

1985

The guidance program in schools which employ one part-time counselor

Peter Van Nelson
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Copyright ©1985 Peter Van Nelson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Van Nelson, Peter, "The guidance program in schools which employ one part-time counselor" (1985). *Graduate Research Papers*. 3040.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/3040>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Offensive Materials Statement: Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

The guidance program in schools which employ one part-time counselor

Abstract

The author's employment, during the 1984-1985 school year as a part-time counselor and as a part-time teacher in a K-12 school system of approximately 250 students helped him become aware of challenges facing the part-time counselor. Investigation of the school's guidance files provided informal guidelines for recent services provided by previous counselors. The files contained a more organized statement, dated in the middle 1960's, oriented toward guidance in a totally services framework.

THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS WHICH
EMPLOY ONE PART-TIME COUNSELOR

A Research Paper
Presented to
The Department of Educational Administration
and Counseling
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
Peter Van Nelson
August 1985

This Research Paper by: Peter Van Nelson

Entitled: THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS WHICH EMPLOY ONE
PART-TIME COUNSELOR

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Audrey L. Smith

June 27, 1985
Date Approved

[Signature]
Advisor/Director of Research Paper

Ann Vernon

June 28, 1985
Date Approved

[Signature]
Second Reader of Research Paper

Norman McCumsey

July 2, 1985
Date Approved

[Signature]
Head, Department of Educational
Administration and Counseling

Introduction

The author's employment, during the 1984-1985 school year as a part-time counselor and as a part-time teacher in a K-12 school system of approximately 250 students helped him become aware of challenges facing the part-time counselor. Investigation of the school's guidance files provided informal guidelines for recent services provided by previous counselors. The files contained a more organized statement, dated in the middle 1960's, oriented toward guidance in a totally services framework.

The outdated nature of these guidance program plans prompted the author to search for information that would help to improve, update, and possibly to reorganize the program. The goal of the search was to find models that would maximize the counselor's efforts within the part-time guidance program format.

The nonempirical search for information was centered around four areas: (a) what is the current status of counseling in Iowa today in terms of concerns and issues; (b) how many districts in Iowa have part-time one counselor programs, (c) what plans for program development or renewal are available for part-time counselor programs, and (d) could applicability of the information, in regard to program models, components, processes, and new approaches, be determined for a single part-time counseling program?

This investigation identifies, through review of literature and other information, the current status of school counseling in Iowa's part-time single [one] counselor settings, current issues and new approaches to school counseling in these settings, and possible models that could aid the part-time, single-school counselor in upgrading the local guidance program. This study could have implications not only for counselors, but also for principals, superintendents, school board members, parents, and community members: decision-makers in the school's programs.

Review of Literature

The one counselor system, as defined by Frank (1980), is one in which the counselor is responsible for the guidance services of the entire system. Primary responsibility is at the secondary level, but limited involvement with elementary and junior high schools may also be included.

The number of published sources that specifically addressed the needs of the part-time counselor were found to be extremely limited. One topic, "part-time assignments," Arbuckle's discussion of the dual-role of teacher-counselors, was found in Shertzer & Stone (1971,p.56).

Headings that contained information applicable to, or characteristic of, the term part-time, were found under a variety of index listings: "ratios, student-to-counselor" (Baker, 1981);

and "staffing, counselor-pupil ratios" (Ballast & Shoemaker, 1980); "staff ratios" (Shaw, 1973); "working conditions" (Warner & Hawk, 1976). Other sources where information was found were units of book chapters: "Overview of Pupil Services" under Chapter 3. "Organization and Coordination" (Hummel & Humes, 1984) and "Criticisms of Guidance" under Chapter 2. "Guidance in the Educational Setting" (Shaw, 1973).

Current Status of Counseling

One important factor to counselors is that of the counselor-pupil ratio. According to Shaw (1973) and Baker (1981) student-to-counselor ratios are determined by two variables. Predominantly, the first is financial condition, and the second is perceived worth of the guidance program.

