellow-person "grow older together". The other's body appears to the counsellor as a set of concrete symptoms through which the fellow-person's conscious life is vividly present. The central feature of the face-to-face aspect of counselling is an awareness that this human being is confronting me in person. The very action of recognizing this living, conscious being within my reach as a counsellor constitutes the basic form of the Thou-Orientation. The Thou-orientation is not reached by judgment or by analogy; I do not deliberate and then achieve a Thou-orientation.

Rather it is my pretheoretical experience of a fellow-person. By this experience I see that a fellow-person is before me in full actuality here and now. I recognize this fellow person as alive and conscious—I do not necessarily know the contents of this fellow-person's consciousness, nor the meaning of this person's being before me.

The Thou-orientation can be either one-sided, or reciprocal. It is one-sided if I turn to you in full awareness, but you ignore my presence or remain indifferent. It is reciprocal if I turn to you in full-awareness and you, in turn, orient to me in wide-awareness.

The Thou-orientation is crucial to counselling for it is the only way one person has of unqualifiedly recognizing that another person is this living human being endowed with a consciousness and standing before me now.

Of course, as a counsellor I must concern myself with the words and actions of the fellow-person before me since these signify the parameters and sectors of the objective context for meaning, and symptoms of my fellow-person's subjective contexts for meaning. In other words, I must concern myself with what my client does, plans, thinks, feels, how he accounts for his dilemma, what he does and doesn't know and comprehend about the situation of concern. My ability to work for these objective clarifications with my client pre-supposes, and indeed, is greatly dependent upon the degree to which the Thou-orientation has actualized—there is no such thing as a "pure" thou-orientation—it always occurs in some degree of specificity and concreteness.

When I think about what the other says, I step outside of the Thou-orientation, and to some extent outside of the face-to-face relation. Thou-orientation is immediate, on-going and non-reflective. Reflection (and various methods of analysis and interpretation) are ex post facto.

To think about what a client says, or does, and to exercise a consciousness of one's own thoughts and actions requires stepping outside of the Thou-orientation and break the directives of simultaneous experiencing of one person with another. Obviously, it is essential to do this frequently in the counselling "interview". The important points are that counsellor effectiveness in the "working" moments of the interview assume a prior Thou-orientation; the Thou-orientation can be resumed repeatedly; and counselling as the specific activity which it is pre-supposes face-to-faeness, i.e., the Thou-orientation.

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Le counselling pragmatique: exercé auprès de vrais clients, et dans des situations concrètes.*)

Introduction

Habituellement, le counselling est considéré comme une activité quasi-psychologique exigeant des théories assez avancées sur la personnalité, la motivation et les changements de comportement. Certaines méthodes de counselling imitent même la psychothérapie et il est fréquent de considérer que pour un grand nombre de personnes, la différence entre la psychothérapie et le counselling est vraiment une question de degré. La psychothérapie aussi voudrait être qualifiée de «scientifique». En outre, certains spécialistes en counselling demandent la qualification de «scientifique» pour le counselling.

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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Collected Works in English Language

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GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELLOR EDUCATION IN CANADA

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Abstract

In June, 1981, the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA) accepted in principle a set of guidelines for counsellor education programs in Canada. In this article, the authors review the historical development of these guidelines, identify some definitions and working principles upon which they are based, and present them in their current form. The importance of, and advantages in having, a set of guidelines are discussed. Finally, unaddressed issues are considered.

At the national conference held in Calgary in June, 1981, the general assembly of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA) adopted, in principle, a set of guidelines for counsellor education programs in Canada. The final draft of these guidelines was completed in January, 1982.

As members of the ad hoc committee which developed the guidelines, we believe that they represent an important achievement for CGCA and as such have far-reaching implications for counselling in Canada. For these reasons, we wish to offer some of our thoughts about the guidelines as they have appeared in their final form. More specifically, in this article we intend to present (a) a brief historical overview of the development of the guidelines, (b) some definitions and working principles upon which the guidelines are based, (c) a reproduction of the actual guidelines, (d) a discussion of the importance of and advantages in having these guidelines, and (e) a consideration of issues which have not been addressed by the guidelines in their current form.

Historical Overview

Although for a number of years some members of CGCA recognized a need for guidelines for counsellor education programs within Canada, direct action on this issue did not begin until Professor Myrne Nevison of the University of British Columbia organized a meeting-discussion of Canadian counsellor educators at the St. John's Conference in 1979. At this meeting, there was general agreement that guidelines for counsellor education programs were important enough to warrant the formation of an ad hoc committee to develop them. At the same meeting Professor Vance Peavy of the University of Victoria presented a slightly revised form of the guidelines adopted by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) which is a division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association. The document prepared by Peavy was discussed and subsequently distributed to counsellor educators in Canada.

At the next meeting of the counsellor educators held in Ottawa in September, 1980, response to the Peavy/ACES document was reviewed and it was decided that rather than adapting a U.S. model to our Canadian setting, a truly Canadian version should be developed. Consequently, a three-person committee composed of Sharon Robertson from the University of Calgary, Vance Peavy, and Marvin

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Westwood from the University of British Columbia was established with a mandate to develop a preliminary set of guidelines by December, 1980. This was done and subsequently two revisions were made by the committee based on input from counsellor educators across Canada. The guidelines thus developed were presented to the Counsellor Education Committee at the CGCA conference in Calgary in June, 1981. The committee recommended that the guidelines be adopted in principle by CGCA and this was passed by the General Assembly, with the provision that the committee meet one more time to incorporate those changes which had been suggested by counsellor educators at the Calgary meeting. The ad hoc committee met for the final time in December, 1981, to make final revisions and arrived at the guidelines which are presented in Appendix.

Definitions and Working Principles

In attempting to prepare the guidelines document, the ad hoc committee had to agree on some fundamental questions: specifically, "What is a counsellor?" and "What is counselling?"

Professional counsellors were defined as facilitators of human change and development. In order to facilitate human change and development, counsellors acquire an extensive set of specific interpersonal skills and competencies, adopt certain professional, ethical, and moral guidelines, acquire a behavioral science knowledge base, formulate a philosophical rationale for the conduct of their activities, and display what might be called a range of 'helping' attitudes and values.

Similarly, counselling was seen to be a complex human activity which has as its main goal the giving of aid by one person to another in the solution of the latter's life problems. It is comprised of specific and interlocking skills (Brammer, 1973), supported by a base of specialized knowledge, and infused with a set of values which constitute a counselling 'perspective' or 'ideology' (Halmos, 1965; Peterson, 1976; Wallis, 1973). In explicating the nature of counselling, questions such as 'What is the role of the counsellor?' or 'Who should counsel?' tend to deflect attention from the central issue. It is perhaps more instructive to state the central issue thusly: When the counselling perspective is invoked and counselling skills are used by whomever and whenever, are these skills used reliably, effectively (Egan, 1975; Gazda, 1975) and ethically (Blackham, 1974)?

Members of the ad hoc committee further identified five working principles for establishing the guidelines. It was agreed that:

1. The guidelines should be flexible enough to permit different approaches to counsellor education.
2. They should emphasize generic skills, attitudes, and knowledges which underlie all counselling practice.
3. They should indicate both minimal and ideal preparation standards.
4. They should serve as standards for master's level (and, possibly, diploma level) training programs but not doctoral level programs.
5. They should be reviewed periodically (e.g., every five years).

With this in mind, guidelines which appear in the Appendix of this article were prepared.

Why are the Guidelines Important?

"One characteristic of any professional group is the possession of a body of knowledge and skills as well as mutually acceptable ethical standards for putting them into practice" (Association for Specialists in Group Work, 1979, p. 5). CGCA has surely shown leadership in raising the level of counselling practice in Canada over the past two decades. Beginning as a fledgling organization in 1965, CGCA has conducted both regional and national conferences, published an internationally respected journal, The Canadian Counsellor, developed a set of guidelines for ethical behavior, and now has adopted a set of guidelines for counsellor education programs for use across this country. Such activities reflect the gradual maturation of the organization in its efforts to develop a professional identity.

In fact, it was in 1975 that CGCA passed a resolution to "establish a set of guidelines for counsellor education" reflecting an attempt by the organization to establish standards and to regulate the profession internally. An effort was made to act on this resolution when CGCA funded a study by Jevne (1981) to determine the competencies of an effective counsellor and based upon these, to address the issue of what guidelines would best promote their development. Thus, while ACES in the United States had developed guidelines for counsellor preparation, CGCA recognized that what is appropriate for the
Guidelines for Counsellor Education

American context may not be appropriate for Canada and took the initiative to develop a uniquely Canadian set of guidelines.

Although professionals should always be concerned about the quality of service their clients are receiving, in this age of accountability, both internal and external pressures are increasingly being placed on the members of CGCA and counsellor educators in particular to establish and maintain a set of professional standards. One has only to read the two special issues of *The Canadian Counsellor* (1981a, 1981b) which were devoted to counsellor education and school counselling to have this point driven home. In its position paper on school guidance services, the Canadian School Trustees’ Association (1981) is particularly critical of counsellor training programs for not meeting the needs of school counsellors and they also recommend that requirements for certification of guidance counsellors be established. While the guidelines which have been presented here fail to address these issues directly in that they do not legislate program content or standards for accreditation, they do serve as a standard toward which all counsellor education programs in Canada might aspire. Thus, this nationally accepted set of guidelines may help to ensure that all programs provide students with those components of counsellor training which are held to be essential by most Canadian counsellor educators. Given the great diversity among programs which currently exists, this is truly a worthwhile goal.

**Guidelines for Counsellor Education: Some Advantages**

We have already discussed the importance of establishing guidelines especially as it pertains to the development of CGCA and to the enhanced professional status of counselling in Canada. Notwithstanding, there are some specific advantages in the adoption of guidelines which we think should be acknowledged as well. Such benefits will be discussed as they relate to a number of groups: (a) counsellor-training institutions, (b) counsellors-in-training, (c) counsellors in the field, and (d) clients who are referred to or seek counselling.

**The Institution**

The following are distinct advantages accruing to training institutions (i.e., university-based counsellor education programs) from adoption of the guidelines:

1. It gives institutions wishing to establish programs an indication of the minimum number of faculty members required to offer the basic core competencies and to provide the necessary supervision for adequate preparation of a counsellor.
2. It aids university administrations in justifying budget requests to Ministries/Departments of Education or other funding sources.
3. It assists a department in bargaining with its university administration for the requisite number of faculty members, given the number of students enrolled in the program. Nationally based norms provide greater support for staff requisition than norms arrived at by a single department.
4. It allows departments to allocate teaching loads more easily. Reference to the supervisor/student ratios provided may be especially helpful in determining loads for clinically-based courses and practica.
5. It provides a basis by which developing departments can compare the quality of their program or curriculum to a nationally accepted standard.
6. It helps stimulate collegial discussion within and among university departments in terms of program goals and philosophy, research, teaching, supervision activities, and future program directions. Accurate representation of ‘counselling in Canada’ at the international association level will be possible with a greater degree of consistency among the various programs in this country.

**Counsellors-In-Training**

Another group which benefits from adoption of training guidelines consists of students who enter programs to become professional counsellors. The main advantages for the students are considered to be the following:

1. Students, as consumers of counsellor training, may become informed of what counselling competencies are held to be important by most counsellor educators in Canada and hence, what they might expect to be included in a program.
2. More consistency among programs in the
process or methods by which competencies are acquired and in the amount of clinical supervision received means that students in various programs are more likely to engage in adequate clinical experiences, at least to the minimal extent specified. This is particularly pertinent to the development of professional skills through pre-practicum training and experiences in practice for individual and group counselling.

3. Students may transfer more readily to comparable programs in other universities with greater congruity among university counsellor preparation programs.

4. Overall, with the establishment of national norms for counsellor training, prospective students can more effectively judge which program(s) are likely to provide them with the best and most appropriate counsellor preparation for their needs.

Practicing Counsellors

For counsellors who have completed their training and are currently working, adoption of the guidelines enables them to more readily identify competency areas which would provide direction for, or form the curriculum basis for in-service training. Directors or coordinators of counselling programs in schools, universities, manpower centers, etc., should also be better able to make decisions regarding hiring and program development when they know what expertise counsellors can be expected to offer.

Clients

It is obvious that the ultimate goal of developing guidelines for counsellor education is to meet the needs of clients more effectively through enhanced counsellor competence. More precisely, though, the estimated benefits to clients may be further broken down as follows:

1. Assurance is greater that clients will be helped by professionals who possess what most Canadian counsellor educators and counsellors consider to be essential skills and knowledge for assisting people in solving life problems and for helping them cope with normal developmental issues.

2. Clients are less exposed to the risk of seeking help from someone who, though well-intentioned, does not possess the professional competencies to be sufficiently effective, but who is working as a "counsellor."

3. With greater consistency in levels of counsellor competence, clients, as consumers, may become more informed about what counsellors can do and may thereby lobby for the delivery of different or additional services by counsellors.

4. With greater uniformity in training, client expectations will probably become more homogeneous. Furthermore, clients are likely to experience more congruence between their expectations of what a counsellor can/should do and what the counsellor can, in fact, provide. Greater congruence of this type will reduce the amount of uncertainty, on the part of clients in our society, about what it is that a counsellor actually does.

There are, no doubt, other advantages emanating from the existence of guidelines for counsellor education which the reader may identify. Nevertheless, if the advantages indicated here are borne out in the near future, counselling in this country will have made significant progress as an evolving profession.

Issues Not Addressed

In working out this set of guidelines for counsellor education programs, a number of issues impinging upon our discussions but were necessarily left out of our final considerations. Here we briefly identify these issues in anticipation that they may be more fully discussed within CGCA in the near future.

1. What About Counsellor Training Outside of University Departments?

One of the working principles which guided our deliberations was "These guidelines are meant to apply to training programs at the M.Ed., M.A. (and, possibly, diploma) levels..." of (University) study. This meant that we were not mandated to work out guidelines for extra-University counsellor trainee programs as represented by such bodies as the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, various pastoral counselling programs, counsellor training efforts within Workmen's Compensation Boards and lay counselling organizations.

For counselling positions within an educa-
tional context such as schools, colleges and universities, virtually all of counsellor preparation is performed by appropriate university departments. However, outside of educational contexts— for example, Canada Employment and Immigration Commission, Workmen's Compensation Boards, Canadian Armed Forces— there are numerous programs (for the most part, short-term) for training employees to provide counselling services. CGCA has developed as an umbrella organization within which all manner of counsellors and individuals who perform counselling functions can become members.

It seemed to the members of this committee that some type of recognized guidance should be available to persons and organizations which sponsor counsellor education programs both within University Departments and outside of University settings.

How guidance for non-university counsellor preparation programs should be developed, by whom, and in what form, is, in our opinion, an issue which should gain attention within CGCA as soon as possible. First steps would seem to be the identification of the number and extent of such programs as well as the establishment of some mechanism within CGCA for the purpose of discussing this issue.

2. Is There Any Interest in "Certification" of Programs?

Does the adoption of "guidelines" for counsellor education programs on a national basis suggest that a further step is a "certification" procedure for programs? This committee did not develop an opinion on this issue. However, the issue was introduced into discussions, especially at the counsellor educator meetings during CGCA conferences at St. John's in 1979, Ottawa in 1980, and Calgary in 1981. At first glance, it seems that some quite strong opinions on this issue are to be found within CGCA both for and against any suggestion of program certification. It is our understanding that at least one Canadian university counselling program (Simon Fraser) plans to seek certification through the Association for Counsellor Education and Supervision, a division of the American Personnel and Guidance Association. A move within CGCA to use our guidelines in establishing a similar certification procedure would enable Canadian programs to seek accreditation within their own national organization rather than searching for such recognition abroad.

Should CGCA study the desirability of program certification? If so, how is this study to be carried out? As already pointed out, this committee did not develop an opinion on this issue. We do believe, however, that there may be enough interest in the matter that it should be brought under study within CGCA.

Concluding Comments

In view of the state of the literature on counsellor education, the tremendous variation in counsellor training programs in Canada, and our desire to maintain flexibility in approaches to counsellor preparation, we did not specify the expected competencies of the "well-trained counsellor" nor did we identify the methods by which these competencies might be attained. Rather, we attempted to identify issues (e.g., program objectives, curriculum, student selection, and advisement) with which all counsellor educators should be concerned in establishing and maintaining a program. In this article, we have argued that guidelines arising out of this orientation are both important and valuable to a number of specific groups including CGCA, institutions, counsellors-in-training, practicing counsellors, and perhaps most importantly, clients.

There are a number of issues which remain to be dealt with including counsellor training outside of university departments and certification. The guidelines presented here are intended to apply in the development of a "core" of skills, concepts, and knowledge which forms the "essential" basis for counsellor training in a wide spectrum of settings. Additional guidelines may be necessary for the establishment of specialties and, indeed, we understand that work on the development of guidelines for school counselling in Canada is already in progress. Within the next decade, other areas may have guidelines as well.

The task of constructing a set of guidelines for counsellor education programs in Canada has certainly been a challenging one for us. We hope that the development and review of guidelines such as these will remain a priority both for counsellor educators and for CGCA in the decade ahead.

References


Canadian Counsellor, 1981a, 15, 45-96 (a)

Canadian Counsellor, 1981b, 15, 105-148 (b)


Guidelines for training group leaders. Association for Specialists in Group Work Newsletter, 1979, 8 (1), 7-8.


Appendix

Guidelines for Counsellor Education in Canada

The following guidelines were prepared by the ad hoc committee and were adopted by the general assembly of the biennial conference of the CGCA, at Calgary in June, 1981.

1.0. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1.1 A graduate program in counsellor education should have a statement of its philosophy with accompanying program objectives. An example of such a set of objectives is given (see Annex A) although this is not intended to be the selected model for counselling.

1.2 Program objectives should be based on theory, research, and applied issues in counsellor education and supervision. They should also incorporate recommendations by Canadian counsellors regarding special needs in preparing counsellors to practice in our society.

1.3 A set of program objectives should be accompanied by a system for continuously re-evaluating the objectives by faculty, students, and professionals in the field. Such re-evaluations should lead to the formulation of appropriate revisions.

1.4 Provisions should be made to assess each student’s level of competence in terms of the objectives as he/she progresses through the program.

2.0 CURRICULUM

2.1 General Characteristics

There is a set of general characteristics which should be evident in such a counsellor preparation program.

2.1.1. The program should provide for the integration of theories-models and practical applications of counselling techniques.

2.1.2. Flexibility should be provided within the curriculum to allow for individual differences in competencies and knowledge in the design of a student’s program.

2.1.3 The program should have a set of core competencies upon which specializations can be built.

2.1.4 The program should make provision for self-understanding and self-appraisal on the part of the student. Personal counselling for graduate students should be made available. Provisions should also be made for students to receive feedback from peers and instructors in reference to their use of skills and their personal impact on clients.

2.2 Core Concepts and Competencies

There are a number of key areas of study which are considered to be essential in providing a foundation upon which the counselling student may build more specialized knowledge and skills. Counsellor preparation programs should include the study of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in each of the competency areas as well as the discussion of professional, ethical and legal issues in counselling. The order in which the following competencies are presented is not meant to indicate their relative importance.
2.2.1 Learning and human development
2.2.2 Research inquiry and evaluation methodology
2.2.3 Career development and the world of work
2.2.4 Individual and group counselling
2.2.5 Consultation methods
2.2.6 Psychological education
2.2.7 Assessment and testing

2.3 Elective Concepts and Competencies

Provision should be made for additional courses which may be selected by the student in consultation with the training institution. That is, courses should be offered to permit students to focus upon a particular area of interest (e.g., family counselling, rehabilitation counselling, elementary school counselling, counselling girls and women, psychological education, and vocational and career education).

2.4 Practica

Probably the most integral aspect of a counsellor education program is the supervised practicum experience. While it is considered that students may benefit from extensive, supervised practicum work, the following minimum guidelines are suggested:

2.4.1 In addition to a pre-practicum (laboratory instruction in basic counselling skills, especially interviewing) experience of 40 hours, a minimum of 120 hours of supervised practicum experience should be included in the program. Of these 120 hours, a minimum of 90 hours should be spent in direct client contact. Of these 90 hours, a minimum of 30 hours should be spent in each of (a) individual counselling and (b) group work.

2.4.2 Supervisors should include a combination of the following methods in discussing the student’s counselling sessions: direct observation, review of audiotapes, review of videotapes, peer reactions.

2.4.3 Work settings need to have qualified on-site supervisors. Supervisors should have a minimum of a master’s degree in counselling psychology plus significant counselling experience.

2.4.4 Supervisors of practicum students (where they are full-time faculty members) should be responsible for no more than five trainees per term. Where applicable, such supervisory work should be credited as part of the supervisor’s normal work load. In situations where the supervisor is a field person this particular norm does not apply. Where a program relies upon field personnel to be the key supervisors, no more than two graduate students are recommended unless the supervisors are to be released from other work responsibilities. The quality of supervision may not be compromised.

NOTE: The ACES requirements for courses and work settings seem to be a useful guide in this regard. These requirements are summarized in Annex B.

3.0 STUDENTS

3.1 Selection

Careful selection and screening of students is considered essential. Areas which should be considered in the selection process are:

3.1.1 Courses. Students should have a minimum of four courses in the social sciences or educational psychology as part of their undergraduate degree programs. These courses, where absent or in exceptional cases, may be taken as co-requisites during the graduate program. In certain cases course work may be substituted by the student demonstrating competence in the area via structured knowledge or skill assessment methods.

3.1.2 Experiences. Students should give evidence of having had satisfactory person-oriented field and/or work experience, i.e., related employment, child care or volunteer work.

3.1.3 Personal characteristics. Applicants should demonstrate personal characteristics which are consistent with the role of the counsellor which should be attended to at the point of selection.

3.1.4 Flexibility. Admissions criteria
should allow for flexibility by accepting candidates with varying backgrounds.

3.2 Advising

The department should provide written descriptions of programs including admission requirements, financial aid, program offerings and requirements for successful completion of the program.

4.0 QUALIFICATIONS OF COUNSELLOR EDUCATORS

Normally full-time instructors would possess a doctorate with a specialization in counselling. Part-time, sessional instructors and practicum supervisors are expected to have at least a master's degree in counselling.

5.0 NUMBER OF FACULTY AND STAFF

In order to provide a good program, it is necessary to offer guidelines for the number of faculty required. More specifically, counselor education departments need some type of formula by which they can estimate the number of faculty needed for the type of program to be offered. Factors influencing staff/student ratios include among others: (a) number of students to be supervised by each faculty member, (b) number of students on part-time or full-time studies, and (c) number of students on thesis and non-thesis programs.

The CGCA ad hoc Committee on Counsellor Education was unable to develop such a formula in time for approval by the general assembly of the Association at the Calgary conference in June, 1981.

However, the ad hoc Committee offers two opinions regarding faculty-student ratios for a graduate program in counselling. a) A program should have sufficient instructor time to offer the core knowledge areas and supervision as outlined in this document. In the opinion of the ad hoc Committee, at least five full-time (or equivalent) instructors are required to implement such a program. b) A program as outlined in this document contains both professional and academic components which, in turn, require individualized practical, and research supervision. In the opinion of the ad hoc Committee, no more than seven full-time (or equivalent) students should be admitted to a program in any given year per full-time faculty member. This ratio would vary in certain programs with additional constraints; e.g. programs admitting doctoral students, programs admitting a large proportion of part-time students, programs requiring more than 12 months to complete and so on.

Annex A

Program objectives: an example

One set of objectives which might serve as a sample model was developed from the DACUM procedures carried out at the University of Victoria and at the Atlantic Institute of Education (participants were from St. Francis Xavier, Acadia, and Dalhousie Universities). These objectives have been listed below.

The student must be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective communication skills in interpersonal relationships.
2. Identify and specify problems and client needs.
3. Apply selected individual counselling methods.
4. Apply special group counselling methods.
5. Apply measurement and evaluation techniques.
6. Demonstrate consultation skills.
7. Apply behavior change techniques.
8. Administer a program of services.
9. Organize and conduct vocational and educational information programs.
10. Enlist and utilize community referral resources.
11. Employ effective instructional techniques.
12. Develop and implement programs in psychological education.
13. Demonstrate continuing improvement in professional education.
15. Intervene at the institutional level, i.e. psycho-social interventions.

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1. DACUM is an acronym for developing a curriculum which refers to a committee process for developing program objectives and related learning activities.
Guidelines for Counsellor Education

Annex B

ACES requirements for courses and work settings

Various questions were raised concerning "course" requirements and how they might fit into the framework or guidelines. For those who would like guidance with this topic we included the following ACES requirements for course and work settings.

A. Course Areas

1. Human growth and development.
2. Social and cultural foundations.
3. The helping relationship.
5. Lifestyle and career development.
6. Appraisal of individuals.
7. Research and evaluation.
8. Professional orientation.

B. Environmental and Specialized Studies

1. Studies to prepare for work in specialized settings (e.g., rehabilitation counselling, employment counselling, school counselling).

C. Supervised Studies

1. Prepracticum. (A laboratory setting in which interviewing and basic counselling skills are taught via role-playing, videotaped feedback and coached clients.)

2. Practicum. (Supervised participation in a real counselling situation with individual and group clients.)

3. Internship. (A 300-hour post-practicum on-the-job experience where the student is paid and supervised.)

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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BRIEF REPORTS / RAPPORTS SOMMAIRES

RECONCEPTUALIZING COUNSELLOR TRAINEE SUPERVISION

VANCE PEAVY
University of Victoria

Background of the Project

Supervision of counsellor-trainees is considered essential in almost all training programs. Traditionally, supervision is given on trainee skills such as interviewing skills, group leading skills, client appraisal skills and so on. Supervision is usually provided by a member of the training institution and the trainee is placed in a host practice site which has been approved by the training institution. Traditional supervision is expert oriented and strongly focused on interviewing skills.

In 1980, our Department\(^1\) was authorized and funded to provide a distance education counsellor training program. The community of Kamloops, B.C., which is about 500 Km distant from the University of Victoria, was selected for this project. A group of 16 applicants was identified as eligible for admission to graduate study. All 16 of the trainees live in or near the community of Kamloops and all are employed either as school counsellors or teacher-counsellors at junior or senior secondary schools. Fifty percent of the instruction is being delivered to the community of Kamloops over a period of two years. Students attend classes on campus during two summer sessions for the other 50\(^{0}\)/o. Supervision of counselling practice is being carried out in Kamloops at students’ regular place of employment.

Need for Reconceptualization

It has been necessary to reconceptualize supervision of trainees for this project since all applicants are employed as well as in training. It is the purpose of this report to briefly describe this reconceptualization and indicate the research which accompanies this reconceptualization.

A fundamental departure from traditional supervision seemed necessary for the following reason. In traditional supervision the trainee is supervised in settings where the training institution exercises administrative control (for example, a clinic operated by the University) or else is placed in a host agency where the trainee is more like a visitor with limited privileges with little or no actual responsibility for client welfare. In contrast, trainees in our project are employed and work as fully responsible employees of an agency completely separate from the training institution. In other words, the trainees are both trainees in a graduate counselling program and employees of an agency which has full responsibility for client (pupil) welfare.

In order to adapt to this unusual situation, we made three important decisions. The first was to convert the supervisory process, at least partially, into a consultative process. The second decision was to use peer supervision as one aspect of the overall supervisory process. The third decision was to broaden the scope of supervision to include three categories of supervisory focus: client-centered focus, trainee-centered focus and structure-centered focus.

Client-centered supervision. The topic of this type of supervision is the client (pupil), or clients (group of pupils, parents). The trainee's dilemma is "How can I analyze and interpret this client(s)' problem in the most efficacious manner?" A primary goal for both supervisor and trainee is to formulate an interpretation and plan that will help the client(s) in question. A secondary goal is that the trainee will learn something through interaction with his or her supervisor on this problem which will add to understandings of similar cases in the future.

Trainee-centered supervision. In contrast with client-centered focus, here attention is directed toward the trainee's counselling-competencies. Counselling competency deficit is identified as lack of a) conceptual knowledge, b) technical skill, c) self confidence, or d) professional objectivity.

The supervisor's aim is to educate the trainee toward the goal of increased counsellor competency, both with the type of client problem at hand and in similar instances in the future.

Structure-centered supervision. In this type of supervision, the focus is upon aspects of the organization or administration which bear upon the effectiveness of counselling. Sample topics include: leadership ambiguity; conflict generating rules and regulations; staff-administration communication break-downs; lack of attention to the human factor; and so on.

Modes of supervision. Supervision is carried out in four ways: 1) an assistant supervisor residing in the community of Kamloops makes on-site visits at the request of individual trainees and provides one-to-one supervisory tutorials; 2) a commuting Departmental supervisor provides both group supervision and one-to-one supervisory tutorials on each monthly visit; 3) the Departmental supervisor provides supervision by means of telephone and mail; and 4) peer supervision. Supervision by the Departmental supervisor is the main mode and incorporates the evaluative aspect of supervision. However, peer consultation is systematically incorporated into the supervisory process. Emphasis is placed upon trainee request for supervision - a procedure which contrasts with traditional supervision which is usually characterized by imposition of supervision on trainees with reference to topics selected by supervisors.

Research

The original conceptualization (Peavy, 1981) was prepared as a document to guide both supervisors and trainees in the practical and research aspects of the supervisory project. The document was adapted from Caplan's (1964, 1970) studies on mental health consultation. The general research methodology is phenomenological and incorporates the critical incident procedure. Using detailed forms to document trainee and supervisor activities and appraisals of the three supervisory foci and the many procedures used to implement the supervisory process, case examples are being built up to both describe and evaluate the program of supervision. Trainees have been given instructions on documenting critical incidents which indicate how the supervisory procedures either provide benefit or go wrong.

Status. The training program is 50% completed. The supervisory component was initiated in September 1981 and will be completed in April 1982. A final research report is expected to be completed by September 1982.

Reference Note

1. The Department of Psychological Foundations in Education provides all counsellor training at the University of Victoria.

References


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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
For years I have been occupied with counsellor training. I have been at this long enough to see several training approaches come and go. At present, most counsellor training models can be categorized as either humanistic or behavioristic, or a combination of these two orientations. In their more "pure" form, humanistic training models stress the helping relationship feelings and values, and the experiencing process for both counsellor and client. The behavioristic training model places emphasis on the practice and measurement of specific skills and cognitive strategies and on teaching trainees how to set up specific behavior learning schedules for clients.

In recent years there has been a certain merging of the humanistic and behavioristic models into what I call the technological or linear stage training models. This should not surprise us too much inasmuch as contemporary social life is being increasingly penetrated by technology per se and by the mentality which accompanies it.

There are some good features of the technological model such as focus on observables, systematization of instruction, and high tech learning aids such as computers and feedback via videotape. However, there are also reasons why we should be worried about unbounded enthusiasm for the technological training model. I will organize the remainder of my discussion around what I regard as potential negative features of the technological model, and their remedy. Hereafter, I use the terms technological and linear stage interchangeably.

Critique

A technological training model has several prominent features which can have positive humanistic value but can also influence training (and counselling) in the direction of depersonalization and materialistic efficiency. Example features include:

1. Explicit goals, skills, and means of achieving goals and skills are emphasized.
2. Measurement, evaluation procedures and accountability are stressed.
3. Training format is highlighted by rational principles and logical organization with skills ordered into sequences and hierarchies. Learning is by increments.

* Adapted from a plenary address at the National Consultation on Vocational Counselling, Ottawa, January 1984.
4. A science base for the training model is held to be desirable.
5. Large units of learning are reduced to microbehaviors.

Technological models of counsellor training present both the counselling process and the method of training as a linear set of stages, ranging from three stages to nine stages, depending upon the model. Some models do provide for feedback loops and step-back. However, the overriding feature of these models is that they are sequenced, step by step progressions from point X to point Y with as much efficiency as possible.

Features such as those I have just mentioned are solid evidence of the technocratic mentality at work. There is no doubt in my mind that this model is a big step ahead of models of "doing nothing", "doing what comes naturally", "counsellors are born, not made", "warm and acceptant" model, "trait and factor" model and so on. Training is enhanced by a degree of explicitness, planfulness, goal-stating, behavioral practice and so on.

What do I worry about? In my opinion, we should worry that the mentality which constructs the technocratic training model is dangerously close to bureaucratic consciousness and to paneconomic consciousness which concentrates on things rather than people, on quantity rather than quality, on behavior rather than meaning.

Linear stage models of training are designed to inculcate a rational, step-by-step mind-set in trainees. On the positive side, this is in the name of "effectiveness". On the other hand, "efficiency" training experiences act to alienate trainees from the reality of everyday decision-making and action. Clients live in the intuitive, unconscious norm-determined reality which we refer to as the common-sense world. Training which leads counsellors to adopt a technical vocabulary (counselselese), a rational template by means of which they try to mold the lives of other people, and a conviction that scientific knowledge is superior to tacit, everyday knowledge, is, in my opinion, quite likely to alienate trainees from the world of the everyday. My claim for counselling is that it should be an integrating influence in the lives of those who receive it. Certainly many people do experience themselves as displaced from their contexts and from other people and experience internal conflict as well. Counselling should help individuals return or move on to contexts and states of mind where they experience integration. In other words, counselling itself should be a process of social integration.

First, individuals experience their own lives as fluid, pluralistic, in-flux, dialectical, even chance-like. In other words, everyday experiencing is intuitive and tacit as well as rational and explicit. Therefore, counsellors should not be taught to impose a linear, logically sequenced
decision-making or behavior-changing framework on client's experiencing without regard for the intuitive way in which clients experience their own lives. My claim is for a rational-intuitive balance in the counselling process, not that either should exclude the other.

Second, a primary source of self-esteem and personal motivation for individuals is social support. A technological model reinforces logical analysis, efficiency, segmentation, hierarchical expertise, and productivity — factors which are more likely to work against social support than for it. In some significant way individuals need to belong with other people. A person should have, so to speak, a recognized place in society which contributes to that person's sense of positive identity. This may be the "high touch" phenomenon of technological culture. Counselling should contribute to social support.

Third, it is the counsellor's consciousness which regulates, or fails to regulate, the movement of the counselling process and the counselling interview. Technological models of counsellor training tend to develop a reliance in trainees upon external guidance in the form of techniques, recipes, scales, and other explicit guidelines for performance. This reliance is counterintuitive and causes trainees to ignore or deny more fluid structures such as improvisation, tacit knowing, intuition, metaphoric thinking, chance, and serendipity. These fluid structures are rooted in wide-awake consciousness and not in external rules or guidelines.

Fourth, the technological model and its accompanying mentality fosters segmented thinking, that is making sure that each thing is carefully defined, reduced to its elements, and contained within its proper category or boundary. This tends to promote a carefully defined role of the counsellor — one that does not overstep compartments and boundaries. Unfortunately, while this permits a good adaption to a bureaucracy, it leads counsellors to overlook, avoid, or fail to utilize and cooperate with other aspects and persons in the client's greater social context.

Fifth, the values and principles which underlie the technological model are not necessarily in the best interests of human self-esteem and social belongingness. Some examples are:

1. Hierarchical expertise is required for the most precise execution of techniques. (Alienation from folk wisdom and natural social support?)
2. Technical decisions are more efficient than personal decisions. (Robotics?)
3. Reducing wholes to parts improves prediction and control. (Is "wholeness" important?)
4. Objective measurement is preferred over subjective judgement. (Scientism?)
5. Anonymity is valued. Contemporary is attributed to office holders and certificate holders rather than to persons. (Depersonalization).

Now I will present a different model of counselling - a social integration model which has implications for training counsellors quite different from those negative implications associated with the technological model.

Social Integration Model of Counselling

The process of making decisions, solving problems, and engaging in goal-setting actions within the context of social reality and personal potential can be illuminated through reference to the Social Integration Model of Counselling.

Basic Argument. The well-being of any society, community, institution or other cultural sub-group is directly related to the degree to which members are integrated in ways which are constructive for the society and meaningful for the individual members. Social integration takes place within such areas of social life as work, leisure, personal relations (including family) and education (including training). The socially integrated individual is one who can say, with reference to work, love, and play: "I am where I want to be, doing what I want to do."

Most people who are engaged in work, leisure and satisfying personal relations are more socially integrated than not. A few fortunate members of society can say with conviction: "I am where I wish to be, doing what I wish to do," and can be said to experience a high degree of social integration.

Being unemployed, or being in a state of disrupted personal relations, or not having access to leisure activities, or not having access to training or education results in serious flaws in social integration. Such terms as demoralization, alienation, estrangement, helplessness, withdrawal, and cynicism are used to describe the ways in which individuals experience lack of social integration.

Social integration (and disintegration) is a complex and far-reaching concept. On a broad plane it refers to political and economic structures which can, for the most part, only be influenced by nation-state and international economic negotiation and legislation. Counsellors, of course, cannot directly influence the economical and political structural changes which affect social integration at the level of individual experience. At this broad level each counsellor can only act as a "citizen of conscience."

At the level of individual experience, however, the counsellor is often very much an agent of influence regarding social integration. What I am pointing out is that when a counsellor assists a client to achieve a degree of satisfaction in any of the four fundamental areas of life: work,
leisure, personal relations, learning, then the counsellor is directly addressing social integration.

When an unemployed person finds a job, an obvious step toward social integration is taken. When an unemployed person is not able to find a job but does get access to training or education, then a step toward social integration is taken. When an unemployed person is not able to get immediate employment, not enter training, but is able to participate in voluntary work or engage in meaningful leisure activities, then a step toward social integration is taken. When a person is not successful with any of the above, but is still able to find support (personal relations) within the counselling interview, or within a support group, or within peer self-help groups, then a step toward social integration is taken.

Social integration, with emphasis upon participation which is both constructive for society and meaningful for the individual can be a guiding concept for counsellors in all practical activities.

Wheel As Metaphor. In constructing the social integration model of counselling I have chosen the wheel as an organizing metaphor. I use this metaphor for the following reasons. First, the counselling process is quite often circular more than linear. The various tasks of problem-solving such as clarification, identification of alternatives and solution implementation are related to each other in a recurring, dialectical or back and forth fashion rather than in a logical sequential fashion. Second, this circular, recurring process is organized around a center which is the counsellor's consciousness of what is actually occurring in the interview. Finally, wheel metaphor symbolizes both organization and chance.

Many specialists in counselling, problem-solving, and decision-making portray these processes as idealized, rational sequences in which counsellors and clients should move in an orderly fashion from point A to the end point. While I certainly agree that it is desirable to achieve a degree of organization in counselling, I also think that it is just as important to recognize the recurring, back and forth nature of problem-solving as it actually occurs in real life rather than as represented in textbook. Also, it is best, I believe, to admit that chance-factors may play an important part in decision-making and problem-solving. A client "just happens" to talk to a friend and what she learns in this conversation greatly influences her decision. A counsellor, while visiting in a dentist's office chances to read an article in a magazine which gives him an influential idea to use with a particular client. Thus, I intend the wheel to symbolize both organization and chance in the counselling process.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION MODEL OF COUNSELLING

In the Social Integration model of counselling, each of eight counselling tasks are linked to each other through
consciousness of the counsellor. The tasks are supported by communication, data, and self-esteem enhancement qualities of the counselling interview. The entire process revolves around an "existential core" of values, serendipity, tacit knowledge, improvisation, and chance factors. In this model the counsellor's consciousness of the counselling process plays a vital role. Through the mediating influence of consciousness, the counsellor is able to assist the client through the process and is able to flexibly go back and forth between tasks as needed. Counsellors recognize the importance of reflecting on what they do in the counselling process and how they do it. Learning to do something better by reflecting upon it is given as much importance as learning to do something better by "measuring" it.

Movement through problem-solving or decision-making is not necessarily linear, but rather circular and dialectical. Further, the subtle nuances and enigmatic factors of decision-making are included as significant rather than denied or ruled out as is the case in purist methods of rational decision-making.

In the Social Integration model of counselling the counsellor provides communication structure, task structure, and self-enhancement structure, while the client provides most, but not all, of the data. Other data are provided by the counsellor, while some data are encountered by chance. Together, the client and the counsellor co-constitute the reality of decision-making not as it is explained abstractly, but as it is experienced in the pragmatic flux of life.

After Thought

It has been my intention to draw attention to the interweaving of technological mentality and counselling process. Also I believe that both the training of counsellors and actual counselling should pay more attention to maintaining (or restoring) social linkages and support in everyday life. Is it possible to be both expert and natural? Why do we say so little about the counsellor's consciousness?
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
New Concepts and Practices in Career Counselling:  
A Research and Development Project

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe the Career Counsellor Training Project  
(CCTP) which is underway at the University of Victoria, and to indicate what some of  
the products of the project will be.

CCTP is a CAMCRY-sponsored research and development project. The principal goal  
of the project is to produce new ideas and procedures for the training of career  
counsellors. It is important to note that no counsellors are currently being trained  
through the project. The work of the project to date has been to (1) critically review  
existing concepts and procedures generally used in the training of career counsellors,  
(2) determine the possible nature of useful revisions in existing training concepts and  
practices and the direction which innovation should take, (3) actually developing and  
revising new concepts and practices, (4) the testing out of such concepts and practices  
and, finally, (5) the preparation of finished products for dissemination to training  
groups and institutions. The three-year project is now 15 months away from  
completion.

The research team is composed of a senior researcher and six research associates. All  
are experienced counsellors with graduate degrees in counselling and all have had  
previous experience as researchers. Four are experienced teacher-trainers.

The materials produced in this project are designed for use in training to both  
beginning and experienced counsellors. It is our intention that the bulk of the  
materials will be suitable for workshops and "short courses" for delivery to  
community-based practitioners who are engaged in career counselling as part of their  
work. Certain materials will be tailored to individual study, so that individuals who  
live in remote regions could improve some aspects of their counselling ability through  
self-study. Further, it will be feasible to incorporate some materials into already

and development project. Paper presented at the National Consultation on Vocational  
Counselling, Ottawa, Canada, 1992 Jan.
established counsellor education courses. It is not our intention that the work of this project should replace counsellor education curricula already existent in university departments—just exert a salutary influence!

Conceptual Basis for the Work of the Project

Why are revisions in concept and practice needed? A thorough review of the literature on the training of career counsellors (Peavy, 1991) concluded that from 1915 onwards career counselling has been dominated by rationalist, information-processing theories of human functioning and linear, stage-like theories of human development.

On the level of practice, such theories favour the use of information-gathering (for example, tests of ability, interest and personality); information use (rational decision-making, for example); causal explanations (if you know A, then you can predict B—at least within some degree of statistical confidence); expert opinion based on authority or superior knowledge (for example, "counsellor-as-advisor"); and environmental determination (placing and fitting people into jobs, for example).

This rationalist conceptual base of much career counselling and counsellor training rests upon a number of philosophical assumptions which are increasingly questionable. Three such assumptions are:

(1) An ontology of realism—the assumption that there is one true reality—and that this reality is predictable and external. This is sometimes referred to as a "God's eye" view of reality;

(2) An epistemology of rationalism. This means that knowledge is declared true or valid as a result of experimental verification, and through the application of logic and reason;

(3) A linear theory of cause and effect—that learning and change are linear chains of discrete cause and effect relationships.

The professional schools of universities (where many counsellors are trained) have incorporated these assumptions into their educational practices. Thus it can be said that such educational programs are premised on a platform of "technical rationality." This had meant that career counselling and career counsellor training has been based on procedures at least superficially grounded in scientific knowledge and technology. Thus we find technologies of "testing" or "micro-skill training," or "computerization" of guidance. All such undertakings are based on premises that society and personality are stable, enduring and predictable. Recent shifts in the paradigms of science and social science make these assumptions less and less tenable.
A Revisionary Direction

A review of the intellectual state of affairs in career counselling and counsellor training through a study of the literature and staging a series of self-educational seminars with invited professional "experts" on career counsellor training formed a decision to undertake revisions and engage in innovation which would produce a model of counsellor training based on the conceptual orientation known as constructivism.

What is constructivism?

In contrast with behaviourism, constructivism is a perspective on human behaviour that stresses the "self-organizing" and "meaning-making" characteristics of the individual.


The theorists cited above and those writing on practical applications of constructivism to counselling and therapy may differ in various particulars. However, they are all working from the basic assumption that humans are "self-organizers" who actively create and construe their personal realities.

M.J. Mahoney and W.J. Lyddon (1988) write, "The basic assertion of constructivism is that each individual creates his or her own representational model of the world . . . (which) becomes a framework from which the individual orders and assigns meaning to new experience" (p. 201).

Constructivism, as a general perspective, holds that humans:
(1) make meaning as well as act from a framework of personal meaning,
(2) initiate change as well as respond to change and
(3) participate in evolving transformational systems.
Practical Emphases in Constructivist Counselling

While at this point in our project we have not identified all of the practical emphases and implications of a constructivist counselling approach, the following points can be taken as indicating some of the more important practical distinctions we have determined to this point:

(1) Intervention emphasis. While rationalist counsellors tend to guide counselling according to specific goals and anticipated outcomes, constructivist counsellors are less externally focused and try to utilize the self-organizing capacities of clients in the course of counselling.

(2) Problem conceptualization. Whereas a rationalist counsellor conceptualizes problems as mistakes in thinking or in perceiving (rational-emotive, for example uses the notion of "irrational beliefs") and relies upon the counsellor's expert ability to re-educate or correct these mistakes, the constructivist is more likely to conceptualize a "problem" as a reflection of an adaptation strategy and construes problems to be (a) opportunities for exploring developmental and meaning processes and (b) preliminary to the potential emergence of higher-order insight and adaptation structures.

(3) Attitude toward emotional experience. Instead of viewing emotions as largely negative and in need of "control," the constructivist conceptualizes emotions as important avenues for exploration and as powerful "ways of knowing" (L. Greenberg & J.D. Safran, 1987), (Guidano, 1987) and (Solomon, 1976).

(4) Resistance. Conventional counselling perceives "resistance" as something to be "overcome." The constructivist perspective holds that resistance reflects natural self-protective processes that protect the individual from too much change, too quickly. From this perspective, resistance should be worked "with" rather than "against" (Bugental & Bugental, 1984).

(5) Relapse and regression. When clients revert to former ways of behaving or seem to lose motivation for change and effort in counselling, the conventional response is that relapses and regressions constitute "failures" either on the part of the counsellor, the client or on the part of both. The constructivist view, in contrast, is that relapses and regressions are usually quite natural and virtually inevitable aspects of human development. They represent recurrences of prior patterns of adaptation which are natural, expectable, and represent phenomena to be worked "with" (Marlatt & Gordon, 1985) rather than phenomena to be avoided or categorized as failure.

(6) Insight. From a constructivist point of view, insight is a form of "metacognition" or knowing about knowing (Flavell, 1979). Insight, construed as meta-cognition, seems to have perceptual, conceptual and experiential components. What is important
is to try to integrate insights with affective and behavioural processes. From a constructivist perspective, insight is not synonymous with awareness. Since excessive, explicit awareness can impede performance (Hayek, 1978), the constructivist attitude toward awareness is a cautious one.

(7) The counselling relationship. The counselling relationship is viewed by the constructivist as a safe and supportive base from which the client can explore both his or her own "life-world" and relationships with others. The counsellor and client are collaborators in the discovery, creation and explication of meaning and in examining the connections between meaning and action in the everyday life-world (Carlsen, 1988), (Guidano & Liotti, 1985).

A Constructivist Perspective for the Counsellor

I have prepared a ten-point prospectus for counsellors to think about when considering whether or not constructivism holds value as a blue-print for their own counselling practice.

