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Sulaiman, Suad (Co-Auth)	مؤلفين آخرين:
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School Counseling and Guidance, Do we Need Them at our Schools?

Monther Al-Damen^o

Suad Sulaiman^{oo}

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to present the importance of guidance and counseling in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. It also attempts to shed light on the role of the school counselors in providing individual and group counseling for a variety of issues that face students at all levels. It also provides information on the counselors' developmental, preventative, and treatment approaches to handle students' concerns which range from conflict resolution to career and college major decisions. This paper recommends the implementation of a counseling and guidance programs in schools due to their immense and urgent need.

^o Assistant professor at Sultan Qabous University

^{oo} Assistant professor at Sultan Qabous University

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Monther Al-Damen[°] Suad Sulaiman^{°°}

Introduction:

The history of school counseling as a specialty of counseling profession has been well documented in the literature (Baker, 2000). During the intervening years, school counseling programs and their particular areas of emphases have been alternatively based on the social, political, economics, and psychological issues facing schools, communities, families, children and adolescent. At times, school counselors have worked more exclusively in educational and career arenas while at other times, much more attention has been paid to the personal and social development of students.

School Counseling and guidance are considered very important services, which are provided to students. They assist the students in making decisions and solve many of their problems. The increased demand for counseling and guidance could be attributed to several reasons. First, the increased number of students. This increase has asserted the need for individual and group counseling. Secondly, The growing family problems such as divorces, polygamous marriages, and female employment have emphasized the need for family counseling . Thirdly, the need to provide vocational guidance to students in order to help them find suitable jobs in the future. Industry leaders claim that post-secondary students are not graduating with the basic skills needed for success at work, home, and in further education (Carnevale et al, 1988). Fourthly, psychologist often refer to this age as the age of anxiety, therefore, counseling is needed in order to help students cope with their stress related

[°]Assistant professor at Sultan Qabous University

^{°°} Assistant professor at Sultan Qabous University

problems. Fifthly, the complexities of the modern life resulting from advances in technology affected the academic life of students. Counseling and guidance could play a roll in helping students to deal with the complexities of twenty first century.

Humans have provided counseling and guidance in the form of advice since the beginning of time. More recently, Counseling the guidance have depended on scientific theories and techniques. They went through different stages before taking on their present form. First, the mental hygiene movement which dealt with normal and abnormal individuals, along with retarded people. The concentration in this movement was based upon the need to understand individuals' psychological and social needs. Second, psychometric movement which concentrated on testing personality, IQ, vocational, and individual interest. Third, Vocational guidance which started in 1908 by Parsons which is considered the father of guidance. The main emphasis of this movement was to place the right individual in the right job and matching people with the appropriate jobs. The latter movements paved the way to counseling and guidance after the second world war. Rogers wrote a book in 1951 called "Becoming a Person" which concentrated on individuals and their selves. He developed the theory of "Client Center therapy". Since then, counseling and guidance have developed to encompass more than one hundred approaches.

School counseling is a profession that focuses on the relations and interaction between students and their school environment and institutional barriers that impede student academic success. The profession fosters conditions that ensure educational equity, access, and academic success for all students K-12. To accomplish this function, the trained school counselor assist students in their academic, social, emotional and personal development.

Counseling is a one to one helping relationship that focuses upon a person's growth, adjustment, problem solving, and decision making needs. It is a client-centered process that demands confidentiality. In individual counseling students may

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meet one-to-one with a counselor to discuss feelings or problems related to their social, emotional or academic functioning. Whereas group guidance focuses on providing information, developmental experiences. Group counseling tends to focus more to the problem solving and adjustment needs of persons through a process very similar to individual counseling.

The philosophy of guidance and counseling programs are:

1. To provide needed services to all students
2. To help the students develop a better understanding and appreciation of self, individual abilities and relationships with others
3. To assist the students in bridging the gap between elementary school and high school, between high school and college.
4. To encourage the students to establish worthy educational and vocational goals and to make plans to realize these goals.
5. To utilize community resources in helping students solve problems, further their education and make realistic plans for the future. ([http : / www . chaminade. org/ westhills/ HS/ consel / HS / counselingservice.htm](http://www.chaminade.org/westhills/HS/consel/HS/counselingservice.htm))

To help all students means that comprehensive guidance programs serve equally all students, parents, teachers, and other recipients regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, family structure and functionality, socioeconomic status, involvement, or other special characteristics. It means understanding students, cultural, sociological economic, and family backgrounds. Marin and House (2001) stated that school counselors are ideally positioned in schools to serve as conductors and transmitters of information to promote school-wide success for all students. They create school climate where access and support for rigorous preparation is expected.

