The Professional Identity of Contributors to the *Journal of Counseling & Development*: Does It Matter?

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R. K. Goodyear (2000) criticized the methodology and results of a study which demonstrated that during the editorial terms of Goodyear (1984-1990) and Claiborn (1990-1993) there was a trend toward publishing articles written by psychologists as opposed to counselors in the *Journal of Counseling & Development* (JCD). The issue of journal content goes to the heart of professional identity. The authors assert that professional affiliation of contributors matters less than the content of the articles published in JCD (i.e., articles must "speak" the language of counselors and not the language of some other mental health professional).

In the fall 1998 issue, the *Journal of Counseling & Development* published an article titled "Publication Patterns of *The Personnel and Guidance Journal/Journal of Counseling & Development*: 1978 to 1993" by Weinrach, Justig, Chan, and Thomas. One focus of our analysis was the affiliation of the contributors during the editorial terms of James Barclay, Volumes 57-62 (1978-1984); Rodney Goodyear, Volumes 63-68 (1984-1990); and Charles Claiborn, Volumes 69-71 (1990-1993). We found an increasing trend during the editorships of Goodyear and Claiborn in *The Personnel and Guidance Journal (P&GJ)/Journal of Counseling & Development (JCD)* toward publishing articles written by psychologists as opposed to counselors and counselor educators. The purpose of this present article is to address some of the concerns our colleague and friend Goodvear (2000) raised in his article "An Unwarranted Escalation of Counselor-Counseling Psychologist Professional Conflict: Comments on Weinrach, Justig, Chan, and Thomas (1998)" and to elaborate on other issues that we believe concern the readership of the *Journal*. Throughout this article, the term *Journal* has been used when referring to both *P&GJ* and *JCD*.

We first discuss the origins of our 1998 study. Independently of each other, Stephen Weinrach and Kenneth Thomas sensed that more and more members of the American Psychological Association's (APA) Division 17 (Counseling Psychology) seemed to be publishing in JCD. One day in 1994, they discussed the topic of who had been contributing to JCD. Because Thomas already had an interest in identifying the primary individual and institutional contributors to the *Journal*, they decided to combine these research interests into one comprehensive study.

**HOW GOODYEAR'S CRITICISM SUPPORTED OUR FINDINGS**

Goodyear (2000) devoted considerable journal space to criticizing the methodology used and the conclusions reached in our study, yet many of his objections actually served to support our findings. For example, he stated the following:

> Almost all of the counseling psychology programs that have developed over the past 20 years have evolved from counselor education programs. ... Given this fact as well as the reasonable expectation that faculty in doctoral programs face higher demands to publish than do counseling practitioners or even faculty in master's-level programs, it makes sense therefore that (a) proportionally more publications would come from doctoral programs than from other sources, and (b) that a substantial portion of these would be from counseling psychology programs. (p. 104)

So, we ask, what is the problem? It seems that Goodyear is helping us to explain why we found more counseling psychologists contributing to the *Journal*.

We are frankly surprised that Goodyear did not use his opportunity to respond to our 1998 study to echo the sen-
Contributors affiliated with psychology programs typically conduct more sophisticated research and have stronger writing skills than persons from counselor education programs. Consequently, submissions from faculty of psychology programs tend to be of a higher quality and less methodologically and conceptually flawed. (p. 433)

Hence, Goodyear could have made a strong case in favor of publishing the work of psychologists, a notion that we had considered sufficiently important to include in our study. It is interesting that Goodyear (2000), in an almost classically Freudian manner, also stated that "Weinrach et al. seemed to have been arguing that editorial biases affected the proportion of articles written by authors affiliated with counseling psychology programs" (p. 104). Actually, we neither stated nor implied that the editors were biased in any way; we stated only that there had been a pattern of more psychologists than counselors publishing in the Journal. Any accusations regarding editorial bias were Goodyear's, not ours. (Later in this article, we examine an additional plausible explanation for the increase in articles written by counseling psychologists.)

