

# Counseling and school counselor roles



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This literature review is divided into six subjects which started with the historical overview of counseling and school counselor roles, then followed by the American School Counselor Association National Model, ASCA National Model and Education Trust, self-efficacy, self-efficacy theory, and lastly research on school counseling and school counselor self-efficacy

### Historical Overview of Counseling and School Counselor Roles

Within the educational framework, counseling and guidance are relative novel concepts, having developed in early 1900s with vocational guidance as its origins (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). Instituted in 1915, the Department of Vocational Guidance was considered an education entity in the public schools of Boston. In connection, certification of school counselors also began in this same year (Smith, 1951). Pioneering efforts in the field of school vocational counseling were done by Frank Parsons (Nugent, 1994; O'Brien, 2001). Parsons motivated career counselors to work towards social justice and social change prompting the youth to explore careers (O'Brien, 2001). This same time period also coincided with Parsons' work on vocational counseling which Adolf Mayer coined as 'mental hygiene' which became the thrust of school guidance counseling. Smith (1951) described mental hygiene as the process school counselors were trained to better understand and work with individuals in coping with day to day stressors.

Following the death of Parsons comes the emergence of 'vocational guidance'; however, guidance in schools disappeared by the early 1930s (Nugent, 1994). By the later part of the 1930s, EG Williamson developed trait-factor theory of vocational and educational guidance along with the

reappearance of guidance and counseling, and the 1940s saw the publication of the research of Carl Rogers (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997; Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Lambie, 2004; Nugent, 1994). Since the time that school guidance and counseling emerged professionally during the 1940s, there were already efforts to have a clear definition and develop the standards set for school counselors (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997; Nugent, 1994).

The National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which took effect in 1958, rapidly affected school guidance and counseling through training and funding of individuals who are desirous in becoming school counselors. The advancement of school counseling as profession only began in the 1960s with the emergence of developmental guidance, the terminology utilized in describing how programs in school guidance and counseling needed to be developed (Gysbers, 2004). Ten years after the movement towards developmental guidance comes the movement for accountability (Gysbers & Henderson, 1997; Lambie & Williamson, 2004). During the 1980s, school guidance have become more integrated into schools slowly becoming a unique field of specialization then a foundation of education from the point of view of “ guidance-as-education” and classroom teachers as “ teacher counselors” (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994, p. 11-12).

As stated by Myrick (1997), there were numerous instances that the terms guidance and counseling are constantly interchanged in describing the roles and functions of a professional school counselor adding confusion between their roles and functions. Myrick (1997) clarified that guidance are program-

based initiatives while counseling is founded on counselor-counselee relationship and provides a supportive net against anxieties and concerns.

In the history of education, the school counselor's role has evolved with each passing decade. During the first few decades of the 20th century, the focus of school counselors is the provision of academic placement, assessment and vocational guidance to students. Towards the middle, school counselors are responsible for providing social and personal counseling services at the same time support holistic student development. The recent years has seen the integration of student academic program coordination, teacher-parent consultation and special education services (Gysbers & Henderson, 2002) into the responsibilities of a school counselor. Over the years, these changes in a school counselor's role have resulted in ambiguity and confusion in practice. Development of this role evolution started with service-oriented traditional school counselors who assist students with their class schedules, employment preparation and college admission guidance to more contemporary data-driven role. In discharging their contemporary role, school counselors made use of professional national standards so that student outcome competencies would be obtained, work in collaboration with teachers in the preparation of lesson plans and present and model teaching strategies that promote student success.

Instead of school counselors taking control over how they define their roles, it is the local district level school administrators. As a matter of fact, Sears and Coy (1991) stated, " School counselors appear to be reluctant or unable to convince principals that they should perform the duties for which they have been trained" (p. 3). Roles of school counselors defined by school

administrators include non-guidance-related activities like clerical staff members, detention room supervisors, testing coordinators, and master schedule builders. Moreover, school counselors likewise defined the responsibility of school counselors as the personnel providing students individual counseling services on both college and academic placement and a family liaison. While school counselors do not hold to these perspectives, conflict results in defining school counselor roles.

