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ABSTRACT

Several topics carry heavy weight in making psychologists in the schools more indispensable. Topics of this paper are: (1) the coming transition between "school psychology" of the 20th century and "psychology in the schools" of the 21st century; (2) the critical need for education reform, and the potential impact of such reforms on psychology in the schools; (3) the need to develop a science and research agenda for the 21st century; (4) the needed changes in professional roles and service delivery models for school psychological services for schools of the future; (5) examinations of the education and training of psychologists in the schools across the spectrum of graduate, doctoral, and postdoctoral programs; (6) ethics; and (7) giving psychologists a vision of the future of psychology in schools. The greatest opportunities for psychology in the schools in the 21st century lie with the adding of value to every school psychological service, exclusive of its costs. To create added value, psychologists in the schools must have desire, agency, and will power--but this is not enough. They also need the necessary skills to overcome the obstacles that will stand in their way. "A Formula for the Future" is advanced, which involves balancing logic, emotion, and character. (JBJ)

Chapter Eight

One Way of Looking at the Future: A Plan for Creating Value in School Psychological Services

Beeman N. Phillips

When I received the invitation to prepare a 3,000-word chapter, I had two reactions. First, I felt appreciation at the thought of being asked to write something for this book. But that reaction was overtaken by great concern. What meaningful thing could I say about "making psychologists in schools indispensable?" In some respects, the situation is analogous to that of a colleague of mine who worked for a superintendent in California about 15 years ago who kept dinning into the heads of his employees that there is no such thing as problems—only opportunities. When using intelligence tests with African American students was banned in California, a dutiful supervisor in that school district called his school psychologists together to tell them the news: "Ladies and gentlemen, I want to tell you that we are faced with an insurmountable opportunity." In a similar vein, the assignment for this chapter can be construed as an insurmountable opportunity.

The realization of such a future for psychologists in schools will, of course, require conviction, leadership, and societal and community support. Neither I nor anyone else can ever know all the factors that will be important. I can only tell my story. But I am pleased that my optimism about the future of psychologists in the schools is shared by others and that there is an underlying base of support for the compact with the future proposed in this book. After some thought, I realized that certain paths may be taken in a search for understanding of how to make psychologists in schools indispensable. Some of these paths lead through terrain that is mostly scientific and technical; other paths follow less structured, more intuitive leads. In a literary vein, Shakespeare, portraying madness, found clear threads of orderliness within apparent chaos and discord. But my concern here is with methods of making psychology in the schools more indispensable, not madness. Yet methinks, in attempting to achieve this goal, a bit of madnesslurks therein. To add a much needed perspective on the process of making psychologists in the schools more indispensable, I decided that some subjects are more in need, than others, of being brought to the attention of the readers of this book. But what are some of these topics?

One would involve explorations of the coming transition between the "school psychology" of the 20th century and the "psychology in the schools" of the 21st century. In dealing with this topic, one would need to consider the nature of the required changes, and how to overcome the difficulties that the school psychologists of the 20th century will face in coming to terms with this renaissance. Another would be a consideration of the critical

need for education reform, and the potential impact of such reforms on psychology in the schools. This would involve much more than reeling off statistics that reflect how the educational standards in our nation have been surpassed by those in other nations.

A third would be to give careful thought to the need to develop a science and research agenda for psychology in the schools in the 21st century. This would include a discussion of issues and recommendations concerning the development of scientific standards for professional practice.

For still another topic, there would be a focus on needed changes in professional roles and service delivery models for school psychological services in the schools of the future. The interface of psychologists in the schools with other professional psychologists, and human service professionals in schools and community agencies, would be a part of that discussion.

One might also want to examine the education and training of psychologists in the schools across the spectrum of graduate, doctoral, and postdoctoral programs. In such an effort, the present disjuncture of science and practice in such programs, and what it means to have an effective graduate research environment, would receive emphasis.

There is the additional need to examine the importance of ethical behavior in the psychology in the schools of the 21st century, including the "social balance sheet" that all psychologists must keep. This balance sheet is critical because how psychologists in the schools do something is as important as what they do.

