

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF
SCHOOL COUNSELORS

by

Jill Bridget Engquist

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree in
Guidance and Counseling

Approved: 2 Semester Credits


Research Advisor

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout

May, 2004

The Graduate College
 University of Wisconsin-Stout
 Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Engquist (Author)(Last Name)	Jill (First)	Bridget (Middle)	
Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles and Responsibilities of School Counselors (Title)			
Guidance & Counseling (Graduate Major)	Dr. Denise Zirkle Brouillard (Research Advisor)	May, 2004 (Date)	37 (No. of Pages)
American School Counseling Association, 5 th edition (Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)			

Teachers are the primary link between students and counselors. Oftentimes, they are the individuals who refer students to the counselor or consult with the counselor about a specific student need. If the counselor understands the expectations of the teacher, or what the teacher sees as the primary roles and responsibilities of the counselor, the students are to be better served when they receive counseling services. The counselor can then consult with the teacher, and have better knowledge of how the teacher sees counselors as successfully accommodating each students individual needs.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the needs, desires and wishes of teachers regarding the roles and responsibilities of school counselors.

In the spring of 2004, 65 teachers received a survey delineating 32 duties of school counselors. Teachers were asked whether they believe those duties were indeed those that should be handled by school counselors. The study revealed that teachers believe one of the primary duties of school counselors is to provide information to students regarding post-secondary education opportunities. Teachers also believe school counselors hold the responsibility of providing individual counseling to students and intervening in times of crises.

This manuscript examines the history and development of the current trends in school counseling as well as suggestions for enhancement of guidance services.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With much support, I found the inspiration to continue my education beyond what anyone believed I would or could have. Thank you for believing in me, as I will believe in the students I work with in my counseling career.

Dr. Denise Zirkle Brouillard has made a profound impact on Stout's Guidance and Counseling program and her students (a.k.a., "folksies"). Thank you for the patience, help and unconditional support you give your students.

A handful of friends couldn't have been more encouraging. I will be forever indebted to you for your open ears and cheers of support.

Mom, you pushed me to get started early on this paper. I have to say, moms are always right... procrastination makes the deadline less than desirable. I made it! Keep pushing me, and I will succeed.

Dad, I know I've gotten duller since I've become educated. Good thing I've got you to make me laugh! Your generosity has struck big for me. Now, treat yourself... Corvette?

Jeff, I will never forget your well-wishes the night before my graduate school interview. You told me I would make it. You *believed* in me. Thank you.

Tyler, your sacrifices have allowed me to become what I had hoped to be. Without your patience and support, this road would have been much longer and rougher. Most importantly, you have always assured me that I would achieve my goals, and reminded me that I make you proud. We did this together.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	v
Chapter One: INTRODUCTION	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Problem.....	3
Research Questions.....	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study.....	4
Chapter Two: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
INTRODUCTION.....	6
Influences and Evolution of Guidance Counseling.....	6
Teacher Roles in Guidance Programs.....	12
The Importance of School Counselors.....	14
Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY	
INTRODUCTION.....	17
Sample.....	17
Instrumentation.....	17
Procedural Analysis.....	18
Data Analysis.....	18
Limitations.....	18
Chapter Four: RESULTS	
INTRODUCTION	20

Demographic Information.....	20
Item Analysis.....	21
Table1.....	21
 Chapter Five: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	
INTRODUCTION.....	25
Discussion.....	25
Conclusion.....	26
Suggestions to School Counselors.....	26
Suggestions for Future Research.....	27
REFERENCES.....	28
 APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Survey.....	31
Appendix B: Letter to Teachers.....	33
Appendix C: Consent to Participate.....	34
Appendix D: Reminder to teachers.....	36

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Several years ago the primary role of the school counselor was to serve as an academic advisor. Because of the ever-changing duties of the position, school counselors could now hold such titles as test administrator, peer tutor supervisor and career counselor. Aside from working closely with teachers and staff to create a solid backbone for students (*by helping with special education, finding peer tutors and chemical pre-assessments, which is a requirement in Minnesota schools*), counselors also help with career planning, post-secondary enrollment options program and scholarship and financial aid assistance for juniors and seniors who are usually undergoing an especially stressful time in their lives.

With all of the possible roles that the counselor may serve in schools, it is probable that faculty and staff members of the schools have conflicting ideas about what exactly the school counselor should be doing. Different counselors may even have different views of their job description. "A major problem in school counseling is that the role of the counselor has not been clearly defined by the profession" (Heldref Publications, 1996, p.2).