Lambie and Williamson (2004) explained that role ambiguity likely occurs when the individual does not have sufficient information about his or her role at work, lacks clarity about his or her work objectives, and lacks understanding on how their work peers expect of them with their job responsibilities. The study of Burnham and Jackson (2000) compared the actual and prescribed responsibilities of school counselors. Very often, school counselors spend most of their time in bus duties, keeping records, attendance records, testing coordination, and multiple clerical tasks. School counselors are yet to come up with a concrete definition of what their roles are and how they will apply these roles to their jobs. The constant question has always been “ What do school counselors do?”. To remove role ambiguity, it is necessary for school counselors to be provided with process data that describe practice and effectiveness. Gysbers and Henderson (1997) said, “ the purpose of evaluation is to provide data to make decisions about the structure and impact of the program as well as the professional personnel involved” (p. 263). Research provides support for the implementation of counseling interventions in curriculum, counseling, coordination and consultation (Scarborough, 2005). Through available

counseling task information, student success is promoted by school counselors in achieving the competencies described in the National Model for School Counseling Programs of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2003).

The American School Counselor Association (2002) supports the roles and standards

of school counselor practice and describes that school counselors are involved in systematic, development, and preventive methods of counseling. As insiders in the educational system, school counselors are advocates of families, students and teachers in enhancing the psychosocial, academic, and employment-related well being. The ever-changing formation of professional school counselors is described in 2004 by the American School Counselor Association in the following literature: “ Professional school counselors are certified/licensed professionals with a master’s degree or higher in school counseling or the substantial equivalent. Professional school counselors deliver a comprehensive school counseling program encouraging all students’ academic, career and personal/social development and help all students in maximizing student achievement” (p. 23).

The American School Counselor Association National Model

The American School Counselors Association in 2005 enumerated the standards for appropriateness in school counselor activities. Generally speaking, ASCA has greatly specified how counselors should be utilizing their time in school based on Gysbers and Henderson’s model of distribution of school counselor time (ASCA, 2003; Gysbers & Henderson, 2006).

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Enumerated are activities considered to be appropriate as follows: planning of individual academic program, interpretation of scores obtained from achievement, aptitude, and cognitive tests, counseling students who are always absent, tardy or having discipline problems, counseling on appropriate school attire, collaborating with teachers in the presentation of guidance curriculum lessons, analysis of grade-point average in association with student achievement, interpretation of student records, provision of suggestions and recommendations to teachers on how to better manage study halls, ascertaining the maintenance of student records in adherence to both state and federal regulations, working closely with students in providing counseling services for both small and large groups, and supporting students in their individual education plan meetings and student performance. On the other hand, the following activities are inappropriate according to ASCA: scheduling and registration of new students, coordination or administration of achievement, aptitude, and cognitive tests, signing of excuse slips for absent or tardy students, implementation of disciplinary measures, sending home students who violated school dress code, holding classes when the teacher is absent, computation of grade-point averages, maintenance of student records, supervision of study halls, clerical record keeping, assistance in the duties of the principal, working with one student at a time in a clinical, therapeutic setting, preparing individual student education plans, teams for student study, and school review boards, and entry of data.

As earlier mentioned in the historical background, the role of school counselor is somewhat blurred because of the lack of clarity of what is proper and expected of the position (Huffman et al. (1993). Myrick (2005)

asserted, “ history shows that unless the role of the school counselor is clearly established, the whims of the times can threaten the very existence of counselor positions” (p. 6). Hatch (2002) pointed out that despite the listing of inappropriate activities by the ASCA, school counselors feel a great amount of frustration on their actual function and role. One respondent in the study mentioned that her daily school tasks as school counselor are those that are not related to counseling that she finds it difficult to change her role since she has become an expert in these tasks and showed concern over who would likely take over her position after her tenure.

Dahir and Stone (2007) emphasized that it is the ASCA National Model that contemporized the expectations of 21st century centers of education with reference to how they will be founded, managed and how services will be delivered to their stakeholders along with accountability. The model provided the mechanism wherein school counselors and their teams can help in designing, coordinating, implementing, managing and evaluating their programs geared towards academic achievement. When the four components of the program starting with foundation, management, delivery system and accountability are integrated with skills in data usage, teaming, collaboration, leadership and advocacy along with the art and science of counseling, the school program of the 21st century is created.

The ASCA National Model (2005) provided for a counseling program that is “ comprehensive in scope, preventive in design, and developmental in nature” (p. 13). By comprehensive, ASCA meant that the counseling in school should be able to tackle healthy social/personal, career, and academic development of students from grades pre-K to 12. Preventive measures aim at proactively

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fostering adaptive skills and disseminating vital information through a curriculum in classroom guidance. Lastly, counseling in school should also be developmental as it is sensitive to the needs unique the student population being served a delivers programming that meets competencies and content standards specific to the age group of students.

These competencies and content standards are summarized in the ASCA National Standards. These national standards provide the framework in the design of school counseling programs. Likewise the ASCA model listed down standards in the content of classroom discussion specific to age presenting what students ought to know and do after completion of the school counseling program and provide learning objectives designed to help students reach their highest potential.

