
Half-Time Elementary School Counsellors: Teachers' Expectations of Role Versus Actual Activities

Paul R. Madak

Carol L. Gieni

University of Manitoba

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Abstract

Since poor role definition may create problems such as poor communication, service overlap/duplication, improper evaluation, diffuse goals and vague job descriptions, the present study investigated teacher expectations and actual role activities of five half-time elementary counsellors. Daily activity logs, kept for three weeks at three different times of the school year, and a survey completed by 141 teachers, were utilized in the data collection process. The findings were: (1) individual counselling and consulting with teachers accounted for the majority of counsellor time; (2) family problems other than divorce was the topic dealt with most frequently; (3) counsellors used their time differently in October than in May; (4) teachers disliked the half-time program; and (5) though inserviced, teachers were unclear on counsellor role.

Résumé

Un rôle mal défini peut causer des ennuis comme de mauvaises communications, des services doublés, une évaluation inadéquate, des buts diffus, et des descriptions d'emploi vagues. En vue de ces problèmes, l'étude en question a examiné les attentes de l'enseignant et les activités actuelles de cinq conseillers à temps partiel dans des écoles élémentaires. Des carnets journaliers et des sondages d'enseignants furent utilisés pour recueillir les données. Les découvertes furent: (1) le counselling individuel en consultation avec les enseignants occupait la majorité du temps d'un conseiller (2) le sujet des problèmes familiaux autre que le divorce était abordé le plus fréquemment (3) les enseignants détestaient le programme à temps partiel et (4) malgré les journées pédagogiques les enseignants demeuraient incertains du rôle du conseiller.

The realization of the need for supportive services within elementary schools has led to a rapid increase in the number of counselling personnel (Allan, Doi, & Reid, 1979; Humes & Hohenshil, 1987; Merchant & Zingle, 1977). The pace at which these programs have been implemented has left little time for Canadian elementary counsellors to stop and evaluate, define, differentiate, and communicate the exact dimensions of their role.

Several problems result from poor role definition. First, Humes and Hohenshil (1987) pointed out that role confusion can lead to ambiguous territorial prerogatives and organizational patterns among the helping professions. Second, can be the result of poor communication and service overlap or duplication. Third, evaluation is difficult if roles are not clearly defined. Fourth, job satisfaction and feelings of worth may be

hindered by a lack of well defined goals and functions. Goals can become diffuse and can easily be replaced with activities of lower priority. Finally, planning effective educational programs for elementary school counsellors is difficult without knowledge of the activities and duties they are currently performing.

Counsellor Activities

Merchant and Zingle (1977) studied the functions of elementary school counsellors in Canadian urban areas. The four activities that counsellors perceived to be most frequently performed were: (a) counselling; (b) consulting; (c) coordinating; and, (d) assessment. As a cost saving measure, the authors recommended elementary school counsellors do more consultation with parents and teachers, and more group counselling, while reducing the amount of time spent with individual children.

Furlong, Atkinson, and Janoff (1979) studied 54 California elementary school counsellors' perceptions of their actual and ideal roles using a ranking procedure. The ideal and actual role perceptions were fairly congruent, with individual counselling, group counselling, consulting, and parent assistance seen as most important. Counsellors in the sample also expressed a desire to spend less time on discipline, testing, and referral, and more time on career development activities. Bonebrake and Borgers (1984), using a Likert scale, found similar results with a group of 172 elementary and middle school counsellors in Kansas. However, compared to the study of Furlong *et al.* (1979), they found that group counselling was given a lower priority, superseded by activities of a consultative nature. Both studies reported that counsellors wanted to spend less time on discipline.

Miller (1988) examined elementary school counsellor activities in schools that were determined to be "excellent." Counselling and consulting were the activities of highest priority, while discipline was given the lowest ranking. It is noteworthy that consultation was rated as having equal importance to counselling.