One of the more spurious criticisms offered by Goodyear (2000) regarding our study was his statement suggesting that because we listed the accreditation status (APA or Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP]) of the 50 most prolific institutional sources of articles in the Journal, we were suggesting that all authors from universities with APA-accredited programs were psychologists. In fact, we (Weinrach et al., 1998) inferred only "that institutions with CACREP-accredited programs are not necessarily among the top institutions whose faculties contribute to the Journal. Also, of the top 50 institutions, 92% (n = 46) offer doctorates in counseling or related fields" (p. 432). Obviously the strategy Goodyear accused us of using to identify authors as psychologists or counselors and counselor educators would have been illogical. For example, a university such as Pennsylvania State, which has doctoral programs in both counselor education and counseling psychology, could have APA accreditation only and yet be the institutional source of articles in the Journal that were authored by counselor educators rather than by counseling, clinical, or school psychologists.

Equally questionable was Goodyear's (2000) assertion that it had been unreasonable for us to use 1996 American Counseling Association (ACA) membership data. We were even accused of implying that authors who were not members in 1996 had never been members. Yet we (Weinrach et al., 1998) clearly conceded "that some of the top contributors may have let their ACA membership lapse after they stopped contributing to the Journal" (p. 431). We also acknowledged that there could be errors in the membership lists and that other contributors may have retired, lost interest, or passed away during the 15-year period of the study and through 1995–1996 when the ACA membership directory was compiled and published. Moreover, we stated that ACA was unable to provide complete and accurate membership information prior to 1996 (M. Poskaitis, personal communication, August 8, 1998).

It is interesting that Goodyear (2000) asserted that by citing an author's membership status in ACA and APA and using the term carpetbaggers, we were in some way harming his or her "professional reputation" (p. 104). We hardly think that listing one's membership status in ACA or APA would harm one's professional reputation, especially because such information is readily available from membership directories published by these associations. It is not uncommon for us (Weinrach, Thomas, & Chan) to publish occasionally in a journal of an association to which we do not belong. We have no problem with members of those associations knowing our membership status. Had Goodyear been a member of ACA in 1996, we doubt he would have raised this issue. We cited Gerstein's contention that scholars who do not provide uninterrupted financial support, through paying membership dues, to those organizations in whose journals they are frequent contributors are "analogous to . . . carpetbaggers" (Weinrach et al., 1998, p. 434). This notion is held by Weinrach but not by Thomas or Chan.

Another criticism offered by Goodyear was that we erred in using departmental affiliation to make claims about program affiliation. Actually, deciding on how to assign program affiliation was the most difficult (and most carefully considered) aspect of the study. Our research design was developed after examining those of numerous previous studies, such as those by Barry and Wolf (1958), Brown (1969), and Stone and Shertzer (1964). Although imperfect, we eventually decided to use the procedure detailed in our article because it was the best alternative available. As pointed out in our article, surveying 2,198 contributors, some of whom were deceased by the time our study commenced, and asking their or their survivors to recall their professional affiliation from as far back as 1978 would have been impractical and fraught with potential lapses in recall. Ironically, the example given by Goodyear (2000, p. 104) regarding a Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, where we would have assigned half to counseling and half to educational psychology (i.e., other psychology-related program), would have actually served to underestimate rather than inflate the number of authors affiliated with counseling psychology programs, because it is quite possible that an author from such a department, who was publishing in the Journal, would be affiliated with a counseling psychology program rather than with a counseling program or an educational psychology program.

Above all, Goodyear asserted that our methodology and data were flawed and our facts incorrect. We were even accused of providing "misinformation" (Goodyear, 2000, p. 106). Yet, he acknowledged that our objectives of identifying primary institutional sources of articles and primary contributors were met (Goodyear, 2000), and he offered no evidence to indicate that the statistical procedures and significant findings reported in the study were inappropri-
ate or inaccurate. We believe that what Goodyear (2000) was actually saying is that he disagreed with our conclusions and he, of course, has that prerogative. However, the data we reported in the study were as accurate as humanly possible, and the methodology we used was carefully considered and clearly presented in the procedures section of the article. Goodyear, who is an experienced and talented researcher, writer, and editor (Goodyear, 1990; Goodyear, Abadie, & Efros, 1984; Goodyear, Crego, & Johnston, 1992; Goodyear & Shumate, 1996), is personally familiar with the limitations imposed by reality on studies such as ours, limitations, we might add, that were clearly demarcated.