There are nine ASCA National Standards subdivided to three domains namely: academic, career, and personal/social development. Under academic are the standards that students should be able to: (1) acquire attitudes, knowledge and skills that impact effective school learning and in his or her lifetime, (2) complete school equipped with the necessary academic preparation in choosing from a variety of post-secondary school options which covers college, (3) understand the association between the workplace and home and community life. For career development, ASCA listed another set of standards: (1) acquire skills of investigating the workplace and relate these skills to the self so that informed decisions on career would be derived; (2) utilize the strategies in achieving career goals in the future successfully and satisfactorily; and (3) correlate personal characteristics and qualities, training, education, and the workplace. In the <https://assignbuster.com/counseling-and-school-counselor-roles/>

domain, personal/social development, the standards are the following: (1) acquire the knowledge base, attitudes, as well as interpersonal skills in respecting and understanding the self and others; (2) decide, set personal goals, and act upon those goals; and (3) understand survival and safety skills. A frequent way school counselors address the national standards defined by ASCA and emulate the national model in their schools is the adoption of guidance programs that are comprehensive and developmental in nature (Galassi & Akos, 2007). Though these counseling programs are described to be efficacious by several authors like Lapan, Gysbers, and Petroski (2001), Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun (1997) and Sink and Stroh (2003), there is no outline constituting these programs. The ASCA National Model and National Standards set the direction in program structuring but the specific details and components of the program are left to the discretion of the school counselors.

#### The ASCA National Model and the Education Trust

The Education Trust, in coordination with the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, provided support for a group of counselor educators and school counselors to reorganize school counseling training and practice. One aim of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund is the promotion of significant achievements on educational quality and career development among the youth. In addition, the funding is aimed at increasing access of disadvantaged communities to improved educational and social services (DeVoss & Minnie, 2006). Areas of interest cover improvement of services delivered to individuals in the elementary and secondary levels as well as community-based organizations through the collaborative efforts of the <https://assignbuster.com/counseling-and-school-counselor-roles/>

school and the community. The contemporary role of this initiative defined school counseling as “...a profession that focuses on...reducing the effect of environmental 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” (Education Trust, <http://www.edtrust.org>).

The Trust also solicits proposals that develop new training models in training school counselors from refurbishing the criteria in selecting candidates eligible for counselor education programs to the revision of the content in the curriculum, professional development, and field experience. It is crucial that education departments in states make sure that training programs are abreast with present changes and demands in society (ASCA, 2003; Education Trust 1999). The changes are now referred to as New Vision Counselor (DeVoss & Minnie, 2006; Education Trust).

In 2003, the Education Trust began with the movement transforming school counselors’ role from merely providing services to one that is more oriented towards student achievement and learning. During the same year, Reese House, the director of the National Center for Transforming School Counseling explained, “ This new Center will arm practicing school counselors with the data and knowledge to lead schools efforts to raise achievement of all students and close the gap between groups once and for all” (Paragraph 6).

When the teachers were surveyed by Clark and Amatea (2004), they had definite ideas regarding the services they wanted their school counselors to

discharge. It was likewise noted that the school counselor is a valuable and significant player and resource not only to the student body but to the faculty force as well by giving support in their instructional endeavors. The teachers believed that the role of the counselor is the provision of direct services to students through the conduct of classroom guidance and individual student counseling. When their recommendations were asked, the students and teachers said they need additional school counselors so that the programs of the school counselors would be better communicated to the student body. Dahir (2004) mentioned that school counselors are continuously working toward adequately defining their roles and establishing program standards in the delivery of counseling services. In 1990, Ginter and Scalise found that teachers classified the roles of elementary school counselors into two dimensions: first is the helper role and the second is the consultant role. In the former, the school counselor provides counseling for individual students, guidance for classroom and resolving concerns affecting students while the latter requires his or her professional expertise and guidance in helping teachers implement strategies that impact curriculum planning, classroom assessment, and student behavior.

According to Stone and Clark (2001) and Ponec and Brock (2000), principals regarded school counselors as integral to the school system as they are collaborators and values formation advocates resulting in a more holistic academic school program. Beale (2003) expressed the need for school counselors as they aid principals in fulfilling their primary responsibility of helping their students achieve their full potential.