Campbell and Dahir of the National School Counselor Association explain that the primary duty of the school counseling program is to "promote and enhance student learning through the three broad and interrelated areas of student development" (p. 11); academic, career and personal/social

development. The job of the counselor includes promoting growth in today's youth and pushing for success of the students, staff, teachers and parents of the school by using grief, academic, individual, crisis and career counseling as well as classroom guidance. Although the counselor may play the lead role in the administration of a guidance program, there are other key players who make the program successful. Teachers and staff of a school must be supportive of the program and have a position in carrying out the set goals of the school's guidance program. By working as a team to carry out guidance lessons on social skills and the like, students will have an opportunity to receive a comprehensive guidance curriculum.

Developing a guidance program can be a challenge for any working school counselor. The American School Counseling Association National Standards (2003) provides a model by which to follow when designing and implementing a guidance curriculum. According to the executive summary, the ASCA model states that this framework fits in with many districts because it "supports the school's overall mission by promoting academic achievement, career planning, and personal/social development" (p. 2).

According to the ASCA web site (2004), Minnesota ranks second to worst for highest student-to-counselor ratios, with 806 students to one counselor (behind California, with 971:1). The recommended student-to-counselor ratio is 250:1, with the national average being 448:1. A study conducted in the spring of 2004 examined a school with a caseload of 321:1. It attempted to decipher exactly what the teachers expect the specific duties of the school counselors to

be. During the spring of 2004, the district was undergoing substantial budget cuts. Among the positions targeted to be cut were two half-time school counselors and a half-time dean of students. Provided with data that spelled out exactly what duties were performed by the school counselors at the high school, the principal foresaw the detrimental impact that the school would encounter, if they decided to cut an entire counseling position. Instead, they eliminated the dean of students position and created a full-time counseling position. This decision changed the student-to-counselor ratio at this high school from 321:1 to 355:1. However, these changes are only effective for one year. The following spring, more cuts are likely, and the counseling position would need to be delineated once again to avoid additional budget cuts. The goal of this study is to help counselors understand exactly what teachers perceive their specific roles to be.

Statement of the Problem

“ASCA views the primary goal of school counseling programs to be the enhancement of student achievement and accomplishment” (American School Counseling Association, 2000). This requires the assistance of all teachers and staff to make the program comprehensive. Finding out what teachers perceive as being the exclusive roles of the school counselor will help to improve the guidance services offered, and to enhance the overall comprehensiveness of the program.

Research Questions

This study intends to answer two main questions:

1. What do teachers believe are the primary duties of school counselors?
2. What can counselors do to fulfill the needs of teachers in order to make their guidance program comprehensive in nature and improve the effectiveness of their services at the high school level?

Definition of Terms

In order to better understand the literature provided throughout this study, the following terms are defined:

Counseling A one-on-one or group interchange among students and professionally trained individual(s), in which thoughts, feelings and behaviors are explored in confidence.

Guidance Program (may be used interchangeably with “School Counseling Program”): A developmental, comprehensive, and responsive program intended to assist students in their achievement of personal/social, career, and academic capabilities (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

School Guidance Counselor: Licensed at the Master’s level by the state of Minnesota to provide academic, career and personal/social counseling minimally to students in a secondary school. May provide individual or group counseling and classroom guidance.

Researcher: Jill Engquist, the writer of this document was the researcher for the study. “Researcher” may be used interchangeable with “investigator”.

Assumptions and Limitations:

Two assumptions have been made regarding this study:

1. The researcher assumed that teachers put a significant amount of thought into completing this study, took it seriously and completed the survey honestly.
2. The researcher assumed that teachers generalized their opinions to that of all school counselors, and completed the survey with that generalization in mind, rather than completing it with the idea that they were critiquing the position of their current school counselor(s).

It is important to note that findings of this study should not be generalized to those opinions and perceptions of all teachers, including those teachers in and outside of the school district where the study took place. Findings of this study are generalized to the opinions among the group of teachers in the spring semester of 2004 at one metro area school district. The techniques used in this study could be duplicated and used in any school district.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will examine pertinent topics including the influences and evolution of school guidance counseling, roles and functions of school guidance counselors and teacher roles in school guidance.

Influences and Evolution of Guidance Counseling

Perhaps counseling first began when Adam reaped the effects of eating the fruit off the tree in the Garden of Eden (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003), but it was the early Greek philosopher Plato, then Aristotle, who began organizing psychological understanding. After that, it was Descartes, Rousseau and Pestalozzi who took small steps toward the belief that counseling had a place in society. It wasn't until the early 1900's that Frank Parsons suggested ways of helping young people choose a career, and offered help in assisting them to reach their goals (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). The schools in the early 1900's relied on teachers to deliver personal, social and career guidance to students (Schmidt, 1999). The Industrial Revolution paved the way for guidance counselors, whom then held the title of deans (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003), to take on the guidance role in schools in order to address students' needs. Teachers and staff began recognizing the need for assistance for their students who were experiencing educational, emotional and psychological problems as they were affected by the changes in society (Wittmer, 1993). The premise of guidance during the industrial revolution was to provide career guidance (Gysbers &

Henderson, 1994) and to help students make informed decisions about their future (Coy & Sears, 1993). Concurrently, elementary schools began utilizing psychiatrists, psychologists, and educational counselors to staff their guidance department to offer psychotherapy, counseling, child studies, and assistance to parents (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). College campuses were also using guidance workers to conduct admissions tests for placement purposes.

