The Stance of Curiosity in the Classroom
Is There a Place for Counselling Skills in Teachers' Work?

Maria Kecskemeti

Abstract

Relationship competencies are emphasised in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). Alongside this, many schools have a growing interest in citizenship education. Relationship strategies traditionally used by counsellors are included in teachers' interactional repertoire. This article presents findings about the relationship potential of "a stance of not-knowing" when it was employed by teachers for educational rather than therapeutic purposes. Examples are drawn from the results of a research project that examined how teachers might utilise various conversational moves from narrative therapy in support of their relationship practices. In spite of the paradigmatic differences between counsellors' and teachers' work, and the consequent difficulties these might pose for teachers when they try to shift between different relationship paradigms, the research participants almost unanimously embraced a stance of not-knowing. While the enthusiasm of these teachers provides an argument for the positive potential of counselling knowledge beyond therapeutic contexts, I also raise questions about the overenthusiastic transport of counselling skills into the classroom. The purpose of this article is to encourage discussion among school counsellors and teachers about their respective roles and contributions to students' learning.

Keywords: not-knowing, classroom relationship practices, narrative therapy, key competencies, classroom management, pastoral care

Recent decades have witnessed some major shifts in the dominant philosophies and practices of schools. With inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 1997, 2004) and the broadening of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) to

include citizenship and relationship competencies, teacher-centred paradigms of interaction no longer offer adequate strategies to respond to the complexity of diverse classrooms. The daily management of heterogeneous classrooms demands not only different teaching strategies, but also specific relationship skills from both students and teachers. Students have to work and get on with classmates whose abilities and cultural backgrounds differ from their own. They are expected to tolerate and value their peers' differences and not to use these as a rationale for teasing, bullying, or exclusion from a group. Teachers are required to consult, collaborate, and negotiate with other professionals (Thomson et al., 2003) and to work in partnership with parents (Meyer & Bevan-Brown, 2005) when, for example, they adapt programmes in order to meet their students' academic and cultural needs. They might also invest a significant amount of their time in teaching relationship skills to students and in working with other professionals and parents more closely. Teachers who are determined to build inclusive learning communities in this interaction-rich context need to be skilled in establishing and maintaining respectful communication with others of varying abilities and backgrounds. They need to be able to listen differently—to students' and parents' life experiences—in addition to determining students' subject knowledge.

Schools have for some time recognised that it is beneficial for teachers to have relationship skills that are not traditionally included in teachers' interactional repertoire and initial teacher training. The implementation of anti-bullying and conflict resolution programmes (see, for example, Cremin, 2007; PPTA, 2004; Winslade & Williams, 2012) and restorative practices (Liebmann, 2007; Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2007) depends upon teachers learning conversational processes that reflect a different stance from what might be seen as the traditional teacher stance of "knowing" and transferring knowledge (Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010). Often, all staff members in a school are trained in mediation, conflict resolution, and/or restorative skills (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Such training programmes draw on the knowledge base of counselling and include questioning techniques and conversational moves used by therapists, adapted for other-than-therapeutic purposes. It is often school counsellors who train or support their teacher colleagues while they learn to extend their repertoire of responses.

The research project (Kecskemeti, 2011), the partial findings of which are reported here, included the development of one such training programme. This programme, which I facilitated in my capacity as counsellor, offered teachers professional learning in various conversational moves.

Some comments about relationships in schools

I have worked as a teacher, resource teacher learning and behaviour (RTLB), coun-sellor, and counsellor educator. In each of these roles I have both witnessed and experienced the harmful effects of relationship practices that exacerbated teacher–student or student–student conflict. Students and colleagues told me about the long-lasting negative emotional and psychological impact of such relationship practices. In many of these instances, conflict was produced by a familiar relationship practice of "telling off" or by making assumptions. These relationship practices are not usually mentioned, however, as causes of relationship trouble in schools. More familiarly, problems might be located in unmotivated students whose disruptive behaviours are seen to threaten classroom order and to undermine teachers' and students' right to safety (see, for example, PPTA Hutt Valley Branch, 2008). Alternatively, inadequate teacher practices and teachers' failure to establish good relationships with their students are cited as reasons for teacher–student interactional trouble (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2004). I would argue that blaming either students or teachers does not provide adequate solutions to relational trouble in schools. The issue is possibly more complex than either of these explanations suggests.

