

STUDENT PERSONNEL WORK AND ACADEMIC ADVISING: SOME PHILOSOPHICAL CONCERNS

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... being educated ... is like setting off on an expedition into the jungle. Gradually most of the things you know disappear. The old birds fly out of the sky and new ones fly in which you've never seen before. And everything surprises you. Trees you expected to be just a few feet high grow right up over you. I think education is simply the process of being taken by surprise, don't you see? (Shaffer, 1958, p.33).

Having once lived in a jungle, I feel particularly competent in elaborating on this inciteful passage quoted by Hardee and Mayhew (1970). The analogy of comparing college to a jungle is not inappropriate. There is no pejorative connotation, rather, there is a comparison based on mystery, surprise and fulfillment. Going through a jungle can be a wonderful experience. There is so much to be learned not only about the jungle, but also about yourself as you move through it. The deeper you penetrate the jungle the more it thickens with a corresponding increase in complexity. There are countless wonders and magnificent sights to be seen and understood. A jungle however, is also full of dangers. Indeed the mysteries, beauty and danger of a jungle oftentimes combine in such a way that one becomes so enraptured or lost that one may lose touch not only with one's own identity, but also with the reality of the world that surrounds the jungle. In most instances a guide is needed for the uninitiated in traveling through it. This guide not only helps in avoiding the jungle's many dangers and pitfalls in reaching the destination, but if he is a good one, he also points out and explains its mysteries as one goes along. Generally speaking, he facilitates the continuing sequences of surprises along the way. Of course there are the exceptional few who can get through a jungle on their own without being harmed and who also come to understand it; most people however need a guide. It should also be noted that going through a jungle can be an onerous journey, but there is usually a sense of accomplishment (even if it is only one of survival) when one reaches his destination. In most cases the experience also rewards the traveler with a fuller understanding not only of the jungle but also himself. Traveling through a jungle changes the person not only for having learned and experienced new things, but also for developing a feeling of competence in many ways to live in and cope with the world beyond.

The college experience is quite similar to the jungle experience. The student enters college not really knowing what to expect. From the very beginning he is awed by the surprises of increasing complexity. And if he is not careful, not only will he miss much of what is happening to him and around him, but he may also fall to one of the dangers or pitfalls. Thus a guide is called for to facilitate his travel through the world of academia. This guide is the academic advisor, who not only sees that the student fulfills the requirements for graduation, but if he is a good advisor, stimulates and lends to a fuller education for the student.

This paper is concerned with academic advising as it relates to the student and college. Just as there are reasons that a person needs a guide through a jungle, there are reasons that a student needs a guide through college, and this

paper addresses this need for academic advisors. The relationship between academic advising and teaching will also be examined. This will then be related to the purposes and goals of the institution and the role that academic advising plays in helping the institution reach its educational mission. The significance of this for the student personnel worker, I trust, will become obvious. Before we can touch on these questions, though, it will be necessary to present a descriptive analysis of academic advising followed by a presentation of predominant philosophies which guide institutions in their educational endeavor.

DEFINITIONS AND ANALYSIS

The role of academic advising is viewed in the context of what the contemporary college is: a complex organization of social structures and processes called a college or university in which diverse students enter to be developed in such a way that they will come to possess qualities that are desired by those who support and those who operate the organization. There is some theory, implicit and explicit, which guides the activities of the college in the way students are to be changed (Sanford, 1962). This definition relates to the purpose of this paper, to examine the relationship between the guiding theory of the college or university and academic advising.

In the interest of definitional clarity the difference between faculty advising and counseling should be pointed out. The differentiation used by Hardee and Mayhew (1970) is the most concise. Faculty advising is defined as that activity carried out by members of the teaching faculty in assisting students with their educational, vocational, and personal concerns at a defined level of competence. Counseling on the other hand consists of the utilization of specifically trained and experienced persons in the areas of educational, psychological or clinical counseling procedures. The former emphasizes facilitation or assistance while the latter primarily deals with therapeutic concerns. While this elucidation should be kept in mind, it is possible to talk of academic advising in a general nature without making reference to this differentiation.

It is argued that on an analytical level academic advising can be viewed as a tri-dimensional activity as put forth by Hardee and Mayhew (1970) without emphasizing faculty advising as those authors do.

1) The first dimension: Discovering the purposes of the institution in its teaching-learning mission. An understanding of the goals of general and professional education can be achieved within these purposes. Requisites for the advisors' understanding of these include knowledge of departments and their inter-relationships, knowledge of inter-disciplinary endeavor, information about introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses, and productive inquiry. Basically what must be understood is how the content of the individual courses and the method for their teaching come to produce the desired end.