Carreiro and Schulz (1988) studied 65 elementary school counsellors from five Canadian provinces. The counsellors were asked to rate (a) the amount of time they spend on each of 25 activities, and (b) how much they ideally value each activity. The top five ranked activities that counsellors felt they actually performed were: (a) consulting with teachers; (b) individual counselling; (c) consulting with principal; (d) consulting with parents; and, (e) staff meetings. Group consulting was given an "actual" rank of thirteenth. The ideal rank order agreed with the actual rank order for the first four items listed. Counsellors felt that staff meetings should take up much less time than was actually the case (ideally ranked 15th).

Morse and Russell (1988) found similar results in a survey of 130 elementary school counsellors from the Pacific northwest. Rankings of actual activities placed consultation before individual counselling and ideal rankings placed both consultation and group counselling before individual counselling. Discipline and substitute teaching were ranked very low both actually and ideally.

It appears that there may be a trend in the elementary school counselling profession away from direct service delivery to individuals, and toward (a) intervention at the system level through consultation, and (b) providing more cost effective group counselling. However, counsellors' perceptions of the frequency with which they actually perform certain activities are bound to be influenced by a number of factors such as the desire to fulfill objectives. A more accurate way to determine elementary school counsellors' activities is to have the counsellors keep daily activity logs.

Wilgus and Shelley (1988) conducted a study in the United States using the log procedure. They had counsellors from seven elementary schools keep logs of their activities during each quarter hour, every day for one school year. Results revealed that individual counselling took up the greatest percentage of counsellor time (19%), followed by the category "Other" (e.g., lunchroom duty, 15%), and staff consultation (14%). Group counselling was only engaged in for 7% of counsellors' time.

This study suggested that the actual activities of elementary school counsellors may not have evolved toward more cost effective methods to as great a degree as is perceived by counsellors. The rating scale method calls for counsellors to reflect on their activities and judge which activities were engaged in most frequently, whereas the log method requires them to keep accurate daily records of the amount of time spent performing their various duties. Therefore, log method results should be a more accurate gauge of changes in the role activities of elementary school counsellors over time, since this procedure is less susceptible to judgement errors/biases.

Teacher Perceptions/Expectations of Counsellor Role Activities

Teachers have great influence over the successful implementation and day-to-day functioning of counselling programs (Wilgus & Shelley, 1988). Elementary school counsellors and teachers must often work in collaboration, utilizing team decision-making and planning processes. Counsellors often depend on teachers to detect student difficulties, make appropriate referral decisions, and have appropriate expectations in terms of counsellor interventions.

Since the role of the elementary school counsellor has evolved quickly, teachers have not had sufficient input as to which counsellor activities

should be performed, in accordance with the needs that the teachers perceive in their students (Allan *et al.*, 1979). In order for counsellors to clear up teacher misconceptions about their activities, and to enable them to respond to teachers' opinion of their role, data must be collected on current teacher perceptions of the counsellor's role. These perceptions can then be compared to the counsellor's actual role activities, so that roadblocks to communication can be identified and remedied.

Few studies have been undertaken to address these issues. Allen *et al.* (1979) surveyed 150 elementary schools in British Columbia in order to ascertain teacher perceptions of the counsellor's role, and found that only 15% of teachers knew how counsellors proportioned their time. Of the teachers surveyed, 73% believed that counsellors were needed at least full-time to 2-3 days a week.

Kazalunas (1977) studied 47 California elementary school teachers' perceptions of the guidance counsellors' role. It was found that 85% believed that counsellors are needed in the elementary schools. The author noted that a high degree of ambiguity existed in teachers' perceptions of counsellors' role activities.

The above studies were limited in their scope, as they did not look at specific counsellor activities, nor did they compare teachers' perceptions to the counsellor's actual activities. This limitation, however, was addressed by Wilgus and Shelley (1988). They had elementary school teachers rank a list of 15 counsellor activities in terms of (a) how they perceived counsellors to be spending their time, and (b) how they felt counsellors should ideally spend their time. As previously mentioned, they also had counsellors keep logs of their activities, so that teacher perceptions could be compared to actual counsellor activities. The results of this study indicated that teacher perceptions of actual and ideal counsellor activities were quite similar, but differed somewhat from what counsellors were actually doing. "Individual Counselling" was ranked first on all three lists, while "Group Counselling" held second rank for only (a) and (b) above. In fact, "Group Counselling" was not even in the top five actual counsellor activities, indicating that teachers perceived and expected counsellors to be doing more group counselling than what they were actually doing. This is only one example of several discrepancies found between the three lists. These differences can have a negative effect on the success of the counselling program, and therefore the authors concluded that counsellors at the elementary school level need to more clearly articulate their role and activities to teachers.

