

OUTCOMES IN COUNSELLOR EDUCATION

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If, as is widely accepted, the therapists' attitudes are the most important ingredient in therapy, can these attitudes be fostered in the education of therapists? Some evidence that this can be done has been presented in a series of publications involving the Counselor Attitude Scale developed by the author (Patterson, 1967, 1975; Nelson-Jones and Patterson, 1967). It can be questioned, however, whether the results of responses to a questionnaire actually represent attitudes. This paper presents a sampling of the free responses of students following a course emphasizing therapeutic attitudes.

Counselor education involves more than the imparting of facts and information. Counsellors must develop a philosophy and a system of beliefs. Natielo (1986, p. 342), in discussing the continued development of the theory and application of client-centered therapy, cited the need for "more effective training programs, integrating theoretical and experiential learning." Combs (1986, pp. 74-77) emphasizes the importance of counsellor beliefs in counsellor education. Again, in another place, Combs (1988, p. 267) writes: "If counsellors, like their clients, behave in terms of their belief systems, the acquisition of trustworthy belief systems must become a prime objective of educational programs.

The task of training must be seen as a problem in personal becoming rather than the traditional 'how to' concept." Thayer (1987) has presented a detailed statement of an introductory course in counsellor education touching on this problem.

For the past six years I have been teaching a course titled, "Advanced Theories of Counselling/Phenomenological". There are two texts for the course (Patterson, 1985, 1986), with an assignment in Rogers' "On Becoming a Person" (Rogers, 1961, Part II.) I meet with the students for 3 hours every other week (a total of 24 hours). A doctoral student meets with them in alternate weeks, providing paper-and-pencil exercises, tapes and films and discussion. There is no experiential group or skill training component, as in Thayer's (1987) course. For the first 3 years, Nil Moore was the co-instructor; currently it is Suzanne Freeman.

Cain (1986, p. 373) suggests that if we are to learn from our student "teachers," we must encourage our students to disclose their learnings to us. At the end of the semester, our students are asked (as a "take home" examination) to respond to two questions: "What, if anything, have you learned from this course? Will it make any difference in your

personal or professional life?" Several unedited responses follow, with the permission of the students.

Karen C. Havens

I do not know whether adults naturally grow psychologically and spiritually the way a child grows physically, but four years ago I began a journey that has turned out to be one of the most intense and significant growing spurts of my life. It began, seemingly, unintentionally. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time that my mind began to expand; slowly at first, and then accelerating; turning inward and outward all in the same breath in an effort to explore new territory. This growth is psychological and spiritual, which are two aspects of my being that seem inseparable. Psychological development, as I perceive it, implies a spiritual evolution as well. I slowly began to search for a better, broader way of seeing things; towards a way of being and thinking that would provide more fertile ground for my psychological and social development. I searched for an approach to life that would maximize the quality of my existence and interactions with others. I am not sure what precipitated this journey but I remember a gnawing at my spirit about attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions that I both personally experienced and observed in other people. I began to experience a dawning awareness of incongruity between how I felt living should be approached and conducted and what I perceived was actually happening in my life and the lives of others. Perhaps wanderlust triggered the journey; wanderlust for the age-old quest for goodness, rightness, and abundant living. Then again, maybe I had an urge for what is referred to as self-actualization. I am not sure. But apparently, just below conscious awareness, I knew something was not right. Something was out there wanting me to discover it. This "something" involved me and other people, and I meant to find it.

Feelings of restlessness accompanied this journey because of my awareness that certain attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions tended to bind human spirits and cause needless trouble, anxiety, and confusion in social interactions. Furthermore, I felt that there existed an approach to life guided by principles which freed human spirits; an approach girded by attitudes and philosophies that created arable environments for maximum human functioning and happiness. The restlessness was compounded by my inability to identify and define misalignments I continued to experience in my own life and observe in the lives of others. I could point out attitudes, behaviours, specifically identify why I did not like them or what was wrong about them. I felt the need to specifically identify these dislikes and flaws. I wanted to start intentionally steering myself away from damaging and suppressive attitudes, behaviors, and interactions. I felt that my navigation was, and would continue to be, a hit and miss proposition until I could discern harmful characteristics in social and psychological functioning. Oddly enough what I needed, as I discovered later, were words. Words, and their respective definitions, which clarify and distinguish harmful and beneficial elements in attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions.