2) The second dimension: Understanding the purposes of the student, that his goals are a blend of interests, needs, abilities, family expectations, and cultural influence.

3) The third dimension: Fostering the growth of the student by a review of possibilities for facilitating the student's learning and the promotion of these in cooperation with him.

These three dimensions are necessary if academic advising is to facilitate the students' growth in wisdom, in the appreciation for, exercise of, and integration of knowledge.

PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATION

As stated in our definition of a college, there is always some theory of education, implicit or explicit, which guides the activities of the institution in the way students are to be changed. To fully understand the college and the activities which go on in it, such as academic advising, these theories must be elucidated. These philosophies can be classified on a continuum ranging from rationalism at the conservative end through neo-humanism to instrumentalism at the liberal end (Hardee, 1959). Figure I is included as a descriptive aid in understanding the relative position of each philosophy.

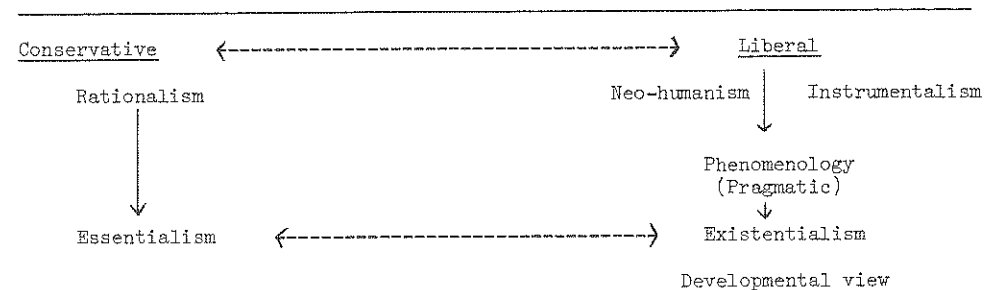


Figure I. Relationships of philosophies.

The rationalist program seeks to develop its intellectual virtues through a set of first principles including the good, the beautiful and the true. A prescribed curriculum is thus designated dealing with that referred to as metaphysics. The prototype of rationalism is the Great Books curriculum.

The neo-humanist program is based on a unity found in the cultural heritage of western civilization. With a dual recognition of the importance of mind and body, the curriculum is divided into the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. While primary orientation is towards subject-matter content, some interest in personal development exists.

The unity of the third program, instrumentalism, is centered upon the individual student. This philosophy of individualism is concerned with the full development of the individual in the development of society. The curricula, in attempting to provide for individual differences, consists of broad electives, experimental in nature, which have a relativist orientation, pragmatic in aspects of operation. An institution which is instrumentalist in nature provides not only subject-matter content but also personal, social, and vocational guidance for its

students. In short, the overriding consideration is that everything should render the fullest possible benefit to students.

A philosophical position which appears to draw from both the neo-humanist and the instrumentalist approaches is phenomenology. This position originated in an effort to deal with the inabilities of scientism. Its emphasis is on the subjective world of experience as the ultimate ground of reality. In essence, each individual must be viewed in his totality as he exists within his unique world. Individual worth, freedom, and humane concerns are stressed. This lends itself to a pragmatic view which holds that truth is modified as discoveries are made and is relative to the time, place, and purpose of inquiry (Penney, 1972).

The foregoing philosophical positions are all part of a fundamental issue: essentialism versus existentialism. Essentialists are concerned with what is permanent, rational, certain, which go on beyond time and place. A standard exists by which all is judged. This may be a divine being, nature, or humanity, but it is never the solitary being of individual man. The existentialists, however, center their attention on man qua man. They view the vitality in philosophy or education as efforts to give rational form to a vision which must be intensely personal. Unlike the essentialists who view the ends as crucial, the existentialists emphasize means (Penney, 1972).

With regard to pedagogy, the essentialists contend that there is a specific body of knowledge to be taught and learned. Since human nature is viewed as essentially the same in every epoch, tradition, history, and experience become worthy teachers. As a consequence, they emphasize the disciplines and protect the departmentalization in college organizations. Subject-matter and standards are prerequisites which are maintained and pursued in set sequences. Essentialist pedagogy thus stresses the accumulative side.

The existentialists, on the other hand, stress the affective side. That which is to be learned is coupled with how the learner takes the learning. What is heard, rather than what is told, takes on the most significance. The end for students to which knowledge is a means is the finding of identity and the capacity for good judgment (Penney, 1972). It will be shown later how this fits the development view.

