

THE IMPACT OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AT A  
SMALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE:  
MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

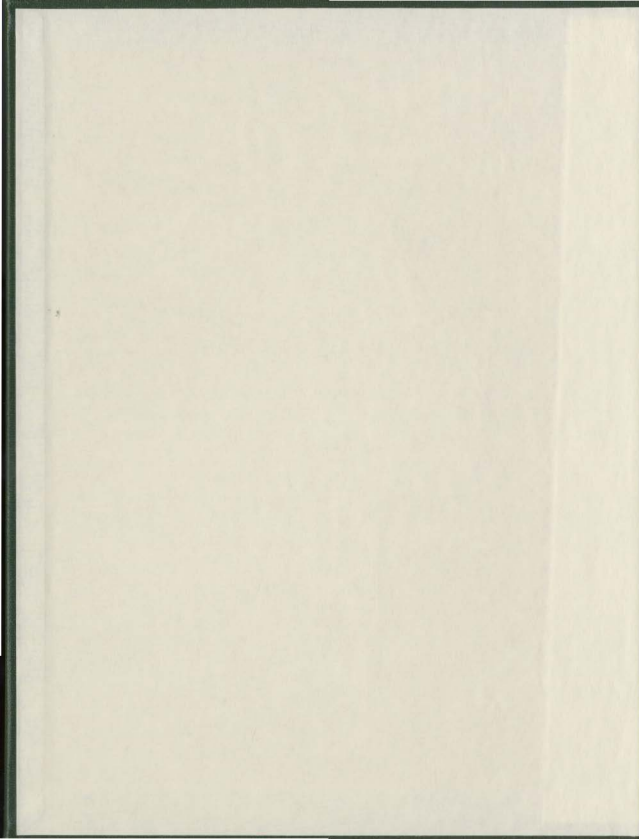
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INTERNSHIP AND RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT

by Blanche M. Whelan

The Impact of Counselling Services  
at a Small Community College:  
Multiple Perspectives



### **Abstract**

This two part report describes a counselling internship and research project carried out at the College of the North Atlantic, Corner Brook campus, in the spring semester of 1998.

Prior to the commencement of the internship, the intern in collaboration with her supervisor and primary field supervisor, set realistic, obtainable goals. Part One of the report describes activities undertaken to reach these goals. These goals were aimed at improving counselling skills and gaining experience.

One goal was to complete a research study related to the placement. The research consisted of a survey of students' perceptions of, use of, and satisfaction with counselling services offered at the College of the North Atlantic. Interviews were also conducted with student services personnel to collect data related to role descriptions and program planning to meet student needs. The study found that 83% of students surveyed were aware that counselling services were available, 29% had used the services and the services with the highest satisfactory ratings were Academic Performance and Study Skills and Program/Resource Information. Structured interviews with counsellors and other members of the student services team produced agreement that all services of the Student Services Department should be promoted to students and faculty. The research is discussed in detail in Part Two of this report.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the staff of the College of the North Atlantic in Corner Brook. Their support and guidance enabled me to have a diverse and challenging work experience.

I would also like to thank Marie Furlong for her unique insights into the dynamic role of the counsellor and her love of research.

Special thanks to Libby Chaulk, Colleen Barnes, and Chris Mercer, whose professionalism and critical perspective allowed me to grow as a counsellor and as a person.

A special thank you to Dr. Gary Jeffery, whose wit and humour tempered with guidance and direction, enabled me to complete my formal academic responsibilities to the counselling profession.

I offer a daughter's special thank you to my parents, Donald and Stella Tompkins, whose lifelong commitment to and respect for academic achievement instilled in me the motivation and desire to pursue entry into a profession, which has at its core assistance to others.

Finally, to my husband Michael, who has supported me through all my academic endeavours, and my daughter Claire; you add balance to my life and nurture my spirit.

## Table of Contents

	<b>Page</b>
ABSTRACT .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
<b>PART ONE: INTERNSHIP COMPONENT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Description of Internship Setting .....	7
Supervision of the Internship .....	8
Goals for the Internship .....	9
Goal 1: Assessment Instrument .....	9
Goal 2: Consultation .....	11
Goal 3: Programs and Services .....	13
Goal 4: Professional Development .....	14
Goal 5: Special Needs Services .....	15
Goal 6: Individual Counselling .....	16
Goal 7: Liaison Activities .....	17
Goal 8: Research .....	18
Conclusion .....	19
<b>PART TWO: RESEARCH COMPONENT</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Introduction .....	22
Review of Literature .....	22
Evolution of Counselling Services .....	22
Range or Pattern of Service .....	25
Factors Influencing Students use of Counselling Services .....	27
Determining Student Needs .....	28
Summary of Literature Review .....	29
Methodology .....	30
Sample .....	30
Structured Interviews .....	30
Questionnaires .....	31
Procedure .....	31
Structured Interviews .....	31
Questionnaires .....	34
Analysis .....	35
Results .....	36

Data from Structured Interviews .....	36
Students' Use of Services .....	36
Enhancing Counselling Service .....	37
Referrals .....	38
Provincial Perspective .....	39
Data from Questionnaire .....	39
Section A: Demographic Information .....	39
Section B: Awareness and Use of Counselling Services .....	41
Section C: Satisfaction with Services .....	44
Section D: Elements of Services .....	45
Section E: Perceived Helpfulness of Services .....	45
Conclusion .....	47
Limitations of the Study .....	49
Areas of Further Research .....	49
REFERENCES .....	51
APPENDICES .....	55
Appendix 1 .....	55
Appendix 2 .....	56

**List of Tables**

		<b>Page</b>
Table 1	NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND RANGE OF AGES	40
Table 2	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	41
Table 3	STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF SPECIFIC COUNSELLING SERVICES	42
Table 4	STUDENTS' USE AND SATISFACTION WITH SPECIFIC COUNSELLING SERVICES	43
Table 5	STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH FIVE MAIN AREAS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES	44
Table 6	STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES	45

**Part One**  
**Internship Component**  
**Introduction**

Memorial University of Newfoundland offers a number of options to complete the Master of Education program. The options are a thesis, project, paper folio or an internship. An internship in the area of counselling was chosen because it provided the intern with the opportunity to further develop counselling skills while participating in a supervised environment. The internship option provided the intern with the opportunity to work with experienced professionals in the area of post-secondary education and the conduct research at the worksite in collaboration with the faculty and on-site supervisors.

The Faculty of Education has formally defined the internship option of the Master of Education program and sets out the opportunities that the internship experience can provide to graduate students following the completion of course requirements:

An internship is a full-time practical experience for a minimum of ten weeks and is normally undertaken after or near the completion of course work. The purpose of an internship is to provide a graduate student with a breadth and depth of experience in a practical setting and to provide opportunities for:

1. The development of personal and professional competencies for each intern based on perceived needs, previous experiences, and career plans;

2. practical experiences that serve to highlight the theoretical and pedagogical aspects under study in the program; and
3. the development of a creative and reflective perspective given the stated goals of the intern, the nature of the setting, the specific placement, and field supervisor's exchanges on knowledge of subject matter, and counselling/instructional/leadership competence (Memorial University, 1997).

The internship period was eleven weeks from April 13th to June 26th, during which the intern gained practical experience in the community college setting. During this time the intern worked toward achieving set goals, while receiving continuing feedback from the on-site and faculty supervisors.