The constructivist perspective:
1) construes personal and social realities to be "chaoging, transitional, transformational" rather than some kind of fixed, static entities and situations,

(2) implies a posture of openness toward innovation, invention and negotiation,

(3) places stress on human variation and potential . . . self-knowledge and critical self-reflection,

(4) views the "self" as an evolving, self-organizing proactive and reactive entity which discovers, attributes and creates meaning as movement through new situations and contexts occurs,

(5) gives the individual's perspective (world-view) central importance in decision-making, adaptation, learning and coping,

(6) acknowledges the essential contribution which cognition (and meta-cognition) plays in human life—people can choose and invent new ways of seeing, interpreting, construing and feeling the world . . . and thus form different bases for deciding and acting . . . even though neither the external world nor the body may be very pliable at times,

(7) is sensitive to the continuous potential for positive influence of crisis, transition and transformation in human life,
(8) views the human world as a symbolic universe of language, symbolism, meaning and communication. We invent fictions... and live by them... our lives are dramas... we live in and through our scripts and stories... we are construing beings with the power to remember, imagine, invent and tell... our troubles and successes are not with things themselves, but in what we think and feel about things...

(9) takes emotions to be ways of knowing, albeit frequently primitive, deep and implicit... emotions are hand in hand with thinking and perceiving... emotions often give us knowledge about the world which cognition is unable to articulate... emotional experience is not something to be controlled, feared or suppressed, but rather to be acknowledged, expressed and explicated for meaning,

(10) perceives human experience to be characterized by conflict, uncertainty and confusion... yet recognizes, nonetheless, that the experiential dimension of human life is the primary source for personal meaning and significance and is the "stuff" out of which individual well-being must be carved, if indeed it is to be at all.

In summary, I might point out that constructivism is a developing framework for understanding human behaviour. It is both a philosophy and a conceptual model. It is nurtured by various intellectual sources: family systems theory, cognitive science, phenomenology, life-span developmentalism, motor meta-theories (Weiner, in press), evolutionary epistemology (Popper, 1974) and autopoietic theory (Varela, 1979).

Constructivism is the preferred conceptual basis for an increasing number of clinical theorists as well as some practising therapists. Our project is the first attempt to base career counselling on constructivism, so far as we know.

Current Project Status

As we have proceeded through our various sub-projects we have drawn ideas for career counsellor practice and training from various sources: personal construct psychology, constructionist social psychology, theories of reflective learning and critical thinking, and existential phenomenology.

Working from these sources, together with ideas and practices already available in the literature on career counselor education, we have increasingly taken on a thematic approach to the construction of career counselling and training methods. I will briefly outline ten such themes.

1. Self as a reflexive project. This refers to a conception of the self as built up through interactions with others. Such a self is characterized by varying degrees of "feeling adequate," by "reflexivity"--that is, taking in bits of perceived meaning and
using them to change both self and action. The self has ontological status—that is, its very existence can be threatened by consequences of embeddedness in institutional life and interpersonal relations.

2. Non-linear development. Career and self development are not conceived as linear, stage-by-stage processes. Individual careers and selves are seen as non-linear trajectories across institutional settings and social relations. Such trajectories are characterized more by transitions, transformations and crises than they are by step-wise progression.

3. Self-help. The effectiveness of counselling is measured most of all by its ability to effect the self-help capacities of the individual. The same principle applies to counsellor training. Training should aim to stimulate the counsellor's autonomy and self-construction abilities. Counsellor training is clearly a life-long need in that societal conditions and lifestyles of clients change continuously.

4. Meaning-making. Both the training of counsellors and counselling practice itself should give primacy to "meaning-making" activities. Meaning-making includes at least three reality construction processes: critical reflection, purposeful action and interactional negotiation.

5. Self-organization. The efforts of counsellors, both in their own process of learning to be competent counsellors and in their work with clients, should focus on self-organization rather than upon traits, behaviour change and psychic factors. There certainly are both psychological and sociological processes by means of which the self organizes itself and these should be taken into account in effective counselling. However, it is how the individual's life experiences are organized and reorganized into patterns of self adequacy and competency and how the individual builds up interpretive schema which should be given priority in counselling work. Self-organization implies learning how to critically reflect on one's own knowledge and beliefs and to be able to observe one's own actions and the actions of others, and to organize meaningful patterns from these intertwining factors.

6. Career counselling defined. Career counselling should be redefined as a methodology for life planning. This life-planning methodology applies to such sectors of one's over-all life-world as "life-style", "life-span", "control of personal time", "life-purpose", "meaningful experience—both work experience and personal experience", and "existential values" such as choice, commitment, responsibility, hope, care and authentic forms of action and self. The separation of counselling into "career" and "personal" is artificial. Individuals have only one self—work and personal are two sectors of the same self which always comes as a whole "Who I am" to the counsellor.
7. Counselling-therapy. Counselling and therapy should be more or less equated in that both processes are taken to refer to three interconnected structures:
(a) an internal self-referential process of personal learning, purpose, decision-making and planning,
(b) a milieu or relationship which provides psychological-emotional safety, and support for personal learning, decision-making and planning and
(c) counsellor competency and various counselling "aids" by means of which counsellors assist clients to achieve life planning goals and self-organization.

8. Self as narrative. Recognition of the narrative or storied nature of selves. What the client brings to counselling are not so much deficient personality and ability variables, dimensions of pathology or "traits" as "stories" of life or aspects of life. The self from this perspective is not revealed by an "inventory" or "test"; rather it is described and interpreted through storying. The self is made up of sentences organized into meaningful patterns. Changes in self are changes in meaning at both the cognitive and the emotional levels of self.

9. Self-society dialectic. Counselling necessarily must attend to both the social context in which an individual is embedded and to the individual's self-organization. Living in society has profound consequences for the individual self; and individual selves are constitutive of social order. This self-society dialectic must take more prominence in counselling and in the training of counsellors.

10. Work. The value, function and meaning of work in self-construction is enormous and is generally under-appreciated in career counsellor training. It is not sufficient to provide "information" about work, labour markets, occupations and so on. It is necessary to engage youth, and adults as well, in reflective processes of exploration and understanding of how the meaning and action of "work" constitutes the self—especially in terms of self-adequacy, self-autonomy, and self-authenticity.

These ten themes redirect the gaze of counsellors, counsellor trainers and researchers from counselling as rational-technical process based on realism and predictability to counselling as a constructivist program based on the observation that modern social life and the experience of persons living this life is uncertain, transitional and largely unpredictable.

**Intended Products of the Project**

One of the characteristics of a research and development project which is premised on "innovation" is that there are no certain criteria by means of which the progress of the project and its products can be judged. However, at this time, at least ten different products are in progress. I will conclude this paper by listing them together with estimated dates of completion. Together, they will form a substantial body of materials for use in the training of career counsellors.
1. Book on "Non-linear career development with implications for counsellors" [manuscript completed]
2. Guidebook for counsellors on "Constructivist Counselling" [In progress--August, 1992].
3. Guidebook for trainers on "Teaching and Learning Strategies in Educating Counsellors" [In progress--December, 1992].
4. Workbook on "Personal process learning for counsellors" [In progress--September, 1992].
5. Manual on "Counsellor networking" [In progress--March, 1992].
6. Video on "Constructivist Interviewing" [In progress--December 1992].
7. Guidebook on "Constructive use of emotional experience in career counselling" [In progress--December, 1992].
8. "Self-organizational Curriculum for the education of counsellors" [In progress, March, 1993].
9. Evaluation and adaptation of Computerized Counsellor training and counselling assistant (TLP) [In progress, no date].
10. Counsellors's Workbook on "Autobiographical and critical thinking in learning to be a counsellor" [In progress, August, 1992].

References


Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
R.V. Peavy, CCTP, University of Victoria, November, 1992

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE: WORKLIFE AND COUNSELLING

INTRODUCTION

In this analytical essay I have two goals in mind. One, I will present a highly condensed view of changes which are occurring in the lives of people as a result of societal transformations from industrial to post-industrial (PI) society.

My second goal is to suggest how counselling theory and practice can be viewed so as to better prepare counsellors for working with PI clients. In other words:

1. What are some of the predicted consequences which evolving PI societal changes have for individuals in their daily lives?
2. What are some of the implications for counsellor training and for the practice of counselling which these changes and consequences imply?

For an analysis of the transformations which are taking place in society, I rely primarily on Anthony Giddens’ study, Modernity and Self-Identity and another recent sociological study, Post-Industrial Lives (Hage and Powers, 1992).

Prefatory Comments on Counselling

The training and preparation of counselling psychologists and counsellors is largely instrumental and pragmatic. That is, counsellors learn techniques which are designed to work effectively and efficiently in order to achieve desired behavioral outcomes.

While skill-based training of counsellors certainly has some value, it tends to ignore contextual factors, especially language and social structures and practices which form the context for clients and counsellors alike. Professional counsellors are trained to apply techniques to clients, "...though often without an adequate grasp of the relation of... (individuals)...to... their cultural contexts (Kvale, 1990, p. 50).

Professional counsellors do not encounter individuals in the abstract. They face concrete, existential beings who are struggling with "context-bound" issues such as employment and unemployment, career choosing, getting access to training, immigrant adaptation, family-work role conflict and so on. While it is unrealistic to think that counsellors should become sophisticated social analysts, it seems very important that counsellors be familiarized with the more prominent aspects of social context. Such aspects as globalization, penetration of expert systems into personal life, commodification, electronically mediated experience, and deskilling-reskillng trends in the economy have profound and specific consequences for people in the conduct of their daily lives and in their attempts to develop and maintain robust self-identities.

More and more, the various studies of human life are interpenetrating each other to produce the "blurring of genres" of which Geertz speaks (1986).

Increasingly, to be a good counsellor requires an understanding of how the processes of context and person interact and transform each other (Schon, 1983) on the micro or concrete level of the individual. To gain these types of understanding, the counsellor's interest must be directed toward a variety of phenomena and concepts – social, psychological, and educational and methods of describing and incorporating these phenomena and concepts into the work of counselling. The phenomena include: lived experience (together with phenomenological methods for explicating experience); role-definition and status dynamics, (drawing on symbolic interactionism); reflexivity (possibly the most important process
in formation of self) and the ways in which individuals use language, narrative and activity to construct selves, roles and relationships.

So far as future counselling practice is concerned, there is likely to be decreased preoccupation with the intrapsychic life of clients and an increase in the use of constructivist and social constructionist ideas about self-construction, meaning, and selves as narratives; and an increasing use of counselling practices derived from these ideas. This is not to say that inner life is of no consequence in PI society, but it is to say that such concepts as reflexivity, constructed selves and relationships, and meaning will occupy a larger part of counsellor education and practice.

As we move toward the next century, human agency is on the increase (Touraine, 1988). However, more and more agency will be socially determined – or perhaps it is better to say co-determined through interaction. More and more there will be the tendency to construe the self as a 'constructed project' which will be interpreted from the perspective of narrative rather than the perspective of trait and behavior.

ANTHONY GIDDENS AND THE COMING YEARS

In this section I will briefly describe some of the main points of analysis which Giddens makes of our current social context – which he refers to as the late modern age but which I will refer to as PI society. I am borrowing from Giddens in a highly selective manner – I am presenting those ideas which seem to me to bear most forcibly on issues which concern counsellors.

I have selected seven topics for discussion: 'self as reflexive project', 'lifestyle', 'meaning and meaningfulness', 'linguistic life', 'shame vs guilt', 'pure relationship', and 'dilemmas of the self' from Giddens. The interested reader will certainly need to consult Giddens' many publications, especially Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (1990)
for a more detailed and comprehensive coverage of his views on PI transformations and attendant consequences for individuals in their day-to-day lives.

1. **Self as reflexive project.** Under the influence of information technology, and new forms of mediated experience, especially television, self-identity is progressively becoming a **reflexively organized project**. In pre-modern and modern times, self-identity and life-roles were strongly influenced by various traditions, cultural customs and stable norms. To put it bluntly, one did not have to think very much about who and what one wanted to be since the guidelines for culturally approved identities were firmly in place. With the decay of almost all forms of tradition and the greatly increased risk, doubt, uncertainty and social instability which the decay of tradition produces, people now must depend much more on their own reflexivity as a means of developing self-identity. It is necessary to sustain 'narratives' of self-identity which have some degree of coherence even though more-or-less continuously under revision.

A brief summary of the main features of the self as reflexive project includes:

(a) In the absence of reference of external authoritative criteria, the self is an **internally referential system**. Instead of referring to sources of external authority the self questions itself and its own system of meaning through reflexive acts. In this way information from others is weighed, and the self decides on next moves through reference to its own memories, perspectives and constructs of meaning.

(b) The self presumes a **narrative** or complex of narratives which express self-identity. This is a radical shift from an 'objectivist' view of personality as a rather stable entity composed of traits and variables to a constructivist view of self as **story**;

(c) Self-identity, self-adequacy and self-fulfilment depend upon two processes for their formation: (1) **activities** which the individual chooses and becomes engaged in, and (2) the
vocabularies which the individual uses for describing life experiences and events.

(d) Just as social life and institutions are becoming more and more reflexive, so too is the project of the self-organized, constructed, and deconstructed principally through reflexivity.

2. **Lifestyle** becomes an important concept as individuals, on a daily basis, have to negotiate choices amongst a diversity of lifestyle options. For the past half century, there has been an assumption that individuals 'developed' in a linear fashion, completing one developmental task and moving on to the next. Linear development is not a satisfactory way of describing PI lives. **Nonlinearity, transition and negotiable options** are more closely descriptive of how individuals now experience their lives. I hasten to add, however, that the vast majority are caught between a yearning for 'how it used to be' and perplexity about how to move forward into the new PI world. Certain standardizing influences continue, especially 'commodification'. However, with the increasing 'openness' of social life, the pluralization of contexts, the diversity of 'experts' on every conceivable topic, and the increase in electronically mediated experience, reflexively organized lifestyle and life-planning are now central features of self identity.

To illustrate, consider eating, which has become much more a matter of lifestyle than of tradition, unless one is a member of impoverished or starving people. Today there are literally hundreds of experts on what one should and shouldn't eat, and how much and how often. Television, especially, mediates our experience of eating. In addition, foods from all over the world are now available in local shops. More people travel now and to more places, thus learning of diverse foods and eating customs. In most major cities, one finds restaurants serving food from dozens of other countries. In a very different vein, and under intense control through commodification, the typical North American supermarket has a staggering array of pre-packaged, ready to eat foods. One now finds these packaged foods
virtually everywhere in the world even in remote, small communities where local and traditional food eating habits remain in force. This example contains the PI elements of:
(a) globalization
(b) expert systems
(c) commodification
(d) diversity of choice and interpretation of local and global influences
(e) lifestyle (eating) options.

3. **Personal meaning and meaninglessness.** In industrial society meaninglessness issued from lives of routine and boredom (assembly line work). Alienation resulted from individuals no longer being able to sense any connection between their own work and the eventual product which was personally meaningful to the worker. In the PI society, meaninglessness tends to stem from the fact that while a reflexive project of the self generates actualization and competence in living, it is separated from moral and spiritual resources needed for living a full and satisfying life.

PI society is also unpredictable which raises many doubts and insecurities about how one should live – or even if life is worth living at all. There are many suicide epidemics amongst aboriginal peoples whose traditional, pre-modern cultures are being rapidly interpenetrated by PI influences. The aboriginal's very way of being is made vulnerable and self-identity is opened to doubt, uncertainty, and risk beyond the capability of the individual to continue experiencing a coherent life or existence. Reasons for living are overturned by meaninglessness and despair. They have not learned how to reflexively organize a self-identity in a context which no longer contains unquestioned traditional guidance.

One of the very grave problems of PI society is that two classes of people are on the increase. One is a 'have' class of individuals who possess symbolic skills and have been educated and trained to function well in an information intensive environment. They have the ability and desire to
lead lives characterized by high degrees of symbolic interaction. The second population is increasingly marginalized and ineligible for participation in PI society. They lack the symbolic interaction skills and knowledge required for work in PI workplaces and often have neither the wherewithal nor the desire to acquire skills needed for successful employment in PI workplaces. This population is almost certain to experience increasing amounts of ontological insecurity. Increasingly, members of this population find their ways of being no longer adequate. Any overall remedy to this problematic is most likely to be the result of changed political, economic, educational and social policies. Of course, counsellors will have much work to do with individuals who are trying to move from marginalized status to symbolic competency status.

4. Human life is linguistic life. Language is a kind of time machine which makes possible the reenactment of social practices and the differentiation of past, present, and future. Through the use of electronic networks we can be with each other in the same moment of time while at great distances spatially. Linguistic skills take on much greater value and importance in PI society than in industrial society. One of the most serious problems facing PI societies is how to make adaptations for large populations of people who do not possess the linguistic competence required of PI society workplaces and family relationships.

Counselling and psychological practices of the future will quite likely look more and more to such disciplines as symbolic interactionism, narrative psychology, and constructionist social psychology – disciplines which may prove more adequate for describing and explaining PI selves than the current objectivist, behavioral paradigm which is preoccupied with individualistic assumptions (Denzin, 1991).

5. Shame replaces guilt. In pre–modern and early modern society when traditional sources of authority were still in place, 'inhibitions', 'sanctions' and authoritative 'reprimand'
served to instill guilt and thus control the self and conduct. With the onset of PI society and the decay of tradition and the lessening of guilt as a guide for self-formation, shame is emerging as a widespread psychological condition. Shame should be understood in relation to personal integrity and personal insufficiency (low self-esteem) while guilt is a correlate of wrongdoing. Self-esteem is a topic of wide interest in psychology and pedagogy and in the popular literature as well. Self-empowerment is another topic of emerging interest and one that is directly related to the self as a reflexive project. Helen Lewis has distinguished two types of shame: 'overt' and 'by-passed'. Overt shame refers to feelings when humiliated by others while by-passed shame comes from experienced inadequacies of self. Shame indicates that self-identity and trustful relations with others are under threat. The risky, unpredictable conditions of PI society bring on the experience of anxiety as more and more it is difficult for individuals to answer such basic self-identity questions as "Who am I?" "Where do I belong?" Shame is the negative side of the motivational system of the individual. Pride and hope constitute the positive side. The individual with high self-esteem is infused with pride and hopefulness – in other words, confidence in the coherence and integrity of the narrative of self-identity:

Developing a coherent sense one's self (biography) and engaging in activities which establish feelings of adequacy are primary means of getting free from shame and at the same time opening oneself out into the future. Adequate or 'empowered' selves are constructed through activity and reflexivity.

6. Pure relationships. In both traditional and modern cultures, family life and work life relationships have been guided by external criteria. This means that relationships were constructed on understandings of rights, duties, privileges, obligations and defined responsibilities. In PI society the concept of relationship is changing to a negotiated structure rather than a pre-defined structure. Giddens refers to this
emerging relational phenomenon as the 'pure relationship' with features such as:

(a) It is not anchored in externally imposed duties and obligations – rather it is negotiated and remains open to renegotiation.

(b) It is sought only for what the relationship can bring to the interactants involved and is not much invested with traditional meaning.

(c) It is reflexively organized more-or-less on a continuous basis and participates in the broader reflexivity of social and economic life by way of newspaper articles, magazines, specialist books, television talk shows and documentaries, networks, and special topic courses and weekend workshops.

(d) Commitment is important in pure relationships in that it essentially replaces the external anchors of more traditional relationship. Commitment provides a degree of emotional support during periods of perturbation in the history of the relationship.

(e) The pure relationship requires sensitivity to nuances of feeling, meaning, gesture and speech. Pure relationships are much more personal and customized than traditional relationships. They are socially constructed and interactants must be able to 'read' each other and reflexively redirect their acts so as to maintain freedom from unacceptable levels of relationship stress or inequity.

(f) Reciprocal trust is an essential ingredient of the pure relationship. This includes ability to listen as well as talk, and attempts to 'get to' feelings behind issues.

(g) According to Giddens, the pure relationship is a key environment for constructing the reflexive project of the self. It allows for and demands organized and continuous self understanding. The moral basis for the pure relationship is 'authenticity', rather than recourse to traditional values. Authenticity derives from knowing oneself, and being able and willing to disclose that knowledge to others, discursively and through action.
7. **Dilemmas of the self.** I will finish this section on Gidden's work by reviewing what he refers to as 'dilemmas of the self' characteristic of PI society.

**Unification vs fragmentation.** Every day the reflexive project of the self incorporates diverse contextual happenings and must chart a course through this experience. The reflexive activity of the self can lead to coherence and sense-making or toward fragmentation and doubt.

**Powerlessness vs empowerment.** The number and diversity of lifestyle options made available in PI society offer numerous opportunities for empowerment, and perhaps even more which lead to powerlessness. The experience of personal power or its lack is an extremely important and all-pervasive phenomenon in daily life. It is useful to distinguish between the modes of 'being overpowering', 'bring overpowered' and 'being empowered'.

**Authority vs uncertainty.** Under conditions of little or no traditional authority to guide one, then the reflexive project of the self must steer a way between commitment and uncertainty. **Risikotaking, trust-building, and authenticity** are directly implicated in the effort of the reflexive project of the self to chart a course in the uncertain waters of PI social order.

To sum up Giddens' thesis: the emerging conditions of PI society - globalization, deskilling, commodification, and change which is rapid, unpredictable, and risky to individuals, together with the decay of nearly all forms of earlier moral authority requires that we view individuals in new ways. Namely, that they must take charge of (a) constructing a reflexively and internally references project of self, and (b) that they must co-construct relations at work and at home out of conditions of uncertainty, conflict and lack of external moral criteria. This thesis suggests the desirability of both constructivist and constructionist views of
social life and indicates possible changes needed for counselling in the PI context.

In 1931, the existential philosopher Karl Jaspers presciently wrote about the coming era of globalization, mass-order and technological life. He believed that the levelling and unsheltering effect of modern, objectivist, commodified life was unavoidable, yet he held out a hope for those with courage and the willingness to risk self-empowerment. To paraphrase, he wrote that people are more than what they know of themselves. They are not just a static entity, they are a process. Each individual is not merely a life, but within that life is endowed with possibilities through the freedom to make oneself what one will by the activities on which one decides. He predicted that there would be many who would find ways to pull themselves back from the anxious borderline of selfdestruction and banal existence and "...take matters into their own hands, realize their own selfhood, and enjoy true being" (p. 227). In 1931 Jaspers was already envisioning an era in which the self as reflexive project would become necessary for a successful and meaningful existence.

HAGE, POWERS AND THE COMING YEARS

As my second source of analysis of what the future is likely to mean for family and work life, and therefore for counsellors, I have consulted a second sociological work, Post-industrial lives: Roles and relationships in the 21st century (Hage and Powers, 1992). Like Giddens, Hage and Powers believe that a new epoch – post-industrial society – is now being constructed out of global events and through the decay of local, traditional communities. Their primary interest is in understanding the meaning of PI transformations for work roles and personal relationships. They too believe that the macro changes taking place in economies and social orders have profound consequences for the way people will lead (or already are leading) their lives. In their opinion, the very character of the
The social self is being altered into a more complex and pluralistic or polyphonic phenomenon under the impact of PI conditions.

There are a remarkable number of similarities between Giddens and Hage and Powers even though they are couched in different vocabularies and only one cross-reference appears in their respective studies. In the following discussion, I can only bring out a small number of points and again I have chosen those which seem to me to have the most potential relevance for counsellors and the practice of counselling.

The transformation to post-industrial society means that more and more work tasks will be defined in terms of information gathering, problem solving, creation of new ideas and products, and the ability to respond flexibly to new situations and interact in new and adaptive ways. In general, both physical labor and routine labor will be replaced by various forms of mental, symbolic activity. Service and tourist industries will continue to be human labor intensive, but even these will call for better and better symbolic and interactional skills and attitudes.

In the family, we can already find clear evidence of PI impact on marriage and child-rearing. Divorce rates have risen drastically over the past few decades, a sure sign that the institution of marriage is being re-defined. Spousal roles have been moving from 'rights' and 'obligations' to 'negotiation'. The marriage vow is no longer "until death do us part" but more like "until we agree that this is no longer working." The interpenetration of 'experts' into family life via television, radio, tabloids, magazines, workshops, books and so on is phenomenal.

There are changes in work and family roles that not only are occurring in tandem, but they are also interactive with each other. For example:

1. Team effort is more evident both in families and on the job.
2. Raising children and doing work is taking on more plasticity as greater adaptation to changing societal pressures and individual variation is required.
3. An increasing number of parents – both dual and single – are working. Parenting and working roles interpenetrate much more now than in earlier times.
4. An increasing number of people work ‘at home’ at least part time.
5. Work which involves symbolic problem solving is much more likely to be taken home at night, at least in the head, than work that involves operation of machinery.
6. Increasingly, parents, spouses, workers, and managers are all expected to be better communicators and to know how to listen responsibly and to attend to emotional nuances of communication.

What the foregoing suggests is that there is an increasing ‘blurring’ of distinctions between work and family, between personal and public life. In large part what Hage and Powers contend is that societies transforming under the influence of PI or postmodern influences will require more and better quality interactional competencies from members of society in both work and family contexts. This is, in part, based on the earlier discovery of G.H. Mead (1964) that members of society are more likely to participate at higher levels of satisfaction and competence to the extent they are able to: (a) take varying roles, (b) engage in imaginative rehearsal, (c) adjust their interpersonal responses in different contexts, and (d) read conventional gestures in local contexts.

Hage and Powers’ central argument that the rapid development of knowledge producing and service society, together with increasing complexification will demand more people with creative minds and complex selves. Such persons will be more interpersonally competent and responsive to others and will spend more time on innovation than on routine production.

With the complexification of social order and the accompanying decay of external authority, there are fewer and fewer situations for which there is one right way to act, or be, or problems for which there is one right solution. Moreover, a complex self is more than an aggregate of selves, each one of which may be
called forth in the appropriate specific situation. In the complex self, all of the role-identities are capable of co-activation. For example, through the use of the portable telephone we can remain 'in touch' with friends, family and work colleagues virtually simultaneously.

In more traditional contexts, individuals learn 'scripted' speech. Scripted speech is a standardized set of responses which one is to make in a given situation. A good example is the famous 'sales pitch'. Scripted speech works well in social contexts where the assumption is that there is a 'right' way to act and speak according to conventions – a kind of conversational etiquette, so to speak. Under conditions of increasing social complexity and the blurring of conventional social situation, script–speech fails. Interactants must be able to 'read' others, know how to listen, take the other's role, and adjust to varying perspectives on a given topic. If this type of creative flexibility is missing, the trust required to maintain role-relationships falters. 'Impression management' will not do. Instead of giving standardized responses designed to produce pre-determined effects, both workers and family members will be asked to produce more 'authentic' speech and gesture. The uniqueness of the other and the nuances of communication will have to be attended to, so that the interpersonal relationship is customized to fit the person, the need, and the event.

The individual who navigates PI society well will be accomplished at role-definition. In the view of Hage and Powers, the capacity for role-redefinition will be the pivotal micro process in PI society. They identify factors which tend to hinder the capacity for role redefinition and factors which favor it.

Factors hindering role-definition.
(a) Over-commitment to role 'scripts' and impression management.
(b) Routinizing of behaviour.
(c) Over-control or suppression of feelings imbedded in role scripts.
(d) Preoccupation with securing approval and validation from others.

Factors supporting role-definition.
(a) Learning to interpret both cognitive and emotive gestures (linguistic competence).
(b) Ability to 'take' roles on both cognitive and emotive levels (empathy).
(c) Ability to engage in imaginative rehearsal (envisioning alternatives).
(d) Ability to adjust responses (context-action congruence).

There is a rapid development, particularly on the economic level, of human capital intensive organizations. These are organizations where highly specialized knowledge, much of which is carried around in people's heads, is on the increase. For example:
1. Upgrading of many semi-professional organizations such as police departments, schools, and nursing, into knowledge-intensive organizations.
2. The creation of many new small joint venture and partner companies.
3. The establishment of many small, high-tech companies.
4. The establishment of knowledge intensive networks amongst cooperating researchers.

While PI development proceeds unevenly from region to region, there is very good evidence that organizational structures are moving from linear, hierarchical and fixed structures to fluid, organic structures with a good deal of plasticity between organizational structure and worker activity and between workers themselves. This requires complex symbolic and innovative acting and thinking, as well as finely-tuned abilities for taking the roles of others on the part of managers and workers alike. In a knowledge intensive organization, individuals typically will interact with a large number of others in widely differing roles but only with a few people in each role-set.
To sum up, among the analytic points for counsellors emerging from the work of Hage and Powers are:

1. A major premise of symbolic interactionism, that individuals can construct their own life-roles (selves) is likely to be realized in PI society. A corollary to this premise is that role-defining becomes a core activity.

2. Interactional competence which means ability to take the role of others, emotional sensitivity, and general linguistic and symbolic mental abilities will be much more important in the future than they have been in the 'working' past.

3. In knowledge intensive workplaces, networking, consulting, and interpersonal negotiating become central skills.

4. Distinctions between personal and public, between family and work roles become harder and harder to maintain. Roles are interpenetrative and in continuing redefinition.

5. There are profound and perplexing problems to be faced in the movement from industrial to PI social status. Two such problems which impact on the work of counsellors are:

(a) Individuals of the present and previous generations (including counsellors) have all been socialized into industrial society which is much more fixed and role-stable than the emerging PI society. This means that a great many people have difficulty even conceiving of the changes underway, let alone trying to re-organize or redefine their self-identities in order to resonate with the emerging social context.

(b) There will be (already is, to some extent) a large population of individuals who do not have, and perhaps do not want, or are incapable of acquiring, the interactional and symbolic functions required by an increasing number of PI organizations and industries, and by PI family networks. In theory, within just one or two decades, the literacy and numeracy levels required for the bulk of PI industries will approach what we now consider to be University level competence. The growth of an incapable, impoverished, marginalized New World
Order *lumpenproletariat* mired in despair, drugs and violence is a nightmarish possibility that all responsible individuals must wish to avoid. Certainly counsellors all over the world will be engaged in helping individuals to escape this fate.

**THE COMING YEARS FOR COUNSELLORS**

In this final section, I will briefly outline an approach to counselling revised in two ways. The first revision is to place counselling and the training of counsellors in a constructivist framework rather than the 'objectivist' framework. Secondly, I will describe selected counselling strategies which (a) are grounded in the constructivist framework, and (b) are designed for use with clients in the emerging PI world of work and family. One can think of psychoanalysis as the 'first force' in counselling and therapy; behaviorism as the 'second force', humanistic psychology as the 'third force' and constructivism as the fourth force. As G.S. Howard (1991) aptly put it, "All across the intellectual landscape, the forces of objectivism are giving way to the entreaties of constructivist thought."

**Constructivist training approach**

I have described the constructivist model of training career counsellors in other papers (Peavy, 1992a; Peavy, 1992b). Four main aspects of this approach to training counsellors are as follows.

1. **Reflexivity**. Reflexivity is construed to be a core ingredient of both professional *counsellor education* and of client 'therapeutic' or learning experience. Skill training tends to be a decontextualizing process, reflexivity redresses this imbalance in that it promotes contextualization [understanding what one is doing, and why one is doing], and promotes the discernment of assumptions and tacit knowledge.
2. **Domains of knowledge.** Counsellor education incorporates three types of knowledge:

(a) **Knowledge of self.** Lack of self-knowledge on the part of the counsellor can render useless an otherwise sensible counselling practice. Furthermore, inasmuch as clients are characterized as 'selves in reflexive process' then counsellor training which engages participants in reflexivity is good preparation for work with clients.

(b) **Knowledge of cultural norms, values, assumptions, customs, language and everyday praxis.** In order to make sense with clients, it is necessary to have an understanding of the local or sub-cultural contexts in which the client has membership. Such understandings can either come from general cultural experience or by the counsellor eliciting this type of knowledge directly from clients.

(c) **Theoretical and technical knowledge.** This is what counsellor education is usually composed of and includes such items as theories of counselling, research findings, theories of personality change, testing, labor market information, and so on. While it is our opinion that this type of knowledge is important, it is no more important than knowledge of self (and self in interaction with others) and cultural knowledge.

3. **Centrality of activity and practice.** It does not seem to be the formal and technical knowledge which distinguishes expert from novice counsellor as much as the **tacit knowledge** which expert counsellors have derived from their more extensive praxis (Martin, Slemmon, Hiebert, Hallberg, and Cummings, 1989). It seems to be the-experience maps or construal systems derived from praxis which shapes counselling practice and informs the actions of counsellors in relation to clients (Cohen, Sargent, and Sechrest, 1986) more than their knowledge of counselling and personality theories.
4. Self and role redefined as narrative structure rather than complex of personality traits and variables. Human life is linguistic life and both counsellors and clients hold memberships in communities of language practice. These communities of language contain the meanings and assumptions including both overt cognitive and emotional gestures and an undergirding of covert assumptions and unselfconscious meanings which individuals use to guide actions and get things done. In short, the self and role are constructed and deconstructed through symbolic interaction with others and practical actions in everyday life are guided by 'semantic maps'.

Examples of practical learning activities of this 'new generation' counsellor training approach are:

(a) practice in self and life planning by means of autobiographical writing, story-telling and narrative explication,

(b) discussion and analysis of recorded role-play and actual counselling conversations with an emphasis on critical reflection and the uncovering of assumptions and tacit knowledge and the development of interactional competence,

(c) practice in establishing and maintaining networks – both support networks as in human contact and informational networks as in labor market data,

(d) practice of the 'healing' interview through ethnographic discourse,

(e) practice in authentic conversation in which the dialogical principles enunciated by Habermas (also by Buber and Gadamer):
   i. Whatever the speaker (counsellor) says is invested with importance and feeling.
   ii. The speaker (counsellor) believes what he or she is saying (in contrast with impression management).
iii. The speaker (counsellor) experiences a sense of affinity with listeners.
iv. Listening is given equal status within speaking.

4. Study and discussion of theoretical knowledge: society, counselling, etc. The overall objective of the training approach is to promote a counselling self which is complex, polyphonic, reflective, characterized by a good quality of interactional competency and interested in self-society interactions at both concrete and abstract levels.

What does the constructivist counsellor do?

I will begin with a revised definition of (career) counselling.

1. Counselling is a general methodology for life-planning. The intended outcome of counselling is empowerment of clients to get on with their lives and participate in society according to directions and purposes which are satisfying to them and constructive for society.

2. Counselling is ‘career’ counselling when the main focus of counselling is on aspects of worklife such as career choosing, training, job-getting, conflict at work, retirement concerns, etc.

Since, from the point of view presented in this paper, there is increasing interpenetration of family, work, health and leisure in the lives of PI society members, the distinctions between different kinds of counselling are becoming more artificial. Such distinctions are more a function of bureaucratic turf than of a realistic knowledge of client need and counselling process.

The constructivist counsellor is committed to entering directly into the meaning and life activities of clients as much as possible without distancing, objective aids such as psychometric tests, formalized interviews, and technical vocabulary use. This allows for the assertion of a number of ‘operating’ principles guiding the counsellor’s work with clients:
* work from the life world of the client as experienced and reported by the client.
* use conversation to mediate counsellor/client experience; within conversation the counsellor engages in 'receptive inquiry' which is a blend of empathy, questioning, reflexivity, various linguistic deives such as 'summarizing', 'turn-taking', 'metaphorizing', and others [one of the counsellor's functions is that of linguistic coach]
* use networking to help clients access information and participate in social and community support
* use narrative means to redefine self and role – means such as story eliciting and story analysis, personal documents such as journals, letters, notations, and forms of autobiographical writing and thinking (White & Epston, 1990)
* use role-play and imaginative rehearsal for practice in role and self redefinition
* use personal project analysis (little, 1986), life activity analysis (Peavy, 1992c) and personal construct analysis (Fransella & Dalton, 1990) to assist clients to connect meaning and action in their worklife dilemmas.

Autobiographical activities, as well as life-role analyses and enactments, together with attention to 'lived experience' and reflexivity in constructing selves and solutions, all highlight the need to evolve a wholistic approach to career counselling in which thinking, feeling and action are balanced.

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Collected Works in English Language

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by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

Permission was not received to include Peavy, R.V. (1992), A constructivist model of training for career counsellors, Journal of Career Development, 18(3), 215-228. This article has been removed from the collection.
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

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21. This article was originally published in The B. C. Counsellor, 1992, 14 (1), 18-26. This Journal is no longer published and therefore no permission could be requested or given. This article has remained in the collection.
Career Counselling Training Project

R. Vance Peavy

In this brief paper, I will outline as simply as I can, the main features, purposes, and products of the Career Counsellor Training Project (CCTP) at the University of Victoria. The total project is complex so I will use a question and answer format in an attempt to present the more important features of the project in a simplified manner.

WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF THE PROJECT?

The main purpose of the project is: (1) to produce new methods for training "career" counsellors. A secondary purpose is to produce new methods of doing career counselling.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "NEW"?

New means either inventions of our own or reorientation of already existing methods to fit within the conceptual framework we have adopted.

WHAT IS THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK WE HAVE ADOPTED?

We have adopted "constructivism" as our guiding conceptual framework for inventing new methods of training and doing counselling. The decision to use constructivism as a framework is explained in the following section.

WHY ADOPT A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR COUNSELLING?

Many counselling approaches are quite closely tied in with the model of technical rationality. This means that counselling practice is mainly a matter of instrumental problem solving made

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The B.C. Counsellor 18

rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique. According to this model, counselling should: (1) be specialized or expert driven, (2) have clear boundaries which set it off from other practices such as social work and teaching, (3) have a scientific basis, and (4) be standardized.

At first glance, this model seems to be desirable and it certainly fits in well with a culture which is driven by concerns with economics, efficiency, and expertise. However, a critical examination of counselling approaches based on technical rationality reveals serious shortcomings.

1. It ignores the basic features of everyday experience which are: uncertainty, complexity, uniqueness, indeterminacy, value conflict and emotionality. For the most part, individuals experience their day to day existence in these aspects rather than as a rational process which is satisfactorily explained, predicted, and governed by logic.

2. By defining the counsellor as an expert who is able to bring technique and rational problem-solving to bear on the problems of everyday life, individuals seeking counselling are often enfeebled rather than empowered by the counselling process.

3. By aligning itself with technology and technique, counselling tends to cut itself off from moral questions. For many individuals who face everyday difficulties, not only is the question instrumental: “What can I do?”, but also moral: “What should I do?”

In order to minimize shortcomings such as those just outlined, and after a thorough study of the field of counselling theory and practice, especially career counselling practice, we decided on "constructivism" as an alternate conceptual framework which would at least partially reduce these shortcomings.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF CONSTRUCTIVISM?

Constructivism is a complex framework and encompasses ideas from various disciplines including philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and pedagogy. I will briefly describe seven features of constructivism and indicate some implications of these features for counselling and the training of counsellors:
1. Emphasis is on actual experience of individuals, and on the meaning of these experiences for the individuals in question. In other words, experience-based meanings and perceptions (or constructs) guide action.

   Therefore counselling and the training of counsellors should be grounded in the actual on-going experiences of the individuals involved in the training or counselling. Counselling should be personal, experience-centered and training should be based on experiential learning and practice.

2. How individuals interpret their situations, and the values and assumptions which underlie their interpretations are of considerable importance in forming decisions and in taking actions.

   Therefore counselling and counsellor training should include methods and exercises for learning how to examine assumptions and values, and how to use this self-knowledge in making decisions and taking action. Critical reflection as well as critical thinking should be included as part of training and counselling processes.

3. While every person always faces many and varying constraints in life, each individual is seen as "producing" or "making" his or her own life from the materials available.

   Therefore counselling and counsellor training should be organized around empowerment, agency, and self-directed learning and action taking.

4. Success in daily living means that one has learned how to respond and take advantage of crises, unexpected events, change, transitions, conflict, and uncertainty. From a constructivist vantage, daily life is not a logical, unfolding, step-by-step process but is very much a process of initiating and responding to alternatives.

   Therefore counselling and counsellor training should be oriented to career and individual development as non-linear processes. The choosing of vocation, occupation, career and specific jobs involves chance and accidental factors, crises and unpredictable events, as much as it involves developmental stages, and rational planning. Change and uncertainty, and

The B.C. Counsellor
a focus on constructive alternativism, rather than on stability and predictability, constitute a more realistic focus for counselling.

5. The self is not a stable collection of traits and abilities. Rather it is constantly being revised and changed as circumstances, meanings, and experiences change. Every individual actually has various selves, some of which are mainly rooted in the past, others are actual present selves, and yet others are possible future selves.

Therefore counselling and the training of counsellors should take into account the self as a fluid or dynamic concept which is continuously under revision from birth to death. The self, or selves of the individual, are best represented through the stories which individuals tell. Selves do not have a trait basis, they have a narrative basis. Self-assessment in counselling needs to be shifted from testing of personality traits, interests, and abilities to assessment of life stories, personal projects and activities. Self-observational ability is promoted by counsellor training and is a method to be used in counselling with clients.

6. Each individual is in some ways always unique and is constantly "interpreting" and making sense of his or her own experience. Yet each is always also shaped by the culture and by the groups to which one belongs, and, most significantly, by the relationships in which one participates.

Therefore counselling and the training of counsellors should emphasize what might be called "cultural sensitivity." This sensitivity should be inclusive of interactions and relationships which are affected by factors such as race, gender, occupational experience, and value systems—all of which can be construed as "cultural." Interational competence is a primary focus of counsellor training for it is the interaction between client and counsellor which forms the basis of cooperation and working together in the counselling interview specifically, and the counselling process generally.

7. As individuals, we "make" ourselves through the activities which we undertake. Sets of activities such as writing this paper, or turning a lathe, or giving a speech, or baking bread are all
personal projects of organized activities by means of which we express “who we are.”

Therefore counselling and the training of counsellors should utilize various methods of identifying, assessing and utilizing activities and personal projects. Activities per se, and the personal meaning of activities are both of great importance in the constructivist framework for counselling. Organized meanings and activities are the principal means for individuals to produce themselves and to give direction to decisions and to their lives more generally.

These seven features of constructivism do not by any means exhaust the various aspects of the constructivist conceptual framework. However, they give an indication of how both counselling and the training of counsellors can be conducted fruitfully within that framework.

WHAT IS THE ETHICAL BASIS OF OUR WORK?

Five ethical principles are invoked by our approach to counselling and training for counsellors:

1. One should take a wholistic rather than a reductionist attitude toward others, including clients. This implies conveying respect for the other, as he or she is in the present moment of life as a human being.

2. While each person is in some ways like all other people, and like some other people, every individual is in some way a unique being and should be so regarded. This element of uniqueness is a “good” and is especially important in counselling. It is often the crucible for change.

3. Self fulfilment is a “good”—that is, one should strive to become what one is potentially able to be. Practices which marginalize, minimize, diminish, degrade or oppress are to be avoided.

4. Personal freedom is a “good.” Such freedom has three elements which give it full meaning but which also act to constrain narcissism: (1) it must be striven for by one’s own responsible actions, (2) it is very much dependent upon the quality of relationships which one builds with others, (3) it requires that the individual remain open to significance.

The B.C. Counsellor
beyond one's self—such meanings as family, divinity, community, fellowship, etc.

5. Dialogue is a preferred form of communication and is a "good." Dialogue is that distinctly human communication which consists of speaking, listening, questioning, and remaining open to the possibility of being changed by what is heard. Further, it is through dialogue that each of us develops and revises selfhood.

These five ethical positions make up what can be called an ethic of authenticity.

WHAT COUNSELLING COMPETENCIES ARE INCLUDED IN CCTP?

From our perspective, there are five main competencies which can be developed by counsellor training. They are:

- Self-awareness or mindfulness. This includes the ability to self-observe and enables the counsellor to reduce "natural" tendencies to impose values, assumptions, and biases on clients.

- Interactional competency. This includes the abilities to communicate, relate, negotiate,—in short, to observe and determine "what is going on here" in everyday face-to-face interaction.

- Receptive inquiry. This is an attitude of empathy and appreciation for the uniqueness and circumstances/plight of the other combined with an ability to question and elaborate meaning and develop understanding.

- Meaning-making. This includes both an ability to map out and clarify internal patterns of meaning and purpose, as well as knowledge of how activities both make meaning and are assigned meaning by the individual.

- Networking. This refers to the ability to gain access to useful information and the ability to transform information into useful knowledge. Networking includes informational, learning, support, and community and regional contact networks. Networking is a useful medium for counsellors to use in improving their own service delivery; it is also a valuable function for clients to learn to use.
WHAT DEFINITION OF CAREER COUNSELLING ARE WE USING?

In the context of CCTP, counselling (and career counselling) is defined as a general methodology for life planning. An individual's life or self represents a continuous striving to achieve or maintain balance amongst the four sectors of a life space. These sectors are: work, intimacy, health and play. Whenever a person has a concern or problem, it is focused within one of these sectors. However, almost all problems in life also implicate other sectors of the person's life. It is quite common for an unemployed person to also experience an increase in health concerns, a loss of involvement in intimacy, and a reduced interest in the "play" aspects of life. Likewise, a person experiencing a health concern will often find that problems in relation to career or work come to the surface. Individuals struggle for "wholeness."

Because individuals tend to experience life in wholistic terms rather than in compartmentalized sectors, it seems desirable to keep counselling open to working with the whole person as much as possible. When the focus of a person's concern is mainly within the work sector—i.e., with job, vocational direction, work adjustment, career choice, training, unemployment, etc., then the focus of the counselling should be in that sector. However, the counsellor should not ignore the fact that other sectors of the individual's life will almost certainly be implicated.

When a person's life impetus is disrupted, then some form of life review and planning are needed in order to reestablish direction and momentum. This is what counselling is meant to do. Of course, there are times when a client's difficulty is beyond the competency of the counsellor or clearly outside the mandate of a particular institution. This requires that the counsellor make use of a referral network and see that the client is able to locate more appropriate assistance.

WHAT ARE THE PLANNED PRODUCTS OF CCTP?

The main products of CCTP are books and manuals:

1. Book on non-linear career development with implications for counsellors.

2. Practical guidebook for counsellors which presents various "constructivist" counselling procedures and discusses counselling topics such as interviewing, assessment, and meaning making from a constructivist perspective.

The B.C. Counsellor
4. Workbook on “personal process learning”—for use by counsellors in training and with clients in counselling.
5. Manual on “networking.”
6. Guidebook on “constructive use of emotional experience in counselling” for use in training and in counselling with clients.
7. Workbook on “autobiographical thinking and critical reflection” for use in training and in counselling.
9. Self-instructional video and study guide on “constructivist interviewing.”
10. Annotated listing of resources to support constructivist oriented career counselling.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE TRAINING FORMATS FOR USING THESE PRODUCTS?

One of the assumptions underlying our work is that effective trainers are capable of modifying training routines to meet the needs of various groups of trainees. Therefore, it is possible to use diverse formats and organize the learning activities to make sense within the various formats. There are three formats envisioned:

1. Workshop. This format can vary from as brief as one-day to week-long workshops. A workshop on a specific career counselling topic can be given all at one time or sequentially over a number of part days or even over weeks. It is doubtful if any actual “training” can be accomplished in less than one day or eight hours of instruction spread over several days.

2. Course. There will be adequate material to organize a course in career counselling which could extend over a long period, for example, for a semester or year at a college or university.

3. Self-study. Some of the concepts and practices contained in the products could be learned through self-study, provided that individual “lessons” were packaged. This could be accomplished through correspondence, e-mail, fax, or in conjunction with broadcast television.
WHEN WILL CCTP PRODUCTS BE READY FOR DISTRIBUTION?

CCTP products are expected to be in final form, or near final form, by December 31, 1992.

WHAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF TRAINERS?

Since CCTP career counselling is grounded in a "new paradigm" or in a conceptual framework which is not familiar to all trainers, "training-for-trainers" workshop or seminar is probably necessary for most potential trainers. It is necessary for trainers to be both knowledgeable about, and committed to, the approach to counselling. Otherwise, trainees are deprived of "living examples" and are quite likely to be confused by trainers who are not able to provide authentic training.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLE TOPICS FOR TRAINING WORKSHOPS?

