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ABSTRACT

This chapter includes basic information about the study of counseling futures, and a brief examination of some of the trends likely to affect student support offerings, including the expansion of electronics, the growth of distance learning, emphasis on competency and skills, the inculcation of lifelong learning, and the reconstruction of work and career. Also discussed are some ideas and predictions regarding the counseling profession in the year 2021. Finally, a concluding statement includes a caveat for the counseling profession about approaching futures. (Contains 33 references.) (GCP)

Current Trends and Their Implications for Futures in the Guidance Profession

By

Pat Nellor Wickwire

Chapter One

Current Trends and Their Implications for Futures in the Counseling Profession

Pat Nellor Wickwire

Contributors to this volume were invited to consider the nature of student support offerings in the year 2021. Using today's paradigm for school systems, children born in 2001 will have completed high school by that time. They will be employed, completing community college or specialized training, enrolled in a university or college, or engaged in a combination of educational and employment ventures. The task of projecting 20 years into the future is both sobering and thought provoking.

This chapter includes basic information about the study of futures, a brief examination of some of the trends likely to affect student support offerings, and some ideas and predictions regarding the counseling profession. Finally, a concluding statement includes a caveat for the counseling profession about approaching futures.

The Study of Futures

In developing predictions, futurists study, interpret, and select probabilities, possibilities, and preferences (Bishop, 1998). This forecasting is based on assumptions and current known information that appear relevant to a given area. In making predictions, futurists consider trends, critical events, and choices (Bishop, 1998). In noting trends, futurists assume evolution. In projecting critical events, they assume unpredictability. In acknowledging choices, they assume influence.

Each potential future situation can be identified as probable, possible, or preferred. *Probable futures* assume likelihoods given the lack of surprising and cataclysmic events and given reasonable and consistent choices. *Possible futures* assume various

combinations of trends, events, and choices in outlining multiple alternative plausible futures. *Preferred futures* assume that certain trends, events, and choices will or will not occur. Given these assumptions, futurists create scenarios with plot lines, themes, and descriptors of anticipated interim and end conditions. In doing so, they interpret elements of relevant physical, scientific, social, emotional, moral, economic, political, educational, work, and other environments. Futurists' beliefs range on a continuum from a deterministic, accommodating, "let it happen" attitude to a generative, focused, "make it happen" outlook.

Predictions can be made with greater ease, accuracy, and definitiveness in some areas than in others. Confidence in prediction is directly related to the probabilities of gradual evolution, unpredictable happenings, and control. Furthermore, confidence in prediction is likely to be greater in information-based areas than in areas that are inference based or opinion based. Time and timing are influential factors, and short-term forecasting is generally simpler and more accurate than long-term forecasting.

Emerging and Continuing Trends

Certain social and educational trends are likely to affect the future of education, and with it, counseling. These trends relate to electronics and computers; distance learning; the emphasis on competencies, skills, and standards; lifelong learning; and work and career changes, among others.

Expansion of Electronics

Electronics are heavily used for information, communication, commerce, and entertainment (Kraut et al., 1998). The computer and the Internet are following the telephone and the television in changing the social and economic fabric of home, community, and work. Well established as a harbinger of the information-knowledge-service era, the computer is a contributor to globalization and to many other changes throughout the United States and the world. Currently, 66% of U.S. employees work in all areas of services; by the year 2000, 44% are projected to be in data services alone (Pritchett, 1998).

The impact of the Internet on the lives of individuals is not yet fully known, and varying opinions exist about the "high-touch" (human contact) correlates of high technology. For example, in a review of literature regarding human factors and

electronics use, Kraut et al. (1998) found both negative and positive effects of technology on socialization. In a field trial with 169 participants in 93 households in their first years of Internet use, researchers found decreases in family participation and size of social circle, and increases in depression and loneliness. This has been framed as increasing isolation (Sleek, 1998a), and warnings about the effects of virtual versus real worlds have been issued (Sleek, 1998b).

In a similar vein, Polka (1997) reminded readers of the need for balance between high tech and high touch, and identified five attitudinal correlates of the human side of technological change: challenge, commitment, control, creativity, and caring. He recommended that these five characteristics be present in innovation and reform in education. Others have recommended the inclusion of educators, including counselors, in the implementation of technology in educational settings (Hartman, 1998).