The role and function of the school counselor has evolved due to several theorists' contributions to today's model of what school counseling. Carl Rogers introduced the idea of group counseling, as well as client-centered therapy, in which the client takes the lead in counseling interactions. Both methods of counseling are still being used in today's schools as a means of integrating the process of individual counseling with the dynamics of the group setting (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003).

Erickson's stage theory focuses on emotional development, or the "ages of man". Throughout our life, we have an intrinsic healthy or unhealthy motivation with relation to a successful means of living life (Corey, 2001). This theory applies to schools in that our influences in childhood are a deciding factor in our life's success.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs characterizes an innate tendency toward health. If our basic needs are met, our development proceeds. This hierarchy brought with it the self-esteem movement, for which Maslow's hierarchy is still being used today (Corey, 2001).

Thomas and Chess (1956) developed a longitudinal study to explain temperament from infancy through school. They found that much of our personality is genetic. They also pioneered the "Goodness of Fit", which suggests that the environment matches a child's personality (Myrick, 2003). School counselors utilize these ideas by recognizing that individual students' drive to learn comes not only from the environment, but primarily from their genetic inheritance.

Super drew his theory from a humanistic perspective, inferring that development is a growing process (Myrick, 2003). Much like the ideas of Thomas and Chess (1956), Super believed that development arises from genetic disposition and environmental influence.

Parsons (1909), who coined the "Father of Developmental Guidance", postulated that career choice comes from a match between self-understanding and the understanding of workplace demands (Gibson & Mitchell, 2003). Relating to school counseling, students must begin the process of self-understanding at an early age. Educating students throughout their primary and secondary schooling about the importance of self-understanding and gaining insight into the opportunities that stand ahead of them prepares them for their post-secondary aspirations upon completion of their high school education.

Perhaps one of the most monumental landmarks for school guidance came in 1958 with the National Defense Education Act. Bourne (1988) stated that Title V was significant because it provided states grant money to improve the student-to-counselor ratio. The year 1964 was another monumental year for the

profession, when the *Statement of Policy for Secondary School Counselors* was released (American School Counselor Association, 1964), in which the role of the high school counselor was defined. It was during these years that the training for those entering the school counseling profession became more specific and rigorous. The transition from a few specialized classes to the requirement of holding a Master's degree, education for future counselors included all aspects of what school counseling is today, including not only vocational counseling, but also personal/social and academic counseling, as well. Today, future school counselors receive specialized training in a variety of subject areas such as school and guidance administration, career development, counseling theories, play therapy, psychometrics and school consultation.

Today, this is what a career in secondary school counseling may encompass:

“...Work with the curriculum; conduct placement; follow-up, and follow-through activities; and do community outreach. In addition, they are expected to continue such guidance functions as crisis counseling and teacher and parent consultation as well as testing, scheduling, and other administrative-clerical duties” (Gysbers & Moore, 1981, p.23).

School counselors in several states now have the option to apply for a

Those in the profession know that there is a constant struggle to define the role of the guidance counselor as the profession continues to grow. Borders (2002) commented that “as societal changes occur, the role and function has continued to evolve and the profession has sought to respond to and keep up

with shifting educational philosophies, social movements, economic swings, and federal legislation that have driven the needs for and expectations of school counselors” (p. 181). One thing will always remain constant: there is a need in schools for a comprehensive guidance program. Wisconsin adheres to “Standard E”, which requires school districts to have a guidance program in every school. The design of the program emphasizes the idea that although the counselor may be running the program, in order to make it a comprehensive program, teachers and staff must assist in the delivery of the program.

The American School Counseling Association (1997) created a design that will bring together the essential parts of school guidance into one comprehensive program to integrate academic, career and personal/social development by means of counseling, consultation, collaboration, coordination, case management, guidance curriculum and program evaluation (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

In individual and small group counseling, school counselors provide an environment for which students can speak openly about their personal concerns related or unrelated to school. As opposed to the one-on-one interaction between the counselor and the student, group counseling offers students the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with their peers. This is also a means by which students can join together in a structured or unstructured setting to “share ideas, give and receive feedback, increase their awareness, gain new knowledge, practice skills, and think about their goals and actions” (Campbell & Dahir, 1997 p. 12).

School consultation, delivered individually or in small groups, offers not only teachers, but also parents support staff and community members to receive assistance in working through concerns, as well as gain more knowledge about an area of interest.