Part I of this report describes the activities carried out at the internship site and Part II describes the research completed during the internship.

### **Setting**

The candidate chose the College of the North Atlantic in Corner Brook as the setting for the internship. The candidate's overall program goal was to gain experience in diverse settings while completing her program. In the pre-practicum and practicum settings, the candidate worked in a Primary to grade 12 school setting. The post-secondary setting offered by the College of the North Atlantic provided the candidate with an opportunity to work with a different population, and different types of programs and services.

The College of the North Atlantic is a post-secondary educational and skills training centres in Atlantic Canada offering over 70 full-time programs and more than 300 part-time

courses. It operates sixteen campuses throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The College has 3000 graduates each year, and its offerings include career-oriented certificate and diploma programs which range from one to three years in duration. The College offers programs in the areas of Applied Arts, Business, Health Sciences, Industrial Education/Trades, Natural Resources, Technology, and English as a Second Language. The Corner Brook campus offers 16 programs to a full-time student population of 754 students.

### **Supervision**

The internship was completed with Counselling Services, a resource area of the Division of Student Services. The intern's placement was supervised by both a university supervisor and field supervisors.

Dr. Gary Jeffery agreed to act as university supervisor. He provided guidance and supervision concerning the development of the internship objectives and with the development of the research component of the placement. He was available to the intern for consultation about the internship placement.

On-site supervision was provided by two counsellors at the College of the North Atlantic. Marie Furlong (M.Ed.), a counsellor and registered psychologist, was the principal field supervisor. Ms. Furlong was available to the intern on a daily basis and provided the intern with a diversity of counselling-related experience and instructive direction related to the research aspects of the placement. Counsellor Colleen Barnes (M.Ed.) also provided the intern with additional experiences related to counselling and the ancillary duties of counsellors in a college setting.



### **Goals for the Internship**

The intern identified eight goals to be met during the internship. The goals and the activities that the intern participated in to meet these goals are described in the following section.

**Goal 1        To gain experience in the administration of assessment instruments used at the post-secondary level and to generate resulting reports.**

1. While at the College of the North Atlantic, the intern familiarized herself with several assessment instruments including the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery - Revised (WJ-R) (Woodcock and Johnson, 1989), the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada, 1988) and the Adaptive Functioning Index - 1, Social Education Test (Marlett, 1971).
  
2. The intern also had the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive assessment of one student. This activity involved the administration of both the CAAT and the Woodcock-Johnson. The student, a 43 year old male, was thought to have a learning disability. A meeting was held at the end of the assessment that included the intern, supervisor, instructor and the client's guardian. The complete experience proved to be very valuable to the intern and a highlight of the internship experience because of the activities associated with the administration of the instruments. The intern had to review the instruments in preparation for administration, administer the instruments to an adult in such a way as to get cooperation and make the experience positive for both parties, score

the instrument, and write a report which was reviewed by the primary supervisor. A meeting was held at the end of the assessment which included the intern, supervisor, instructor and the student's guardian. A goal of the intern was that the report be understood by the guardian. The guardian seemed relieved that the report confirmed her beliefs about the student's abilities that he was limited, but did have a level of cognitive functioning that would allow him to benefit from continued academic work.

3. The Canadian Adult Achievement Test is a standardized instrument that is used extensively by the College of the North Atlantic to assist with the placement of mature students. The test is administered by the Counselling Department to groups of students at predetermined intervals. During the time frame of the internship, the candidate assisted in the administration and scoring of the CAAT to 5 different groups of mature students. Each group averaged 12 individuals. After students completed the CAAT, they were invited by the counsellors to meet on an individual basis to review their performance and their application for entry into specific programs. The students seemed to appreciate the review of their applications and assistance from the counsellors in planning for college entry.
4. The intern also had the opportunity to assist her primary field supervisor in the administration and scoring of the Computer Programmer Aptitude Battery (Palermo, 1974) on two occasions. This instrument is administered to groups of mature students wishing to apply for the Programmer Analyst (Business) - Graduate Enhancement

Program. Applicants were also invited by the counsellor to meet individually to review their performance on the CPAB and their application to the program.

5. The intern observed a counsellor administer the Differential Aptitude Test (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada, Inc, 1988) to a student wanting assistance in determining specific programs that would be of interest to him.

**Goal 2                      To gain experience in consulting with other professionals involved with student services at the college.**

1. During the placement, the intern had several opportunities to meet with both the counsellors and with specific instructors to address concerns of students. The instructor for the General Vocational Preparation (GVP) program was a key resource person for the intern. She was involved in the consultation process relating to three students with special needs. Two students were in the process of applying to the GVP program and one would be graduating. The instructor was very helpful to the intern in explaining the unique program she developed for each student she instructed and also reviewed with the intern the application process for potential students.
2. The intern met with the counsellors at the Stephenville campus to review with them their role in the counselling process at that site. The intern took the opportunity to ask questions related to approaches to learning disabilities assessment and also got each

counsellor to review the survey tool the intern was developing for the research component (see Goal 8 below) of the placement.

3. All counsellors at the various campuses of the College of the North Atlantic are participating in program enhancement initiatives. This reflects a provincial initiative that directs counsellors to review and implement strategies to address counsellor accountability. The intern and the primary field supervisor met with counsellors in Stephenville to review a form that was being developed to document the various services that counsellors provide to the student population.
4. The intern met twice with the District Administrator of the College, Marilyn Luscombe, to review the administrative structure of the Provincial college system and, specifically, the Corner Brook campus. Ms. Luscombe provided the intern with various documents related to the organizational structure of the college. In the second meeting, there was a discussion of strategies for the effective administration of the survey tool to be used in the research component of the placement. The intern found Ms. Luscombe to be very supportive and helpful in all aspects of the placement.
5. During the internship, the candidate had opportunities to meet and consult with several members of the Student Services Department including the Co-operative Education Coordinator, Student Affairs Officer, Success Centre/Student Services Coordinator, and library staff.

6. The intern met on several occasions with the Student Affairs Officer, to discuss the administration of the Computer Programmer Aptitude Battery to students applying for entry into the Information Technology program. The consultations involved discussions of specific student applications, entrance criteria, and each individual's performance on the CPAB.
7. Counsellor Colleen Barnes was chairperson of the convocation committee. Convocation was an important student function that involved several members of the Student Services Department. The intern attended two planning meetings and also volunteered to take the minutes at one meeting. The intern felt this experience was worthwhile because it allowed her to appreciate how the counsellor functions within the internal structures of the college organization.

**Goal 3                      To become familiar with the various programs and services offered by the College of the North Atlantic.**

1. The first activity that the intern initiated was a study of the college calendar and student services handbook. These documents proved to be helpful tools as they provided relevant and needed background information about the college, especially student services.
2. The intern was invited on several occasions to attend debriefing sessions with the Co-op Education Coordinator and several students of the Environmental Technology program.

These debriefing sessions involved various aspects of students' work placements and also reviews of students' performance on the formal presentation they gave to peers at the end of the placement term. Students completed questionnaires in which they rated their work placement experience. From these sessions the intern learned how valuable the on-the-job training experience can be for adult students. Students had to participate fully in their work experience, evaluate their experience, and then inform members of their class about the nature of the placement. The program was structured and students were clearly aware of their responsibilities to the placement.

