

MANPOWER COUNSELLOR DEVELOPMENT : PHASE II

*status report on new
course at Canadian
Department of Manpower
and Immigration*

The program of Counsellor Development described in this article is being conducted in the Ontario Region of the Department of Manpower and Immigration. This Department of the Federal Government of Canada operates, in five regions across Canada, nearly 300 Canada Manpower Centres, which are the approximate equivalent of State Employment Offices in the United States.

The people who do the operational work in the Canada Manpower Centres, who operate at the interface with the world of work, are called Manpower Counsellors. This course was designed to help them do their jobs more effectively; namely, to get the right person in the right job, as quickly as possible; to recommend and expedite training for the unskilled or underskilled; to deal effectively with workers and employers. There are about 1,000 Counsellors in the Ontario Region; and about 170 Senior Counsellors, whose job description makes them somewhat less first-line supervisors, and somewhat more developers and working colleagues of the Counsellors who make up their work teams.

There were 31 courses originally planned in this series of courses from May 1968, to March 1969. As at the end of October 1968, 14 of these have been conducted, affording this level of development to all of the Senior Counsellors and about 300 of the Manpower Counsellors.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

An "Introductory Course to Manpower Counselling," now referred to as Phase I, was conducted in the Ontario Region from May to September 1967. All research from that program¹ pointed to the urgent need for development in counselling and interviewing skills and techniques, as a priority in training. Having conclusively established and confirmed this need as a point of departure,² a series of design meetings were held, alternately, in Toronto and Ottawa, during February, March and April of 1968. In addition

to the core of Staff Development and Counselling Specialists, others attended as their special skills and information were required. A very healthy cooperation between the Region and Headquarters, and between functional units was maintained throughout design and implementation.

Very early in the first meeting, a set of objectives for this proposed course was formulated. These objectives patently had to aim at satisfying the urgent need for skill development, and then spell out specific sub-objectives or specific content areas.

It soon became evident that each member of these design meetings had seemingly different sets of concerns about the quality or lack of quality, of the work of Manpower Counsellors. Each viewed with alarm different evidences of failure on the part of our Counsellors to do their job effectively. These cropped up in all phases of the work placement, manpower re-training, worker mobility assistance, handling discrimination, employer relations, attitudes toward forthcoming testing, power sort equipment, use of time. It seemed that each of these areas would have to be dealt with in the course.

PRIMARY PROBLEMS

When all of these concerns had been listed and examined in detail, we realized that all of the shortcomings and failures to perform effectively, boiled down to three main causes:

1. Misunderstanding or misconception of the economic goals and objectives of the Department and the Canada Manpower Centres.
2. Inability on the part of the average Manpower Counsellor to quickly obtain valid, reliable, usable information (on which he and his client could base an effective decision as to course of action); inability to rank the information according to validity, reliability and utility; failure to test for validity, indeed lack of knowledge about *how* to test.
3. Inability of management to appraise

J. JAMES ETHERINGTON
*Staff Development Branch,
Department of Manpower
and Immigration,
Toronto, Ontario.*

the work done by the Counsellors because

- a. there were no performance standards and
- b. there was no common language in terms of which the appraisal could occur effectively.

To deal with the first cause of ineffective performance, we decided to include in the list of pre-course reading the then newly-formulated Departmental Objectives. These were reinforced with papers by various Departmental Officials. The relationship of Manpower Counselling to other forms of counselling was delineated in another paper. All of these became the subject matter for the pre-course questionnaire, completed individually by participants. Discussion of the items in the questionnaire then became the first major exercise on the course itself, thus establishing a commonality of understanding of just what business we are in, and precisely what are our goals.

LOCATING RESOURCES

To deal with causes 2 and 3, we cast about within our collective experience, referred to the literature, examined several excellent texts.³ All of these, while excellent with relation to various facets of the problem, failed to display a unified approach which would have been truly effective in dealing with these causes of ineffective performances.

At this point, there came to our attention, the work of Dr. James Bugental, of the University of California, and Psychological Services Associates in Los Angeles.⁴ One of our designers attended a course in Banff put on by Jim Bugental and brought back for our deliberations, an understanding of his concepts which we recognized as virtually right on target for our needs.

