

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

I reflect upon the Ministry's Ontario Curriculum Exemplars for Guidance and Career Education (Grade 10) as I worked to complete my Culminating Project

4. July 25th, 2013

I attempt to provide an answer to Schmidt's Question #4 posed at the end of Chapter One and the goal setting lesson as it applies to counselors.

5. July 29th, 2013

This reflection reveals my thoughts on counseling in the future and the pivotal role counselors play in schools now.

Where do I go from here?

(My next steps during and after this course)

1. Develop a broader knowledge of human development.
2. Meet with experienced and forward thinking counselors to explore some practical applications of the Schmidt principles.
3. Read more current information, documentation on counseling for the 21st century child (in two years, all K-8 schools will contain ONLY 21st century children!!!)
4. Make others aware that counseling is a noble challenge and pursue my specialist in Guidance!

"Counselors take into account and show prudent regard for the social codes and moral expectations of the communities within which they work and the ethno-cultural communities represented within that community." (OSCA, p. 14)

Social equality and individual responsibility are threatened by the disparity of wealth across segments of the U.S. population. Initiatives at local and national levels to move schools and students into the twenty-first century may be wasted unless we pay attention to the growing economic gap that divides this country. This gap is reflected in the "achievement gap" often cited in educational progress reports for the nation.

Schmidt, John J., (2008) . "Poverty". *Counseling in Schools: Comprehensive Programs of Responsive Services for All Students, Fifth Edition*. Boston: Pearson Education, p. 310.



Preparing children for a bright and positive future.

School counseling can no longer rely on its legacy for survival [...]. Counselors will be required to demonstrate their value to the overall education, welfare and development of students." Schmidt, p. 320

What will the future hold for our students? Will they still require the same level of counseling support to optimize their educational growth and ensure a life of success? Schmidt would unequivocally state a resounding "yes" to that question as he sees students facing a myriad of difficult conditions - and there seems to be little sign of it letting up any time soon. In my years of teaching, there seems to be an increase in the number of children with special, complicated needs that demands one pool from a wider skill set (to survive!). Arguably, this is due to better assessment practices, techniques and larger urban populations, including school sizes that have swollen to the several hundred body strong. Adding to this are children who suffer under abuse and, in turn, resort to violence as a means of addressing their own personal and social conflicts (Schmidt, p. 309). School counselors have to admit that the job of supporting these hurt children can't be performed by a single person, but then what? I'd like to see schools employ proactive policies that are firmly planted in a belief that all children can succeed and are responsible for their own actions. Tangible, practical ways of doing this would be to consistently and genuinely recognize student achievement (no matter the depth or breadth), student value and worth with a clear understanding of how decisions affect one's neighbour inside and outside of the school building. I envision a staff coming together and critically assess their parent and student community early in the year (or even before the start of classes in the Fall), reflect upon their own strengths and needs and develop an action plan that keeps student success at the forefront of any curriculum and curricular planning. With that in place, a counselor's role becomes so important and validated. Armed with the Ministry expectations, exemplars, ethical guidelines, counselors can serve to guide, yet to lead a team of colleagues into the 21st century. Schools are more than buildings. Counselors are more than support staff. They are at the forefront of evoking positive change in their schools provided that they are prepared to meet the ever-expanding demands of their communities.