Hummel & Humes (1984) stated that "most [schools] have established counselor-pupil ratios for secondary school accreditation, ranging from 250-450 students per counselor" (p. 98). A great variety of ratios were recommended: Peters reports 1 counselor for every 50 students (elementary through secondary) recommended by the Education Task Force of the 1971 White House Conference on Youth (as cited in Baker, 1981). Peters (cited in Baker, 1981) recommends the ratio of 200:1 and upwards. The ratio of 250 to 300:1 was listed by others (Ballast & Shoemaker, 1980; Hummel & Humes, 1984; Warner & Hawk, 1976).

Peters (1978) considered debate on ratios pointless without a statement of actual duties and an understanding of the worksetting. "It is sheer folly to recommend a ratio of 300 students to one counselor without at the same time specifying what the counselor is expected to accomplish" (Ballast & Shoemaker, 1980, p. 143). "Perhaps one should consider any ratio less than 200:1 as excellent, up to 300:1 as good, and anything above 300:1 as increasingly oppressive" (Baker, 1981, p. 260). Warner & Hawk (1976) state that "most counselors operate with student loads far above the recommended 250:1 ratio at the secondary level or 500 to 600: 1 at the elementary level" (p. 271).

Part-time one counselor programs in Iowa

The State Code of Iowa says school districts must employ a counselor to work with personal, social, educational, and career development of its students. Time duration and program functions are determined by the local districts. A school district could employ a counselor for one day a month, or one day a year, and they would meet the law. (G. J. Smith, personal communication, June 6, 1985)

In Iowa, it has been found that specifying the employment of a counselor but not specifying guidelines for student ratio, time, or duties, gives school districts "local control" in determining the services provided to their districts. (G. J. Smith, personal communication, May 31, 1985) Smith, Chief of Guidance Services Section of the Department of Public Instruction, stated that many school districts have excellent programs, while others have minimal, and possibly inadequate, programs.

During the 1984-1985 school year, of the 438 public school districts in Iowa, 278 districts employed a single [one] counselor. (G. J. Smith, personal communication, May 31, 1985) On a rough count, Smith found about 55%, approximately 153 districts, of the single counselor systems employed a full-time counselor. This counting included the 21 counselors serving two districts in which they were counted as part-time in each district even though they were full-time counselors.

Using the data supplied by G. J. Smith (personal communication, May 31, 1985), of the remaining 45%, or approximately 125 school districts in Iowa, including 42 districts sharing 21 full-time counselors, the districts served by counselors on a part-time basis total approximately 167. In other words, as of 1984-1985, approximately 38% of the school districts in Iowa have part-time, one-counselor guidance programs.

Regarding worth of guidance, "Guidance and counseling programs are educational facets which are essential, not supplementary, to teaching" (Unified State Plan for Guidance, Counseling, and Placement in Colorado, 1980, p.5). "Counseling in schools has a developmental emphasis and contributes to the educational process - particularly in affective and life planning aspects" (Tolbert, 1982, p. 43). As such, these programs fill an ever increasing variety of needs that are not being met through other areas of the school curriculum.

Even though proponents see guidance services as essential, many school counselors are finding that the current organizational patterns of guidance place guidance in the category of ancillary services. (Hargens & Gysbers, 1984) As an indication of the effect of guidance being viewed as ancillary, nonprofessional activities, additional activities, and quasi-guidance tasks or duties have been areas of concern for counselors for some time. (Baker, 1981; Ballast & Shoemaker, 1980; Gibson, Mitchell & Higgins, 1983; Gysbers & Moore, 1981; Shaw, 1973; Shertzer & Stone, 1971; Tolbert, 1982; Warner & Hawk, 1976; et al.) Hargens & Gysbers (1984) refer to ancillary services as additional activities such as testing, scheduling, and other administrative/clerical duties. "And what is worse, this reinforces the practice of having them do quasi-guidance tasks because such tasks can be justified as being of service to someone" (Gysbers & Moore, 1981, pp. 23-24). Warner & Hawk (1976) include "Administrative services" as one of the roles of the secondary school counselor, and indicate there is no evidence that school counselors can escape some administrative functions.