Coordination can occur with anyone in or outside of the school, in order for school counselors and other staff to receive counsel from other resources.

Case management occurs when school counselors monitor students' success in regards to academic, vocational and personal/social development.

Guidance curriculum takes place when school counselors present a specialized curriculum within the classroom setting to highlight a specific area of development. This may be done individually by the school counselor or as a team with teachers or staff.

Program evaluation and development is the final and one of the most profoundly important components to the comprehensive guidance program. All programs have room for growth, and regularly examining the effectiveness of the program will allow school counselors to keep it current and continuously make it better.

Teachers Roles in Guidance Counseling

Teachers contribute firsthand knowledge about students, while counselors coordinate all available information and tie everything together. Through this interaction, guidance becomes a team effort, dependent upon both counselors and teachers (Cuskey, 1996), as well as other staff members. Because teachers oftentimes base their judgement regarding the role of the school counselors upon

what they see the counselor doing, some teachers may have misconceptions of the actual workload school counselors may acquire. Counselors spend a lot of time behind closed doors completing paperwork or working individually with students and staff. Those counselors who make time to advertise their services would tend to have a more positive reputation among the staff who are more aware of the functions that the school counselor serves.

Many teachers and administrators hastily make reference to guidance activities or meetings as infringements on classroom time; they often communicate that counseling should occur only during lunch, recess, or study hall. Because of this known perception, counselors would be wise to enlist support for their programs one teacher at a time (Aubrey, 1982). It also takes time to find believers in the other staff members within the school, as well as the parents, who have their own perceptions of the counselor's role and function within their child's school. Oftentimes, parents assume that counselors primarily do scheduling, testing and preparing students for graduation by counting credits and reviewing transcripts. Rarely do parents realize that the school counselor through individual and group counseling could serve their child.

Through the American School Counselor Association National Standards for School Counseling Programs, Campbell and Dahir (1997) point out that successful comprehensive school counseling programs impact several [groups of] people synonymously in a positive way. ASCA specifically addresses three ways in which teachers benefit from a comprehensive guidance program (p.14):

1. Provides an interdisciplinary team effort to address student needs and educational goals.
2. Provides skill development for teachers in classroom management, teaching effectiveness, and affective education.
3. Provides consultation to assist teachers in their guidance role.

Norman Gysbers (1990) stated that “while counselors are the main providers of guidance and counseling services and are the coordinators of the program, the involvement, cooperation, and support of teachers and administrators is necessary for the program to be successful” (p.21). Gysbers recommends that an advisory committee chaired by a community member to consult with those teachers, counselors, administrators, parents and other community members involved in the guidance program to assist in advocating and recommending needs for students.

A comprehensive guidance model illustrates ways in which counselors and teachers work together as a team for the benefit of students. Gibson and Mitchell (2003) comment that another way in which teachers are involved with the guidance program is through means of consultation with counselors for assistance in individualizing their teaching, as well as the general “planning of a productive learning environment” (p. 359).

The Importance of School Counselors

School counselors are often leaders in the student services department in schools. They are not to be disciplinarians within the school. Rather, they are helpers to the students and staff. They are thought of as the professionals

whom students go to for personal/social help, for advice on what classes to take and to plan their future in college or the workforce. The school counselor is also friend to many teachers who are dealing with a particularly difficult class or getting burned out as the school year winds down.

It is of utmost importance to have counselors working in the schools. Licensed at the Master's level, armed with a background of education in areas such as counseling theories, administration, school consultation, play therapy, counseling processes, group dynamics and career development, they are academically prepared to be active in many situations that take place within the schools. States that do not require school counselors to be in every school are providing a disservice to their students. Several studies have shown that when counseling in school begins in the early level, there is an opportunity for prevention of at-risk behavior at an early age (Sundin, 2003).

Counselor roles that benefit students include "helping students prepare for the future in all aspects of life, helping to expand knowledge of career opportunities, acting as a students advocate, and helping students to know themselves and others" (Sundin, 2003 p.53). But the reality is that counselors have many additional duties, including administrative work such as testing, scheduling, paperwork and discipline. Consequently, the Florida State legislature, along with several other state legislatures, has mandated that 60% to 70% of school counselors' time must be devoted to direct student services. Additionally, only 25% of the time may be spent doing other administrative duties (Partin, 1993). A study done in Missouri to determine the amount of time in

which students interacted with their school counselors showed that at a rate of 72.9%, the most frequent way students interacted with their school counselor was in individual sessions. At a rate of 65%, students participated in classroom lessons; 49.6% of students claimed they participated in small groups, while 30% were involved in the guidance program through workshops, seminars, or large groups (Hughey, 1993).

