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EVALUATION OF A HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELLING PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

One of the most pressing needs in high school guidance programmes is the need for research which can be used to determine the effectiveness of a programme and serve as guidelines for future planning. The counsellors at Macdonald High School felt this need and decided to undertake an evaluation of the programme.

Macdonald High School has a population of slightly over one thousand students from grades eight to twelve. The curriculum is geared primarily to the academic stream. In the last two years the guidance department made an effort to develop a client-centered counselling programme. The department consists of five counsellors who spend the equivalent of three full time positions in assigned guidance and counselling duty. Three of the counsellors are men, two are women; the men account for two of the three full-time equivalencies. Nearly all interviews are student initiated.

RATIONALE

In an article written for the *Canadian Counsellor* John G. Paterson (1968) expressed the view that the success of a guidance programme can be measured by how the services are utilized by various persons in the school and community. This principle, plus Boy and Pine's (1963) study of the counselling programme at Muzzey Junior High School, served as guidelines for this study. Boy and Pine's rationale for their evaluative approach is based on their criteria for an effective and meaningful client-centered counselling programme. These criteria emphasize that students will voluntarily seek counselling, that they will voluntarily seek personal counselling, that different types of students will seek counselling regardless of sex or intellectual capacity, that students will not be apprehensive regarding the tape recording of interviews since trust is part of the counsellor's image, and that students will return for further interviews because they feel they can profit from the counselling relationship. The criteria also emphasize that the counsellor should not be placed in the role of an authority figure and that he should be committed to quality research.

METHOD

Four of Boy and Pine's criteria were used in this study, but no attempt was made to evaluate the programme in terms of apprehension regarding the taping of interviews, the counsellor's role as an authority figure, and the counsellor's commitment to quality research.

The evaluation was based on a questionnaire containing seven questions to which the students were asked to respond by placing a check mark in a

"YES," "NO," or "NOT CERTAIN" column. The questionnaire was presented in draft form to small groups of grade-nine and -eleven students to be certain it was understandable and would be interpreted as uniformly as possible.

The final form of the questionnaire was given to students in grades eight, nine, ten, and eleven during an extended morning homeroom period. The questionnaires were collected immediately after their completion. The time allowed to complete the questionnaire was fifteen minutes. The students were informed that all questions pertained to the 1967-68 school year. They were asked to identify themselves by grade and sex, but not by name.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total number of students who responded to the questionnaire was 890. Absentees on the day the questionnaires were completed, and grade-12 students, did not participate. Percentages of "yes" answers were computed for each question from the number of students who answered it. The N answering the seven questions varied from 851 (for question 5) to 878 (for question 3).

Question 1 "Have you had sufficient opportunity to obtain individual counselling?"

Nearly 66.5% of all the students answered "YES" to this question. This was lower than expected. Sufficient opportunity implies both the availability of counselling services and the awareness of the services. The most immediate avenue for improvement would seem to be in informing students about the services available to them.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the positive responses to "sufficient opportunity" by grade level and sex. The major difference is between grades 8-9 and grades 10-11. The need for a more effective orientation programme seems to be at the 8th and 9th grade level.

TABLE 1
Percentages of Students
With "Sufficient Opportunity" to Obtain Counselling

	Grades 8 - 9	Grades 10 - 11	Total
Male	58.7%	79.6%	68.9%
Female	54.1%	74.1%	63.8%
Total	56.2%	77.2%	66.5%

Question 2 "How many appointments have you had with a counsellor?"

At least one interview was held with 68.2% of the students responding to this question. This seems to be an acceptable goal at this stage of the programme. In Boy and Pine's study, 71% of the students had at least one interview during the second year of the programme at Muzzey Junior High School. In this study 592 students were seen at least once during the year. Of these, 329 (55.6%) returned for further counselling. This would seem to

satisfy the criterion that students will return for further counselling because they feel they can profit from the counselling relationship. This is particularly so upon consideration that many students requesting information need only one interview.