Bugental does not merely speak of rapport, of climate, of non-judgmental acceptance, nor does he distinguish merely the "either-or" dichotomy of direct and non-direct counselling.

Rather he logically and systematically segregates the particular factors or elements which affect the actual interview process, namely:

- a. **Impact** - the influence that the counsellor has on the client, that the client has on the counsellor; that both have on the interaction process; and teaches how to be aware of impact, how to modify it, and how to use it for successful interviewing.
- b. **Concurrence** - letting the client know that you (the counsellor) understand what he has said and how he feels; and how to modify that concurrence to achieve the goal of the interview.
- c. **Focus** - which has two aspects: the first concerns the choice of one of a number of topics, and staying with it or returning to it as needed; the second concerns the depth of detail to which you penetrate (as with a zoom lens).
- d. Handling the phenomenon of client *resistance*, an ability the need for which in counsellors is as self-evident as its lack is frustrating.

INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

Having segregated and considered each of these elements in turn, having made the counsellor aware of each, and able to modify it with some skill, Bugental reassembles the elements into three *Interview Strategies*, which are all-inclusive in the sense that every interview situation can be handled by the applications of one, or some combination of the three.

The three Interview Strategies are:

- (a). **The Direct:** A large percentage of our interviews can be handled by this strategy. It is straightforward, aimed right at the objective. It deals with information, and its smooth exchange. It works (i.e., is effective in goal achievement) provided both counsellor and client share a common understanding of purpose, of roles and relationships,

neither experiences pronounced feeling, and nothing interferes with the smooth progress of the interview.

Impact can be honestly in the middle range; concurrence will be high on the part of both interview participants; problems and information can be focused on at will, and at any depth required without baring raw nerve endings, and there will be virtually no resistance.

- (b). **The Non-Direct Strategy:** deals effectively with feelings and emotions. A counsellor may need this strategy on few occasions, but the skill in its use must be in a good counsellor's repertoire.

Impact is intentionally held very low, and correspondingly acceptance must be held high; concurrence must be high; focus must be held broad and shallow, to avoid arousing feelings to any greater extent; this whole strategy is aimed at handling resistance that is evidenced in emotion. These are the factors which make for the successful use of the non-direct strategy.

- (c). **The Indirect Strategy:** The use of this, the previously neglected strategy is the key to success as a counsellor. It deals with assessing and appraising the subjective traits and qualifications of the interviewee. The counsellor cannot ask a client directly "Are you intelligent?" and expect an honest answer. He has to ask a dozen questions throughout the interview, questions designated to test, and from the answers to all of these (each has given him a tiny piece of data) infer or deduce the level of intelligence.

The counsellor cannot tell a client the whole nature of a prospective job, and then expect an honest answer to the question "Can you do this job?" Any intelligent being

automatically adjusts to the needs of a situation. He will give you the answer you want. The Indirect Strategy says, if you want valid, reliable, usable information on the basis of which to make an assessment, you must gather your data before you beg the question and color the answer. Your questions and statements must elicit responses from the client, which you then must test and re-test for validity (trait triangulation).

This strategy demands conscious and aware use of the whole range of impact, all levels of concurrence, all degrees of focus, skillful handling of resistance.

Such is the Indirect Strategy of Interviewing, a skill which the top counsellor needs desparately at his fingertips, but may well take years to perfect.

We (the course designers) realized that here in Bugental, we had a clear, hard-nosed, practical, sensible, definitive look at the interview process, and at the skills, knowledges, awarenesses and attitudes needed to carry it off successfully and effectively towards the accomplishment of objectives.

Here we had a learnable ability related to obtaining valid usable information; we had a set of performance standards against which to measure effective interviewing; and we had a language which we felt could be made common, so that both counsellors and their supervisors would understand each other when they came to examine the interview process for purposes of appraisal and further development.

To this point: We had formulated a set of objectives, we had shared a group of concerns bearing on deficiency, we had reduced these to causes, and we had determined on an authority and his set of viable and useful concepts. There remained only to modify those concepts to suit the needs and situations of our Manpower Counsellors, to decide upon methodology, and to implement the training.