The role of the school counselor is constantly expanding to meet the needs of the students. As a proactive participant in the well being of the school, counselors are typically eager to take on new roles. However, as budgets get tighter and school counselor job duties become broader and are examined more closely, it is imperative that the role of school counselors be defined more specifically to eliminate any conflict of interest and to create a better understanding among observers about what school counselors do. Oyaziwo and Imonikhe (2002) recommended ways in which high school counselors could define their role and function. School counselors must first understand themselves and their responsibilities within the school, so as to enable themselves to educate students, staff and the community about the services they offer. Secondary school counselors must also be aware of the different perceptions people hold regarding the role and function of school counselors. Knowing what others believe they do will allow counselors to more readily educate them on the actual duties of the counselors.

Partin (1993) recommended that school counselors be active in communicating and advertising their position to students, staff and the

community. The importance of these people to become more aware of the high school counselors' role is monumental in the success of the profession.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the sample population, the instrumentation used, a procedural analysis and data analysis, and a conclusion with a discussion of limitations.

Sample

This study was conducted among all teachers employed at one metro area high school in the spring of 2004. There were 65 teachers; 23 male, 42 female. The average teaching experience among the teachers who received a survey was 9.62 years.

The investigator in this study was optimistic about the timely and accurate responses of these teachers, as they are all very active in this highly responsive school district.

Instrumentation

The instrument in this study was a survey developed by the researcher, which was customized according to the current roles and responsibilities of the current counselors at the high school where the study took place, as well as counselors in similar metro area high schools. Comprised of 32 questions, teachers had the opportunity to examine duties that are *currently* fulfilled by school counselors; some of them being legitimate duties of a typical school counselor, others being debatable among individual counselors. Teachers were to then decide if those are duties that *should* be done by school counselors.

Teachers could choose to answer each question with “yes”, “no” or “undecided”. Teachers also had the opportunity to add their personal comments at the end of the survey.

Procedure Analysis

The counselors, dean of students and high school principal were all contacted in person and asked for permission to conduct this study. All parties gave their consent to begin this study, and expressed interest in the findings.

On the morning of Tuesday, March 30, 2004, each teacher received a survey (see Appendix A) in their mailbox, preceded with a letter explaining the rationale of the survey (see Appendix B) and a human subjects consent form (see Appendix C). Blank envelopes were also attached to the packet for easy return to the. On April 1, 2004, teachers received a reminder memo in their mailboxes to complete the survey and return it to the box in the guidance office. They were also sent a reminder via e-mail on April 7, 2004.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using calculated percentages for each of the 32 subjective items on the survey. For the 33rd item, written responses were recorded.

Limitations

The findings of this study must not be generalized to all teachers' perceptions, including those teachers who work in the school district where the survey was distributed. Findings of this study are generalized to the group of teachers who were employed at the studied high school in the spring semester of

2004 and responded to the survey. The survey used in this study could be duplicated and used in any school district.

Because the survey was customized to the current status of this geographic area, there are no measures of validity or reliability provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The following chapter presents the results of the survey conducted regarding teacher's perceptions regarding the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. The instrument used to gather data was a survey designed by the investigator, tailored to fit the current roles of school counselors in the surrounding area where the study took place. This instrument can be found in Appendix A. As stated in the first chapter, the goals of this research were to

1. Find out what teachers believe to be the primary duties of school counselors,
- and 2. Determine what counselors can do to fulfill the needs of teachers in order to make their guidance program comprehensive in nature and improve their effectiveness at the high school level. A table has been included to illustrate the responses to each of the 32 questions posed to teachers, as well as the additional comments that were made by individual teachers.

Demographic Information

A survey was distributed to each of the 65 teachers in one metro area high school. 29 completed surveys were returned, constituting a 44.6% return rate. The average teaching experience among the teachers who received the survey is 9.62 years, and there was no distinguishable characteristics included in the study to determine how long each individual teacher has been in the district, the age or gender of the teacher or what subject matter they teach.

Item Analysis

Table 1 provides an analysis of each of the 32 subjective items from the survey, as well as the comments added by the respondents. Percentages are used to provide an exact average of the group responses for each question, including the percentage of teachers who answered “yes”, “no” or “undecided” to each question about what school counselors do.