Table 2 shows that there was not a great difference between the percentage of boys (68.7) and girls (70.9) who were seen at least once. The criterion that different types of students will seek counselling regardless of sex or intellectual capacity is partly satisfied. However a weakness of the study was that it did not include the use of the service by students in other categories, such as underachievers, discipline problems, bright students, and so on. Evaluation of client-centered counselling programmes would need to consider such categories in order to fully assess whether the programme was meeting the aforementioned criterion.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Students Who Had Appointments During the
1967-68 School Year

GRADES	MALES					Total At Least 1	FEMALES					Total At Least 1
	None	1	2-5	6-10	10+		None	1	2-5	6-10	10+	
8 & 9	42.8	32.4	20.0	4.0	0.8	57.2	40.9	34.1	21.7	2.0	1.0	59.1
10&11	18.1	31.8	45.0	4.0	1.0	81.9	16.6	24.7	48.9	4.3	5.3	83.4
ALL	31.3	32.1	31.7	4.0	0.8	68.7	29.0	29.6	35.1	3.2	2.9	70.9

Question 3 "Have you ever had an appointment with a counsellor about educational matters?"

More than half the students in the school had at least one appointment with a counsellor about educational matters. The lack of awareness of the services by grade-eight and -nine students as pointed out in question one might be a cause for such low figures for these grade levels illustrated in Table 3. There is certainly a need to reach more of these students and this could be accomplished with a more thorough orientation programme. There is an increase in educational counselling at the grade-ten and -eleven level from the grade-eight and -nine level. This is probably due to the fact that the older students are reaching the stage where they have to make more complex decisions involving educational matters. It is interesting to note that the boys seem to be more hesitant than the girls in seeking educational counselling.

TABLE 3
Percentages of Students Who Had Appointments About
Educational Matters

SEX	8 - 9	10 - 11	TOTAL
Male	41.3%	68.6%	54.6%
Female	48.2%	75.5%	61.3%
Total	44.4%	71.7%	57.6%

Question 4 "Have you ever had an appointment with a counsellor about vocational matters?"

As the school makes little provision for vocational training the figure of 19.9% is not surprising. Nevertheless 80% of the students do not go on to university. Consequently more effort needs to be put into this phase of the programme.

Table 4 shows an increase in vocational counselling from grades eight and nine to ten and eleven. This would suggest that as the student grows older he becomes more aware of the "world of work" and his desire for vocational counselling increases. This pattern is also evident in the results of questions 2 and 3.

TABLE 4
Percentage of Students Who Had Appointments About Vocational Matters

SEX	8 - 9	10 - 11	TOTAL
Male	9.5%	28.5%	18.9%
Female	15.0%	27.1%	20.9%
Total	12.0%	27.9%	19.9%

Question 5 "Have you ever had an appointment with a counsellor about personal matters?"

One hundred and thirty, 15.2%, responded "Yes" on this item. Although there are no data arising from this study, discussions with counsellors give some indication that this type of interview results in more voluntary return interviews, produces the longest term relationships, and involves proportionally more counsellor time than the other two types. The question arises whether the guidance department wishes to give more emphasis to this type of counselling.

Table 5 shows that a higher percentage of grade-eight and -nine boys had personal interviews than -ten and -eleven boys. This is opposite to the trend shown in respect to educational and vocational counselling. Interpreting these findings is very speculative. Further research is needed to determine whether younger or older students, and whether boys or girls more actively seek personal counselling.

TABLE 5
Percentages of Students Who Had Appointments About Personal Matters

SEX	8 - 9	10 - 11	TOTAL
Male	15.3%	10.6%	13.1%
Female	17.9%	17.3%	17.5%
Total	16.5%	13.7%	15.2%

Question 6 "Have you ever used the vocational-occupational material available in the guidance office?"