3. The intern attended an accreditation ceremony held to acknowledge formally that the Forestry Resources Technician Program had received accreditation with the Canadian Technology Accreditation Board.
4. The intern was invited to attend a meeting with the Student Affairs Officer, one of the counsellors, and the Student Loans Officer, aimed at developing a system to have the general office staff administer student loans. From this meeting the intern gained experience with the consultation process addressing a specific issue that includes several departments of the college.

**Goal 4        To attend and participate in counselling workshops, in-service, and professional development opportunities which may occur during the internship.**

1. The intern had the opportunity to participate in a two-hour provincial phone conference with the counsellors at the various campuses of the College of the North Atlantic. Counsellors conduct these telephone conferences approximately every two months and discuss concerns at the provincial level. Counsellors are working provincially to develop consistency and uniformity in services offered at each campus.

**Goal 5                      To gain experience assisting students with learning disabilities and special needs.**

1. The intern had the opportunity to participate in the processing of applications from students with special needs. She was also invited to go to Deer Lake with the college counsellor who was going help a young man complete the Self-Directed Search Inventory. The client's father sought the assistance of the counsellor in an effort to determine career directions for his son. Following the assessment, a series of meetings were held which were aimed at facilitating the client's admission in to a work study program. Various options were identified and the intern was assigned the task of writing to the father informing him of his son's options.
2. The intern also had an opportunity to observe the administration of the Adaptive Functioning Index-1 Social Education Test (Marlett, 1971) to a special needs female who would be entering the General Vocational Preparation program.

3. The intern was invited to attend a meeting between a counsellor and an instructor regarding a hearing-impaired student in her third year of a two-year program in Early Childhood Education. The student had a reduced workload, but was still not doing well academically. The student was also receiving long- term counselling. The intern noted that the counsellor and instructor worked together to develop some strategies to meet the specific needs of the student.

**Goal 6            To gain additional experience in personal and career counselling.**

1. The intern attended a meeting with the Co-operative Education Coordinator, a counsellor and the Student Affairs Officer to address issues arising from the proposed Counselling and Employment Services (CES) that was to be implemented in the fall of 1999. Issues that were examined included: planning work objectives for a summer student, the promotion of a counselling and employment centre to faculty, and the development of goals of the Counselling and Employment Services for summer and fall. The intern participated in developing work objectives for the summer student.
2. The intern was able to attend counselling sessions offered by the counsellors with 23 different students throughout the 11 week period of the placement. The actual sessions ranged from 15 minutes to one hour. The issues that students presented to the counsellors concerned the following areas: reviews of formal assessments, information giving about various programs offered at the college, assistance with college applications and student



financial issues, career counselling, and personal counselling.

There was no opportunity for the intern to independently offer personal counselling. This was a disappointment to the intern. During the third semester, personal counselling did not seem to be a need of students. The lower demand may have been due to the fact that enrolment in this term was only 1/3 of that in the fall and winter semesters. The intern would have appreciated more opportunities to implement the various counselling skills that were studied and developed during the course work of the program.

The types of counselling services requested by students at the college were different from those that the intern had experienced at the Primary to grade 12 school setting. After discussions with the counsellors at the college, the intern discovered that most students have specific concerns that usually can be addressed with one or two visits to the counsellors.

**Goal 7            To participate and assist with the liaison work conducted by the Counselling office.**

1.    The intern was invited to attend a meeting with the Student Success Coordinator, a counsellor and the Student Affairs' Officer to address the issue of recruitment and to review a draft of the Recruitment Strategy planned for the coming year. Using a team approach, an action plan was developed including goals, objectives, and activities for fall

98, winter and spring of 1999.

2. The intern also assisted the Co-op Education Coordinator as she conducted an orientation tour of the College with some Level 1, 2, and 3 students from the community of Sop's Arm.

**Goal 8            To complete a study aimed at assessing the impact of counselling services offered at the Corner Brook Branch of the College of the North Atlantic.**

1. A study was completed that involved the development and use of a questionnaire which could be also used as an assessment tool by counsellors in the College system who may wish to assess the impact of counselling services at their own settings. This study involved:
  1. reviewing a sample of the representative literature on current services provided by post-secondary counselling staffs and the literature on community satisfaction with counselling services at the post-secondary level.
  2. developing a questionnaire to obtain data from the student population at the Corner Brook campus about recognition, use of and satisfaction with the counselling services.

3. field-testing the developed questionnaire at the College of the North Atlantic campus in Corner Brook.
4. interviewing eight student services personnel from the Corner Brook and Stephenville campuses, to collect data on their perceptions of the nature of counselling services offered and of the programming initiated to meet student needs.

A complete report on the study is found in Part 2 of this report.

### **Conclusion**

This intern believes that experience is a great teacher. Because of that philosophy, the intern selected the option of completing an internship to obtain a Masters of Education from Memorial University. The intern learned from new experiences obtained from the placement and through the discussion of the past experiences and knowledge of her academic supervisor, field supervisors and other professionals at the placement.

The intern selected the College of the North Atlantic because it offered a setting which was completely different from previous student placements. The intern had worked in a secondary school setting and had exposure to the workings of a university setting. The community college thus provided the intern with novel experiences.

At the community college, the intern learned that a major emphasis on the work of the counsellor is related to preparing the students for their future careers. Counselling and most Student Affairs activities are directed at providing assistance to students in the college and

making them employable. Most courses are of short duration (e.g., two years) when compared to university programs and students want assurances from counsellors and instructors that they will be employable at the end of their programs.

Counsellors spent a great portion of their time providing program information and job market information, and in the administration of various types of assessments aimed at providing prospective students with information about their academic abilities, and job-related suitabilities for certain programs. The administration of the assessments such as the CAAT and CPAB and the review process with individual students illustrate this point.

The intern appreciated the comprehensive nature of the assessments. The experience of administering the Woodcock- Johnson was a highlight of the intern's placement. The intern was able to establish an environment where a special needs adult male appeared to be comfortable and the formal assessment proceeded positively. The intern, with the assistance of the primary field supervisor, wrote a report which was reviewed with the student's guardian. The entire process was very informative and educational for the intern.

The intern was very impressed with the General Vocational Preparation program and the various program elements that had been implemented at the college. The application process and work placements experiences seemed to be comprehensive in addressing the special needs of adults with learning disabilities. Students seemed to be very motivated and pleased with the program.

The intern had the opportunity to gain an awareness of the diversity in work environments of counsellors at the community college setting. It seemed that on a day to day basis counsellors were consulting with other student services personnel on a wide range of

matters such as meeting with students for counselling, testing, information giving; and working on various committees established to enhance the community life of the college. The intern felt that participation in other activities such as convocation, orientation programs, and school visitations provided counsellors with opportunities to promote themselves and their services.

The intern gained worthwhile experiences in the placement, and appreciated the help and support of all the professionals working at the college. Overall the placement offered an interesting and challenging internship experience. Such a setting would be recommended to other graduate students.

## **Part Two**

### **Research Component**

#### **The Impact of Counselling Services at a Small Community College: Multiple Perspectives**

“It is important that the community or population gain not only from the results of the research, but from the process itself.” (B. Hall, 1982).