Table 1

Responses to Teachers Opinions Regarding the Duties of School Counselors

<u>Item</u>	<u>Number of respondents</u>	<u>% Yes</u>	<u>% No</u>	<u>% Undecided</u>
1	29	96.55	3.44	0
2	29	75.86	13.79	10.34
3	29	86.20	10.34	3.44
4	29	93.10	6.89	0
5	29	79.31	17.24	3.44
6	29	41.37	48.27	10.34
7	29	58.62	37.93	3.44
8	29	75.86	17.24	3.44
9	29	65.51	13.79	24.13
10	29	96.55	0	3.44
11	29	89.65	3.44	6.89
12	29	79.31	13.79	6.89
13	29	51.72	31.03	13.79
14	29	89.65	6.89	3.44

15	29	82.75	13.79	3.44
16	29	68.96	20.68	10.34
17	29	48.27	44.82	6.89
18	29	89.65	6.89	3.44
19	29	96.55	0	3.44
20	29	100	0	0
21	29	96.55	3.44	0
22	29	44.82	31.03	24.13
23	29	89.65	10.34	0
24	29	62.06	13.79	24.13
25	29	89.65	17.24	6.89
26	28	58.62	31.03	6.89
27	28	48.27	24.13	3.44
28	29	79.31	17.24	3.44
29	29	62.06	20.68	17.24
30	29	86.20	3.44	10.34
31	29	65.51	24.13	10.34
32	29	75.86	6.89	17.24

Teachers had the opportunity to add additional comments at the end of the survey. Those comments included:

- ◆ "Our counselors are very overworked and very underpaid."

- ◆ “Many of these duties can be and should be handled by the guidance secretary.”
- ◆ “We should have a registrar office that takes care of scheduling, transcripts, college admission, etc. Let the counselors support teachers, students and parents”.
- ◆ Some of the questions on the survey “... could fall to a staff member without a degree in counseling.”
- ◆ “You’re wonderful, you’re misunderstood, you’re underpaid and overworked.”
- ◆ “Although some of my responses were “no”, I know guidance counselors still perform such duties. At least at this school, I feel some of those responsibilities should be taken over by the administration.”

It has been found that a guidance program is most beneficial when it is comprehensive in nature, with teachers and staff being active participants toward the success of the program. The American School Counseling Association recommends such a model which promotes personal/social, academic and career development to students (p. 3). Those questions related to personal/social development of students had an average agreement percentage of 79.34%, demonstrating that teachers feel that personal/social counseling is a large part of the counselor's job.

Questions in regards to academic counseling and development had an average of 71.6% of the respondents agreeing that academic counseling is a role among school counselors.

Career counseling also seems to be a priceless service provided by school counselors. 87.27% of the teachers who responded to the survey claim that they feel career counseling is a role of the school counselor.

Other roles and responsibilities of school counselors that were listed on the survey included:

- ◆ Collaboration with parents or guardians
- ◆ Collaborate with other school staff to develop an appropriate guidance program/plan to highlight state and nation competencies
- ◆ Give assessments and tests
- ◆ Provide crisis intervention
- ◆ Provide programs for parents
- ◆ Help with administrative duties
- ◆ Work closely with resources within the community
- ◆ Give school tours for prospective students
- ◆ Maintain licensure at the Master's level

Overall, teachers feel that at a rate of 77%, the above are duties that school counselors perform in addition to those duties related to personal/social, academic and vocational counseling.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will review the purpose of the study, methodology and conclusions, and will conclude with suggestions for further research.

Discussion

This study sought to determine 1. What teachers believe to be the primary duties of school counselors, and 2. What counselors can do to fulfill the needs of teachers in order to make the guidance program comprehensive in nature and improve the effectiveness of their services at the high school level. All teachers at the studied high school in the spring of 2004 were given a survey regarding roles and responsibilities of school counselors. At the time the survey was distributed, there were 65 teachers employed at the High School, with the average teaching experience among all teachers being 9.62 years.

Teachers' perceptions were measured through a survey of 33 questions. This survey was customized to the current roles of school counselors in the relative geographic area of the high school that received the survey.

Much research has been done regarding the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. Past studies have found that counselors used to do primarily career and academic counseling; in recent times, counselors are utilized for more various duties, including administering tests, collaborating with other professionals and providing personal/social counseling to students. This study determined that the teachers at the school where this survey was distributed

believe the counselors should be involved in a variety of roles. The greatest need appears to be in the career development competency. Ranking among the top needs in the school are providing information on post-secondary education opportunities and providing information on financial aid, grants, loans and scholarships.

Teachers also rated personal and social counseling to be a high priority for school counselors. The top rated area for need in this domain was providing individual counseling to students.

Teachers felt that administrative duties, such as collaborating with student's parents or guardians and providing crisis intervention were among the responsibilities of the counselors.

Conclusions

The respondents to this study expressed an understanding of the overwhelming workload of school counselors. The majority of teachers agreed that it is the role of school counselors to conduct each of the 32 tasks listed on *the Survey of Teacher Opinions Regarding the Duties of School Counselors*.

Suggestions to Counselors

As a way of educating teachers about the actual roles and responsibilities of school counselors, it is wise to advertise your services. Placing an ad in the school newspaper and local newspapers allows people to read about what you do. Celebrating National School Counseling week in February is a great way for the profession to be understood.

