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A CURRICULUM FOR PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Yes - This is exactly what this
speech is about.
Good - no duplication.*

I congratulate you on the vigor of your conference theme, "Women Educators Create the Future." Many educational planners today seem more concerned with predicting the future than with creating it. We amass countless statistics to tell us what is going to happen while spending relatively little time pondering the value questions of what should happen. I want to address myself today to the questions of what should happen in education.

The rhetoric of the college catalogue is probably more in-tune with what most of us think should happen in education than are our practices. Few educators believe that the saturation of students with the content of the academic disciplines is the ultimate goal of education, and yet we teach subject matter as an end in itself, rather than as a means to help students stretch their minds to accommodate the constantly changing information about the world and its people. The respondents to a California study several years ago provided documentation of the discrepancy between our goals and our practices. There was widespread agreement among faculty, students, trustees, and lay community people that the public and private colleges in California were overdoing the traditional emphasis on providing academic information and underplaying the importance of student development (Peterson, 1973).

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The personal development of students in the context of this study was defined by goals such as helping students achieve self-confidence, self-understanding, and trusting relationships with others. Students, especially, felt short-changed over higher education's apparent lack of concern for student development. Undergraduates at the University of California, for example, said that the university presently gives student development 18th priority out of a list of 20 goals, whereas students feel that it should receive 4th priority.

Education has always had the dual responsibility of serving the needs of individuals as well as society. In a democracy, the two are not often in conflict. Fully functioning citizens help promote a fully functioning society. But now, more than ever, there is a need to reaffirm the human concerns of individuals and society through greater attention to both the personal and interpersonal development of citizens.

The needs of society as we move into the post-industrial era are clearly people-related. There are urgent problems that society must solve -- crime in the streets, morality in government and industry, increasing dependence on drugs (legal and illegal), a rising divorce rate, the civil rights of minorities and women, job dissatisfaction for the majority of workers, paralyzing labor strikes, a bumbling confusion and lack of knowledge regarding social reform. By this time, we should have the message that throwing money at social ills will not solve the problems. We need better knowledge of individual and societal development, and we need a cadre of skilled people to apply such knowledge.

Furthermore, we should look not only at the negative side of the problems to be solved, but at the positive side of enrichments to be won -- through life-long learning for workers with increasing amounts of leisure time, through cultural revitalization and the stimulation of aesthetic appreciations, and through the creation of deeper interpersonal satisfactions. Society's need is for highly trained career specialists who can create new knowledge about individuals and groups, who can design new programs through the application of such knowledge, and who are skilled in working with other people.

The needs of society are great, but education serves individuals as well as the state. And individuals are telling us in all sorts of ways that they want and need help in living with themselves, their family, and their co-workers. Carl Rogers (1969, p. 6) has observed that the public demand for interpersonal growth experiences is "utterly beyond belief." Current estimates place the number of people participating in personal growth experiences of one kind or another at between three and six million people. For the most part, education has turned a deaf ear to the pleas of the public, leaving the difficult matter of educating for interpersonal effectiveness to entrepreneurs who see dollar signs in the consumer demand and to industry which sees business efficiency in improved interpersonal functioning on the job.

There is both a need and a demand for an educational curriculum deliberately designed to provide for career and personal interests in improved human relationships. I suggest that the student personnel profession should assume a major responsibility for

developing and teaching in such a curriculum. In the early years of my association with the student personnel profession, we talked about our jobs as working with extracurricular activities of students. Then we began to talk about co-curricular programs. Today, I am addressing the need for student personnel workers to involve themselves directly, in the classroom and out, within a new curriculum for improved human understandings.

Historically, the curriculum has always grown and changed to meet the need of the times. In the early years of education in this country, the classical curriculum of Latin, Greek, and rhetoric prepared the sons of the aristocracy to be ministers, lawyers, and gentlemen. When it became apparent in the mid-1800's that growth and production, through agriculture and industry, were the national needs, the land-grant institutions were established to teach the applied subjects of agriculture and the mechanical arts. In the middle of this century, the community colleges met the changing needs of the nation by introducing vocational and technical curricula such as auto mechanics and data processing. Today, the needs of the country are shifting once again as we move into the post-industrial era. The national needs now are clearly people-related.

While history documents a constantly evolving curriculum, it also provides ample evidence of continuous and sometimes acrimonious resistance to change. In the early 1800's there was much snorting and derision about the need of a college education for farmers. How unnecessary it seemed for a farmer to go to college to learn what he had been doing, apparently reasonably

adequately, all his life. Much as agriculture was held to have no intellectual content because it was done by people without education, so the subject of applied human relationships is held to be non-college material because it is done every day by people without much knowledge about the subject. Who 150 years ago could have dreamed what a formal curriculum in agriculture would do for farming? Who among us today can imagine how the improved practice of human relationships might change our world?