Our dispute with Goodyear’s criticisms aside, he provided a valuable service to the counseling profession by focusing additional attention on the demographics of contributors to the *Journal*. It is not something that should be taken lightly. Unfortunately, many of the issues he raised were picayune in our opinion and missed the broader concerns that need to be addressed. For example, our squabbling over whether any given contributor was or was not a member of ACA at any given time is less important to the debate than what impact professional affiliation would have on the manuscript of a would-be contributor. Goodyear’s call for greater harmony within the counseling “family” rings hollow when the author affiliation statements of those who contribute to both of the Division 17 journals, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* and *The Counseling Psychologist* reveal so few counselors or counselor educators among their ranks (Hanna & Bemak, 1997).

**PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: A DISTINCTION WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE?**

What does it matter that an increasing percentage of contributors to our flagship *Journal* have come from outside the ranks of ACA? Sometimes it is easier to understand an issue when it is presented artificially in the extreme—where differences are exaggerated. Imagine what the content of the *Journal* might look like now if 90% of its contributors came from the ranks of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists? What about political activists and lawyers? What if 90% of the contributors were nutritionists, alternative health experts, internists, social workers, or criminal justice experts? One would reasonably expect that the *Journal’s* content would accurately reflect the professional identity of its contributors. Professional identity is the possession of a core set of values, beliefs, and assumptions about the unique characteristics of one’s selected profession that differentiates it from other professions.

Although the mammoth scope of our 1998 study precluded examining the *Journal’s* content, an analysis of its content is exactly what is needed now. Professional affiliation of contributors matters less than the content of the professional counseling literature, although the former will influence, if not determine, the latter. The issue of journal content goes to the very heart of professional identity. In October 1997, ACA’s Governing Council adopted the following definition of “Professional Counseling”: “The application of mental health, psychological, or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral[,] or systemic intervention strategies that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology.” We believe that ACA’s flagship *Journal* should accurately reflect the broad activities of what counselors do as opposed to what other mental health professionals do.

**The Role of Politics**

Thomas (1991) believed that “one would be hard put to distinguish substantively between counselor education and counseling psychology” (p. 204). He also believed that “the differences between counselor education and counseling psychology are really only political and semantic” (Thomas, 1991, p. 204). Hanna and Bemak (1997) suggested that “politics make up the bulk of the difference between counseling and therapy disciplines” (p. 202). To some, the differences between counseling and counseling psychology can be accounted for in terms of status alone. Membership in APA is perceived by many to be more exclusive and elitist than membership in ACA. Graduation from an APA-approved program is considered by many to be more prestigious than graduation from a CACREP-accredited program (Wittmer, 1988). The occupational title of “psychologist” carries more prestige than that of “counselor.” As O’Bryant (as cited in Hanna & Bemak, 1997) stated, “I wish counselors wouldn’t be viewed as the bastard children of psychologists and social workers” (p. 196).

Despite the fact, as Goodyear (2000) pointed out (see also Hanna & Bemak, 1997), that there are more similarities than differences between the occupations of counselors and counseling psychologists, the occupations and the way they are performed are not identical nor interchangeable. How prospective contributors conceptualize the work of the counselor is of considerable importance. Those who contribute to counseling journals need to think like counselors so that they can write for counselors.

According to Lanning (1988),

> the distinctiveness of the counseling profession must be found in its philosophy, curriculum, history, world view, and probably its practice. If we define ourselves only in contrast to psychology, we will continue to be nothing more than the “drones” of the helping professions. (p. 297)

Clearly, counselors and counseling psychologists share a common theoretical base and often function similarly in their efforts to help others. But there are often dramatic differences in work settings, and therefore the duties, of the job. Regardless of job title, those working in schools function differently from those working in private practices and clinics. Those working in university counseling centers, which focus on a preventive-outreach model, function differently from those working in university counseling centers, which focus on individual and small-group, intensive psychotherapy. We believe that journal content...
should correspond with the needs of its readers. The Journal and other ACA publications tend to address the needs of those who work in schools and agencies that focus on a preventive-outreach model and tend to avoid focusing on issues that would resonate with those who are performing long-term, intensive psychotherapy. Otherwise there would be little, if any, difference in the content and readership between the Journal of Counseling & Development and Psychotherapy.

Was It Bias?