Present Study

Over the last four to five years, the school divisions located in the city of Winnipeg have been adding counsellors, on an experimental basis, to their elementary schools. Since the addition of another full-time staff

member to all elementary schools presents a substantial increase to each division's budget, the school divisions have been piloting half-time counsellor positions as a method of keeping budget increases to a minimum. Therefore, given the fact that there are no studies that we were aware of which have looked at the activities of half-time elementary counsellors, and that there have been no Canadian studies which utilized the log procedure to investigate counsellors' actual activities, we designed the current study to address the need for a more complete picture of the expected and actual activities of elementary counsellors. In addition, teacher surveys were utilized in order to assess their perceptions and expectations of counsellor role activities.

METHOD

Participants

Counsellors. The participants of this study were five half-time elementary school counsellors from two school divisions in the province of Manitoba, Canada. Of the five counsellors, four worked in a single school and one worked in two schools. The population of the six schools were between 350 and 500 students and can best be described as being made up of middle income (\$25,000-\$35,000) blue collar families, with approximately 10-15% of the families being from lower income levels (\$14,000-\$20,000). Four counsellors were female and one was male. The number of years of counselling experience ranged from two to five years. The schools were not randomly selected, but rather were selected because they had volunteered to pilot an elementary counselling program. The counselling programs were all in their second year of operation.

Teachers. All 181 of the teachers who taught at the six schools were sent surveys. Of the 181, 141 (77.9%) teachers returned completed or partially completed surveys. Of the teacher sample, 73.8% were female and 19.1% were male. A total of 78.7% had taught for six or more years, while 9.9% has taught for three to five years and 7.9% had taught for two years or less.

Instruments

Counsellor logs. The counsellor logs were designed so that the counsellors could record the number of times during the day that a given activity was performed, and the average length of time, in minutes, that the activity consumed. Based on the literature review, and counsellor suggestions, 14 major activity areas were included on the log sheets (a copy can be obtained from the authors). In addition, counsellors were asked to record the grade levels of the students seen in counselling sessions, and to record the topic areas dealt with during the sessions.

Teacher survey. The teacher survey consisted of 26 questions which were designed to ascertain: (a) the perceived need for an elementary counselling program; (b) the awareness of/satisfaction with program goals/objectives; (c) the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the program; (d) expectations of the counsellors' ideal role activities; (e) perceptions of actual counsellor activities; and, (f) perceived effects of the program on the emotional and academic functioning of the students. The survey was piloted and a number of minor wording changes were made to the survey based on the results of the pilot.

Data Collection Procedures

Counsellor logs. The counsellors kept daily logs of their activities for a period of three consecutive weeks, at three different randomly selected times during the 1988-89 school year. To select the time periods, the school year was divided into thirds (Fall, Winter, and Spring) and one data collection period was randomly selected from each third. Data was collected: (a) the last week of October and the first two weeks of November, 1988; (b) the last three weeks of January, 1989; and, (c) the last three weeks of May, 1989.

Teacher surveys. Surveys were sent to all teachers in the six schools during the first two weeks in March, 1989.

RESULTS

Counsellor Logs

The results of the log sheets were analyzed from two different perspectives. First, the data from all six schools were combined and analyzed as a whole. Second, the data were analyzed across the three time periods as it was hypothesized that the activities of the counsellors may vary according to the time of year.

Missing data. As is the case in any school system, there were days on which data could not be collected (e.g., illness, parent-teacher conferences, inservice days). Given the total number of possible data points, approximately 5% to 7% of the data points were missing. In all situations where zeros were a result of missing data, they were removed from the analysis.