#### **Introduction**

This study was aimed at obtaining a better understanding of the nature and range of counselling services offered at small community colleges. More specifically, the study was conducted to determine student and staff awareness of the range of services and their views about whether or not these services were appropriate and meeting students' needs. To study this question, and provide the Student Services staff with new information, an assessment of students' recognition, use of and satisfaction with counselling services at the Corner Brook campus of the College was completed. Student Services personnel from both the Corner Brook and Stephenville campuses were interviewed to collect data on their perceptions of the nature and range of counselling services offered and the programming initiated to meet the student needs.

#### **Review of Literature**

##### **Evolution of Counselling Services**

Much of the literature about counselling centres at the post-secondary level focuses on large colleges and universities with student populations ranging from 5,000 to more than 15,000

students (Richardson, Seim, Eddy, and Brindely, 1985). There is very little information available on the delivery of counselling services in colleges of less than 2000 students.

A review of counselling services offered by the Counselling Centre at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College was conducted in 1979 (Final Report, 1979). An interested reader can find additional information regarding efforts of administrative staff to address student services issues from documents developed by the staff of Memorial, such as the recent University Forum (1999) and a Report from the Committee to Review Student Services (2000).

In all settings, the nature, range, and delivery of counselling services at the post secondary level has changed in the past 50 years. Heppner and Neal (1983) provide a comprehensive examination of the evolution of the roles and functions of counselling centres up to 1983. They identify four general periods up to that date and describe key aspects of each period. They offer the following overview of key periods in the offering of services.

1. Before 1945: **The beginnings** - Many different levels of advisors, deans, and counselors "counseled" students during this period. The terms counseling, vocational guidance, and student personnel were essentially undifferentiated.
2. 1945-1955: **Transition and professionalism** - This period saw the establishment of many counseling centers in response to the need for vocational guidance by veterans returning from World War II. The role of counseling as a profession separate from student personnel work evolved.
3. 1955-1970: **Expansion and consolidation**- During this period the role of counseling centers expanded and personal counseling began to emerge as an important function, although centers continued to deliver more vocationally-

oriented services.

4. 1970-1982: **Broader Scope and constricted budgets** - This period was characterized by a further expansion of the counseling center role. Center staff began to see themselves as much more than individual counselors, with the entire campus environment as their client. Paradoxically, many centers had to deal with budget restrictions and threats to their resource base.

Stone and Archer (1990), in summarizing the evolution of present counselling centres state that: "In general then, there has been a gradual expansion of counseling center functions with a change away from vocational counseling towards personal counseling and concern with the general campus environment" (p.541).

If counsellors are to become more involved with the concerns and activities of the general campus environment, the potential exists that the specific roles and functions of counsellors could become enmeshed and confused by requesting that they engage in other ancillary duties.

Carrol and Tarusuk (1990) address this issue at post secondary institutions. They state that:

Ancillary services include many activities beyond the already established personal/social, education, and career/vocational counseling. Additional services include, assessment, placement, information dissemination, orientation, study skills, curriculum development, consulting, teaching, disciplining, record keeping, managing and coordinating (p.34).



### Range or Pattern of Service

Richardson and his colleagues (1985) report on a survey of 400 public and private colleges in the United States with student populations of under 5,000. One of the purposes of that study was to determine the range of services offered by counselling services at smaller colleges. The survey suggested that smaller colleges rely on counselling services to assist with student adjustment to the college environment. The study also found that these "services are comprehensive in nature, spanning personal adjustment, career planning, academic problems, basic skills remediation, and services addressing crises associated with stress"(p.511).

Carney, Peterson, and Moberg (1990) in a study of what students expect from a counselling centre, replicated a 1980 survey of students' perceptions of their needs seven years later. They discovered that very little had changed in that time span. Both studies indicated that students referred to counselling centres for assistance with pragmatic issues like problems involving lack of faculty support, inconsistencies between what the institution promised and what it provided, problems with self-support and finances, frustrations with career information and job searches, difficulties with the academic system, and academic problems. Both studies reveal that students feel they did not require counselling services for personal services to the same degree as they did for more pragmatic problems. The authors state that, "The consistency of these results across time lends credence to the suggestion by Carney et al. (1979) that a core set of student concerns exists around which other concerns may rise and fall, depending upon changing environmental circumstances" (p. 427).

Bishop and Walker (1990) present a study and literature review that suggests that counselling services have a positive impact on retention efforts in higher education. Wilson,

Mason, and Ewing (1997) present a more recent study which suggests that receiving psychological counselling can have an impact on a student's likelihood of succeeding in college.

MacKinnon-Slaney (1994) presents a comprehensive adult learning model which provides direction for counsellors in addressing the diverse needs of adult learners. In reflecting on the various services for students at the post-secondary level the author states:

Adult satisfaction with and continued participation in formal learning are not the consequences of one easily isolated factor in the interactionist paradigm, but rather complicated responses to a series of issues confronted by the individual adult in his or her unique situation as "universe of one." In essence, counseling responses cannot be directed to a singular issue, but rather must take into consideration multiple factors likely to be of concern in the adult learner's life (p. 269).

MacKinnon-Slaney reviews the ten factors of the Adult Persistence in Learning Model and provides counselling intervention strategies for each factor. Five of the factors in the APLM model relate to personal issues and include: self-awareness; willingness to delay gratification; clarification of career and life goals; mastery of life transitions; and sense of interpersonal competence. The two factors that relate to learning issues are educational competence and intellectual and political competence. The final three factors address the environmental issues of the particular educational institution that can impact on the individual learner and include: information retrieval; awareness of opportunities and impediments; and environmental compatibility. In advocating consideration of the Adult Persistence in Learning Model the

author states that, "This model provides a checklist of issues and survival skills that need to be mastered, as well as counseling interventions for ensuring appropriate services for the retention of adult learners in higher education" (p.274).

### Factors Influencing Students' Use of Counselling Services

Several factors appear to influence the degree to which students utilize a counselling service. It cannot be assumed that a service will automatically be utilized by students and be promoted by faculty. Carney, Peterson and Moberg (1990), for example, suggest that counsellors may have to promote themselves and their programs to encourage faculty to refer students. They also suggest that the title of the counselling centre can have an impact on the counselling services. Brown and Chambers (1986) found that faculty were more likely to refer a student to a centre titled "Personal and Career Counseling Service" than they were to a centre titled "Counseling , Career and Consultation Service" or "Psychological and Career Exploration Service".

When services such as assisting students with personal issues, are considered, Bieschke, Bowman, Hopkins, Levine, and McFadden (1995) provide research and supporting literature that points to the strength of the therapeutic working alliance between the counsellor and student. "These outcomes suggest that student satisfaction with university counseling services is more strongly related to the quality of the student-counselor working alliance and functioning at termination than to the amount of symptom change resulting from counseling"(p.558). This study also demonstrates "strong support for the efficacy of time-limited therapy"(p.559). Students who participated in this research would have seen the counsellor for three to ten

sessions.

Lewicki and Thompson (1982) suggest that student services personnel should become more involved in publicizing student services and call for direct staff contact with students. "Direct staff contact with the students will increase personalization of student services, and the expertise the staff can offer should result in better informed students" (p.481).

#### Determining Student Needs

Gallagher (1992) points to the use of surveys to determine what the needs of students are in relation to the services offered by counselling centres. "Survey results can be used not only to help set clinical priorities and focus outreach activities for counseling programs but also to sensitize the campus community to the many stresses college students are experiencing and increase community knowledge of available services" (p.281).