Further evidence of the ancillary status often afforded guidance was provided by Peer (1985) who conducted a national survey of state directors of guidance in the state departments of education throughout the country. Four of the findings have direct implications on this study: (a) over 83% of the respondents

reported that secondary counselors were 'probably' or 'definitely' heavily involved in nonprofessional activities, (b) over 60% of the respondents indicated that programs in their state were in all probability not guided by a statewide plan, (c) nearly 60% of the respondents doubted the existence of written plans (on the local level), and (d) over 86.5% of the respondents doubted the existence of a guidance committee structure. Peer's (1985) findings, in regard to the lack of written guidance plans, found support in Iowa, and may indicate that guidance is not seen as being of primary importance.

V. Pinke (personal communication, June 14, 1985), Career Development Coordinator in the Educational Services Division of Iowa's Northern Trails Area Education Agency (AEA 2), made a "very rough guess" that at least one half of the school systems in AEA 2 had guidance plans in writing, but that the location, or even existence of such plans, may or may not be known. This condition may or may not be representative of all A.E.A.'s in the state. "If the evidence of a guidance program's existence is that it is in writing, it could be said that few guidance programs exist." (Ballast and Shoemaker, 1980, p.26)

At this time, Iowa does not have a written state guidance plan. A booklet of suggested policies was published in 1971. The survey of the current status of guidance throughout Iowa has been of help in updating suggested policies and development of a state

guidance plan. The DPI is preparing a written state guidance plan with hopes of completion in 1986. (G. J. Smith, personal communication, May 31, 1985) R. L. Frank completed research sponsored jointly by the Guidance Section of the Iowa Department of Instruction and the Counselor Education Staff at the University of Northern Iowa, from 1980 to 1983 to assess the current status of counseling in Iowa. Following are a few of those studies and some of the results derived from the data.

Frank (1980) surveyed Iowa counselors on major issues that concerned them. The top one third of the issues identified included: (a) role clarification, (b) accountability, (c) priorities established by others, (d) counselors' involvement in career education, (e) working with special student populations, and (f) special skills needed by counselors.

In another survey of Iowa counselors, Frank (1982) found that the greatest amount of counselor time was spent in contact with students (over 44% by senior high and over 45% by junior-senior high school counselors). The second greatest use of counselor time was spent at "noncounseling duties," and clerical duties (over 20% of the counselors in senior high, and by over 27% of the junior-senior high counselors).

In yet another study, Frank (1983) researched counselor responsibilities. In this study, administrators and counselors rated perceived and ideal roles of the counselor. No

interpretations of the data were offered in the report. The data indicate a tendency for the administrators to perceive a substantial services role for counselors. The corresponding counselor responses tended to indicate the perception of a more developmental role as being appropriate for them in guidance functions.

The author feels that perceptions of administrators may give some indication as to possible difficulties in the building of support for remodelling guidance programs along developmental guidelines. Counselors are faced with the challenge of making the transition from the ancillary service concept of guidance to that of a comprehensive, developmental program that is an equal partner with other programs in education. (Hargens & Gysbers, 1984)

Assessing the need for change in the school's guidance program begins with recognition of the difference between the present status of the school's guidance program and those services and activities the staff feels should be provided. (Gysbers & Moore, 1981; Hargens & Gysbers, 1984)

The initial stimulus to modify guidance may come from a variety of sources: counselors, parents, students, school administration, the school board, or community organizations. (Gysbers & Moore, 1981)

Plans for Program Development

Once the decision to change the guidance program has been made, administrative and school board endorsement is needed for

support. (Hargens & Gysbers, 1984) Building support through public relations and being politically active can be very important, as many reserchers have documented (Cristiani & Herring, 1981; DiSilvesto, 1980; Fuss, Mosher & Rashbaum-Selig, 1977; Gerler,1974; Gysbers & Moore, 1981; Hargens & Gysbers, 1984; et al). DiSilvesto (1980) wrote about counselors being active politically, influencing the school board. "The local school board is the most important policy making body that affects their immediate working conditions" (DiSilvesto, 1980, p. 351). Fuss, Mosher & Rashbaum-Selig (1977) demonstrated the power innovative public relations with school boards can have. Gerler (1974) noted the confidentiality inherent in counseling limits what is known about the counseling work and the counseling process.

