

M I N U T E S

Mandel

WORKSHOP OF THE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTES

Topic: "Principles and Practice of Student Progression"

Thursday, May 9, 1968
Boston, Massachusetts

Present: Arnold Z. Pfeffer, M.D., Chairman - New York Psychoanalytic Institute
Justin Krent, M.D., Secretary - Cleveland Psychoanalytic Institute
R. Hugh Dickinson, M.D. - Seattle Psychoanalytic Institute
Paul G. Ecker, M.D. - Institute of the Philadelphia Association for
Psychoanalysis
Henry M. Fox, M.D. - Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, Inc.
Sigmund Gabe, M.D. - Southern California Psychoanalytic Institute
Stanley A. Leavy, M.D. - Western New England Institute for Psychoanalysis
Rudolf O. Marburg, M.D. - Baltimore Psychoanalytic Institute
Haskell F. Norman, M.D. - San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute
George A. Richardson, M.D. - Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute
Clarence G. Schulz, M.D. - Washington Psychoanalytic Institute
Herman M. Serota, M.D. - Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis
Jack A. Vatz, M.D. - Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society and Institute
Alexander S. Vujan, M.D. - Pittsburgh Psychoanalytic Institute
H. G. van der Waals, M.D. - Topeka Institute for Psychoanalysis

Institute representatives attending the December 1967 Workshop had decided that in May 1968 they would pursue a topic of their own choosing, viz., "Principles and Practice of Student Progression". At the same time the Committee on Institutes had raised the question whether workshop participants might ultimately wish to become an independent study group in order to devote more time to a fuller exploration of chosen topics than has been possible within previous workshop formats. Dr. Pfeffer, a member of the Committee on Institutes, in agreeing to serve as chairman, suggested that all chairmen of Institute Student Progress Committees or their equivalents be invited to attend the May 1968 meeting. Prior to the meeting, an outline of the functioning of these various Institute committees was forwarded to Dr. Pfeffer and ^{then} distributed to the Institute Representatives who planned to attend.

The May 9th meeting was spirited. Differences in the mechanics of the various student progress committees were explored and found to be influenced primarily by the Institute's size, by its original founders, as well as by the local goals of analytic training.

Time lapsed before it became evident which of the many suggested topics commanded general interest. Questions relating to the goals for training set by an Institute were quickly raised. Initially these dealt with the many unknowns inherent in the task of candidate selection. An important question was, What is the aim of selection? Another concerned the qualities inherent in a candidate that lead to a prolongation of time required for him to master analytic training. One reason given was procrastination, which some thought could be evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively at the time of selection so that a prediction of the applicant's performance as a candidate could be made. Many questions followed as to ways in which the training program itself can retard a student's development, including certain problems of countertransference in the training analyst. From this part of the discussion it seemed that one of the unstated goals shared by the group was the desirability of shortening the time required for analytic training.

The goals of training were accomplished, the group seemed to agree, if the candidate could demonstrate attainment of the necessary technical knowledge, ability to do analytic work, and understanding of analytic theory. When the fulfillment of the Minimal Standards of the American was mentioned as one possible goal of training, the hope was expressed that analytic candidates would be more than "tradesmen" and be able to contribute to the field of analysis.

The participants then left this area and turned to another question:

how does one determine a candidate's stage of development in relation to his analytic insights and skills? In some way, it was agreed, the candidate has to be able to communicate his analytic insights and ability to his instructor. In order to assess a candidate's development, one must cope with his relative ability to communicate his adeptness at grasping the clinical and theoretical aspects of analysis. Some candidates are able to analyze patients but nevertheless cannot convey this ability to their supervisors. Others, while able to verbalize the nature of their work, are not able to analyze patients. The importance of communication in other areas of the training process was mentioned, not the least of which is the training analysts' and supervisors' lack of immunity to similar limitations as they attempt to communicate to both the candidate and the student progress committee.

Much of the meeting was devoted to scrutinizing the matter of reporting on candidate progression. At many Institutes, evidence of a candidate's development is contained primarily in the supervisor's report. Reports considered helpful refer to the student's ability to facilitate the transference neurosis in his patient, to recognize its presence, and to cope with it adequately. The development of these abilities by the candidate was seen as a further refinement of the goal of training.

At this point the workshop members were told of an experiment in training at the Los Angeles Institute, where neither an educational committee nor a student progress committee in traditional form any longer exists. During the past year only one training analyst was a member of the candidates' evaluation committee. ^{It is possible that} Next year the committee ~~will~~ not include a training analyst at all. Detailed reports are submitted by the candidate's supervisors as well as by his didactic instructors, and these

reports are studied by the evaluation committee. There is no communication whatsoever between the training analysts and the rest of the Institute regarding a candidate's progress or personal analysis.

The workshop members reacted briskly to the question of whether training analysts should report upon the personal analysis of their analysands. Two groups quickly polarized: one group considered it in the interest of both the candidate and the Institute that a training analyst report upon the candidate's analytic material, and the other comprised members who thought the best interest of the candidate dictated that the training analyst divulge no material from his candidate's analysis.

Those members who felt it incumbent upon training analysts to reveal personal material about their analysands were of the opinion that only in this way could one evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a student as he was undergoing training, that only by having an intimate knowledge of a student's psychic life could one formulate a meaningful educational diagnosis which would be helpful to both Institute and candidate. Some members thought that such an educational diagnosis should be attempted relatively early, before the student's formal matriculation, and others thought that there should be an ongoing evaluative process throughout the student's development.