So that this is achieved, counselors must directly serve the interest of students by working with small groups in counseling and in-service coordination with teachers at the same time, collaborating with the school and the community (Beale, 2003; Beman, 2000). Both principals and counselors shared the belief that if there is mutual respect and understanding towards the role of the counselor, the school counselor would be most effective. However, school counselors must continuously educate principals and teachers regarding their role as well as tasks which are appropriate and inappropriate for them (Beale, 2003; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004; Ponec & Brock, 2000). Numerous times has the school principal's job involve the selection of a guidance counselor and it has also been the principal's assignment to define and delineate the level in which the school counselor dictates the type of counseling program that will be implemented (Beale, 1995; Dahir, 2000).

Though principals did not include specific administrative tasks in the manner with which they perceive the school counselor's role, they have for numerous occasions regarded there is an overlap between the duties of a principal and a school counselor. These included coordination of the master schedule, teaching the class where a teacher was absent and acting as assistant to the principal in some instances (Fullwood, 2004). Myers (2003) described the presence of role confusion among school counselors since its foundation and has been compounded many times by school principals who misunderstood the role and function inherent of a school counselor. As stated by Stone and Clark (2001), school counselors occupy a distinct position of exerting their unique leadership style and take part in the leadership team that work in

collaboration with the principal in driving a collective vision of student achievement and success. “ School counselors and principals can act as powerful allies in school reform focusing on helping students access and be successful in more rigorous academic standards” (Stone & Clark, 2001, p. 46). All are in agreement with the observation that how the school counselor perceived his or her role in school is not in sync with his or her actual role; therefore much needed work has to be done for the school counselor to function in consonance with the profession’s guidelines (Myers, 2003). Feller et al (1992) expressed that although ambiguity is evident in the school counselor’s role, they stated: “ While it is unwise to assume that there is one right role for school counselors, it is clear that a stronger relationship between the tasks of the school counselor and the educational priorities of the nation will support the continuing evolution of the profession”(p. 46)

The American School Counseling Association and Education Trust advocated the enactment of comprehensive and consistent standards for school counselor training and teamwork among stakeholders in education consisting of leaders in the community, parents, school administrators, teachers, school counselors, and the departments of education together with university training programs and professional organizations (Dahir, 2004; Galassi & Akos, 2004). For instance, some investigators revealed the need of counselors playing the role as consultants and advisors in leadership (Colbert et al., 2006; Amatea & Clark, 2005; Martin et al., 2003). On top of universities the priorities seemed to be promoting professional accountability among school counselors and equip them with the required skills in support

of each other while simultaneously encourage academic achievement among students in their school (DeVoss & Minnie, 2006).

Baker (2000) summarized these priorities of Education Trust and advised that for a university training program to be more viable, experts should trace back to the grass roots emphasizing on the following: (1) development and promotion of models specifically on collaborative training models tailor fitted to school counselors so they can better prepare in their function in the multidisciplinary team; (2) education on the significance of school counseling to the community and school personnel; (3) assessment of specific needs of the school or district; (4) development and implementation of programs addressing these concerns; and (5) conduct of regular and periodic assessments basing on the feedback of community partners, school personnel, students and parents to fine tune services offered. These are lofty yet essential goals. Literature has shown that school counselors should possess leadership skills in the school scenario and follow the standards set by the state and federal government. Universities and several boards of education have placed the New Vision school agenda as their first priority (Education Trust, 1999). Conversely, counselor educators should keep in mind that the greatest resources in a school rests in the efforts currently employed by the school counselors (Loesch & Ritchie, 2004).

### Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy denotes to “ people’s beliefs about their capability to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1991, p. 257). Belief of individuals regarding their self-

efficacy is considered to be the result of deliberating, synthesizing and assessing information regarding individual capabilities, and consequently regulate choices and the total effort applied on a specific task (Gist, 1987). A person's judgment on his or her self-efficacy differs across time as he or she is exposed to new experiences and information (Gist, 1992). Therefore, the concept of self-efficacy is dynamic. Beliefs on individual self-efficacy are correlated with the conditions of specific tasks though it will be noticed later that there individual could generate generalizations on these beliefs in related tasks on the basis of the person's sense of efficaciousness in general (Bandura, 1991).

Gist (1987) identified the three domains of self-efficacy: generality, strength, and magnitude. Generality is the level in which a self-efficacy belief applies in a variety of tasks; strength is the conviction that a specific task performance level is achievable; and magnitude is the extent of difficulty in a task that a person can accomplish. Of these three, generality is not measurable. Naturally, when an individual is asked what they feel towards the attainability of various task performance levels, he or she can answer it by a " yes" or " no" and when inquire about whether he or she is confident in reaching a certain degree of performance by assigning a number to it on a scale of 1 to 100. Thus, determination of magnitude is the aggregated sum of " yes" responses while strength is aggregated responses on confidence.