It has often seemed strange and interesting to me - and sometimes rather spooky - how and when answers come; and even what form they take. The words and definitions that I

needed to identify and define the misalignments I had sensed came to me - unexpectedly and timely - in this course. They explained the incongruity I felt between how I thought living should be approached and conducted and what I perceived was actually happening. They created a clear distinction in my mind between harmful and beneficial elements in psychological and social functioning. They calmed my restlessness.

Those words and definitions represent the concepts and principles of Rogerian theory. They describe three core conditions - empathic understanding, respect, and genuineness which I believe are necessary conditions for an approach to life that frees human spirits and creates arable environments for maximum human functioning, happiness, and actualized human potential. I also believe that these core conditions can eliminate much psychological and social pathology.

I can now *intentionally* navigate psychologically and socially to change what I want to change in myself. I can provide what I want to provide to others more effectively. I can also go where I want to go more expediently, without it being a hit and miss proposition. There are, of course, many aspects of empathic understanding, respect, and genuineness that I will continue to define throughout my life. At least I now know *what to refine*. I know what to work toward to provide the best possible psychological world for myself and others. I can continue my journey; but with a compass.

Significant Learnings - Kathy Gramley

As I consider the way this course has changed my life, it may be the counselling relationship which is the critical issue and how I feel about its importance for the success of therapy. Carl Rogers expressed my feelings and fears perfectly in *On Becoming A Person*, when he said in his early professional years, he was asking the question, "How can I treat, or cure, or change this person?" Those are the same questions which have been going over and over in my mind as I have been doing my internship and approaching the completion of my degree and actually "doing" counselling. After years of experience Rogers said a better question is, "How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for his or her own personal growth?" This same question is one we could ask concerning all human relationships, not just counselling relationships. This type of relationship which enables the other person to discover within herself or himself the capacity to grow, change and develop is effective in marriage, parenting, friendship, the work environment and in organizational work. This approach can be useful in international understanding and conflict resolution, as Carl Rogers demonstrated. Now I know counselling isn't anything I do, it is something I am, or hope to be-- caring, empathic and congruent.

When writing about the significant learnings I have acquired in this course, I am taking the freedom to define "significant learnings" as those learnings which I feel will be significant for me - those learnings which I feel will influence my counselling.

In the theories course which I took two semesters ago, it was the client-centered approach which seemed to say all those things about people and counselling which I believed.

Among the things I like about the client-centered approach is that self-actualization, a common goal of all people, is the ultimate goal of counselling. An individual has within himself or herself the capacity and the tendency, latent if not evident, to move toward that self-actualization. I selected this course in order to gain a better understand of Carl Rogers' way of counselling. My most significant learnings are things I have learned about the client-centered approach.

- I have learned that providing the core conditions for a facilitative interpersonal relationship can be difficult.

- I have learned that diagnosis is necessary when using the client-centered approach only to determine whether the client's emotional disturbance is psychological and if it can be helped by psychotherapy.

- I have learned that assessment in the client-centered approach should benefit the client and not focus on what the counsellor can do to the client.

- I have learned that the client-centered approach can be used for cross-cultural counselling.

- I have learned that a facilitative interpersonal relationship is not only necessary, but is the sufficient condition for positive personality and behavior change.

- I have learned that not only change, but the amount of personality or behavior change is dependent on the degree to which the counsellor is able to provide the core conditions (empathy, respect and genuineness) for the therapeutic relationship

In conclusion, I think learning about "The Therapeutic Relationship: Foundations for an Eclectic Psychotherapy", was significant because I have a feeling it will be my "handbook" for counselling. Thank you, Dr. Patterson.

This semester I "sat at the feet" of the renowned and client-centered professor and writer, Dr. C. H. Patterson, who has been described as more Rogerian than Carl Rogers. This was my reason for taking the course. I entered this path in my life too late to hear Carl Rogers in person, and am grateful for this opportunity to experience the next best thing!