Once endorsement is attained, the plan used for the process of program development is the next step. The author feels the limited size of the part-time program and applicability of desired models or model components will need to be considered. The process of program planning has been organized a number of ways by a number of people. Different organizational structures for the process of program planning are presented through the following examples. "The planning process is cumulative; each phase leads into, and is a prerequisite to, the next one" (Tolbert, 1982, p. 152) Comparisons made of the different plan components will

indicate applicability toward the organizational structure of individual programs.

V. Pinke (personal communication, June 14, 1985) outlined a rough draft of the components of a statewide guidance plan being developed for Iowa. The program outline includes these elements: (a) deciding student outcomes, (b) assessment of current status, (c) assessment of student needs, (d) establishing program goals and priorities, (e) establishing student performance objectives, (f) planning activities to meet priority objectives and program strategies, (g) delivering activities, and (h) evaluating outcomes. It is hoped this plan will be available for use by the state's school districts by late 1986.

One approach to the process of program development is suggested by Tolbert (1982). Tolbert proposes the process of program planning through phases. His plan includes these phases: (a) organizing approval and support, (b) formulating the program rationale, (c) needs assessment, (d) formulating goals and objectives, (e) functions, (f) resources, (g) staffing, (h) evaluation, (i) preparing the budget, and (j) implementation and evaluating the program.

The systems approach to program planning is presented through the Hosford and Ryan Systems Model (1970). This model is organized into 10 different segments: (a) study real-life environment, (b) define problem situation, (c) establish project

goals, (d) design counseling/guidance program prototype, (e) simulate to test program prototype, (f) pilot test model, (h) introduce system, (i) operate system, (j) evaluate system, and (k) eliminate system. Tolbert (1982) compared this plan with the systems model proposed in his book. Tolbert notes the Hosford & Ryan model as "being far more specific, showing alternative steps, ... giving needed emphasis to feedback [and] clearly gives more weight to pilot testing and evaluating the system." (1982, p. 157)

Plans for change do not need to involve changing the entire program. Shaw (1973) proposes these methods of promoting change in existing guidance programs: (a) the initiation of change, (b) development of a plan for change, and (c) converting plans to policy. Three basic headings are developed further by subheadings:

(1) The initiation of change. This step involves: the recognition for a need to change, the assessment of readiness for change, the possible use of a consultant, the collection and utilization for appropriate evidence, and the pace for change.

(2) Development of a plan for change. This step involves: the plan of the total or partial program, the planning group, the final proposal, and obtaining wider support.

(3) Converting programs to policy. This step involves: the development of functions, the implementation of functions,

development of plans for evaluation, and putting the plan into operation.

The American College Testing Program (ACT) (1982) has developed a conceptual model for evaluation of student services and guidance activities. There are five basic parts which are as follows: (a) assessing student needs, (b) setting priorities, (c) establishing objectives, (d) planning activities, and (e) evaluating outcomes, which they connect back to (a) to form a cyclical pattern.

Hargens & Gysbers (1984) and Gysbers & Moore (1981) present the following structure focussed on improving the existing guidance program. The remodelling process is outlined in terms of six steps: (a) decide you want to change, (b) get organized and form work groups, (c) assess your current program, (d) select a program model, (e) make the transition from the present program to the model program, and (f) evaluate your program.

The model for program development proposed by Hargens & Gysbers (1984) has been expanded a little more than other models mentioned in order to demonstrate how characteristics of various components could be developed for more clarification. The four assumptions characteristic of this model are presented by Hargens & Gysbers as follows:

"1. Guidance is a program" (p. 119). As a program, it has characteristics similar to other programs in education, including:

(a) learner outcomes (competencies), (b) activities and processes to assist learners in achieving these outcomes, (c) professionally recognized personnel, and (d) materials and resources.