- Developing a cooperative relationship with clients
- The constructivist interview
- Use of autobiographical thinking in counselling
- Networks for counsellors and for clients
- Developing Interactional competency
- Learning to work from client experience
- Constructivist framework for career assessment
- Identification of life activities and personal projects as a way of formulating meaning in work
- Implementing the self-help principle in counselling
- Learning to do receptive inquiry
- Using critical reflection in work and transition
- Developing control of your life as a helpful person

In this brief paper I have attempted to present something of the intent and flavor of CCTP. I wish to acknowledge the generous financial support for the project from the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission, the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology, the University of Victoria and the administrative assistance of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation. For more information on the project and its products, contact Dr. R. Vance Peavy, Director, Career Counsellor Training Project, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3N4.

The B.C. Counsellor
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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Constructivist Counselling: A Prospectus

Abstract
This conceptual-analytic article presents a constructivist framework for the practice of counselling, especially career counselling. An Ethic of Authenticity is outlined and this is followed by a discussion of the need for new orientations in career counselling and a new model of the self on which to base much of the work of the counsellor. The remainder of the article discusses various practical implications which stem from assuming a constructivist framework. Constructivist principles require that a holistic psychology be used in helping clients to change and this means that career counselling should not be treated as a kind of counselling separate from counselling addressing other life issues. Therefore, career counselling is defined as a general methodology for life planning. The article concludes with a discussion of various aspects of this methodology including an outline of the constructivist interview and associated counsellor tasks.

PART I: THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

As part of the Camtry-sponsored project at the University of Victoria, my research associates and I are developing (1) new methods for training career counsellors and (2) new career counselling procedures. "New" means either inventions of our own or significant reorientation of already existing methods of training and counselling. Broadly speaking, all of our innovations are being developed within the conceptual framework of constructivism. I have described many of our new conceptualizations in other papers (Peavy, 1991, 1992).

In the major portion of this paper I will describe some of the concepts which provide a basis for new approaches to career counselling and the training of career counsellors. In the second section of the paper I will briefly address practical applications of our work. The discussion in this paper revolves around direct face-to-face counselling which represents the most valuable context for youth and adults to discuss issues related to individual career choice — issues such as alternatives, purpose, uncertainty, barriers, worklife and the personal meaning of work and career. This emphasis is not meant to deny the importance of group career counselling, career guidance in the classroom or the use of technology to support the career counselling and guidance process. It is meant to underscore the fundamental importance of face-to-face counselling as a means of facilitating individual life planning and career decision-making.

Before proceeding on to a more specific discussion of constructivist counselling, I will first present the idea of an ethic of authenticity which is intended to provide a philosophical orientation based on self-fulfillment as a moral good. This orientation is offered as a guide for counsellors in their work with clients.

Ethic of Authenticity
In the 1991 Massey Lecture, the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1991) identifies three worrisome features of modern, North American society. The first is "individualism" in its degraded forms of the "me generation," narcissism or "permissive society" in which each individual does her or his own thing. The second worry is the hegemony of "instrumental reason." This is the belief that whatever is most efficient or looks best in terms of cost-benefit analysis is best. Instrumental reason often means that human fulfilment is reduced to a matter of dollars. It is also allied with the assumed virtues of technology (Benner and Wrubel, 1989). In medicine, instrumental reason often sides with technical achievement rather than with the care of the "whole" person. For example, the contribution of nurses is degraded in comparison with the contribution of nuclear medicine technology. Similarly, in counselling, the value of one-to-one counselling is often degraded by arguments that it is not cost-efficient or is too time-consuming. The third malaise to which Taylor alludes is loss of freedom brought by various features of contemporary society such as bureaucratization, the "iron cage" of technology, the pervasive surveillance and control exercised by governments of "soft despotism," and by the triumph of instrumental reason over humanistic care and respect. Instrumental reason leads to the "dream of the quick fix" which in turn leads to compromise and the reduction of personal freedom.

In counselling, if we are to resist and try to avoid and overcome such malaises as Taylor posits, then we must carefully examine the values and assumptions which underlie our counselling practices. As a start I suggest the following. Counselling should be based on:

1. A wholistic rather than a reductive psychology of the individual.

2. A moral idea that self-fulfilment is a "good"—that is, that one should strive to become what one is potentially able to be.

3. A concept of personal freedom as a tripartite entity. It is dependent, without question, upon one's own responsible actions and thinking; it is also dependent upon the quality of relationships which one has with others; finally, personal freedom is influenced by the kind and quality of one's engagement in meaning beyond one's own ego—engagement in such phenomena as nature, God, society, art, compassion for others, work, etc.

Taylor proposes that we consider an ethic of authenticity which would help us to overcome some of the worrisome aspects of contemporary society such as soft relativism—the belief that every person is entitled to his own values and that these can't be argued with. Or the idea that there is an endless range of alternatives to choose from and one choice is as good as the next. Or the idea that every individual is completely her own master—that we are all just an aggregation of atoms unconnected to each other by commitment, respect or care. These types of thinking lead to unbridled self-centredness, greed and disregard for the needs and dignity of others.

Taylor's ethic of authenticity can be taken as a set of arguments in favour of self-fulfilment or, more precisely, as indicating the philosophical principles which constitute the modern self. Moreover, an ethic of authenticity can be invoked to resist and overcome the moral defaults outlined above. Briefly, an ethic of authenticity manifests five interconnected features.

1. It involves creation and construction, or making of the self, as well as discovering who we are, in contrast with a self that is determined by external criteria and forces.

2. It implies that each individual is, in some sense, an original being even though in certain ways each is similar to many others, or even all others.

3. It requires of the individual a willingness to stand up for him- or herself, even if it means opposing the conventions of society.

4. It requires that the individual remain open to significance beyond the self (if we do not engage in meanings beyond our own self-interests, then we have no way of judging the value of our own life choices).

5. It assumes that self-definition arises from dialogue; who we become from infancy onward depends very much on the social relations we have with others and the patterns of meaning and communication in which we are participants.

These five factors: construction, originality, standing up, significance and dialogue interact in differing ways to produce an ethic of authenticity and provide a moral framework in contemporary society for understanding who we are and understanding the background for our choices in life. It also represents a model of the self for counsellors to use when working with clients and for self-understanding as well.

Constructivist Counselling

Constructivist counselling is not so much a specific approach or set of techniques as it is a philosophical framework within which counselling is done. One of the early contributors to constructivism was George Kelly (1959). He asserted that "Whatever exists, can be reconstructed." Constructivism, which has roots in philosophy, psychology, therapy, biology and cultural studies, holds to the thesis that human beings are "self-organizing" systems rather than stimulus-response organisms, information processors or sets of traits.

A further premise of constructivism is that self-organization is accomplished through the processes of "meaning-making," "reality construction" and "interpersonal negotiation." Within the context of counselling this means that the counsellor guides and collaborates with the client or clients in activities such as reconstruing, reframing, redescribing, revising and reinterpreting perspectives in reference to the complication with which the client is trying to cope. It also means that counsellor and client may cooperate in developing alternative choices and plans of action based on revised perspectives.

From a constructivist perspective individuals "produce" their own lives through reconstruing and through actions which they deliberately take. Actions and patterns of actions are understood to be grounded in the meaning constructions of the individual. To find out why a person does or does not perform a given action or set of actions requires that the "personal meaning" of the action be determined. Meaning and action are constitutive of each other. An activity often takes on meaning for me as I "do" it; conversely, I will be much more likely to do something if I perceive it to hold meaning and purpose for me.

The general goal of constructivist counselling is to facilitate clients' self-organization and self-expansion. Self-organization is constituted by new and altered meanings—and by actions which are in accordance with these personally relevant meanings (Mahoney, 1990). We believe that this can best be done in the context of counselling which embodies safety, care and deliberate, critical examination of assumptions, values, relationships and sets of actions.

Help which is given to the client in face-to-face counselling should be aimed at the goal of self-help. In this way, self-organizing and action planning which occurs in face-to-face counselling enhances both the autonomy and self-helping ability of the client. The impulse to self-help then can carry the client forward in situations beyond the counselling interview.

Constructivist counselling aims at reorganizing and expanding the self in
terms of (1) reflectiveness, critical thinking and self-knowledge and (2) feelings of adequacy and confidence. A further goal is to facilitate the interactional ability of clients.

The Need for New Orientations in Career Counselling

It is often said that "career counselling," or "vocational counselling" does not seem to rank very high on the personal agendas of counsellors — either in their training or their practice. As a counsellor educator of many years experience, I can recall literally hundreds of conversations with individuals applying for admission to counsellor training programs in which the applicant conveyed to me that he or she was "not particularly interested in career counselling." I believe that there have been numerous reasons for this attitude toward career counselling, but two stand out.

First, career counselling has been founded on conceptions of the self which simply do not match the self as it is actually experienced by people in their daily lives. The conception of self which has formed the basis for counselling procedures such as self-assessment, career assessment, job-traits matching and so on, has been that of the self as "profile" or "organism" made up of testable aptitudes, interests and personality traits and variables. In its most extreme form, such a conception is that a self is "that point where personality variables intersect!" Much of career counselling has been organized around what might be called a psychometric self — you are what tests say you are. Many counsellors and clients have found this approach to self-understanding to be less than satisfying.

Recent (post-modern) developments in philosophy (Rorty, 1989), anthropology (Caughey, 1984), sociology (Giddens, 1991) and psychology (Sarbin, 1986) are now depicting conceptions of selves as fluid, composed as they go along, frequently revised and constructed through conversation or dialogue. In most ways, and in contrast to "psychometric" conceptions of self, these "new" conceptions of self are much closer to how an individual actually experiences it's self in everyday life. Further, the new conceptions offer rich sources of possibilities for change and development with which career counsellors can work.

A second reason why career counselling has not appealed to practitioners is that the career counsellor has been cast in the role of information-giving expert who provides clients with information — on careers, labor force, job markets, education, training, income and future employment trends. This role of expert data handler has never been appealing to many counsellors. Now that there are "information technologies" which handle complex data much more efficiently and accurately than humans, counsellors have even less reason to savour the role of information-handler.

Even more importantly, emphasis on information generation represents a partly mistaken idea about how people make decisions. While information is important in making decisions, it is only important if it gets converted into personally meaningful knowledge which the individual can use and wants to use, as a guide to choosing and acting. Career counselling needs to be focused on how individuals get and use personally meaningful knowledge in relation to career choice and preparation and not be satisfied with simply providing "facts" and information.

It is small wonder that counsellors and others concerned with career development and choice often are "lukewarm" toward a role which is conceived to be that of a rationalistic, information-providing expert and feel constrained to work with psychometric selves.

Developing a New Concept of Self

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to present a detailed analysis of self theory, a brief description follows of what might be called guiding ideas for a conception of the self which is what makes sense in the context of evolving, contemporary society and which is close to the "social experience" and the "personal experience" of individuals.

1. The self is not a set of stable traits. Rather, it is a system of meanings which are continuously under revision and are expressed through the ability to say "I" and tell stories.

2. The self is reflexive. This means that a person's constructs and actions are bound together through acts of reflection. Giddens (1991) points out that both contemporary institutions and contemporary selves are constantly revising themselves based on information which comes to awareness and then acting in accordance with this information. In his terms the self is a reflexive project reorganizing itself in terms of both time and circumstance.

3. The self is a self-referential, internal process which is constituted of meaning, purpose, intention and order. In everyday interaction we tend to deal with each other in what can be thought of as "external forms." We say the correct things, we do what is normally expected of us in our respective roles, we tend to interact on the level of personae and control our inner thoughts and feelings more than we disclose them. In counselling, however, there is often a need for the counsellor to help clients to shift from external form to internal, personal process. Access to the feeling life, to the assumptions, values and belief-systems of the client — in short, to how the client is construing her-self and world. Access to internal, personal process is essential if self-reorganization is to be facilitated. While this shift is not always required, the ability to do so is crucial to being a good counsellor.

4. Each person's life is a story — in fact, many stories. The "who" of a person is constructed through dialogue or narrative within which can be called a self space. A self space is populated by many imaginary versions of "I" and correspondingly many imaginary versions of others such as parents, friends, colleagues, enemies and so on. It is estimated that the typical individual has, in her self space, between 200 and 300 hundred imaginary replicas of sc-
ual social others with whom some form of contact, past or present, prevails. In addition to these replicated others, each person also has purely imaginary others for whom there is no actual counterpart — such as the imaginary companions of children or the figures of dream and fantasy. Finally, in one’s self space there are “media” figures which come into existence through contact with television, videos, fiction and even computer games (Caughey, 1984; Watkins, 1986).

Within the self space of a person, endless dialogues occur between the I’s and their Me’s and all of the imaginary others. These “conversations of the imagination” are very important for at least two reasons. First, they play a part in organizing the self. Second, they influence how a person acts toward others as well as toward self. These imaginary conversations interact with conversations which the individual has with actual others.

Selves are organized around the ability to say I — I think, I feel, I believe, etc. Yet what “I” think changes in accordance to changes in interpersonal relations, social and physical situations and time. I take various “I” positions or occupy different “possible selves,” each with its own voice, depending upon contexts of relationships, circumstances and time which I am experiencing at any given moment.

The various voices of the self function like characters in a novel. Each story takes on a degree of coherence in itself, yet at the same time partially constituting the “whole” self. Each character has a story to tell from the perspective of its own experienced past, present and imagined future. The different voices of the self exchange information about their respective “Me’s” and “Me-worlds.” This internal dialogue results in a complex, narratively structured self in which meaning, imagination, alternative realities and storying play crucial parts.

This polyphonic conception of the self (Herms, Kempen, and van Loon, 1992) is a radical departure from prevailing conceptions of the self as a bundle of traits, motives and behaviours, or as a behaving organism, or as an animate computer. I will briefly outline three implications of this new conception of self which bear on counselling.

1. Multiple realities. From this perspective on self there is no “one right way” to think or do. Instead it forces one to recognize the many perspectives from which a given issue can be considered. It also helps to bring the issues of risk and trust into full view. If there is no “one right way,” then we must act as if a certain way of doing things is better than others. We are forced to (a) consider more vigorously the consequences of taking a certain perspective, (b) examine assumptions underlying each perspective and (c) to take individual choice seriously. Stability in human conduct becomes more a matter of “this is how it is for the moment or until further notice,” rather than “this is the way it is for once and for all.”

2. Importance of dialogue. The importance of face-to-face dialogue as experienced in the counselling encounter can hardly be overestimated. Face-to-face dialogue has the special character of being a kind of listening, speaking and questioning which attempts to develop an increasingly full understanding of the topics under discussion; further, participants in dialogue retain a willingness to be changed by what is heard. Dialogue is a different order of communication from telling, ordering, advising or teaching in that it includes an authentic receptivity on the part of participants to be changed by what they hear. Of course everyday practical conversational experience makes clear that individuals vary greatly in their willingness or ability to engage in dialogical communication.

Perhaps even more than interpersonal dialogue, imaginal dialogue plays a central role in our lives, especially influencing how we form decisions, relate to others and come to understand different perspectives. In counselling, imaginal dialogues need to be regarded respectfully, not minimized or discounted. When a client says, “I think my father would be very upset if he knew what career I am planning for myself,” it is important to recognize that the client’s statement should not be simply discounted as a “guess” or as “role-taking” or as an “illusion.” Instead, the counsellor should recognize that by this statement the client is saying, “I construe my father as a self-position that I can occupy within my own mental space. When I do this I create a perspective on my own world and my own self which is different from the one the I usually hold.” Of course, this imaginal dialogue may or may not approximate the view held by the actual other (father). This can only be checked out in face-to-face dialogue with the father.

Even when a person is outwardly silent, inwardly she may well be communicating with countless others in the landscape of her consciousness — friends, parents, conscience, pets, media figures, dream images, gods, reflections in the mirror — everyone of which is personally meaningful and capable of exerting influence on the individual’s decisions.

3. The constraints of context and culture. Selves do not arise spontaneously from the present nor are they little bits of consciousness locked in our heads. Nor do they miraculously unfold from the wonder of nature and nurture mixing it up together according to psychological laws of development. Selves are constructed through interactional and imaginal dialogue and through taking actions which “make” meaning or are driven by meaning. Beyond these self-constructing activities, persons are clearly influenced by cultural values and knowledge available in the immediate context.

Values locate a person in a given historical culture as, for example: young, old, man, woman, white, black or aboriginal. Values give order to one’s self, and act to constrain it. Most counsellors have encountered clients who do not seem to be able to “let their feelings speak.” Instead, these clients “intellectualize.” Other clients seem to view the
world as only a black or white place — they have binary vision. Limited ability to express one's feelings or to see alternatives may be due to some traumatic or inhibiting personal experience. However, limitation is just as likely to result from adherence to cultural values which have been incorporated into the self through family interaction. The point is that cultural values can constrain or facilitate a client's (and counsellor's) efforts to reach useful goals for the client.

The Practice of Constructivist Counselling

The practice of constructivist counselling has three aspects: (1) various (practical) means of accessing the internal, personal learning process of the client, (2) the provision of a milieu within which clients feel safe, supported and willing to engage in personal process learning and (3) counsellor competency. I will discuss each of these aspects.

Internal, personal process. First, counselling refers to various means or activities which a counsellor uses to gain access to a client's internal, self-referential process of personal learning, purpose, decision-making and planning. Client change in thinking and in acting begins with changes in the internal, self-referential process of the client. There are a great many means that counsellors can use in order to assist clients to change and move toward preferred goals. Five examples of counsellor means are (1) the counselling relationship itself by means of which the counsellor can provide a context of trust and support, (2) the use of certain questions by means of which the counsellor can assist the client to self-observe and state implicit beliefs and assumptions, (3) the use of imagery by means of which the counsellor can assist the client to probe the future, (4) the use of self-coherence by means of which the counsellor can help the client to clarify and revise life-stories which the client is living by and (5) the use of activity analysis by means of which the counsellor can help the client to discern the personally meaningful activities which are being taken and to discover new and meaningful action possibilities.

As already stated, the constructivist view is that each individual is internally organized around the self-referential ability to say "I." The organized patterns of knowing, feeling and meaning is what we call self. A self is made up of various levels and sectors of meaning, and I-positions, mostly derived from concrete interactional experience with others.

"Who" a person is can best be discerned by listening to the stories a person tells about herself. We can depict a person as an "author" of herself in the sense that each person constructs her own stories from the materials available in her social and cultural contexts. Counselling is a process which attempts to elicit, understand and sometimes co-author the other's story. From a narrative point of view, a person's self is constituted by internal dialogue and interaction with others. Individuals readily tell the stories of major life events such as first job, winning a school award, getting married or divorced, losing a job and so on. Virtually none can explain these events in terms of imputed personality traits.

Milieu. The second aspect of counselling refers to a milieu (often the counselling relationship per se) which offers emotional safety, facilitation and support for the client's process of personal learning and self-reconstruction. A safe milieu reduces feelings of vulnerability and threat which are often experienced by clients. The reduction of perceived threat invariably leads to a "loosening" of rigid ways of interpreting "how things are" and makes the client more open to the consideration of alternative ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling and acting. Safety also implies interpersonal trust which is an essential precondition for experimenting with alternative ways of thinking and acting.

Competency. The practice of counselling is based on the assumption that practitioners are competent. However, we hold an expanded view of competency which goes far beyond the view of competency as behavioural skill which is presented in many counselling approaches.

Counselling competency contains at least the following elements. First, the individual must be able to perceive relevant features in a given situation which call for the exercise of the competency in question. This usually is in the form of "tacit" or intuitive knowledge of similar situations which one has previously experienced. Second, the individual must have a sense of timing — an ability to judge just when the competency should be exercised. Third, the individual must have an intention to bring about a certain result by acting competently. Fourth, in order to act competently, one must have practised and mastered the mental or behavioural operation or skill called for. For example, if I decide to perform a paraphrase in order to verify that I have understood what a client has said, then I must be able to perform the linguistic skill of mirroring the gist of what the client has said. Fifth, in order to perform competently, one must be able to exercise constraint on competing ego-demands and maintain concentration on the competency task at hand. Finally, one must value the competency in question and this valuing must show explicitly and implicitly in my interaction with the client.

Rather than taking competency to be just a skill, in expanded form a competency includes: (1) contextual perception, (2) sense of timing, (3) intention, (4) ego control, (5) behavioral or mental skill and (6) value support. In various combinations, these factors account for competency ranging all the way from the minimal competency of the beginner through the intuitive and masterful performance of the expert (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986).

From a constructivist point of view, the ability to counsel assumes four basic competencies:

1. mindfulness
2. interactional competency
3. receptive inquiry
4. meaning making
Perhaps the most fundamental competency is mindfulness. This refers to the individual's ability to self-observe and remain aware of various aspects of her own consciousness. This is the domain of self-knowledge. The counselor's awareness of self lays the basis for sustained attention to others and helps the counselor to refrain from "blindly" imposing her own biases and interpretations on others. A second important competency is interactional competence — which for the most part means ability to express and understand the nuances of language and understanding how words "do" things. Human life is linguistic life. To inquire into the meaning and justification of speech utterances is tantamount to asking about the meaning and justification of the speakers themselves — are these authentic utterances to begin with?

Interactional competency means that the counselor should be able to observe, communicate, relate and negotiate in face-to-face dialogue. It also implies an ability to "self-observe" already mentioned as mindfulness. These abilities add up to being able to interpret "what is going on here" in face-to-face interaction and in imaginary dialogue with a minimum of denial, deception or bias. Spoken communication — to the extent that one "means" what one says, is self-involving, in terms of commitment, belief and performance. Meaning is essentially relationship. It is like my approaching a client (other), announcing myself to the other as one who intends to be-present-to-you and inviting the other to do likewise. This is the essence of meaningful interaction.

The second competency is receptive inquiry. This is an attitude of empathy combined with an ability to question and elucidate meaning. Receptive inquiry does not mean accepting the client's assumptions — it means using forms of questioning which create client openness to different kinds of experience, readiness to examine different perspectives and constitutes an effort to induce critical thinking by the client. This type of inquiry, in contrast to interrogation or questioning to get at the "facts," can only take place in a relational climate where clients have the experience of being heard, of having both their perspective and their feelings understood, of feeling that they are confirmed and respected. This form of inquiry opens the premises for exploration of the client's life-space in terms of both meaning and action.

The third competency is the ability to engage in, and promote, meaning-making activities. Meaning is a complex and elusive concept — in one sense it is relation, as I have already emphasized. As used here it implies three components: Purpose, intention and order or pattern. These three components are implied whenever we speak of meaning in reference to our experience, relationships or entities such as work or objects. Meaning does not "just happen" — we must deliberately and actively "make" meaning. Meaning is ordered or patterned.

A meaningful story is one which a person intends to tell. The various parts of the story are interconnected and "sewn together" in a pattern which has a purpose. If we cannot discern patterns of meaning and a sense of purpose in what we experience, we tend to say "this doesn't make sense" or "doesn't have any meaning" or "this doesn't interest me." Mahoney and Lyddon (1988) write that "The basic assertion of constructivism is that each individual creates his or her own representational model of the world ...(which) becomes a framework from which the individual orders and assigns meaning to new experience" (p. 201).

New Definition of Career Counselling

Early conceptions of career counselling emphasized testing, diagnosis, and matching clients with jobs or occupations. More recent versions of career counselling have tended to include the concepts of "career development" (Brown, Brooks, and Associates, 1990) and emphasize a "holistic" or "life-planning" conception (Gysbers and Moore, 1987) of career counselling. Even though career counselling theorists are moving in the direction of meaning-based and wholistic methods of counselling, their counselling prescriptions remain fixed on such components as diagnosis, problem identification, intervention, assessment, information and evaluation. Up to now, it has mainly been Donald Super who has pointed out the need to develop career counselling that would emphasize the need for clients to be active career planners, decision makers and assimilators of useful self and environmental information. The Tiedeman's (Miller-Tiedeman, A., and Tiedeman, D., 1990) concept of "lifecareer" is also a recent attempt to transcend older conceptions of career counselling. Lifecareer theory includes emphasis on individual consciousness, self-organizing concepts and a re-examination of the role of "objectivity" in career decision making.

In the context of our project, career counselling is defined as a general methodology for life planning. The rationale for this definition is as follows. In thinking, feeling, remembering, imagining and acting in personally meaningful ways, the individual is "producing" his or her life, or more precisely, a self. A self is a wholistic phenomenon, made up of patterns of meaning organized in a purposeful system. This system has as its center the ability to say "I" — more precisely, to take a number of "I" positions. "Life-planning" implicates such factors as "life-style" (What kind of life do I want to live?); "life-span" (At what point in my life am I now?); "life-calendar" (What are the significant events in my life?); "life-trajectory" (What direction is my life taking and how am I tending it to the landscape across which it is passing?); and "life purpose" (What is it that is most meaningful to me in my life?)

An individual life, or self, is a system continuously striving for balance between and amongst activities and meaning in four sectors of life space: work, intimacy, health, and play.

To separate out career or work from the other sectors of the individual's life is artificial and fragmenting. Life is lived as a single piece — counselling should be construed so as to recognize this "wholistic" nature of
everyday life. Of course, clients come for counselling because of specific concerns within one or another of the four sectors of life space. What career should I choose and prepare for? is a question clearly situated in the (future) work sector. However, it implicates health, relations with others, status in society and leisure considerations. To be concerned with work or any other specific concern always has implications for other aspects of one's life, since individuals are self-organizing, holistic systems.

New Vision for the Conduct of Individual Career Counselling
Consider the following scenario. Counsellor and client meet. At first it is a meeting between “outer forms.” They speak of mundane things, they are polite, they are cautious. Each is testing out the authenticity of the other.

Soon a slight shift takes place in the conversation that is passing back and forth between the two. A discussion begins to take place, still between the outer forms. This discussion presupposes that the counsellor intends to quickly learn as much as possible about the client—her concern, ways of thinking, feeling, trusting and receptivity to cooperating, learning and disclosing. The counsellor asks questions, listens, observes, summarizes and uses external criteria for gaining an understanding of the client and what the client is seeking counselling for.

The impression which the counsellor builds up is based on what the client says and does in an “objective” sense. The counsellor may even use tests to find out “what the tests say” about this client.

A further supposition underlying this initial discussion is that the counsellor is prepared to become engaged with the client at a deeper level of concentration and intensity.

This second shift marks a clear change of focus from outer forms to an inner process of personal learning, self-observation, reflexivity and reorganization. This shift requires of the counsellor that she be capable of emptying herself of distractions, of irrelevant and idiosyncratic personae, of all other psychic elements which might interfere with disciplined concentration, deep listening and empathic attunement with the other. By emptying herself as much as possible of impositional impulses, the counsellor becomes authentically present to the other, to the other’s stories and biography and other’s tribulations.

In this way the counsellor, as a non-imposing receptive inquirer, is able to enter into the self space of the client where together they can explore and make meaning, plan and develop alternative ways of thinking and acting—sometimes even prepare for a different way of being.

Engaging in this shift means that the counsellor assumes the phenomenological attitude—the counsellor acts so as to allow the self of the client and the thoughts, feelings and actions of the client to be expressed as what they are, without any distorting influence on the counsellor’s part. In part this attitude is achieved by an emptying out of the counsellor’s ego demands. In part it is achieved by accurate observation—listening and seeing which is concentrated, non-interfering and empathic. In part it is achieved by questioning which arises from the client’s utterances and not from the counsellor’s assumptions, expectations or need for control.

Faced with a truly receptive counsellor, the client also undergoes a change in the sense of an “outpouring.” Given the right situation of receptivity, the client pours out stories into the counsellor’s openness of hearing and understanding. This outpouring signals the client’s shift from outer form to inner process, from objective criteria for deciding to personally meaningful decisions grounded in the experience of the self.

These shifts, and the resulting co-participation enables both client and counsellor to experience a sense of “working together” and of mutual understanding and transformation in the form of growth and expansion of self. The principal experience of self-organization, and expansion is on the part of the client, for it is the client who is actively seeking change. However, it should not be overlooked that this shift in counselling focus on outer form to inner process also brings about change and reorganization of the counsellor’s self.

PART II
PRAGTICAL DISCUSSION OF THE INTERVIEW TASKS
In texts on counselling practice, discussion is often organized around the interview. I will briefly discuss the interview from the constructivist perspective and use this discussion to introduce practical guidelines for constructivist counselling.

If the term “interview” is taken to identify a method of getting information, then a different term should be used in reference to counsellor-client meetings. However, if interview is taken to mean “face-to-face” meeting, then one can discuss the nature of the constructivist interview. All human encounters, including interviews, have beginnings, middles and ends. We can think of these as “stages” in an interactive structure. The diagram on the following page (Figure 1) outlines nine tasks which typify the work of the constructivist counsellor during an interview. The column on the right shows the main function of each group of tasks in each stage of the interview.

Task 1. Providing a counselling space which is reasonably free from the intrusions of telephone, other people, and which offers at least a degree of privacy is an initial way of showing respect both for the client and for the counselling process.

Task 2. To accept the role of careful listener is to take a committed and responsible attitude toward the other. One should be prepared to see that the venture of helping is carried through and not prematurely abandoned. Finding out what name the person wishes to be called, and then using that name can be quite helpful. The client should be able to sense immediately that the counsellor is interested, ready to be personally involved, trustworthy and is a credible listener.
Figure 1. Constructivist Interview

<table>
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<th>Task</th>
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| **Beginning** | Task 1: Provide a suitable meeting place, protected from distractions. **Task 2**: Meet, greet and initiate rapport and a working relationship. **Task 3**: Make mutual expectations explicit and set time limit. **Task 4**: Begin exploration of client’s self-space by eliciting client story, voiced concern and relevant personal constructs. **Task 5**: Explicate, examine and negotiate meaning of the complicating issues by means of receptive inquiry questions. Use relevant information. Generate “knowledge”. **Task 6**: Identify and construct alternatives. Work with the “as-if.” Negotiate and initiate “experiments” designed to alter constructs and perspectives. **Task 7**: Explore the “network” of tie-ins that the complicating issue has with other people, aspects of self and with past, present and future. **Task 8**: Confront the autonomy, responsibility and power of the self. Negotiate how the client’s self can be engaged to carry out action initiatives in real world contexts and with other people. Reinforce the principle of self-help. **Task 4, 5, and 6 are devoted to gaining access to the client’s inner process of: personal learning, meaning creation, feeling, reflecting, self-organization, construing, biography, envisioning**. **Tasks 7 and 8 confront the individual with interactional ties to others, institutions and with time.** **Task 8 is devoted to implementing the self-help principle, to the move from inner process to action and interaction and personal agency.** **Task 9 concludes the meeting in an authentic manner.**

| Task 3 | The first three tasks are aimed at establishing an interactional framework for cooperative working together. **Tasks 4, 5, and 6 are devoted to gaining access to the client’s inner process of: personal learning, meaning creation, feeling, reflecting, self-organization, construing, biography, envisioning.** **Tasks 7 and 8 confront the individual with interactional ties to others, institutions and with time.** **Task 8 is devoted to implementing the self-help principle, to the move from inner process to action and interaction and personal agency.** **Task 9 concludes the meeting in an authentic manner.**

**Task 3.** For the first time client, it is helpful for the counsellor to briefly explain the purpose of counselling, what a counsellor does (listens, helps the client to understand, etc.) what is typically expected of a client (speaks of her concern, helps the counsellor get the gist of the concern, etc.); the counsellor should comment on issues of privacy, confidentiality and explain any rules which may be in effect in the particular counselling situation. It is best to set the time frame at the beginning of the interview. It is a good idea to ask what the client’s expectations of counselling are also. This task should be seen as an opportunity for the counsellor to initiate attitudes of collaboration and joint participation in the work of the interview.

**Task 4.** Now the counsellor can encourage the client to “tell her story.” The counsellor must now put aside her own personal way of construing the world and adopt the professional system of constructs within which credulous, empathic listening is a primary tool and the object of this listening is to subsume the client’s construing system. This means going beyond normal listening, even beyond empathic listening and strive to begin seeing the world as the client sees it. Most people find it easy to tell their story to an interested listener. It is up to the counsellor to convey interest which is genuine. This can be done in many ways such as giving full attention and asking questions which are rooted in what the client is saying, not in the curiosity or habit patterns of the counsellor. Showing interest and demonstrating a willingness to become interpersonally involved as an interested listener, a receptive questioner and a promoter of meaningful expression goes a long way in avoiding so-called “client resistance.” People live by the stories which they tell. It is up to the counsellor to observe just how this is occurring and help the client to fill in missing parts of a story and to see in what ways a particular story is serving this client. Stories are never complete and it is in exploring what is missing or not told by the story that openings to new experience or alternative ways of thinking and acting often appear.

**Task 5.** As a story is told, it invariably reveals a “complicating issue.” Examples of complicating issues are: “I don’t know what I want to do with my life,” “What school should I go to?,” “My parents and I don’t agree at all on what career I should prepare for,” “I don’t know what to do next,” “I don’t have any friends,” and so on. The reason for using the term “complicating issue” rather than “problem” is to stress how something which is troubling an individual is not just insoluble as a “problem;” rather, it frequently touches many aspects of one’s self and relations in a “complicating” way. This compli-
cation is often a powerful organizer and has a strong influence on what can be called the Now self — the self as I actually perceive it at the present time — and on the stories the Now self is telling and living by.

Task 6. "Experiments" refers to a variety of ways in which counsellor and client, working together, can (1) find out how the client would like things to be, what alternative ways of acting or thinking can be identified, what future hopes or goals can be brought to light, and then (2) devising "experiments" to elaborate and test out these alternatives. Experiments can take many shapes: conversations, thought-experiments, writing, drawing, modelling, dramatization, role-playing, imagery, planning and initiating a set of actions, exploring new information through studying and reflection and undertaking new life experiences.

Experiments should either be compatible with those aspects of self which are presently adequate but in need of confirmation or in the direction of reconstruing one's self differently, or acting differently. In this way how one construes oneself is loosened and the future is opened up for the making of possible selves.

Task 7. A self is "tied-in" to social life through reciprocal contacts with other individuals and with institutions. In addition to exploring the way in which a complicating issue is influencing the self in terms of worry, adequacy and self-constriction, it is also important to examine the network of relations in which the individual is embedded, both actual social relations and relations with figures in the imagination. This exploration can encompass past, present and future.

Certain questions can be used by the counsellor to help the client examine her ties to other people and circumstances.

Past: In your past, who are the persons who have had an influence on you? What was that influence like? How do you think you are being affected by these influences today? Can you see any connections between these influences and the complication you are talking with me about? Similar questions can be asked about experiences and circumstances.

Present: At present, who are the people in your life who are affecting you the most? What kind of effect is it? Do you think they are involved in the complication you are discussing with me? If so, how? Similar questions can be asked about experience and circumstance.

Future: Do you have future goals which you think will play an important part in your life? When you think of the future, who are the people (real or imagined) whom you see in it? In what ways do you anticipate that they will be important for you? When you think of your future, what do you think will be very important to you in terms of people you will know, in terms of what occupation or job you would like to have, in terms of the style of life you want to lead?

Questions such as those just listed and the conversations surrounding them bring together two experts. The client is an expert on his or her own experience and life story. The client is an expert on what she thinks is relevant in the local situation in relation to her own life. The counsellor is an expert on methods of inquiry and communication and has insight into personal and social phenomena and processes at the general level of relevance.

Task 8. One of the purposes of "experimenting" with possible alternatives is to explore the self-confidence of the client in striving to improve her life situation? How engaged is the client? The counsellor can reinforce the client's sense of personal power and engagement in various ways:

- Establish and maintain a spirit of cooperation
- Offer unconditional respect for the uniqueness and value of the "person" of the client
- Acknowledge and validate the client's efforts in the counselling situation
- Help the client to respect and use her own process for personal learning
- Respect the client's expertise on her own life experience and on her circumstances
- Support the client's need for change
- Help the client develop feasible action plans.

Task 9. When the end of a counselling session approaches, take time to trade comments with each other on how the session has gone — both for the client and the counsellor. "What do you think of what we have discussed today?" or "How have things gone for you in our counselling?" are good questions to ask of the client. I try to remember to tell clients something which they have said or done which has especially interested me or which I have taken to be insightful or otherwise valuable. If either you or the client have committed to anything outside of the counselling context, or before meeting again, it is important to reiterate these commitments.

Conclusions

The approach to career counselling outlined in this article is based on three assumptions. First, that any counselling method should make sense to clients and should reflect the overall features of the social context within which the clients are living. The second assumption is that the ideas and pictures individuals have in their heads, i.e., how they "construe" the world, and the "meaning" they make, play a major role in how they act. Therefore counselling should be organized around client construals — what they are, how they can be revised and how they are used by clients in interacting with others and the world around them. The third assumption is that the self and how it is organized as a set of construals, meanings and stories is the principal psychological entity which counsellors should attend to. Gaining knowledge of the self should constitute a principal part of both the training of counsellors and of counselling itself.

In this article I have tried to show how these assumptions are tied to various concepts and practices in a constructivist approach to counselling. The constructivist approach to understanding human behavior and to
counselling as described in this article invites counsellors to consider (1) that attempts to change or correct the client’s “objective” perceptions or adaptations to reality almost always result in patronizing and treating the client as a “helpless” one; and, (2) the counsellor has an alternative — that is to appreciate the individuality and complexity of each client and that client’s experience (Mahoney, 1991); and to join with the client in making sense of the client’s life, decisions, plans and concerns from the perspective of personal meaning, values, constructs and relationships.

References


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Envisioning the Future: Worklife and Counselling

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Abstract

This analytical essay describes scenarios of what work and personal life may be like in postmodern-post-industrial society and how societal changes may impact on the lives of people. Based on these futuristic observations, suggestions are offered about how counselling can be revised to prepare counsellors to more adequately meet the needs of clients in post-industrial society. One of the principal recommendations is to infuse counsellor preparation and counselling practice with constructivist concepts including a psychology of the self based on narrativity.

Résumé

Cet essai analytique décrit comment le travail et la vie personnelle peuvent se vivre dans une société postmoderne postindustrielle et comment les changements sociétaux affectent la vie des gens. Basées sur ces observations futuristes, des suggestions sont offertes sur comment le counseling pourrait être révisé dans le but de préparer les conseillers à répondre plus adéquatement aux besoins des clients dans une société postindustrielle. Une des recommandations premières est d’imprégner la préparation du conseiller et la pratique du counseling de concepts constructivistes comprenant une psychologie du soi basée sur la narrativité.

This analytical discussion will have two goals in mind. First, it will present a highly condensed sketch of changes which are occurring in society and in the lives of people as a result of transformations from industrial to post-modern, post-industrial, (PI) society. What are some of the predicted consequences which evolving PI societal changes present to individuals in their daily lives?

Second, it will suggest revisions of career counsellor preparation and practice so as to better prepare counsellors for working with post-industrial, post-modern clients. What are some of the implications for counsellor training and for the practice of counselling which these changes and consequences imply?

ANTHONY GIDDENS AND THE COMING YEARS

This section will briefly describe some of the main points of analysis which Giddens (1991) makes of our current social context—which he refers to as the late modern age but which will be referred to as PI society. Borrowed from Giddens will be those ideas which seem to bear most forcibly on issues which concern counsellors.

Seven topics have been selected from Giddens for discussion: "self as reflexive project," "lifestyle," "meaning and meaninglessness," "linguistic life," "shame vs guilt," "pure relationship," and "dilemmas of the self."

Self as Reflexive Project

Under the influence of information technology, and new forms of mediated experience, especially television, self-identity is progressively becoming a reflexively organized project. In pre-modern and modern times, self-identity and life-roles were strongly influenced by various traditions, cultural customs and stable norms. To put it bluntly, one did not have to think very much about who and what one wanted to be since the guidelines for culturally approved identities were firmly in place. With the decay of all forms of tradition and the greatly increased risk, doubt, uncertainty and social instability which this decay of tradition produces, people now must depend much more on their own reflexivity as a means of developing self-identity. It is necessary to sustain “narratives” of self-identity which have some degree of coherence even though more-or-less continuously under revision.

The following is a brief summary of the main features of the self as reflexive project. First, in the absence of reference of external authoritative criteria, the self is an internally referential system. Instead of referring to sources of external authority the self questions itself and its own system of meaning through reflexive acts. In this way information from others is weighted, and the self decides on its next moves through reference to its own memories, perspectives and constructs of meaning.

Second, the self presumes a narrative or complex of narratives which express self-identity. This is a radical shift from an “objectivist” view of personality as a rather stable entity composed of traits and variables to a constructivist view of self as story.

Third, self-identity, self-adequacy and self-fulfilment depend upon two processes for their formation. These are the activities which the individual chooses and becomes engaged in and the vocabularies which the individual uses for describing life experiences and events.

Finally, just as social life and institutions are becoming more and more reflexive, so too is the project of the self.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle becomes an important concept as individuals have to negotiate choices amongst a diversity of lifestyle options on a daily basis. For the past half century, there has been an assumption that individuals developed in a linear fashion, completing one developmental task and moving on to the next. Linear development is not a satisfactory way of describing PI lives. Nonlinearity, transition and negotiable options are more closely descriptive of how individuals now experience their lives. It must be added, however, that the vast majority are caught between a yearning for “how it used to be” and perplexity about how to move forward into the new PI world. Certain standardizing influences continue, especially “commodification.” However, with the increasing “openness” of social
life, the pluralization of contexts, the diversity of "experts" on every conceivable topic, and the increase in electronically mediated experience, reflexively, organized lifestyle and life-planning are now central features of self-identity.

**Personal Meaning and Meaninglessness**

In industrial society meaninglessness issued from lives of routine and boredom (assembly-line work). Alienation resulted from individuals no longer being able to sense any personally meaningful connection between their own work and the eventual product. In the PI society, meaninglessness will stem from the fact that while a reflexive project of the self generates actualization and competence in living, it is separated from oral and spiritual resources needed for living a full and satisfying life.

One of the very grave problems of PI society is that two classes of people are on the increase. One is a "have" or "first" class of individuals who possess symbolic skills and have been educated and trained to function well in an information intensive environment. They have the ability and desire to lead lives characterized by high degrees of symbolic interaction. The second "other" class is comprised of youth, unemployed, displaced blue-collar workers and families, minorities, and the aged. This "other" class is increasingly marginalized and ineligible for participation in PI society. They lack the symbolic interaction skills and knowledge required for work in PI workplaces and often have neither the wherewithal nor the desire to acquire skills needed for successful employment in these workplaces. This population is almost certain to experience increasing amounts of ontological insecurity. Increasingly, members of this population find their ways of being no longer adequate. Any over-all remedy to this problem is most likely to be the result of changed political, economic, educational and social policies. Of course, counsellors will have much work to do with individuals who are trying to move from marginalized status in the "other" class to symbolic competency status in the "first" class.

**Human Life is Linguistic Life**

Language is a kind of time machine which makes possible the reenactment of social practices and differentiation of past, present, and future. Through the use of electronic networks we can be with each other in the same moment of time while at great distances spatially. Linguistic skills take on much greater value and importance in PI society than in industrial society. One of the most serious problems facing PI societies is how to make adaptations for large populations of people who do not possess the linguistic competence required of PI society workplaces and family relationships.
Counselling and psychological practices of the future will quite likely be influenced more and more by such disciplines as symbolic interactionism, narrative psychology, and constructionist social psychology—disciplines which seem more adequate for describing and explaining PI selves than the current objectivist, behavioural paradigm which is preoccupied with individualistic assumptions (Denzin, 1991).

Shame Replaces Guilt

In pre-modern and early modern society when traditional sources of authority were still in place, “inhibitions,” “sanctions” and authoritative “reprimand” served to instill guilt and thus control the self and conduct. With the onset of PI society and the decay of tradition and the lessening of guilt as a guide for self-formation, shame is emerging as a widespread psychological condition. Shame should be understood in relation to personal integrity and personal insufficiency (low self-esteem) while guilt is a correlate of wrongdoing. Self-esteem is a topic of wide interest in psychology and pedagogy and in the popular literature as well. Self-empowerment is another topic of emerging interest and one that is directly related to the self as a reflexive project. Helen Lewis (1971) has distinguished two types of shame, “overt” and “by-passed.” Overt shame refers to feelings when humiliated by others while by-passed shame comes from experienced inadequacies of self. Shame indicates that self-identity and trustful relations with others are under threat. The risky, unpredictable conditions PI society bring on the experience of anxiety as more and more it is becoming difficult for individuals to answer such basic self-identity questions as “Who am I?” and “Where do I belong?” Shame is the negative side of the motivational system of the individual. Pride and hope constitute the positive side. The individual with high self-esteem is infused with pride and hopefulness—in other words, confidence in the coherence and integrity of the narrative of self-identity.

Developing a coherent sense of one’s self (biography) and engaging in activities which establish feelings of adequacy are primary means of freeing oneself from shame and at the same time opening oneself out into the future. Adequate or “empowered” selves are constructed through activity and reflexivity.

Pure Relationships

In both traditional and modern cultures, family life and work life relationships have been guided by external criteria. This means that relationships were constructed on understandings of rights, duties, privileges, obligations and defined responsibilities. In PI society the concept of relationship is changing to a negotiated structure rather than a pre-defined structure. Giddens refers to this emerging relational phenome-
non as the "pure relationship." Some features of this pure relationship are that:

1. It is not anchored in externally imposed duties and obligations—rather it is negotiated and remains open to re-negotiation.

2. It is sought only for what the relationship can bring to the interactants involved and is not much invested with traditional meaning.

3. The pure relationship is reflexively organized more-or-less on an economic life by way of newspaper articles, magazines, specialist books, television talk shows and documentaries, networks, and special topic courses and weekend workshops.

4. It is concerned with commitment in as much as commitment essentially replaces the external anchors of more traditional relationships. Commitment provides a degree of emotional support during periods of perturbation in the history of the relationship.

5. The pure relationship requires sensitivity to nuances of feeling, meaning, gesture and speech. Pure relationships are much more personal and customized than traditional relationships. They are socially constructed and interactants must be able to "read" each other and reflexively redirect their acts so as to maintain freedom from unacceptable levels of relationship stress or inequity.

6. It assumes reciprocal trust as an essential ingredient. This includes the ability to listen as well as to talk, and attempts to "get to" feelings behind issues.

7. Finally, the pure relationship, according to Giddens, is a key environment for constructing the reflexive project of the self. It allows for and demands organized and continuous self understanding. The moral basis for the pure relationship is "authenticity," rather than recourse to traditional values. Authenticity derives from knowing oneself, and being able and willing to disclose that knowledge to others, discursively and through action.

Dilemmas of the Self

This section on Giddens' work will finish by reviewing "dilemmas of the self" characteristic of PI society. The first dilemma is unification vs fragmentation. Every day the reflexive project of the self incorporates diverse contextual happenings and must chart a course through this experience. The reflexive activity of the self can lead to coherence and sense-making or toward fragmentation and doubt.

The second dilemma is powerlessness vs empowerment. The diversity of lifestyle options made available in PI society offers numerous opportunities for empowerment, and perhaps even more which lead to powerlessness. The experience of personal power or its lack is an extremely
important and all-pervasive phenomenon in daily life. It is useful to
distinguish between modes of “being overpowering,” “being overpow-
ered” and “being empowered.”

The third dilemma is authority vs uncertainty. Under conditions of
little or no traditional authority to guide one, then the reflexive project
of the self must steer a way between commitment and uncertainty. Risk-
taking, trust-building, and authenticity are directly implicated in the
effort of the reflexive project of the self to chart a course in the uncertain
waters of PI social order.