As a result of the digital revolution, intelligent tutoring systems, personalized learning modules, and voice recognition are beginning to be used in learning (Bassi, Cheney, & Lewis, 1998). The "plug-in" school—with modules blending responsibilities, functions, activities, and tasks of home, work, and school—may be technologically possible (Pesanelli, 1993). Interactive simulations may be sponsored by and replicative of whole communities and their component parts (Page, 1998).

Growth of Distance Learning

One consequence of the increasing use of electronic technology is the advancement of distance learning. The coincidence of time, place, and personnel is no longer essential to the content, process, and structure of education. Virtual universities are multiplying and, in some cases, supplanting in-residence and on-site institutions as locations of study. Major industries are now offering virtual training and education. New jobs and job titles are appearing, such as distant-site facilitator, management sponsor, and technology supporter (Abernathy, 1998). Web-based training is underway, using web-specific technology, training methods, and standards compliance (Black, 1998).

Emphasis on Competencies and Skills

On the human side, one major trend in employment is the emphasis on competencies and skills, with employment being

earned by way of accomplishment and productivity, with a corresponding de-emphasis on personality traits, and the loss of entitlement therein. The federal government and business and industry are developing organization-specific competency and sequential skill packages for work and training applications (Wickwire, 1995). In the high-performance workplace, employees are expected to have competencies related to resources, interpersonal relationships, information, systems, and technology, as well as foundations of basic work skills, thinking skills, and desirable personal qualities. Schools are implementing instructional and assessment programs designed to teach active learners foundation, employability, transferable, and transition-management skills and competencies (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). Organizations such as the Business Coalition for Education Reform (1997), which is supporting the use of transcripts in hiring for employment, are involved in the effort to implement these programs in schools.

Emphasis in employment is shifting away from the normal curve and individualized approaches of differential psychology and toward the approaches of the management sciences and the psychology of education and behavior (McLagan, 1997; Mirabile, 1997). Important now are competencies and skills for high-quality, productive performance. Important now are knowledge of content; skills in processes, including specific tools, tasks, and activities; skills in facilitative, contributory attitudes and behaviors, such as teamwork; and skills leading to desired results and output (McLagan, 1997). Employers identify core competencies and superior performance indicators; organizational vision, mission, goals, and objectives are prominent, along with flexibility in employment.

Competency modeling is becoming a science with its own vocabulary and methods, and job analysis is being conducted through direct observation, critical incident analysis, job function analysis, focus group research, work methods analysis, interviews, job inventories and checklists, and position-analysis questionnaires (Mirabile, 1997). Competency models are constructed in different ways with different degrees of detail depending upon their purpose, function, and practicality. For example, construction of a competency model may begin with identifying success factors, followed by developing behavioral descriptors, rank ordering of factors by criticality, and establishing proficiency levels for factors.

Emphasis on Standards

Closely allied to the movement toward skills and competencies is the movement toward standards, with accountability and assessment becoming bywords in public, legislative, professional, and consumer domains. The federal government has spearheaded a drive toward the development and adoption of national education standards; most states have responded by developing and adopting state education standards. Associations and agencies have also developed and adopted standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997; Wickwire, 1996). In addition, some two dozen industries are developing standards under agreements with the National Skill Standards Board ("ASTD Works," 1998; Wickwire, 1995).

The establishment of standards is generally initiated with content standards followed by performance standards and, thus, carries assessment and evaluation components. Standards are designed to identify the subject matter to be learned, the level to which it is to be learned, and the applications for which it is to be learned. Standards are also designed to measure the degree and the nature of the learning, to recycle and modify educational approaches until learning occurs, to evaluate the entire approach systematically and to make needed changes, and, ultimately, to institute reforms in education for more focused acquisition of learning and more defined accountability for what one learns and how one uses this learning.

