

Article 1

Invited Address

Counseling: Yesterday and Today

Robert L. Gibson, Professor Emeritus and Marianne H. Mitchell, Professor Emerita
Indiana University

Robert L. Gibson, PhD, and Marianne H. Mitchell, PhD, are Professor Emeriti from the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology at Indiana University and co-directors of Indiana University's counselor education programs in Bermuda and Scotland. They are the distinguished co-authors of many widely-used resources in counseling, such as *Introduction to Counseling and Guidance* (7th Edition) and *Introduction to Career Counseling for the 21st Century*. Dr. Gibson is a past president of two state counseling associations and a past treasurer of ACES. Dr. Mitchell is a past president of ACES and ACA.

In framing the context for this article we thought it might be appropriate to initially identify some contrasts between a few societal characteristics—then and now. For example, when people bragged about their computers *then*, it meant they were going to drag out their electric adding machine that could also subtract, multiply, and divide. If they talked about Charlie having a cell phone *then*, it meant that good ole Charlie was in the county jail and because of his good behavior, he was allowed a telephone in his cell. When an individual said they were texting back *then*, it meant they were studying their text for an upcoming exam. If an individual said they were “cool” in the 1960s, we usually turned up the heat or offered them a jacket. Back *then*, in the early 1960s, when an individual said they had something “online,” we assumed he was a fisherman with a little luck. It is therefore understandable why today’s counselors would think that those of us in the profession in the 1960s were, in effect, counseling in the “dark ages.” However one views it, counseling was certainly going to emerge from the “dark ages” in the 1960s.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the national accrediting associations had begun to encourage secondary schools to develop counseling programs. An increasing number of colleges and universities began training programs for counselors. Then, in 1958, counselors, secondary school counseling programs, and counselor education programs received a dramatic boost when the U. S. Congress passed the National Defense Education Action Act. This act was in response to the Soviet Union’s successful launching of a space satellite, Sputnik I, in 1957. This Act recognized the vital linkage between national well-being and education. Title V in the Act resulted in a significant increase in the development of counseling programs inasmuch as it provided for grants to states to encourage the establishment and maintenance of secondary school counseling

and guidance programs. Additionally, it provided grants to colleges and universities to provide training for counseling and guidance personnel for local educational programs. By 1964 the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare noted that the number of high school counselors had risen from 12,000 in 1958 to 30,000 in 1964, stimulated by 480 institutes training secondary school counselors. These institutes were conducted in colleges and universities across the United States. Additionally, the certification and performance of school counselors were upgraded, and the criteria which accrediting associations utilized for evaluation of school counselor programs were strengthened. Counseling was on its way!

In the 1960s one of the most important developments for the school counseling and guidance movement was the *Statement of Policy for Secondary School Counselors* (American School Counselor Association, 1964), which was developed and approved as an official policy statement by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). This effort to specify the role and function of the school counselor involved more than 6,000 school counselors, plus teachers, school administrators, and other educators.

C. Gilbert Wrenn's classic publication of the 1960s, *The Counselor in a Changing World*, also examined the counselor's role in a society with changing ideas about human behavior and changing schools. Wrenn (1962) noted the growing complexity of the counselor's task:

It is not enough for the counselor to understand youth in isolation, as it were. More than ever before, the counselor must understand not only the student, but himself and his adult contemporaries as they attempt to adjust to a rapidly changing technology and the world order. (p. 8)

In 1965 C. Harold McCully of the U.S. Office of Education Guidance and Counselor Training Institutes Program and one of the most forward-looking members of the profession, implied that if school counselors were to move toward bona fide professionalization, "they cannot afford to define their function on the basis of a retrospective analysis of what counselors have done in the past as technicians" (p. 405). He forecast needed new directions in which the counselor functioned as a consultant and agent for change; directions that would require substantive study of the dynamics of cultural and social change.