To sum up Giddens’ thesis: the emerging conditions of PI society,
globalization, deskilling, and commodification, produce change which is
rapid, unpredictable, and risky to individuals. This accelerated change,
together with the decay of nearly all forms of earlier moral authority,
requires that individuals be viewed in new ways. Namely, they must take
charge of (a) constructing a reflexively and internally referenced project
of self, and (b) they must co-construct relations at work and at home out
of conditions of uncertainty, conflict and lack of external moral criteria.
These observations suggest the need to adopt a constructivist view of
social life and raise many implications for counselling in the PI context.

In 1931, the existential philosopher Karl Jaspers (1931) presciently
wrote about the coming era of globalization, mass-order and technologi-
cal life. He believed that the levelling and unsheltering effect of modern,
objectivist, commodified life was unavoidable, yet he held out a hope for
those with the courage and the willingness to risk self-empowerment. To
paraphrase, he wrote that people are more than what they know of
themselves. They are not just a static entity, they are a process. Each
individual is not merely a life, but within that life is endowed with
possibilities through the freedom to make oneself what one will by the
activities on which one decides. He predicted that there would be many
who would find ways to pull themselves back from the anxious borderline
of self-destruction and banal existence and “... take matters into their
own hands, realize they own selfhood, and enjoy true being” (p. 227). In
1931 Jaspers was already envisioning an era in which the self as reflexive
would become necessary for a successful and meaningful existence.

HAGE, POWERS AND THE COMING YEARS

As a second source of analysis of what the future is likely to mean for
family and work life, and therefore for counsellors, Post-industrial lives:
Roles and relationships in the 21st century (Hage & Powers, 1992) was
consulted. Like Giddens, Hage and Powers believe that a new epoch—
post-industrial society—is not being constructed out of global events and
through the decay of local, traditional communities. Their primary inter-
est is in understanding the meaning of PI transformations for work roles
and personal relationships. They too believe that the macro changes
taking place in economies and social orders will have profound consequences on the way people will lead (or already are leading) their lives. In their opinion, the very character of the social self is being altered into a more complex and pluralistic or polyphonic phenomenon under the impact of PI conditions.

There are a remarkable number of similarities between Giddens and Hage and Powers. The following discussion includes those observations which seem to have the most relevance for counsellors and the practice of counselling.

The transformation to post-industrial society means that more and more work tasks will be defined in terms of information gathering, problem solving, creation of new ideas and products, and the ability to respond flexibly to new situations and interact in new and adaptive ways. In general, both physical labour and routine labour will be replaced by various forms of mental, symbolic activity. Service and tourist industries will continue to be human labour intensive, but even these will call for higher quality symbolic and interactional skills and attitudes.

In the family, we can already find clear evidence of PI impact on marriage and child-rearing. Divorce rates have risen drastically over the past few decades, a sure sign that the institution of marriage is being redefined. Spousal roles have been moving from “rights” and “obligations” to “negotiation.” The marriage vow is no longer “until death do us part” but more like “until we agree that this is no longer working.” The interpenetration of “experts” into family life via television, radio, tabloids, magazines, workshops, books and so on is phenomenal.

There are changes in work and family roles that not only are occurring in tandem, but that are also interactive with each other. For example: (a) team effort is more evident both in families and on the job; (b) raising children and doing work is taking on more plasticity as greater adaptation to changing societal pressures and individual variation is required; (c) an increasing number of parents—both dual and single—are working; parenting and working roles interpenetrate much more now than in earlier times; (d) an increasing number of people work “at home” at least part time; (e) work which involves symbolic problem solving is much more likely to be taken home at night, at least in the head, than work that involves operation of machinery; and (f) increasingly, parents, spouses, workers, and managers are all expected to be better communicators and to know how to listen responsibly and to attend to emotional nuances of communication.

What the foregoing suggests is that there is an increasing “blurring” of distinctions between work and family, between personal and public life. In large part what Hage and Powers contend is that societies transforming under the influence of PI or postmodern influences will require more and better quality interactional competencies from members of
society in both work and family contexts. This is, in part, based on the earlier discovery of G. H. Mead (1964) that members of society are more likely to participate at higher levels of satisfaction and competence to the extent they are able to take varying roles, engage in imaginative rehearsal, adjust their interpersonal responses in different contexts, and read conventional gestures in local contexts.

Hage and Powers' central argument is that the rapid development of an informational and service society, together with increasing complexification will create a labour market demand for more people with creative minds and complex selves. Such persons will need to be more interpersonally competent and responsive to others and will spend more time on innovation than on routine production.

With the complexification of social order and the accompanying decay of external authority, there are fewer and fewer situations for which there is one right way to act, or problems for which there is one right solution. Moreover, a complex self is more than an aggregate of selves, each one of which may be called forth in the appropriate specific situation. In the complex self, all of the role-identities are capable of co-activation. For example, through the use of the portable telephone we can remain "in touch" with friends, family and work colleagues virtually simultaneously.

In more traditional contexts, individuals learn "scripted" speech. Scripted speech is a standardized set of responses which one is to make in a given situation. A good example is the famous "sales pitch." Scripted speech works well in social contexts where the assumption is that there is a "right" way to act and speak according to conventions—a kind of conversational etiquette, so to speak. Under conditions of increasing social complexity and the blurring of conventional social situations, script-speech fails. Interactants must be able to "read" others, know how to listen, take the other's roles, and adjust to varying perspectives on a given topic. If this type of creative flexibility is missing, the trust required to maintain role-relationships falters. "Impression management" will not do. Instead of giving standardized responses designed to produce pre-determined effects, both workers and family members will be asked to produce more "authentic" speech and gesture. The uniqueness of the other and the nuances of communication will have to be attended to, so that the interpersonal relationship is customized to fit the person, the need, and the event.

The individual who navigates PI society well will be accomplished at role-definition. In the view of Hage and Powers, the capacity for role-redefinition will be the pivotal micro process in PI society. They identify factors which tend to hinder the capacity for role redefinition and factors which favour it.

Some factors that hinder role-definition are: (a) over-commitment to role "scripts" and impression management, (b) routinizing of behaviour,
(c) over-control or suppression of feelings imbedded in role scripts, and
(d) preoccupation with securing approval and validation from others.

Factors supporting role definition are: (a) learning to interpret both
cognitive and emotive gestures (linguistic competence), (b) the ability to
"take" roles on both cognitive and emotive levels (empathy), (c) the
ability to engage in imaginative rehearsal (envisioning alternatives), and
(d) the ability to adjust responses (context-action congruence).

There is a rapid development, particularly on the economic level, of
human capital intensive organizations. These are organizations where
highly specialized knowledge, much of which is carried around in
people’s heads, is on the increase. For example: (a) the upgrading of
many semi-professional organizations such as police departments,
schools, and nursing, into knowledge-intensive organizations; (b) the
creation of many new small joint-venture and partner companies; (c) the
establishment of many small, high-tech companies; and (d) the establish-
ment of knowledge-intensive networks amongst cooperating researchers
and amongst some industries.

While PI development proceeds unevenly from region to region there
is very good evidence that organizational structures are moving from
linear, hierarchical and fixed structures to fluid, organic structures with a
good deal of plasticity between organizational structure and worker
activity and between workers themselves. This requires complex sym-
bolic and innovative acting and thinking, as well as finely-tuned abilities
for taking theories of others on the part of managers and workers alike.
In a knowlege-intensive organization, individuals typically will interact
with a large number of others in widely differing roles but only a few
people in each role-set.

To sum up, there are five analytic points emerging from the work of
Hage and Powers which have relevance for counselling:

1. A major premise of symbolic interactionism, that individuals can
construct their own life-roles (selves), is likely to be realized in PI
society. A corollary to this premise is that role-defining becomes a
core activity.

2. Interactional competence, which means ability to take the role of
others, emotional sensitivity, and general linguistic and symbolic
mental abilities, will be much more important in the future than
they have been in the “working” past.

3. In knowledge-intensive workplaces, networking, consulting, and
interpersonal negotiating become central skills.

4. Distinctions between personal and public, between family and work
roles become harder and harder to maintain. Roles are inter-
penetrative and in continuing redefinition.
5. Profound and perplexing problems must be faced in the movement from industrial to PI social status. Two such problems impact on the work of counsellors. Firstly, individuals of the present and previous generations (including counsellors) have all been socialized into industrial society which is much more fixed and role-stable than the emerging PI society. This means that a great many people have difficulty even conceiving of the changes underway, not to mention trying to re-organize or redefine their self-identities in order to resonate with the emerging social context. Secondly, there will be (and there already is, to some extent) a large population of individuals who do not have, and perhaps do not want, or are incapable of acquiring, the interactional and symbolic functions required by an increasing number of PI organizations and industries, and by PI family networks. In theory, within just one or two decades, the literacy and numeracy levels required for the bulk of PI industries will approach what we now consider to be University level competence. The growth of an incapable, impoverished, marginalized New World Order, *lumpenproletariat* mired in despair, drugs and violence is a nightmarish possibility that all responsible individuals must wish to avoid. Certainly counsellors all over the world will be engaged in helping individuals to escape this fate.

**REVISING COUNSELLING PRACTICE AND COUNSELLOR PREPARATION**

This final section will discuss ways in which career counsellor preparation and counselling practice can be revised so as to fit the post-industrial, post-modern context. The first revision is to place counselling and the training of counsellors in a constructivist framework rather than an “objectivist” framework. Secondly, it will describe selected counselling strategies which are grounded in the constructivist framework, and are designed for use with clients in the emerging PI world of work and family. One can think of psychoanalysis as the “first force” in counselling and therapy behaviourism as the “second force,” humanistic psychology as the “third force” and constructivism as the “fourth force.” As G. S. Howard (1991) aptly put it, “All across the intellectual landscape, the forces of objectivism are giving way to the entreaties of constructivist thought” (p. 187).

The preparation of counselling psychologists and counsellors is largely instrumental and pragmatic. That is, counsellors learn techniques which are designed to work effectively and efficiently in order to achieve desired behavioural outcomes with clients. While skill-based training of counsellors certainly has value (Hill & Corbett, 1993), it also has drawbacks. Professional counsellors are trained to apply techniques to clients, “... though often without an adequate grasp of the relation of... [individuals]... to... their cultural contexts” (Kvale, 1990, p. 50).
Counsellors Who Also Think

Serious questions have been raised about the wisdom of specific micro-skill training approaches in counsellor education (Greenberg & Goldman, 1988; Mahon & Altmann, 1977; Martin, 1990). Three principal concerns have been voiced: (1) ultimately it seems to be the counsellor's ability to see, hear and understand the subtleties of client experience rather than the counsellor's ability to display specific "skills" that determines whether or not counselling is effective; (2) micro-skill training may produce robot-like behaviours in counsellors who by virtue of their habituated skills are incapable of perceiving and responding to diverse client needs; and (3) finely honed micro-skills do not necessarily transfer into useful behaviours in the everyday world of client and counselling (Galassi & Galassi, 1984).

There is fairly strong evidence that it is not simply the specific skills which the counsellor has which lead to effective work with clients as it is the counsellor's ability to construe and think about the client and the ability to assist the client to explicate the meaning structures of the client's lifeworld. In Martin's (1990) words: It is not the skill as such, but "... underlying conceptualizations, grounded in ... knowledge and dispositional structures [that] ... lead to effective, intentionally driven therapeutic actions" (p. 404).

It seems that counsellors face clients and contexts which call for indeterminate modes of practice. That is, they must make sense of uncertain, conflicted and unique situations of practice. It cannot be assumed that professional skill and knowledge fit every client case, nor can it be assumed that there is one right solution to each problem. Training should move counsellors along the way of being able to devise new methods of reasoning, constructing and evaluating new categories of understanding, using new ways of framing problems, and negotiating new courses of action and experiments with clients.

It is not so much that all skill training should be discontinued in counsellor education, but that counsellor education needs to go beyond skill training. One way this can be accomplished is by the artistry-in-action approach to developing professional skill and knowledge advocated by Schon (1987). Other "new-paradigm" models of training are the critical reflection approach as advocated by Mezirow (1990) and the nursing curriculum as outlined by Bevis and Watson (1989). While Bevis and Watson are proposing a caring curriculum for the training of nurses, many of their recommendations fit counselling.

The basic tenet for "new-paradigm" curricula can be found in what Greene (1978) calls a "wide-awakeness" in learning. The base of this "wide-awakeness" is critical self-reflection wherein both educators and learners can explicate their own life-world meaning structures, thereby facilitating the release of possibilities for "fruitful" action.
Learning carried on under the spotlight of critical self-reflection is both emancipatory and transformative (Watson, 1989). A great deal of counselling is directed toward assisting clients to move toward a more open range of possibilities and alternatives. A curriculum for educating counsellors should embody these same goals.

The direction to take, the need for reflection-based, transformative curricula which recognize that all knowledge is constructed and therefore is contextual, emotional, intersubjective, passionate, rational, evolving, relational, ethical and values-based can be found in the writings of Botkin, Elmandjra, and Malitza (1984); Belenky et al. (1986); Noddings (1984, 1988); and Schon (1987).

So far as future counselling practice is concerned, there is likely to be decreased preoccupation with the intrapsychic life of clients and an increase in the use of constructivist ideas about self-construction, meaning, and the psychology of narratives; and an increasing use of counselling practices derived from these ideas. This is not to say that inner life is of no consequence in PI society, but it is to say that such concepts as reflexivity, constructed selves and relational meaning will become more prominent in counsellor education and practice.

As we move toward the next century, human agency is on the increase (Touraine, 1988). However, more and more agency will be socially determined—or perhaps it is better to say co-determined through interaction. More and more there will be the tendency to construe the self as a “constructed project” which will be interpreted from the perspective of trait and behaviour.

*Constructivist Training Approach*

The constructivist model of training career counsellors under development at the University of Victoria has already been discussed in other papers (Peavy, 1992a; Peavy, 1992b). Four main aspects of this approach to training career counsellors will be discussed here.

*Reflexivity.* Reflexivity is construed to be a core ingredient of both professional counsellor education and of client “therapeutic” or learning experience. Skill training tends to be a decontextualizing process, and reflexivity redresses this imbalance in that it promotes contextualization (understanding what one is doing, and why one is doing it), and promotes the discernment of assumptions and tacit knowledge.

*The Knowledge.* Counselling is a social practice constituted through interactions as one person attempts to “help” another cope with normal “world-living.” As a social practice, counselling invokes six aspects of interaction: relationship, language, metaphor, story, power, and explication. These are the “core” elements of counselling around which counsellor training is organized. These six elements are the conceptual
Envisioning the Future

reference points in constructivist-oriented counsellor preparation and counselling practice.

Counselling is "counselling" and not some other social practice by virtue of its helping relationship aspect. Language is the principal means which counsellor and client employ for making sense together; counselling is a type of "conversation." Metaphor is a vital principle of language and a key to understanding our world, others, and ourselves. Story is the device which all people use to make their lives, or aspects of their lives, coherent. Power is taken to exist in actions. Power is not a thing, an entity which is possessed, but rather exists only in actions. Power is exercised and shapes people's lives. One of the principal objectives of constructivist counselling is to create conditions and to conduct counselling so that clients are empowered. Explication is the process by means of which meaning is made. In one sense, counselling is a process of explication—giving detailed accounts, unfolding and clarifying meaning, making sense of, developing what is implied, and interpreting.

Together, relationship, language, metaphor, story, power and explication constitute the context out of which counselling "competencies" arise. Competency is more than behavioural performance. Performance is also the outward display of an internal system of meanings, values, assumptions, understandings, and dispositions. Competency includes both the outward performances and the inward dispositions, knowledge, intentions and values from which the performance arises; competency refers to ways of knowing being, and doing.

Centrality of activity and practice. It does not seem to be the formal and technical knowledge which distinguishes expert from novice counsellor as much as the tacit knowledge which expert counsellors have derived from their more extensive praxis (Martin, Slemmon, Hiebert, Hallberg & Cummings, 1989). It seems to be the experience maps or construal systems derived from praxis which shapes counselling practice and informs the actions of counsellors in relation to clients more than their knowledge of counselling and personality theories (Cohen, Sargent & Sechrest, 1986).

Self as narrative. Human life is linguistic life and both counsellors and clients hold memberships in communities of language practice. These communities of language contain the meanings and assumptions including both overt, cognitive and emotional gestures and an undergirding of covert assumptions and unselfconscious meanings which individuals use to guide actions and get things done. In short, the self and role are constructed and deconstructed through symbolic interaction with others while practical actions in everyday life are guided by "semantic maps."

Examples of practical learning activities of this "new generation" counsellor training approach are:
1. practice in self and life planning by means of autobiographical writing, story-telling and narrative explication;

2. discussion and analysis of recorded role-play and actual counselling conversations with an emphasis on critical reflection and the uncovering of assumptions and tacit knowledge and the development of interactive competence;

3. practice in establishing and maintaining networks—both support networks as in human contact and informational networks as in labour market data;

4. practice of the “healing” interview through ethnographic discourse (Banister, 1991), especially questioning and meaning explication; and

5. practice in authentic conversation in which the dialogical principles enunciated by Buber (1965); Gadamer (1974); and Habermas (1984) are implemented. In this (a) whatever the speaker (counsellor or client) says is invested with importance and feeling, (b) the speaker (counsellor or client) believes what he or she is saying (in contrast with impression management), (c) the speaker (counsellor) experiences a sense of affinity with listeners (clients), (d) listening is given equal status with speaking in counselling conversations, and (e) both participants (counsellor and client) are open to being changed by what is said.

Study and discussion of theoretical knowledge. The overall objective of the training approach is to promote a counselling self which is complex, polyphonic, reflective, characterized by a good quality of interactive competency and which is able to integrate both subjective and objective knowledge in a competent, constructed self.

Instructions for the constructivist counsellor. Initially a revised definition of (career) counselling must be proposed. Counselling is defined as a general methodology for life-planning. The intended outcome of counselling is the empowerment of clients to get on with their lives and participate in society according to directions and purposes which are satisfying to them and constructive for society.

Counselling is “career” counselling when the main focus of counselling is on aspects of worklife such as career choosing, training, job-acquisition, conflict at work, retirement concerns, etc.

Assuming that there is increasing interpenetration of family, work, health and leisure in the lives of PI society members, distinctions between different kinds of counselling are becoming more artificial. Such distinctions are more a function of bureaucratic turf than of a realistic knowledge of client need and counselling process.
The constructivist counsellor is committed to entering directly into the life-world (meaning and life activities) of clients as much as possible. Objective aids such as psychometric tests, formalized interviews, and technical vocabulary use are regarded sceptically, as they are viewed as methods of "distancing" rather than methods of "being present to." This allows for the assertion of a number of "operating" principles guiding the counsellor's work with clients: (a) work from the life world of the client as experienced and reported by the client; (b) use conversation to mediate counsellor/client experience; within conversation the counsellor engages in "receptive inquiry" which is a blend of empathy, questioning, and various linguistic devices such as "summarizing," "turn-taking," and "metaphorizing"; (c) use networking to help clients access information and participate in social and community support; (d) use narrative means to redefine self and role—means such as story eliciting and story analysis, personal documents such as journals, letters, notations, and forms of autobiographical writing and thinking (White & Epston, 1990); (e) use role-play and imaginative rehearsal for practice in role and self redefinition; and use personal project analysis (Palys & Little, 1980), life activity analysis (Peavy, 1990c) and personal construct analysis (Fransella & Dalton, 1990) to assist clients to connect meaning and action in their worklife dilemmas.

As a final thought, participation in constructivist training and practice can help counsellors and clients move toward inventing solutions and futures, toward a heightened sense of responsibility towards self and others, and promote counselling which is creative and fruitful. Certainly, there will be revisions needed in counselling theory and practice in order to assist people who are experiencing social and personal change much as W. B. Yeats (1924, p. 187) described in the Second Coming:

Turning and turning the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

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(Original work published in 1934.)


Envisioning the Future


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Collected Works in English Language

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Counselling for First Nations Students

A Research Summary Report

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
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A copy of the complete report (161 pages, plus Appendices) is available from:

Aboriginal Education Branch
Ministry of Education
Victoria, BC
V8V 2M4
Introduction

Background

The landmark document, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, prepared in 1972 by the National Indian Brotherhood addresses a number of educational concerns of importance to Aboriginal peoples. One concern laid out in quite clear terms is the kind of counselling and counsellors desired for First Nations children and youth in schools. The report stresses the importance of counsellor knowledge of Aboriginal culture and traditions, Aboriginal psychology, respect for family life, the co-ordination of on-reserve and off-reserve counselling, and school counselling and non-school counselling. The report especially stresses the need for counselling which bolsters self-esteem and identity of Aboriginal children and youth. Finally, the report calls for more and better counsellor training to prepare both First Nations and non-First Nations counsellors for counselling First Nations children and youth.

Since 1972 various Royal Commissions and Task Forces have reiterated the need to improve counselling services for First Nations children and youth, but so far as can be determined, improvements have been few and far between.

Further, a thorough search of academic literature, reports and various other documents located very little research into the difficulties which First Nations youth face in trying to use counselling services in schools or in community agencies. A few opinion articles have been written about various issues in counselling Aboriginal clients, but virtually no empirical research has been reported.

The Research Problem and Research Questions

The research problem which this study examined was "Why do or why do not, First Nations students make use of counselling services offered by schools?" This topic was examined in reference to Aboriginal students from grade 8 through college, and with non-school-attending Aboriginal youth as well. The research was guided by three specific questions:

- Which factors inhibit or encourage Aboriginal student participation in counselling?
- How is counselling for perceived by First Nations students, counsellors and others?
- Why do some counsellors have rapport with First Nations youth and others do not?

Research Purpose and Parameters

The purpose of this study was to gather detailed, in-depth descriptions from individuals who were directly involved in counselling, either as clients or as counsellors, and who could tell us what their experience was when counselling was personally valuable and successful for them; and conversely, what their experience was like when counselling was not valuable or successful for them. It was not the objective of this research to evaluate any counselling program or service, nor to make known the performance of the counselling of any individual counsellor or Home School Support Worker.

Research Methodology

A key informant method was used to gather information from members of four groups: (1) First Nations students, non-attendees and former students; (2) counsellors, both First Nations and non-native; (3) Home School Support Workers, and (4) others, e.g., parents, First Nations Education Directors, and school principals. During the period December 1, 1993 to March 1, 1994, accounts were taken from 60 informants, mostly resident on Vancouver Island. The informant accounts were audi-taped and/or notated. The accounts were then analyzed and organized into themes so as to give collective "voice" to informants' experiences and perceptions in reference to counselling.
Findings

The findings are presented in the form of thematic statements which were compiled from the first-hand accounts of informants. Each thematic statement gives voice to experiences and perceptions given repeatedly by informants.

What First Nations students want from counsellors and counselling:

- A counsellor should be a friend, not an official.
- Counsellors should help First Nations students get through school and prepare for their futures.
- Counsellors should 'be there' for First Nations students when they are having difficulty.
- Counsellors should help First Nations students with both school and personal problems.
- Counsellors should help First Nations students “put it all together”, make sure that they get the courses needed to graduate, and help make plans for after graduation.
- Is informal and personal, has a “drop-in” policy and does not require appointments.
- Refrains from judging First Nations students by “worst examples” and avoids stereotyping.
- Recognizes that many Aboriginal students and their families have had to cope with really bad times—and yet values students for their good qualities and potential—what they can do, now and in the future.
- Is of First Nations ancestry, or if not, then understands Aboriginal cultural backgrounds and identity, family life and what First Nations students are trying to do with their lives.
- Recognizes the differences between bands and understands that there is no “generic” Aboriginal.

From the point of view of First Nations students, the helpful counsellor:

- Reaches out, is friendly and trustworthy.
- Really listens and is not pushy.
- Takes the time to understand the student's background and earn trust.
- Knows when and how to leave First Nations students alone and when to reach out.
- Gets involved in school and community activities (volleyball, school dances, soccer, community cultural events).
- Recognizes individuals by name, has some knowledge of where the student comes from, and knows something about families — especially “aunties” and grandparents.

Counsellors of First Nations ancestry speak of counselling with Aboriginal students:

- It is important to see Aboriginal students outside of the school in the community. When counsellors participate in cultural events such as the Spirit Dances, the students can come in to talk about it. When a counsellor shows caring by friendliness and support of a First Nations student, then more students come around to visit that counsellor.
- Counsellors should take the lead in creating a First Nations presence in the school so Aboriginal students feel like they belong.
- Counsellors need regular counsellor training and be familiar with traditional cultural practices and have experience in incorporating the spirituality and healing rituals into counselling.
- Counsellors of First Nations ancestry have
grown up having to deal with prejudice and stereotyping. While this is unfortunate, this is valuable experience for working with First Nations students and helps the counsellor to understand bi-culturalism and the issues of Aboriginal identity.

- Counselling skills and techniques are important to the success of the counsellor working with First Nations students, but the key is to be able to "look into the heart" of Aboriginal students.

- A respect for Aboriginal spirituality is essential in counselling with some First Nations students.

- Family is a major influence in the lives of most First Nations students, and counsellors should make it a point to learn something of each First Nations student's family. Even the so-called dysfunctional families are still very influential on the behaviour of students.

- Counsellors are at a distinct advantage with Aboriginal students if they have knowledge and interest in cross-cultural communications, traditional healing, First Nations justice, and traditional dance and art. Historical and cultural knowledge of Aboriginal peoples enables counsellors to chart a pathway for working with First Nations clients.

- Counsellors need to be clear about First Nations sub-cultural groups, not only tribal and band differences but sub-cultural groups such as: traditional, assimilated, transitional and bi-cultural. Counsellors have to recognize the differences in urban and rural, reserve and off-reserve life if they are to counsel effectively with different First Nations youth.

Confusion many First Nations youth are trying to overcome must be recognized.

- It is necessary to have personal knowledge of the family and relate to First Nations students in a personal way before getting to such things as timetabling. This is much more important than in counselling with other youth

- Use a "relationship first, problem second" approach.

- It is necessary to be less verbal, more patient, more encouraging, and learn to wait "for the right time." This means putting aside some of what is learned in regular counselling courses, since they are designed for mainstream middle-class students and counsellors.

- Counsellors should be open to the best in First Nations students, not the worst. A counsellor's main focus in working with Aboriginal students cannot be around middle-class white values. Counsellors are faced with anger, reactions to racism and prejudice, suicide, family loss, transience, addictions, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, cross-tribal conflict and rivalry, and family conflict and abandonment. At the same time there is a privacy around feelings, a condition for which there are historical and often traumatic reasons.

- Sharing food, tea or coffee is a good rapport builder. Talk about family first, then issues. The counsellor's job is to show respect, build trust and relationship, and then help First Nations students navigate the culture of the school. It is essential for them to know what courses they need and why, what their progress is in classes, and to have opportunities to discuss what comes next—in school, career and personally.

- Working with First Nations students requires a more intuitive, "heart-felt" counselling approach. The "high-efficiency" mode of counselling does not seem appropriate.

Non-Aboriginal counsellors speak of counselling with Aboriginal students:

- It is essential to convey a respect for the value of Aboriginal culture.

- The complexity of problems, pain, and
Combining perspectives to create an “Effective Counsellor Profile”

In the following section, themes were combined from all groups to build a profile of the counsellor who is effective in counselling with First Nations youth.

Profile of an Effective Counsellor

- The counsellor is of Aboriginal ancestry or else has an unusual knowledge and respect for Aboriginal history, culture, traditions, and issues. Such a counsellor may be described as “bi-cultural”.

- The counsellor has knowledge of the cultural diversity to be found amongst First Nations people. Knowledge and awareness of First Nations diversity enables counsellors to respond to actual, rather than assumed needs.

- The counsellor who is effective with First Nations clients has an informal, friendly and involved approach. Relationship comes first, problems come second. Building trust is paramount.

- Counsellors working effectively with First Nations clients are available on a “quick response” basis, use drop-in strategies, move around the school, meet family members, visit homes, participate in community cultural, recreational and social events, and contribute to a First Nations presence and identity in the school.

- The effective counsellor with Aboriginal students recognizes and is able to respond appropriately to a wide range of issues such as identity confusion, cultural shame, family violence, loss, suicide, residential school fall-out in the family, transience, adoptions, addictions, involvement with the criminal justice system, racial prejudice and discrimination, and cross-band rivalries.

- In-school issues which often confront Aboriginal students and which the effective counsellor has strategies to help students include: navigating the school culture; adjusting to teacher expectations and discordant learning styles; planning for further education and a place in the workforce; coping with academic gaps created by transience (dropping in and dropping out of school); enhancing self-esteem and building identity; leaving and re-entering school with respect and understanding; coping with boarding room situations; finding a place of “respect” in the school; and, having contact with suitable role models.

- The counselling style which effective counsellors tend to display is holistic, personal, informal, active, and engaged. The counsellor works through relationships and has a network of personal contacts in school and in the Aboriginal community. The counsellor acts as a source of resources and academic, career and personal information. The counsellor is a reliable guide who helps First Nations students navigate the school culture. The counsellor acts as an advocate for students, ensuring appropriate academic placement and preventing automatic sideling into remedial classes and programs.
Recommendations

It is the intent of the research team that the findings of this research should be useful to counsellors (including home-school support workers). School Boards and School Administrators, Tribal Education Authorities, Ministries, and subsequent researchers and counsellor educators. Therefore, lists of recommendations which follow are grouped in these categories. Naturally, they overlap in varying degrees. The recommendations are based primarily on the findings (voices) of this study. Some information from previous related studies also has been used to form the recommendations.

Recommendations to Counsellors:

- Cultivate a friendly, informal, interest-showing, accessible and active relationship with First Nations students.
- Extend your counselling activities beyond the school into the community, and become acquainted with family members of First Nations students and with other members of the community.
- Take a leadership role in promoting cultural awareness for other members of the school culture, and contribute actively to the building of a First Nations cultural presence in your school.
- If you are counselling with First Nations students, or if you are intending to do so, undertake a self-assessment to determine educational and practical steps you can take toward forming a bi-cultural self-identity. This recommendation applies to both non-native and First Nations counsellors.
- Within the school, encourage a school team strategy which includes all personnel who are working with First Nations students. Enlist the help of the principal, vice-principal and other school leaders in order to develop a holistic, culture-sensitive, racial bias-free encouragement strategy for Aboriginal youth, regardless of whether or not they are in transition from one school to another, just entering school, dropping-out of school, doing well, or having trouble with school work.
- If you are doing career and educational counselling and guidance, do not impose middle class, non-First Nations procedures on First Nations students. Interest tests, ability and aptitude tests, and other non-Aboriginal norm standardized tests should be used with great discretion or not at all.
- Consider how you can function as a role model for Aboriginal youth or what steps you need to take in order to do so. Also work to bring First Nations youth into contact with role models of Aboriginal ancestry.
- Take an active role in entering into negotiation with your principal, and other administrative figures, and enlist the help of Band authorities and school board members toward the goal of defining counselling in a more culturally appropriate way, e.g.:
  a. Counselling activity should transcend the walls of the school.
  b. Counselling should attend to the whole individual.
  c. Counsellors should not be overburdened with administrative tasks.
  d. Counsellors should have reasonable “case-loads” especially when their clients have diverse and urgent needs.

Recommendations to School Districts and Tribal Authorities:

- Establish a process for developing culturally appropriate role descriptions for First Nations counsellors, home-school support workers and any other personnel whose job entails counselling with First Nations youth.
- Provide funding and administrative support for the training and up-grading of...
counsellors and home school support workers toward the goals of higher counselling competence, cultural awareness, and progress toward bi-cultural status of school-based helpers working with First Nations youth.

- Adopt a student services policy which authorizes counsellors to make visits to First Nations communities, establishes the importance of helping networks, and generally promotes respect for cultural diversity and reduction of discrimination towards First Nations youth.

- Authorize and fund courses and workshops for student services personnel on the topics of Aboriginal history, culture, psychology, and cultural awareness; support individual non-native counsellors who wish to engage in cultural immersion experiences in First Nations communities.

- Provide First Nations meeting spaces in school buildings. Provide support for creating a First Nations cultural presence in the school.

- Support the efforts of individuals of First Nations ancestry who wish to take advanced counsellor training. This is the other side of bi-cultural development.

- Adopt a policy of increasing the number of Aboriginals counselling Aboriginals.

b. bi-cultural emphasis,

c. training on the levels of para-professional, diploma, and post-graduate degree,

d. the content of programs should combine Aboriginal cultural knowledge and some aspects of skill and knowledge contained in typical Euro-Canadian counsellor education programs.

- With regard to further research and development, projects should be initiated with the following objectives:

a. to determine content of culturally appropriate training programs.

b. to determine sites of training programs.

It is desirable to utilize community-based and distance education methods for training, perhaps after the Arctic College model for training First Nations teachers. Technology for training should be utilized to the greatest degree possible.

c. to determine means of providing support for individuals registering for training.

- With regard to an integrated strategy for increasing the flow of First Nations students into education and the work force, appropriate Ministries and Tribal Authorities should collaborate in a carefully selected and small task force to develop a “pipe-line” strategy for helping a larger number of First Nations students make their way through schooling and into graduate degree programs of study and professional positions.

Recommendations for extending the impact of this research - Training and Research:

- With respect to training, appropriate Provincial Ministries, Aboriginal authorities and School Districts, acting in concert with selected College(s) and University(ies), should fund and initiate training programs for 1) Home-school Support Workers, and 2) counsellors of First Nations students.

Training programs should be organized around the following principles:

a. Aboriginals counselling Aboriginals,
1 For an excellent example of counsellor education materials developed from an Aboriginal perspective, see the Appendix of the full report containing a sample of Wedlidi Speck's cultural awareness training materials, included in this report with his permission.

2 A pipeline strategy was developed at one university medical school in the United States which resulted in more than 75% of all Aboriginal medical school graduates for the entire country. The pipeline strategy is a culturally integrated effort which begins in the Aboriginal community with parents and extends outward through all associated groups and institutions to the university level.
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

Permission was not received to include Peavy, R.V. (1994), A constructivist perspective for counselling, Educational and Vocational Guidance, 55, 31-37. This article has been removed from the collection.
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The Erosion of Self: An Ethnographic Study of Women’s Experience of Marriage to Alcoholic Husbands

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Abstract

An ethnographic study according to Spradley’s (1979) Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) Method was conducted in order to develop knowledge about how women live out, interpret, and express the experience of living with an alcoholic husband. The discourses surrounding women whose husbands are alcoholic have been used to minimize women’s experience. In addition, these same discourses have also contributed to the concept of codependency, an explanatory theme used in alcohol treatment programs and recent popular literature to define the wives’ difficulties. In contrast, what stood out from this study is evidence of a complex interaction in the experience of women married to alcoholics involving internalization of cultural expectations, weakening of self, and embeddedness in an alcohol-dependent marriage. Suggestions for counsellors include consideration of how internalization of cultural norms and the interactional dynamics of the marital relationship seriously affect the women’s experience. Further, ethnographic questions could be employed therapeutically to map out clients’ meaning constructs and to develop a coherent understanding of clients’ worlds. Finally, ethnographic questioning could be integrated into counsellor training programs to raise trainees’ awareness of the significance of their clients’ use of language.

Résumé

Une étude ethnographique, selon la méthode de la Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) (Séquence de la recherche développementale) de Spradley (1979), a été conduite dans le but de développer une connaissance sur comment les femmes vivent, interprètent et expriment l’expérience de vivre avec un mari alcoolique. Les traités concernant les femmes dont les maris sont des alcooliques ont été utilisés pour minimiser les expériences de ces femmes. De plus, ces mêmes traités ont aussi contribué au concept de codependance, un thème explicatif utilisé dans les programmes de traitement de l’alcoolisme et dans les récentes publications populaires, pour définir les difficultés de ces épouses. Par contraste, ce qui est ressorti de cette étude est l’évidence d’une interaction complexe de femmes mariées à des alcooliques impliquant l’intériorisation des attentes culturelles, un amoindrissement du concept de soi et l’enlissement dans un mariage alcoolique-dépendant. Il est suggéré aux conseillers de prendre en considération que l’intériorisation des normes culturelles et les dynamiques interactives de la relation maritale affectent sérieusement l’expérience des femmes. De plus, des questions ethnographiques pourraient être employées thérapeutiquement pour établir les grandes lignes de la signification du construit des clientes et pour développer une compréhension cohérente des mondes de ces clientes. Finalement, un entraînement sur comment formuler et présenter des questions ethnographiques pourraient faire partie du programme de formation des conseillers pour familiariser ceux-ci avec la signification du langage utilisé par leurs clientes.

Within the last fifty years, the perspective concerning the wife of the alcoholic has evolved from that of her having a personality disorder (Futterman, 1953; McDonald, 1956) which causes her husband’s alcoholism (Clifford, 1960; Whalen, 1953), to acknowledging her as an individual living in a relationship of double bind (Denzin, 1987) that may or may not result in dysfunctional coping behaviour (Orford, Guth-

rie, Nicholls, Oppenheimer, Egert & Hensman, 1975; Wiseman, 1991). This view has merged into a systemic perspective where the behaviour of the wife is seen as part of an interactional process occurring within the family around the husband’s drinking behaviour (Casey, Griffin & Googins, 1993; Denzin, 1987; Steinglass, 1981). Such interactional processes tend to undermine the couple’s ability to generate positive emotional feeling toward the self and other (Denzin, 1987; Wiseman, 1991). Being married to an alcoholic involves a set of unique difficulties that influence and change wives’ self-definitions (Asher & Brissett, 1988; Weinberg & Vogler, 1990; Wiseman, 1991). Over time, the wife may query her identity and undergo a weakening of boundaries between her sense of what is real and what is artificial (Asher, 1988; Jackson, 1959; Wiseman, 1991). Differences in perception between the wife and her husband about the drinking behaviour contribute to this sense of blurred reality (Maisto, O’Farrell, McKay, Connors & Pelcovits, 1988).

All too often, the wife attempts to escape the reality of her husband’s alcoholism by denying its existence (Asher, 1988; Casey, Griffin & Googins, 1993; Denzin, 1987; Jackson, 1954; Wiseman, 1991). However, eventually an accumulation of problems in the marital relationship leads her to eliminate temporally possible explanations for her husband’s dysfunctional behaviour and instead develop a new perception that her husband is an alcoholic (Asher, 1988; Gorman & Rooney, 1979; Jackson & Kogan, 1963; Weinberg & Vogler, 1990; Wiseman, 1991).

Nevertheless, there is a potential pitfall for the wife. Within the context of formal intervention programs for family members of alcoholics, the “culture of codependency” (Asher, 1992, p. 190) is introduced and stabilized in the woman’s lived experience. Such programs may narrow her identity to “codependent,” enhancing her readiness for self-blaming (Kokin & Walker, 1989). These feelings of self-blame tend to emanate from the negative self-image which is typical of wives who have experienced years of violent emotionality within the alcohol-centred relationship (Asher & Brissett, 1988; Denzin, 1987). Thus, labeling a woman “codependent” involves a social process maintained by family alcohol treatment programs, Al-Anon, therapists, and popular literature on codependency (Asher, 1992). It is not surprising that codependency is viewed as a “feminine disease” (Kaminer, 1992, p. 14) due in part to this social process and to women’s traditional role as caretakers of the family’s emotional health (Bateson, 1989; Rubin, 1979).

With most investigations that involve women married to alcoholics, the focal point has centred on the marital couple or family (Dunn, Seilhamer, Jacob & Whalen, 1992; Moos, Finney & Gamble, 1982; O’Farrell & Birchler, 1987; Steinglass, 1981). In addition, some recent works have questioned the wife’s enterprise of labeling herself as “codepen-
dent” and in need of treatment, (Asher, 1988; Asher & Brissett, 1988; Koken & Walker, 1989) and have stressed the social construction of the condition. For the purpose of this study the term “codependency” is used as it relates to alcohol treatment programs in relation to alcoholics’ wives’ difficulties and behaviours centred around their husbands’ alcoholism. The definitional ambiguity of the term “codependent” corresponds to a paucity of treatment methods for the condition in the literature. No empirical research supports the concept of the phenomenon of codependency (Troise, 1992) but a retrospective-prospective study by Asher (1988) on the “moral career” of defining oneself as the wife of an alcoholic and Denzin’s (1987) extensive ethnographic/phenomenological study of the alcoholic self suggest a cultural and interactional basis for the connection between symptomatic behaviour in the wives and diagnosis of the syndrome.

Basic questions concerning the experiences of women whose husbands are alcoholic remain unanswered in the literature, and treatment approaches centred in counselling theory have yet to be formulated. A rigorously applied ethnographic research approach can begin to fulfill this purpose by enabling the researcher to discover aspects of experience that reflect not only participants’ cognitive understanding but also the underlying meaning of their cultural reality (Spradley, 1979). An account of women married to alcoholics, which considers their tacit knowledge (Spradley, 1979) would be appropriate as a means to examine the cultural aspects of their experience. An ethnographic method can provide such an account.

A basic assumption of ethnography is that dimensions of meaning in cultural experience can be discovered through the study of language. The ethnographic interview is a vehicle for discovering the forms of discourse through which knowledge about the informant’s experience is revealed (Bertaux, 1981). Spradley (1979) refers to this discourse as a unique form of speech event.

Why is an ethnographic methodology appropriate to counselling research at this time in history? “Ethnography is an emergent interdisciplinary phenomenon. Its authority and rhetoric have spread to many fields where ‘culture’ is a newly problematic object of description and critique” (Clifford, 1986, p. 3). Bruner (1990) and others speak of a “contextual revolution” occurring in psychology and Waldegrave (1990) reminds us of the significance of cultural determinants in his argument for “Just Therapy.” It should be noted that “culture” has been familiar turf in the field of medical anthropology (Marsella & White, 1982; Chrisman & Maretzki, 1982). Anthropological and psychiatric knowledge have been brought to bear in helping individuals and families gain cultural understanding of their illnesses. The concept of culture (Unger
& Sanchez-Hucles, 1993) is recognized by feminist scholars who advocate the inclusion of context in social science research (Gergen, 1988; Lott, 1985; Mishler, 1986). Specifically, feminist ethnography involves an examination of women's behaviour in terms of cultural contexts (Reinharz, 1992).

What exactly do we mean by the term "culture"? Culture is the acquired ideas, beliefs, and knowledge that a particular group of individuals use to make meaning of their experience and generate cultural behaviour (Spradley, 1979). Furthermore, in a dialogue between two individuals, there are "the embedded or unconscious cultural structures in language, terminologies, nonverbal codes of behaviour, and assumptions about what constitutes the imaginary, real, and symbolic" (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, p. 31). The contention here is that individuals in a shared cultural and linguistic community define and identify their experience in a common and systematic manner (von Eckartsberg, 1986). Cultural knowledge affects all areas of one's life.

An ethnographic approach to counselling research was used in the present study to serve as a vehicle to evoke cultural/historical/gender sensitivity to the difficulties of women whose husbands are alcoholic, and thus enhance counselling outcomes for this group. This article seeks to illuminate what it means to be married to an alcoholic, from the perspective of five women at this time in the twentieth century.

TACTICS OF INQUIRY

Identifying Informants

Leninier (1985, p. 47) reminds us that the "selection of informants rests more on the careful identification of persons, often in advance, who are representative of the culture and who show potential to reveal substantive data ... on the domain of study." The informant's current involvement in the cultural scene for a minimum of one year is recommended (Spradley, 1979). In keeping with these criteria, five women currently married to alcoholics were chosen who were articulate and willing to describe their experience; duration of marriage ranged from 19 to 32 years. Each of the women identified her husband as an alcoholic and volunteered to be an informant for the study. Participants were recruited from a drug and alcohol centre. Clients or wives of clients were provided with information about the study by staff members at the centre and were invited to contact the authors by telephone if interested in participation. The participant group was chosen from the first five women that contacted the authors. One woman was a full-time student, one an artist, one a technician, and two were clerical workers. Four women lived with their husbands and one had been recently separated. The women's ages ranged from 47 to 60 years. All were Caucasian.
Interviews

A total of 10 individual one-hour interviews, all audio-taped, were conducted among the women. Three participants were interviewed for 2 one-hour conversations; one woman was interviewed for 3 one-hour interviews; and a one hour conversation occurred with one informant. Four of the informants were interviewed in their respective homes; one woman preferred to be interviewed at the drug and alcohol centre. Following the first hour’s interview, further interviews were arranged with four of the informants to elaborate emerging themes and domains, until saturation of the data was reached. The authors took the attitude of a novice in discovering the cultural knowledge of each informant (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979) wherein they were the “learners” in the research situation and each participant was invited to teach something about her experience.

The ethnographic interviews were conducted and the typed transcripts were analyzed according to the Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) Method of Spradley (1979). The DRS Method consists of 12 specific tasks whereby dimensions of meaning in cultural experience are discovered through the study of language. By examining how the informants used their phrases and terms, it was immediately necessary to decode the full meaning of symbols in the culture under investigation, as suggested by Spradley (1979). Of the 12 DRS steps, three involve posing descriptive, structural, and contrast questions.

Descriptive questions elicit respondents’ representation of some aspect of their culture or world (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) and help collect an ongoing sample of their language. The following is an example of a descriptive question posed in the initial interview with each informant: “I wonder if you could just start by telling me what it is like to be married to your husband?” Structural questions generate the constructs, or domains, informants use to describe their worlds (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). These constructs, or domains, are the basic units in an informant’s knowledge. The following example illustrates a structural question: “Debbie, you said that you believe you’re going crazy. Are there different reasons for believing that you’re going crazy?” Contrast questions are used to discover the meanings of, and the relationships among, the constructs that informants use (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The following contrast question used with one of the informants elicited valuable information: “So you see yourself living two lives. Can you tell me the difference between the two . . . give me an example of each?”

Ethnographic Analysis

Four kinds of ethnographic analysis, each an additional task in the DRS method, were used in conjunction with the various types of ethnographic questions as a way to discover the cultural meanings that women married
A condensed more intensive focus occurs at this stage of the research.

12. Writing the ethnography

11. Discovering cultural themes

10. Engaging in componential analysis

9. Posing contrast questions

8. Creating a taxonomy

7. Posing structural questions

6. Engaging in domain analysis

5. Analyzing ethnographic interviews

4. Posing descriptive questions

3. Writing condensed/expanded notes; audio taping

2. Interviewing an informant

1. Locating an informant

The dotted lines represent a shift in the ethnographic focus throughout the research process.

*Adapted from James P. Spradley (1979).

Figure 1

Developmental Research Sequence (DRS)*

to alcoholics use and to continually clarify and validate such meanings (Hycner, 1985; Spradley, 1979). Domain analysis involves a search for domains or larger categories, each made up of similar cultural symbols. Of importance to the concept of culture is the idea that individuals organize their knowledge about their world into categories. Bruner (1990, p. 56) reminds us that if we were not capable of constricting our
world into categories or schemas, we would be "lost in a murk of chaotic experience." In taxonomic analysis, the internal structure of a domain is examined by identifying commonality among terms. Constructing a taxonomy allows not only the content to be revealed within a domain but the structure of how all the terms are related to one another. Pieces of information that people use to distinguish differences between terms are called attributes. Componential analysis involves a search for attributes that reveal differences among terms in a domain. Lastly, the discovery of cultural themes requires a search for recurring ideas in several domains that relate to the culture. Many cultural themes are at the tacit level of the informant’s knowledge (Spradley, 1979). The four remaining DRS tasks involve locating and interviewing an informant, creating an ethnographic record, and writing the final report.

Credibility

Credibility of the study was accounted for through the use of a dependability audit, including an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The entire data gathering process was recorded (e.g., researcher/informant relationship; specific steps of the method used; any biases and reactions involving the topic of inquiry; as well as hunches, inferences, and ideas to be applied in data collection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993)). In addition, two specific methods were employed to solidify the credibility of this qualitative study. First, during the interviewing process, each informant was asked to verify the hypothesized domains that had been explicated from the typed transcripts. Second, after analyzing the data and creating the text, consideration was given for accuracy by returning to each informant for verification of the themes (Brenner, 1985).

