

# Martin Sarkar

## Reflective Journals

1. July 7th, 2013:

The Ethical Questions: Guidance:

I reflect upon the OSCA Ethical Guidelines for Ontario counselors focusing on the roles, expectations for professional competence and conduct.

2. July 11th, 2013

I reflect upon the Chapter #2, "Diverse Students, Community and Schools" from the Schmidt textbook and on the cultural lens that can affect the decisions of a school.

3. July 18th, 2013

4. July 25th, 2013

5. July 29th, 2013

## Questions raised as I read:

1. Is race and ethnicity the same thing?
2. How prepared am I to work with young people with gender-identity issues in Ontario schools?
3. How far must a school go to ensure that all cultures are not only respected, but showcased within the school?
4. What biases do I have that shape my teaching and the treatment of others? Are they barriers?

## Final thoughts...

I must admit I was a tad intimidated by the content in this chapter as it delved quite deep into the theoretical. Yet, learning more about the "concepts of culture" provided a backdrop to explore the issues facing counselors as they work with children from varying backgrounds, beliefs and even sexual orientation. As a person who considers himself schooled as a "worldview" thinker, my view points will continue to broaden based upon my experiences and may clash with traditions and stereotypes, mindsets

"Today, the school counseling profession is attempting to formulate a more proactive stance. It is moving from the reactive posture of past decades to a more programmatic stance for the future." (Schmidt, p. 27)



i. Schmidt, John J., (2008) . "Counseling in Schools: Comprehensive Programs of Responsive Services for All Students, Fifth Edition", Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

## A Diverse Learning Group.

I took the picture above during our annual Terry Fox run and noted the heterogeneous collection of water bottles that quickly amassed on the ledge of the building. Despite carrying the same life-giving fluid, all the bottles were unique in design. This image resonated for me as I read Chapter #2 in our textbook as I fostered a deeper understanding of the task facing guidance counselors today: that counselors need to address (and champion!) the needs of a wider audience of children and embrace the diversity that characterizes so many schools in Ontario. At the same time, a counselor is called to find a unifying thread to bring a diverse group of learners and staff together without falling into the common traps I've seen where schools host their "culture of the month" events. How can we go beyond this simple awareness program and delve deeper into what connects us a body of learners? As was articulated by Schmidt, schools often mirror the traditions and belief systems of the dominant culture. Imagine the challenge a counselor would face if she came from an entirely different culture or ascribed by a different set of norms? Gender roles even vary from culture to culture. Those roles that are defined by one culture could be radically different from another - and could come into question by the culture that may dominate a school.

Our school is located in an area predominately "white", middle to upper class people, although the landscape of the school is changing. In a relatively short time, a number of East-Asian immigrants have settled in the area and have elected to send their children to our school. While there has been little rumblings in the community, our school faces the task to become more multicultural competent. That is, the staff needs to examine their best practices and go beyond the awareness stage. Schmidt states that an "awareness is complemented by a sincere effort to learn about other cultures". Again, the counselor is in an excellent position to launch programs with this effort.