Group results. A total of 34 different topic areas were dealt with during counselling sessions. The six topic areas most frequently dealt with were: (a) family problems other than divorce (11.4%); (b) peer relationship problems (10.0%); (c) self-concept (8.3%); (d) behaviour problems (8.1%); (e) social skills (7.3%); and, (f) family problems related to separation/divorce (5.4%).

Table 1 presents the average amount of time per day that counsellors spent carrying out various activities. From that table, it can be seen that

the counsellors spent the greatest amount of time carrying out individual counselling (42.1% of their time), followed by consulting with teachers (12.3% of their time) and short meetings with students (9.5% of their time). In total, the counsellors spent 46.8% of their time providing direct service to students, 24.4% of their time consulting with teachers, parents, etc., and 26.2% doing committee work, paper work, planning and other tasks (e.g., acting principal).

TABLE 1
*How Counsellors Spent Their Time**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Average time per day Spent on Activity</i>	<i>Percentage of time</i>
Individual counselling	68.5	42.1%
Consulting with teachers	34.9	12.3%
Short meetings with students	27.1	9.5%
Paper work†	24.9	8.8%
Planning†	20.2	7.1%
Other tasks	16.4	5.7%
Group counselling	15.7	5.5%
Committee work	13.2	4.6%
Consulting with parents	12.7	4.5%
Classroom activities	11.3	4.0%
Consulting with principals	10.6	3.7%
Emergencies	10.4	3.7%
Consulting with clinicians‡	9.5	3.0%
Counselling teachers	7.6	2.7%
Average work day	242.8	

* Time was recorded in minutes

† It should be noted that, based on interviews with counsellors, it was discovered that some of this time was completed at home.

‡ Psychologist, social worker, reading clinician, etc.

Further analysis of the data indicated that, while their half-time positions called for them to work three hours a day (180 minutes), the average day for these counsellors was approximately four hours (242 minutes). The normal work day for a full-time counsellor is 5½ hours (330 minutes).

Time of the year. While the analysis of the data by time of the year indicated that the grade levels of the clients and the topic areas dealt with were constant across the three time periods, differences were found with regards to how counsellors spent their time. Based on the results of one-way ANOVAs, it was found that, while the amount of individual counselling ($F(2,203) = 1.82$; $p = .17$) remained the same over the three time periods, the amount of time counsellors engaged in classroom activities

significantly decreased ($F(2,203) = 7.36$; $p = .0008$), and the amount of group counselling significantly increased ($F(2,203) = 8.44$; $p = .0003$). Follow-up analyses indicated that the classroom activities represented a significant downward linear trend ($F_{\text{linear}}(1,203) = 14.54$; $p = .0002$), while the amount of group counselling represented a significant upward linear trend ($F_{\text{linear}}(1,203) = 16.39$; $p = .0001$).

TABLE 2

*Average Time per day Spent on Activities Across Time of Year**

Activity	October	Average time per day		p*
		January	May	
Classroom activities	16.9	15.1	2.7	.000
Group counselling	9.5	14.2	27.1	.000
Individual counselling	60.8	76.4	67.3	.165
Short meetings with students†	—	29.6	23.9	.031
Emergencies	13.1	4.1	12.1	.122
Consulting with teachers	43.5	30.4	30.4	.001
Consulting with principals	11.9	10.8	8.7	.603
Consulting with parents	17.7	6.2	15.5	.017
Consulting with clinicians‡	10.9	9.9	6.7	.661
Counselling teachers§	—	7.7	6.1	.507
Committee work	11.6	15.1	12.4	.820
Planning	18.9	25.2	14.2	.120
Paper work	25.3	21.2	30.2	.130
Other tasks	18.1	6.9	28.5	.144
Total work day	260.2	226.9	242.0	.275

* Time was recorded in minutes

† Psychologist, social worker, reading clinician, etc.

‡ Based on one-way ANOVAs.

§ Data for this item was not collected during first time period.