Gallagher, Golin, and Kelleher (1992), in an article discussing the necessity of matching student service programs to current student needs maintain that needs assessment continues to be one of the most useful and efficient means available to identify college students' concerns. Accurate identification of concerns is becoming increasingly important in light of the growing diversity of students on campus, their changing personal and career needs, and the heightened accountability demands that confront student service programs (p.301).

Stage and Russel (1992) agree that "Much of what is known about the college student has been learned through the use of surveys, structured interviews, and standardized measures" (p. 485). These authors advocate, however, that an alternative research design, involving a method they describe as triangulation, be used "as a way of expanding readers' effectiveness in college

student research”(p.485). Triangulation is the combining of methods, sources and multiple data collectors to investigate the same phenomenon in one study. The authors advocate consideration of this method of research to individuals who seek to understand and describe the campus environment. The authors present five limitations of the more standard methods and present an argument for the use of method triangulation. They state, “Whatever the label, advocates of this approach share the understanding that all methods (qualitative and quantitative) should be viewed as complementary rather than as rival; methods employed should triangulate or come together to shed light on the results”(p.487).

### **Summary of Literature Review**

To examine issues related to counselling services in small post-secondary institutions, four areas have been presented: the evolution of counselling services, the range or pattern of services, factors influencing students' use of counselling services, and determining student needs. When viewing patterns of service, the studies presented indicate that students want assistance with practical issues arising from participating in education at the post-secondary level. Factors that influence students' use of counselling services include; degree of promotion of services by counsellors and faculty, the name of the centre, and the strength of working alliance between counsellor and student. To determine student needs, the literature presented refers to the regular use of survey methods by student services personnel to assess the current needs of students.

### **Methodology**

In an attempt to gain information about the impact of counselling services offered at the Corner Brook Campus of the College of the North Atlantic, a questionnaire was developed and administered to students attending the college during the spring 1998 semester. Due to the time constraints of the placement, the intern chose to develop and administer a questionnaire to attempt to gain information from students about their knowledge of, use of, and satisfaction with the services offered by counsellors. College staff with Counselling and Students Affairs at both the Stephenville and Corner Brook campuses were also interviewed to determine their perceptions of the nature of counselling services offered at the college system.

The data from three sources (student surveys, structured interviews with college staff, and a literature review) were integrated to provide additional information on the status of counselling services at the Corner Brook campus of the College of the North Atlantic.

### **Sample**

Data used in the study was obtained from two major sources, namely, college administrators and counsellors who were interviewed and groups of students at the college who completed a questionnaire. Each of these sources is described below.

#### **Structured Interviews**

To obtain information on the nature and range of Counselling Services at the College of the North Atlantic, three counsellors (two from the Stephenville campus and one from the Corner Brook campus) were interviewed. Three Student Services personnel were interviewed at

the Corner Brook Campus. Interviews were also conducted with the Provincial Director of Student Services and the regional campus administrator of the Corner Brook campus. In total, eight persons associated with service provision were interviewed. The researcher, with the permission of each interviewee, tape recorded each discussion.

### Questionnaires

All students (approximately 271) attending classes in the third semester at the Corner Brook campus were asked to complete the questionnaire. Questionnaires were completed with the consent of the class instructor. Students were informed that completion of the questionnaire was voluntary. Questionnaires were completed by 196 students (72.3%).

## **Procedure**

### Structured Interviews

Interviews were conducted with four members of Student Services Personnel at the Corner Brook campus that included one counsellor and three other members of the Student Services Department. Two counsellors at the Stephenville campus of the College of the North Atlantic were also interviewed. Interviews focussed on current activities of counsellors and future developments. These three counsellors provided the intern with information from their own counselling experience. Each counsellor was asked questions related to the service he or she provided to students. For an administrative perspective, the provincial Student Services Director was interviewed (Stephenville campus) and regional Campus Administrator (Corner Brook campus) was also interviewed. A total of eight interviews were conducted.

The questions asked counsellors were:

1. What services do you provide students here at this college?
2. What are the various types of services requested by the students you see?
3. What is the average number of visits made by a client? How many clients do you see one to two times? How many do you see three or more times?
4. Do you actively promote the services of the Centre or of the individual counsellors?
5. Can you estimate the number of students you see per day, per week, and per semester?
6. Have you comments on how the service is perceived by teachers? administrators? others in the community (e.g., prospective employers)?

As indicated, interviews were also conducted with three other members of the Student Services team; the Co-op Placement Officer, the Student Affairs Officer, and the Director of the Student Success Centre. These individuals along with the two counsellors are an integral part of the Student Services team at the Corner Brook campus. Each member of the Student Services team was able to provide information related to the effectiveness of the team's efforts and the services that the team provides to the students.

Questions asked student services personnel were:

1. Do you work with counsellors in addressing concerns of students? If so, in what ways? What are the students' concerns? Are these concerns addressed effectively?



2. Do you work with counsellors in developing programs for students? In what ways and for what programs?

The Student Services Director is responsible for providing leadership and direction for counselling departments at all campuses of the College. Counselling administration, programs, and initiatives would be developed with his sanction and direction. It was felt that he would be able to provide information from a Provincial perspective as to current and future mandates for counselling services.

The regional campus administrator is responsible for providing effective leadership for the Corner Brook/St. Anthony District. This person oversees Student Services, Natural Resources Programming, Marketing and International activities. Based on her supervisory roles, it was felt she would be able to provide information on local activities, roles and functions of counsellors who were part of student services. The Student Services Director and regional campus administrator were asked the following questions to guide the interview.

1. What are the specific goals of counselling services offered in the Colleges campuses?
2. Are there new initiatives being implemented now or in the future?
3. Presently, are there any procedures in place to determine the effectiveness of counselling services?
4. What processes do you employ to monitor counselling services at each campus?

It was made clear to all interviewees that their participation was voluntary, that they could cease to participate at any point, and that they were free to omit answering any questions.

All respondents were also fully informed as to the nature of the study being conducted. A copy of the consent form for the interview is found in Appendix A.

### Questionnaires

A student satisfaction questionnaire was developed based on (a) a review of literature on counselling services at the post-secondary level, (b) input from on-site counsellors and c) an analysis of former student satisfaction surveys. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information from students regarding students' awareness of, use of and satisfaction with counselling services.

The questionnaire was reviewed by the academic supervisor, the primary field supervisor, and the four staff counsellors throughout the development stage. The questionnaire was pretested on a sample of students at the college. Based on the results of the pretest questionnaire, final revisions were made. (See Appendix B for copy of the Questionnaire)

The questionnaire used a combination of a four-point and five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions. It was estimated that five to fifteen minutes would be needed to complete the 33 items found on the instrument.

Items were divided into five sections. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of five items aimed at obtaining demographic information about the students and to determine if they had used any of the counselling services at the college. If they did not, they were directed to answer one question (item six). This item requested that students indicate why they never made use of counselling services.

If students had used counselling services, they were directed to go to item number seven

and to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire was made up of 13 items representing the range of counselling services offered at the Corner Brook campus. Students were asked if they knew services were available and asked what services they had used. Their satisfaction with the offered service was also assessed.

The third part of the questionnaire asked students to rate their satisfaction with the five major areas of counselling services offered at the Corner Brook Campus. These focussed on; personal/social concerns, career issues, job search assistance, academic performance, and program/resource information.