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC TEXT

As most individuals would imagine, living with an alcoholic husband is difficult and complex. The wife lives in a world of diverse cultural meanings which she has learned in order to cope with and make sense of an alcohol-centred relationship often not seen by the outsider or casual observer. An understanding beyond this outsider’s view requires an interpretation of the wife’s life-space as experienced within the realm of the alcohol-dominated world she shares with her husband. It appears that the wife’s experience of temporality and emotionality has been distorted through years of interactional experiences woven through her husband’s “alcoholically altered stream of inner consciousness” (Denzin, 1987, p. 18). Metaphors of “not living a normal life” are frequently used by each of the women in their narratives. In fact, this is an important part of their tacit cultural knowledge.

By carefully explicating from the text the women’s use of words and phrases, a rich tapestry of common themes emerged to form a connect-
edness between their worlds. Separate strands of experience gathered from each informant were woven to create this tapestry of cultural understanding. Working through the material, it was possible to identify three common themes representative of the five women’s lives. The themes are: (1) Constantly Being on Guard; (2) Living in a Pit; and (3) Push and Pull.

**Constantly Being on Guard**

In contrast to normal relationships where love and affection bond two individuals, the alcoholic relationship is experienced as painful emotionality on a daily basis. Interacting with her alcoholic husband, the wife must determine whether her husband has been drinking or whether he is sober. For the wife, composing a life means integrating the ambiguous meaning surrounding these interactions. Fear and confusion, as Jackson (1956) observes, fills her emotional field of experience in anticipation of what phase of the drinking cycle her husband will be in.

When Anne was asked how she would describe her life with her husband, she gave me an example of having to be on guard when she said:

> It’s extremely stressful . . . you just don’t really know from one minute to the next just how things are going to be. There’s never any consistency. There’s constant up and downs . . . like a roller coaster . . . you’re constantly in a state of tension. There’s always tension or anxiety floating around you.

Debbie talked about being on guard whenever she anticipated her husband’s arrival home from work. She said, “you’re constantly in fear, not knowing what kind of a mood the person is going to be in when they come in the door because alcohol usually changes you so much.”

In the five women’s descriptions of being on guard, each of them used the terms “artificial” and “superficial” to describe how she experiences her life-space of negative emotionality. Over time, the wife’s verbal exchanges with her husband are shallow, meaningless monologues. Buber (1947, p. 42) used the term “reflexion” to describe an artificial interchange as “the mysterious intercourse between two human worlds [as] only a game. . . . In the rejection of the real life confronting [her], the essence of all reality begins to disintegrate.” Eventually, the spouse of the alcoholic has learned to suppress her emotions and finds herself living an inauthentic life.

Living an inauthentic life was explicitly described by each woman. In conversation, Karen said she never talked to anyone about her painful feelings and that such feelings were “almost” concealed from herself. She said:

> I was a person walking around with a shell, dressing really nicely, making sure that my hair was always really nice and so on and so forth. My make-up was always really nice so that no one would see the inner . . . I mean I was perfect at putting on that
show... I guess I was doing everything on the surface and almost my feelings were probably almost in the deep freeze.

There was a pervasive lack of trust interwoven throughout each woman’s descriptions of having to constantly be on guard with her husband. During conversation, Louise’s implicit awareness of not trusting her husband was made explicit when she used two metaphors—“being in a void” and “an empty black space,” to describe her experience of spatiality in relationship with him. She went on to say, “[it] feels like when you look at the stars at night—it’s black and empty, yes, empty. That’s what the void is... it’s a lack of trust.”

As the women talked about being on guard as part of their experience, for each of them, the male-female relationships have been characterized by a disparity of power—weighed heavily on the side of the husbands. As in our society, differences in interpersonal power related to gender are only recently being addressed (Bartky, 1990; Miller, 1976; Yoder & Kahn, 1992). Bateson (1989, p. 39) wrote, “issues of female inferiority still arise for virtually every woman growing up in this society.” The foregoing descriptions of being on guard reflect each of the five women’s tacit cultural knowledge that her existence within her marital relationship is experienced as powerless. Each of the five informants entered traditional marriages at a time when inequality within the marital relationship was expected (Bateson, 1989; Breines, 1992; Harvey, 1993). But for each woman interviewed, asymmetry in the marital relationship turned to distorted forms of exploitation.

**Being in a Pit**

The theme of being in a pit involves the experience of a weakening of self within the alcohol-centred relationship and of how this loss relates to each of the participant’s cultural learning of being a woman in society. In other words, the wife finds herself “trapped in a pit” through the erosion of self in relationship with her husband and through the cultural myths she lives by.

For Debbie, being in a pit meant a state of confusion each time she was subjected to her husband’s subversive behaviour. After each confusing interaction, she would spend days of loneliness trying to reconstruct meaning in relation to self. She described a step to being in the pit:

My whole life was confusing... he still, all those years, said how much he loved me and I was the world to him... I had that on the one hand and then how he acted was so different... He would make demeaning comments to me... this is part of the step to being in a pit... You get to the top of the slimy wall of the pit, thinking you could see daylight again, then something completely crazy would happen and you’d go back down again and try to sort yourself out.

Being married to an alcoholic is not the only reason that each of these five women struggles with her sense of self. Bateson (1989) observed that in our society, women have a tendency to believe messages of unworthi-
ness and disdain which lead to a vulnerability to distorted perceptions of themselves.

Karen spoke about how she had arrived at believing she would fail an upcoming final exam:

The weekend before I wrote those exams [he] was awful to me. Just awful . . . just adding every bit to me to make me feel really, really low. Well, I went to my first test and I mean I blew it. I didn’t even have any oxygen in my brain.

Bateson (1989) also reported that women in this society learn to assume a victim mentality and are often targets of blame, especially in situations of vulnerability. This victim mentality places the wife in a vulnerable position to receive her husband’s and other’s blame for everything wrong in the relationship. Findings by Asher (1988), Denzin (1987), Kokin and Walker (1989), and Wiseman (1991), support this dynamic of blame found in the alcohol-centred relationship.

The pit is a “private world of insulated madness” (Denzin, 1987, p. 146) protected from the outside by soft, padded, moveable walls where, as Denzin (1987) observed, the wife’s identity is molded into a dependency on the alcohol-dependent relationship, and her self becomes entrenched and intertwined into that of the alcoholic self. Debbie described her loss of self as she became “completely cocooned in loneliness”:

It was like there’s this little cloud all around it and it was soft in there and that was where I was lonely—like soft—because you could push on the walls and they’d move—it wasn’t really—it was a trap but it wasn’t a trap that you would fight to get out of . . . it wasn’t a real place.

Caught in a spiral of isolation that involves a weakening of self and an ambiguous sense of what is real and unreal, the wife believes she is unable to change.

**Push and Pull**

“Insulate” is what he tries to do. I think of that as soft padding like words and flowers, stuff like that and nice gestures, pushing, wolf in sheep’s clothing kind of stuff. So I think of “insulate” as soft stuff. “Isolate” I think is the result of trying to do that—all that stuff about pulling and straining is the fact that I think it’s just everyone’s nature, either you give up or you fight. I guess the pulling is the fighting. . . . No wonder I have all this terrible indecision [about leaving the marriage] when in fact I do have all this padding.

This excerpt from a conversation with Louise illustrates the powerlessness that dominates the lives of the women talked to, and powerlessness which predisposes them to conflicts around issues of dependence-independence (Rubin, 1979). Rubin (1979) reported that most women experience conflicts especially at mid-life, around independence, separation, and individuation largely as a result of socialization processes that encourage dependency and passivity in women. However, these conflicts seem exaggerated for the alcoholics’ wives, who for years have
lived in marriages defined by a cycle of dependency, which makes change extremely difficult.

Denzin (1987, p. 196) found that the alcoholic, who lives with a distorted perception of self and other, eventually moves deeper into isolation from the real world and “becomes an outsider to society.” The wife’s knowledge of her husband’s alcoholically-clouded stream of consciousness that pushes him toward increased isolation is implicit. The centrality of isolation in the relationship is revealed in the following statement by Debbie:

I feel that it was even physical isolation . . . at one time when I had three couples—three women I was particularly close to at work and their husbands—we used to socialize a lot. . . . He didn’t like that even though he was always included and so he came up with the idea that for a year we wouldn’t see anybody but each other.

The above statement supports Denzin’s (1987) observation that the self-centred, self-seeking alcoholic experiences a terrifying, desperate loneliness that pervades all emotional relations with others. It appears that as the husband becomes less engaged with the “outside,” his dependency needs on his spouse are increased. Louise has to “fight a huge war” against her husband’s forms of control in her struggle to be more independent. She told me the following:

I’m trying to remember some night when I was out, he talks about how he misses me and it sort of, he’s just trying to crowd me in, to make my world small. Like [he says] my friends, whichever ones I bring home, which I stopped doing years ago, [that] they’re trying to dominate me, for example. That’s trying to insulate me so that I have no friends and only do his things.

It is no wonder that each woman believed she was “weak” and “not strong enough to leave.” Rubin (1979) observed that women’s early experiences of powerlessness gear them to a lifetime of conflict around issues of dependency-independence and struggle to develop separate personal boundaries in their relationships. Karen said, “When we first got married I was a very passive person—I did not argue back at all.” Rubin (1979) added that if a woman had been raised in a culture that valued her for her independence, she wouldn’t experience fear each time she moved in that direction.

Thus, the five women, all from a generation that lived in compliance with the cultural norms that relegated them to domestic concerns (Dinnerstein, 1992), understood themselves through care for their families and the nurturance of relationships within them (Bateson, 1989). In conversation, Debbie reflects on her role in the marriage:

[I believed that] to be a good wife you made a good marriage. . . . I made his whole life easy. . . . [If] he was drunk, I would drive. If he was drunk and didn’t pay the bills, I’d take a second job and no matter what, I always was there to pick up the pieces and I was always there for, you know, moral support—anything.

For the women, living with an alcoholic meant “getting out of touch with your needs.” The power of socialization processes that for gen-
erations have trained women for self-sacrifice, prepares them to bear guilt whenever they consider their needs (Rubin, 1979). Guilt, the “dark shadow of responsibility” (Yalom, 1980, p. 276) that can paralyze the willing process, played a central role in each woman’s struggle for change.

As women encounter not only the internal pressures toward change, but external ones toward stasis, their determination and confidence tends to weaken so that future possibilities are relinquished. This was true for these women. Although conscious of the painful state of their marriages, they were unable to act on their internal struggles toward alteration. Debbie said, “I could have walked” but speaks of some pressures that blocked her way.

I think society did expect women to stay home and either be old maids or else be married or else be a whore. Our roles were cast for us. You didn’t seem to be an adventurer or free spirited woman who could be alone and respected.

Decision, as Yalom (1980) observed, means confronting not only freedom but also fearful isolation. Even though she lives separate from her husband in the same house—separated by a door with a removable bookshelf, Ann chooses to stay financially and socially comfortable as a married woman. She speaks of her fear of loneliness:

Yeah, fear of change, fear of . . . being out there and just being on your own. Totally. Like even in this situation, even when those doors are shut, I still haven’t lost him totally. Like I still know that he’s there for me if I need him so I guess I’m not really 100% sure [I could leave] . . . I think I’m dependent to a degree but yet I don’t see myself as one to go out and try the world on my own.

Because most women have been forced to suppress and repress so much of their nature, they are fraught with ambivalence and ambiguity when faced with the possibility of disrupting the continuity of their lives (Rubin, 1979). Debbie said, “socially it was easy. . . . It was easier in my mind, I think it was easier to live that phoney existence than to strike out on my own. . . .” Rubin (1979) found that most women in mid-life fear divorce and are unwilling to take the risk no matter how great the personal cost. Rubin added that in reality, mid-life women reckoning with divorce, face the possibility of financial deprivation and limited social options. Limited social options for single women were a major driving force behind the wives’ fear of change.

A major thread woven through the theme of push and pull is disillusionment. Phrases such as, “It’s a waste of life,” and “It’s a big loss” illustrate the women’s despair. Future possibilities with their husbands are anticipated with images of loneliness and isolation. Each at mid-life, a difficult time for most women, when old roles are shed and priorities reestablished (Rubin, 1979), the women struggle with the reality of being sold a cultural myth of family and marriage.
In summary, each of the themes organizes the wives’ experience around their husbands’ alcoholism and cultural expectations. Taken together, the themes refer to an interactional process that focuses on the wives’ construction of meaning around their husbands’ drinking behaviour. These themes do not always function at a level of conscious interpretive strategies, but rather structure the wives’ experience at a taken-for-granted level (Denzin, 1987).

**DISCUSSION**

Fundamentally, ethnographic research sets out to discover aspects of experience that consider not only participants’ cognitive understanding, but also their cultural reality. The importance of this study is that through my search for some of the rules and maps of the culture of five women married to alcoholics, an expanded vision of the women’s experience has been created.

Spradley’s (1979) ethnographic interviewing methodology was rigorously applied to uncover meaning in the five women’s existence, and this illuminated the impact of socialization processes on their experience. Also, the description of the alcohol-centred interactional dynamics of the marital realtionship has been broadened.

This work builds on and adds to a symbolic interaction study by Asher (1988) on the “moral career” of defining oneself as the spouse of an alcoholic husband and on Denzin’s (1987) ethnographic/phenomenological study of the alcoholic self. The authors concur with Denzin’s (1987) suggestion that alcoholics’ partners live in a field of contrasting emotions centred around alcohol-dependent marital interaction. The authors also agree with Asher (1988) who proposes strong cultural and interactional bases for wives’ ways of defining themselves and their problems.

Based on the descriptions from five informants, it is suggested that a complex interaction in the experience of each woman involving internalization of cultural expectations, weakening of self, and embeddedness in an alcohol-centred marriage that encourages women to be passive, dependent, self-sacrificing, and self-blaming, has contributed to the popular perspective of what it means to be married to an alcoholic.

The interpretation of the wives’ experience in this work refers to the cognitive and emotional structures that shape their actions. The concepts of emotionality, temporality, autonomy, dependency, powerlessness, trust, guilt, self-blame, female inferiority, weakening of self, isolation, loss, and separation refer to the inner and outer forms of experience that make up the women’s essential structures of existence.

The ethnographic method offers important contributions to the substantive field of alcohol studies. Except for Denzin’s (1987) study on the alcoholic self which revealed insights about the alcoholic’s partner, and
Wiseman's (1991) investigation which provided a symbolic interactionist perspective on women married to alcoholics, an ethnographic methodology has not been used as the route of discovery into the culture of women whose husbands are alcoholics. Using the ethnographic method made it possible to go beyond the individual's experience and to illuminate cultural structures and processes. Thus, by examining the subtleties of the women's meaning systems concerning gender socialization, a rich source of cultural knowledge has been uncovered.

Implications for Counsellors

With awareness that internalization of cultural norms and the interactional dynamics of the marital relationship seriously affect the wives' experience, some suggestions for counsellors are presented.

First, since the wives experience dependency and powerlessness in marriage and are already vulnerable to these issues through socialization, they present special difficulties for counsellors. Entrapment in an alcohol-dependent marriage fosters fear, particularly fear of change. Counsellors need to be cognizant of this, and respect the immense barriers that women married to alcoholics have against change (i.e. suppressed emotions, social pressures, cultural beliefs, weakened self).

Second, consideration of clients' beliefs (e.g. blaming themselves for their husbands' alcoholism) could offer a larger framework of the presenting problems. Particularly useful would be counselling strategies that encompass the understanding of problems within the cultural context.

Third, some suggestions for counsellors are based on the researcher's experience with ethnographic interviewing methodology. Integration of ethnographic questioning in the therapeutic interview would shift more emphasis to clients' use of language. This way, clients could be actively involved in shaping the meaning of their cognitive maps. Also, ethnographic questioning would elicit valuable descriptions and contrasts of clients' experience.

Finally, a counsellor training model could be developed that builds on Spradley's (1979) ethnographic questioning. Integrating ethnographic questioning into counsellor training programs could raise trainees' awareness of the significance of clients' use of language. Trainees could learn how to apply ethnographic questioning as a therapeutic tool for mapping out their clients' meaning constructs and for developing a coherent understanding of clients' worlds.

References


The Erosion of Self


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This paper represents a collaboration between Elizabeth Banister, who conducted the research on alcoholics' wives, and Vance Peavy, who served as the research supervisor.
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

Permission was not received to include Quail, J.M., & Peavy, R.V. (1994), A phenomenological research study of a client's experience in art therapy, The Arts in Psychotherapy, 21(1), 45-57. This article has been removed from the collection.
Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Career Counseling With Native Clients:
Understanding The Context

R. Vance Peavy

Overview

In order to discuss career development and counseling sensibly in relation to Native clients, it is necessary to state four contextual conditions:

1. There is no generic Native or “Indian.” The term “Indian” is a “white” term. For Natives living traditional lives, there are many important clan, band, and tribal differences as well as complicated family politics—all of which influence career development and choice for Native individuals. Career counseling with Native clients requires an unusually large range of cultural understandings and an appreciation of diversity and uniqueness.

2. With regard to Native enculturation and self-identity, there are at least four Native “cultural-self” definitions, each having profound implications for career counseling.2

   · A “traditional” Native supports and lives the traditional way of life through use of foods, medicines, social organization, ceremonies, and communication, and is happy with this way of life.

   · An “assimilated” Native supports and lives the modern, dominant society way of life through use of foods, social organization, and communication and is happy with this way of life.

   · A “transitional” Native identity fluctuates between traditional and dominant society, and often exhibits dysfunctional ways of living. The transitional individual is not committed to either culture and may be unhappy, uncertain, or unaware of his or her own lifestyle. He or she is often abusive, substance addicted, manifests low self-esteem and lack of personal stability.

   · A “bi-cultural” Native person lives and supports both traditional and dominant society ways of living. The bi-cultural person uses both traditional and dominant society foods, medicines, and social organization, and may engage in both clan and nuclear family patterns. In contrast to the other identities, the bi-cultural individual has reconciled cultural differences and is at peace with reconciliation. If career counseling is to be at all effective, it must take these differing life-styles and identities into account.

3. Career development for Native youth is seriously impeded by two characteristics of dominant society schools:

   · Lack of attention, understanding, and respect on the part of school personnel (including career counselors) toward the linguistic and cultural identities of Native students.

   · Lack of structural support or “Native cultural presence” for students who are attempting to retain Native cultural identity. A counseling preoccupation with the “self” of Native students as a step toward career development is all too often assimilative and contributes to the creation of transitional, dysfunctional lifestyles. Though unintentional, career counselors perform a kind of colonization of the Native mind (Madsen, 1990) when they attribute importance and value to academic, social, and vocational values and tasks as they understand them. If career counseling and development is to make sense to Native students, ways must be found for Native students to find and use their own “cultural voices” in career exploration and to use their own life experiences as building blocks for a hopeful future.

4. Training in “multicultural counseling” is not an answer for providing sensible career counseling for Native clients for at least two reasons. First, Natives are not immigrants. Persons who come to North America as refugees and immigrants have an expectation, as does the dominant society, that in due time they will attain full membership in the North American dominant society. Their direction is clearly assimilative and contrasts absolutely with many Natives who struggle to preserve their historical, cultural identity as an “original” or “First Nations” people. Second, to “migrate” is to leave one culture and to re-establish oneself in another culture (Bissoondath, 1994). Most “First Nations” peoples are dedicated to retaining their Native cultural identity and, in many instances, interested in developing a bi-cultural

ability to navigate harmoniously back and forth between Native and dominant culture.

Directions For Career Counseling With Native Youth

Our research (Peavy, 1994) suggests at least five ways in which career work with Native youth can reduce racism and dominant society suppression of Native identity and give Native youth more voice in the formulation of career conceptions which are sensible to them:

- Provide financial and conceptual support for educating Natives as career counselors for Native youth. Native community leaders and elders should have a say in the composition of such training programs.

- Take steps in school programs to ensure that Native youth can receive career counseling from Native counselors, if they want it, or from non-Native counselors who have successfully established credibility and rapport with Native clients and with the larger Native community.

- Restructure counselor education programs to include courses in Native psychology, language, history and culture. Include “immersion” experiences in the Native community. At the very least, counselors of Native youth should have participated in Native community events and should have first-hand knowledge of the cultural protocols typical of the Native cultural groups.

- Develop career counseling programs to include experiences and materials tailored to the needs of Native youth; use suitable role models—for identity purposes and for career emulation.

- Revise the basic process of career counseling for Native needs. In contrast with formalized, self-focused counseling based on dominant society education and psychological principles, Native-appropriate counseling might employ, for example, narrative and story-telling as a central counseling procedure (Peavy, 1992). Storytelling is a good vehicle for rethinking one’s “career identity” in relation to social, political, and economic realities, and can help counselors and clients find ways to reclaim identities as members of a respected cultural group. Further, storied counseling enab Native clients to explore ways to navigate through school and dominant culture.

Conclusion

The contextual consideration outlined in this paper provide a framework for career counseling with Native youth. It is a framework which links Native tradition, community and culture to Native experience in dominant society schools and which helps Native youth construct a personal voice and identity, yet, at the same time, learn to navigate school and majority cultural life. This framework suggests that career counseling approach with Native clients can be constructed which respects Native culture and promotes abilities and hope for bi-cultural navigation and career formation.

References


Reference Notes

1 For consistency, I use the term “Native” in this paper without prejudice to other terms, such as “Indian,” “Aboriginal,” “First Nations,” and “Indigenous.”

2 I am indebted to Wedlidi Speck for these distinctions. Wedlidi Speck is a status Indian and member of the Nimpkish Band of the Kwakiutl Agency and is a traditional-based counselor.

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Career Counseling For Native Youth:
What Kind And By Whom?

R. Vance Peavy

Overview

One of the most sobering realizations about career counseling with Native youth is that almost no research has been done on Native career development—we do not even know to what extent the term "career" is culturally sensible to Native people. Working formulations conducted by the author and several graduate students (MacNeill, 1994; Peavy, 1993, 1994) has led to some working formulations about the concept of career with Native clients.

- Personal and cultural identity is a critical issue for Native youth. They are often caught between two cultural worlds—bicultural personhood is hard to come by for many and rejected by others.

- The life path, and career path, of many Native individuals is unbelievably chaotic and unpredictable, especially for "transitional" individuals. Family deterioration, deculturation, and racial discrimination produce extremely turbulent lives with little trace of "career" path.

- The need for healing, identity authentication, and self-esteem building is so pressing for some Native clients that career and educational counseling must be part of an integrated approach which encounters the "whole" person.

- Psychometrically oriented approaches to career counseling are inappropriate for many Native clients. As one person put it, "We do not want you to develop culture-fair tests for our children—we want you to stop testing them!"

- High expectations play an important part in many Native cultures. The traditional family depended for its survival on the sharing and cooperation of all family members. Praise was seldom given. It was simply expected that each person would do the very best possible—"that excellence would be striven for without praise. High skill and quality products were their own rewards. There was reluctance to do something unless the probability of success was high. Appreciation was shown, not by vocalizing praise, but by asking people to continue doing what they were already doing. One of the tasks of counselors working with Native youth is to find ways to tap into the naturally occurring ethic of high expectations and help Native clients to apply this ethic in school culture and in dominant society worklife.

While differences exist among Native groups as to the kind of counseling suitable for their children and youth, there is almost remarkable unanimity, which goes back decades, concerning the need for, and the nature of, culturally appropriate counseling for Native youth (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; Peavy, 1993).

The Kind of Counseling Native Leaders and Parents Want

The National Indian Brotherhood (1972) document primarily addressed education for Native children and youth. A discussion of counseling contained the following requests:

- Availability of counseling for Indians by Indians, both on and off reserves.

- Provision of more culturally appropriate sensitization and training for non-Native counselors who counsel Natives.

- Recognition that existing counseling services for Native youth are not only ineffective, but in some instances contribute to the failure of Native students in school.

- Provision of Native para-professional counselor-aides to increase liaison with families and Band councils.

- Each school with Native students should provide counseling and guidance services which ensure that Native students are prepared for the challenge of living and working after leaving school.

The Kind of Counselors and Counseling Native Youth Want

Recent studies of counseling for Native youth in British Columbia (Peavy, 1994) and the Yukon (MacNeill, 1994) identified characteristics which Native youth search for in counselors and which contribute to counseling success, (i.e., the extent to which Native youth describe the counselor as a safe and helpful person).

- A counselor should be like a best friend—someone who knows when to speak and when to stay quiet, some-

A counselor should be personal but non-invasive.

- A counselor must be perceived as “safe.” Word of betrayal of confidence travels fast through a Native community.

- A counselor should be accessible on a “drop-in” basis.

- Counselors should be actively involved in providing a Native presence in the school.

- A counselor should be known in the community and should know family members by name.

- A counselor must be patient, accepting, and humorous.

- A counselor must be familiar with the many struggles of Native youth. This includes coping with addictions, grief, homesickness, segregation, suicide, discrimination, adoption, cross-band rivalries, pregnancy, sexual and physical abuse, neglect, lack of role-models, and shame and confusion about personal and cultural identity.

- A counselor need not be Native (although this helps) but must have non-biased knowledge about Native culture and protocol.

- A counselor should be informal and treat Native students as having equal status with other students. As Native students in one discussion said, “We don’t want to be just shoved along through school, nor segregated into special rooms or seen as having deficits or being slow. ... We want counselors to help ensure that we take courses needed to go on for further education and to prepare us for work.”

- A counselor should understand the need of many Native youth to be in a healing process.

- Counselors should know about the need of most, but not all, Native youth for spirituality. As one informant put it: “We have a special relationship with the land, with ancestors, with our community, and with nature. To achieve harmony is sometimes more important than anything else.”

**Summary Guidelines for Counselors Serving Native Youth**

Our own research and that of others (Heinrich, Corvine, & Thomas; 1990; Epp, 1985) supports guidelines which can help counselors be culturally sensible with Native youth:

- Within the school, take an informal, personal, friendly, non-invasive, and accessible stance.

- Participate in Native community happenings and become acquainted with family members.

- Concentrate on the best in students first, problems next. Move cautiously in the area of “personality” and feelings.

- Recognize and respect world-views based on harmony, non-interference, trust, and spirituality.

- Use career exploration strategies based on doing, not on telling.

- Actively work to create a “Native presence” in the school and cultural awareness among all members of the school culture.

- Create Native community networks and identify Native role-models for the purpose of helping Native youth with transitions from home to school, school to school, remote community to urban school, and from school to work experience.

- Above all, practice patience, understanding, acceptability, informality and earn the trust of both Native youth and their family members.

**Conclusion**

It is essential for career counselors working with Native youth to be cognizant of Native communication patterns which include non-intrusive listening, story-telling, patience and respect for family influences. Native students and the parents want non-biased treatment, information, and guidance from counselors to ensure both successful navigation of the school culture and transition to worklife. There is a great deal of diversity among Native groups. Counselors must not fall into the trap of seeing all Natives as the same, or as “different in the same ways.” A counselor’s best tools are knowledge of Native culture and protocol, a personal, informal, accessible counseling style, useful knowledge about the school and work, humor, patience, respect for world-views including balance, harmony, spirituality and non-intrusiveness—and an ability to relate to Native youth on the basis of their strengths and successes, rather than their failures and deficits.

**References**


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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Constructivist Career Counseling
R. Vance Peavy

Overview
Counseling as a profession has developed in a social context. The advance of science and technology, the rise of mass consumerism, the deterioration of families, neighborhoods, and small communities, and the increasing irrelevance of traditional authority, all create problems for people trying to cope with everyday living. At the same time the modernist ideas of progress, productivity, and perfectibility, buttressed by the belief that objective rationality would eventually "cure all," carry people into more complex and disturbing life circumstances. In this modernist context, counseling took on the trappings of Technical Rationality (Schon, 1983) (e.g., objectivity, neutrality, expertness, behavioral reductionism, quantification, measurement) and aspects of instrumental reason (Taylor, 1991) (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability)—all of which belong more to economists than to counselors.

These social transformations have enormous implications for career counseling. Client lives are increasingly characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict. Globalization and the undercutting of traditional customs radically alters the nature of day-to-day social life and affects most personal experience. In certain ways the 1990's are better than previous decades (for some) and in other ways the 90s are simply awful (for many). To quote Dorothy, "We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto." In order to help individuals navigate these changing contexts, counseling is in need of revision and reformation. Counselors must comprehend both the scope and the effect of these transformations and how they intertwine with each individual and therefore with the self. In general, this means that issues such as "self-construction" instead of "self-presentation," "self-as-narrative" instead of "self-traits," and "life-planning" instead of "career choice," become of paramount importance to career counselors.

The author has begun to outline a constructivist career counseling perspective which is designed to be appropriate to the post-industrial/post-modern context (Peavy, 1992, 1993, 1993a, 1994). The main concepts and practical career-counseling procedures from this perspective are outlined below.

Constructivist Concepts
Constructivist thought has its roots in philosophy, psychology, science, and cultural studies. Some constructivist concepts which can be applied to counseling include the following:

1. There is no single "God's eye" view of reality—rather, there are multiple realities. Although there is no "one right way" to think, feel, or do, some ways are better than others. One of the challenges for constructivists is to devise ways of ascertaining better and worse ways of thinking, acting, and being, usually by considering more vigorously the consequences of our thinking and acting; examining the assumptions and beliefs underlying our alternatives; and taking individual choice more seriously.

2. Humans are "self-organizing" entities, not a set of traits or repertory of behaviors. Each person's life is a story, or set of stories—an evolving biographical narrative under continuous revision.

3. Individuals "construct" their own selves through the interpretations they make and the actions they take. Increasingly, societal conditions call for individuals to be active and reflective selves, aware of the contexts in which they live, and capable of becoming agentic—at times resistive—and creative in relationships and work.

4. A self is "polyphonic"; it has several voices. Four important voices are the voices of health and well-being: the voice of intimacy; the voice of work life and learning; and the voice of spirituality.

5. People are "meaning-makers" and word-munchers. They use language and action to make meaning out of daily activities. The most important personal meanings are relational. They are constructed through interactions with others and with aspects of the surrounding world.

6. To exist as an empowered person requires reflection and examination of the assumptions underlying daily decisions and actions. Critical reflection enables the building of a world-view which includes the following elements:

   · A wholistic rather than reductive psychology of people.

   · The moral idea that self-fulfillment is "good"—one should strive to become what one is capable of being.

   · A tripartite concept of personal freedom. First, one is responsible for one's own thinking and actions. Second,
personal freedom is dependent on the quality of relationships which one builds and maintains. Third, personal freedom is influenced by the kind and quality of one’s engagement in meaning beyond one’s own ego (transcendent meaning) in such phenomena as nature, society, art, hobbies, God, compassionate action on behalf of others, and work.

Practical Counseling Considerations

Constructivist career counseling is a general method of life planning. It is a philosophical and psychological framework from which to work, rather than a set of techniques. However, certain counseling interventions are clearly constructivist.

Collaboration

The counselor and client are allies, with each making significant contributions to counseling. The counselor is an expert on the counseling process and the client is an expert on his or her own life experience.

Receptive Inquiry

The counselor promotes inquiry into the client’s life-world within a context where the client feels simultaneously safe and challenged. Receptive inquiry tools include meaning-generating questions, metaphorical transformations, the use of artwork and objects to create meaning, autobiographical writing, visualization, and dialogical discussion.

Pattern Recognition

The counselor and client try to identify “patterns of influence” which are shaping the client’s thinking and acting, especially influential relationships. Relationships, informal relations with peers and family, and mediated relationships such as those generated by media, often are more influential in career development and job-getting than traditional psychometrically-oriented career counseling activities.

Primacy of Life Experience

The counselor and client work directly with the client’s life experience (i.e., with perceptions and personal meanings as revealed through narrative, journaling, interview dialogue, concept-mapping, artwork, and other self-revelatory activities). Counseling is not so much a matter of “initiating” change as it is a matter of influencing change already underway—informing the direction of an “evolving self.” Client resistance or reluctance is a concept not used by constructivist counselors. The constructivist assumption is that whatever a client is doing or thinking is necessary for the client’s coping or survival, given the client’s immediate frame of reference.

Mindfulness

The constructivist career counselor regards mindfulness as a desirable goal for both clients and counselors. The essential elements of mindfulness are (a) the creation of new categories of constructs to help interpret experience, (b) panding openness and receptivity to new information, b internal and external, and (c) the awareness of more than perspective on any aspect of one’s life-world, including reer. Critical reflection is a key tool in developing mind ness (Peavy, 1994).

Creating Meaning Through Activity

It is involvement in activities such as work experie cooperative education placement, job shadowing, volunt ing, work-site visitation, and work simulation, which provide the basis for personal meaning. The usefulness such activities to clients is greatly enhanced through “ref tion-on-activity” and “discussion and dialogue” with a co selor. Activity provides the raw materials (experiences), it is reflection and counseling activities such as interview c logue, group discussion, journaling, concept-mapping, pendable strengths analysis, and metaphorizing of exp ence and self, which influence both the evolving self and reer decision-making.

Conclusion

Constructivist career counseling represents a “turn” the history of counseling. It is a turn away from a reduct ist and partiale view of personality and social life—and accompanying view of counseling as driven by a need to c rect human deficit—and toward a view of the person whose listic, self-organizing, and maker of meaning. It is a h away from “psychometric self” and toward “strored self.” A constructivist approach offers counselors and clients a mode of collaboration and co-participation in meaning-maki counseling activities. This method enables clients to constr self and to make sense of worklife in the 21st century.

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Constructivist Career Counselling and Assessment

R. Vance Peavy

Abstract

This article provides an introductory discussion of important issues in career development concepts and outlines the main features of career counselling from a constructivist perspective. The author provides an overview of assessment procedures in career counselling.

Introduction

In a recent article, Peavy (1993) discusses changes occurring in economies and in patterns of worklife that are radically altering the day-to-day social life for the majority of people in our culture and are clearly influencing the most personal aspects of our experience.

We can no longer view the self as a passive entity, largely determined by external factors such as family and schooling. More and more, the experience of doubt permeates daily life and decision-making. There are fewer and fewer traditional sources of guidance available to individuals who are trying to forge identities and make decisions about careers and other aspects of their future (Giddens, 1991). In Canada we are definitely living in an evolving culture of multiple choice, risk, and uncertainty. Social and economic life is being restructured and revised. Individuals are experiencing uncertainty about what the future holds and the need for developing changed views and skills in order to survive in restructured cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Correspondingly, the profession of counselling — especially “career counselling” — urgently needs revising (Peavy, 1993; Savickas, 1993) so as to be more effective in helping individuals to develop attitudes, perspectives and skills which will increase their chances of success in worklife.

Career development, counselling and assessment are complex matters and we need to examine both our theoretical ideas and our practice orientations in relation to them. I will briefly examine four topics which are relevant to career development and counselling before I move on to a discussion of “constructivist” counselling and assessment.

These topics are: the changing theories of self; three interpretations of reality — objective, subjective or participative; the place of real life experience and activity in career choice and development; and perspectives on worklife in the 21st century.

Self Theory

Since World War II, career counselling and assessment have been based primarily upon what can be described as a “psychometric” theory of self — i.e., a self comprised of measurable traits and factors.

This model of self is no longer tenable. In recent years, self theory has undergone radical revisions and now is based more on notions of agency, narrative and evolving self-organization. Further, personal meaning is much more prominent in self-theory than in previous times. Also, the development of self as a function of construction, especially in the context of social participation, relationships and dialogue has, to some extent, replaced earlier notions of self as a logical unfolding of “stages” or the self as the “product” of environmental influences.

This “new” self is a reflexive project consisting mainly in the sustaining of coherent, yet constantly revised, biographical narratives taking place in the context of multiple choices of lifestyle from a diversity of options and constraints. More and more, individuals are “thrown back on themselves,” so to speak, and must learn to engage in personally and reflexively organized life-planning. Reflexive planning which entails uncertainty and risk at every state and is often filtered through contact with experts and expert knowledge, is fast becoming a central feature of the structuring of self-identity (Giddens, 1991). This model of the “new” self has enormous implications for career counselling and career assessment.

Perhaps the most profound implication of this new model is that personal meaning and activity have replaced traits and mental mechanisms. What is real for
the individual is what that individual constructs through participation with others and with materials in his or her environment.

Interpretations of Reality
Counseling, as well as education and other social sciences, has long been plagued by debates about subjective versus objective views of what is real or more real. This has impacted strongly upon career counselling and assessment. The use of tests, and what kind of tests, the conduct of the effective interview and other counselling procedures have been torn between advocates of objectivity and advocates of subjectivity.

Recent conceptual developments in science and social science have opened up another possible view of reality. This is the view that reality is neither objective nor subjective, but participatory. What is real, what kind of life we lead, what we make of our career potentials is the result of participation in social life, of engaging in dialogue and relationship and of activity. In other words, we produce, create and construct our realities, both personal and social.

This means, for example, that career counselling is not so much an expert process as it is a cooperative process. Counsellor and client work together to produce better ideas, action possibilities, plans and resolutions. Counsellor and client share expertise. The client is expert on his or her own life experience. The counsellor is expert on processes of communication and change. Working cooperatively they construct sensible plans and resolutions.

The Use of Real Life Experience and Activity
The emphasis on results obtained from "objective" aptitude, interests and ability tests should be replaced in large measure with the actual life experience of individuals when exploring and forming career goals and plans.

It is no longer tenable to believe that the vast majority of individuals will have career plans that are rationally planned, organized and carried out to successful career development. There are few so-called "rational stages," if any, through which most individuals progress. The very concept of career grows suspect in our post-modern times (Miller-Tiedeman, 1988). Even granting that career retains legitimacy as a concept, career development must be seen as non-linear, intuitive and influenced by perturbations, accident and chance as much as rational planning.

We can think of career as synonymous with "life." Instead of career planning, we can speak of life-planning or personal planning and shift the focus of career counselling from testing, computerized career information data bases and career materials to practical activities of the client (Vahamottonen, Keskinen & Parilla, 1994), reflection, life-experience, meaning-exploration (Carlson, M.B., 1988), dialogue, career mentoring and participation in work and work preparation activities.

Having an occupation and a work identity is certainly important and necessary. However, the concept of "career" should not be the centrepiece of career counselling and career development programs. Instead, direct life-experience, reflection on that experience, support of the individual’s learning of new and post-industrial appropriate skills, together with the generation of personally meaningful, new knowledge about self and work should be central features of career counselling. Individuals "produce" themselves through participation, not through external moulding nor through rational unfolding.

Perspectives on Worklife in the 21st Century
Two terms, "post-modern" and "post-industrial" are important for understanding changes in worklife and changes needed in counselling practice. While there is no single definition of "post-modern" which authorities agree upon, it generally is applied to discussions of changes in culture, specifically developments in literature, film, architecture, media, leisure, philosophy and, to a lesser extent, social science. "Post-industrial" is a term which is applied more to society, especially the economic aspects of society.

One of the leading analysts of post-industrialism, Daniel Bell (1973, 1988) breaks the concept of post-industrial society down to five main parts:
1. Economic sector: the change from a goods-producing to a service economy (and cyber-world).
2. Occupational distribution: the pre-eminence of the professional and technical class.
3. Axial principle: the centrality of theoretical knowledge as a source of innovation.
5. Decision-making: the creation of a new "intellectual" technology.

The implications of these components of the post-industrial society for individuals who enter into the labour force are many. The prediction of success in the labour market of the future will be clearly dependent upon the worker’s acquisition of symbolic and interpersonal skills, especially those associated with:
1. Problem-solving, critical thinking and information gathering and analyzing.
2. Creative ability and innovative idea production.
3. Adaptability to "new" situations and work roles.
4. Interpersonal flexibility and competence.

The changes which we are experiencing today began decades ago in the minds of some thinkers. As career counsellors we must work at the philosophical level if we are to bring about a desired future effect for our clients and ourselves. We are in the midst of technical transformation and we need a philosophical transformation to match the technical one (Delavigne & Robertson, 1994). The philosophical transformation which career counsellors may find useful is one which recognizes that:
1. An ever-increasing portion of workers will be engaged in "knowledge-creation."
2. Self-esteem is as important as skill or opportunity.
3. System thinking is needed to replace "patch-up" and linear, hierarchical thinking.
4. Intrinsic motivation (agency) is essential to future success in the workplace.
5. Collaboration, cooperation and teamwork will supplant individualistic competition.
6. Symbolic skills and creative thinking will continue to replace manual and repetitive skills.
Constructivist Career Counselling

For better or for worse, we are seeing in our lifetimes the collapse of the "objectivist" world view which gave assurance that we humans exist in one true reality which is absolutely knowable, provided we use the right methods and which is composed of permanent, enduring beliefs and human traits. This objectivist world view has dominated education, counselling, social science and everyday life for most of this century. It has given birth to various forms of counselling and therapy (most notably behaviourist orientations) which depend upon objectivist ideas for their credibility.

The objectivist frame of reference has also given birth to, and continued to support, psychometrics, tests and testing and standardized assessment procedures. It has also found an ally in computerized guidance — especially, computerized information bases. One world view which is emerging from the collapse of objectivism is broadly termed constructivism. What follows is a review of an approach to career counselling based on a constructivist platform.

Constructivist career counselling (Peavy, 1992, 1993) is not so much a set of techniques as it is a philosophical framework for guiding the work of the counsellor and client. Some of the more important tenets of constructivist career counselling are:

1. An outstanding characteristic of individuals is their ability and need to "make meaning."
2. An individual's life is more like a story or work of art than a "profile" of traits or set of scores.
3. The counsellor and client are allies or co-constructors of the client's world, plans and coping strategies.
4. The self is constituted by self-organizing processes and is purposeful and proactive.
5. There are as many different "realities" as there are people — although some realities are more viable and preferable to others. Each person sees the world through his or her particular lens and speaks to the world through his or her unique voice.

It is often up to the counsellor and client to define and experiment with different alternatives and examine the consequences of either staying with a certain reality or moving to another.

6. The constructivist career counsellor tries to work directly with the client's own perceptions and personal meanings — often given in the form of stories, metaphors, narratives and dialogue. The assumption here is that the material of one's own life is more relevant to the formation of career choices and occupational planning than the scores on interest, personality and aptitude tests.

7. The constructivist career counsellor is receptive to a range of client contacts: one-to-one counselling, group meetings, letters and autobiographical writing and use of electronic communications such as telephone and computerized communication. In all instances, the emphasis is upon working together, co-constructing and empowering the client.

8. As with most other forms of counselling and therapy, the pre-condition for almost all other counselling work is that the client feel emotionally safe in the counselling context and feel supported to express feelings in that context. As Guidano (1991) puts it, "No change seems possible without emotions... The structure and quality of change depend to a large extent on the level and quality of self-awareness..." (pp. 96-97).

9. The self is a self-reflexive construction, hence reflection is an essential procedure in constructivist-oriented career counselling. Meaningful activity, reflection and self-articulation are three processes which constructivist counselling seeks to promote and support.

10. From a constructivist perspective, "career" is just one theme of a person's self-project. The individual should be approached as a "whole" being and not simply as a decision or a careerist. One way to define career counselling from this perspective is as a general methodology for life planning.

Assessment in Constructivist Career Counselling

Underlying Principles

Objective assessment is based on the assumption that is possible for the assessor to make observations or evaluate client concerns or characteristics in a neutral, non-obtrusive, "objective" manner. One of the reasons for using numbers or test scores is to adhere to "standardized" procedures and maintain a distance and neutrality toward clients.

In contrast, constructivists ally themselves more closely with recent developments in science (Keutner, 1984) and argue that any assessment is actually an intervention which prompts the assessed to reconstrue the concerns or factors being assessed. From the constructivist perspective, "...assessment is inherently a change-generating process that can be harnessed and directed toward promoting personal reconstruction (Neimeyer, 1993, p.12)." A counsellor working from the constructivist perspective assumes that an assessment should be active, dynamic and re-constructive.

Constructive assessment emphasizes semantic holism, the belief that any construction can only be understood within the context of meaning which supports the construction. What this means is that from an objectivist point of view, for example, a client might be assessed on a standardized test as passive or unmotivated. The underlying assumption is that the client has a trait of passivity and this is carried with the client across diverse contexts. In other words, for this client passivity is a general characteristic or enduring personality trait.

In contrast, the constructivist assumption is that a client may appear passive or act in an "unmotivated" manner in one context, but aggressively in another. Further, the client who acts passively is doing so for reasons sensible to herself, given the context in which the client is embedded and the meaning given to passivity and its contrast, aggressiveness, in that particular system to meaning.

Constructive assessment tends to focus on the implications which a particular construction of one's self has for one's own beliefs and future behaviour or implications for the actions and beliefs of
others. Objectivist assessment, in contrast, tries to establish the frequency or strength of a client’s characteristic. Such assessments can be expressed numerically yielding T-scores, percentiles, scores or other quantification.

Whereas objectivist assessment tries to produce scores which can be compared with various reference groups and thus suggest generalizations to be made about individuals, constructivist assessment tries to generalize meaning which applies to the particular individual or individuals in question and promotes the examination of implications rather than quantity.

A good example of how constructivist assessment focuses on implications is the implications grid originated by Hinkle (1965) and then updated by Fransella and Bannister (1977), and Caputi, Brierie & Pattison (1990). It is possible to treat the implications grid either statistically or intuitively and it permits the analysis of the various personal constructs of a client around two central constructs. The resulting structures of meaning can be used by the client to better understand how she is interpreting her own actions and beliefs and how these are being interpreted by others and forms a basis for examining the influence of implications for future choices, actions and change.

The Call for Diversity in Career Related Assessment

Constructivist-oriented career assessment calls for a cautionary attitude toward the use of standardized tests and questionnaires as assessment tools. Certainly there is a place for the use of some questionnaire-type assessment tools for at least two reasons. First, they can be used as devices for assisting clients to explore their own life experiences and ways of cognizing those experiences and their reactions to items on the test.

An example of a questionnaire which is well-suited to this purpose is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers & McCaulley, 1985) which attempts to assess Jungian theory-based “cognitive styles” (Singer & Loomis, 1984). Second, they can be used to help clients consider the implications of their own interests, values, attitudes, dispositions and preferences as well as the implications and meaning of these beliefs for the conduct of everyday activities. A recently devised questionnaire is the Career Beliefs Inventory (Krumboltz, 1994) which is designed to “help people identify beliefs and assumptions that may limit their career opportunities” (Krumboltz, 1994, p. 424). While the Career Beliefs Inventory tends to focus on beliefs and assumptions and can be used to stimulate clients to be reflective about their own life experiences.

The main focus of constructivist-oriented assessment is other than questionnaires. I will briefly outline a sampling of non-questionnaire assessment procedures in the following paragraphs. It should be borne in mind that two primary objectives of constructivist assessment are 1) to generate personal meaning and 2) to promote reflection on the implications of both new and old self-knowledge in relation to the concern under consideration (such as career planning). New meaning and reflection are part of the self construction and reconstruction process.

Methods of Assessment

Autobiographical Work
This includes writing activities such as keeping a journal (Rico, 1991), writing letters (White and Epston, 1990), and self-characterization (Kelly, 1955). Writing enables the client to give a name to feelings, hunches, dreams, fears and pain. It also is a method of enfrahming ones otherwise inchoate experiences. The verb frame infers moulding, shaping, making and patterning — all formative. By giving name to our inner feelings and ideas and giving them a frame we shape the formless and chaotic into something we can work with, something that is distinct, formed, framed and graspable. Another way of defining writing as a valuable counselling and assessment tool is to describe writing as a mode of making the self visible.