A significant difference was also found across time of year in the amount of time spent consulting with teachers ($F(2,203) = 7.05$; $p = .001$). Since this data was not linear, Tukey's HSD procedure (Klockars & Sax, 1986) was used and the results indicated that counsellors spent significantly more time consulting with teachers in October than they did in either January or May ($q(203) = 3.35$; $p = .05$).

From Table 2 it can be seen that a significant difference was found across time of year for the amount of time counsellors spent consulting with parents ($F(2,203) = 4.14$; $p = .017$). Tukey's HSD procedure indicated that counsellors spent significantly more time consulting with parents in October than they did in January ($q(203) = 3.35$; $p = .05$). While there was an increase in the amount of time counsellors spent consulting with parents between January and May, this difference was not

statistically significant. Significant changes across the three time periods were not found for the other activities listed in Table 2.

Two activities, short meetings with students (defined as meetings of five minutes or less) and counselling teachers, were added after the October data collection period. These items were added because the counsellors reported that they felt these two pieces of information were being missed. The results of the data analyses indicated that, while a significant change in the amount of time spent counselling teachers between January and May was not found ($F(1,129) = 0.44$; $p = 5.07$), a statistically significant decrease in the amount of time spent in short meetings with students was found ($F(1,129) = 4.77$; $p = .031$).

Teacher Survey Results

The results of the 141 completed and/or partially completed surveys were as follows:

1. Twenty-seven teachers (19.1%) had not referred a student to the elementary counselling program, while 38 (27.0%) referred one or two students, and 75 (53.2%) had referred three or more students.
2. A total of 110 teachers (78.0%) felt that it was “very important” for their school to have an elementary counselling program, while 27 (19.1%) stated having the program was “somewhat important.” This finding was further supported by the fact that 71 (50.4%) of the 141 teachers stated that the services offered by the half-time counsellors were “very useful,” while 57 (40.4%) stated that the services were “somewhat useful.” A total of 96 teachers (68.0%) reported that they felt the program had made improvements in the social/emotional well-being of the students it served, while 13 (9.2%) stated that the program had no effect on the students’ social/emotional well-being.
3. Ninety-six teachers (68.1%) reported that they were aware of the goals and objectives of their school’s elementary counselling program.
4. When asked if they felt that their students understood what a counsellor does, 114 teachers (80.9%) reported “yes” and 22 (15.6%) reported “no.” Additionally, when asked if they felt that their students understood how to gain access to the counsellor, 115 (81.6%) responded “yes” and 23 (16.3%) responded “no.” A further breakdown of the data indicated that the teachers of grades K-3 were more likely to report “no” to the above two questions than were teachers of grades 4-6.

With regards as to whether teachers felt that their students would approach the counsellor on their own initiative if they had a problem, only 1 teacher (9.2%) stated that *all* of their students would, while 71 (50.3%) stated that *most* of their students would approach

a counsellor for assistance. A total of 43 teachers (31.9%) felt that *most* of their students would *not* approach the counsellor if they had a problem. Again, analysis indicated that teachers of higher grade levels (4-6) were more likely than teachers of lower grade levels (K-3) to indicate that their students would approach a counsellor with a problem.

5. To obtain information on "ideal" counsellor activities, teachers were asked to review a list of 25 suggested counsellor services and to indicate which services were "important to provide." From Table 3 it can be seen that the seven services most frequently rated as "important to provide" included: (a) individual counselling; (b) consulting with teachers; (c) consulting with parents; (d) consulting with clinicians; (e) sexual abuse prevention; (f) liaison with outside organizations (e.g., police, child welfare, etc.); and, (g) group counselling.

In order to obtain information regarding "actual" counsellor activities, teachers were asked to again review the list of 25 services and to indicate which services they perceived their school counsellor to be *currently* providing. Table 3 reveals that the seven services most frequently perceived by teachers as being provided included: (a) individual counselling; (b) consulting with teachers; (c) consulting with parents; (d) liaison with outside agencies; (e) consulting with clinicians; (f) referral services; and, (g) group counselling. It should be noted that, for the remaining 18 services listed, the "do not know" percentages ranged from 13.5% to 57.4% (see Table 3). This indicates that some uncertainty existed among teachers regarding the activities or services that counsellors actually provided.