"2. Guidance programs are developmental and comprehensive" (p. 120). Immediate and crisis needs of individuals are being met, but the major focus of the program is developmental through experiences to help growth and development. Guidance programs are comprehensive through a full range of activities and services provided, including: (a) assessment, (b) information, (c) counseling, (d) placement, (e) follow-up, and (f) follow-through.

"3. Guidance programs focus on the development of individuals' competencies, not just the remediation of their deficits" (p. 120). A major emphasis should be on helping individuals in identifying competencies they already have and helping in the development of new ones.

"4. Guidance programs are built on a team approach. A comprehensive, developmental program approach is built on the assumption that all staff are involved" (p. 120). The professionally certified counselors are central to the program as coordinators, and provide services to individuals, and in consultant roles with other members of the guidance team.

Baker (1981) presented his approach as a self-renewal program for school counselors. He divided the program into 11 components that can be approached simultaneously, or individually. They

include: (a) counseling, (b) consultation, (c) program development and management, (d) training, (e) referral, (f) orientation, (g) the information service, (h) placement, (i) testing, (j) student records, and (k) accountability.

The accountability movement seems to be gaining strength and support. The author found recent published sources (Baker, 1981; Ballast & Shoemaker, 1980; Tolbert, 1982; et al) presenting accountability as a ongoing tool for evaluation. Many approaches to evaluation are beginning to appear that are structured on the concepts of accountability. The scope of investigating the accountability issue could easily surpass the intentions of this paper, and is deserving of additional study. Crabbs & Crabbs (1977) listed eight approaches that have been field tested to evaluate counseling programs. The eight approaches identified were: (a) satisfaction surveys, (b) experimental design, (c) status studies, (d) tabulation approach, (e) follow-up, (f) case study, (g) achievement of goals study, and (i) time-cost analysis. Many of these methods tend to be unidirectional methods of collecting specific types of data. (Crabbs & Crabbs, 1977)

An example of a program-wide model was presented by Atkinson, Furlong & Janoff (1979); a proposed four-component model for proactive accountability in school counseling. They structured accountability through two major types: (a) transactional (actions completed) or (b) product (the effect). Each of these two types

can be answered using either: (a) qualitative (descriptive) or (b) quantitative (numerical) data. The resultant categories provide these combinations:

- (1) Category I: the value of the counseling activity,
- (2) Category II: the value of the counseling outcome,
- (3) Category III: the occurrence of the counseling activity,
- (4) Category IV: the occurrence of the counseling outcome,

It should be noted that overscheduling can be a real problem, either in an established, or a remodelled program. Shaw (1973) warned that if a guidance staff commits itself to accomplishment of more objectives or functions than it is subsequently able to effectively implement, they may nevertheless find themselves held accountable for that implied promise. Shaw went on to suggest as an approach to the problem the establishment of a series of objectives and functions which are viewed as ideal. The ideal objectives and concomitant functions should, however, be prioritized, and it should be made clear that only certain objectives and functions can be achieved through current staff availability. If staff availability improves in the future, then other objectives and functions on the list can be included in the priorities. Such a procedure has the advantage of making it clear, both to the guidance staff and to others, that an ideal program cannot be implemented with less than ideal available time.

R. L. Frank (personal communication, June 7, 1985) suggested a similar approach. He believed that the needs of the students

attending a school with a part-time one counselor program could be found to remain fairly consistent with other students who attend schools with full-time counselor programs. Because access to the counselor by students is limited in the part-time program, Frank suggested a priority list of program objectives and student outcomes that encourage accountability, rated according to counselor availability.

Concluding Statement

Personal experience in a part-time single counselor program made the writer aware of challenges confronting the counselor in the part-time program. Outdated guidelines and program materials prompted a search for current, applicable information. The limited number of sources specifically identifying part-time concerns forced a wider approach in consideration of resources.