Counseling assumptions about human nature:

Counseling and guidance deal with human being on a personal level. The philosophy on which counseling and guidance stands upon are:

1. Human beings deserve acceptance and understanding.
2. As counselors, we should differentiate between the client and his behavior. Our objective is to change his behavior towards the best.
3. Individuals are capable of achieving their self actualization and solve their problems if we create a suitable environment for them.
4. The behavior of individuals is purposive.

One of the challenges facing school counselors involves the increasing diverse students populations in the schools (Lee, 2001). The term diversity actually describes a far broader range including socioeconomic status, with disabilities and urban/suburban lifestyle differences.

School counseling programs have historically been linked to desired student outcomes. Lapan, (2001) suggested that the continuing development of the profession depends upon the ability to improve answers to such questions as:

1. How can counselors' roles, functions, and interventions be transformed to be greater benefits and impact for all students?
2. How can a program be tailored to better meet the needs of each school?
3. How can counselors' time be redistributed to maximize benefits for all students? (p.291)

Goals of counseling

The goals of counseling are:

1. Changing the behavior of individuals towards the best.
2. To deal with the clients from all developmental aspect such as cognitive, social, emotional, and physical.
3. Exposing the client's needs, skills, and interest.
4. Maintaining the mental health through encouraging and supporting their interdependencies and to provide them with the freedom of thinking.
5. To assist individuals in solving their problems.
6. To build up a strong personality for the client.

7. Helping the client in taking decisions.
8. to assist individuals to achieve academic, social, emotional adjustments through developmental preventable, and treatment goals.

Who are the school counselors

School counselors have an enormous impact on the choices students make and their future options. They are ideally positioned in schools to serve as advocates who create opportunities for all students to define, nurture, and accomplish high academic aspirations.

School counselors have always considered themselves to be change agents. That change has been related to helping an individual become aware of behaviors or attitudes that might be affecting his/her success and then guiding that individual into new way of acting or thinking. This skill is transferable to effecting change in the learning environment or the school climate. Change is the heart of educational reform. School counselors need to position themselves as facilitators of that change.

The overall role of the school counselor

School counselors take on many roles most importantly program management, guidance, counseling, consultation, coordination, and finally assessment and professionalism (Ginson and Mitchell, 1986).

A counselor's role as a program Manager could be categorized into five different parts. First, the counselor plans, Implements and evaluates a developmental program of guidance and counseling services. Second, He defines the needs and priorities. Third, he determines appropriate objectives. Fourth, he organizes personnel, physical resources, and activities in relation to defined needs, priorities, and objectives. Fifth, He evaluates the guidance program.

The second role for school counselors is guidance. Guidance would entail providing a proactive, developmental program to all

students grades from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Guidance counselors have to keep in mind when developing the program cross-cultural issues, individual differences, and problem-centered concerns.

A third role is counseling which applies appropriate theories and techniques to develop and maintain effective relationships and to provide counseling in response to individuals and small groups. Counseling involves educational, career, personal, and social concerns.

The third role for counselors is consultations. They have to provide professional expertise to assist faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and other community members to understand both individual behavior and human relationships. As part of consultation, a counselor has to interpret relevant information to those persons concerning the development and needs of students.

Coordination is the fourth role of counselors. They have to bring together people and resources in the school, community, and the district for the fullest academic, career, personal, and social development of the student.

The fifth role is assessment. Counselors have to collaborate with other schools and district staff to design testing and appraisal programs that help students identify their abilities, aptitudes, achievements, and interest. Counselors are ethically bound to treat assessment data as confidential.

Professionalism and confidentiality are the sixth role of school counselors. They demonstrate their professionalism by adhering to ethical, legal, and professional standards for performance. Counselors and clients are bound by confidentiality. Prior to the counseling session, a person is informed of the purposes, goals, techniques, and rules for the procedure under which he or she will receive counseling assistance. The meaning and limits of confidentiality are clearly defined to the counselee through a written and shared disclosure statement. This is called informed consent.

The counselors role in Secondary schools:

1. Counselors in secondary schools have to help students in developing certain skills and awareness through conducting several programs. Some of the most important are communication skills, career awareness, conflict resolution, study skills, family concern, decision Making, self-knowledge and acceptance, responsible behavior, motivation to achieve, goal setting, and career planning.

Researchers have found that as little as 20% and as many as 605 of students entering college are undecided about an academic major or career choice (Gorden, 1995)

Self-efficacy, locus of control, and anxiety are factors that have come to be viewed as personality component of decision making. Researchers such as (Betz and Voyten, 1997) stated that students with low self-efficacy and external Lucas of control will be delayed in their decision making. High anxiety has also been closely tied to students' inability to decide.