Changes and Insights - Rudell A. Lawrence

In thinking about some of the changes that have taken place in me over the duration of this course and as a result of this course, they have not been dramatic nor earthshaking, but subtle, gentle and comfortable.

This course was a beautiful experience to have, especially since it was not expected. The course has helped me become less didactic, less fearful, and more trusting in my dealings with my grown children. I am not yet at a place where I am doing internships in the program, but I find that the philosophical basis of the phenomenological approach

embraced by our professor can be used almost like a blueprint for living one's everyday life, and given a true change, the rewards can be very satisfactory. Before, I found it difficult not to rush into situations my children were dealing with, and try to make it better. Now, I restrain myself and let them handle their own lives, as I can now allow myself to trust that they can. This is not an easy thing for me at all because I have a strong nurturing personality. The nurturing part of me has gone through a change also. It is evolving from the sympathetic to the empathetic which will allow me to be a more beneficial counsellor. This course has helped me to understand that entering another's frame of reference and listening to them is much more helpful than saying, "I know how you feel," and trying to do something about a situation myself. By listening, this enables another to take actions to come to their own resolutions. I now believe the only lasting real fix comes from within the person themselves, and cannot be accomplished from without. The kind of counsellor I would have become without this course would have been an entirely different one. So I can honestly say that this has not only changed me in the present but will have lasting effects on the way I conduct myself professionally in the future. Sort of a future change. I probably would have been more of the teaching, directing kind of counsellor without having taken this course. My future clients thank you.

Besides the beneficial changes in me and my relationships, I feel it has been a pleasure and an honor to have been a part of this class. I know we have been fortunate in having Dr. C.H. Patterson for our professor, and I will always count myself fortunate to have been present to hear what he had to say and to tape a great deal of it to listen to later.

I have learned most importantly, that if in one's relationships and dealing with other people we treat them as capable, valuable, responsible, and trustworthy, that the majority of the time our beliefs will be confirmed. I have also learned what a personally freeing philosophy the person-centered counselling approach really is. One of the things that kind of put me off from the profession was that I thought I must take responsibility for the lives or problems of clients; now that I believe they must take responsibility for their own lives, choices, and actions, I believe I will be of far greater service and help to them without carrying an unbearable burden.

I can truly say the most significant thing that I have learned in this course is that a warm, accepting, and caring relationship is the most helpful, curative, beneficial and healing thing of all. I think it took a while for this to really sink in, and I think it is truly remarkable that this is true, I will always wonder at it, it was a wonderful discovery. Thank you for the rest of my life.

These may not be the kinds of significant learnings you might have been asking about, for they are not necessarily book learnings. We have surely been exposed to many different theories. But, these were the most important learnings to me because they were truly personalized internally; they are the kind of learnings that last. That was one of the significant things about this course. We really acquired something special, a philosophy to guide our lives.

What I Have Learned and How It Affects My Personal and Professional Life
- Darlene Hopkins

The learning that took place, for me, in C.H. Patterson's course in counselling theories was phenomenal. I am not exaggerating, when I say that I cannot remember a single course where I learned more. I learned about several counselling theories. I learned names and approaches to associate with them. I feel that I can converse about various theories with confidence in my familiarity with them. This learning took place from my reading, from the discussions and films in the class, and from the lectures.

I learned the differences between the various theories. I learned that some methods of psychotherapy focus on cognition, some on behavior, and some on affect. I learned about the disagreements in the profession over the best way to work with a client. Of much more importance than the differences between the theories is what I learned about their similarities.

I believe that, in this course, I learned what makes psychotherapy work. I gained a real understanding of what Carl Rogers' core conditions are and why they are the foundation of every psychotherapy that helps people function better. I now understand the theory behind client-centered counselling and I am now familiar with the research that supports it.