The last part of the survey consisted of items addressing specific aspects of counselling services such as availability of the counsellor and recommendations for improvement of service.

To enhance the administration process, and on the advice of the campus administrator, the intern first met with the department heads of the various programs at the Corner Brook campus. The intern met with these individuals and was given advice as to the most efficient way to administer the survey without interfering with class time and to assure a maximum response rate. Students were asked to fill out the questionnaire and also informed that completion of the questionnaire was voluntary.

### **Analysis**

Information resulting from the interviews with college personnel was reviewed with the aim of identifying common themes related to the goals of the research. Analysis of the questionnaires involved the calculation of frequencies and ranges.

## **Results**

### **Data from Structured Interviews**

The structured interviews provided the intern with information related to the diverse roles of the counsellors, administrators, and other student services personnel. The intern discovered through responses to items and related discussion that, while counsellors provided similar services to students, each counsellor had his or her own unique counselling style and perspective on how they envisioned his or her role.

Information gathered through the structured interview method was categorized into the following common themes:

1. Students' use of services;
2. Enhancing counselling services;
3. Referrals;
4. Provincial perspective.

Each of these major themes is discussed below.

#### **1. Students' Use of Services**

Students used Counselling Services through a walk-in or referral basis. Trying to determine the average number of students seen on a daily basis proved to be very difficult for all four counsellors due to the range of services that they provide. At the beginning of the fall term, two counsellors stated it would not be unusual to see 100 students per week. Many of these students could be stopping by the counsellor's office for information, specific forms needed for student loans, issues related to course assignments, or booking appointments for assessments or

personal counselling. One counsellor also indicated that a formal comprehensive assessment to determine if a student had a learning disability could take up to three days with the one student. If a student needed information, the session might be 15 minutes. A personal counselling issue could take up to five to six, one- hour appointments.

## 2. Enhancing Counselling Services

It was felt by both the counsellors and student services personnel that, generally, students are aware that counselling services existed at the campuses. Despite this they felt that services should be promoted on the college campuses. The following is a list of suggestions given by counsellors and student services personnel:

1. Counsellors should be involved with activities such as orientation and preparation for convocation to promote themselves as counsellors and part of the student services' team.
2. Counsellors should visit classrooms to make presentations about the counselling services available. This could be done two to three weeks into the first term. It should not be done the first week of term because students are receiving too much information related to student services and specific information about counselling services would be lost.
3. Committee work of counsellors that involves student representation is important because students see counsellors outside the office in a role that is proactive to student issues and unrelated to personal guidance and problem solving.
4. Counsellors should continue to be actively involved in working with other student services personnel in developing and implementing seminars and workshops. One participant stated that counsellors need to be viewed in a role not solely connected to

personal problems, but in a proactive, student-community enhancement role.

5. Strategies to promote counselling services should include non-print media because students do not seem to pay attention to all the print and messages on the television screens place around the campus. It was suggested that counsellors need to be seen participating in visible activities such as convocation and registration.
6. Four of the interviewees suggested that counsellor offices should be in close proximity to the lobby or gathering area of students.
7. Two participants suggested that counsellors could post a schedule on their office doors and leave information as to when they would be back, or should give the name of another contact person.
8. Counsellors should look for opportunities to promote their roles and services to the college and external communities.
9. One participant stated, "Once things start rolling, you don't have to promote yourself." In other words, once service is established, less promotion is needed.

### 3. Referrals

1. One interviewee had the philosophy that when a student comes with an issue, the counsellor should assist the person in such a way that no other referrals should be necessary. "If I can't help, I will get the necessary information to help. I don't like to suggest you'll have to go to see that particular person."
2. A participant stated that it would help if instructors were to refer clients more often to the appropriate member of the Student Services when an issue developed. It was also felt that

action should be taken at the time a problem was identified and not at the point when the student is having serious difficulty in the classroom.

3. Another suggestion was that if counselling services are promoted effectively, self-referrals and instructor- referrals will follow.

#### 4. Provincial Perspective

The Director of Student Services was able to provide the intern with the philosophy and operating model underlying the counselling role and services. It was suggested that an educational model for counselling is more appropriate at the college campus while the more traditional clinical model may be implemented at universities. Counsellors were viewed as facilitators of learning outside the classroom and it was felt that their main focus should be assisting students with the learning process. Counsellors were viewed as assisting with more practical problems. Serious personal issues should be referred for therapy to outside community mental health resources.

#### Data Collected from Questionnaire

##### Section A

This section asked for demographic information and if students used counselling services of the college. Of the 196 respondents, 185 gave their age. The mean age of students was 23. 71 with a minimum age of 18 and a maximum of 56. Table 1 represents the number of students and the range of ages.

**TABLE 1****Section A: Number of Students and Range of Ages**

Age	Frequency	Percent
18	13	6.6
19	27	13.8
20	28	14.3
21	22	11.2
22	29	14.8
23	19	9.7
24	3	1.5
25	6	3.1
26 - 30	12	5.5
31 - 35	14	7.5
36 - 40	5	2.5
41 - 45	3	1.5
46- 50	2	1
51 - 56	2	1
<b>Total</b>	185	

One hundred and thirty-eight (70.4%) students were male and 57 (29.1%) were female. One hundred and sixteen (59.2%) students indicated that their place of residence when not in school was Corner Brook and 80 (40.8%) indicated their place of residence when not in school was outside the city. One hundred and thirty-eight (70.4%) students stated they had not previously used counselling services. Fifty-eight (29.6%) of students stated they had used the services in the past. Of the 138 students who did not use the services, 113 (81.9%) indicated they never felt they had questions or concerns that required them to seek the assistance of a



counsellor, 56 (40.6%) indicated they felt they should be able to handle their own concerns and questions and 24 (17.4%) indicated they were unaware of counselling services offered. See Table 2 for a summary of the above data.

**TABLE 2**

**Section A: Demographic Information**

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Total (N=196)
Male	138	70.4
Female	57	29.1
Students from Corner Brook	80	40.8
Students from other area	116	59.2
Students who never used Counselling Services	138	70.4
Students who had used counselling services in the past	58	29.6

**Section B**

This part of the survey was directed at the 58 (29.6%) of the students who indicated they had used the counselling services. For most of the services listed (items #7 to #19), more than half of the students responded that they were aware that those specific services were available. Fifty (92%) of students who responded were aware that help with academic problems was available. Forty-nine (96%) of students who responded were aware that help was provided for acquiring student aid.

There were three types of services that were unknown to about a third of the students. Twenty-one (45%) students were not aware of job search workshops. Twenty-two (46%) of

students were not aware that counsellors would visit high schools during career week. Nineteen (40%) of students were not aware that testing for program placement was done. Many of the services offered were reported to be relatively unknown to the respondents. Many services were known about by 10 to 25% of the respondents. See Table 3 for a summary of the above data.