Many of those working with young people have reason to be concerned about the interrupted and missed learning opportunities of students who are expelled from schools or who drop out (Ministry of Education, 2010; Smyth & Hattam, 2004). As a counsellor I have comforted both desperate students and burnt-out teachers. I have listened to students who were bullied either by their peers or by their teachers, their experiences similar to those described by Fleming et al. (2007). I have also listened to teachers who contemplated leaving their jobs because of the daily stresses and the ongoing emotional impact of their problematic relationships with students, colleagues, or parents.

As well, teachers with whom I have worked noted a recurring pattern in the conversations they had with their students after conflict between students. They reflected on the difficulties they had sometimes had in accepting some of their students' accounts of events that had led to bullying, fights, and arguments. These teachers told me that their first response was to tell off students who, they believed, were not telling the truth. At the same time, they acknowledged that telling off and rejecting students' accounts might have been a harsh response in some cases. Nonetheless, their students' intensified defiance and the consequent deterioration of the teacher–student

relationship still came as a surprise. Other colleagues were puzzled by the hostility and anger directed at them by parents when they tried to give advice to parents who had been called to the school as part of a disciplinary process involving their child. Many teacher colleagues reported the stressful and hurtful effects of such encounters. They expressed interest in, and wanted to learn, conversational strategies that might produce a more satisfactory and less emotionally costly outcome.

Adaptation of counselling skills for teaching contexts

In responding to these kinds of relationship difficulties in schools, practices from collaborative and narrative therapies make available ways of speaking that offer transformative potential. In my responses to student and teacher stress caused by relationship problems, I have drawn on a range of collaborative, narrative, and discursive resources and approaches (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992; Bansel, Davies, Laws, & Linnell, 2009; Davies, 1994, 1998; Laws & Davies, 2000; White, 2007; White & Epston, 1990). Specifically, I have witnessed the positive relational effects of questioning with genuine curiosity (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992) and externalising problems (White, 1990) during consultations and conversations with students, teacher colleagues, and parents. As both an RTLB and a school guidance counsellor, I responded to many invitations from teacher colleagues to collaborate in putting conversational moves from the counselling field to work in classroom interactions (see Gray & Drewery, 2011, and Kaveney & Drewery, 2011, who have reported some of these experiences).

Doing restorative work in schools and utilising some of the processes developed by The Restorative Practices Development Team (2003) provided further impetus to pursue my interest in the adaptation of counselling strategies for classroom practice. The team developed unique forms of restorative conversations drawing on constructionist ideas and conversational moves from narrative therapy. They had a broad vision for restorative practice (RP), suggesting that it could be the basis of a caring, inclusive school ethos and a school culture based on respect and developing responsibility. Their approach provided alternatives to disciplinary systems that rely solely on behaviour management and punishment. Members of the international restorative community have also offered strong support for such a vision, suggesting that RP processes be utilised as the basis of daily relationship management in diverse school communities (Blood & Thorsborne, 2005; McCluskey et al., 2008).

In the context of my own professional experience and these developments in RP, I carried out doctoral research, further exploring the value to teachers and teaching that

might come from knowledges and skills employed in the discipline of counselling if these skills and knowledges were adapted for use in everyday interactions. This article reports on the use of a not-knowing stance, and on the practices of listening with curiosity.

The stance of certainty and the stance of not-knowing

Anderson and Goolishian (1992) emphasised the interpretive nature of therapeutic conversations and interactions, in which therapists take a not-knowing stance. I want to use their arguments to convey a sense of what I believe to be some of the paradigmatic differences between counsellors' and teachers' dominant relationship practices. I distinguish in this way between the work of these two groups of professionals, not in order to produce a hierarchy but because such a distinction supported me in teaching a not-knowing stance to the teachers, including the participants in my study.