The goal of career guidance in secondary school are:

- making decision and choosing alternatives in planning and pursuing educational and career goals
- understanding the relationship of life roles and careers
- applying skills to revise the students career plan
- understanding the relationships between educational achievement and career planning, training, and placement
- using positive attitudes towards work and learning
- researching, evaluating, and interpreting information about career opportunities
- learning how to function more effectively in small groups
- learn appropriate social skills needed for group activities
- improve student's ability in self-control
- show respect for others
- learn to demonstrate knowledge and skills of social interdependence
- learn how to improve students' educational performance
- learn strategies on how to cope with success as well as failure

- acquire knowledge of steps necessary for entry into postsecondary educational and training programs
 - understand how education relates to entering the job market
 - learn general skills that can apply to variety of occupations
 - understand the relationship between occupational roles and lifestyles
 - learn more effective time management skills
2. Counselors also have to provide personal, academic, and vocational counseling.
 3. They have to appraise students' academic advancements and interpret the results test such as interest and capabilities tests.
 4. Educational and occupational planning through providing students with vocational information concerning opportunities after graduation.

Comprehensive Counseling and guidance programs:

Comprehensive counseling and guidance programs are the umbrella program, designed to provide all students with life competencies through personal, social and career counseling. Comprehensive counseling and guidance employ four interactive components (Gysbers and Henderson, 1988):

1. The guidance curriculum. Counselors focus on content areas such as self knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning.
2. Individual planning. Counselors help students think ahead for themselves. They teach them how to plan courses, as well as, monitor and manage their lives.
3. Responsive services. Counselors meet the immediate needs of students confronting personal or educational challenges.
4. System report. Counselors work to sustain and enhance the implementation of comprehensive counseling and guidance programs.

Career guidance and counseling programs help individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to identify options, explore alternatives and succeed in society.

These programs better prepare individuals for the changing workplace of the 21st century by:

- teaching labor market changes and complexity of the workplace
- broadening knowledge, skills, and abilities
- improving decision making skills
- increasing self-esteem and motivation
- building interpersonal effectiveness
- maximizing career opportunities
- improving employment marketability and opportunities
- promoting effective job placement
- strengthening employer relations

The roll of the middle school counselor:

Middle school counselors are student advocates, proactive rather than reactive, committed to the education of early adolescents, flexible, sensitive, self-motivated, focused, patient, and articulate. They are also problem solvers, computer literate, on the cutting edge of educational innovation and practice, good managers of time, members of professional counseling associations, and they are involved in the total school program.

Middle school counselors have the following roles:

- Promote the mission of middle level schools
- Assist parents with understanding and coping with their early adolescent child
- Assist middle level youngsters with the resolution of all types of conflict
- Serve as resources people / consultants for the teacher-advisor
- Balance the issues between teachers / supervisors / parents and administrators
- Facilitate team / parent meetings
- Facilitate / teach a developmental guidance program
- Administer and interpret standardized tests
- Organize and facilitate special interest group counseling sessions

The role of elementary school counselor:

The main roles of the elementary school counselor are the following:

- to assist students in improving their self awareness
- Promoting self skills needed later in life.
- Providing general information about the world of work.
- Encouraging students to feel autonomous
- Encourage students to explore

Types of problems students see counselors for:

Personal problems:

- a) relationships and family problems
- b) stress
- c) anger and interpersonal conflict
- d) crises intervention
- e) depression, loneliness, and shyness
- f) self-esteem

Educational problems:

- a) difficulties with study skills
- b) time management
- c) motivation
- d) choices about majors and careers
- e) communications with instructors
- f) substance abuse

Vocational problems:

- a) lack of information about vocations
- b) lack of information concerning their capabilities
- c) lack of information concerning the working environment

How can students see the counselors:

Students can see the school counselor through the following ways:

1. appointment made by the counselor
2. self-referral
3. administrative referral
4. teacher or other staff referral
5. referral by friend

What students should do to benefit from counseling:

- I. Attend scheduled session
- II. Be specific about the concerns that led to his / her decision to seek counseling.
- III. Establish with his / her counselor desired goals and outcomes to be achieved in counseling.
- IV. Discuss his / her progress with the counselor, and modify the goals if necessary
- V. Student should participate actively, be as open and honest as possible
- VI. The student should be prepared for the sessions
- VII. The student should complete any homework
- VIII. The student should tell the counselor if he doesn't believe he / she is getting helped

Summary:

Educational, vocational, and school counselors—in elementary, middle, and secondary schools—help students evaluate their abilities, interests, talents, and personality characteristics in order to develop realistic academic and career goals. Counselors use interviews, counseling sessions, tests, or other methods when evaluating and advising students. They operate career information centers and career education programs. High school counselors provide guidance on college majors, admission requirements, entrance exams, and financial aid and on trade or technical schools and apprenticeship programs. They help students develop job search skills such as resume writing and interviewing techniques. College career planning and placement counselors assist alumni or students with career development and job hunting techniques.