Conceptual and Word-Sculpturing
In conceptual mapping, the client is encouraged to use a coloured pen or pencil and draw a map of his or her life-space in relation to a particular concern — future career, for example. Starting with a circle representing “self” in the centre of the paper, the client is prompted to fill in significant people, events, experiences and activities in relation to self and one another. This process of ‘mapping” consists of linking ideas and experiences, significant others and activities into patterns and relationships. Sometimes the counsellor and client work together on the task of mapping with the counsellor asking questions that clarify, challenge and help establish meanings.

Word sculptures are similar in ways to doodling and concept mapping. A word sculpture is an evocative method of allowing previously unexpressed ideas, feelings and hunches to take meaningful shape and become articulated (Rico, 1991, 16-25). A word sculpture is produced by a kinesthetic movement of the hand and is especially useful for some clients who are slow to put their thoughts into words. The first step in word sculpting is simply to “allow” the hand to make looping gestures with a pencil or pen or paper. This initial gesture or
spiral of sweeping lines is only the beginning. Next it can be embellished without purposely trying to think about it. On a further try, words can be added allowing shape and thought to come together. They often intersect in ways and patterns not conceived before but which instantly make sense or bring new slants on a concern to light. Word sculptures allow an individual's imagination and thinking to loosen and help to clarify and add newness to perspectives. Figure 1 (page 11) illustrates the process of word sculpting.

Following several counseling sessions in which my client used word sculpting she wrote the following note to me:

I am amazed. My hand moves, I feel my life. Something new is stirring. Yesterday I just couldn't think... Now words are forming. I seem to be inventing myself. That's it: When I write, I open my future.

Self-Characterization as Assessment
Kelly's refinement of self-characterization as an assessment device is an excellent example of how a narrative can be used to achieve counseling goals. As an assessment procedure, the client is asked to "Write a character sketch of ____ (client's name), just as if he (or she) were the principal character in a play. Write it as it might be written by a close friend, someone who knows the character sympathetically. Be sure to write in the third person. For example start by saying '____ is _____'" (Adapted from Kelly, 1955, p. 323). At times I have had a client record this story when for some reason the client was unable to write it. This procedure can even be used in group setting with each individual writing their own self-characterization.

This procedure minimizes the threat of self-incriminating self-disclosure by using a third person writing technique. At the same time that it is designed to minimize defensive feelings on the parts of clients, it does provide an opportunity for self-presentation on plausible, holistic terms. It also allows the individual to express uniqueness and identity and to do so in novel self-chosen descriptive terms. Perhaps most importantly, self-characterization permits the client to express those unique organizing themes which the client imputes to his or her life.

The following guidelines for analysis of self-characterizations and dialogue between client and counselor about the self-characterization have been adapted from Neimeyer (1993, p. 85).

1. Approach the self-characterization with a credulous approach rather than an attitude of doubt or scepticism. "What does the world look like through this person's eyes?"
2. Try to grasp the overall flow and organization of the self-characterization. Assume that the first sentences in each paragraph or section are especially instructive.
3. Consider each aspect of the characterization in the context of the whole story. Are there key terms or ideas?
4. Watch for, and examine, repeated words, terms, phrases which have the same content or meaning. These may indicate self-constructions which are not clarified or signal especially important patterns in the life of the client.
5. Assume that the client is on the "growing-edge" of his or her own understanding as reflecting in the writing. Remain open to the client making changes in the story as the characterization is discussed.
6. In discussing with the client, restate your own understanding of what the client has described and meant, amend your own understanding when the client expresses different meanings and interpretations from your own.
7. Use the self-characterization to help your client temporalize his or her concern: What are the implications of this aspect of your characterization (or the whole characterization for your future? Your present? How strong are past influences in your characterization? What are they?)
8. Who and what are the character's validators? Invalidators?
9. Discuss with the client what some of the main behavioral, emotional, existential, and learning implications are implied by the self-characterization. What do I learn from reading, discussing or hearing my own self-characterization? What do I want to develop and expand? Shed or alter? How do I go about initiating change? What help do I need to do this?
10. What does this characterization say about the writer as present or future "worker"? What type of Worklife is implied by the self-characterization?

Interviewing as Assessment
A fundamental maxim of the constructivist counselling orientation is: If you want to know something about a client, ask. Instead of administering tests of getting the reports of other people, ask the individual directly. This can be done in many ways, one of which is the interview. Features of a constructivist interview have been outlined in some detail (Peavy, 1993) and an instructional video (Peavy, 1993a) demonstrates features of the constructivist career counselling interview.

Constructivist counselling usually does not employ the concept of "diagnosis" at all, and assessment only with caution. Epping (1984) has suggested that it is wise to describe the interactions between counselor and client as a form of planful conversation. Planning is a counseling task for which the counselor is primarily responsible, but which is always done in consultation with clients. The aim of planning is to assist clients in making transitions: school to work, home to autonomy, one career to another, etc. Planning always start with the life events and experiences of the clients and goes from there to other considerations. Epping (1984, pp. 78-79) has developed a set of planning questions which I have modified slightly for this paper.

Question 1. What is the focus of the client's concern? When and where does she experience it?
Question 2. What are the client's feelings and beliefs about her concern? What is the client already trying to do about the concern?
Question 3. What is your own appraisal of the client's construals and experience?
Question 4. What is the context in which this client is attempting to cope with this concern? Who else is involved? Does the concern implicate gender, race, social class membership or relationship to some other group of people? Is the client concerned with just career? Career and self-identity? Empowerment considerations? Information deficit or lack of ability? In addition to the client and the concern, what other contextual factors should
the counsellor and client be taking into account?

Question 5. What are the alternative routes open to the client for moving in the direction of the client’s preferred future? What can the counsellor and client agree on as a plan that will support the client to get on with successful living?

Question 6. What is the next step? For the client? For the counsellor? Is it clear to each that the other is to take the next step? And just how this step can be taken?

Question 7. Do counsellor and client agree that what each is contributing to the counselling is improving the client’s chances of success in resolving the concern?

The seven steps outlined above do not constitute the interview. Rather they indicate components of planning and provide a means of assessing client need, client resources, the usefulness of the counselling process, and assessing what the counsellor can contribute to client success. A concern such as career choice is not static, but fluid and changing. The main emphasis in conducting planning, from a constructivist perspective is on “avenues of movement which the individual can open up for him (or her) self” (Kelly, 1955, p. 724).

A further gain in using the terminology of “planning” in place of “diagnosis” or “assessment” is that tendencies are reduced to classify and categorize individuals into pigeonholes such as “irresponsible,” “lazy,” “unmotivated,” “depressive,” “co-dependent,” “neurotic” and “challenged.” Such labels, which tend to pathologize and disempower persons and stress deficits rather than assets, also hide the actual constructs and life activities and meanings which constitute the real self.

The aim of “planning” is to aid the client in moving from his or her present status to a future which he or she prefers and is able to achieve and which had continuing potential for the individual’s growth and accomplishments. Again, the aim of constructivist assessment (planning) is to help clients make transitions and move from one life status to another with the greatest amount of self-empowerment possible.

Dependable strengths articulation process as assessment. This is a method of assisting clients to identify positive personal constructs (Haldane, 1988). The procedure is applicable either to groups or to individuals. The first step in the process is to guide clients in expressing and defining “good experiences.” A good experience is an accomplishment or achievement which the individual feels good about, enjoyed doing and is proud of. Each member of the group is encouraged to identify their own good experiences. The counsellor coaches group members so that each member has a “list” of good experiences ranging from a few up to twenty. The counsellor must play an active part since some people will have a hard time identifying any good experiences.

Next, the good experiences are discussed and it is brought out how the individual has been able to achieve the good experiences. In this way, a person’s dependable personal strengths are explored and reinforced. They are dependable in that the individual him or herself accomplished them. The third step in this procedure is to prioritize and confirm how these good experiences (which reveal personal strengths which can be depended upon) can help the individual to lead more successful lives and solve problems.

Portfolio Assessment

The “testing” society and the “psychometric” self were both products of an age which behaviourist, associationist and trait and factor views of ability and self were regnant. Tests were reviewed as the best way to assess potential, achievement and personality characteristics under- standardized, controlled and maximally decontextualized conditions.

Recent work in self theory and human development has undermined the assumptions on which the testing edifice was built and better, alternative assessment tools and ideas are needed for counsellors specifically and education more generally.

It is now recognized that individuals do not develop in stages like the unfolding stair steps as was once thought (Feldman, 1980). Individual development is not smooth, linear or free from turbulence and perturbations, nor is career development.

Further, it is now recognized that almost any kind of assessment should include the views of the individual(s) being assessed. Instead of trying to diagnose the make-up of individuals by testing them, a shift is occurring to examining what actually happens when individuals are engaged in activities. The general thrust of this trend in assessment is to find competence and skill outside the head of the individual.

Human cognitive competence (and other competencies as well) is an emerging capacity. Or, to put it another way, is at least partially “constructed” by the individual through relations with others and the surrounding “world.”

Competence emerges at the constructive confluence of three domains: the individual with his or her skills and knowledge, the nature of the knowledge or procedure within which these skills can be aroused and a surrounding “context” or field within which performance is judged acceptable or as not meeting specifications (Gardner & Wolf, 1988).

One of the best replacements for assessment by testing is the individual portfolio. A portfolio can be built and maintained through cooperative efforts between the individual student or client and the counsellor. It should be simple enough for ease of understanding, it should reflect strengths, competencies, accomplishments, plans and products. A portfolio can contain a wide range of materials, but some commonly included items are: profile of client’s particular intellectual propensities such as linguistic, logical, spatial, mechanical, interpersonal and the like. Indications of mastery or achievements of skills, facts and accomplishments can also be included in the portfolio. A résumé of relevant educational studies and work experiences is often found in a portfolio. Reflections on own future plans, past achievements and present status also belong in a portfolio.

Perhaps the strongest reason for using a portfolio as an assessment procedure is that it is a record of the individual’s progress in constructing a self based on strengths and accomplishments over time. It is a means of personal planning and of developing a coherent self that has a better chance of a satisfactory life.
Conclusion

As Dorothy commented to her dog Toto in the Wizard of Oz, “We’re not in Kansas anymore.” I have alluded to the fact that we are inhabitants of a world in which social, cultural and economic transformations are occurring all around us. The work of world especially is being so transformed that the nature of “work,” the profile of “workers” and the collapse of time, space, linearity and tradition under the influence of the “new” sciences and their application in cybernetics and technology calls for more and more workers with highly developed symbolic skills to do mental work and engage in innovative thinking. These developments require a revising of counselling and guidance, especially in relation to “career” development, career counselling and career assessment.

I have suggested that a constructivist stance will enable counsellors to assist clients with the construction of selves and the generation of personal meaning and interpersonal flexibility needed for a satisfactory life in the evolving society. I have suggested that new forms of assessment are needed since both the “testing” society and “psychometric” self are largely discredited by both recent scientific findings and practical experience. It is time for new chapters on assessment in the book of counselling for life and work. I have briefly described what some of these assessment procedures look like. Further descriptions can be found in Neimeyer’s Constructivist Assessment: A Casebook (1994).

In the past five years I have had many counsellors say to me at the close of a seminar or workshop on constructivist career counselling: “You know, I feel like I have been a constructivist all along, I just haven’t known how to articulate it.” This does not surprise me. Most people who reflect upon their lives realize the importance of staying close to experience, they also recognize that life is not linear but has many turbulences and that what is real for one person may be nonsensical for someone else. Most of all, every human being harbours a hope and a will to make a life with meaning. This is the mission of constructivist counselling: to help people of all kinds, ages and inclinations make lives with more meaning.

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by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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A PERSONAL VIEW

Counselling as a culture of healing

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ABSTRACT While clearly upholding the value of the helping professions, this article presents an analysis of alleged shortcomings of present forms of counselling and therapy. Arguments are presented for a New Look in counselling. Counselling, it is claimed, would benefit from redefinition as a culture of healing. It should be conceptualised as a cultural practice rather than as a scientific undertaking. Drawing on new intellectual resources would help re-align counselling epistemologically and practically in order to achieve sensibility in the face of social and historical transformations which have taken place in the second half of this century and which continue radically to alter both social life and our ways of understanding social life.

Counselling: a valued friend in need of new directions

I was socialised into the profession of counselling in the early 1950s. I was taught to believe that counselling is an application of psychology supported by scientific research—the familiar practitioner-scientist image. I came of age, so to speak, in those heady days when both humanistic and behavioural counselling seemed to promise novices like myself a veritable ladder into counselling heaven if we just continued to verify our theories of helping and our practices through rigorous and persistent research.

I was led to believe that counselling psychology and its venerable older brother, academic psychology, were destined to find universal, truthful explanations for why people do what they do. This scientific knowledge, in turn, would make it possible to devise effective counselling and therapy techniques for getting people to change their ways. Proponents of behavioural and cognitive-behavioural counselling—just like their already-established psychoanalytic brethren—asserted in no uncertain terms that their enterprise was ‘scientific’, and very likely medical, or at least grounded in neurophysiology.

I remember the days when terms like ‘consciousness’ and ‘intuition’ were verboten. Humanists were ambivalent about the degree to which they aspired to scientific status, or at least they were inclined to hedge their bets because they had lingering doubts about whether psychology alone could best explain the doings of people. After all, maybe counselling really is an art, or at least a craft with a smidgen of intuition. And maybe we are not so much conditioned as we are auto poet ic.

The years and decades have come and gone since 1951, when, as a university student, I took my first two courses in counselling—one from a student of Carl Rogers, the other from a trait-and-factor type who was convinced that the future of counselling lay with Skinner. Since those days over 40 years have passed, and society has undergone, and is continuing to undergo, diverse and far-reaching transformations (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Kvale, 1992; Rorty, 1989). The selves which we once were, we no longer are (Taylor, 1989). The economic, social and political transformations which characterise post-modernity are not just abstract musings. They are radically altering the experience of day-to-day social life and affecting the most personal aspects of existence for millions of people, especially in industrialised societies (Giddens, 1991; Hage & Powers, 1992). My basic claim in this paper is that counselling is badly in need of revisions in order to attain synchronicity with social life and the troubles people have in a post-modern world. I believe that counselling would profit from an intellectual re-positioning and the acquisition of what I will call a New Look.

From my perspective, the terms ‘counselling’ and ‘therapy’ refer to the same process of personal reality construction and reconstruction. Both therapy and counselling centre on meaning, with language as the medium. They are both oral modes constituted by narratives, proverbs (pieces of folk wisdom), metaphors, and interpretations of personal and cultural realities. Both use metaphorical language generously in attempts to comprehend that which cannot be comprehended using literal, propositional language (Spence, 1982). Clients talk not about actual experiences, but about reconstructed memories that resemble the original experiences only in certain ways. The client’s story conforms to prevailing narrative conventions of a particular cultural context. Stories are never quite the same with re-telling. A narrator’s representations move further and further away from the actual lived experience and into a descriptive/interpretive mode with the passing of time. Whether the helping process is called counselling or therapy, clients are linguistic creators (constructors) of their life-worlds, and not merely disinterested, objective observers. In short, people everywhere who are engaged in the process of personal change and construction understand or fail to understand each other through their stories, told and heard.

To reiterate, I believe that most of the distinctions which are commonly made between counselling and therapy are issues of territoriality. Arguments of difference are driven by status aspirations, jealousies and attempts to gain access to money: in short, by turf wars. In this paper, I intend the two terms to carry the same meanings and refer to the same general process of change and construction.

What good counselling provides

In my opinion, counselling is one of the most valuable human transactions in which we can engage, provided that it is well done. Generally, I agree with Small’s (1993) contention that counselling can provide three ingredients, each of which has the capacity profoundly to assist people who are having troubles. First, counselling can assist individuals to clarify various aspects of their life-worlds. No matter whether in
careers, interpersonal relations, learning, or health, individuals nearly always benefit when clarification of issues, feelings and contexts is provided. It really is helpful to find out 'what is going on here'. I use the term 'clarification' to refer to a superordinate strategy which subsumes many of the micro-techniques commonly used in counselling and therapy.

Clarification performs such functions as: (1) alerting individuals as to how they are being influenced by the field of power in which they are embedded; (2) identifying the pros and cons of any coping strategy; (3) reducing 'mental' confusion and doubt, thus allowing the ground for decision-making to become more firm; and (4) enabling a forum for 'self-encounter' which helps the person to make important (often essential) distinctions about self and other, and self and ambient world, thus strengthening the person's contact and understanding of his or her own personal reality and life experiences in context.

Second, good counselling provides hope and encouragement. Individuals who are without hope have no windows into their futures. One of Adler's (1958) great contributions to the field of counselling was his insight into the process of discouragement and how encouragement can be used as an antidote (Powers & Griffith, 1987).

The third ingredient of good counselling is comfort, or support. Comfort is a deep human need, once met through the institutions of family, clan, neighbourhood and church. Transformations in modernity and post-modernity have reduced or even eliminated the comfort which these institutions provide for people. Individuals who are suffering emotional pain at the hands of malign circumstances and 'nameless' powers need supportive companions, perhaps more than anything else. Many of the problems which people face in daily living cannot be solved, but must be lived through. The temporary 'shelter' of a therapeutic companion is no small matter to very large numbers of people. To be listened to, to be regarded with care, to be included in trust, even if only briefly, are counselling acts of comfort and are of enormous value to help-seekers (Smail, 1993).

In sum, counselling is of extraordinary value, especially in present times when processes of complexification and community degradation are on the increase. Counselling provides the individual with a genuine, caring, person-to-person contact in an otherwise bureaucratised, fragmented and often incomprehensible social life. However, there are shortcomings in most of the over 400 varieties of counselling currently 'on the market'. I now turn to recounting some of those shortcomings.

Old bottles, old wine

We can think of models of counselling as cultural containers, within which the beliefs, arguments and practices of counselling reside. The three principal containers are psychoanalytic theory, behavioural theory (more recently, cognitive behaviourism), and humanistic theory. Each of these cultural containers has made important contributions to counselling and therapy, but each has one or more serious flaws. Most of the 400-plus forms of helping are derived from these three theory sources.
Psychoanalytic theory

Many people in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and critical theory, as well as a limited number of disciples of some therapeutic/counselling approaches, consider society and social organisation—not the psyche—to be the source of pain and so-called pathology (Hillman & Ventura, 1992; Masson, 1989). In other words, the ‘problem’ is often not in the heads of the person, but is to be found in malign or intractable circumstances.

Psychoanalytic theory, by its own arguments, has little or no room for this view. The psychoanalytic container interprets distress and pathology as the result of internal dynamics originating in childhood, and holds ‘successful adaptation to reality’ as the standard of healthy functioning. As night follows day, a container that defines distress as the failure to adapt to reality cannot see malign conditions as the cause of distress. It does not seem far-fetched to assume that many people have troubles and distress, not because of internal pathology, but because they are ignorant about how life works. Naïvety, ignorance, over-sheltering or enculturation into backward or faulty beliefs seems much more likely to cause distress than unresolved internal dynamics originating in the crib.

Furthermore, the ‘scientific’ status which many psychoanalytic advocates, beginning with Freud, have aspired to, seems far from realisation. Fancher (1995) describes psychoanalysis as a ‘culture in chaos’; and Eysenck (1985) remarked about Freud that he ‘was, without doubt, a genius’, not of scientific thinking but of persuasion and fantasy. Eysenck characterised Freud as being closer to the Brothers Grimm than to Copernicus, the link Freud himself was wont to claim.

Behavioural theory and cognitive behaviourism

The second container of counselling and therapy is behaviourism and its successor, cognitive behaviourism. Based on careful observation of what is observable, behaviourism helped bring attention to concrete behaviours. This allowed behaviourally oriented counsellors to say, ‘for certain things that trouble people, we have a way of helping’. Behaviourism as an enterprise tended for some time to be quite arrogant—a kind of would-be imperialism. The initial programme of behaviourism—to provide clear, uncontestable, measurable laws of behaviour—has failed. Behaviourist counsellors often are not very good at grasping realities outside their ethnocentric agenda. They tend to deny, or exclude, so much of what is puzzling and confusing in human experience, often by declaring it ‘subjective’. Further, behaviourists give great weight to normative values in society and assume that it is normal and healthy for individuals to adjust to received views of how one should behave in social life.

Cognitive science arose parallel with behaviourism and, in time, curbed the imperialism of behaviourism. Cognitive scientists showed convincingly that there is no such thing as a ‘stimulus’ apart from what the stimulus event is taken to mean by the person stimulated by it (Bruner, 1983). Cognitive theorising helped to bring consciousness and mind back into play and thus brought about an important
revision in behaviourist thinking. However, cognitive therapists continue to enshrine adaptation to reality as a standard for mental healthiness. There is an overly-optimistic and conformity-demanding set of values underlying many preachments and counselling strategies advocated by cognitive-behavioural experts.

The reason why cognitive behaviourists such as Beck (1976) seem so persuasive is not just that some of their recommended procedures seem to work, but that they have lined up with the grand myth of Western culture. This is the myth that reason can rule over emotion. A ‘rational’ life is a good life, as this myth has it. Certainly there is a great appeal in this belief. Who would not like to believe that the application of reason will cure just about everything that can go wrong in social life?

While there is undeniably comfort in this view (and have I not already said that comfort was one of the three most important things which counselling can provide?), there is the dangerous other side to this programme: counselling, therapy and mental health care in general are covertly dedicated to making people conform to the values of the dominant culture. Behavioural and cognitive-behavioural counselling are infected with strains of Taylorism and the smooth-running factory as a model of social life, and the desirability of defining mental health as conformity to rational, individualistic, materialistic values.

**Humanistic theory**

The humanistic therapies, in their multi-fold variations, are a partial antidote to the emphasis on conformity to normative values which characterises both psychoanalytic and cognitive-behavioural perspectives. The regnant metaphor for humanistic counselling is that human existence is like an acorn. A person contains endless possibilities for development and simply needs a nurturing, facilitative environment which fosters growth. There is little stress on conformity to normative values and standards, and unrealistic stress on ‘you can become whatever you want to become’.

The supportive and encouraging dimension of the humanistic counselling approach is valuable and does indeed provide a perspective that favours change, evolution, and self-determination. However, humanistic forms of counselling contain an ever-present danger of Utopian fantasising which often works against commitment to the hard labour of actual change and self-construction. Unfortunately, some humanistic counselling approaches are associated almost exclusively with popular psychology and what can be termed fringe elements of new-age philosophising.

Perhaps the most serious shortcoming of the humanistic forms of counselling and therapy is their over-reliance on individualistic psychology and a blindness to the social relatedness and community embeddedness of the individual. This is not to imply that there is no ‘inner world’, for indeed there is. Nor is it to deny the agentic aspect of human life, for without agency there would be no human life as we know it. We exist as members of a shared language community. In counselling, we create meaning and perform, not through the power of the inner world, but through taking action under the gaze of reflection (Vahamottonen et al., 1994).
We are not monads, nor are we merely subjective. Rather we are agents navigating and acting in a sea of social contexts and relations. Meaning and purpose are essential to human life, and meaning and purpose are socially constructed, not made up in the deep and shadowy recesses of our inner worlds. We evolve as possible selves by virtue of our capacity to interpret, communicate and act within the language and social contexts where we reside.

Finally, psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioural and humanistic helping approaches have all sought the status of being 'scientific' or being viewed as cultural projects which gain legitimation from their base of scientific research. As Fancher (1995) has pointed out, these claims of scientific status are just not supportable. The experimental method, the testing of propositions, the mathematisation of data—all hallmarks of the scientific enterprise—are simply not, or at least not yet, applicable to any extant forms of counselling or therapy.

**New wine, new bottles**

Following from the criticisms of conventional forms of counselling and therapy which I have made in the preceding paragraphs, I now propose a partial, visionary platform for remedying what I see as conceptual and practical shortcomings of many, if not most, current approaches to helping. The individual ‘planks’ or claims of the platform are contentious and numerous. Due to the constraint of this being a short paper, I will describe only two planks. I do not argue absolute validity for either. However, I do argue that each addresses an important aspect of counselling, and that entering into discussion about them will contribute to the improvement of how counselling is thought about and done.

**Claim 1: Counselling should be conceptualised as a ‘culture of healing’**

When individuals are experiencing confusion or pain, or are facing difficult decisions, *something* has to be done, hence the main justification for counselling. Both counsellors and clients need to believe that what they are engaging in, in the name of counselling, is credible and valuable. Institutions which offer counselling services need assurance that standards of practice are in place, that counselling competency can be judged and maintained, and that their proffered services are both worthwhile and ethical.

Each counselling orientation builds up a culture around its central ideas about helping and healing and about how life ought to be lived. This culture, composed of assumptions, beliefs and practices, is certainly better than not having any framework at all to legitimate counselling. However, it is the result not of scientific activity, but of cultural activity. Membership in a healing culture gives members (counsellors) identity, orientation and legitimacy as a professional group. As a member of a healing culture, one gets a sense of what kinds of problems are worth attending to, and how one should proceed in trying to help people resolve them. A culture is not a body of knowledge based on scientific research and findings. It is an evolving and *constructed* configuration of beliefs, assumptions, values and practices.
It depends on science neither for its legitimacy as an institution of society, nor for guidance on how to do the practical work of counselling.

Counselling as a culture of healing offers a variety of perspectives on how the world works, how people are supposed to act in a great variety of cultural scenarios, and how problems can be overcome, lived with, or outgrown. As a cultural or social practice, counselling is constructed more from (1) 'folk wisdom', (2) culturally sensible ways of communicating, (3) local, rather than decontextualised, knowledge, and (4) bits and pieces of knowledge developed through research, both scientific and humanistic. The language of counselling from the perspective of a culture of healing is moral discourse, and should be in the form of everyday idiom, not of professional specialised vocabulary.

The authority for the helping professions lies not in a scientific explanation of human behaviour and change, but in folk wisdom and in the excellence of the 'craft' of personal helping raised to a professional level. Of course, the disciplines of psychology, education, sociology, organisational studies, economics, etc., and their research-based findings, can make important contributions to counselling as a culture of healing. However, their role should be contributory and not that of a legitimating, scientific foundation.

When counselling is defined as a cultural practice, the skilful counsellor practises a craft which is constituted of astute folk wisdom, locally relevant knowledge, and culturally sensible communication. Counselling is a general methodology for life planning. Counsellors and clients collaborate in what might be called strategies of the best guess. Counselling as a cultural practice is inclined to holism rather than compartmentalisation.

For hundreds of generations, folk wisdom has grasped the fundamental knowledge that humans live best when their lives are coherent and cut from whole cloth. It is only in recent times, under the influence of industrialism and the mentality of the factory and the bureaucracy, that severe fragmentation of human life has been encouraged. The division of counselling into various fragmentary types such as career, school, personal, rehabilitative, addictions, mental health, and so on, is likewise a violation of the wholeness of human experience. This would be at least partially corrected by construing counselling as a healing culture. The word 'heal' is appropriate because of its dual meanings: (1) 'to restore to the integrity of wholeness', and (2) 'to cause undesirable conditions to be overcome'.

Claim 2: Different intellectual resources can provide counselling with a New Look

Counselling needs a new concept of self. The days of the averaged, psychometric self are over. What is needed is a conception of self-as-multifaceted-process (Markus & Wurf, 1987) which creates itself through the activities which it decides upon and undertakes in relation to ambient others and world. The reflexive project of the self is sustained by continuously revised biographical narratives. A New Look self is polyphonic (Bakhtin, 1929/1973), organised reflexively, and configured through acts with meaning, and is the agentic nexus of relationships. Self (or personality) can no longer be viewed as a matrix of variables. Guidano's Self in Process (1991) is a good
example of counselling and therapy based on the New Look self, while Hermans & Kempen's *The Dialogical Self* (1993) analyses the New Look self.

One of the accomplishments of modern psychology is the insight that individuals do have a life-span and that they develop and evolve over the entire life-span. This insight proved valuable for counselling in many ways. It allowed the realisation that learning is a life-long process, and helped to remove the mistaken notion that intelligence goes into an irreversible decline somewhere around one's 21st birthday. In general, this realisation debunked numerous stereotypical notions associated with age. However, due to the writings of Erikson (1963) and other developmentalists, a very unfortunate notion became current—that an individual's development is unfolded in a succession of linear, step-like stages or phases. While there is an element of truth in this idea, the emphasis on lock-step stages is no longer tenable. We now know that a person's development is often non-linear, episodic, subject to fluctuations between turbulence and steady-state, and frequently not predictable. This has enormous significance for the work of counsellors, especially in career guidance. Non-linearity, along with a host of other considerations—self-construction, narrativity, accidentalism, serendipity, polyphony—should largely replace the concept of linearity.

The very concept of career—which is often associated with such terms as 'ladder', 'one-time choice', 'stages in development', 'measurable entity'—is increasingly inadequate as a major organising idea for career counsellors. In an ambience of conflict, uncertainty, risk and fluctuation, the idea that most, or even many, people will continue to 'climb a career ladder' seems absurd. Miller-Tiedeman (1988) has coined the new term 'Life Career' which refers to a self-organising process and is an attempt to revise the outdated concept of career which counsellors have been socialised into using for some decades.

Two important intellectual sources for bringing about a New Look in counselling are the feminist perspective and constructivism. The feminist perspective is an increasingly important contributor to counselling practice, to the education of counsellors, and to research on counselling issues. Feminists have brought much-needed attention to issues of power and domination in therapy contexts and in the larger society as well. In the feminist view, dominant cultural positions (frequently male and white) are designed to maintain themselves and to advance views and practices that benefit the power-wielders and disenfranchise all 'others'. Taking a stand against groups in society, including male-dominated agencies of helping, methods of therapy, and programmes of training dominated by males, which define the oppression and pathologising of women as 'normal', is a primary objective for many feminist scholars and therapists. Feminist counsellors tend to use a code of 'care' and 'no harm' in relationships. Male therapists, on the other hand, tend toward an emphasis on rules and rights, and on maintaining an 'objective' stance, and are quick to voice their views and maintain a dominant position in the counselling relationship.

A second increasingly important intellectual source for counselling is constructivism. This asserts that we do not discover reality: we invent it (Watzlawick, 1984). Rorty (1979) suggests that the very idea of 'accurate, objective representation of
reality' is really a compliment which we pay to those beliefs which are useful in helping us to do what we want to do. Constructivism also challenges the positivist science assumption that it is possible objectively to distinguish 'facts' from values. As Howard (1985) points out, values and attitudes determine what are to be taken as facts. A counsellor who has been socialised into a positivist way of thinking is likely to approach therapy as a context for finding answers. A constructivist counsellor, on the other hand, is more likely to say, 'what are the questions?'

Constructivist views can be found in developmental psychology (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1986; Scarr, 1985), in the psychology of women (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990), in human sexuality (Tiefer, 1987), in counselling and therapy (Carlson, 1988; Hoyt, 1994; Neimeyer & Mahoney, 1995; Peavy, 1995), in assessment (Neimeyer, 1993; Peavy, in press), and in career-oriented counselling (Peavy, 1992; 1993).

In conclusion

I hope that my personal point of view will contribute to thinking more deeply and more broadly about what counselling is, and should be; and will encourage a realisation that counselling is an essential and valorous occupation. With a New Look, counselling can move a few steps toward a renewed and valuable role in the social life of the 21st century—toward what Derrida (quoted in Lether, 1991, p. 160) calls the as-yet-unnameable world of the post-modern which is only beginning to proclaim itself.

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Collected Works in English Language
Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)
by Dr. R. Vance Peavy

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
By R. Vance Peavy, Professor Emeritus
University of Victoria, Oct-99

In the early 1980s I started to realize that the world was changing much faster than ideas about counselling were changing. So I started a series of researches and practical experiments with counselling to develop a new form of counselling. I could see that as we approached the new century people would experience an increasing amount of uncertainty and ambiguity in their daily lives. Furthermore, the traditional forms of guidance—family, church, and community—were de-traditionalizing and losing their guiding influence on the lives of members of new generations.

In short, changes in social life all over the world were taking place rapidly and extensively. Technological advances, globalization of economies, increasing migration and intercultural mixing, changing demographic patterns, and the McDonaldization and Disneyfication of western societies and consumers were bringing on dizzying and fluxing social landscapes. By 1985 I had begun to write about the need to revise counselling to meet the emerging post-industrial, postmodern conditions.

By 1990 I had developed the skeleton of a new perspective for counselling, learning and leading to which I gave the name SocioDynamic. I wanted it to be known as a Canadian invention so I acquired a Canadian trademark for the term, 'SocioDynamic Counselling'. In 1997 I wrote a book with that title, and now it has been translated from English into Danish, Swedish, and Finnish. I plan to have a French language translation, but have not yet been able to make the necessary arrangements. I now have constructivist/Socio-Dynamic counselling training projects in Toronto at George Brown College, in Ottawa, and in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Iceland.

SocioDynamic THEORY

It has taken about 20 years to construct a SocioDynamic framework for 21st century counselling. Very briefly, it is a spanning theory. This means that it draws concepts from a number of sources: sociocultural and co-construction theory (Vygorsky; Wertsch, Bakhtin, for example); philosophical conceptualization (especially Emmanuel Levinas, Richard Rorty and Charles Taylor); narrative theory and studies of everyday life. The concept of self is partially replaced with the concept of lifespace. The self is re-conceptualized and transformed from a matrix of measureable variables and traits to a configuration of voiced stories and meaning-creating strategies. The role of the counsellor as professional expert is reframed to that of professional bricoleur.

The individual is a relational, social being more than an individual entity counsellor is taught the concepts of 'cultural tool' and shown how to use cultural tools with helpseekers. Second, the counselling process is de-psychologized. Freud, Adler, Jung, the behaviorists, cognitivists and other psychological theorists are set aside. Description and analysis of everyday life events and experience take their place. The counsellor performs as a professional bricoleur. This means that the counsellor's attention is directed toward the cooperative interaction between counsellor and helpseeker; and toward the on-going life experience of the help-seeker. A bricoleur is someone who takes 'the materials at hand' and solves concrete, practical problems. For the counsellor-cum-bricoleur, the 'materials-at-hand' are the ongoing events and experiences in the helpseeker's life, the interaction which both counsellor and client contribute to, and various types of information and data from the surrounding practical world which are relevant and useful in resolving the concerns of the helpseeker.

The SocioDynamic perspective brings a 'partnering' influence to the counselling process. Any success which occurs in counselling is the joint achievement of counsellor and helpseeker. Each has distinct contributions to make. The help-seeker brings her life experience to the counselling session, as well as her hopes, fears, desires, and

**SocioDynamic counselling is defined as a sociocultural method of life planning.**

Although the concept of agency is retained. Learning as a process is converted from a transmission process to an appropriation process. Underlying all the conceptualization rest two assumptions: the notion of everyday life-experience as the primary reality for people and the notion that a vocabulary of possibility and potentiality has much more value for constructing successful lives than does a psychological, psychotherapy vocabulary of deficit and pathology.

APPLYING THE SOCIODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE TO COUNSELLING

The SocioDynamic perspective transforms counselling in a variety of ways. I will describe some of the key transformations. First of all, counselling becomes a cultural practice and the

Continued on page 15

capacities. The counsellor brings an ability to construct a communication-interaction framework within which the help-seeker and the counsellor can work cooperatively to alleviate the concerns brought to the counselling session. There is no omnipotent expert in the SocioDynamic scene. Instead two people work together, pool their resources, and engage in activities that will construct choices, plans and action.

SocioDynamic counselling is defined as a sociocultural method of life planning. This can take place in one-to-one counselling, group counselling, semi-autonomous guided participation, or through microelectronic mediation.

Counselling in all formats in a mix of dialogue, guided participation in activities, and reflective self-study. In each instance, the process and activities of counselling must be culturally sensible to the help-seeker(s). We can say that this form of counselling is culture-centered.

A very important concept in SocioDynamic counselling is the concept of lifespace. Lifespace refers to the field of meanings in which an individual is embedded at any given moment. Meaningful relations, experiences, events, important people, accomplishments, goals, values, and activities are all part of the lifespace. Who and what we are is achieved through everyday activities. As Sartre wrote: "By your acts you create your self." Lifespace is a way of describing how our myriad activities are coordinated—or not coordinated.

Mapping the lifespace (or some aspect of it) is the core skill of the SocioDynamic counsellor. There are a multitude of benefits for the help-seeker whose counsellor introduces mapping to the counselling discourse. Some of these benefits are:

- Clarity—what is actually going on in my life?
- Coordination—how one thing is influencing another in my life
- Identification of blockages and barriers to forward movement

- Making the self visible
- Locating ambiguities and blind spots in one's everyday life
- Developing ideas about preferred futures
- De-problematicizing—what is initially defined as a problem often turns out to be something else altogether
- Establishes common ground and mutual understanding between counsellor and help-seeker
- Produces a 'product' in counselling
- Stimulates the help-seekers thinking and discussion with others outside of the counselling sessions

My experience in teaching counsellors to do mapping has been interesting to me. Many persons can quickly see the 'sense' of mapping. Some immediately begin to practice mapping at any opportunity and are able to use mapping as a cultural tool in their counselling. Others will neglect to practice mapping and thus remain uneasy about using it with help-seekers. I try to use the training rule that you should not make up your mind about your own use of mapping in counselling until you have practiced it at least three times.

Besides mapping other common counselling activities include dialogical conversation, using meaning-generating questions, using activities to access, appropriate, and use data and cultural tools for constructing futures, plans of action, and for strengthening identities.

I will close by saying that the SocioDynamic perspective promotes resource thinking, encourages the use of a vocabulary of possibility, respects wholeness and connectedness; insists on the necessity of perceiving life as multiple realities; strives to create and honor personally meaningful experience; and recognizes that individuals are always embedded in specific contexts—cultural and otherwise. Two strong images for this type of counselling are homo creator and homo socialis.¶

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A SOCIODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE FOR COUNSELLING

R. Vance Peavy

In this article the author outlines the main concepts of SocioDynamic Counselling, a constructivist approach to counselling. The development of the approach is briefly outlined, together with reasons for the need to invent a new counselling method. SocioDynamic Counselling is both a philosophy of helping and a set of counselling procedures designed to meet the needs of contemporary help-seekers. The counselling procedures — dialogical communication, life space description, mapping and cultural tools — are presented as important features of this counselling approach. Mention is also made of counselling contexts in which SocioDynamic Counselling is being introduced.

In 1977 I wrote a small book entitled Adults helping adults: An existential approach to cooperative helping. It was my first attempt to describe a counselling process that was not an expert-oriented procedure in which the counsellor is alienated from the help-seeker by virtue of status and vocabulary. Instead I attempted to describe a dialectical process of joint action in which both the counsellor and the one seeking help make important reciprocal contributions to the counselling process.

In addition to bringing the idea of joint action into counselling, I also stressed that counselling is a creative process. I was beginning to think about how to develop a counselling process in which solutions are created by the cooperation of counsellor and help-seeker on the assumption that co-invented solutions are often much more useful than formulaic counselling or therapy “interventions” imposed by the counsellor-as-expert.

Earlier I had written “Creative helping” (Peavy, 1974), an article in which I stressed the need to recognise that all actions are contextualised. Instead of focusing almost exclusively on the psychology of the individual, I believed it necessary to examine agent—context patterns of reciprocal influence in counselling.

Further, I emphasised that counselling process and procedures should not neglect, abandon, or block the creative process in which all people participate to some degree. I wrote a follow-up article (Peavy, 1979) organised around the idea that the image of humans as homo creator is an extremely hopeful image. I wrote that in counselling we should regard the individual as capable of “building up his or her life from endless possibilities”. In the article I asked: “Why not try to maximise the latent and actual creativity of the individual within the counselling situation?” More and more I was adopting the belief that counselling should be a process in which the jointly contributed creativity and cultural know-how of the counsellor and the help-seeker are activated. It seemed to me that the joint capacities should be used to create solutions that take into account the details of both the particular self and the specific context within which the other concerns are embedded.

In other words, my way of thinking about counselling was transforming from the perspective of individual psychology to a perspective that was social and dialectical. I was moving from reliance on generalised and theoretical knowledge to greater use of local cultural knowledge in producing useful ideas, solutions and understandings of client difficulties. Later I would use the term “bricolage” to describe this counsellor—client joint activity of using cultural materials to construct new paths in social life. My thinking about counselling was crystallising around the notion that counselling should be a process that helped people to become eligible to participate (more fully or more competently) in daily sociocultural life. This perspective was in sharp contrast with what I had been taught in my own education as a counsellor.

The perspective that I and other counsellors and psychologists had been socialised into was that counselling was a procedure for “changing behaviour” and for changing what goes wrong in the heads of people. On top of that we were exhorted at every turn to adopt a “scientific” attitude in our professional counselling practice and research. My own experience as a counsellor and counsellor educator, and my reading of the mounting evidence that most counselling and clinical research turns out to be unused (and unuseable) in practice, was fueling a transformation in my own stance toward counselling. The rest of this article gives some of the details of this transformation and briefly describes a new form of counselling that is designed to more closely fit the needs of people in contemporary social life.

By the late 1970s I had become quite dissatisfied with most extant models of...
counselling. From my point of view, models of counselling developed from the late 1930s to the last quarter of the 20th century were unsatisfactory for at least the three following reasons.

1. Nearly all counselling and therapy models were based on positivist premises and suffered from reductionism and fragmentation.

2. The professionalisation of counsellors and their elevation to expert status in too often results in their alienation from help-seekers — especially help-seekers who come from a lower socioeconomic class and those who are culturally different, or poorly educated.

3. I had also become acutely aware that psychological — especially abnormal psychology — and the accompanying vocabularies of pathology and deficiency were (and still are) dominant in the thinking of counsellors. Too often, counsellors as well as psychologists and teachers try to explain and analyse what is going on from the perspective of a “disturbed” or “deficient” individual. Sociocultural contexts were being woefully ignored.

Of course, there was also the other extreme behaviourists who tended to believe that conditioning forces from the environment told the whole story. For them, agency was a crazy idea — individuals were “responding machines” who were no more than responding to environmental stimulation. Neither the individualistic nor the environmental theorists and practitioners had seriously considered the interactive nature of human social life.

I had begun to understand that counselling is not only a psychological method as it is a social practice or cultural method. In other words, counselling should be based on cultural hypotheses and principles and should not be presented as a “quasi-scientific” model based in either individualistic psychology or environmental conditioning.

I thought that a culture-based counselling process that was construced as a social practice would reduce counsellor—other alienation. Further, such a move should make counsellor—other cooperation and joint action much more feasible and meaningful. However, at that time, I did not know how to implement my ideas in a practical fashion.

As might be expected, I encountered widespread resistance to my ideas from other academics. The notion that counselling should be moved from a psychological base to a multidisciplinary or social base, and from scientific pretensions to cultural knowledge, was too drastic and visionary for most colleagues. In many academic settings, there was, and continues to be, a rather cosy marriage between counselling and psychotherapy. Both are based on various psychological theories of personality development, deviation and individual adjustment, and both continue to borrow rather heavily from the medical model of curing people.

To my mind, the idea of “cure” is definitely out of place in the context of counselling practice. Very few help-seekers need to be cured of anything. Instead they need to make and/or use culturally sensible ideas and actions that will enable them to navigate and participate in everyday social life. Most people asking for counselling help want to learn how to perform more successfully in everyday living. Often they are trying to find, or make, their own compass of meaning that will give purpose to their daily actions.

Finally, many help-seekers are seeking opportunities to “give voice” to their life stories, issues that concern them and dilemmas that they face. They do not present behaviours to be changed as much as they present stories of human struggle for meaning and a desire to participate more rewardingly in sociocultural life. Many help-seekers are seeking situations that afford them the opportunity to voice “who” they are and want to be and to tell how they are experiencing life in their particular social space.

By 1985, and from the perspective that I had developed, my claim had become that counselling should be a process of assisting people to become eligible to participate more fully and with more meaning in social life. I was taking the stance that the processes of learning and construction should replace the processes of behaviour modification, curing, and personality shaping or changing, which most counselling and therapy models posit as their goals.

Counselling, as envisioned it, was more of a “meaning-making” enterprise than a “behaviour-changing” strategy. What I wanted counsellors to attend was not how to adjust and change the behaviours of people, but how to interact in culturally sensible ways with help-seekers in the service of the others’ expanded capacities for participation in everyday social life, such as work life, family life and school life.

I also was realising that two aspects of human existence — spirituality and moral choice — were not (or could not be) addressed in most models of counselling. In North American counselling, spirituality was virtually a forbidden territory even though for some help-seekers this was the most important part of their lives. Spiritual issues were considered “non-scientific”, “too personal” or “minefields of prejudice and bias”. Increasingly, I found this barren point of view unacceptable and even disgusting. More importantly, the most significant issues in the lives of many people were not eligible for examination and discussion.

It seemed obvious to me that anyone who was experiencing confusion, ambiguity or conflict about moral or spiritual issues should be able to use counselling as a legitimate place for an intelligent discussion with the counsellor. Of course I realised that many counsellors would find this view unsettling, either because they had been indoctrinated in the belief that these issues were off-base or because they had not developed a reflective perspective of their own on such matters. To me this seemed a matter for counsellor education to address so that counsellors could come to the counselling encounter better prepared for moral and spiritual dialogue.

Sociodynamic Counselling is Born

For all of the reasons I have outlined above, by the late 1980s I was prepared to construct a counselling perspective that would minimise or eliminate some features of conventional counselling approaches that I no longer believed were sensible or tenable.

My initial attempts to seriously formulate a revised perspective for counselling began with the publication of two pamphlets: Credo for counsellors: SocioDynamic counselling (1988a) and SocioDynamic counselling (1988b). I coined the word “SocioDynamic” to convey two meanings: “Socio” refers to the view that daily existence is social — humans are relational or social beings. Socio is derived from the Latin socialis meaning ally or companion. It also stems from the Greek asosethi, meaning to “help” or “stand by another”.

We are who we are, think what we think, and do what we do as a consequence of the patterns of social interaction in which we participate. The
faulty dichotomy of individual versus society should be set aside. We are at once both social beings and agents (having an ability to act). We cannot be one without the other. Language is a good example: Language exists prior to the birth of the person. Following birth, through interaction with parents and others, the growing-up begins to appropriate language. It is best to think of language as a system of cultural tools. Bit by bit the tools of language move from the social interaction surrounding and engaging the child to the consciousness of the child. What was first in the parent and in the child–parent interaction becomes a working tool internally for the child.

The flow of language and the use of language are both part of our sociocultural “situation” and at the same time a set of tools that the individual employs to interact with others in a meaningful and competent way. In other words, language in the form of utterances, words, symbols, metaphors, maps, drawings and texts are cultural tools — or social mediators of experience. As I have come to understand language in this way — as cultural tools — I have realised that counsellors would be much better equipped to understand, assist and function if they saw that their basic working tools were different aspects of language rather than psychological methods and interventions. I moved from a psychological to a sociocultural base in my thinking about counselling.

“Dynamic”, which derives from the Greek root dynamiko, has many meanings. Those that seem especially relevant to my purpose are “an energised, interactive system”, “an aesthetic equilibrium that becomes unstable upon separation of its parts” (I wish to emphasise the need for a holistic attitude toward people and their lives and to reduce the tendency toward separation of subject/object), “continuous movement” and “relating to power”.

CONSOLIDATING NEW IDEAS AND CONSTRUCTING A SOCIODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

In 1988 I initiated a research project to investigate how counselling should be revised — and what revisions would be most preferred — in order to make counselling resonant with postmodern, post-industrial society. This project covered a period of five years and produced a framework for a new form of counselling that initially had the title, “constructivist career counselling”.