Meaning generation and information processing

When counsellors adopt a not-knowing stance (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992), the client is viewed as a "meaning-generating being" rather than an "information-processing machine" (p. 26). The therapeutic encounter thus provides a conversational space in which it is possible to create a new understanding and "to re-relate the events of our lives in the context of new and different meaning" (p. 28).

Anderson and Goolishian (1992) quoted a client, Bill, who illustrates the counter position to that of the client as an information-processing machine, what I would call the stance of knowing, one that is limited by prior experiences and assumptions:

> "You (the professionals) are always checking me out…checking me out, to see if I knew what you knew rather than find a way to talk with me. You would ask, 'Is this an ashtray?' to see if I knew or not." (p. 25)

I believe that a considerable proportion of teachers' work has to do with checking out whether students "knew what they knew," asking questions similar to the "Is this an ashtray?" question. Teachers pass subject content (e.g., mathematical or scientific formulas and processes, accounts of historical events, or pieces of literature) on to students. They also teach specific skills, such as reading, comprehension, writing, healthy nutrition, cooking, and many others, that students can utilise for accessing written material, communicating their thoughts, and improving the quality of their lives. The New Zealand school system is organised in such a way that students' knowledge of the material passed on is then tested in examinations and by various forms of assessment. These assessment processes tend to require teachers to find out

and demonstrate how well students have acquired both the content and the skills that they have taught them. Therefore, teachers often check if students "knew what they knew" (similarly to Bill's therapists) rather than asking what other knowledge students might have. Thus, many of the activities that are associated with teaching and learning traditional curriculum subjects have to do with information-processing rather than meaning-making.

However, when teachers perform their pastoral care duties, they engage in conversations with their students where the topic of discussion is not subject content but the students' experiences and life events. Deans and senior teachers frequently interview students about conflict situations in or outside the classroom. Classroom teachers might conduct class meetings where problems that affect a community are discussed. The stance of certainty or knowing that teachers take up when explaining new concepts and/or demonstrating a skill might not be the most useful in such situations. Such a stance is less likely to invite students to relate what happened and then to come up with a more helpful meaning about their experiences, one that might support changes in relationship practice, for example.

The ways of interacting that are more likely to help teachers perform their pastoral care duties and/or build relationships with students are not about checking whether a student knows what the teacher also knows, but about supporting students with "re-relating the events of their lives" (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992, p. 28) in order to change damaging practices, such as bullying or disrupting. An assumption by a teacher that they already have access to "the truth" is not likely to gain cooperation from a student who is called a liar, neither is it likely to elicit that student's version of events. Similarly, taking up an expert position and telling parents how they could sort out their child who frequently gets into trouble might not be appreciated by the parents, either. In these instances, an understanding of the stance of not-knowing as it is used by counsellors might better support teachers in achieving a satisfactory relational outcome than would a familiar or usual stance of knowing.

Being informed and informing

Another important distinguishing feature of a not-knowing stance is what Anderson and Goolishian (1992) call "abundant, genuine curiosity." The therapist "positions himself or herself in such a way as always to be in the state of 'being informed' by the client" (p. 29). Contrary to informing others—as teachers might do when they introduce new material and explain a new concept—or wanting to be informed about

students' knowledge of the material taught, from a stance of not-knowing it is not preconceived opinions or the already-known that is sought. It is the "not-yet-said," new stories that therapists and clients develop together that emerge from their interaction. There are many possible and unpredictable answers in this process. This is in contrast to the limited number of correct answers that teachers are used to seeking when assessing students.

Anderson and Goolishian (1992) emphasised that the so-called "curious" questions that are used from a not-knowing position have to be in the style of Socratic questions that bring forward the client's worldviews and the as-yet unknown. These are not meant to be rhetorical or pedagogical questions that would provide their own answer or steer the answer in a particular direction. The contrast here is with the dominant mode of teacher questioning, with its objective of searching for knowledge that is already familiar to the teacher, and finding out if the student also possesses the same knowledge.