Those who were strongly opposed to the revealing of analytic material to a student committee contended that this represented a major interference with the analytic process, that it put the training analyst in a decision-making role, that it ran contrary to the principle of confidentiality as far as the candidate was concerned, and that if a candidate was aware that this practice existed he would not have the freedom and trust to be adequately analyzed. It was also thought by some that opinions by

training analysts about their analysands were often misleading because of countertransference problems. Some advocates were quite outspoken in stating that there should be no communication from the training analyst about his analysand.

Many questions were raised in opposition to the opinion of the latter group. What would happen if other members of the Institute were not aware of very serious defects in a candidate which were apparent only to his training analyst? Other questions were formulated. What if a student were psychotic or had a perversion or other characterological difficulties that would interfere with his functioning as an analyst? Should a training analyst remain silent if a candidate should prematurely terminate his personal analysis?

Dr. Norman repeatedly emphasized that Institutes should be interested in the most important aspect of every candidate's training, namely, his own personal analysis, and should have some knowledge of its results. At his insistence, a poll was taken of the workshop members. To the surprise of many who advocated that the training analyst should not report on his candidate, it became apparent that, in one way or another, training analysts of all but one Institute did communicate to a student committee or its equivalent something about their analysands' analyses and did exercise some responsibility to the Institute as to the future performance of a candidate as an analyst. Such communication might consist of a periodic brief report to the student progress committee about the analysand. In some Institutes there is an understanding that a training analyst will say nothing to the responsible committee about his candidate unless some untoward problem manifests itself. The existence of such a problem might be conveyed by a facial expression, by an informal or by a written comment. In other Institutes all

that the educational committee requires to know from the training analyst is whether the termination of the training analysis was mutually agreed upon and whether the candidate could be considered as having had an adequate amount of analysis. The only exception was the Los Angeles Institute, where at the present time no communication exists between the training analysts and the student progress committee. This policy is followed, it was stated, in order to protect the analytic process, even though such a policy entails some risk that a poorly qualified or potentially dangerous candidate may be graduated.

To many workshop members it came as a revelation that although their Institute does not recommend any form of communication between the training analysts and the rest of the Institute, some form of communication was implicit, especially in the event of an extreme situation.

As a result of this discussion, other thoughts were pursued. Certainly a training analyst cannot be completely excluded from a decision-making role, and often such a role becomes a necessity in order to maintain the analytic process. All the workshop members agreed that decisions to stop a training analysis should remain the prerogative of the training analyst. This is an example of a fundamental decision-making role, which is the responsibility of every analyst. Comments were also made about the practice at some Institutes of making a determination relatively early in a student's training about his potential to be analyzed and to become an adequate analyst. One member thought decisions to drop candidates could readily be made only in extreme cases where there was little doubt about a candidate's liabilities. However, in most usual situations it often takes many years of analysis before a candidate's difficulties can be resolved and before he can mature sufficiently to do good analytic work. In such

cases it is often impossible to predict in the early phases of analysis what the end-results will be.

The question arose whether candidates with perversions, provided these perversions did not enter into their analytic work, could make good analysts. Analysts who are disturbed in other ways have shown themselves capable of making analytic contributions. No answer to this question was reached.

There was no consensus as to the best means of communication between the training analysts and the student progress committee. It was interesting, however, that most of the workshop members were perhaps closer in their opinions than they had originally thought.

On one side were those who felt the only way to arrive at a thorough understanding of a candidate's difficulties was by integrating information obtained from his analysis with the opinions of his supervisors and didactic instructors. This group maintained that in this way a true educational diagnostic picture could be assembled. Moreover, the collating of this material would be the only way to study adequately the problems which arise in training. Some of the members thought that such a study should be done very early, and others that it should be a continuing process.

A resolute group felt that participation to this extent by the training analyst would of necessity interfere with the analytic process to the detriment of the candidate. This opinion was countered by those who advocated reporting on the part of the training analyst, claiming that if there were extenuating circumstances in a candidate's life, the knowledge of these by the student progress committee would serve to protect the candidate's status in the training program. This was countered by the thought that if extenuating circumstances existed, certainly the candidate should

reveal these himself to a committee without the intervention or interference of his analyst.

To some of those present, the issue did not constitute a conflict between the training analyst's responsibility to his analysand and his responsibility for the Institute's educational goals. Optimally as little involvement as possible by the training analyst in the educational process is desirable, but there are times when it is necessary for the training analyst to become involved, not only in the interest of the candidate but for the sake of the educational goals of the Institute as well. What comprises the optimal amount of reporting by the training analyst (never, or only in extreme situations, or routinely) remained unsettled.

Summary

Many topics relative to student progression were scanned by the group. Ultimately the discussion centered on the merits of the training analyst's reporting the process of his candidate's analysis. No consensus was reached. Some participants supported this practice on the grounds that only by utilizing analytic material could a meaningful educational diagnosis of the candidate's relative strengths be formulated. Many strongly opposed such reporting, stating that such a practice jeopardized the candidate's analysis.

Even though the latter opinion was strongly maintained by many, a poll revealed that it is customary in every Institute but one for the training analyst to report in some manner to the Institute, should he have serious concerns about this analysand.

Justin Krent, M.D.
Secretary
Workshop of the Committee on Institutes