The Morrill Act did not bring a full-blown, sophisticated agriculture curriculum into instant reality, but it made it possible for the intellectual leadership to study the issues, and it also legitimized a commitment to work toward steady progress. Similarly, there is no full-blown sophisticated curriculum for helping people to develop personal and career skills in interpersonal relations. But there are many people who are committed to pushing at the frontiers of knowledge through study, through research, and through practice. There is no lack of intellectual challenge in the human relations curriculum. Indeed, one of our problems is that the subject is so complex that it has defied our attempts to study it.

The Morrill Act changed more than the curriculum of colleges, however. It changed the posture of higher education from isolated scholarship to active involvement through applied research and extension. Once again, there is a call for education to become involved with the issues of our times. To date, most of the teaching of human relations has been academic rather than experiential, most of the research has been pure rather than applied,

and most of the academic expertise has been consultative rather than involved.

I believe that it is time for educational institutions to get involved with society's need for educating people to work with people and with the individual's need to learn to live and work more effectively in our increasingly interdependent society.

It may seem overly ambitious to call for leadership from the personnel profession for the development of a new curriculum -- especially in these days of fiscal austerity -- but I think we are much closer to a curriculum for personal and interpersonal education than most people realize. Indeed, there is a human relations curriculum of sorts already in existence, but neither the subject matter nor the methods of the curriculum have been given clear articulation. Bits and pieces of human relations education lie scattered across the curricular landscape. The task now lies not so much in curriculum building from the ground up as in articulating a clear sense of direction so that existing components can be pulled together into a coherent whole.

Let us begin this task by addressing forthrightly the question of the subject matter of the curriculum, and then I would like to turn to a discussion of the methods that implement the teaching of the subject matter. Academic educators are now attempting to define their subject matter in terms of competencies rather than in terms of knowledge alone. This trend helps in our task of articulating the competencies of the human relations curriculum. We should not be surprised to discover that the competencies for personal development -- which is half of the proposed curriculum --

show a substantial overlap with the rhetoric of the college catalogue. We say that we want students to demonstrate a sense of identity and purpose, to develop moral capacity and personal integrity, and to have a sense of self and autonomy, while remaining open to the new experiences that permit further growth. The research of the past two decades shows that college students do tend to move in these directions. But there are two problems with our present approaches to personal development. One lies in our refusal to be satisfied with the minimal and sometimes ambiguous results shown in the research. Although most studies agree that college students become more open-minded and less judgmental and that they show a growing sense of autonomy and personal identity, the amount of growth is hardly spectacular, nor does it affect all students, nor do we have any very adequate understanding of why or how it happens. Until we can identify the growth-inducing experiences responsible for the desired ends, we are powerless to improve educational programs.

The second problem with settling into a happy acceptance of the research that shows enough student growth to indicate that educators must be doing something right, is that the largest gains in personal development are made by students who have the most intimate and long-lasting association with the total environment of the college. Fine -- except that the trend today is for students to have less and less immersion in the collegiate environment. Most students now attend college part-time rather than full-time. Most are starting their college experiences on commuter instead of residential campuses. The fastest growing new clientele

for colleges are adults and older students. And most expansion of educational programs is occurring off-campus rather than on. In brief, colleges are giving up the luxury of providing an enriched, if somewhat isolated, environment in which the probability of bumping into growth-producing experiences is slightly greater than would occur in the everyday world of work. If we wish to offer the new clientele some of the personal growth benefits that accrued from a college education in the past, we are going to have to become much more deliberate in our efforts. And if we wish to improve education for personal development, we are going to have to set about the difficult task of identifying cause-and-effect relationships so that we can do something more than hope that students will bump into some good experiences on their way through college. I think we can and should teach students directly and deliberately how to achieve some of the personal attributes that are so glowingly described in the catalogue. Admittedly, we haven't had much experience, and we lack knowledge and confidence in the design of education for personal growth. But research has probably told us all that it is going to tell us about what does happen to the average student in four years on an average campus. The need now is for some judicious experimentation and evaluation to see what can happen if we define our goals carefully and attempt to design educational experiences to meet them.