In order for teachers to shift competently between a stance of knowing, which is useful when they teach content, and a more hesitant, not-knowing stance, which can be more productive when they perform pastoral care duties, it is important that they are able to distinguish clearly between the two: these two approaches represent two different relationship paradigms. It is also useful if teachers can decide for themselves which stance might better support a particular interaction. Over time, I have introduced teachers, including the participants in my research, to these distinctions. I have also taught a way of questioning that seeks and accepts many possible answers. The following example, provided by Andrew, a dean in a secondary school, demonstrates how teachers distinguished between the two different paradigms.

Andrew shared with his colleagues his two different responses to one of his students, John. When he received a complaint about John from Anna, who claimed that John had been stalking her, he immediately confronted John using an accusatory tone of voice. When John denied the stalking allegations, Andrew's response was: "Don't lie to me. She told me that you were stalking her." This response left no space for any other telling or version of the events. It also treated Anna's interpretation of what had happened as the truth. Andrew was not interested in "being informed" by John. Rather, he informed John about what he had already known. John left the dean's office distressed.

After reflecting on his unsuccessful attempt at resolving the conflict between John and Anna, Andrew had a further conversation with each of the students. He carefully considered how to start his second interaction with John differently, and this time he

said: "John, regarding the complaint that I received about you, I have had another talk with Anna. I am also interested to find out what you could tell me about what happened." This invitation offered John an opportunity to provide his version of events. Several unpredictable answers could be inserted into the conversational space opened by Andrew, in contrast to his first interaction with John, when there was only space for one predetermined correct answer. In a further meeting between Andrew and the two students, each admitted to some wrongdoing against the other and their conflict was resolved. John and Anna's relationship with each another also turned out to be more complex than initially assumed.

Andrew commented that having a theoretical understanding of different stances and relationship paradigms helped him to reconsider his initial response to John and to go back and try a different one. He also noted that in a busy school day, the allure of acting from a position of certainty and quickly deciding what the "truth" might be is considerable, due to the less time-intensive nature of such interventions. However, acting from a stance of curiosity and allowing students to put forward their interpretations creates less resistance, as Andrew discovered in this instance.

I admit that distinguishing in this way between the work of teachers and counsellors could be read as an oversimplification of teachers' work and/or as creating a rigid dichotomy between teaching and counselling. This is not my intention, and neither do I think that teachers always operate from a stance of knowing. For example, when they apply an inquiry learning model to teach the curriculum (Claxton, 2006; Hipkins, 2006), they engage students in problem-solving processes in which the answers are not predetermined. Teachers help students make connections between what they know and the various contexts of which they are a part. Inquiry learning involves facilitating students' understanding as opposed to increasing their knowledge of facts. Meaning-making is therefore part of this process in addition to information processing. However, I want to argue that when teachers have to deal with relationship problems or conflict situations, it might be easier to revert to and employ familiar hierarchical ways of relating because these might provide a greater sense of control. Having a theoretical understanding of different relationship paradigms and specific skills might better support decisionmaking about relationship practices that suit a particular context.

The research project

Most of the development that included the adaptation of therapeutic skills to conversational moves for classroom use had preceded the research that I report on here. The

specific conversational moves that I selected to include as useful for teachers were chosen because they seemed to provide a fitting response to some of the challenges that my teacher colleagues asked me to address in my capacities as an RTLB and as a school counsellor.

Research questions

The study that I conducted was a combination of development work, professional learning, and an exploratory investigation of the potential effects of the take-up of this learning by teachers. The development work that I undertook included the articulation of a relationship theory, and the adaptation of ways of speaking. The professional learning involved teaching participants a critical discursive framework and the conversational moves that I had adapted from narrative therapy. One research question related to the potential of conversational practices. I investigated whether specific relationship principles and moves adapted from therapy—including the stance of not-knowing, questioning with genuine curiosity (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992), externalising (White, 1990), repositioning (Laws & Davies, 2000) and deconstructing (Davies, 1998)—are useful for improving teachers' wellbeing and relationships.