**TABLE 3**

**Section B: Students Awareness of Specific Counselling Services**

Item #	Service Description	N	Unaware	Aware
7	As a way of dealing with an academic problem	54	4(7)*	50 (92)
8	To obtain individual career counselling	49	10 (20)	39 (79)
9	To help me do college entrance testing	48	17 (35)	31 (64)
10	When I attended one or more job search workshops	46	21 (45)	25 (54)
11	When I was seeking personal counselling or help	48	5 (10)	43 (89)
12	When I attended special presentations on such topics as Time Management	48	14 (29)	34 (70)
13	When the counsellor visited my high school during career week activities	47	22 (46)	25 (53)
14	When I sought assistance with Student Aid Programs	51	2 (3)	49 (96)
15	When I sought testing for program placement	47	19 (40)	28 (59)
16	When I sought scholarship and awards information	48	12 (25)	36 (75)
17	When I sought convocation/graduation information	47	14 (29)	33 (70)
18	When I was submitting an Academic Appeal	46	14 (30)	32 (69)
19	When I was seeking transfer of credit information	50	8 (16)	42 (84)

The bracketed number indicates percentage and is based on the total number of respondents to the specific item.

Items # 7 to #19 also sought information on users' satisfaction with the services they had

utilized. It was reported that the three areas of service that got the highest “satisfactory” rates were: dealing with academic problems (item #7, N=27,90%), personal counselling (item # 11, N=21,91%) and assistance with student aid ( item # 14, N=34,87%). See Table 4 for a summary of the above data.

**TABLE 4**  
**Section B: Students’ Use and Satisfaction of Specific Counselling Services**

Item #	Service Description	N	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
7	As a way of dealing with an academic problem	30	3 (10)*	27 (90)
8	To obtain individual career counselling	12	3 (25)	9 (75)
9	To help me do college entrance testing	5	2 (40)	3 (60)
10	When I attended one or more job search workshops	6	3 (50)	3 (50)
11	When I was seeking personal counselling or help	23	2 (9)	21 (91)
12	When I attended special presentations on such topics as Time Management	16	2 (12)	14 (88)
13	When the counsellor visited my high school during career week activities	8	0	8 (100)
14	When I sought assistance with Student Aid Programs	39	5 (12)	34 (87)
15	When I sought testing for program placement	6	2 (33)	4 (67)
16	When I sought scholarship and awards information	9	3 (33)	6 (67)
17	When I sought convocation/graduation information	9	1 (11)	8 (89)
18	When I was submitting an Academic Appeal	6	2 (33)	4 (67)
19	When I was seeking transfer of credit information	22	4 (18)	18 (81)

\* The number in brackets represents the percentage of respondents for each rating category of the item.

### Section C

This section directed students to rate their satisfaction with the five main areas of counselling provided at the college. Satisfaction was rated on a five-point scale (Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Adequate, Somewhat Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied). A "Not Applicable" category was also included. More than half of the students responded that the five categories that were presented were not applicable to them. The two categories with the highest satisfactory rates (in percentage terms) were Personal and Social Concerns, (item #20, N=7, 58%), Academic Performance and Study Skills, (item #23, N= 12, 57%) and Program/Resources Information (item #24, N= 13, 52%). It is also interesting to note that for Career Issues, item #21, almost half the respondents (47%) rated the counselling services in this area as adequate. No dissatisfaction was expressed about services in the personal/social concerns category (item #20) and from 4 to 9 percent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the remaining areas. Table 5 presents these results.

**TABLE 5**

#### **Section C: Students' Satisfaction with Five Main Areas of Counselling Services**

Item #	Area of Service	N	1*	2	3	4	5	$\bar{x}$
20	Personal/Social Concerns	12	7 (58)	2(16)	3(25)	0	0	1.6
21	Career Issues	21	9(42)	1(4)	10(47)	1(4)	0	2.1
22	Job Search Assistance	18	6(33)	6(33)	4(22)	1(5)	1(5)	2.2
23	Academic Performance and Study Skills	21	12(57)	3(14)	4(19)	2(9)	0	1.8
24	Program/Resources Information	25	13(52)	4(16)	7(28)	1(4)	0	1.8

\* Note: The numbers indicate the following rating categories: 1 - Very Satisfied, 2 - Somewhat satisfied, 3 - Adequate, 4 - Somewhat Dissatisfied, 5 - Very Dissatisfied

The number in brackets represents the percentage of respondents for each rating category for the item.

### Section D

This section asked specific “yes” or “no” questions related to miscellaneous elements of service. Fifty-six (96.6%) of the students indicated they would recommend services to a friend. Fifty-seven (98.3%) students stated they would use counselling services in the future. Fifty-one (87.9%) indicated that the counsellor was accessible. Fifty-seven (98.3%) stated that the counsellor was “open” and “friendly”. Seven students (12%) responded that the counsellor was not accessible for making appointments. These results are presented in Table 6.

**TABLE 6**

#### **Section D: Students’ Perceptions of Specific Elements of Counselling Service**

Item #	Specific Element of Service	N	Yes	No
25	If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend our services to him or her?	57	56(98)	1
26	Would you use our services in the future?	57	57(100)	0
27	Was the counsellor accessible for making appointments?	57	51(89)	7(12)
28	Was the counsellor open and friendly?	57	57(100)	0

The number in brackets represents the percentage of respondents for each rating category for the item.

### Section E

This last part of the survey requested short written responses to questions that asked students about the helpfulness of services offered of the counselling department. Thirty-eight (65.5%) of the students stated that the counselling services helped a great deal and 17 (29.3%) stated that counselling services helped somewhat. Forty-one (70.6%) of students commented that the service they received was the most helpful. Thirteen (31.7%) stated that the help they

received with student loans was the most helpful. Six ( 14.6%) stated that having the counsellor readily available was the most helpful to them.

When asked to indicate which aspect of service was the least helpful nine ( 15.5%) responded. Each response revealed a different comment. The following is the list of comments:

1. Help with course selection.
2. Study skills and academic performance.
3. Not available.
4. General office.
5. Personal social concerns.
6. I'm a born again Christian, so there are issues I deal with that the counsellor can't help with! The counsellor must remain anonymous about his/her beliefs but, I would love to have access to a Christian counsellor. Jesus is my counsellor but it would be nice to have humans trained for a student's spiritual concerns as well.
7. Getting help with a teacher that wasn't very nice.
8. Programs and resources.
9. Personal issues.

When asked to comment upon the best thing about counselling services, 34 comments referred to the friendliness of the counsellors and 13 comments referred to the helpfulness of counsellors. When asked how to improve counselling services, 8 comments recommended more counsellors and 3 recommended that counsellors be more available.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to determine, using the survey method of data collection, if students at the Corner Brook campus of the College of the North Atlantic were aware of , used and were satisfied with available counselling services. Student services personnel were also interviewed using structured interviews to gain information from them regarding the impact of counselling services on the student population.

The response rate from student questionnaires was 72.3%. One hundred and thirty-eight (70.4%) students were male and 57 (29.1%) were female. The statistician at the College of the North Atlantic (G. Luther, personal communication, August 21, 2000) reported that the courses offered in the spring term of 1998 were traditionally those that tended to have more males than females enrolled.

Twenty-four (12.2%) of the students surveyed indicated they were unaware that counselling services were offered. This would indicate that the majority of students who attended the College in the spring semester were aware that counselling services were available. Of the students who did not use counselling services, 113 (57.6%) indicated that they never felt they had questions or concerns that would require them to seek the assistance of a counsellor.

Fifty-eight (29.6%) of students surveyed indicated they had used counselling services. The students who had used the service were seeking assistance related to academic problems and acquiring student aid.

Areas of counselling services that students knew least about involved job search workshops, high school visitations, and testing for program placement.

Areas of counselling services that got the highest satisfaction rates were those dealing

with academic problems, personal counselling, and assistance with student aid related problems.