The other half of the proposed curriculum -- interpersonal education -- is not as familiar to the lay public as the curriculum for personal development, which seems to capture much of what traditional liberal arts colleges have tried to articulate. But

there is now a substantial body of knowledge and skills associated with human services careers. Education, health, and welfare, of course, are the big three in the human services. But in our interdependent society, it is difficult to find a career that does not call for some measure of skill in working with people. Business and government are recognizing the full measure of their dependence on the interpersonal skills of employees, supervisors, and managers. More people lose their jobs because of a failure in interpersonal relationships than because of a lack of technical job knowledge. And yet, educational institutions are only recently acknowledging their responsibility to provide a core curriculum for the career needs of people who plan to spend their lives working with people. The subject matter of interpersonal skills may be as essential to life in this society as the subject matter of written and spoken English. Indeed, I would observe, that with the proliferation of hand calculators, readin', writin', and relationships may replace readin', writin', and 'rithmetic as the necessary skills for survival.

The competencies needed for interpersonal development include the communications skills, especially the art of listening and the oral skills of articulating ideas, directions, and desires. Most people admit that the communications skills can be directly taught, and even that they are academically respectable. But we don't work very hard or very effectively in teaching students oral communication, and it is the unusual teacher or course that concentrates on developing the useful and extremely rare skill of listening to what people are saying. Among other competencies

that should be included in the curriculum for interpersonal development are empathy and sensitivity to the feelings of others, tolerance for differing viewpoints, understandings of socio-cultural influences, and the ability to participate constructively in group activities.

In brief, there is no lack of subject matter for the curriculum in either personal or interpersonal development. The purpose of the proposed curriculum is to help students become competent persons in a society that calls for a high order of human interaction. Students must gain a sophisticated understanding of themselves, of other people, and of the interaction between the two.

Now let us turn to the teaching and learning methods that are the tools of implementation for the curriculum. Much as the methods for teaching agriculture and the laboratory sciences differ from the methods of the classical curriculum, so the methods of a people-oriented curriculum will differ from those of a traditional academic curriculum.

I think that I can identify six reasonably distinctive methods that are presently used to teach and to learn in the presently scattered human relations curriculum. First, and probably most important, is experiential education. Learning to respond to human needs -- whether one's own or those of other people -- is neither a library subject like the classics, nor a laboratory subject like the sciences. It is basically a field-study subject in which much of the learning must take place under real life conditions. Although field study, or the more au courant experiential education is one of the hottest innovations in

academe today, it is an old and familiar method to student personnel workers. As you will quickly recognize, it lies at the very heart of educational experiences inherent in student activities and group living. But the new experiential education that is the headline grabber of educational innovation today is a sophisticated and distant relative of the old experiential education that spawned the folk wisdom that "experience is the best teacher." Experience is not always even a very good teacher; sometimes it is unnecessarily cruel, and it is usually inefficient. Experiential education is, or should be, a set of carefully designed experiences directed toward some clearly articulated goals. The design for an effective internship, for example, is likely to include the selection of an appropriate learning environment, the supervision of a knowledgeable and experienced advisor, and a periodic review of the learning experience.

Most student personnel workers have had considerable experience with experiential education, but if the profession is to offer the expertise and leadership that I envision as the future role for student personnel workers, then graduate and in-service training programs will need to develop sophisticated methodologies for the design, the conduct, and the assessment of experiential education.

The second major methods component of the human relations curriculum lies in traditional academic education. There are people who claim that psychology, sociology, and anthropology as presently taught, do not represent valid approaches to a realistic understanding of human interactions. While I agree that too much of the attention of the social sciences is directed toward the

narrow goal of preparing undergraduates for graduate education, it seems apparent that we cannot make progress in building a solid human relations curriculum without the benefit of knowledge accumulated over time in the academic disciplines. By itself, experiential education can culminate in a dead end because it does not move beyond the immediate experience of the participants. The progress of society is heavily dependent on the ability of each generation to stand upon the shoulders of previous generations. The academic disciplines possess the capacity to lay solid foundations and to stimulate the search for new knowledge. As such, they are vital components of the new curriculum. On the whole, the student personnel profession has been more interested in training administrators and counselors than in training scholars and researchers. There is, I think, a need to attract scholars from the disciplines to work in the interdisciplinary area of human relations education, and there is a need to train some student personnel scholars dedicated to the advancement of knowledge in applied human interactions.

A third methodology lies in a strong tradition of the student personnel profession -- counseling and guidance. The practice of human relations would be much easier if it were not for individual differences -- if there were some generalized laws of human behavior that could be laid down in the laboratory or classroom and applied to real life situations. But it is the existence of individual differences that provides the need as well as the central core of the human relations curriculum. Traditional education forgot about individual differences in academic learning for awhile,

and they are now correcting that oversight through the strong individualized education movement, complete with mentors, tutors, and advisors. Student personnel professionals would be ill-advised to abandon their individualized approaches to counseling and guidance in the new human relations curriculum, but on the other hand, today's counseling methods leave much to be desired. Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, most counseling is remedial in nature. It is concerned with shoring up weakness rather than building strength. Such an approach, whatever its merits -- and there are some -- does not lay an adequate base for the human relations curriculum. Most of the work on student development that has been a recent thrust of the ACPA is directly relevant to the task of counseling for strength, and some of the new developmental theories of scholars such as Perry and Kohlberg (see Cross, 1976, chapt. 6) provide especially promising foundations upon which to build.