6. When asked about the half-time nature of the program, 82 teachers (58.2%) stated that the program should be "increased to a full-time program," while 18 (12.8%) stated that the program should be "kept as a half-time program." Two teachers (1.4%) stated that the program should be "discontinued, as the school does not need it."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

There are three limitations the reader should keep in mind when interpreting the results of this study. The weaknesses of this study were that the schools were not randomly selected, the number of counsellors involved in the study was limited to five, and the study only included half-time elementary school counselling programs. However, even though these limitations effected the extent to which generalizations can be made, the study did replicate many of the findings reported by other researchers (e.g., Kazalunas, 1977; Allan *et al.*, 1979; Wilgus and Shelley, 1988). Therefore, the results of this study (a) provide insights into expected and actual activities and roles of half-time elementary counsel-

lors in Canada and, (b) provide ideas for research with counsellors running full-time programs.

TABLE 3

Classroom Teachers' Expectations/Perceptions of Counsellor Activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Important to Provide</i>	<i>Actually Being Provided</i>	<i>Do Not Know</i>
Individual counselling	90.1%	70.2%	3.5%
Group counselling	61.0%	44.7%	13.5%
Student assessment	24.8%	29.8%	36.2%
Sexual abuse prevention	64.5%	27.7%	25.5%
Chemical abuse prevention	39.7%	11.3%	46.1%
Family life education	34.0%	21.3%	31.9%
AIDS education	30.5%	8.5%	45.4%
Classroom observation	17.7%	12.1%	23.4%
Consulting with teachers	77.3%	58.9%	4.3%
Teachers inservices	20.6%	14.9%	24.8%
Referral services	53.2%	50.4%	24.1%
Consulting with parents	73.8%	56.7%	12.8%
Parent inservices	43.8%	15.6%	40.4%
Administrative duties	3.5%	4.3%	57.4%
Supervision of students	7.8%	13.5%	36.9%
Career education	9.2%	1.4%	55.3%
Scheduling	8.5%	12.1%	53.9%
Discipline	17.0%	10.6%	36.9%
Teaching no-guidance classes	2.1%	1.4%	38.3%
Orientation for new students	34.0%	40.4%	22.7%
Secondary school liaison	25.5%	5.7%	56.7%
Liaison with outside agencies	63.8%	54.6%	24.8%
Consulting with clinicians	66.0%	53.9%	24.8%
Liaison with resource teachers	37.6%	40.4%	35.5%
Provide emergency services	53.2%	28.4%	28.4%

Actual Counsellor Activities

While the small sample size of only five counsellors necessitates that caution be used when interpreting these findings, the results do suggest some interesting trends. The studies reviewed in the introduction suggested that there is a movement in the practice of elementary counselling away from individual counselling and toward more cost effective methods such as consulting and group counselling. The results of the present study and those of Wilgus and Shelley (1988), suggested that, while counsellors may be voicing the opinion that they want to do more cost effective activities, their actual activities are not reflecting their ideal goals. In fact, the results of this study and the Wilgus and Shelley study suggest that counsellors are actually spending a large amount of time on individual counselling activities and on "other" activities such as meetings, paper work, administration tasks, and committee work.

Therefore, when comparing the studies which utilized logs, and studies which collected counsellors' perceptions of their activities, it appears that there is a rather large discrepancy between what counsellors perceive their activities to be and what counsellors are actually doing at the elementary school level. If future research confirms this discrepancy, then the conclusion to be drawn is that counsellors are allowing low priority activities to replace high priority activities—an outcome that can easily occur when role confusion exists.

Given that it is not always possible to have the ideal situation, counsellors may have to make adjustments to their goals, objectives, and role activities. For example, if duties such as serving as acting principal and providing counselling service to teachers do not fall within the stated role of the counsellor, then these activities should be identified and the "official" role of the counsellor needs to be adjusted to reflect reality. If these are not desirable activities for the counsellor, then steps should be taken to ensure that they do not continue to distract counsellors from what is desired. Clear specification of the counsellor's role activities should lead to less confusion among school staff concerning the role of the counsellor in their school and assist evaluation processes.