The majority of students who had used counselling services indicated that the best thing about counselling services was the friendliness and helpfulness of the counsellors.

These results indicate that the majority of students are aware that counselling services are provided, although they may not be aware of the range of services offered. This survey result is in agreement with data collected from the structured interviews from campus counsellors and other student services personnel. The structured interviews resulted in nine strategies identified by the researcher that both student services personnel and counsellors could implement to promote their specific services to the college student population.

In redesigning a counselling centre at a liberal arts college with fewer than 2,000 students, counsellors Kranz and Harris (1991) implemented strategies that were similar to those identified during the structured interviews. The areas of responsibility identified in the redesign of counselling services presented by Kranz and Harris (1991) were: flexibility in direct services; address education and prevention needs of campus community; and consultation and outreach components.

An unexpected discovery made by the intern was the realization of the degree to which counselling services are made available to the public by the college. School students are provided tours of the college facilities that are often led by counsellors. Adults may request an appointment with counsellors for program information and career counselling. Formal assessments may also be implemented in assisting adults to determine their academic ability and program direction.



### Limitations of the Study

The review of literature on this research topic was limited due to the fact that there were few studies of the counselling services offered at colleges of less than 2,000 students. The information presented in this study obtained from students' surveys and structured interviews with student services personnel attempts to add additional data.

A limitation of this study is the sample size. A survey administered in the second semester, during the winter term may capture a larger number of student perceptions regarding counselling services.

The subjective self-reporting nature of surveys is also a limitation. The design and wording of the questionnaire may have been misinterpreted by some students, yielding inaccurate information. For example, some students may have thought the Student Success Centre at the College was part of services offered through the Counselling Department. This clarification could be beneficial in further surveys.

Strengths of the survey include the response rate and the range of respondents. The 72.3% response rate and the range of respondents offers a more comprehensive perspective of the nature and impact of counselling services.

### Areas of Further Research

The intern experience at the Corner Brook campus of the College of the North Atlantic was very positive and the atmosphere of the college was conducive to conducting research. The staff and students were very supportive and cooperative with all data collection procedures initiated by the intern. In such a positive climate, opportunities exist for further data collection

and research activities.

Use of focus groups would be a method of data collection that might be used to determine how counselling services impact on the college community. Members of the college community could be represented in these groups. Focus groups could be utilized to further develop any questionnaire directed at gaining information in specific areas of concern.

Users of counselling services could be asked to complete questionnaires at the end of counselling sessions. This process would provide additional information regarding user immediate satisfaction of counselling services. The questionnaire developed by the intern can be readily revised or directly used by counsellors seeking feedback on their services and or for future data collection and recording keeping.

The College of the North Atlantic campus in Corner Brook provided this intern with a wonderful opportunity to develop and conduct a research project. The assistance from student services staff and administration was instrumental in assisting her to complete the research study. Despite their own demanding course work, the students were very helpful and willing to give of their time when asked to complete questionnaires. The research activity component of the intern's placement did indeed assist with "the development of a creative and reflective perspective (Memorial, 1997) and instill within the intern an appreciation for the efforts that are needed when entering the realm of research.

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Appendix 1

## Consent Form

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Blanche Whelan and I am a graduate student in the Educational Psychology department at Memorial University. I've been doing my on the job training as a counsellor intern here at the College. I'm conducting research on the impact of counselling services on the students here.

Your knowledge and experience with Student Services can provide valuable information about the administration of and impact of counselling services for the student population. You are asked to participate in an interview that will be used to assess the impact of counselling services. The interview will be audio taped so that I may review the collected material. The tape will be destroyed once I have assessed the information.

Your responses are confidential and participation is completely voluntary. Material from these interviews will be incorporated into a written report with recommendations which will be submitted to the College of the North Atlantic. All information collected in this study will be confidential and no individual will be identified.

This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee of Memorial University. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at 637-8534. Should you wish to speak to a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Linda Philips, Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Research at Memorial University, 737-3402. My research supervisor is Dr. Gary Jeffery, and he can be reached at 737-7654.

Thank you for your participation in this research activity.

Sincerely,

Blanche M. Whelan

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I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby grant permission for Blanche Whelan to use the information from this questionnaire for research purposes, assessing the impact of counselling services at the Corner Brook campus of the College of the North Atlantic. I understand that all information obtained is confidential and that no individual will be identified.

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Date

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Signature

## Appendix 2

(Note: The questionnaire has been modified from its original format.)

### Counselling Services Questionnaire

**This questionnaire is designed to inform us about your views of the counselling services offered at the Corner Brook Campus. Please answer the following questions to give us feedback about our services.**

**To insure that all information offered is strictly confidential, please do not sign or put your name on this form. Please answer questions as honestly and fully as possible. You may omit answering any questions. Your participation in completing this questionnaire is voluntary.**

**Please provide the following background information:**

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Program of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Place of residence when not attending school:

Outside Corner Brook Area \_\_\_\_\_ Corner Brook \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you previously used the any of the Counselling services offered at the college?

No \_\_\_\_\_ (If **NO**, please complete the following Section A, #6 only.)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ (If **Yes**, please go to Section B, # 7 and complete the survey.)

### **Section A:**

6. I have never used the Counselling Services because (Mark as many of the following as apply):

- (A) I was unaware of the counselling services offered. \_\_\_\_
- (B) I never felt I had concerns or questions that would require me to seek the assistance of a counsellor. \_\_\_\_
- (C) I felt I should be able to handle my own concerns and questions. \_\_\_\_
- (D) I considered using the service but had concerns about confidentiality. \_\_\_\_
- (E) I considered using the service but the centre was never open at a time that I was free to visit. \_\_\_\_
- (F) I could not easily get to the place where the Counselling Service was located. \_\_\_\_
- (G) I was not comfortable with the counsellor available. \_\_\_\_
- (H) Please state any other reason(s) you have for not using the service. \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for completing our questionnaire.**





Listed below are the most common reasons why individuals use counselling services. Using the scale below, please indicate by placing a ( / ) in the space provided, your satisfaction with each of the services listed. Please check "N/A" if you have not used a particular service. Please check each item.

**1. Very Satisfied**

**2. Somewhat Satisfied**

**3. Adequate**

**5. Very Dissatisfied**

**6. Not Applicable/Never Used this service**

**4. Somewhat Dissatisfied**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Personal/ Social Concerns (i.e., dealing with unwanted or troublesome emotions, problems concerning relationships, family conflicts)						
21. Career Issues (i.e., aptitude, ability or interest assessment, planning for the future, career information)						
22. Job Search Assistance (i.e., how to look for jobs, prepare resume, practice interview skills)						
23. Academic Performance and Study Skills (i.e., concerns about grades, study habits, note taking, exams, dropping/adding courses)						
24. Program/ Resources Information (i.e., getting information about occupations, university and college programs, transfers within college system)						

25. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend our services to him or her?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
26. Would you use our services in the future?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
27. Was the counsellor accessible for making appointments?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
28. Was the counsellor open and friendly?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
29. I found the counselling services offered to me:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Helped a great deal \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Did not help  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Helped somewhat \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Made the situation worse or more difficult
30. What service or aspect of the service offered to you was the most helpful?

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31. What service or aspect of the service offered to you was the least helpful?

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32. What was the best thing you liked about our counselling services?

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33. How could we improve our counselling services?

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your input is very important.**