This material was available in the guidance office waiting room and used mostly during lunch hour or before and after school, strictly on the

students' own time. The overall figure of thirty percent backs up the observation that quite a few students spent part of their leisure time in the guidance office and this is a strong argument for including it as part of the regular school duty stations and shifting counsellors from authoritarian supervision duties to duty in the guidance office.

Table 6 shows an increase in the number of students using this material at the grade-ten and -eleven level. This fits the pattern evident in questions two, three and four. Although a higher percentage of girls had interviews about educational, vocational, and personal matters, Table 6 indicates that a higher percentage of boys than girls used the material available on vocations and occupations.

TABLE 6
Percentage of Students Who Used Vocational-Occupational Material Available in Guidance Office Waiting Room.

SEX	8 - 9	10 - 11	TOTAL
Male	20.7%	46.3%	31.8%
Female	17.4%	39.5%	26.2%
Total	19.1%	43.2%	30.5%

Question 7 "Have you ever used the material on colleges and universities available in the guidance office?"

Much of what was said concerning the use of vocational-occupational material applies here also. The overall figure of 31.7% is very close to the 30.5% result for question 6, and is an indication that many students were taking the initiative in obtaining basic information. As a result many educational interviews were of more of a counselling nature than an information-giving nature.

Table 7 shows that a higher percentage of grade-ten and -eleven students used this material. This also follows the pattern of increased use of the services by older students.

TABLE 7
Percentage of Students Who Used Educational Material Available in Guidance Office Waiting Room.

SEX	8 - 9	10 - 11	TOTAL
Male	10.4%	58.0%	32.3%
Female	11.6%	49.7%	30.9%
Total	11.0%	54.1%	31.7%

SUMMARY DISCUSSION

It was encouraging to find the frequency of the students' use of the programme. That 69.7% of the students voluntarily used the services at least once was reassuring, particularly when 56% of them returned for further counselling. It was discovered that the younger students were not as aware of

the programme as was desirable, pointing out the need for further orientation to the services.

A pattern developed in questions two, three, four, six, and seven indicating a greater use of the services by older students. This pattern did not hold in the case of personal counselling which might suggest that the response to this type of counselling is not necessarily related to age. The whole area of personal counselling should be further investigated in terms of length of relationships, types of students involved, need at different age levels and the desirability of greater emphasis on this phase of client-centered counselling programmes.

Further studies of client-centered counselling programmes might attempt to survey student perceptions of counselling and counsellors particularly with regard to the taping of interviews and the role of the counsellor as a non-authoritarian figure. Limited information resulted from this study with reference to the types of students using the counselling services and this is another area that should be of concern in the evaluation of client-centered programmes.

The staff at this school intend to continue the evaluation of the programme in an effort to determine whether the utilization of the services increases as the programme becomes more established. Studies will also be made to survey the attitudes of both students and faculty towards the guidance and counselling programme. If nothing else this study has kindled the desire to gain information concerning the attitudes toward the department's activities in order to serve the students more effectively.

REFERENCES

- Boy, A. V., & Pine, G. J. *Client-centered counselling in the secondary school*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.
- Paterson, J. G. Counselor use of group techniques in school situations. *Canadian Counsellor*, 1968, 2, 88-96.

EVALUATION D'UN PROGRAMME DE COUNSELLING AU NIVEAU SECONDAIRE

J. A. H. FRASER

Un rapport d'un service de counselling en milieu secondaire affirme que 68% des étudiants ont eu recours à ce service au moins une fois et que 56% y sont retournés pour un counselling *supplémentaire*.

On note aussi que les étudiants moins âgés n'étaient pas tellement renseignés quant aux objectifs du service. 57.6% demandaient des rendezvous pour des motifs d'étude, 19.9% seulement y venaient discuter de leur avenir et 15.2% de sujets personnels.

Le matériel d'information professionnelle fut utilisé par 30.5% des étudiants et le matériel relatif aux exigences scolaires par 31.7%.