We did not seek to determine in our study whether there was any editorial bias. We did not suggest that either Goodyear or Claiborn accepted manuscripts simply because they were written by psychologists or members of Division 17 of APA, or rejected manuscripts simply because they were written by counselors or members of ACA. What may have taken place was a logical extension of what Goodyear and Claiborn valued as counseling psychologists—in other words, their professional identity. Editorial decisions are often extensions of how an editor views his or her own profession. That is why the Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy would no sooner appoint as editor a psychoanalyst than would the journal, Psychoanalytic Psychology, appoint as editor someone committed to rational emotive behavior therapy. Perhaps counseling psychologists have different professional interests than counselors do and vice versa. Legitimate differences in professional perspective could easily account for differences in editorial decisions. Surely, no one would expect The Counseling Psychologist to appoint a school guidance counselor as its editor—precisely because of differences in professional identity.

Professional identity can often be determined through an examination of the types of articles a journal publishes. Every ACA journal, and JCD is no exception, publishes a statement, found most often on the inside cover, about the journal’s purpose and types of articles its editor seeks to publish. Presumably this statement has an impact on the types of manuscripts that are selected for publication. Although such statements are more similar than dissimilar, over the 15-year period of our study, there were several significant changes, which perhaps reflected the professional identity of each editor.

Under Barclay (1983), the statement read, in part,

The Professional identity of Contributors to JCD

At the beginning of Goodyear’s (1987) second term as editor his statement read, in part,

The Journal of Counseling and Development is the official journal of the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD). As such, one of its purposes is to publish archival material. The journal also publishes articles that have broad interest for a readership composed of counselors, counseling psychologists, and student personnel specialists who work in schools, colleges, community agencies, and government. Specifically, this journal is an appropriate outlet for articles that (a) critically integrate published research, (b) examine current professional and scientific issues, (c) report research that has particular relevance to practitioners, (d) report new techniques or innovative programs and practices, and (e) examine AACD as an organization. (Inside front cover)

The first time any reference to counseling psychologists appeared in the statement was during Goodyear’s second term (Goodyear, 1987, inside front cover). As compared with Barclay’s statement, student personnel specialists were relegated to third place. It should be noted that the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) was among the founding divisions of ACA’s corporate predecessor, The American Personnel and Guidance Association (Hoyt, 2000). ACA has never had a division dedicated to counseling psychology.

Another change that took place during Goodyear’s second term was the increased emphasis on research. Barclay’s (1983) first priority was publishing articles that dealt with “current professional and scientific issues” (p. 52). His second priority was “report research of unusual significance to practitioners” (Barclay, 1983, p. 52). Goodyear’s (1987) first priority was publishing articles that “critically integrate published research” (inside cover). Goodyear (1987) bumped to second place “current professional and scientific issues” (inside cover). His third priority was to “report research that has particular relevance to practitioners” (Goodyear, 1987, inside cover). Claiborn’s (1992) statement was identical to that of Goodyear’s in 1987 except for another name change of the association.

To the extent that the statements are an accurate representation of the professional identity of the respective editors, there was a discernable shift toward counseling psychologists. On the basis of their statements, Goodyear and Claiborn placed at the bottom of their respective publishing priorities “report new techniques or innovative programs and practices” and “examine AACD as an organization” (Goodyear, 1987, inside cover; Claiborn, 1992, inside cover). In other words, Goodyear’s and Claiborn’s priority for the content of the Journal tilted toward focusing on the professional interests of counseling psychologists at the expense of the professional interests of student personnel specialists. Furthermore, publishing research became more important than publishing articles about counseling interventions. These changes in the Journal’s focus represent important differences in professional identity.

It should be noted that the most recent change to JCD’s statement was made in August 2000 by this journal’s current editor, Earl Ginter. Ginter placed a greater emphasis...
on the interests of professional counselors. The statement reads, in part, "The journal also publishes articles that have broad interest for a readership composed mostly of counselors and other mental health professionals who work in private practice, schools, colleges, community agencies, hospitals, and government" (Ginter, 2000, inside cover). The reference to counseling psychologists was deleted.

CONCLUSION

Certainly, counselors will continue to benefit from the input of experts in other disciplines, as they have in the past. The Journal's editors have a responsibility to ensure that what they publish is germane to the work of the counselor. To the extent that author affiliation influences article content, affiliation does matter. Presumably those who identify primarily with counseling would write articles that more closely resonate with a counseling readership than would those who identify primarily with other mental health professions. That is why the results of our 1998 study are so important and possibly why Goodyear was inclined to attempt to refute them. In the final analysis, the single most important criterion for the acceptance of a manuscript in the Journal should be the extent to which the editor believes its publication would be meaningful to the Journal's readers.

REFERENCES