Subsequently this “new look” in counselling was named SocioDynamic Counselling. Since it was developed as a holistic counselling perspective that unified five sectors of self and social life, the qualifier “career” was dropped as it was redundant. The sectors of self and social life to which the SocioDynamic perspective applies are:

1. learning/worklife;
2. personal/relational life;
3. spirituality
4. health/body; and
5. creativity/recreational.

The new counselling perspective makes three assumptions:

The first assumption is that counselling as a discipline and as a practice should be moved from a positivist base to a constructivist base. This implies a different perspective on what knowledge is, on how we get knowledge, and on how knowledge is used in the practice of everyday life.

1. Ontology — acceptance of the principle of multiple realities. This means that local, particular, constructed realities must not be supplanted by probabilistic, generalised knowledges as advocated by positivism. This stance legitimises cultural variations, gender differences, life-space differences, and places many practical truth claims in the domain of cultural sensibility rather than scientific proof.

2. Epistemology — shifting from a dualist/subjectivist belief to a participatory, created knowledge belief. We do not observe reality from an objective, detached position; we create realities through participation in whatever it is that we choose to call reality. As counsellors, we do not know from an objectivist, expert stance; we do know (just like those we seek to help) from a culturally participative activity.

3. Methodology — shifting from scientific hypotheses and quantitative, rational analysis to sociocultural study methods of analysis. This implies that counsellors in their practice should adopt a phenomenological, dialogical, hermeneutic stance for describing the particulars of the counselling process and relationship, and for describing the life-space of the other.

The second assumption is that counselling should be situated in the context of postmodernity. This means a shift in emphasis from an intellectual position that favours the accumulation of authoritative knowledge and generalisation to a focus on complexity, interrelationships, uniqueness, invention and local knowledge (Rosenau, 1992, pp. 172–173). A postmodern stance means giving up meta-narratives such as beliefs in the primacy of sciences as the only legitimate route to knowledge, the certainty of “progress” and foundational thinking in general.

The third assumption is that counselling should be made sensible within the context of social life. This means adjusting to the requirements of a detraditionalising world (Heelas, Lash & Morris, 1996) taking into account the post-industrial elements of increased intercultural mixing, the transitional nature of working life (Hage & Powers, 1992), the increasing speed and unpredictability of socioeconomic change and the globalisation of communication and economic systems (Giddens, 1991). It also means rethinking ways of thinking about categories essential to counselling such as self, relation and meaning (Peavy, 1998).

By 1993 I had consolidated my thinking and had solved a number of conceptual and practical issues concerning what 21st century counselling should be like. I was ready to begin presenting SocioDynamic Counselling as a new form of counselling customised for intellectual and social conditions that are prevailing as a new century begins. I secured a Canadian copyright on the term “SocioDynamic Counselling”. This would allow me to present a Canadian counselling invention that could be named as a clear alternative to other existing forms of counselling.

I am not interested in “proving” that SocioDynamic Counselling is more effective than other forms of counselling. I take the position that when we are dealing

Footnote

1 The term “SocioDynamic Counselling” and the research and practice documents produced under the name “SocioDynamic” carry a Canadian Trademark. SocioDynamic Counselling is a Canadian invention of Dr. R. Vance Peavy. All requests for permission to use SocioDynamic Counselling Documents, or portions thereof, except for the purpose of quotation in other documents prepared for publication, should be made to Dr. Peavy.
It is my own intellectual stance that ideas about counselling, both as a process and a practice, are always "ideas in progress". I believe that no ideas can be completely refined. Even the best idea in the world about counselling is still a "developing idea". The implication of this intellectual stance for counselling is that whatever it is that we think about counselling and whatever we are engaged in may be, we should not regard them as the "final word" but as provisional signposts.

I understand that humans live by a "fuzzy logic". Contrary to the foundationalist-essentialist stance, I believe that most people actually live by cognitive approximations, intuited patterns and emotional fluxes, and not by proven or pre-ordained certainties. Of course, many people try desperately, and insist that others settle on certainties and truths and then live accordingly. Increasingly, this certainty-based perspective is not tenable in postmodern social life. Instead we are more likely to make sense with those who help us, and to ourselves, if we see our ideas as provisional, under development, as being dynamic and non-linear. This makes for an improvisational approach to human action, and to counselling, but it allows counsellors to remain close to the particulars of any sociocultural situation and to the ongoing life experience of people.

The SocioDynamic perspective does not offer arguments against the other counselling vocabularies that it wishes to replace with a new vocabulary. As an advocate of the SocioDynamic perspective I strive to make it attractive by showing how it resonates with cultural knowledge that people use as a guide for living and solving problems. The process of counselling should be mainly constructed from living experience. I try to use ordinary language for my descriptions. I try to resist the intrusion of theoretical pretensions into the sensibilities of people who are using cultural prescriptions and cultural knowledge in their efforts to understand and resolve existential problems of everyday life.

MATERIALISING SOCIODYNAMIC COUNSELLING

Counselling, similar to therapy, is often discussed as a "talking cure" or "merely words and feelings". I believe that it is of considerable importance to establish a material basis for counselling. Introducing the concept of counselling skill as the use of cultural tools is a big step in the direction of materialisation. The production of texts, transcripts, recordings, videos and the creation of maps in the counselling process are all rather obvious examples of materialisation. Cultural tools by themselves cannot do anything. They only take on function when agents use them. Agents without cultural tools cannot perform in significant ways either. For meaningful action to occur, agents require tools and tools require agents.

A life-space map, for example, is an excellent example of a cultural tool (the map) that exists in space and time beyond the bounds of its creation, thus allowing for its characterisation as a socially created artifact (material object). This affords us a means for grasping the mental appropriations of the other. The map is a tool (sign) that permits the agent to say "this is what I mean", and enables that phrase to become a materialised object that lives on after the conversation of the counselling encounter is complete. The map of the map's existence as a material object gives the counsellor and client an enormous advantage over "just talking". In my view, the use of material objects as cultural tools results in changes in agents. As counsellors we should be concerned with the development of others in skills in using cultural tools. The development of such skill requires acting with, and reacting to, the material properties of tools. Without material properties there is nothing to act with or react to — hence we have the phenomenon whereby counselling is "just talk" that soon vanishes with little or no trace when the conversation is ended.

SocioDynamic Counselling may be best described as a language game in which metaphors are used for "this is what happens", "this is how it happens" and "this is how people feel influenced by what is going on". It is a language game in which social artifacts are produced in the form of maps, signs, diagrams, charts, icons, drawings, letters, recordings, videos, journal entries, collages, inscribed metaphors, and written scenarios and characterisations. These artifacts become cultural tools for the purpose of identifying mental appropriations — especially meanings. They allow the counsellor and other to transcend the "black box" phenomenon that is so prevalent in conversations as indicated by such statements as "you know what I mean?" or conversely "I know what you mean".
If we really do use new vocabularies, there are no antecedent criteria for comparing the new with the old. Are we willing to face up to the contingency of language? Can we accept that it is a human creation and does not express any intrinsic, essential truth or universal reality? While we can compare one vocabulary with another (this often leads to trivial quibbling) we cannot say that one vocabulary gets at the “facts” or “truth” better or more effectively than others do.

I take the SocioDynamic vocabulary to be a set of cultural tools, a way of getting things done. It is not a medium for arriving at the true nature of anything, or for determining the effectiveness of counselling methods. It is a cultural tool for doing the work we have chosen to call “helping” on a personal level, or what we refer to as “counselling”. SocioDynamic Counselling is not grounded in theories of personality, motivation or behaviour. It is grounded in the concrete descriptions of what people do, how they do what they do, why they do these things, and what their actual sociocultural situations are.

Since 1994 I have been able to organise and implement a number of projects that have furthered the materialisation of SocioDynamic Counselling, specifically:

• writing a counsellors' book entitled SocioDynamic counselling (Peavy, 1997);
• writing Trainer guidebook for constructivist counsellor training (Peavy, 1999);
• co-sponsoring a Project for At-Risk Youth using SocioDynamic Counselling in Toronto, under the auspices of the Toronto School Board (1996–98);
• providing training for counsellors in Denmark under the auspices of Radet for Uddannelse- og Erhvervsejledning (RUE) including the translation of my book into Danish (Konstruktivistisk vejledning: Teorier og metode (1998));
• providing training for counsellors in Finland under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor including the translation of my book into Finnish (Sosiodynamminen ohjaus: konstruktivistinen nakokulma 21 Vuosissaan ohjaustyöön (1999));
• providing training for Swedish counsellors under the auspices of DOCEIL including the translation of my book into Swedish (Konstruktivistisk vejledning. Stockholm: Trinom forlag);
• initiating a cooperative project with George Brown College in Toronto in offering a certificate program in Constructivist Career Counselling (1996–);
• developing and implementing a constructivist peer career counselling training program for the Canadian Steel Trades Employees Commission in Toronto — this project was concluded in 1996 after a group of 30 counsellors had received training and about 6000 unemployed steelworkers received group and individual counselling for workplace planning over a five-year period; and
• instituting a mentoring project for career counsellors in the Public Service Commission of the Yukon Territorial Government — assisting to implement constructivist career counselling in the worker reintegration project.

These nine projects constitute a strategy of materialising SocioDynamic Counselling. In each project I am attempting — through direct instruction and through mentoring — to educate other counsellor educators and trainers about SocioDynamic concepts and practices so that they can help to disseminate these ideas.

THE SOCIODYNAMIC COUNSELLING VOCABULARY

The vocabulary of SocioDynamic Counselling uses new ideas as well as old ideas in new ways. Aspects of the vocabulary are rooted in existing counselling theory and practice: no cultural phenomenon springs full-blown from zero. However, there is enough that is new in the SocioDynamic perspective to enable a rejection of “nothing but …” arguments. In the following paragraphs I will describe three pivotal ideas of this new perspective for counselling:

1. constructivist thinking;
2. life-space (and life-space mapping); and
3. dialogical communication.

Idea 1: Constructivist thinking as the preferred cognitive mode in counselling practice

Generally, constructivist thinking informs the SocioDynamic perspective. Constructivism is a family of inter-related perspectives that attempt to describe what, how and why people do what they are doing. This family of perspectives commonly includes at least four principles of human experience.

• In perception, memory and knowing humans are proactive, generative, participatory and “makers” of meaning.
• Humans are self-organising (auto poetic) systems. Many of the self-organising processes typically existing at tacit levels of awareness can be articulated under enabling conditions. In other words, what is ordinarily implicit (tacit) can be made explicit when appropriate procedures (cultural tools) are used in the counselling process. The concepts of conscious and unconscious are not used in the SocioDynamic perspective. Instead, the notion of “circumferences of awareness” is used to indicate what and how much of any field of attention is taken into account.
• Self-organising processes of the individual favour the maintenance of certain experiential patterns. Thus we observe continuity of thought and action across time and space. We can identify these patterns as the “life-space” of the individual.
• Thought, memory, feeling and action are a blend of uniqueness and social mediation instruments (cultural tools). The individual is at once an individual agent and a node in a web of social relations.


The discourse of constructivism is complex and varied. However, there are certain central ideas in constructivism with very powerful implications for the practice of counselling. First of all, I believe that counselling approaches based on objectivist, positivist, justificationist or quasi-authoritarian principles will, in due time, be superseded by approaches that
employ methods of description, active exploration of life experience, and dynamic metrics of understanding and evaluation. Constructivism favours descriptive language.

Second, there will be increasing emphasis on the moral dimension of life with issues of "good and bad", "right and wrong" and "sacred and profane" emerging as an important aspect of counselling. In other words, the spiritual aspect of life will be legitimised by constructivist thinkers as a relevant part of the counselling enterprise.

Third, constructivist thinking promotes interest in holism (wholeness) in assessment and counselling. In my opinion, fragmentation and reductionism that is characteristic of positivist counselling methods will be reversed under the influence of constructivist thinking. Finally, constructivist thinking opens the door to greater use of such postmodern conceptual categories as multi-voicedness, reflexivity, narrativity, dialogicality, and diversity in counselling practice.

**Idea 2: Life-space mapping: A core counselling activity**

In order to remove the overemphasis on individual psychology and personality from the counselling perspective, I have developed the concept of "life-space". My original inspiration for this notion came from Kurt Lewin (1948), who often referred to "social space" that has both psychological and sociological dimensions. Life-space is a metaphor for the semantic space that we inhabit. It contains meanings for all of the significant experiences, relations, people, beliefs, assumptions and objects in our conscious life experience. It is both psychological and sociological. It is a kind of circumambient compass and lens that guides our interpretations and actions.

The concept of life-space is somewhat like the French sociologist Bourdieu's (1992) notion of "habitus". Both express the result of an organising strategy within the individual for coping with whatever is going on at this moment in the individual's life. Life-space expresses a way of being—or ways of being at different moments and in different contexts.

In a counselling session I often say to the other: "Let's make a map of your personal world" (life-space). Then we draw a large circle that designates the boundary of the life-space and then we fill in details. Who is important to you (in reference to the life-space topic being discussed)? Where are you trying to go in your life? What is on your side? As these and other important meanings are mapped and discussed, a "map" of the person's life-space is constructed. Patterns of reciprocal influence begin to show themselves in the map.

When mapping, the counsellor does not use a diagnostic category, or a theory of motivation or behaviour. Instead of using psychological tools to guide the life-space construction, the counsellor uses a "dramatic" method (Burke, 1966) for analysing action (which includes thinking and feeling as acts). By using a "pentad" of questions (Table 1), the counsellor and other are able to develop a map of acting or "doing" that minimises the danger of reducing the person and context to "nothing but" this or that behaviour.

The pentad also keeps the door open to various perspectives and helps to avoid shortsighted monistic explanations.

In asking the pentad's questions and developing a map of the life-space, the counsellor and help-seeker are working together to produce some points of clarity, find ambiguities and, most importantly, articulate how and what the person is experiencing in the sociocultural context under investigation. By keeping in mind that human motives and actions implicate five elements, and not just one, it is obvious that the counsellor needs some method for coordinating the perspectives provided by these elements. Mapping is the coordinating method used in SocioDynamic Counselling.

Mapping provides a visualisation of the patterns of influence that dynamically relate act, actor, context, means and purpose. Mapping also reveals the other's use of cultural tools in constructing his or her life situation, and in his or her attempts to deal with trouble, the future, relationships and so on.

Finally, it is very important to note that while one result of the mapping usually is greater clarity regarding the dilemma with which the help-seeker is asking help, it is equally important to see that mapping also brings ambiguity into view and enables both counsellor and client to see those points in the life-space where ambiguity arises. Exploration of ambiguity is a critical activity of the SocioDynamic Counselling session.

From the SocioDynamic viewpoint, understandings of human problems are dynamic and seldom free of some degree of ambiguity. The counsellor and help-seeker use strategies of the "best guess" when trying to decide what to do, or how to think about, a given circumstance or trouble. What is strived for is not a predictable outcome, nor logical explanation to human action, but an understanding that makes "cultural sense"—that is, the best guess or constructed understanding that can be produced under the sociocultural circumstances. While the positivist may be uncomfortable with this stance, and may insist upon logic and rational clarity as the goal of counselling discourse, it is certainly less pretentious to allow that there remains an enigmatic quality to human situations regardless of the effort we make to render these conditions clear and unambiguous.

Ambiguity is a phenomenon to be explored rather than a phenomenon to be eliminated. Life-space mapping gives us a method for exploring ambiguity. Mapping gives us "footprints in the sand". The SocioDynamic perspective allows that such footprints are seldom permanent—they are often washed away by successive waves of experience.

**Idea 3: People use "cultural tools" in constructing meaning and performing actions**

The idea of cultural tools may be unfamiliar to many counsellors, so I will try to explain what "cultural tools" means and this should indicate their considerable usefulness in the process of counselling.

A basic assumption for my explanation is that the counsellor's attempt to understand the other should focus on both the agent (actor) and the means being used by the actor in his or her actions (including thought and speech). The counsellor and other should mentally
approach any situation in ways that tend to keep all of the elements of the "whole" situation under consideration. It is often a mistake to concentrate too exclusively on the individual and not take the context into account. Conversely, it is also a mistake to focus too much on the context and omit considerations of the agent and the means the agent uses to deal with others, self and context. A second assumption of the SocioDynamic perspective is that the use of the notion of "cultural tools" will be of great assistance in keeping the "whole" in mind.

The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky taught that people use two types of "cultural" tools as instruments of social mediation: technical tools (e.g. the computer for coordinating information, or a pole for vaulting) and psychological tools (such as words, concepts etc.). According to Vygotsky (1981, p. 137), the category "psychological tools" includes "language, systems of counting, algebraic systems, mnemonic techniques, works of art, writing, schemes (plans), diagrams, maps, mechanical drawings, and all sorts of conventional signs [icons, symbols, codes, non-verbal signs and gestures]". In combination, I name these two types of tools "cultural tools".

From the SocioDynamic perspective, words are tools for getting things done. They are cultural tools in that we acquire the ability to use words from our interactions with other cultural members such as parents, teachers and playmates. We are not born with language (or with any cultural tools) but we appropriate them through our social interactions. All of our symbolic skills are appropriated from other cultural members.

In any symbolic performance both the agent and the tool(s) are required. As an example, consider the following. If asked to multiply one number by another by another (e.g. 2896 by 8851), most adults can do this using Arabic numerals by placing one set of digits under the other and then performing the multiplication procedure. So it is easy to feel and say, "I can do that" as if the agent (you) were completely responsible for the performance. However, if you are told that you cannot place one set of digits under the other or if you are told that you must use Latin numerals, then it immediately becomes obvious that the "cultural tool" has a very important part to play in this performance. Most people cannot do this rather simple arithmetic task when denied the use of the cultural tool they have learned for doing tasks of this nature. The agent and the tool need each other.

In the example I have just given, the cultural tool (the multiplication method) is a specific mediational means. It has certain affordances (Gibson, 1978) that make solving the problem possible if we have the tool. It is more sensible to say that the tool and I solved the problem than to claim "I did it". Cultural tools connect us to our contexts; they enable us to act sensibly in everyday life; they are the tools that counsellors and others can use to repair practical difficulties and concerns in daily living.

Using the concept of cultural tools helps counsellors move away from overemphasis on psychological explanations, pathological explanations and theoretical formulations, and directs attention to action, joint action, mediation processes, local knowledge, meaning and ongoing experience. It moves counselling toward the status of being a culture-centred activity (practice).

Many cultural tools are important in the counselling process. In fact, we can say that counselling itself is a cultural product in that it is produced through the joint interactions of counsellor and help-seeker. It is an interactive (social) achievement. Some of the more useful cultural tools in SocioDynamic Counselling include:

- speech, non-verbal language and written language (i.e. counselling discourse in which all utterances are seen as tools for negotiating understandings between the participants);
- communication that is dialogical from a Bakhtinian (1981) frame of reference (i.e. language that "lies on the borderline between oneself and the other" [p. 293]);
- mapping as a tool of moving the implicit and unarticulated and uncoordinated to the explicit, articulated and coordinated;
- empathy as a tool of removing "noise" and distortion from communication;
- schemes, scenarios and visual plans as tools for coordinating everyday actions;
- witnessing as a tool for getting outside of frames;
- reflection as a tool for connecting personal and social processes;
- metaphor as a tool for introducing new tools;
- generative questions as tools for developing meaning;
- the pen as a tool for guiding analysis;
- visualised scenarios as a tool for preparing to act; and
- computers as a tool for accessing information.

Some cultural tools are specific and easily understood. For example, to utter the sentence, "Please sit down here," is a "velvet gloved" cultural tool for bringing about a very specific action. A pencil is a simple, technical cultural tool for making signs. A computer, on the other hand, is an extremely complex cultural tool, both in terms of the varieties of communication that it enables and in terms of the add-on technologies that are implicated in its production.

Within the context of counselling, the very nature of the counselling process is altered once a counsellor adopts the idea of cultural tools. A much more active participation by both counsellor and help-seeker is potentiated. The process is embedded in cultural knowledge and sensibility rather than being an abstract, professionalised specialty that uses psychology and various idealised interventions and instrumental reasoning.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

I wish to emphasise two issues in closing. First, the ideas about counselling contained in this article are not presented as the final word on anything but are given as "ideas-in-progress". They are the result of nearly two decades of study, research, practice and reflection, and they have shown themselves to be inspiring and empowering for counsellors who have brought them into their own thinking and practice.

Second, I believe that counselling will greatly benefit by including what C. Wright Mills (1959) called the sociological imagination. What he meant by this is that unfortunately most people (including counsellors, I believe) live in personal worlds that are too small for effective living in the contemporary world. Small worlds keep us from understanding the larger cultural and social factors that influence us — often in less than desirable ways. By actively expanding our view of what life is about, and by learning to see that we are social as well as psychological beings, we can create an imaginative reconstruction of the social relations and larger social structural forces that influence our lives. When people lack this skill — sociological imagination, that is — they are too often left with the belief that troubles are either the exclusive result of their own doing as individuals or conversely that troubles are somehow due mostly to factors beyond their understanding and control. Neither of
these stances is constructive. One leads to self-blame and the other leads to blaming others.

By taking a more sociological and cultural stance in counselling, help-seekers can be coached through counselling to develop the skill of sociological imagination and thereby to see that they are neither victims nor possessors of deficit and pathology, and that often personal troubles are in fact also public issues. Such shifts in perspective open the door to constructing strategies of action that are empowering and that keep both the context and the agent (both the personal and the public) factors in view.

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NEW VISIONS FOR COUNSELLING IN
THE 21ST CENTURY

SOCIODYNAMIC COUNSELLING

R. Vance Peavy

This article provides a comment on the 21st century post-industrial context for counselling. It offers a sociodynamic perspective and describes examples of cultural tools that the sociodynamic counsellor uses to render counselling more sensible. In this paper it is argued that we are entering a new era marked already by unpredictability and ambiguity. Counselling must change to make it sensible and affirm the validity of people's experience. Counsellors must know how to indicate to others that it is experience, not events, that makes the difference in enlarging the scope of understanding both individual lives and society.

In their recent book On the Edge, Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens (2000) write that work was a principal influence on identity and biography. In a post-industrial world, work is now transforming so that it no longer serves as a basis for organising and shaping identities and biographies. In the same book the German sociologist Ulrich Beck (2000) claims that 'everything is up in the air', which means that people must become activists in constructing their own lives. In post-industrial society, people must learn how to author and re-author their self-identity. The post-modern individual is faced with the task of do-it-yourself self-identity construction.

Moreover, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to sustain a fixed picture of themselves. Saturated with images from everywhere, people experience confusion and uncertainty about who they are and who they are becoming. Church, family, school and community are no longer providing people with reliable guidance on work futures and self-development. The omnipresent, ever-shifting market society, exploding technologies and increasing cultural diversity and cultural interpenetration, perturb fixed pictures of self and identity and complicate processes of identity formation.

The Environics Research Group has been evaluating the sociocultural attitudes of Canadian citizens since 1983. Within the past five years some important and somewhat alarming attitudinal changes have taken place. While Canada — a country that is representative of the post-industrial wealthier nations — has been doing well economically, this economic success is not without cost to individual citizens. The results of the recent Environics studies (Adams, 1999) show that Canadian citizens as a post-industrial population describe themselves as 'ontologically insecure'. This means that they are experiencing:

1. Insecurity about personal identity and confusion about the course their lives are taking.
2. A decline in vitality and personal engagement — people are more stressed and tired.
3. Disengagement from society along with the feeling that individuals (especially members of what used to be called the blue- and white-collar classes) are bearing more of the load, and government and corporations are bearing less.

Participation in escapist activities such as TV and movies, the Internet, rap and rock music, extreme sports, vacations, drugs, and consumption-as-therapy is on the increase.

4. Doubts about the unqualified advantages of technology and science. Who is being benefited? What about the risks accompanying nuclear power, pollution, global warming, toxic substances, chemicalisation of the food chain, surveillance and loss of personal privacy, and so on?
5. A growing desire for personal stability and reliable guidance on 'How should I live my life?' There is no evidence that Canadians want to return to the 'good old days'. However, there is evidence that they desire to achieve more clearly defined identities and stability in social life.

Much of this growing malaise is traceable to shifts in economic policy and structure in Canada, and globally, over the past few decades.

WHAT POSTURE SHOULD COUNSELLORS TAKE IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY?

It would be absurd to suggest that counselling can have any appreciable influence on structural changes in society. In fact, counsellors as a group in society experience the five concerns just outlined as much as anyone else. Stress appears to have significantly increased in the past two decades, as indicated by reports of burnout and incidence of 'chronic fatigue syndrome' among the helping professions.

However, there are several steps counsellors can take in their efforts to assist clients who seek help with their worrying ontological insecurity and other sociocultural concerns. I will outline strategic steps that I believe will help to make counselling a vibrant and useful

response to people who are leading zigzag lives increasingly characterised by ambiguity and who are asking for help from counsellors in orienting themselves to post-industrial life.

Adopt and Protect a Genuine Counselling Vocabulary
Counsellors can take steps to confirm their own vocabulary of practice. This means that counsellors should resist pressure by industry and bureaucratic managers to adopt the vocabulary of business. Terminology such as 'marketable' self and skills, 'bottom line' and 'time management' should not inform counselling practice. Counselling is not an economic activity; it is a personal meaning-making process that is designed to help people develop identities and capacities. It supports their efforts to move toward goals that they have chosen. The vocabulary of counselling should emphasise:
- possibilities, not pathologies;
- capacities, not deficiencies;
- goals chosen by individuals, not goals imposed by economic imperative; and
- self-identity creation, not identity confusion.

Counselling is not Therapy
Counsellors should resist the imperialism of psychology and psychotherapy — especially diagnostic labeling — and affirm the validity of people's experience (Smal, 1993). Most people who are struggling with new economic conditions, post-industrial society and ontological insecurity are not sick and do not need to be cured of anything. Counselling is a practice in its own right and should not strive to be a weak form of therapy; it should be seen as a culturally defined social practice and a method of life-planning rather than a system of psychological techniques and theory designed to treat or cure people of deficits and personality problems. People struggling with post-industrial changes may be stressed and worried, but they are not sick.

To summarise, most forms of counselling are currently being colonised by 'business thinking'. Today, counsellors hear the constant refrain that their counselling must be efficient, effective, measured and accountable, and that counselling should support business profitability by placing squared pegs in the square slots that industry and business have available. This 'commodity' and 'market' thinking about people both corrodes personal identity and degrades the proper functions of counselling. Unfortunately, career counsellors and their managers are frequently inclined to adopt both the vocabulary and the goals of the business community at the expense of concern for the well-being and development of individuals.

In addition, counsellors may be afflicted by a desire to be therapists and try to convert their counselling practice to a therapy practice. This may be the result of wanting to elevate their status in the pecking order of the helping professions. It certainly reflects what Schuster (1999, p.8) calls the 'psychopathologisation' of everyday life that has been under way since Freud's time. Ordinary people and their ordinary actions get labelled as pathological (e.g. the 'average neurotic'). There is nothing wrong with individual help-seekers describing their experience in counselling as 'therapeutic' or 'healing' if they choose to do so. Good counselling certainly can result in people feeling better about themselves, their relationships and their lives. My concern is that a clear distinction is made between being cured and 'learning'. Further, I contend that diagnostic labelling derived from psychometrics and theories of abnormality should not be allowed to replace the validity of people's described experience and their ordinary ways of talking.

Advocate a Capacity-building Focus for Counselling
Counsellors can work to keep the purpose of counselling clear. This purpose is to aid individuals to develop and make their own lives more fulfilling and empowered. Counselling is a learning process designed to promote self-creation and the development of individuals as empowered social agents. While the economic context is a very important factor bearing on the welfare of individuals, the primary purpose of counselling is not the promotion of economic goals and values of the state and corporation.

The 1998 Nobel Prize winner in economics, Amartya Sen, advances a new theory concerning the development of society and the development of individuals within society (Sen, 1998). He defines personal freedom as the development of the capacities of the individual. The more capacities possessed by a person, the greater the range of choices open to the individual. Sen is concerned with the relations between economic wealth/poverty and our ability to live as we would like. He contends that our answers to the question 'How should we live our lives?' is not answerable strictly according to economic ideas, criteria and measures, but requires that we address the social basis of individual capacity, well-being and personal freedom.

My main contention in this article is that counselling should be construed as a process devoted to the personalised learning and the development of individual freedom. It should focus on increasing the capacities of individuals and on planning how to live in a way that will enable them to pursue goals of their own choice.

In order to guide people in the process of life-planning, counselling itself must be revised. In real life, the capacity to re-story or recast your life story is an empowering capacity for dealing with the world of work, family and relationships. Of the various social practices (e.g. teaching, leading, administering) it is only counselling that can provide personalised, supportive influence on people who face the task of performing a do-it-yourself biography. Self-creation is a task that must be done in the face of fluctuating and often unpredictable work and family life (Wallulis, 1998). In this runaway world of the 21st century, a world in which more and more people experience stress, unpredictability and insecurity, counselling can be construed as a workshop for self-creation and capacity building. In the face-to-face counselling encounter characterised by genuine cooperation between help-seeker and helper, counsellor and help-seeker can jointly work on constructing the self-as-project.

A Revisionary Impulse for Counselling
Not just any kind of counselling will suffice for helping individuals plan and make choices in the post-industrial context of this new century. Although cognitive-behavioural, psychodynamic, humanistic and eclectic forms of counselling developed during the past century are valuable helping models, they also have serious drawbacks. They are based on metaphors of behaviour change, adjustment, and compliance with norms, and tend to subscribe to vocabularies of pathology and deficiency (Pancher, 1995; Gergen, 1991; Peavy, 1996). Counsellors who base their practice on these metaphors often emphasise classification, diagnosis, prescription, advice, treatment interventions and evaluation.
In no way am I arguing against counsellor competency. Counselling is a fundamentally important function in society. Every reasonable step should be taken to ensure that counselling is valued and done competently. I am arguing that the primary focus of counselling should be on the development of individuals and their capacities rather than institutional efficiency and market profitability.

In democratic societies, adults should have the freedom and the necessary social support to develop capacities that enable them to pursue goals of their own choosing and to contribute to social arrangements that make this possible. While institutional requirements and needs cannot be ignored, counselling should be clearly on the side of individual development, choice, capacity, personal responsibility and freedom.

TRANSFORMING COUNSELLING TO MAKE IT A 21ST-CENTURY PRACTICE

In the following paragraphs I present ideas about counselling that I believe will move it toward greater viability as a 21st-century practice. These ideas are taken from a new form of counselling, sociodynamic counselling, which my associates and I have developed over the past three decades. Sociodynamic counselling is composed of three elements:

- a perspective or world view toward contemporary social life;
- a constructivist philosophy of helping; and
- a set of counselling practices derived from the first two elements.

A more complete discussion of sociodynamic counselling can be found in a number of publications (Peavy, 1997, 1999, 2000a, 2000b).

Transforming the Meaning of Career

In the century just ended, 'career' meant a life-long occupation or profession. It has been customary to urge youth to select a career early in their lives and education, and then to focus on education and training that would make them eligible for the career they have chosen. Much career counselling, as practised in the past century, can best be described as a kind of 'matching' process. The underlying assumption of this process is that there is an existing array of jobs and careers into which individuals can be fitted by shaping them properly. This 'cookie-cutter' concept of career guidance is no longer appropriate. In the so-called 'new economy' a much more plastic relationship exists between workers and work. Each has a shaping influence on the other.

Under the impact of post-industrial economies and the enormous influence of computerisation of the world of work, the idea of a career is passing out of fashion. Now young workers look forward to a succession of jobs, sometimes linearly or laterally related but often not. Working life is now a continuous process of training and education, retraining and further education. Knowledge turnover is rapid. New jobs and new types of work appear constantly and must be fit into a way of living. Old jobs now must be done in new planning, of which work is a part, albeit a very important part. What is more appropriate now is to consider one's life as one's career. How should I live my life? This question brings up concerns in all sectors of one's life — family, economics, leisure, health, education, work, and so on. The original meaning of career was that of a course or journey. In mythology the carthas or chariot travelled a course across the sky. The individual's career-as-life is just such a course or journey from birth to death. When a person poses the question 'How should I live my life?,' it means 'What are my next, and future, steps on my life journey?' With reference to work, employment or its absence, the question is 'How does my job or my work, or its absence, fit into and influence my life plan or career?' Increasingly, the relationship between workers and work is that each influences the other; a condition of plasticity and reciprocal influence is how work is most likely to be experienced in post-industrial workplaces.

How Should I Live my Life?

If we take the question, 'How should I live my life?' as the fundamental question one asks in the face of any trouble or problem in life, then we can use a number of ideas and tools to help post-industrial counsellors and help-seekers search for answers to this question.

In the final section of this paper I will briefly describe eight 21st-century tools and maxims for counsellors to use if they desire to develop a counselling practice that emphasises wholeness, capacity, identity, self-creation and transformation. These eight conceptual tools are not the only new tools that are embodied in the sociodynamic perspective, but they do indicate how counselling practice can be construed to be useful to individuals living in post-industrial society.

CONCEPTUAL TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMING COUNSELLING PRACTICE IN 21ST-CENTURY CONTEXTS

In the following section of this article I will briefly describe examples of cultural tools that the sociodynamic counsellor uses to
render counselling more sensible in post-industrial contexts. A cultural tool is some mental device (e.g. concept, words, diagram) that is used in cultural discourse to make sense. It also refers to technical inventions (e.g. computer, pencil, book). All cultural tools are inventions or, more precisely, artifacts. They are used to make meaning, construct realities and communicate. In sociodynamic counselling the idea of cultural tools partially replaces the idea of psychological technique.

**Life Space**

An individual does not exist simply as a solitary being. Each person is the centre of a network or configuration of other people and things that have self-defining meaning for the person. In other words, each of us lives in a life space or 'social' space, as Lewin (1948) proposed. Within this space, which is fluid and constantly changing, our life activities and meanings are meaningfully coordinated and interrelated. It is the help-seeker's life space that the sociodynamic counsellor learns how to enter and co-investigate with the help-seeker's assistance.

**Mapping**

Humans are meaning-makers. Meaning is made and communicated in three ways:

- by speaking and listening;
- by writing and reading; and
- by visualizing (i.e. drawing and viewing).

Most counsellors rely heavily on speaking and listening. Sociodynamic counselling introduces counsellors to the art of visualising and mapping with help-seekers. Simply stated, a map is the drawing produced from visualising. Virtually anything can be mapped: problems, futures, life spaces, relationships, situations, conflicts and so on. The benefits derived from mapping are many, but especially:

- planning by evaluating the present situation of the help-seeker;
- developing awareness of how activities and relationships are coordinated, or not;
- identifying patterns of action;
- generally creating meaning; and (most importantly)
- simplifying complex situations.

**Autobiographical Self**

This concept of the self is in strong contrast to the psychometric self that has been the centrepiece of counselling theory for nearly half a century. The psychometric self is knowable through testing. It is conceptualised as a composite of traits, interests and variables that are relatively fixed and endure over time.

In contrast, the autobiographical self is narrated and composed or authored by the individual in conversation with other people and with the environment. The autobiographical self is made up of many stories and voices and can be known through the communication modes of speaking/listening, writing and visualising. This self is constructed, evolving and dialogical. It is a self of meaning and symbolic construction. The autobiographical self is consistent with the self-creation model. The tools needed for understanding and authoring an autobiographical self are linguistic tools such as metaphor, dialogue, conversational and meaning-generating questions, not psychometric devices or behaviour adjustment.

**Dialogue**

Bakhtinian dialogue (1981) implies human connectedness and inspiration. It refers to forms of communication that bind people together in common understanding and inspires them to be curious. It stands in contrast to all those forms of 'knowing already' what is best — a form of knowing encouraged by versions of the counsellor-as-expert who uses tests to confirm and verify that a person belongs to classifications, averages and pre-formed categories.

For dialogue to be real there must be grounds for genuine participation, for curious exploration, for meaning-making and for feeling inspired to struggle for a better future. Dialogue must be cultivated and needs a context that is safe for interaction and a context that promotes openness to life experience as well as a willingness to negotiate meanings and change one's mind. Dialogue is the preferred mode of communication for counselling.

As Rikkonen (1999, p.141) writes, a prerequisite for genuine dialogue is 'allowing, to some degree or another, the expression of individual and constantly changing perspectives and individual or shared inspirations, enchantments and desires'. If counsellors are truly interested in the well-being of those they help, and in promoting interaction within which well-being can be constructed, then they need to ground counselling discussion in what the help-seekers say about their life experiences. This includes being receptive to what help-seekers say about the choices and futures they value, as well as what they say about the blockages to their desires that they are encountering in their everyday lives. Counsellors must take care not to sidetrack dialogue by a search for events and facts that they assume to be important to the help-seekers. The agenda in dialogical conversation is co-constructed and is not simply inserted into the discussion from the counsellor's own frame of reference. Engagement in dialogue concerning life experience is the foundation of useful plans and actions leading to a 'life worth living'.

According to Robyn Penman (1992), the goodness of communication should not be defined by ideas of competency and efficiency, but by moral criteria. Good communication does good things to people, such as inspiring them, promoting their creativity, encouraging them and respecting their uniqueness and their struggle to build integrity and identity. Penman uses four criteria to outline what good communication is:

- it is attentive to the social realities of the moment;
- it has to be open to constant revision;
- it respects diversity and the right of the other's interpretations to exist; and
- it is never complete, as neither meanings nor communication can ever come to an absolute final point — they change as new perspectives are brought to bear and all perspectives are transformed by human and contextual changes.

Interpersonal communication (dialogue) in counselling is a method of co-creating common, temporary worlds or 'social spaces'. These temporary social spaces have their own meanings, rules, desires, hopes and despair.

Expert talk is problematic, not only because it arises from a stance of already knowing, but because power differences are fostered by expertise and because it obstructs the viability of metaphorical, figurative, inspirational and creative dimensions of talk. While reliable information (about available job openings, for example) is essential, counsellors should eschew communication that is saturated with information or prescription.

**Co-construction (Joint Action)**

An important aspect of thinking about how an individual can live a life he or she values is the recognition that meanings, futures and choices are not 'somewhere out there' waiting to be prescribed or simply 'found'. Instead they are forged...
from negotiation within the personal and social realities of the ongoing experience and contexts of the person. Further, they are found through interaction with other people and with aspects of the surrounding world. In post-modern counselling there is a sense of ‘we are in this together’ when help-seeker and helper discuss, plan and negotiate what to do and how to go about it. Both have unique contributions to make; counselling is an interactive achievement.

Guided Participation

Good counselling has a guiding function. However, this guidance should not be prescriptive, but should take the form of guided participation. If counselling is being competently performed, counsellor and help-seeker share a common space. Within that space the possibilities for the help-seeker to learn are many. The kind of learning, however, should be learning by doing, not learning by being told.

It is reasonable to expect that the counsellor is more accomplished in interpersonal communication than the majority of help-seekers. Further, since most counsellors have studied in areas like psychology, learning, sociology and other social sciences, it also reasonable to expect that they have in mind more problem-solving models than the majority of help-seekers. However, rather than telling the help-seeker what the best course of action is or how to think, the sociodynamic counsellor provides practical opportunities for the help-seeker to actively participate, and thus learn by doing. This means participating in the dialogue, participating in mapping, participating in problem-solving, and participating in the making of plans and projects. The counsellor may guide the process of participation, but the help-seeker remains a legitimate contributor to the ideas and plans being developed in the counselling space. The counsellor does not ‘tell’ but gives examples and models, and works alongside the help-seeker.

The concept of guided participation (Rogoff, 1992) is derived from Vygotsky’s (1978) theory about the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to a learning space in which one person is aided by another to learn. However, the learning procedure is not information presentation, telling, prescribing or advising. Instead, learning is carried out through activity, especially cooperative participation. The one who guides is assumed to have more and better information or skill that is appropriated by the one being aided through their interaction and cooperative learning activity. The relationship between aided and aiding has an apprentice–mentor quality rather than a teacher–student quality.

The two elements of ZPD that are especially relevant in counselling are cooperative learning and the reciprocal influence of spontaneous and theoretical concepts. From a Vygotskian perspective, ‘spontaneous’ concepts can also be defined as ‘common sense’, ‘intuitive’ or ‘cultural sensibility’ arising from the individual’s immediate, ongoing experience and thinking. They are rich with meaning, but not systematic or organised. They are also highly contextualised.

What Vygotsky referred to as ‘scientific’ or theoretical concepts are not necessarily based on scientific knowledge. However, they are systematic, logical and decontextualised. In ZPD the two types of ideas (spontaneous and theoretical) can reciprocally influence each other, leading to a grasp of problems and knowledge that has the characteristics of organised thinking, intuitive insight and personal meaningfulness. Perhaps most important of all, learning that occurs in ZPD has been shown to definitely be superior in what is called far-transfer (Camposone & Brown, 1987). What is learned in the cooperative, activity-learning situation is more likely to be used in problem-solving beyond the counselling discussions.

The idea of ZPD and guided participation helps to resolve the long-standing debate over whether the counsellor should take a prescriptive, advisory role with help-seekers or should take a non-prescriptive, supportive and personal growth role. In participatory learning, the help-seeker is guided but not ‘told’ what to do. Imitation, modelling and practice take place; intuitive ideas are respected and interwoven with more systematic ideas; and the cooperative relationship helps to personalise and inspire the learning process.

Personal Projects

It is in the ambience of ZPD that personal learning projects can be cooperatively designed, thus enabling the help-seeker to engage in personally meaningful activities outside of the counselling. A personal project differs from the so-called ‘action plan’ in that the project is cooperatively designed, must pass the test of personal meaningfulness, and is sensible within the intuitive or cultural sensibility of the help-seeker. A major fault with many action plans is that they are imposed upon the help-seeker with limited regard for personal meaningfulness or cultural sensibility to the help-seeker. The action plan is often a way of executing the mandate of the counselling service or the requirement of the organisation within which counselling is taking place, and may have little personal relevance to the help-seeker.

Human Face

Drawing on Emmanuel Lévinas’ (1985) philosophy of the other, we can say that the counsellor has a moral responsibility to present a ‘human face’ to those who seek help. This is in contrast to the indifferent face of the objective professional, whose expert gaze reduces the other to the status of ‘incapable’. It is also in contrast to Homo economicus, who classifies help-seekers as ‘commodities’ to be packaged as marketable skills and attitudes.

Human face is the principal manner in which we are present (or not) to others. It manifests care and responsibility, and is also the bearer of inspiration and hope. When our face recognises the other as that unique being who he or she is, as ‘this one here before me now’, we are manifesting the primary condition for genuine relationship, dialogue and cooperative helping.

The concept of human face implies both self-observing and self-forgetting. As one human facing another human, I must be aware of my own thinking, feeling and acting in this situation of meeting the other. In other words, I must remember, or observe, myself. At the same time I must forget myself, in the sense of putting the needs and concerns of the other above my own. Finally, the concept of human face implies that the helper has a responsibility to the other, but not for the other; the helper should not take the position of trying to ‘save’ the other. What the counsellor has responsibility for is his or her own conduct, and that part of the help-seeker’s life that the help-seeker places in the open space between.

Self-observation

One’s ability to understand the situation that is of concern is directly dependent upon what can be called the self-observation method. In order to keep one’s prejudices, habits and self-interests from obstructing clear perception, especially listening, the counsellor must have a well-developed capacity for self-
observation. This same ability is valuable for help-seekers also. The use of self-observation enables them to transcend the barriers of presumption, habit, blame and inaction.

The counsellor who models self-observation is providing an opportunity for the help-seeker to learn to self-observe through imitation. Self-observation depends upon being able to distinguish between describing experience and explaining experience. Self-observation also enables individuals to 'look before they leap', so to speak. Impulsivity, lack of reflection and inability to describe one's own experience are all barriers to learning and problem-solving. The person who has little capacity to self-observe is constantly in danger of performing self-defeating actions. Reflective individuals make better problem-solvers than either impulsive or extremely logical individuals.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

In this paper I have argued that we are entering a new era, a new century marked already by unpredictability and ambiguity. We must change counselling to make it sensible in this new era. Counsellors must learn new ways of making complex life situations graspable. They must know how to indicate to others that it is experience, not events, that makes the difference in enlarging the scope of understanding both individual lives and society.

A primary function of counselling is to promote the integrity of the individual as a whole being and to support the activities of building a capacity to pursue goals of the individual's choice. Further, counselling should promote 'guidance from the inside' (Vähämööttönen, 1998), a way of being that is self-guiding and self-authoring (Bohart & Tallman, 1999). Counsellors can encourage individuals to take a posture of responsibility for who they are and wish to become, and encourage the development of individual freedom together with responsibility for others. I remember reading a line from the black essayist, Richard Wright: 'It is so hard to be somebody in a world where so many people want you to be nobody'.

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Social and Cultural Context of Intercultural Counselling

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ABSTRACT
In this article, we argue two points. First, successful intercultural counselling depends on how well the counsellor understands the social contextual factors surrounding the interaction. Second, intercultural counselling is a collaborative process, the success of which depends on how well the counsellor and clients coordinate their communication on process and content. Counsellor knowledge of social and cultural contextual variables contributes to common ground with the client. However, it is the counsellor's ability to monitor and attune to the moment-by-moment changes of counselling discourse that contributes most to the success of an intercultural counselling session.

RÉSUMÉ
Dans cet article, nous faisons valoir deux points de vue. Premièrement, le succès du counselling interculturel est fonction de la compréhension par le conseiller des facteurs contextuels sociaux relatifs à l'interaction. Deuxièmement, le counselling interculturel est un processus de collaboration dont la réussite dépend de la capacité du conseiller et de celle du client à coordonner leur communication quant au processus et à son contenu. Une bonne connaissance des variables contextuelles sociales et culturelles de la part du conseiller contribue à l'établissement d'un terrain d'entente avec le client. Toutefois, c'est l'habileté du conseiller d'être à l'affût des changements pouvant survenir à tout moment dans le cours de l'entretien et sa capacité d'accorder sa réaction avec ces changements qui contribuent le plus au succès d'une séance de counseling interculturelle.

In North American counselling literature, the terms “cross-cultural” and “multicultural” are used as descriptors for counselling which occurs when counsellor and client are members of different cultures. These descriptors frequently contain two assumptions about which we are sceptical. The first is that the principal barrier to effective counselling between members of different cultures is a matter of language difference. This is a popular belief that many hold and we do not think that it is justified. As Lakoff (2000) has noted, language is not “just words.” How language is used tells us how we are connected, and who has power and who doesn't. The use of language has as much to do with cultural coding as it does with grammar and semantics.

A second assumption implied by these terms is that “standard” counselling techniques and skills of mainstream counselling approaches can, and should be adapted to fit the multicultural counselling situation and that this adaptation will result in multi-, cross-cultural counselling efficacy. This second assumption bears examination and deconstruction. Although a large body of literature has built up around the topics of multi- and cross-cultural counselling, there is scant

reason to believe that the quality of counselling being given to minority culture clients has improved, because the approach often used is simply a transfer of mainstream counselling methods to multi-cultural counselling situations. There has been extensive criticism of this Eurocentric tendency together with recommendations for remedy. (Sue & Sue, 1990; Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996; Das, 1997; Ivey, A. E., Bradford Ivey, M., & Simek-Morgan, L. 1997; Peavy, 1998; Li & Brown, 2000).

In this article we make two arguments. First, successful intercultural counselling depends on how well the counsellor understands the social contextual factors surrounding the interaction. This highlights the need for a perspective of “cultural attunement” proposed by Hoskins (1999). This perspective urges us to recognize oppression, act toward culturally different others with respect and humility, and maintain an openly curious and reverent attitude toward difference. Intercultural counselling occurs between two people of different cultural backgrounds. Thus the context of this communication is entirely different from intracultural counselling which refers to counselling between members of the same culture.