Finally, time orientation is a subject that deserves special attention because it can be an important influence on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of psychologists in the schools. Psychologists tend to partition the flow of professional experience and events into the categories of past, present, and future and develop an attentional focus on one or another of these temporal frames. That focus influences how they see, evaluate, and deal with a host of scientific, practice, and professional matters. In essence, the behavioral worlds of psychologists in the schools differ as a function of their time perspectives. This means, for example, that psychologists who fail to develop a realistic sense of the future, with articulated means to goals, will experience many difficulties in adjusting to environments that are geared toward a future time perspective. Thus, giving psychologists a vision of a future psychology in the schools that they can work in and for is a crucial challenge to making the field indispensable.

Now, I realize that what I have said above is in broad strokes, and that one could write an entire article on any one of those topics.[1] In fact, one could spend a full semester on each. But I don't have a semester. I don't even have space for an extended manuscript. So, now that readers know what topics I considered writing about, let me tell you what I will write about. The subject I present in the remainder of this chapter involves a plan for operating as a psychologist in the schools in the 21st century. The plan sets forth a formula of conduct for these psychologists—functioning as individuals within their school systems, other applied settings, universities, or a members of groups and organizations of all kinds. The plan, I believe, will help psychologists in the schools to capture new developing opportunities as the field moves into the 21st century.

I see the future with optimism, confident that there will be plenty of opportunities for every psychologist in the schools to succeed. I believe that windows of opportunity will abound for the field as a whole in the years ahead. Psychologists in the schools will be in the right place, in relation to the schools of the future, at the right time. Through education reforms and health care innovations being put in place, and by transforming opportunism into idealism, and the politics of education and psychology into

statesmanship, conditions will be ripe for capturing great opportunities for professional growth and achievement of success. In pursuing these opportunities enthusiastically and energetically, psychologists in the schools will advocate the pursuit of fast-paced innovation. They will encourage pilot projects for every problem that is addressed and support committed champions of innovation. They will work for the empowerment of students, teachers, and parents.

It also means that psychologists in the schools will have an abiding interest in the nature and workings of American society, schools and schooling, and organized American psychology. And, to effectively respond to the opportunities of the 21st century, they will interweave the strands of their own professional lives with the strands of American society, schools and schooling, and organized American psychology.

But where do the greatest opportunities for psychology in the schools in the 21st century lie? I would argue that they lie with the *adding of value to every school psychological service, exclusive of its costs.* To create added value, psychologists in the schools must have the desire, agency, and willpower. But this is not enough. They also need the necessary skills to overcome the obstacles that will stand in their way. Now, in the rest of this article, I advance a formula for expressing some of the fundamental truths inherent in this situation, for readers to consider. I call it "A Formula for the Future."

The formula actually is quite simple. Envision, if you will, an equilateral triangle. It is the basis for the formula. This equilateral triangle is reflexive; it is transitive; it is symmetrical; it is balanced. And no element in the triangle is more meaningful or more important than another.

Now, if you will, at each point of the triangle visualize a function: at one tip, the function of logic; at the second, the function of emotion; at the third, the function of character. These are the only three elements required in the formula, or equation, and I now examine each of these to show how they are made operational in the professional lives of psychologists and their school psychological services programs.

I begin with the function of logic. This is the basis of scientific thought—of investigation. Logic represents that which is based on fact. It is precise and exacting. Logic is neither good nor bad, nor right or wrong. Logic—simply—is.

Without the function of logic in psychological inquiry, psychology would still be somewhere in the late 19th century. Psychology would be stagnant because "discovery" would be based on chance. We realize of course that the element of chance has some application in "discovery." But researchers in the field pursue a logical course of inquiry, and "chance" merely hurries the process along.

Logic is a rich source for the practice of psychologists in schools as well. Logic provides the rule. It is the machinery that crunches out the step by step elements of the problem solving process. It is uncompromising in its striving for perfection.