MODIFYING THE CONCEPTS

The concepts were self-evidently valuable in terms of viability, utility and applicability. Modification to the basic concepts need only occur in relation to balance, emphasis, sequencing.

Certain sub-concepts, related to some of our objectives needed to be added to the content of the proposed training: the concept of fact and inference, which validates the indirect strategy; a look at self-awareness and the value of non-verbal behavior, an examination of decision-making in the counselling process.

The decision was taken not to employ as trainers outside professionals. We would reduce all of the research and expertise to pieces of paper, short films, video tape segments, prepared one-concept lecturettes. In short, we would virtually instrument this learning package totally.

In keeping with thoroughly validated principles of adult learning, principally that we learn best by doing, by risk taking, by making mistakes and learning from them we decided on very short lecturettes, backed by handout papers for transfer of concepts, on discussions, and cases and questionnaires and much role-play to set the concepts, test them for validity, and so reinforce them.

To reinforce the concept that training and development is a management responsibility, and that each level should be trained by the level above; it was understood that senior counsellors should do the actual training, and certainly reinforce and maintain the learned behavior in the day-to-day work situation.

While it was always possible to prepare packages of training to be given by senior counsellors in-plant, it seemed mandatory to us (for the purposes of this total re-look at the interview process, with its emphasis on practice, risk taking and testing, together with the concomitant teaching of a "new language") to separate groups of counsel-

lors from the work situation, and bring them to in-residence seminars. A balance between budgetary considerations and realistic loss of operational time on the one hand, and useful transfer and setting of concepts and language on the other, led us to a five-day, in-residence, total-involvement, virtually day-and-night seminar.

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAINING

Having decided on the totally-instrumented, in-residence approach, and preserving the principle that Senior Counsellors should be the ultimate trainers of counsellors, we decided to give the course first to Senior Counsellors. We quite frankly regarded each seminar as a pilot for all that followed in the series, and informed the participating Senior Counsellors of this approach, and elicited their help.

By this means we could test, refine, modify, reject or retain many different instruments and methodological approaches. We could develop overhead projector transparencies, determine how effectively to use our audio tape recorders and video tape equipment. We tested sequencing of concepts, to achieve, wherever possible, maximum mutual reinforcement of concepts, and psychological (rather than logical) development.

Most of our Senior Counsellors in the Ontario Region attended the first four courses. The course designers served as trainers during this stage, since they had determined the methodology and were most familiar with the concepts and the language.

As we moved into courses for the counsellors themselves, these Senior Counsellors became the trainers. To accomplish this a "Course Administrator" from the Regional Staff Development Branch was added to each course. His prime function was to train the trainers.

Several instruments were at hand to facilitate this training, together with the experience which the adminis-

trators had in the earlier stages of the program. A number of new instruments have been developed to strengthen this training, and broaden its applicability beyond the *ad hoc* training situation.

TWO LEVELS OF COURSE

In essence, the courses currently running are being conducted at two levels, i.e. two courses are going on simultaneously, the Phase II course for counselors and the Training of Trainers course for the Senior Counsellors who act as trainers. The one is used to model the other, trainers learn best by training (adults learn best by doing), testing and risk-taking are encouraged. Furthermore the language (impact, concurrence, focus, handling resistance, strategies) is quite as applicable to the training situation as it is to counselling

and interviewing.

Recently, selected Senior Counsellors have begun to administer the program on-site, thus taking over the training of trainers as well. There remains for the Staff Development Branch to monitor the program for quality and provide off-site administrative service, including equipment, course supplies, and the paper instruments.

MEASURING RESULTS

All programs, including programs of training, must be ultimately appraised in terms of results, in terms of accomplishing the objectives for which they were formulated. The overall objective of C.D.II was "to improve the job performance of Manpower Counsellors," i.e., to enable them more effectively to do their work in moving towards the Department's economic

goals, to enable them to place workers more quickly in the "right" jobs, and to fill employers' vacancies with the least delay and with the "right" workers.