Counselors in part-time program districts often are working in programs that are without established written plans. Needs of the students remain fairly consistent with those in systems that have full-time counselors, but counselor accessibility and programs possibly are limited because of the part-time employment of the counselor. As a result, services of the program may be less than those available in schools employing full-time counselors.

Establishing a written guidance program or written objectives and procedures, will help in the development of a basis by which

the measurement of the objectives and outcomes can be made.

Current issues investigated included: (a) counselor-pupil ratios, (b) the percentage of part-time one counselor programs in Iowa's high schools, (c) nonprofessional or quasi-guidance activities that take away from the counselor's time, and (d) current issue and concerns of Iowa's counselors.

Once the need for change in the guidance program was determined, development of support for the change was discussed. A process of program development was investigated, program models were presented for comparison, eight field-tested accountability approaches were listed, and a four-component accountability model was also presented. As a result of this investigation, it appears that the counselor must determine if change is needed within the whole, or only within the parts of his/her own program. The tools are available for bringing about change and can be adapted to serve a system of any size.

References

- American College Testing Program (ACT). River city high school guidance services: A conceptual model. Iowa City: ACT.
- Atkinson, D. R., Furlong, M. J. & Janoff, D. S. (1979). A four-component model for proactive accountability in school counseling. The School Counselor, 32, (2), 222-228.
- Baker, Stanley B. (1981). School counselor's handbook: A guide for professional growth and development. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Ballast, D. L., & Shoemaker, R. L. (1980). Coactive guidance: A blueprint for the future. Springfield, Thomas.
- Colorado Department of Education & Colorado State Board for Community Colleges and Comprehensive Education. (1980). Unified state plan for guidance, counseling, and placement in Colorado.
- Crabbs, S. K. & Crabbs, M. A. (1977). Accountability: Who does what to whom, when, where, and how? The School Counselor, 25, (2), 104-109.
- Cristiani, T. S. & Herring, L. R. (1981). Enhancing counselor effectiveness through the development of support system strategies. The School Counselor, 28, (5), 181-189.
- DiSilvestro, F. R. (1980). The school counselor and political activity: Influencing school boards. The School Counselor, 27, (5), 351-356.

Frank, Robert L. (1980). Survey of Iowa counselors.

Unpublished manuscript, Department of Public Instruction and University of Northern Iowa.

Frank, Robert L. (1983). Counseling responsibilities study.

Unpublished manuscript, Department of Public Instruction and University of Northern Iowa.

Fuss, C., Mosher, J. E. & Rashbaum-Selig, M. (1977). The Board Game. The School Counselor, 24, (3), 181-189.

Gerler, E.R., Jr., (1974). Facing school boards: A must for counselors. The School Counselor, 21, (5), 366-370.

Gibson, R. L., Mitchell, M. H., & Higgins, R. E. (1983). Development and management of counseling programs and guidance services. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Gysbers, N.C., & Moore, E. J. (1981). Improving guidance programs. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Hargens, M. & Gysbers, N. C. (1984). How to remodel a guidance program while living in it: a case study. The School Counselor, 32, (2), 119-124.

Hosford, R. E. & Ryan, T. A. (1970). Systems design in the development of counseling and guidance programs. Personnel and Guidance Journal. 49, (3), 227.

Hummel, D. L., & Humes, C.W. (1984). Pupil services development, coordination, administration. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

- Peer, Gary G. (1985). The status of secondary school guidance: A national study. The School Counselor, 32, (3), 181-189.
- Peters, D. (1978). The practice of counseling in the secondary school. In The status of guidance and counseling in the nation's schools. Washington, D.C.: American Personnel and Guidance Association.
- Shaw, M. C. (1973). School guidance systems: Objectives, functions, evaluation, and change. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Shertzer, B. & Stone, S. C. (1971). Fundamentals of guidance. (2nd). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Tolbert, E. L. (1982). An introduction to guidance: The professional counselor. (2nd). Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Warner, R. & Hawk, R. (1976). Careers in counseling. In T. H. Hohenshil & J. H. Miles (Ed.), School guidance services: A career development approach (pp. 263-286). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.