A fourth methodology for the human relations curriculum is to be found in the T-group, sensitivity, encounter group movement. I debated for awhile as to whether these methods are not a version of experiential education, but I think the methods represent something rather different. Although T-group learning is direct and experiential as opposed to indirect and vicarious, the T-group methodology probably has more in common with academic learning than with experiential education. Indeed, one of the problems of the T-group is that an individual who behaves in an open, trusting manner in the laboratory atmosphere of the T-group does not always transfer these behaviors back to the reality of home or office. The T-group laboratory is an artificial, as opposed to a real life,

experience.

Despite the credibility problem of "sensitivity training" today, I think the conception of laboratory education as it was introduced by a group of scholars at Bethel, Maine in the 1940's is an appropriate model for the laboratory of the human relations curriculum. The T-group was created for the purpose of studying interpersonal interaction under laboratory conditions. As originally formulated, it was more akin to research than to training because the atmosphere in which the human interactions took place was artificially controlled by a set of rules that grew out of a substantial body of theory.

A strong human relations curriculum does need a research component. It may be that we should consider resurrecting the old conception of the T-group and laboratory education to see what use it has, if any, for further contribution to research and theory in interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, perhaps we have learned all we can learn from that particular model. Maybe the research components of the human relations curriculum await the creation of some new theory and a new kind of laboratory in which to test it.

A fifth methodology is beginning to make its appearance in human relations curricula. For want of a better term, I shall simply call these new methods "structured exercises." They have their counterpart in the mathematics problems and the case studies of the more traditional curriculum. Their purpose is to give practice in solving problems. Here I refer to such exercises as the human potential seminars which are designed to give practice

in self-confidence and self-regarding behavior. There is also assertiveness training designed to give leadership practice to women accustomed to playing supportive roles. In addition, there are values clarification exercises designed to give practice in thinking through some of the personal and moral issues of our times. The new techniques of simulation, role-playing, and gaming are also problem-solving exercises that have the potential for making pedagogical contributions to human relations curricula.

Finally, there is a sixth methodology which should be included in the implementation of the new curriculum. Let us call it skills training. I am thinking here of the use of microteaching and microcounseling techniques that attempt to break complex human relations abilities into component skills. Human relations skills training has its counterpart in such traditional educational skills as typing, vocabulary development, music, or surgery. It is now apparent that the teaching skill of "asking probing questions", for example, can be directly taught and that people can make significant improvement with practice. Likewise, there is evidence that the counseling skill of empathy can be developed and improved with practice.

These six methodologies form a strong foundation for the articulation and further development of a curriculum in personal development and interpersonal relations. The student personnel profession has had experience with experiential education, with academic methods, with counseling and tutoring methods, with the laboratory methods of T-groups, with the problem-solving exercises of assertiveness training and values clarification, and with skills

training such as microteaching and microcounseling. When all of these educational methods are pulled together and directed toward the common end of helping people to relate more effectively to people, it is encouraging to see how much of the new curriculum already exists.

If women educators are to create the future, one place to start is with the dedication of each woman educator in this room to the identification of a contribution that she can make to the profession. The shopping list is long because the needs are great and unfilled. But among them are these:

- 1) To take the leadership in defining objectives and evaluating the experiential learning of student leaders or of students working on community projects.

- 2) To offer to work with a faculty member on the design of an internship or field-study component related to interpersonal functioning.

- 3) To design and to teach a credit-bearing course on personal or interpersonal development.

- 4) To raise the policy issue of the responsibility of your institution to attack directly the problem of preparing students to live in a society highly dependent on human interaction.

- 5) To engage in a self-study program designed to make you a knowledgeable resource on a new teaching-learning technique in the human relations curriculum -- simulation, gaming, experiential education, counseling for strength, microteaching, human potential seminars.

- 6) To write a dissertation on the relationship of knowledge

in one of the social sciences to the design of education for personal or interpersonal development.

7) To plan or to attend an in-service workshop directed toward increasing the capacity of student personnel professionals to plan and to teach human relations courses.

8) To think about what you personally can do beyond the day-to-day administration of your job to create the kind of future that you would like to see.

NAWDAC has had a long and glorious tradition of providing leadership for the professions. Let us hope that the women educators of NAWDAC will continue to create the future.

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