Research participants

I identified potential participant schools after informal discussions with several secondary and primary school principals and deputy principals who had attended workshops where I had introduced a critical discursive framework and conversational moves adapted from therapy. These senior managers considered those theoretical ideas and conversational processes to be potentially supportive of their schools' vision, their strategic plan, and their staff members' preferred ways of interacting with students. After consultations with staff, two schools (a primary and an area school) formally agreed to become research participants.[1] The principals of those schools did not make it compulsory for individual teachers to opt into the research. The professional learning that I offered as part of the research project was one of several options available to teachers. A total of 39 teachers signed up to take part in the study.

Process

I taught specific conversational moves to these 39 teachers through a series of four workshops. The stance of not-knowing and asking questions with genuine curiosity (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992) was one of the theoretical concepts and skills taught. Following the workshops, a series of seven focus-group meetings were held at three- to four-weekly intervals over an academic year. The focus-group meetings, which

each lasted for two hours, had a multiple function of skill practice, reflection on practice, and sharing concerns.

Reflection on practice followed a process of guided deconstructive reflection. This process was an adaptation of the steps of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), as described by Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008). Teachers identified those discourses of teaching and learning that they thought produced teacher–student conflict. Teachers' accounts during focus-group conversations of their relationship practices and their reflections on their use of the conversational skills became research data. Focus-group discussions were audiotaped. Participants could ask to have the recording of a particular session deleted, and some participants exercised this right on a few occasions.

Examples given by participants of the effects of using the conversational moves were transcribed and analysed for themes. In what follows, I present data on the relational effects that teachers attributed to adopting a stance of not-knowing in what they deemed difficult relationships. The same themes emerged in the analysis of the participants' data from both schools. These examples demonstrate how teachers incorporated questioning with genuine curiosity into their interactional repertoire and what relational outcomes they attributed to this different way of speaking.

Teachers' use of not-knowing and questioning with genuine curiosity

Listening rather than problem-solving

Jane and Hannah both noted that taking a not-knowing stance required them to give up their usual problem-solving stance. They believed that they had become better listeners and more able to support others to work out their own solutions.

Jane: *For me, in the past I was too concerned about solving people's problems and giving them advice, so now I don't feel this burning need to solve all their problems and make them perfectly happy. I'm doing more listening and curious questioning and I think it has reduced my stress a little.*

Hannah: *I've learnt that there is another story, or that there are several other stories…and it isn't necessarily my problem, but how can I support others to work out that problem, or go forward really…and in personal relationships as well as professional, with children and the adults that we work with…I don't do anything more than that.*

Jane noted that while the skill of inquiry supported others to take charge of their problems and to feel they were treated well, it could also be experienced as a tedious process for the person doing the questioning.

Jane: *I admit I got a little bit fed up with the curious questioning and trying to wade through this mire that this person had gotten themselves into. But the interesting thing was that they came back at the end of the day, and I found that children do that, too. So they must feel that they are being treated well during the discussion, enough to basically in their own time think about it and come back themselves.*

Jane's and Hannah's accounts are representative of one of the two most commonly identified relational effects of the stance of not-knowing. Most participants commented that they could more easily position themselves as listeners and supporters, which differed from their usual positions of experts and "fixers," practices so available to teachers, especially those in management positions. Like Jane and Hannah, several other teachers felt relieved when they could resist taking responsibility for others' problems. Giving up their usual practices of knowing and providing answers also enhanced these teachers' wellbeing: Jane spoke of experiencing less stress.

Tolerating different views and giving up assumptions
Jane also shared how she could now accept different meanings and listen to both sides without feeling responsible, which in turn helped her stop internalising other people's problems.

Jane: *I think the difficulty in our jobs is that we have to maintain a relationship with the child and the adults, and I think I probably learned the hard way how not to get caught in the middle, because often the stories are opposites. You'll be told one thing and they'll tell someone else the opposite and the person in the middle is aggressive, and I really hit the wall with that. I've decided that that's maybe because I thought that I had to fix it and I can't, but I can listen to both sides now and not feel I have to be responsible for both.*

Laura talked about how she was better able to accept and respect the diversity within her team, which she also found more satisfying.