To measure such results requires an objective, relatively long-term, research program, which utilizes control groups, and takes into account all variables including changing policy, climate and situation, contamination from other sources, etc. Such research would produce an answer of some validity to the question: "Has C.D.II enabled those trained to do their job better?" Such a program of research, within our means, is to be applied in the next few months, on a sample basis. In the meantime, the measures that we can apply relate to determining whether learning has occurred, i.e., have the trainees learned the concepts and how

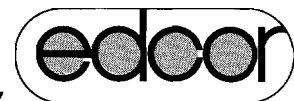


DON'T BE TIED DOWN WITH A CORD... SET YOURSELF FREE WITH AN EDCOR CORDLESS SENSAMIKE...

... a scientific triumph in sound that operates anywhere without a cord or antenna. The most important "tool" a sales employee uses is his voice. The EDCOR cordless SENSAMIKE makes his voice much more effective.

Discover for yourself the ease and effectiveness that can come to a sales meeting, a product demonstration or a training session when you are free to move around and have the sound go with you.

Electronic Development Corp. 82 W. Louise Ave. Salt Lake City, Utah 84115 (801) 467-9487



to apply them? has the behavior of the trainees changed? Several devices have been applied during the course: (a) daily evaluation sheets which measure relevance to the back-home situation and quality of presentation; (b) participant steering committees, which enable immediate feedback of learning, and indicate needs for re-emphasis, repetition or reinforcement; and (c) course evaluations which give a measure of participants' attitudes towards relevance, utility and applicability of the training course as a whole.

To date these measures have been highly favorable, in terms of indicating high relevance and high levels of learning of new behavior, and in terms of recommending the continuance of training for other Counsellors.

Because the course was precisely designed to accomplish the objectives, and fill the needs as specified, these favorable results from the measurement

of learning, give us *a priori* evidence of course validity.

The Staff Development Branch which has produced this report cautions the need to allow for bias on its part. We, nevertheless, are very enthusiastic about the results of this program of training. We believe we have "a tiger by the tail."

REFERENCES

1. (a). Etherington, J. James, "Report on the Debriefing Sessions of Trainers and Co-trainers from the Introductory Course in Manpower Counselling," Oct. 1967.
- (b). Jackson, David and Associated, "A Study of Manpower Counsellor Training Programs, Ontario Region," Interim reports submitted Aug. and Nov. 1967 and Feb. 1968. Final report submitted June 1968.
2. This is not to gainsay the gentle

malaise of the Staff Development that the organization might well be "putting the cart before the horse," i.e., that management development (aimed at producing a climate in which Manpower Counsellors could effectively operate, and use their skills) ought to precede the engendering of those skills. However, organizational development (OD) appeared to be seen as too long range (five years) a project, whereas skill development in Counsellors was seen as a comfortable and concrete objective, whose results might be felt within a much shorter term, and measurable, if suitable yardsticks were devised.

3. (a). Tyler, Leona, "The Work of the Counsellor."
- (b). Truax, Charles and Carkhuff, Robert, "Towards Effective Counselling and Psychotherapy."
- (c). Kann, Robert and Cannell, Charles, "The Dynamics of Interviewing."
4. Bugental, James F. T., "Psychological Interviewing," 1966.

STAFF TRAINING HELPS 47,000 OFF WELFARE ROLLS

The U. S. Department of Labor is training teams of employment specialists in most cities to ease welfare clients into job training or full-time jobs.

A special staff training program is being emphasized for personnel connected with Work Incentive (WIN) programs already under way in 34 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

Eighteen week-long training sessions have been conducted across the country by employment specialists from the Manpower Administration headquarters. More than 500 State employment service people from 48 States have been provided the special knowledge needed to handle the local WIN programs.

Enrollments are moving ahead rapidly. At the end of January, 47,000 persons were enrolled.

The program will be launched in the other 16 States, where changes in State laws must first be made, and in the Virgin Islands.

The Federal government finances 80 percent of the cost of the WIN program and the States finance 20 percent.

Federal funds totaling \$117.5 million were appropriated for the first fiscal year to conduct work and training projects, and to provide day-care facilities for children whose mothers are enrolled.

As of the start of 1969, \$74 million of the Federal funds have been approved for projects involving 80,000 participants, and State governments have put up an additional \$15 million.

The funds appropriated by the Congress would provide for the enrollment of 100,000 persons by the end of June.