The move toward standards has led to wider experimentation and innovation in assessment and evaluation by an increasing number of professionals. For example, *value-added alternative assessment* may take the forms of the portfolio, demonstration, exhibit, criterion-referenced testing, or performance assessment scored with rubrics. Moreover, different methods of evaluation are being developed for the different purposes of evaluating these five levels; reaction, learning, behavior, results, and output. The effort to develop evaluation methods has been accompanied by examination of and experimentation with systems, policies, and practices such as social promotion, transitions from school to career, private operation of public schools, teacher preparation and placement, school choice, world competition, community service, and preschool offerings ("Making the Grade," 1998).

Standards-based education reform is touted as a means (a) to increase equity for all; (b) to add clarity for all stakeholders regarding expectations for learning; (c) to offer an internally

integrated and consistent system of planning, delivery, and evaluation; and (d) to provide for individual and organizational consequences of reaching or not reaching standards (Panasonic Foundation & American Association of School Administrators, 1998). Under standards-based reform, educational institutions could become learning organizations, learning communities, and continuing laboratories within which to study and apply the bases of learning.

Inculcation of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a significant trend that is focused on the development of human capital and social capital. Individuals, organizations, and communities are expected to invest in formal and informal education and training, to the ends of individual and group satisfaction, success, and productivity. Continuous lifelong learning is now essential for individual, organizational, community, state, and national economic growth ("Multifaceted Returns," 1998).

The learning organization (e.g., institution, agency, corporation) is part of the concept of lifelong learning. In the learning organization, a unique synergy drives a systematic search for collective learning in order to achieve constructive results and output. Ideally, employers and employees learn and share openly; they review their beliefs and values, behaviors, solutions, and the connections among them; and they work together to improve productivity (Calvert, Mobley, & Marshall, 1994). Continuous improvement is a goal.

In the lifelong-learning paradigm, the learning organization adopts a knowledge-based culture with databases to support members of the organization in decision making about policy, programs, and operations. Adding value, developing intellectual capital, and achieving results and outcomes are important; structures, systems, and processes are internally consistent (Tecker, Eide, & Frankel, 1997).

Reconstruction of Work and Career

Paradigms for career and work are changing (Wickwire, 1993); serial, mobile employment is becoming more frequent and job changes more rapid; contingent work and cybernetic work spaces are increasing; passion, action, and entrepreneurism are becoming necessary; expectations for flexibility, responsiveness, and quality are rising; specific high-performance skills, such as problem solving, are increasingly being targeted; and lifetime

job entitlement is no longer either certain or expected (Pritchett, 1998). In 1970, the usefulness of a worker's skills diminished by half over 15 years; today, that figure is 2 to 3 years ("Talking Trends," 1998).

Matching of individual assets, attitudes, and aspirations to employer needs for personal qualities, skills, and outcomes in work and career continues. Ongoing self-knowledge, self-assessment, self-development, and self-management based on knowledge of one's inner world and the outer environment are required for self-sufficient career and work in the information-knowledge-service era (Borchard, 1995). Increasingly, individuals need to add value for employment by advancing and enhancing their portable skills. To meet change in work and career, they need to release dependence on traditional systems and to create their own fluid options (Kaye & Farren, 1996).

Other Trends

Change. Change is a significant overriding trend. The current speed, frequency, complexity, and scope of change require commitment, vigilance, capacity to learn, adaptability, and renewal. Managing organizational change requires leadership strategies centered on customers and driven by mission, value, and behavior (Trahant, Burke, & Koonce, 1997).

Information. The creation of information is accelerating and its availability increasing. More information has been produced in the last 30 years than in the last 5,000 years; one weekday edition of the New York Times includes more information than the average person in seventeenth-century England would encounter in a lifetime (Pritchett, 1998). Knowledge is becoming a commodity; industries are managing knowledge by building knowledge repositories, using knowledge for discussion and learning, offering knowledge-transfer services, and encouraging knowledge appreciation through sharing. Some organizations are initiating positions such as chief knowledge officer, director of intellectual capital, and chief learning officer (Bassi et al., 1998). More rapid access to extensive information results in both positive and negative effects, including increased or decreased effectiveness and accuracy, sensory overload, and anxiety caused by information overload.