Wood, Bandura, and Bailey (1990) described the four primary sources of self efficacy judgments and each is particularly significant when applied in work environments in an organization. The first source referred to as enactive mastery experiences implies that self-efficacy judgments become



strengthened resulting from the accomplishment of tasks. According to the triadic reciprocal causation model, there is association between enactive mastery experiences and impact of behavior on individual perception of self-efficacy. The implication is that when there is a higher resilience in the person's sense of self-efficacy, it signifies that the person has overcome obstacles by being perseverant. This experience provides assertion of the individual's capabilities allowing the person to tolerate failures and setbacks without losing his or her confidence. Quick successes are the result of expecting short-term results which lead to fast discouragement when failure comes. It will be observed that when self-efficacy beliefs are strengthened or weakened by their experiences, it will have a major effect on their work especially with success or the lack of it in a person in his or her present position and conditions in the task which may be modulated and adjusted to facilitate success. Vicarious modeling or experience is the second source of beliefs pertaining to self-efficacy (Gist, 1987) and is mainly influenced by environmental factors. Modeling is the process of observing another person or the model who is performing a specific task. If a model is successful in his or her efforts, he or she is able to effectively convey to the observer plausible task strategies providing the basis for comparing and judging their individual abilities, and encourage the observer in believing on him/herself that with persistent efforts, in spite of setbacks, the task is accomplished successfully. The effect of modeling is linked to the likeness of both model and observer in terms of age and capability. Emulating models is a powerful desire. Modeling first started during childhood when the child tries to imitate significant others like parents or older siblings. In an organizational setting, the desire to model immediate supervisors or superior performers is likely

strong in some. Definitely, when roles are taken in and previously observed behavior, these illustrate social learning (Vecchio & Appelbaum, 1995). The impact of vicarious modeling or experience in an organization has repercussions in both daily uninhibited situations when a person examines another performing a similar task as part of normal routine work and with reference to training activities using modeling as a method of learning. Social or verbal persuasion though less efficacious than enactive modeling or mastery is regarded a significant source of self-efficacy judgments. The aim of verbal persuasion is communicate to the individual confronted with the activity of using his or her capability to succeed in the task at hand and not set high and unrealistic expectations which negatively affect the person if the task is a failure. Social persuasion is used widely on an ad hoc basis as if one is encouraging another; however, utilization of the form of persuasion would be strategic in a skill development context because it promotes higher task-directedness in the effort and this is useful during the initial phases of skill development.

Another source is the physiological state perceived by the person. When the individual is in a state of fear, anxiety or tension, he or she may judge him/herself to be less competent in accomplishing a specific task. Pain or fatigue will adversely affect the individual's perception of his or her self-efficacy especially in tasks requiring physical strength (Wood & Bandura, 1985). Efforts of improving either the psychological or the physical state of the individual by means of stress reduction interventions can potentially enhance self-efficacy judgments.

### Self-efficacy Theory

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The self-efficacy concept lies at the heart of the social cognitive theory of Albert Bandura. His theory highlights the role of reciprocal determinism, social experience, and observational learning in personality development. The theory defined the self-system is an individual's cognitive skills, abilities, and attitudes and it is said that this system plays a significant role in perceiving situations and behaving in response to various situations. An important element in the self-system is self-efficacy.

Bandura (1995) defined self-efficacy as “ the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 2). This means that self-efficacy is the belief of the individual regarding his or her capability to successfully accomplish a specific task. Bandura believes that self-efficacy determines the thinking, behavior, and feelings of people. Since the publication of Bandura's seminal work entitled, “ Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change,” self-efficacy has ever since the talk of psychologists the world over. Why is self-efficacy considered an important subject matter in education and psychology? Bandura and other investigators have established that self-efficacy affect state of mind to behavior and motivation.

#### School Counseling Research and School Counselor Self-Efficacy

Young (2004) described the perceptions of the leadership of school counselors and the practices of a large university in midwestern US. The specific objective of this study is to answer how participation in The Ohio State University Transforming School Counseling Initiative (OSUTSCI) program affected the leadership perceptions of graduates in the said

university. Qualitative approaches were employed in the collection and analysis of data. A purposive nonprobability sampling procedure was done where 19 graduates of the program were considered. The sources of data were field notes, structured individual interviews and focus group discussion. The team of researchers who were experts in analyzing qualitative data using the grounded theory gathered the data. There were four major and multiple sub-themes that emerged and indicated that program participation led to leadership practices and perceptions that positively change the servi