Nevertheless, in the practice of psychologists in schools, there has been a preoccupation with technical competence—more with technical virtuosity, less with things that fire the imagination; more with the mastery of formal skills, less with the satisfaction to be found in the search for far-reaching relationships among ideas. All too often, the result has been practice by the numbers.

This, then, brings me to the second element in the formula. At the second point of the triangle we find the function of "emotion." Emotion, as I define it here, is the opposite of logic. Emotion is heart—compassion, understanding, empathy. It can be the "will-o'-the- wisp" that leads to decisions by psychologists in the schools when the absolute application of logic is not possible. For example, in an assessment situation—involving an individual student or a whole school

system—after all the available facts have been gathered—after all of the "numbers" have been laid out—after all of the parameters for the decision have been established—a gap sometimes exists (a chasm, so to speak) that cannot be bridged by pure logic. Yet the decision must be made.

This is where the function of "emotion" plays its role. Emotion is the "leap of faith" that makes the decision (by the psychologist and/or others in the schools) possible. Again—as with logic—the role of discovery in scientific psychology would be severely limited without the function of emotion. For example, would Jenner and Pasteur have been able to accomplish what they did in vaccination without the element of emotion at work. Their theses were developed carefully, but it still required a leap into the unknown to provide the progress.

So now we have two elements of the formula. On the one hand we have "logic"—the element of the empirical. On the other hand we have "emotion"—the element of intuition. The final element in the equation is a function that permits the other two to operate. I will define this third element as "character"—the third point on the triangle. Character is that which defines the balance of logic and emotion. It is the processor, or the accelerator or retardant. Character determines the degree of enthusiasm—the passion—in which logic and emotion operate.

Applied to psychologists in the schools, we can see three distinct forms of character as they move through professional life. For those in the early part of their careers, theirs is the character of "youth". They crave action—they advance with impatience—they pursue their professional goals with fervor. They are filled with hope and dreams. Theirs is the age of confidence. For those in the last part of their careers, their professional lives have been tempered by experience. They "believe" but seldom "know." They use the term "perhaps" more often. Their judgments are constrained by a positive skepticism. Their professional lives are based on calculation, and the principles of graduality and evolution. Theirs is the age of caution.

For those in the prime of their professional lives, there exists the characteristics of both confidence and caution. Theirs is that of self control-governed neither by trust, nor mistrust; neither rashness, nor timidity; neither expediency, nor inaction. Theirs is the age of reason.

The formula is now complete—logic, the empirical; emotion, the intuitive; character, the application. Not only can they govern the actions and reactions of the individual psychologist in the schools, it can provide the basis for how school psychological services programs operate and how the field as a whole deals with the education and psychology environment that emerges in the 21st century.

No school psychological services program can operate, and succeed, on the basis of logic alone. Nor can a school psychological services program operate successfully on the basis of emotion alone—the whims and fancies of supervisors and administrators. Nor can a school psychological services program operate with the volatility of character in its application. To progress, to innovate, to succeed—there must exist a balance of the three elements: logic, emotion, character.

In practice, however, the balance is not always easily obtained. Factors both outside and inside the field sometimes push or prod individuals, as well as school psychological services programs, in directions that may not result in the greatest overall benefit. For this reason, psychologists in the schools must always strive to bring the equation back into balance—for themselves, and for their school psychological services program. In the process, they will discover much about themselves as persons and as psychologists, and they will help to shape a view of school psychological services that broadens and enlivens.

The equation that I have discussed in this article is not new. It was first proposed more than

2,000 years ago as "logos," "pathos," and "ethos"—logic, emotion, and character. It was set forth by a person who was one of the leading philosophers, educators, and scientists of his day. The man was Aristotle. But this proposal of more than 20 centuries ago is as valid today as it was then. It provides a formula for achievement of value in school psychological services programs. And it truly is a formula for helping to make psychology in the schools more indispensable in the 21st century.

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[1] I have gone into a lot more detail in writing about these topics elsewhere; see, e. g., Phillips (1990, 1993).

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