I wrote a paper for the class, in which I explored the similarities between Jungian psychotherapy and Rogerian psychotherapy. I didn't start out looking for similarities when reading "A Way of Being by Rogers" and "Memories, Dreams and Reflections" by Jung. I read the writings of both therapists just to be familiar with them, but I was struck again and again by how Jung practiced the core conditions in his therapy. Since then, in reading about other approaches, I see the similarity. It seems to me that psychotherapy is effective to the extent that it incorporates the core conditions. This learning, that the core conditions are what makes psychotherapy work, is of immense value to me as a counsellor. I want to be the best counsellor I can be and I now know that to the extent that I develop my ability to be empathetic, warm, accepting, and genuine, my ability to enter the perceptual world of the client - I will be effective. I want to learn as much about human behavior as I possible can, I want to know what other therapists have done with other clients that seemed to help. BUT, I know that such knowledge is not what will make my therapy helpful; it is my capacity to form therapeutic relationships that will be effective.

This philosophy of counselling says three important things: that people grow and heal when they have unconditional acceptance, that you can trust the actualizing tendency in people to draw them towards health, and that each individual's perception of the world is unique and totally valid for that person. If I accept those things for my counselling practice, and I do, then I have to realize that they are no less true in my personal life. Embracing this philosophy, changes the way I relate to other people. I am the mother of

teen-aged daughters. Relating to them as if I believed that their perceptions and feelings are valid, and that they can be trusted to develop into healthy adults, and treating them with unconditional positive regard, is a challenge, which I face on a daily basis. I know that I will be an effective mother to the extent that I am able to treat them this way.

My experience in this course has been extremely valuable to me, both professionally and personally. I have gained academic knowledge and I have gained knowledge that enriches my personal life, as well.

Personal Learnings - David John Bergen

I have a personal belief that true learning does not really involve facts and theories at all, but symbolizes a way of living. Certainly one must acquire information about the world and oneself, yet true learning is how we process this information and what we do with it. It is also my belief that there are two types of classes. One type of class is a means to an end, such as credit towards a degree. In the other type of class the means is the end. Our class is this second type and has been full of true learning for me. I could write down all the bits of information I got from the books, but then what would that tell you? I have enjoyed the readings and am looking forward to spending more time with the eclectic psychotherapy book over Christmas. I want to include within this paper the process I have gained from the stimulation I received in both classes, yours and Suzanne's. Process is difficult to objectify and put on paper, but I will try.

I leave our time together with a greater sense of who I am as a counsellor. During my Master's program I was inundated with theoretical foundations that offer tremendous cognitive appeal, but did little in my work with clients. In fact, I rejected all schools of therapy and did what I felt was the most facilitative with the client. It was through this process that I came to consider myself client-centered in approach. This is also my approach to life. Life to me is relationships with others and it has taken me a long time to begin to be able to develop these connections. Counselling has facilitated my process toward full functioning while I was able to enable someone else. We learn together. I have gained a new clarity in my observations of myself in working with clients. It is through this process that I am able to develop and grow and become more effective as a facilitator.

I am very aware of the rare moments when I leave a class with things to reflect upon and to process with myself. This class has offered me these rare and valued gifts which I take hungrily. I felt as though each week built upon the previous one and that the road of discovery travels in all directions with no ends that are beyond choice. We do control our destiny and are able to face the forks in the road. Sometimes we need support as we travel along the path and in time we are not only able to walk alone, but can support someone else. It is a gift that you can give to others while also keeping it for yourself.

The philosophies that we discussed in class represent a lifestyle that I continually work to achieve, both personally and professionally. The issue of responsibility has been the most difficult for me to process. As I move through life, I catch myself assuming responsibility

for those who are able to assume this by themselves. I work toward allowing them to be who they are, as I do for myself. It is not easy, but I am more able to let go both of them and myself. And as I am able to let go, I get even closer.

I want to express so much, but the words get in the way. I take much from the class and am truly sad it is over. I do not say this about my other classes! You both carry messages that a lot of people are not ready for or are unable to hear. I am sure that I have missed many. My point here is that I have heard quite a few and thank you for them, the others will come to me later. You have given me the gift that keeps on giving as the value you have for it increases. Thanks again.

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