In a time when school districts are short on money and time, it is necessary for counselors to be cautious when adding to their workload. If counselors continue taking on more work, others may assume that the counselor did not have enough work to do in the first place. As more duties get placed upon the counselors, Partin (1993) recommends that whenever counselors are asked to take on additional noncounseling duties, the counselor should pose the question, "In place of what?" Certainly, something has to be given up in order to add something new to the list of priorities.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study merely surveyed the perceptions of what teachers think are currently the position of school counselors. This research could be taken a step further to determine the perceptions of both teachers and students that school counselors are meeting their needs. There could also be a comparison study to determine whether the current guidance program at this school follows the recommended guidelines set forth by ASCA.

After the completion of this study, teachers who were asked to participate were presented with the opportunity to examine a comprehensive list of the duties that the school counselors at their school are responsible for. It is recommended that if this study is to be replicated and used in another school, teachers should receive a similar follow-up of the actual duties of the counselors.

REFERENCES

- Aubrey, R.F. (1982). A house divided: Guidance and counseling in the 20th century America. *Personnel and Guidance Journal*, 61(4), 198-204.
- Beale, A. (2003, September). The indispensable school counselor. *Principal Leadership*, 1, 68-71.
- Borders, D. (2002). School counseling in the 21st century: Personal and professional reflections. *Professional School Counseling*, 5(3), 180-185.
- Burnham, J.J., & Jackson, C.M. (2000). School counselor roles: Discrepancies between actual practice and existing models. *Professional School Counseling*, 4(1), 41-50.
- Campbell, C. & Dahir, C. (1997). *The National Standards for School Counseling Programs*. Alexandria, VA: National School Counseling Association.
- Cuskey, M. (1996). Teacher perceptions of counselor roles and guidance program effectiveness in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI.
- Gibson, R & Mitchell, M. (2003). *Introduction to counseling and guidance*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Person Education Inc.
- Gysbers, N. (1990). *Comprehensive guidance programs that work*. Ann Arbor, MI: ERIC Counseling and Personnel Services.
- Gysbers, N. & Henderson, P. (2000). *Developing and Managing your School Guidance Program*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Gysbers, N. & Moore, E. (1981). *Improving guidance programs*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Heldref Publications (1996, May/June). Guidance for the 1990's: Revitalizing the counselor's role. *Clearing House*, 69(5), p303-308.
- Hughey, K. F., Gysbers, N. C., & Starr, M. (1993). Evaluating comprehensive school guidance programs: Assessing perceptions of students, parents and teachers. *School Counselor*, 41(1), 31-36.
- Miller, G. (1975). *Closing the gap: A study of four counselor education programs and efforts to facilitate role implementation and counselor effectiveness in the school*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Education.

- Myrick, R.D (2003). *Developmental guidance and counseling: A practical approach*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.
- Partin, R. (1993). School counselors' time: Where does it go? *School Counselor*, 40(4), 274-282
- Quast, C. (2003). Parents' perceptions of the role and function of the high school guidance counselor. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, WI.
- Schmidt, J. (1999). *Counseling in Schools: Essential services and comprehensive programs* (3rd ed.). Neeham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Schmidt, J. & Ciechalski, J. (2001, June). School counseling standards: A summary and comparison with other student services' standards. *Professional School Counseling*, 5, p328-p333.
- Sundin, K. (2003, June). *Developmental guidance needs as perceived by students and staff at Falls High School in International Falls, Minnesota*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie.
- Wittmer, J. (1993). *Managing your school counseling program: K-12 developmental strategies*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media Corporation.

APPENDIX A

Survey of Teacher Opinions Regarding the Duties of School Counselors

This survey seeks to gather information as to your understanding and expectations of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. The results will help counselors to evaluate their guidance program and to make any necessary enhancements to the specific needs of the school. Answers to this survey will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your time in filling out this survey!

Please **CIRCLE** the response that best matches your opinion, using the following choices: **Y=Yes; N=No; U=Undecided**

In your opinion, the roles of the school counselor include:

1. **Y/ N/ U** Provide individual counseling to students.
2. **Y/ N/ U** Provide group counseling (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Awareness, self-esteem, divorce groups, etc.).
3. **Y/ N/ U** Work with teachers in order to help students with academic challenges.
4. **Y/ N/ U** Monitor academic progress, credits total and graduation requirements, then communicate this information to students, parents, and teachers.
5. **Y/ N/ U** Counsel individual students who are academically challenged.
6. **Y/N/U** Conduct a study group for students who are struggling with school.
7. **Y/N/U** Coordinate private tutors for students.
8. **Y/N/U** Assist with the career goals into the writing of Individual Education Plans and attend IEP meetings.
9. **Y/N/U** Write 504 plans for those students who do not qualify for special education services.