The career counseling movement increased in popularity beginning in 1963 after revisions to vocational educational legislation. Kenneth B. Hoyt noted in 2001 that career counseling had continued to grow over the period 1970-2000 stimulated by the rapid changes in the world of work.

During the 1970s and 1980s the accountability movement had its influence on school counseling programs. Programs began stating their needs objectively and collecting data relating to these needs. During this period national counseling conventions attracted crowds as large as 30,000 or more. During the 1980s and 1990s elementary school counseling programs began to grow as well as society became concerned about social issues affecting children.

In the 1990s a significant movement in the counseling profession's organizational structure occurred. A number of divisions of the American Counseling Association indicated their desire to function and be organizationally independent of the American Counseling Association. Most of these changes were highly controversial among the membership of the American Counseling Association.

In the first generation of the 21st century, significant societal changes took place impacting the counseling profession. These included the dramatic impact of the technology revolution which added new dimensions to how the individual lives and works. The globalization of the workforce was an additional significant change stimulated by the expansion of businesses and industries worldwide. During this period of time counselors were called upon to continue to increase their sensitivity to the various ethnic and cultural populations of our country. Computers opened up new patterns of communication and data processing. The cell phone came “out of the jail” into homes, schools, automobiles, and the workplace. In this period of rapid change, counselors must be continuously alert to make appropriate adjustments and ensure that they keep in step with the times.

Recommendations

Your authors found the writing of this article tempting us to write recommendations. Since we have never been good at resisting temptations, we are going to conclude with our recommendations (not necessarily in order of importance).

1. We recommend the American Counseling Association lobby Congress to pass a National Elementary School Counseling Act, modeled after the 1958 NDEA Act. There is obviously much research supporting the need for this legislation.
2. Our kudos to those working to establish counseling associations in other countries. We would like to recommend the continuation of these efforts. Note: Your authors established cooperative counselor training programs with the Bermuda College in Bermuda, and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, offering Indiana University courses in counseling. These courses were taught by regular Indiana University faculty, using Indiana University standards. These programs existed for over 30 years and frequently had enrollments in excess of 200 students.
3. We would like to recommend that a unified convention of all the organizations that counselors in various roles belong to be held every three years. However, we *do* believe the small conventions of 3,000 to 5,000 have their advantages, so we do not want to see them eliminated.
4. We recommend an international counseling conference be scheduled in London, England, for example, in 2015.
5. We recommend that concrete efforts be made to improve relationships among those organizations representing memberships that counselors must, and should, work closely with, such as: psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists, mental health workers, and special educators.
6. We recommend that counseling preparation programs should feel free to seek appropriate accreditation from organizations such as the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), as well as the American Psychological Association, since many people perceive that the more accreditations a program has, the more prestigious it is.

7. We recommend that increased efforts be made to collaborate with the above-indicated accrediting associations and the professions they represent. Additionally, we recommend that increased efforts be made to liaison effectively with the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Education Association, and the Armed Services.

In conclusion, your authors have enjoyed this opportunity to reminisce a bit and also make some projections of the future for our profession. Thank you.

One of our counseling students read this article and said, "You all are cool," whereupon Dr. Gibson said, "You're pretty chilly yourself!" At this point, Dr. Gibson's daughter said, "You don't get it, Dad." Since we were afraid to ask what "it" was, we didn't pursue it further.

References

- American School Counselor Association. (1964). *Statement of policy for secondary school counselors*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Hoyt, K. B., (2001). Career education and education reform: Time for a rebirth. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(4), 327-331.
- McCully, C. H. (1965). The counselor-instrument of change. *Teachers College Record*, 66(5), 405-412.
- National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, P.L. 85-864.
- Wrenn, C. G. (1962). *The counselor in a changing world*. Washington, DC: American Personnel and Guidance Association.

Note: This paper is part of the annual VISTAS project sponsored by the American Counseling Association. Find more information on the project at: http://counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/VISTAS_Home.htm