Additional trends. Additional trends are numerous, among them are changes in global relationships, age and cultural demographics, family structure, socioeconomics, patterns of socialization, and leisure opportunities and choices. Partly in

reaction to the information-knowledge-service era, the existential-experiential-spiritual era is beginning.

The Counseling Profession in the Year 2021

Counseling as a formal discipline is a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century invention, created in part because of the shift from the agricultural age to the industrial age. Industrialization brought increasing urbanization, immigration, migration, and differences in work and family. Needs for information about occupational options arose, and interest in social, economic, and educational issues grew. Vocational guidance and the measurement of individual differences began, as responses to trends of the time (Herr, 1997).

Today's trends, as discussed above, include the expansion of electronics and rise of distance learning; the movement toward competencies, skills, standards, and lifelong learning; and the reconstruction of work and career. Trends also include changes in the nature of change, information, globalism, demographics, socioeconomics, family, socialization, and leisure. The information-knowledge-service age is burgeoning and evolving toward the existential-experiential-spiritual age.

These trends need response, as did those of a century ago. The counseling profession will respond and initiate, exercising combinations of authentic, visionary, cultural, quality, and service leadership (based on modeling, ideas, interpersonal factors, excellence, and systems support, respectively) (Schwahn & Spady, 1998). Various counseling futures are possible. The needs of the student are paramount in studying and selecting futures to pursue.

The Student of Tomorrow

The student of tomorrow will need to be aware of, understand, and apply behavior and learning (in career, work, family, education, and leisure areas) with the goal of mastering the following qualities, skills, and areas of knowledge:

1. Purpose, vision, mission, goals, expected outcomes, and outputs
2. Partnership, teamwork, conflict resolution, problem solving
3. Flexibility, adaptability, resiliency, self-management
4. Initiation, involvement, sense of ownership, responsibility

5. Change management, inquiry, innovation, continuous improvement, renewal
6. Leadership, decision making, options discovery and selection
7. Technology, organization facilitation, systems implementation
8. Openness, responsiveness, communication, consistency
9. Alertness, high performance, quality, productivity, accountability
10. Recognition of complexity, multiple-skill mastery, skill transferability, transition management
11. Content, process, structure, results

As the knowledge-information-service age matures and dovetails into the existential-experiential-spiritual age, the student will seek to add high-touch efforts to balance high-tech, to increase rewarding social and personal involvement and contributions in the home and in the community, to become part of the service community with integrity, to clarify the relevance of morality to behavior and learning, to explore matters of personal and societal ethics, to test systems and structures of living and working, to identify and experience the effects of these systems and structures on the affective domain, and, in general, to seek a variety of new experiences that will enhance breadth and in-depth capacities to think, know, feel, be, and do.

The Counselor of Tomorrow

The counselor of tomorrow will have the same needs for awareness, understanding, and application in behavior and learning as the student of tomorrow, plus the capacity to assist the student to meet those needs. The counselor will be a continuous learner and an accomplished change agent.

The counselor is likely to continue the following professional models, with pragmatic, updated twenty-first-century adaptations.

1. Leadership: authentic, visionary, cultural, quality, service-based (Schwahn & Spady, 1998)
2. Systems: programs, services, content, processes, structures, policies, procedures, operations
3. Domains: affective, cognitive, academic-educational, career-vocational-work, personal-social
4. Treatment: prevention, development, remediation, crisis intervention

5. Service delivery: assessment, diagnosis, planning and preparation, implementation-monitoring, evaluation-recycling
6. Evaluation: formative, summative, reaction, learning, behavior, results, outcomes-outputs

In working with individuals, groups, agencies, organizations, and communities, the twenty-first-century counselor will maintain the vision of the optimal development of human potential, and the mission of developing and delivering theory, practice, ethics, guidelines, standards, laws, and regulations that are consonant with the vision. The counselor will seek content, process, and structure that support mass customization of counseling services with customer-oriented quality. The counselor will respond to ever-increasing expectations for accountability in programs and services, and to increasing competition within the human development field.