Teacher Expectations

Confirming the findings of Kazalunas (1977) and Allan *et al.* (1979), the teachers in this study perceived a need for counsellors in the elementary school setting. However, the teachers did not like the idea of only having a half-time counsellor in their school. Even in the smaller schools, having only a half-time counsellor resulted in problems for teachers. For example, at times the counsellor was needed but was unavailable, so that the teachers had to wait until the next day in order to obtain the needed services. Furthermore, the half-time nature of the jobs occasionally placed the counsellors in the position of either working overtime or leaving in the middle of something. In this situation, the counsellors had to choose between working on their own time, or leaving at a point in time when they were needed.

Although the majority of the teachers felt that they were aware of the goals and objectives of the counselling program in their school, there was some uncertainty among the teachers regarding the "actual" activities of the counsellors. The results of this study indicated that the classroom teachers expected the counsellors to perform certain activities, and that these expectations did not differ greatly from the perceptions of the counsellors' actual activities, with regard to the high priority activities. That is, they expected counsellors to have as their top priorities individual counselling, consultation with teachers, and consultation with parents. These activities were also perceived by the teachers as consuming the most counsellor time. Teacher's expectations and perceptions also

agreed with regard to which activities are least important. These were teaching non-guidance classes, and administrative duties.

The results of this study also demonstrated a number of inconsistencies. For example, the teachers expected the counsellors to be involved in the activity of AIDS education to a greater degree than they perceived them to be. Also, there were seven activities for which 40% or more of the teachers reported that they "did not know" whether the counsellor performed it. This data, like that of Kazalunas (1977) and Allan *et al.* (1979), suggests that elementary school teachers surveyed were somewhat unclear as to the activities of the counsellors.

A comparison of Tables 1 and 3 revealed that teacher expectations, teacher perceptions of actual activities, and the list of actual counsellor activities agreed as to which were the highest priority activities. These were individual counselling and consulting with teachers. However, teachers' expectations and perceptions of the counsellors' role were not in agreement with actual activities with regard to administrative duties, discipline, and "other" activities. The teachers did not appear to be fully aware of the amount of time that these activities consumed.

The fact that specific discrepancies were found should alert Canadian counsellors to the potential need for clarification of the specific dimensions of their role. If undertaken, this clarification process should facilitate communication between counsellors and teachers. It appears that "refresher meetings" are necessary in order to ensure that all staff members are aware of the counsellor's current activities.

Topics of Counselling Sessions

The counsellors who participated in this study dealt with family problems with the greatest frequency. Peer relations difficulties, social skills, self-concept, and behaviour problems were the other problems that elementary students most frequently brought up during counselling. While only half-time programs were included in this study, it is inconceivable that student needs would have been different if these schools had a full-time rather than a half-time program.

This information has implications for the education of elementary school counsellors. When training counsellors for elementary schools, emphasis should be placed on the topics mentioned, so that the counsellors can effectively tailor their skills and abilities to meet the current needs of students. However, due to the fact that only five programs were included in this study, further research should be carried out with larger sample sizes. Also further research on the topics of counselling sessions should be conducted at the elementary school level so that the training, skills, and objectives of elementary school counsellors can be adjusted as student needs change.

Finally, the next step in the process of researching counsellor role in elementary schools is to carry out a more direct comparison between counsellors' actual activities, and counsellors' and teachers' perceptions of ideal counsellor role activities. This would involve having the teachers and counsellors give their "perceptions" of the counsellor's role activities, and then comparing that information to "actual" role activities. The most accurate procedure to utilize in collecting actual counsellor activity data is the log method. Relying on the memories of the counsellors can result in a confusion between the ideal situation and what is actually done.

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About the Authors

Paul Madak is an Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Manitoba, Canada R2T 2N2.

Carol Gieni is a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Manitoba, Canada R2T 2N2.

Address correspondence to: Dr. Paul R. Madak, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man. R3T 2N2.