ADVISING AND TEACHING

The central activities of a college are teaching and learning. These two activities carried on by the teacher and the student are the reasons that colleges exist. While some may view that teaching is nothing more than the implantation of facts; I believe it is more, in the words of Nathan Pusey:

...the teacher's task is not to implant facts but to place the subject to be learned in front of the learner and through sympathy, emotion, imagination, and patience, to awaken in the learner the restless drive for answers and insights which enlarge the personal life and give it meaning (Hardee, 1961, p. 114).

This role of teaching is without a doubt in harmony with our previously cited definition of faculty advising, the activity carried on by teaching faculty in assisting students with their educational, vocational, and personal concerns. If

one accepts that college is centrally concerned with the growth of each student towards wisdom and intellectual maturity, academic advising is simply an extension of teaching. Academic advising is thus viewed in support of this main effort for it is a conscious concern for the academic and educational questions that most students have about the importance of their studies, the proper direction of their educational development, and the practical value of their educational objective (Robinson, 1958).

Some may question why this is important. Indeed some may feel it is a given that teaching and advising are in harmony. The answer is impersonalization. This has come to be a main characteristic of higher education in America. In fact this has been a characteristic for years in the history of higher education, especially since the German model of research has been predominant in the growth of large state universities. In 1910, the greatest weakness of American higher education was referred to in Williamson (1961) as the loss of the personal relationship between student and institution.

Impersonalization can be overcome by the integrating effort of academic advising. The hypothesis here is that if integration takes place, then impersonalization will decline. Through academic advising as the integrating factor between guidance, instruction, and administration, these main aspects of a college will become focused jointly on the aims of education. This is because the goals of the institution could be better reached when the objectives of administrators, faculty members, and personnel workers merge into singleness of purpose (Brunson, 1959). It has been assumed here that a goal of any institution would be to minimize impersonalization.

ADVISING AND THE INSTITUTION

The point of this discussion is that academic advising is an essential part of the activity of colleges and universities. It is a central aspect of the educational process that involves the teacher and the learner.

An underlying assumption of the paper has been that if a college or university is to have an effective advisory program then it must have a clear guiding philosophy. In other words, the philosophy that guides the institution in its educational function must be properly understood so that an advisory program can exist which will be consistent with and reflective of that philosophy in the attainment of the institution's educational goals. Thus preliminary questions of what responsibilities towards its students the institution is and is not willing to assume must be asked and answered. Without a clear formulation of philosophy, the advising program (not to mention the whole of the institution) will determine policy through expedience. Without a basic philosophy, the climate for an effective and intelligent advisory program cannot exist. Only when an institution is fully cognizant and genuinely committed to the underlying principles of its existence can an advisory program and the institution as a whole function properly to fulfill its educational mission.

PRESCRIPTIVE VERSUS DEVELOPMENTAL ADVISING

This author firmly believes that there are developmental tasks which most students face upon entering college and that these tasks must receive the utmost attention of the college teacher. The Committee on the Student in Higher Education

(1968) outlined the following three developmental tasks: 1) each student needs to acquire a positive and realistic conception of his own abilities in the world at large, 2) each student needs to reach the point of being able to see the structures and interrelations of knowledge so that he may begin the process of forming judgments on his own, and 3) each student needs to see the relevance of higher learning to the quality of his own life and to see that life in relation to the new kinds of judgments he now makes.

As has been previously stated in an implicit and explicit manner, the academic advising program of an institution is related to the overriding philosophy of that institution. It appears that the traditional relationship that exists between the academic advisor and the student on most campuses has been an essentialist one in nature. Since there are essential sequences to be met the relationship between academic advisor and student has been of a prescriptive nature. The relationship is based on authority resting in the advisor who tells the student to do certain things to overcome certain problems.

As has been stated, each student entering college faces certain developmental tasks. Facing these is what education is all about. This is an existentialist position which views the numbers of lectures given, the procedures and arrangements employed, the amount of material covered, the statement of rules and procedures are significant only to the extent that they help students find an identity and develop a capacity for good judgment.

To help face these developmental tasks, a developmental relationship of academic advising as teaching should be followed. This developmental relationship is according to Crookston (1972) based upon "the belief that the relationship itself is one which the academic advisor and the student differentially engage in a series of developmental tasks, the successful completion of which results in varying degrees of learning by both parties (p. 13)."