Laura: *It has worked really well for me within my team, because I have a pretty diverse team, and to respect where they are coming from…to respect what they have, to utilise what they have and to trust them in their work, I think has been more satisfying for me, because I feel now that I am actually more successful with the work I do in running the team.*

Lynn thought that curiosity helped explore different views and make people feel listened to. She also believed that providing opportunities for people to voice their views was more important than resolving problems.

Lynn: *If you don't talk about the situation then you could just end up with little niggly things just hanging in there. Resolving would be hearing everybody's point of view no matter if it were a teacher or child. Everybody has his or her point of view on an issue*

and I think it's really important that you listen to it. If things are left there they can linger there for years. Gosh, families sometimes have things that go on for years. Well, you can agree to disagree, but it's really important that you are listened to, especially when you are in a situation where someone has more power. Really, being listened to is more significant than the resolution. So, yes, the overriding principles of listening and accepting there are different views and giving everyone the chance to voice their views.

Diana believed that learning to accept different views helped her to become less emotionally involved when dealing with difficult adults and parents.

Diana: *I think it's helped with adult relationships and that people have got different points of views, and to accept that they shouldn't be thinking what I think. It's also good for your personal life really, and you know with that difficult parent I talked about, I felt better.*

Claire and Pania recalled how their investigation of a hitting incident, during which one of them was able to adhere to a curious stance, contradicted their initial assumptions. They had come to the view that the capacity to suspend assumptions and to explore different interpretations of the same event was important for achieving restoration between two girls in conflict. They also referred to the potential of a curious stance to sort misunderstandings through the clarification of different perspectives. They noted the repositioning of those in conflict that could be achieved through such clarification. Claire and Pania were also able to give up certainty and to position their students as experts about their conflict.

Claire: *We automatically assumed that it was the girl who was doing the hitting, it was all her fault, but it turned out it had sort of been instigated by the other one. Hitting people is not acceptable, but after talking it through and giving both the opportunity to talk and listen to each other, they went off as friends.*

Pania: *Well, actually I reacted in the beginning and took her out of the room. I reacted in a way that I shouldn't have reacted.*

Claire: *But by doing the interviewing we got a fuller picture and we were able to restore the relationship and so they have got a better relationship. The person who did the hitting was listened to and she was understood. We could tell where she was coming from and so she had the opportunity to be heard. The conversation restored the relationship between the two girls, [and] the relationship between Pania and the girl who did the hitting. So you give a chance for the different stories to be heard.*

Pania: *And you get an uninterrupted account of what's happened from both people. I think it's also important for them to listen to the other one.*

Familiarising themselves with the notion of not-knowing and learning the skills of questioning with genuine curiosity helped the research participants to shift from their usual paradigm of interacting—that of problem-solver and fixer. Instead of looking for one correct answer, these teachers were able to accept different views and they were able to give up their preconceived ideas about a situation. To some extent they were able to support their students and colleagues with "re-relating" events and developing a new, "not-yet-known" narrative.

The stance of not-knowing is also shown to support the managing of differences and conflicts. The teachers are positioned in these situations as people who have the capacity to value the different contributions and views of their colleagues, students, or parents. They are able to explore and accept contradictory views and meanings, which in turn positions the people interviewed as valued participants in the conversations. Their meanings are validated rather than excluded from defining the terms of the interaction; they are therefore positioned as agentive subjects, as Drewery (2005) described it, rather than subjects who are told what to do. The conversational spaces created by these teachers allow for many possibilities and different relational outcomes from the ones assumed at the start. The teachers experience this as more satisfying and less stressful. Curious questioning is shown, in these examples, to support interactions that normalise, assume, and tolerate difference. Difference is not problematic, but rather a resource that could be used to improve difficult relationships.