Elementary school counselors observe younger children during classroom and play activities, and confer with their teachers and parents to evaluate their strengths, problems, or special needs. They also help students develop good study habits. They do less

vocational and academic counseling than do secondary school counselors.

School counselors at all levels help students understand and deal with social, behavioral, and personal problems. These counselors emphasize preventive and developmental counseling to provide students with the life skills needed to deal with problems before they occur, and to enhance personal, social, and academic growth. Counselors provide special services, including alcohol and drug prevention programs, and classes that teach students to handle conflicts without resorting to violence. Counselors also try to identify cases involving domestic abuse and other family problems that can affect a student's development. Counselors work with students individually, with small groups, or with entire classes. They consult and work with parents, teachers, school administrators, school psychologists, school nurses, and social workers.

Vocational counselors (also called employment counselors when working outside a school setting) help individuals make career decisions. They explore and evaluate the client's education, training, work history, interests, skills, and personal traits, and arrange for aptitude and achievement tests. They also work with individuals to develop job search skills and assist clients in locating and applying for jobs

Rehabilitation counselors help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel people with disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or the stress of daily life. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement. Rehabilitation counselors interview individuals with disabilities and their families, evaluate school and medical reports, and confer and plan with physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, and employers to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual. Conferring with the client, they develop a rehabilitation program, which often

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includes training to help the person develop job skills. They also work toward increasing the client's capacity to live independently.

Mental health counselors emphasize prevention, and work with individuals and groups to promote optimum mental health. They help individuals deal with addictions and substance abuse, suicidal impulses, stress management, problems with self-esteem, issues associated with aging, job and career concerns, educational decisions, issues related to mental and emotional health, and family, parenting, and marital problems. Mental health counselors work closely with other mental health specialists, including psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and school counselors.

Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors help people who have problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling, and eating disorders. They counsel individuals who are addicted to drugs to help them identify behaviors and problems related to their addiction. They hold counseling sessions for one person, for families, or for groups of people to assist them in dealing with problems.

Marriage and family therapists apply principles, methods, and therapeutic techniques to individuals, family groups, couples or organizations for the purpose of resolving emotional conflicts. In doing so, they modify perceptions and behavior, enhance communication and understanding among all family members, and help to prevent family and individual crisis. Individual marriage and family therapists also may engage in psychotherapy of a non medical nature, with appropriate referrals to psychiatric resources, and in research and teaching in the overall field of human development and interpersonal relationships.

Other counseling specialties include gerontology or multicultural counseling. A gerontology counselor provides services to elderly persons who face changing lifestyles because of health problems, and helps families cope with these changes.

A multicultural counselor helps employers adjust to an increasingly diverse workforce.

Conclusion:

In general, counselors are expected to:

- a- Provide individual and small group counseling sessions
- b- Conduct classroom guidance intervention
- c- Consult with parents, teachers, administrators
- d- Participate in the membership of school leadership and policy making groups
- e- Provide individualized, focused, and intensive interventions for the at-risk students
- f- Perform a developmental specialist role at schools
- g- Perform a mental health specialist role at schools
- h- Provide family counseling interventions.

(<http://www.coe.uga.edu/echd/tenure/paisley.htm>)

This paper has reviewed the importance of counseling and guidance in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. We believe that counseling and guidance services are important, therefore we recommend the establishment of such programs in our schools. Decision maker must answer the following question: should they implement counseling and guidance programs at schools?

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التوجيه والإرشاد المدرسي: هل نحتاجهما في مدارسنا؟

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة لإبراز أهمية التوجيه والإرشاد في المدارس الابتدائية والإعدادية والثانوية. كما تحاول الدراسة إلقاء الضوء على دور المرشد المدرسي في الإرشاد الفردي والجمعي لجميع الطلبة بكافة مستوياتهم.

كما تتحدث الدراسة عن الجوانب النمائية والوقائية والعلاجية التي يستخدمها المرشد في التعامل مع اهتمامات الطلبة وقضاياهم التي تشمل الإرشاد المهني واتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بدراساتهم المستقبلية. وتوصي الدراسة بتنفيذ برامج إرشادية وتوجيهية في المدارس نظراً للحاجة الماسة لمثل هذه البرامج .