10. **Y/ N/ U** Collaborate with student's parents or guardians.
11. **Y/N/ U** Work with teachers in order to help students with personal issues.
12. **Y/ N/ U** Collaborate with other school staff to develop an appropriate guidance program/plan to highlight state and nation competencies.
13. **Y/ N/ U** Educate students about the world of work.
14. **Y/ N/ U** Help students explore career interests.
15. **Y/ N/ U** Give assessments and tests (ACT, SAT, BST, MCA, etc.).
16. **Y/ N/ U** Promote students personal growth and development.
17. **Y/ N/ U** Teach students decision-making skills.
18. **Y/ N/ U** Counsel individual students who are struggling with personal issues.
19. **Y/ N/ U** Provide information on financial aid, grants, loans, or scholarships.
20. **Y/ N/ U** Provide information on post-secondary education opportunities.
21. **Y/ N/ U** Provide crisis intervention.
22. **Y/ N/ U** Provide programs for parents.
23. **Y/ N/ U** Help with administrative duties (schedule changes, printing transcripts, etc.).
24. **Y/ N/ U** Work closely with resources within the community.
25. **Y/N/U** Arrange for college and military recruiters visits to the school.
26. **Y/N/U** Sign and send all college admissions applications for seniors.

- 27. Y/N/U** Write appeal letters for seniors who have been denied college admission.
- 28. Y/N/U** Oversee the entire registration process.
- 29. Y/N/U** Give classroom lessons on such issues as depression and suicide.
- 30. Y/ N/ U** Aid in the transition of students into high school.
- 31. Y/N/U** Give school tours for prospective students and their parents.
- 32. Y/N/U** Maintain their licensure at the Master's level.

Please feel free to add any additional comments.

APPENDIX B

March 25, 2004

Dear Teacher:

I am a student seeking my master's degree in the Guidance and Counseling program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. As a requirement for completion of this program, I am conducting a survey of teacher perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. Results of this study will be used to provide feedback to counselors and to enhance counseling programs to make them the most efficient and conducive to their school.

Attached you will find a questionnaire. I would sincerely appreciate your help in taking a few minutes to complete it and return it to me within the next week in the attached envelope. All responses will be kept confidential.

If you are interested in the findings of this survey please email me at jillkaproth@hotmail.com. You can expect the results by the end of May.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jill Engquist
Guidance Student

APPENDIX C

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Consent to Participate

TITLE OF STUDY:

Teacher perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors.

INVESTIGATOR:

Jill Bridget Engquist, Graduate student

PURPOSE:

You are being asked to participate in a voluntary research study. The purpose of the study is to gather information on teacher perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

PROCEDURES:

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to complete the attached survey entitled; "Survey of Teacher Opinions Regarding the Duties of School Counselors". The survey should take approximately ten minutes to complete. Surveys were distributed into all teachers mailboxes this morning. You are invited to take this survey with you and return it sealed in the attached envelope to the box located in the Guidance Office by Friday. The counselors were not present during the distribution of this survey, and will not be present when you complete it or return it. It will remain anonymous as to who participated and who did not. By completing and returning this survey you are consenting to participate. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time with no risk to you. **You participation in this study is voluntary.** There are no risks or consequences to you if you choose not to participate.

RISKS:

Risks have been minimized as participation is voluntary and no follow up methods will be employed. Data results from this study will be reported only in group format (no individual responses will be made public). Participants are free to decline from or withdraw from this study at any time with no consequences to them.

BENEFITS:

As a participant in this research study you will be contributing to a better understanding of teacher views of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Completed surveys will be kept in their sealed envelopes until the end of each school day throughout the week. At the end of the day, they will be taken home with the investigator for tabulation. The investigator, Jill Engquist, will be the only individual with access to the data. Your responses on this survey will be kept confidential and disseminated only in tabulated and anonymous form. No specific information that would personally identify you is collected.

If you have any questions or concerns you may contact Jill Engquist in person in the Guidance Office, by phone at 651-739-8235 or 320-282-2285. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Denise Zirkle Brouillard at (715) 232-2599, or Sue Foxwell, Director of Research at UW-Stout at (715) 232- 2477 or

152 Vocational Rehabilitation Building
UW-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751.

APPENDIX D

Dear Teacher:

On Tuesday you were given a survey concerning your perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors. Results will be used to provide feedback to counselors and to make needed program enhancements in various capacities of counseling programs. Results will be outlined in my thesis, a requirement of my master's degree.

If you have already completed the survey, THANK YOU! Your feedback is greatly valued. If you have not yet been able to complete the survey but would like to be of assistance, I would appreciate your confidential reply by Thursday, April 8th. Envelopes are included with all surveys, and can be deposited into the drop box located in the guidance office. If you have misplaced your survey, there are additional copies available on the mailroom table.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jill Engquist
Guidance Student