A DUTCH CONTRIBUTION TO COUNSELLOR EDUCATION.
AN IN-SERVICE MODEL

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Abstract

In the Netherlands counselling is seen as an integrated part of school life for the benefit of all students. Counsellor education at the University of Utrecht was provided as a part-time, in-service programme for teacher-counsellors. This structure enabled students to integrate the skills and theory learned with their practical application in schools; current school practice enriched learning on the programme. Examples of integrative activities which encouraged these benefits are given.

Introduction

In this account of the Dutch approach to counsellor education the focus is on the advantages perceived in the in-service nature of the programme. The model provided an opportunity for students to integrate the theory and practice of counselling they learned on the programme with their practical application in the schools where they worked. Similarly, students' constant work experience enriched their learning on the programme.

History of the programme

School counselling is a new phenomenon in the Netherlands. The first counsellor education programme was started in 1975 at the University of Utrecht. In their description of the content and structure of the programme Deen and de Vries (1978) also state the rationale which led us to adopt an in-service model for counselling in the Netherlands. When I use 'we' I refer also to colleagues in this Department at the University of Utrecht. The effects of the programme were reported by an external evaluator (Brammer, 1978). This article elaborates strategies for working with students in an in-service context, and lists some of the benefits encountered.
We were aware of the rich contribution we could find in American-based counselling theories and practice. Our own development was influenced by this body of knowledge. Yet we knew that if counselling were to get started here, we would have to create a home-grown model. Stewart, Hughes and Jackson (1980) show how the promising start made in Britain by the counsellor training programmes of the late 1960's did not realise fully their expected impact on British schools. They note that since much of the counselling literature is American, it may well be that British counsellors are working from an American model. Their conclusion is that models imposed from other countries frequently fail to take into account fundamental differences in the educational traditions of the countries concerned and thus in the long term may prove to be detrimental rather than helpful.

Our view of how counselling can and should be integrated into the Dutch school system (Deen, 1981) directly affected our approach to students, our role as counsellor educators and the structure we created for our programme, which we ran on an experimental basis for the Ministry of Education at the University of Utrecht between 1975 and 1980. We completed internal and external evaluation studies (Brammer, 1978) and produced a curriculum design to be implemented in four regions of the Netherlands for counsellor education. Here I describe the basis of the original model which is still reflected in the four existing programmes now sited at four ‘New Schools of Education’ (NLO). This university department now fulfills a consultative role towards those four programmes and is the only research and development unit specifically for counselling studies at a university in the Netherlands.

**The Dutch Background**

As shown by Deen (1981), Dutch schools have a large measure of autonomy in how they deal with guidance, counselling and other non-teaching activities. It is the principal and teaching staff of each school who decide how to allocate hours (proportionate to the number and type of students) they receive for all non-teaching duties, and these may or may not include counselling. This means that the counsellor will have to compete directly with colleagues for scarce resources, like time and space. We have not yet, in the Netherlands, dealt with this matter explicitly. Our Canadian colleagues, Schantz, et al., (1980), raise questions about whether counsellors who follow the expectations of their organization or colleagues are necessarily doing what is most helpful for their students. Most of our students were the first designated counsellor in their schools, and therefore had to define their own counselling function, even though they were new to counselling themselves. Together with colleagues, they formulated the counselling activities they and other teachers intended to undertake. At the same time they were usually put in a position of having to create resources needed to carry out these