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Special Report

Provincial Receptivity to Guidance and Counseling

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In traditional societies where family ties remain loyal and strong, the elders are charged with the responsibility for inculcating norms and values in their kin. Family counsel and dialogue, however, although worthwhile and necessary, have today become insufficient toward answering the challenges of modern life or toward helping the youth discover their role in life. We are experiencing today a decay of family life, as the term "generation gap" often implies confrontation rather than cooperation within the home. Professional counseling, with its special emphasis on better adjustment for the normal individual, has become a vital component of modern education, especially in urban areas. Appraising the status of guidance and counseling in the Philippines, Isidro has acknowledged that "a real guidance program is rarely found". In order to remedy this situation, particularly in rural areas, a guidance and counseling seminar was conducted by this writer at Tubod, Lanao del Norte, June 21-23, 1970.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DELEGATES

The 82 delegates included 13 religious and 69 lay men and women, ranging in age from 20 to 49, with an age mode

¹ Antonio Isidro, *Trends and Issues in Philippine Education* (Quezon City: Alemar-Phoenix, 1968), p. 90.

of 23. A further breakdown of statistical data indicated that 22 men and 60 women participated, the number of women delegates almost three times greater than that of men. Twenty-three of the lay delegates were married; they therefore had a personal interest in guidance and counseling vis-a-vis their family life. Some 16 schools were represented: 3 elementary, 9 secondary and 2 colleges; only one school had an organized guidance program. Furthermore, the delegates had had varying years of work experience and were exercising a diversity of roles, i.e., teacher, administrator, counselor.

OUTCOME OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar was intended primarily to provide a basic understanding of guidance and counseling, to correct misperceptions, and to generate enthusiasm for counseling as a profession. Each participant completed a form at the conclusion of the seminar, but not all participants, rated all items (see Table 1).

The success of the seminar may be ascertained from the fact that all participants favored the statement that "guidance and counseling should be part of a school program".

About one-quarter of the delegates endorsed the statement, "one should always follow the dictates of tradition". It may be concluded that attitudes are deep-seated in personality and difficult to change. Flexibility and acceptance are a *must* for those aspiring to be counselors.

The statement, "women would make better counselors", evoked the highest rating under the neutral category. Interestingly enough, in terms of percentage, women showed less objectivity in their answers to this statement. A major emphasis during the seminar was that maturity rather than age and sex was a primary requisite for counseling.

The need for greater perceptual insight is evident by the fact that fifty respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement "verbal communication is more important than non-verbal". During the seminar, it was emphasized that often what the client fails to verbalize, as well as his non-

verbal clues, may be more indicative of his real emotional state and his self-concept.

On the statement, "Age is an important factor in determining or identifying the successful counselor," the delegates either generally disagreed or registered a neutral reaction. To reiterate, age is not a reliable indicator of one's level of maturity.

That "teachers should be guidance oriented" received a favorable rating, with one dissenting ranking from a woman delegate.

The theme of guidance, as a preventive, remedial and developmental service, was elaborated during the seminar. Answers to statement seven show that the respondents seem to cling to a notion of guidance as problem oriented. More effort is therefore needed to dispel the myth that guidance is only for the maladjusted.

Item eight: "guidance is needed only by the very young", evoked overwhelming disagreement: it was placed in the "disagree" or "strongly disagree" category. This again was a positive outcome of the seminar. An individual becomes socialized and humanized through interpersonal relations. Therefore, even adults need feedback to adjust to the norms and expectations of their society and culture.

Cognizant of the fact that many parents still choose their children's career the seminar participants conceded that "parents should be guidance oriented".

"Men would make better counselors" evoked less diffusion of opinion and a generally neutral consensus. Male delegates gave the same number of neutral responses to this question as they did to statement four concerning female counselors.

CONCLUSIONS

The seminar participants were generally from average or below average means; this factor did not diminish but accelerated their desire to learn. Without prompting, the dele-

gates participated eagerly in the discussions, buzz sessions, and role playing. Their regard for the possibilities offered by a guidance and counseling seminar was further highlighted by their plea for another seminar—soon and of longer duration. Since provincial educators want to be updated, it is recommended that one way universities may fulfill their responsibilities of public service is by sponsoring rural seminars and conferences of this type.

TABLE 1

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
1. Guidance and counseling should be part of a school program.	M 20 W 48 — 68	M 2 W 7 — 9				77
2. One should always follow the dictates of tradition.	M 0 W 1 — 1	M 5 W 3 — 8	M 2 W 9 — 11	M 6 W 30 — 36	M 9 W 10 — 19	75
3. Women would make better counselors.	M 1 W 6 — 7	M 3 W 16 — 19	M 14 W 24 — 38	M 3 W 8 — 11	M 1 W 0 — 1	76
4. Verbal communication is more important than non-verbal communication.	M 10 W 13 — 23	M 7 W 20 — 27	M 3 W 13 — 16	M 2 W 10 — 12		78
5. Age is an important factor in determining or identifying the successful counselor.	M 2 W 6 — 8	M 8 W 13 — 21	M 8 W 11 — 19	M 3 W 22 — 25	M 1 W 3 — 4	77
6. Teachers should be guidance oriented.	M 10 W 27 — 37	M 10 W 28 — 38	M 2 W 0 — 2	M 0 W 1 — 1		78
7. Guidance and counseling is problem oriented.	M 7 W 8 — 15	M 11 W 27 — 38	M 3 W 9 — 12	M 0 W 8 — 8	M 1 W 0 — 1	74
8. Guidance is needed only by the very young.	M 1 W 1 — 2	M 0 W 1 — 1	M 3 W 2 — 5	M 7 W 28 — 35	M 11 W 25 — 36	79
9. Parents should be guidance oriented.	M 8 W 22 — 30	M 10 W 31 — 41	M 4 W 1 — 5			76
10. Men would make better counselors.	M 1 W 2 — 3	M 3 W 8 — 11	M 14 W 29 — 43	M 4 W 6 — 10		67

M = MEN

W = WOMEN