An essentialist philosophy, as has been noted, underlies the prescriptive relationship in academic advising while an existentialist philosophy underlies the developmental relationship. To aid in the comparison of these two relationships, Table I has been included. This table compares the central components of the relationship between the academic advisor and the student that differentiates prescriptive and developmental approaches to advising.

CONCLUSION

It has been shown that academic advising is intricately involved with the overall philosophy of the college and university. Indeed it is linked with the central activities on campus, teaching and learning.

The compatibility of student personnel work with an existentialist philosophy of academic advising is, I believe, quite obvious. The underlying assumption is that college student personnel administration includes any person in the college applying knowledge and skills derived from the behavioral and social sciences to further the education of students. The implication derived from this, since the roles are compatible, is that a student personnel worker should become directly involved with existential academic advising. In this way a vital linkage could be constructed which could help bridge the gap between teaching, learning and student personnel work on today's college campus.

TABLE I

Contrasting Dimensions of Prescriptive and Developmental Approaches
to Advising

In terms of	Prescriptive	Developmental
Abilities	Focus on limitations	Focus on potentialities
Motivation	Students are lazy, need prodding	Students are active, striving
Rewards	Grades, credit, income	Achievement, mastery, acceptance, status, recognition, fulfillment
Maturity	Immature, irrespon- sible, must be closely supervised and carefully checked	Growing, maturing, responsible, capable of self-direction
Initiative	Advisor takes initiative on ful- filling requirements; rest up to student	Either or both may take initiative
Control	By advisor	Negotiated
Responsibility	By advisor to advise By student to act	Negotiated
Learning output	Primarily in student	Shared
Evaluation	By advisor to student	Collaborative
Relationship	Based on status, strategies, games, low trust	Based on nature of task, competencies, situation, high trust

Source: Burns B. Crookston, "A Developmental View of Academic Advising As Teaching," p. 14.

In our opening analogy college was viewed as a jungle. This paper contends that a student needs an academic advisor as he moves through college just as one needs a guide to travel through the jungle. This guide could be of an essentialist philosophy viewing advising as a prescriptive function in avoiding the dangers and pitfalls of college. On the other hand, this advisor could be of an existentialist philosophy attempting to help the student move through college by establishing a developmental task relationship. Similarly a guide could just get one through the jungle safely or a guide could not only do this, but hopefully also help the traveler in coming to understand the surprises along the way and to be a more fully rewarded person once his journey through the jungle is finished.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Lynn D. Luckow was graduated from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, in 1971 with a B.A. degree in German and English. For the past two years he was employed by UND as an academic advisor in the University's freshman division, and also received experience in financial aid, registrar, and admissions counseling. He is presently working on his masters in College Student Personnel Administration and serving as a fraternity graduate scholarship advisor for the Indiana chapter of Delta Upsilon Fraternity.

PLACEMENT REPORT FOR INDIANA UNIVERSITY 1972-73 GRADUATES IN COLLEGE STUDENT PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

The student personnel job market was not as tight this year as it appeared to be last spring. Jobs were available; in fact, many candidates had choices to make in accepting a position. Of the 52 graduates with a major in CSPA, 40 were employed in positions in institutions of higher education. Four more accepted positions in industrial or governmental agencies. Of the remainder of the graduates, four chose specific locations to be with their spouses, two rejected job offers, and one joined a family business. There were no reports from some of these persons; only three definitely reported non-placement.

Conventions aided most in job-finding this year leading to 15 graduates' obtaining positions. Other placements were made through personal contacts with schools (9), the department office and faculty (7), former acquaintances in student personnel positions (7), professional bulletins (3), and the Residence Life staff (3).

A majority of positions (22) included some residence hall responsibilities and provided remuneration in room and/or board as well as salary. Mean adjusted income for such positions was \$10,628.31, compared with mean incomes of \$11,003.50 for government positions and \$10,112.94 for positions without hall responsibilities. The mean income for all positions was \$10,459.00, which is in line with former years' incomes, \$10,645.00 for 1972 and \$10,044.00 for 1971.

Listed below are the 1972-73 graduates and their present positions:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION AND INSTITUTION</u>
Barnett, Deborah Ann	Head Coordinator Residence Life Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana
Browning, Pamela	Assistant for Student Development Florida Tech. Orlando, Florida
Burrows, Dan	Director of Student Activities Southwest Community College Chicago, Illinois
Colantonio, Corinne	Panhellenic Adviser Iowa State University Ames, Iowa
Dean, Diane	Area Coordinator University of Miami Coral Gables, Florida
Dean, Judith	Counselor Indiana Rehabilitation Services Indianapolis, Indiana