Conclusion

The teachers who took part in this research almost unanimously embraced the stance of not-knowing and the skills of questioning with curiosity. They particularly appreciated the changes their different stance produced among their most problematic relationships. These findings, while not able to be generalised, suggest that it would be worth exploring further the potential benefits and possible applications of counselling skills and strategies in teachers' work in support of school priorities, such as the development of key competencies and citizenship skills. In addition, it might be useful to investigate how counselling practices could support inquiry-based learning, in addition to relationship practices employed in pastoral care. After all, it is possible to find similarities between the paradigmatic positions of inquiry-based learning and the stance of not-knowing.

However, these findings do not support the unproblematic transport of counselling skills into teachers' work. I would like to register three concerns that I hope will invite

discussions among school counsellors and teachers about their respective roles and the contributions they each might make to building respectful relationships within school communities.

First, I have some concerns about students. I am reminded of Foucault's (1995) description of disciplinary power and how training and interventions can be used to regulate the bodies of people in order to turn them into useful citizens. Teachers are agents of disciplinary power. It is part of their job to train students in behaviours that make teaching and learning possible in the classroom, such as sitting in particular ways, taking turns, and not interrupting explanations. Teachers use behaviour management techniques in order to regulate students' bodies and to achieve order in the classroom. Foucault warns, however, that disciplinary power does not just operate on bodies. It must spot an inappropriate action before it occurs; therefore, it "must intervene somehow before the actual manifestation of the behaviour…at the level of the soul" (Foucault, 2006, p. 52). While some kind of order is necessary for teaching and learning to take place, I wonder whether the use of counselling skills (in addition to behaviour management) might turn teachers into more efficient agents of disciplinary power. Will they then be able to more easily access and manipulate their students' souls in addition to managing their conduct? Fairclough (1992) posed similar questions about the "expansion of the discipline of counselling" into other institutions and using counselling practices "in preference to practices of an overtly disciplinary nature" (p. 99). He suggested that while counselling practices might be perceived as liberating, they could become a hegemonic technique that draws "aspects of people's private lives into the domain of power" (p. 99).

My second concern is about how the role of teachers is defined. Should teachers expand their role beyond subject teaching and perform their pastoral care duties using conversational moves that counsellors use? While it can be argued that teaching has always been a caring profession and that excellent teachers have always cared about their students' lives, it might be useful to consider where we should draw the line between the tasks teachers are expected to perform and the tasks that are better left to other professionals, such as counsellors, social workers, and other specialists. There have been concerns internationally about the increasing demands placed on teachers and the continuous widening of their role (Shacklock, 1998; Smyth, 2001). Thrupp (2006) suggested that where teachers have to perform extensive pastoral care duties, such as in low-decile schools, energy and time is taken away from subject teaching, which might impact negatively on students' achievement levels. While students in these

schools are taken care of emotionally, they are also disadvantaged when they have to compete with peers who come from schools where teachers have more intellectual space to teach academic subjects. Ball (2006) warned that with the broadening of their role, teachers' work is becoming impossible and they cannot do justice to everything. Neither can they care for themselves sufficiently. The question might be framed as one of whether or not stressed teachers can use counselling skills safely when they do not have access to formal supervision.

Finally, I am concerned about counsellor colleagues, especially school counsellors. Should school counsellors be worried about their work becoming redundant? Or should they be excited about the possibilities that might be opened up for teachers and counsellors working collaboratively in support of young people? For example, if teachers sort out low-level conflict and minor relationship troubles, will school counsellors have more time to provide therapy to students who struggle with more serious problems? Will the counsellors' job description change and will they work more as facilitators of teacher professional development and/or in a supervisory capacity to teachers? I believe it is important for school counsellors and teachers to have discussions about their respective roles in their schools, and to clarify these roles. I hope that the questions raised here will encourage and contribute to those discussions.

Endnote

1. An area school is defined as a state school in a rural and often isolated setting that provides learning programmes based on the *The New Zealand Curriculum* to students from Years 1– 15 (New Zealand Association of Area Schools, n.d.).

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