The counselor will strive to embrace change and an increasing number of options as opportunities and challenges. Like others, the counselor will work under conditions with high expectations for on-demand communications, decisions, problem solving, and other actions. The counselor will recognize the complex trend toward multiples: causes, options, success factors, intelligences, models for practice, and others. The counselor will use technology productively, for example, to forecast and evaluate alternative client futures, to obtain immediate feedback on emotionality of clients, or to monitor client choices. The counselor will be called upon to create means to balance high tech with high touch, and to lead in establishing a culture of caring, commitment, and responsibility. The counselor will apply both the science and the art of counseling.

The counselor will be expert in the development and enhancement of the person, the environment, and person-environment interaction. Major roles of the counselor will revolve around the creation, location, and dissemination of information and other resources; the creation, location, delivery, and brokering of strategies for the modification of client behavior and learning patterns; and the creation, location, delivery, and brokering of strategies for intervention into valences in the environment.

The counselor will continue to fulfill various functions and may work under different job titles as, perhaps, alliance creator, career and work competencies educator, consultant for self-actualization, excellence agent, experience designer, human

development artist, information broker, insight developer, interventionist, leadership development specialist, learning facilitator, life planner, option designer and locator, predictor of behavior, problem-solving skills builder, scanner-mover of environment, situation clarifier, social intelligence planner, student advocate, systems designer, trainer in decision making, or whole life monitor.

Within education systems, the counselor will have equivalent status and influence with other educators. Management support services, curriculum and instruction support services, and student support services will have equivalent responsibility and authority; each of these three structural components will, in turn, have its own management, curriculum and instruction, and student services. Schools will be more open and fluid institutions, and responsibility for seamless informal and formal education will be shared by learner, home, business and industry, community, and school.

Counseling Futures

Counseling is about being or becoming a whole person. Counseling is about self-sufficiency and connectedness; about knowing when, how, and where to find information, assistance, and support; and about being responsible for self. Counseling is about value-added programs and services, and about results and outcomes. Counseling is about selecting and offering the best possible theory and practice to create the best possible desired changes for clients.

In a preferred future for the year 2021, the counseling profession will operate from planned systems, programs, and policies, as opposed to operating on a situational basis. Counseling will first determine desired results, outcomes, or outputs, and then determine content, process, and structure. Specialized counseling strategies keyed to results will be used; these strategies will have been tested against characteristics of the organism and the environment. Probabilities of the effects of given strategies in given situations with given clients will be known. An advanced, sophisticated grid may be available for the selection and application of strategies for the specific anticipation of keyed outcomes.

Counselors will conceptualize futures scenarios and test alternative futures that support utilization of information and other resources, modification of learning and behavior, and modification of environment. For example, in one possible

13

counseling future, counseling could be conceived according to a model with a results-based taxonomy; this could add clarity and common understanding for client and counselor about the goals and objectives of the counseling experience. Both client and counselor could agree upon specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-specific objectives. Such a taxonomy could include the following types:

1. Relationship-based
2. Achievement-based
3. Knowledge-based
4. Inquiry-based
5. Creativity-based
6. Leadership-based
7. Motivation-based
8. Accommodation-based
9. Values-based
10. Support-based
11. Action-based
12. Skills-based
13. Anchor-based
14. Mission-based
15. Service-based
16. Vision-based

After client and counselor reach consensus on the themes for the results of counseling, they could develop content, process, and structure, and select and follow through on key strategies. Evaluation of effectiveness, then, could be clearly constructed and conducted by both client and counselor according to client change related to the chosen theme.

This approach could firmly place the focus on results; presumably, process and structure known empirically to have high probabilities for success could be implemented. The framework could apply to the individual, group, agency, or institutional client, and to both direct and indirect interventions. Counselor leadership could ultimately participate actively in policy making, and function in earned and deserved positions of increased span of influence.

Concluding Statement

Counselors are ultimately responsible for futures in the counseling profession, although factors in the external environment may play major roles. Counseling futures could range from obliteration to modification to renaissance, depending, in part, on the posture and action of those in the profession.

Focused convergent and divergent study and action regarding possible, probable, and preferred futures are recommended. This attention is best directed through a proactive approach to defining and creating demonstrable, marketable results that meet client needs. Counselors will make the final choices regarding survival, maintenance, or enhancement of the counseling profession.

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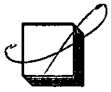

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