The second argument is that counselling is a collaborative process the success of which depends on how well the counsellor and client coordinate on process and content (Clark & Brennan, 1991). To facilitate the moment-by-moment understanding of the conversation (Clark & Brennan, 1991), the counsellor needs to know the client’s cultural rules of conversation or learns these rules in the process of the conversation. We will discuss how culturally embedded rules of conversation other than language can hinder or facilitate effective intercultural counselling. To emphasize the reciprocal, negotiating nature of counselling, we use the term intercultural for counselling discourse between culturally different individuals.

SOCIAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS OF INTERCULTURAL COUNSELLING

All cultures have developed methods of “helping” or culture-specific methods for dealing with human misery (Kleinman, 1988). Members of different cultures vary considerably in language, customs, food, dress, family patterns, music, work habits, health repair, spirituality, and gender relations. Consequently, what “helping” means and how helping is practiced is always culturally defined.

Mainstream American and Euro-Canadian counselling approaches tend to mirror the beliefs, values, and expectations of white, middle-class, privileged majority culture members. There is evidence that counselling theories and methods which are the products of middle-class counsellor education and practice are not culturally relevant when applied to minority-culture clients (Wohl, 1989).

Interestingly, when confronted with clients from cultures different from their own, counsellors typically claim language incompatibility as the chief obstacle to understanding. Of course, language incompatibility often exists and does interfere with mutual understanding. However, we believe that it is not as important a determinant of success or failure in counselling as cultural incompatibility and
lack of knowledge of cultural codes in relating and communicating. Many mainstream counsellors do not know much about the cultural communication styles and the expectations of help-seekers from cultures other than their own (Sue & Sue, 1990; Pedersen, 1994).

Christine Hall (1997) has written about “cultural malpractice.” She points out that unless psychology, and those activities such as counselling which use psychology as a theoretical base, change their approach to culturally different people, the current theories and practices will become increasingly obsolete and irrelevant for larger and larger numbers of people.

Christine Hall (1997) recommends that all practitioner-training programs should work toward the goal of “cultural competency.” In her view culturally competent counsellors and other helping professionals must understand the impact on individuals of the following ten cultural dimensions: (a) cultural membership, including foods, music, customs, ceremonies, and spiritual/religious beliefs; (b) family structure, including gender roles and child rearing practices; (c) language of origin and literacy in majority language; (d) identity processes, including individual variations; (e) medical, personal help, and healing proclivities; (f) relevance of testing and other assessment procedures; (g) oppression and political issues; (h) stigma of status and social location; (i) socio-economic differences within groups and between minority and majority memberships; and (j) majority culture-minority culture relations.

Expanding upon Hall’s observations, Peavy (1998) has formulated four theses underlying effective intercultural counselling.

*Thesis I.* Intercultural counselling demands that the counsellor be able to navigate in two cultures — one’s own and a secondary culture. To do so, the counsellor must have prior, or acquire, knowledge of the help seeker’s personal as well as cultural expectations. Counsellors cannot always be expected to have prior knowledge or to be immediately knowledgeable about the culture of each minority culture member whom they encounter. However, they can be expected to be watchful for, and open to, the cultural nuances that will facilitate a workable counselling encounter. The capacity to “learn from the other” is the key for a counsellor to interact competently in intercultural situations.

*Thesis II.* Intercultural counselling research, training, and practice should take a holistic, unified perspective. Holism and inclusion should prevail over reductionism and classificatory practices in counselling.

Many cultures other than mainstream North American culture do not separate the mind from body, thinking from feeling, and theory from practice. Western psychologists and counsellors have a proclivity for classificatory practices such as diagnostic manuals and carefully bounded specialties. For example, many members of indigenous cultures such as Canada’s First Nations have a worldview in which human life and nature are inter-related. Spirituality and symbolism are fused into their ideas of traditional healing. Thus, they tend to prefer intuitive counselling to majority-culture rationalistic counselling (Peavy, 1994). If majority culture counsellors and psychologists are unaware and unappreciative
of these factors, they are certainly going to frustrate themselves and their help seekers.

**Thesis III.** Many minority culture members experience some degree of marginalization, oppression, racial and ethnic discrimination, and economic inequality. In certain historical periods, entire minority populations have been objects of dominant majority oppression (e.g., Japanese-Canadians in Canada during World War II; indigenous peoples in nearly every majority culture, historically and at present).

The counselling and therapy methods derived from conventional psychology leave much to be desired as models for counselling with minority culture members. Most notably, all such models are implicitly based on middle class values and urge clients to comply with majority culture norms (Fánchez, 1995; Pedersen, 1994). This can be interpreted as a form of cultural oppression.

Counselling with an emancipatory theme can offset the oppressive features of conventional counselling and therapy (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1994). Emancipatory means that the counsellor assists the helpseeker to identify and find ways of overcoming both internal unfreedoms such as low esteem and undeveloped capacity, and external unfreedoms such as prejudice, poverty, and oppressive relationships.

A just and progressive society should allow its members to construct themselves from multiple values and ideals such as equality, authenticity, and diversity. The realization of these ideals depends upon people's ability to exercise choice and whether they have a legitimized voice and position in society. Choice and voice are muted and constrained under conditions of oppression. Counselling with an emancipatory theme can assist intercultural clients — not only to recognize and legitimate their own experience of oppression, marginalization, and discrimination, but to actively strive to overcome these conditions.

**Thesis IV.** Constructivist counselling practice (Peavy, 1997) is a promising perspective for intercultural counselling. First, constructivist counselling is a form of discourse located in a particular cultural context. It is counselling which finds sensibility in the culturally mediated communication of the participants. Second, constructivist counselling is premised on multiple realities. It depends more on the dictates of cultural knowledge than on the claims of universal scientific knowledge. Third, constructivist counselling is receptive to myth, symbol and metaphor — it eschews the "authoritative" voices and vocabularies of professional and academic psychology, as well as the pathologizing vocabularies of psychiatry and psychotherapy.

Based on experience in teaching constructivist counselling to counsellors in language schools and refugee and immigration centres in Denmark and Sweden over a six-year period, Peavy (1999) has identified constructivist principles that facilitate intercultural counselling. (a) respect for difference and diversity; (b) openness to a range of possible ways of interpreting reality; (c) encouragement of creativity, inventiveness and cultural resonance; (d) sense of real-life engagement; (e) resistance to negative effects of any final classification or categorisation; (f) helping based more on cultural than psychological hypotheses; (g) direct use
of language tools and social artefacts; (h) cooperation and consensus rather than authority and imposition; and (i) helping construed as emancipatory and capacity-building in intention.

CULTURAL CONTEXTUAL FACTORS OF INTERCULTURAL COUNSELLING

Communication can be defined as the practice of producing meaning. Culture can be understood as the totality of communication practices and system of meaning (Schirato & Yell, 2000). Communication and culture shape and manifest each other. Intercultural counselling is concerned at once with "communication practices" and "cultural meanings" and is an interactional achievement, based largely on the negotiation of meanings. In the following sections, we discuss cultural-contextual issues that are core to intercultural counselling: self-construal, communication styles and miscommunication, silence, turn-taking and interrupting, and grounding.

Self-Construal

Individuals in Western cultures tend to construe the self individualistically with reference to their inner thoughts, feelings, and actions. In contrast, members of more "collectivistic" cultures tend to perceive the self as part of a social network. The self is, to a large extent, organized and determined by "what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.227). In a recent study, Li (1998) found that, compared with Anglo-Canadians, Chinese are much more likely to express closeness to, and interdependence with, family. These differences in self-construal can lead to serious miscommunication in counselling discourse. An example is the Canadian counsellor who insists on the client taking responsibility for her decisions as an individual actor while the collectivist culture client is inclined to make "group" decisions in consultation with family members.

Communication Styles and Miscommunication

As humans converse according to culturally shaped rules for discourse (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), intercultural counselling is bound to display different conversation styles than intracultural counselling. These culturally defined conversation styles can seriously hinder the success of intercultural interaction. In an early study of intercultural communication, Erickson (1975) videotaped interviews where community college students were discussing career choice and course selections with counsellors. He found that conversations proceeded more smoothly when the dyads were of the same culture (for example, two Italians) and less smoothly when the counsellor and client came from different cultures. Miscommunication in the interviews was attributed to a lack of rhythmic coordination, not lack of language understanding. Later investigations by Gumperz (1978) identified the importance of "synchronized exchanges" in conversation. Peavy (1994) found that lack of synchronized exchanges characterized communication failure in counselling where the counsellor is a majority Canadian culture member and the clients are First Nations culture members. Specifically, this
was shown by opposing interpretations of the same segments of counselling discourse as indicated by the following comparative comments when asked about specific interactions in the interview segment:

Interaction 1
First Nations client: The counsellor is asking too many questions.
Counsellor: The client resisting counselling by not replying

Interaction 2
First Nations client: The counsellor talks too much.
Counsellor: The client won’t talk.

Interaction 3
First Nations client: The counsellor kept staring at me.
Counsellor: The client would not look at me.

Clearly, something is amiss here. The counsellor comes from a culture and training that advocates questioning, flow of speech, and direct eye contact. By contrast, the client comes from a culture in which questioning is moderated, talking is often replaced by respectful silence, and eye contact is regarded as a personal violation. On the basis of twenty years of research on inter-cultural communication in North America and Asia, Scollon and Scollon (1995) pointed out that “most communication doesn’t arise through mispronunciation or through poor uses of grammar... rather it lies in differences in patterns of discourse” (p.xii). Tannen (1981) studied Greek-American conversations and found that miscommunication was attributable to directness-indirectness differences. North American styles of communication do not leave much room for ambiguity. The typical North American speaker (including counsellors) has a “get to the point,” “don’t beat around the bush,” “don’t give me flowery language” style of listening and discourse interpretation. According to Tannen (1981), miscommunication comes not just from lack of similar language fluency, but from the listener’s lack of “sociocultural knowledge,” and thus misinterpretation, of what the speaker had to say. Knowledge of culturally specific rules of discourse (Labov & Fanshel, 1977) allows one to feel at ease in conversation.

Silence

It is typical for North Americans to respond to silence with talk, which may be a continuation of the same topic or an introduction of a new topic in order to overcome their discomfort. Many novice counsellors who simply “fill” silence with words commonly take this approach. To deal with silence competently, one needs to know the cultural variations in the meanings attributed to silence.

Lebra (1987) has pointed out that in Japanese culture, silence is used to save a person from revealing the truth, thus avoiding embarrassment and social disapproval. In traditional Japanese culture, to argue verbally violates social harmony, so conversationalists often choose silence as an arguing strategy. In this way silence accomplishes communicative tasks that words cannot. Similarly, in Chinese culture, silence is a powerful conversational tool. A person of a few words,
an introverted individual, is perceived to have a powerful personality. Silence, as a communication strategy, is well accepted in the Chinese way of communication. The importance of silence is reflected in the Chinese saying, “those who know how to talk also know when to be silent.”

While most members of North American culture believe that the means to get to know someone is by talking with them, many indigenous people prefer silence to talk when social relations are uncertain. Ross (1992) proposes the “conservation-withdrawal tactic” as a common communication strategy for First Nations people of Northern Canada and Alaska including Athabaskans, Northern Tutchone, Carrier, and Cree. This tactic reflects unfamiliarity between conversationalists and contexts, and can lead to withdrawal into physical immobility and silence. This communication tactic is also known as the “rule of the bush.”

A Cree speaker once explained to the first author that silence is better than talk for three reasons: (a) one needs time to think things over, before answering, (b) talking too much is disrespectful, especially in a meeting with a stranger, and (c) it is strategic to leave enough time to figure out how to explain something that is very complex and connected to many other things.

Closely connected to the concept of silence is pause that occurs between utterances. Many First Nations cultural members exhibit a slightly longer pause between utterances than do Euro-Canadians (Scollon & Scollon, 1981). While the difference is slight, the Euro-Canadian counsellor may wait his or her own length of time for the First Nations client to say something. Failing to receive a reply according to the time he or she would wait, the counsellor starts to talk. This can be frustrating for both. While the Euro-Canadian counsellor goes on and on, the First Nations client cannot get a word in edgeways and does not wish to interrupt since this is a sign of disrespect. This example illustrates "failure to achieve a synchronized exchange" mentioned earlier.

**Turn-taking**

Turn-taking refers to who speaks, how often, and how long (Sacks, Scheglof, & Jefferson, 1974). In counselling, the counsellor and client mutually construct conversation, and coordination on turn-taking is extremely important, especially for the speaker who takes most of the turns and consumes most of the talking time. There are distinct cultural differences in turn-taking. For example, Euro-Canadians tend to take long, monologic turns (ranting), permit uneven distribution of turns, and take a high percentage of turns in topics that they initiate. On the other hand, Japanese tend to take short turns, and distribute turns evenly regardless of who has introduced the topic (Yamada, 1990).

**Interrupting**

Closely related to turn-taking is the phenomenon of interrupting. In counselling, as in many other contexts, interruption can be regarded as negative — rude, aggressive, and disrespectful (Mishler & Waxler, 1968; Zimmerman & West,
1975). Again this is a culturally variable practice. Interruption is considered disruptive of the flow of a conversation in cultures valuing deference, independence, and territorial imperative (Murata, 1994). In cultures valuing interdependence, frequent interruption is a sign of active interest in what is being said and shows that the listener is actively participating in the conversation (Tannen, 1989). Mizutani (1988) observed that in Japanese culture, participants converse cooperatively. When one speaks, the other tries to help out. This phenomenon is called kyowa, which means literally “co-produce” or “co-operate” a conversation. Li (in press) found that Chinese interrupted each other frequently in their conversations and they do so in a cooperative (e.g., to take the floor, or change the topic or disagree) rather than intrusive manner (e.g., to agree, or assist, or clarify). On the other hand, the Canadians interrupted more intrusively, especially when they played the role of a doctor and the Chinese person played the role of a patient.

To a First Nations individual, interruption is a sign of disrespect; to a Japanese, a Chinese or a Thai, it means being cooperative and helpful; to a Hungarian or Italian, it is a sign of lively engagement and interest; to many Euro-Canadians, to interrupt is to show one’s knowledge, personal power, and need to be in control of the on-going conversation. Interruption is a powerful discourse strategy influencing both relational and content dimensions of a conversation.

**Grounding**

Counselling is an interactional achievement (Schegloff, 1982). Successful interaction in intercultural counselling is much more difficult and complex than in intra-cultural counselling. Intercultural speakers face a much more complex task in establishing “common ground,” that is, in grounding their communication in shared beliefs, knowledge, and values (Clark & Brennan, 1991). The primary responsibility for the success of intercultural counselling lies with the counsellor. The counsellor’s knowledge of the differences in self-construal, turn-taking, interruption, and the use of silence are important to the construction of a common ground with the client. Common ground, without which there is little basis for sensible counselling, can also be aided by the use of other linguistic tools. Some commonly used tools include (Li, 1999b): (1) Listener restating, or partially restating what the speaker has said. In counselling this is usually called paraphrasing, or empathic responding. (2) Listener making a clarification request by using question words such as what, who, where, when, I beg your pardon, I didn’t quite get that. Such questions, when asked respectfully, are requests to the speaker for clarification, reformulation, elaboration, and reiteration. After getting such a request, if the speaker gives a reply that is at least partially satisfactory to the listener, this exchange has added to their pool of shared knowledge. In other words, it has increased the common ground.

Conversational grounding is a central process in various forms of discourse (e.g, Clark & Schaefer, 1989; Clark & Brennan, 1991) and has been found to facilitate listener understanding (Schober & Clark, 1989). Li (1999b) found that,
in both intra- and inter-cultural discourse, the more interlocutors engaged in grounding activities, the better they communicated the information from the speaker to the listener. It is reasoned that effective counselling does not depend exclusively on the amount of common ground existing prior to the conversation. Rather, it depends largely upon how much common ground the interactants negotiate and create during the counselling process. To the extent that the counselor and help seeker coordinate their conversation, and “keep track of their common background and its moment-by-moment changes” (Clark and Brennan, 1991, p. 128), the counselling conversation progresses, common ground is established, and the counselling communication is increasingly effective.

In this article we have outlined conditions that we believe are important in the practice of intercultural counselling. We have argued against approaches that directly transfer mainstream counselling models and techniques to the intercultural counselling situation. We have also briefly outlined other contextual factors such as emancipatory theme, revised psychological thinking, and bringing cultural knowledge and sensibility more into the practice of counselling — factors which provide a conceptual context within which to discuss inter-cultural counselling communication. We have also indicated those communication tools of conversation: turn-taking, self-construal, silence, interrupting, and grounding procedures which we believe are important for building successful communication in intercultural counselling. To borrow a famous saying from Sunzi, an ancient Chinese war strategist (Bruya & Tsai, 1994): “To win, a marshal must know himself, his target and the context in which the war occurs.” Similarly, in intercultural counselling, a winning counsellor must understand him or herself, the client and the context in which the counselling session takes place.

References


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**About the Authors**

Dr. R. Vance Peavy, Professor Emeritus, at the University of Victoria, died on July 1, 2002 at the age of 73. During his career, he supervised 16 PhD and over 100 Masters' students. He published more than 100 articles, several books, book chapters and professional videos. In 2000, he received the Distinguished Senior Contributor Award from the Division of Counselling Psychology of the American Psychological Association. In 2001, he was the recipient of the Stu Conger Award for Leadership in career counselling and career development by the Canadian Career Development Foundation. His most recent years were devoted to the formation of Socio-Dynamic Counselling.

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Collected Works in English Language

Published Journal and Newsletter Articles (1968 - 2003)

by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Modification of Speech Patterns:
An Example of a Cybernetic Training Design

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UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

Recent advances in the design of electronic recording, transmission, and display instruments have provided the educator with powerful tools for redesigning human learning environments. This increased ability to extend (and simulate) the functions of the central nervous system and sensory systems through electronic instrumentation calls for a continuous re-examination of learning principles and of educational designs in which learning occurs.

Underlying many training and educational designs is the assumption that learning is primarily a process of learner response. This assumption focuses attention on teaching, on reactive processes in the learner, and encourages the use of external guidance and motivational practices. Educational designs for the reacting learner stress reward, reinforcement, verbal persuasion, threat, and punishment.

Learning environments which are designed for the acting or transacting learner are less frequently encountered. Such designs encourage choice, problem solution, and relevancy. In general, they emphasize the self-regulating characteristics of a learner. Arguments in support of principles of learning and educational design which incorporate inherent motivational and energizing properties of the learner are emerging from perceptual and transactional psychology, from experimental studies of exploration and curiosity, and from communications and cybernetics theory.

Perceptual theorists (Combs, 1962; Rogers, 1951; F. Allport, 1955) give central importance to the self-governing characteristics of the
individual. Gordon Allport (1961) terms mental set “the key to the edifice of psychology” and stresses the active rather than reactive nature of human behavior. Berne (1961) and Kilpatrick (1961) call attention to transactional rather than reactive properties of an individual.

Representative studies of exploration (Nissen, 1930), manipulation (Harlow & McClearn, 1954) and activity (Brant & Kavanau, 1964) indicate intrinsic motivational properties of animals. In light of research into exploratory and curiosity behavior, White (1959) has formulated an innate “competency” motive. Life systems are conceptualized as inherently active, exploring, curious, and seeking mastery over their own behavior as well as over components of the environment.

Cybernetics yields further evidence for viewing the learner as self-regulating, (Smith & Smith, 1966). The term cybernetics is derived from the Greek word, kybernetes, meaning “steersman” or “governor.” The formal analogy comparing self-regulating properties of living and nonliving systems was introduced by Wiener (1948). Cybernetics is defined as the science of control and communication in living and nonliving systems. Nonliving purposive systems are known as servomechanisms, (Rosenblueth, Wiener, & Bigelow, 1943). These devices, utilizing feedback control operations, function to regulate temperature, guide missiles and planes, control traffic flow, etc. The feedback control operations can generate movement toward a goal (motivation), detect errors in movement, and use the error for self-correction (learning). If the analogy of common properties between living and nonliving systems is accepted, then redefinition of the learner and learning environment using cybernetic principles is possible. The rest of this paper considers some of the principles involved in such a design and presents an example of a cybernetic educational design.

In behavioral cybernetic theory, it is assumed that the primary goal of the learner is to gain mastery over his own behavior as well as over elements of the environment. Energizing is intrinsic and the ability to detect differences (learn) is a functional characteristic of the living system. To be alive is to be motivated. The commonly held views that most learners “need motivating” or “lack incentive” are the result of incorrect conceptualizing about the nature of the learner and learning.

From the cybernetic view, the concept of motivation is not particularly helpful. The learner is seen as more interested in doing things in his own way (that is, as he can control them) than he is in gaining an extrinsic reward offered for some other response (Smith & Smith, 1966). A primary design goal is to establish an educational environment which will enable the learner to establish his own patterns of
control over tasks, skills, and knowledge. Further, the cybernetic theorist is concerned with the social utility (relevance) of learning. If that which is being learned has no social utility to the learner, then he directs activities to other targets—asocial behavior, interpersonal conflict, discouragement, boredom, etc.

In summary, for the cybernetic theorist, the learner is self-initiating and is energized and directed at varying levels of organization by inherent feedback control systems. The educational design which implements cybernetic principles is one which (a) aims at increasing a learner's control over his own actions, (b) assigns high priority to intrinsic rather than extrinsic regulation factors, (c) gives attention to the degree of social utility accorded to the objects of learning by the learner, and (d) pays attention to overloading versus underloading (Senders, 1966). Cybernetic learning designs can be constructed for a wide variety of learning tasks such as speaking, teaching, interviewing, playing tennis, etc. Each individual design can incorporate selected cybernetic principles depending on the nature of the learning task, age of the learners, facilities available, and other conditions. In each instance, the design should provide a feedback control system which is intrinsic to the learner rather than including external guidance factors.

The design shown here (Fig. 1) is appropriate for modifying certain aspects of interview speech and includes corresponding design factors and principles.

Speech skills are learned; they are specific and can be analyzed into microscopic units. Pope and Siegman (1965) have shown that client speech output is dependent upon the specificity of interviewer questioning. Teaching open-ended questioning behavior to a naive interviewer should lead to greater client output—a condition which is generally held to be desirable in interviewing. The following example illustrates that speech pattern interactions between interviewer and interviewee can be effectively modified by a short, intensive training

![Feedback control systems](image-url)
design which incorporates selected cybernetic learning principles outlined in Table 1.

Eighteen naive interviewers from an introductory class in counseling were randomly assigned to two groups (8 Es, 10 Cs).

Hypothesis: Length of client speech utterance is increased as a result of increasing the open-endness of interviewer questions.

Procedure

All 18 subjects interviewed voluntary clients who were seeking assistance in obtaining summer employment. Following the initial interview, each of the 8 Es underwent three brief training cycles. Each interview was with a different client but the clients' request remained constant.

A training cycle consisted of five steps:

1. E read cues from specially prepared manual. The cues encouraged open-questioning.
2. E conducted a brief interview which was videotaped.
3. E read further cues from the manual which focused attention on questioning behavior.
4. E viewed his own videotape of the previous interview.
5. E rested briefly, talked with the instructor if he wished, and then repeated the cycle with a different client. Three such cycles were completed within 1 ½ hours.

Analysis

Twelve days after the completion of the training, all 18 subjects were taped while conducting posttraining interviews. The tapes were then analyzed for: (a) changes in average length of client speech utterance, (b) amount of interviewer talking time, (c) total number of interviewer utterances, and (d) number of questions asked by interviewers.

Table 2 shows changes in client speech for each of the first 4 min of the interview. As might be predicted, there was some gain in amount of client speech for both groups. The gain differences between Es and Cs were found to be significant (.01,.025,.025,.01) by applying the Mann–Whitney U Test for each of the 4 min.
Table 1. **Cybernetic Design Factors and Principles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design factor</th>
<th>Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The trainee is given oral and written instructions about the specific skill to be learned. He is shown cues to watch for when viewing his own behavior on video-tape.</td>
<td>1. Built-in instructions are provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The trainee conducts a brief interview with focus on single skill. The interview is video-taped.</td>
<td>2. By analyzing interviewing into component parts, the level of complexity is held down to a level acceptable to a limited capacity system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Immediately following the interview, the trainee is again given written cues to assist observation of his own behavior in the transactional situation (on video-tape).</td>
<td>3. Again, built-in instructions are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The trainee views video-tape without instructor's presence.</td>
<td>4. This illustrates the immediate feedback principle and blame-free atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The trainee has a brief rest. He may ask for the instructor's comments but this is not compulsory.</td>
<td>5. Blame-free atmosphere, with rest allowing for integration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cycle 2, 3, 4, 5 is repeated but with different client.</td>
<td>6. All above principles operating plus practice under varied stress (different client).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cycle 2, 3, 4, 5 repeated but with different client.</td>
<td>7. All of the above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. **Client Speech Output Differences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Duration of interview (min.)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Duration of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech Utterance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-training</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-training</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous work by Matarazzo, Wiens, and Saslow (1965) has shown that increase in client output can be obtained by interrupting the client's speech. Analysis of the interruptions in this study revealed that, in the E group, the average number of questions declined, the total number of interviewer utterances decreased, and the average amount of interviewer talking time declined. In the C group, the number of questions increased, the number of utterances remained the same, and, like the E group, the average amount of talking time declined for interviewers. Thus, the increase in length of client utterance apparently did not result from being asked more questions, nor from being stimulated by a more talkative interviewer, but occurred as a result of the increased open-endness of questioning by the interviewer. This change in interviewer skill was accomplished in about 1½ hours of training time in a design which used maximum feedback, varied practice, and was essentially instructorless. The possibility of using a semiautomated training design such as this for the modification of a wide variety of communicative, social, and motor skills is worth considering.

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MODIFICATION OF SPEECH PATTERNS

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by Dr. R. Vance Peavy
Setting Counselling Free from Domination by Psychotherapy and Scientific Psychology

R. V. PEAVY

Introduction

Counselling is considered by many to be primarily a psychological process based on scientific theories of personality, motivation and behaviour. Other counselling specialists present counselling as a mild form of psychotherapy. I have argued elsewhere (Peavy, 1981b, 1982) that counselling is not psychotherapy, is not a science, and would be much improved if de-psychologized.

Arguments for this position are many and complex. Briefly five main reasons can be summarily stated:

1. Scientific psychology attempts to establish general laws of behaviour which explains the typical but not the particular. Counsellors, on the other hand, are always confronted with the particular — this person, on this occasion, under these circumstances, doing, thinking, and feeling these things.

2. A scientific approach is, by definition, abstract and fractionated. Counsellors, on the other hand, must deal with the personal and the whole.

3. Scientific psychology studies behaviours and is based in biology and neurology. Counsellors on the other hand, are confronted with actions which are based in choice and responsibility.

4. Scientific methods aim to predict and control and use probabilistic methods. Counsellors, on the other hand, must face the fact that human action are, in part, not predictable; they must be concerned with understanding and the possible.

5. Psychotherapy attempts to cure. Persons who come for counselling are not in need of curing; instead their need is to learn how to do those things which make individually responsible choice and action possible.

Counselling is neither science nor psychotherapy. Rather, it is a social practice engaged in by two types of participants. On the one side are

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those who seek help to reduce uncertainty about issues in their daily lives. In the jargon of counselling these participants are referred to as "clients." The other participants intend to help reduce uncertainty. These participants are called "counsellors"; sometimes they are also called social workers, therapists, lay-helpers, concerned peers, altruistic bystanders, and compassionate friends. The request for help, the intention to help, together with experienced states of uncertainty bind all such participants together in that social practice which is called "counselling." As a social practice "counselling" necessarily incorporates the principles of co-operative communication and mutual influence. "Counsellors" and "clients" require each other for there to be any such social practice as counselling at all. As the French playwright Genet has the Judge say: "If I am to be the perfect judge, then you must be the perfect thief."

The preceding paragraph is dense and could stand much more elaboration which I have performed in other papers (Peavy, 1981a, 1981b). I only wish, for the purposes of this paper, to suggest that counselling can be conceptualized as freely independent of psychotherapy concepts and without any essential reference to psychology.

Counselling Policies

Now what I wish to do in this paper is to describe ten counselling policies which I have adopted from Driscoll (1981), and which can be used to guide counsellors in their work with clients. Hereafter I will use the term "Persons" instead of "clients" since the concept Person is much more consonant with the counselling orientation and policies I am presenting in this paper.

A counselling policy is designed to apply across all types of counselling cases, with all types and ages of persons facing all types of life uncertainties which normal people encounter. Ordinarily no further rationale is required to make a policy applicable to a particular case.

The adoption of policies for guiding counsellor actions are both reasonable and adequate, and, providing that no stronger contravening reasons exist, gives counsellors a good chance of success in using a broad range of counselling interventions.

The policies are stated in ordinary language and are not intended to be derived from, nor explanations of, any psychological or psychotherapeutic theory. Instead, they are coalesced from descriptions of what actually occurs when help-intending acts are carried out, and when in the judgment of those acting and acted upon, the actions are for better, rather than worse.

In the following tabulation I have entered the policies together with a brief explanation in the left column, and associated counselling interventions on the right. This tabulation is not meant to be conclusive; rather, it is suggestive. The policies prescribe help-intending counsellor actions
and discourage help-inhibiting counsellor actions; further, each policy is an endorsement of two fundamental principles of human interaction on the part of both counsellor and Person: co-operation and self-regulation.

**Policies**

1. *Be on the client's side!* [In its better form, counselling is a co-operative activity between counsellor and Person. The counsellor should refrain from taking an adversary position against the Person.]

2. *Affirm the Person's strengths!* [Each Person has some assets — which may either be manifest or latent — usually both. Try to confirm the Person as a *Person of good character* even though specific behaviours suggest the contrary.]

   Affirming the Person's strengths also means: *Legitimize the Person!* [When a counsellor is able to show, and accept, that what the other Person is doing within the prevailing circumstances *makes sense*, the Person is *legitimized*. Even though a Person is confused, misunderstands and is inept, still, given their (mis)-understandings and the circumstances, *what* they are doing makes sense to that Person; even though others don’t see it that way.]

**Interventions**

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<th>Policies</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
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<td>c. Help the Person to develop a <em>map</em> of what</td>
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<td>d. Use the phenomenological attitude.</td>
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<td>e. Explore and define the actual situation.</td>
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<td>f. Help the Person to clarify his or her</td>
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<td>reasons for actions.</td>
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<td>g. Bolster the Person’s concept of self as a</td>
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Policies

3. Treat each Person as a Person! Counsellors should challenge "victim" statuses which Persons have acquired. Every Person who copes at all in daily life is in charge of some areas of his or her own life. Use Person-in-charge interpretations.

Interventions

a. Identify and emphasize areas of self-control in Person's lives.

b. Reinforce initiative and self-responsibility — use examples, analogies, gentle challenges, re-state your understanding of how this Person is doing something responsibly for him or herself at the present time.


4. Assess what matters! Focus on what may be put to use: practical skills, personal characteristics and relationships, including both deficits and strengths. Avoid using personality or character assessments as a basis for explaining Person difficulties.

a. Clarify and question.

b. Use appraisal methods whose findings can be put to direct use in helping this Person to achieve feasible goals. Don't do "routine" testing.

c. Begin with simple interpretations!

As you work with the Person to evaluate his or her actions and present situation, begin with simple interpretations, stay with the "obvious." Develop elaborations and work up more complex explanations only when actually required. Don't "psychologize" obvious, direct actions and accounts.

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a. Listen.

b. Use ordinary language.

c. Confirm understanding by:

i. paraphrasing to show empathy.

ii. use of graphics such as diagrams, free-hand drawing or scribbling, art work, chalk boards and other objectifying aids.

iii. give-and-take discussion wherein any topic which does not betray the purpose of counselling conversation can be freely discussed.
Policies

6. *Don’t make things up!*
Stay with the particulars of this Person and his or her situation. Don’t impose theoretical or speculative explanations. Don’t promise more than you can deliver and don’t offer suggestions or information which is “shaky” or for which you have no evidence or reason to believe yourself.

7. *Don’t expect this Person to be somebody else!
* Try to avoid angry, blaming or interrogative stances toward Persons. Persons may be uncertain about whether or not they want counselling; they may appear reluctant to engage in counselling; they may resist counselling either passively or actively; they may show outright hostility to the counsellor. If counsellors expect Persons to conform to criteria which define the YAVIS (young, attractive, verbal, intelligent, successful) “client” then in many cases they are in effect expecting client X to be somebody other than who she or he actually is. Such expectations lead to counsellor feelings of frustration, anger, hostility and betrayal.

Interventions

a. Observe and describe Person actions and utterances and check out your observations with the Person.

b. Pay attention to how a Person describes self and situation. Work for a mutual understanding which is based on Person respect but does not necessarily mean agreement. It is quite possible to understand the meaning of another Person without expressing either agreement or approval; disagreement or disapproval. *Understanding* is more fundamental than either the process of agreement or the process of approval.

1. Try to “see” each Person as he or she actually is.

2. Be prepared to radically alter your approach to Persons who are reacting in ways which puzzle or frustrate you. For example:

a. Change from a warm and accepting style to a negotiating style;

b. State matter-of-factly what you can provide in counselling and what you cannot, instead of questioning the Person;

c. Leave the Person alone for a short period then return and begin on a different topic;

d. Ask the Person what he or she would do if in your shoes.
Policies

8. Provide!
   The Person and the counsellor share responsibility for achieving the purposes of counselling. The counsellor has a responsibility to provide the overall framework of counselling within which discussion, learning, accessing information, deciding, planning and evaluating can occur. Providing means at least the following:
   a. Convey information which is relevant to the task at hand in a form which is understandable to the Person.
   b. Clarify concepts, reduce ambiguity in how the Person (and you) see the Person's situation.
   c. Appeal to what is already important to the Person; to what the Person already understands and has had experience with.

9. Deal with the reality basis of emotions!
   This implies two things. First, identify and confirm how the Person does feel about self and situation and others in the situation. Second, don't dwell on emotions unduly, but proceed to deal constructively with the circumstances which generate the undesirable emotions. Fear is usually related to definite, perceived, real-world threat; anxiety, to dimly perceived real-world threat; anger, to provocation; guilt, to wrong-doing; jealousy, to actual or imagined acts of personal betrayal. It is important that the counsellor take responsibility for guiding the attention of the Person beyond the experience and/or expression of emotion itself to the reality which generates it.

Interventions

Use:
   a. Identification of alternatives.
   b. Plan formulation.
   c. Perception-checking.
   d. Graphic illustrations (draw or get the client to "diagram" the task or situation).
   e. Information devices such as pamphlets, books, hand-outs, films, tapes, check-lists, CHOICES, and so on.
   f. Use role-play and simulation to clarify perceptions.

1. Use empathy and clarification.
2. Assist the Person to understand what Person or aspect of reality the emotion is directed toward; then focus on reality or removing oneself from unchangeable realities.
3. Explore the possibility of altering the Person's perception of the antagonistic reality so that the reality is seen in a "new light." The tactic is sometimes valid; however, caution should be taken not to guide someone into putting up with an intolerable situation. This is the tranquilizing approach to counselling.
Policies

10. *Avoid coercion!*

Coercion breeds resistance. In the face of resistance, it is better to work for clear understandings of differences, negotiate, clarify mutual purposes, and put resistance producing topics on the shelf where you can come back to them later when the relationship will support their discussion.

These ten policies overlap in various ways. Collectively, they are guides for: affirming the Person as he or she is, within the situation as it is, and increasing the Person’s possibilities for thinking clearly and acting effectively to achieve goals. The policies really imply a general way of being with clients which is based on co-operation, negotiation, working on the basis of what actually is perceived to be the case, using ordinary language, drawing on practical knowledge and reasoning, and avoiding language and procedures which medicalize, psychologize, trivialize or victimize Persons.

FOOTNOTES

1 I believe that every effort should be made to establish the concept of Person firmly in counselling literature and discussion. Why is the Person concept so important? First, each human being (except in pathological instances) considers him or herself to be first and foremost a Person (rather than an animal, a flower, an object, a number, etc.).


Third, Emmanuel Mounier (*Personalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952) taught that (a) the Person is not an object that can be separated, reduced or converted to quantities without destruction; (b) the Person is actually a centre of reorientation; (c) the Person only exists toward others; it only knows itself through being known by them; this makes communication the primordial fact from which we must start and to which we always return. Persons become uncertain and have troubles whenever communication is disturbed or corrupted.

Fourth, perhaps the most compelling reason for using Person concepts in counselling is that only a Person acts with self-consciousness, experiences meaning, and gives accounts (justifications, reasons, explanations). Deliberate Action [that is, distinguishing between two or more alternatives and then choosing one over others] is what distinguishes the Person from all other living and non-living entities.

The methodological attitude of phenomenology is one in which one refrains from making judgments for or against the existence of an entity (in this case: Persons) based on already inculcated beliefs, assumptions and concepts about what that entity is and should be. From a phenomenological perspective such a suspension of belief is required in order to “see that which actually stands before us, as it is, in itself.” Failure to adopt the phenomenological principle, constitutes a failure to recognize that entity which is called “Persons.”

3 Counselling has been characterized by an ambiguity and, one might say, an on-going identity crisis for decades. While many factors have entered into the continuing rede-
finition of counselling, one of the most serious confusions has been the failure to discriminate counselling from therapy.

Conceptually, "therapy entails the application of conceptual machinery to ensure that actual or potential deviants stay within the institutionalized definitions of reality (Berger and Luckman, The social construction of reality, New York: Doubleday, 1969, p. 113)." Every society faces the "problem" of deviants so that therapy in some form or another is a global social phenomenon. In different cultural contexts, it takes widely divergent forms including psychoanalysis, exorcism, witchcraft, imprisonment, brain-washing, personnel "counselling," and so on. Therapy requires theories of deviance, diagnostic apparatuses, and a conceptual system for "curing." Broadly speaking, all forms of therapy are forms of social control. Even personal "growth" groups and the various "humanistic" therapies with their focus on self-enhancement and Utopian fantasizing may be conceptualized as tranquilizing procedures. As such they act to "contain" individuals within self-centredness and Utopian fantasies and keep persons from taking corrective actions against those aspects of the society which give rise to their discontent to begin with, and from which they desire to deviate.

REFERENCES


What will counselling be like in 1990 and beyond? Wouldn’t we like to know — or perhaps we wouldn’t! I first became interested in counselling in 1949 when, as an undergraduate student, I happened to take a psychology course taught by a professor who himself had been a student of Kurt Lewin and, later, of Carl Rogers. In that course, some 33 years ago, I realized four insights: (1) persons, in the course of their lives, change whether they wish it or not; (2) change is never neutral — it is always for better or worse; and (3) if one prefers better future realities rather than simply accepting “what happens”, then it is necessary to spend some time imagining just what form these preferred futures might take; finally, (4) one must negotiate for the future reality one prefers. Along with these abstract insights, I also came to believe that the process which has the best potential for helping people imagine, construct and work for preferred futures is counselling.

Up until that point in my career as a university student I had been a fairly militant political activist. I had already been expelled from one University for taking a public stand against social organizations which practiced racial discrimination and I had been censured by the chairman of a political science department for working to establish a chapter of the World Federalist Society on the campus. In that inspiring psychology course which I took, however, I was exposed to a contemplative way of life — that of “counsellor”. Thus marked a “conversion” of consciousness for me which I have never regretted. Over the years I have come to understand even more deeply that the practice of intentionally helping another person to face and resolve personal difficulties in life is a fundamental human activity. In our time this practice has come to be known as “counselling”. Counselling is one social practice which directly addresses three basic existential questions: Who am I? Where am I at? And, for the sake of what am I? These questions find their resolution (if at all) in the three spheres of work, love and play. What form of work (job, career, vocation) shall I find to organize my life around? Whom shall I love and be loved by? How will creativity come into my life so that I can experience depth, joy and spirit? It is the search for answers to these questions which bring people of all ages and strata of life to counselling.

Now, I will present three brief scenarios which tell what I imagine about the future of counselling as we move toward the twenty-first century.

SCENARIO ONE: MORE OF SAME

In this vision counselling continues to slowly expand, remaining most prominent in school life and work life. Canadian Society (and other technological societies) continue to interlock into one titanic planetary technical apparatus. Machines (especially high-tech varieties), routinized techniques, and cost efficiency control operations require that work and social life must be done under detailed rules, regulations and criteria which apply to everyone. In this scenario counselling is no longer a desirable, but a mandatory, part of the bureaucracy of mass-technical society. Counsellors carry on various activities within the institutions of society, activities which result in the allocation of persons to functions (interchangeable parts principle) the redirection of persons to new or more available functions (the re-fitting principle) and the altering of the perceptions of people to bring about adjustment to de-personalizing social realities (the engineering principle). Training programs in counselling remain captive of the Universities and continue to be highly componentalized and clothed in either utopian rhetoric (personal growth, humanistic) or scientism (what we do is based on empirical research and logical analysis). Counselling remains under the domination of psychology and the bulk of counselling research continues to pile up trivia which function mainly to advance the careers of academic counselling specialists. The dominant research and educational paradigm for counselling in this scenario is the technological paradigm; the dominant consciousness is the bureaucratic consciousness. The practice of counselling is slow but continuous, interrupted from time to time by economic and political convulsions which cause the planetary technical approach to falter and grope for survival. CGCA is engaged more and more in supporting provincial counsellor groups, with providing professional in-service education, and in actively promoting policy research.

SCENARIO TWO: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO COUNSELLING?

Canadian Society encounters increasingly difficult economic times in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. Failure to penetrate high technology markets even after enormous expenditure of funds produces a series of downward spirals in Canadian economics, especially in Ontario and Quebec. Experimentation with “windfarms” has increased energy production, especially in Alberta. Fishing industries on both coasts “dry up” due to marine environment poisoning and failure to effect fishing agreements with the United States. Nippon-Canada Corporation now owns 60% of British Columbia industrial assets.

Counselling in schools has all but disappeared. On the one hand counselling is seen as a relief for administrators who regard counselling as a non-essential service. On the other hand, counsellors act out death-wishes in the form of self-preoccupation and indulgence in Utopian “growth” and “comfort” fantasies and fail to consolidate as effective unions with conceptual power to reform their profession and with political power to counter cost-cutting measures which reduce their ranks. A common societal attitude is that one police officer is worth a dozen counsellors. CEIC Counsellors are again called placement officers. CEIC has implemented an employability assessment and training organization modelled after a similar program in Sweden. However, funding has been fluctuating, and the encumbrant government has just released a study entitled Cost Benefits of Required Relocation of Unemployed in Northern Regions. CGCA has dwindled to 200 members, with a hard core group to be found in New Brunswick.

Counsellors continue to identify with psychology (an additional sign of their collective death-wish). Psychologists in five countries are attempting (or already have succeeded) to bring about legislation which would prohibit the practice of counselling on the grounds that counselling is a psychological service and can only be done by a licensed psychologist.

University departments are not replacing individuals identified as counsellor educators or counselling psychologists upon death or retirement of such tenured members. The result is that only a few grey-hailed academics who call themselves counsellor educators or counselling psychologists are still to be found roving the halls of academia. One Counselling Psychology Journal is still extant in North America and contains articles from both the United States and Canada. The final article in the most recent issue is entitled: Microanalysis of blinking in terminal interviews. Yes, we did go wrong.

SCENARIO THREE: THE SUN ALSO RISES

The economic near-depression of the early 1980’s had two noticeable effects upon counselling. One effect was that of hardship. Many counsellors were summarily removed from counselling by administrations that counted counselling as a non-essential service. Client-counsellor ratios escalated rapidly. Burn-out spread like wild-fire (is that funny?). Career counselling was championed over personal counselling by critics and by frustrated parents and worried administrators.
A second, and salutary, effect of the 1980's hard-times was that many counsellors began to see the need for strong counsellor organizations which could support informed advocacy.

By the 1990's a substantial number of counselling academics realize that counselling is educational and more of a social process than a psychological phenomenon. Allegiance to theories of personality and psychotherapy has been abandoned. Instead of using concepts such as personality traits, behaviour variables and test scores, by 1995 counselling language will express such social concepts as the Median Self, status, social exchange, negotiated reality, degradation and accreditations ceremonies and participation pedagogy. Counselling trainers and researchers are closer to anthropologists and qualitative sociologists (Schwartz, H. & Jacobs, J.; 1979) than to psychologists. Counselling research now is organized around two poles: what might be called policy research (for the purpose of securing enabling legislation) and naturalistic research using ethnographic methods, as in Williams' (1960) work on counsellors (Brown, J., J. & Sime, J. 1981) methodologies for the purpose of getting a first-hand account of what actually happens in the lives of people as they make decisions, resolve difficulties and act.

By the 1990's a constructive fusion of informal helping, including self-helping, with formal helping (counselling) is evident. A career counsellor is seldom to be seen dispensing information and doing interviews in his or her office. Instead the career counsellor works in the daily world of citizens at work or in community "job clubs" or in "work experience" programs where youth work and get paid for brief periods in different industries. By now the unions in Canada have national educational programs and have their own counselling system. Lifestyle counselling is widespread, both in federal government ministries, provincial departments and in industry as well.

Counselling study occurs partly within universities and partly within organizations employing counsellors. Counsellor training still places some emphasis on human relations concepts and skills, but from a social interaction perspective more than trait or behaviour. Trainers are more like coaches than therapists and trainees are taught how to negotiate, how to teach, and how to capitalize upon the common sense "work" values in various cultural subgroups or doing "things that count". The mark of a good counsellor now is whether or not he/she can successfully enter into the life-world of members from various cultural groups, whether or not he or she knows how to recognize and put to use the conventional insights, wisdom and social rules that people in various social groups possess by virtue of being members of those groups. In 1980 a counselling student was expected to demonstrate an understanding of, for example, the elements of rational emotive counselling theory. In the 1990's counselling students are learning how to construct social reality through speech and action with people using the tools of ordinary language and observant participation.

Since counselling itself is construed to be a form of social life, specialization within counselling is reflected by such terms as "school-life" counsellors, "school-life" counsellors, and more generally, "social-life" counsellors. Several Canadian communities are giving police officers extensive training in counselling so that police in these communities can take on roles as social-life specialists. These constables take more active interest in family relations, school-labour market relations, early childhood education and life-style change. Such experimentation with counselling has drawn international recognition for Canadian Counselling.

In 1995 Canada is sending representatives to an international symposium in Prague on the topic "Using educational and training experiences to alter work and social status: A study of individuals and programs in fourteen countries". Canadian counselling specialists are cooperating with counterparts in Yugoslavia, Greece, Finland, Sweden, West Germany, Poland, Norway, Iceland, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Yemen, in the use of counselling to integrate life-experience.

The Canadian Counselling Community holds an international lead in establishing human control over technology as applied to counselling and guidance. Using "brilliant chip" technology researchers at DISE develop project INTERHUMAN. This is a computer/video interactive home program for learning basic life skills and is used in 43 countries. Building on CHOICES, CIC researchers construct WORLARMAR (World Labour Market), an advanced program for restructuring work environments to fit the needs of individual workers. WORLARMAR transmits via the North Star satellite which is a product of Mitsubishi - Banff Cellular Laboratories located at the Universities of Victoria and Calgary and specializing in counselling technology innovations. This unique world counselling system is due to interface with INTERHUMAN in 1999 - an event which should establish Canada as the world leader in counselling technology.

From these three scenarios I would extract for my own preferred future three themes. First, the formation of counsellors into a stronger, more cohesive professional group with a strong sense of purpose. Second, the transfer of counselling from a primarily psychological-psychotherapy base to a primarily anthropo-socio-cultural base; this would include conceptualizing counselling as an educational process rather than a curative process. Third, a research and development sector of counselling which would work to establish a sophisticated control over the application of technology to counselling, and then exert leadership in the use of technology in counselling, especially in areas such as life-planning, training, decision-making and informing.

REFERENCES