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THE COUNSELOR'S ROLE AS PERCEIVED BY COUNSELOR, TEACHER, AND COUNSELEE

THE PROBLEM

To date counselling research has been generally spotty and unsatisfactory insofar as the practising counselor is concerned (Dressel, 1962). Like others who are less than impressed with counseling research, Dressel implies that researchers have spread their efforts too thinly and over too wide a range of relatively unessential topics. Such topics range from schools of counseling through the training of counselors, counseling methods, and programs, to attempts to delimit the effects inherent in clients as a result of exposure to counseling—to say nothing of a host of attempts to demonstrate the superiority of one counseling method or school or philosophy over another (Travis, 1949). No doubt, the want of both suitable and valid criteria against which to measure this wide range of variables has also been a stumbling block for guidance research (Ebel, 1961). The lack of suitable measuring instruments has no doubt been another. It is also probably true to say that many researchers in counseling have been negligent in failing to clarify and delimit the basic purposes that should be served by such research (McDaniel, 1956). Frank Parsons, who instigated or at least popularized the guidance movement through his work and book *Choosing a Vocation*, was at least clear about the guidance task, which McDaniel (1956, p. 23) summarized as: (i) know the client, (ii) know the requirements of the tasks that are to be undertaken by him and (iii) match the client to the task for which he is best suited. However, Parsons and other early counselors found themselves ineffective largely due to the lack of adequate measurement instruments to enable them to know their clients. In the several decades that were to elapse before more adequate tests were developed, counseling seemed to lose its way in that it became involved in the building of theories related to techniques that would supposedly permit it to accomplish its guidance task in the absence of knowledge about either the client or the problem which motivated him to seek counseling. As a result, both the counselor's training and orientation become disproportionately directed toward counseling techniques and the schools they spawned to the relative exclusion of the counselee and his problems. Peters (1960), King (1959), Dunlop (1965) and a host of other researchers report evidence confirming this contention of the cross-purpose between counselor and client: while the client wishes a solution to his problem, the counselor is preoccupied with putting him at ease, directing or not directing him, and putting his own "ums" in context.

The problem investigated by the current study, then, is but another attempt to discover the relationship of the role counselors feel they should play as opposed to the role teachers and students wish them to play. The hypotheses tested are that there are no significant differences in the coun-

selor's role as seen by (i) the counselor and teacher, (ii) the counselor and student, and (iii) the teacher and student. To the degree that evidence compels the rejection of these hypotheses, it must be concluded that there is evidence that counselors, teachers, and clients are at cross-purposes as to what the counselor's role ought to be.

MEASURING INSTRUMENT AND SUBJECTS

Various researchers have used one or more of (i) family, (ii) vocational, (iii) academic, (iv) social, and (v) personal areas in an attempt to assess and/or delimit the counseling role. The current study set itself the task of utilizing all five areas. The content of some 275 items designed to assess the role of counseling in these areas was selected from the literature. A combining of the content of overlapping items together with editing by the present authors in consultation with a group of university guidance students reduced this number to fifty, ten in each of the five areas of concern. These fifty items were then randomized into a Likert-type scale with five choice categories, and administered to 215 first-year university students. A factor analysis of the results indicated a need for further editing of items together with a further reduction in their number.

The final edition of the instrument, then, consisted of forty-five items—nine in each of the five areas. These items were randomized into a single scale in order to hide the categories from the examinees. In part, the scale reads:

DIRECTIONS: We are interested in your feelings concerning your school's guidance service. *Please respond to each item.*

If you Strongly Agree with a statement,

circle <u>SA</u>(SA)	A	?	D	SD
If you <u>Agree</u> , circle <u>A</u> SA	(A)	?	D	SD
If you are <u>Uncertain</u> , circle <u>?</u> SA	A	(?)	D	SD
If you <u>Disagree</u> , circle <u>D</u> SA	A	?	(D)	SD
If you <u>Strongly Disagree</u> , circle <u>SD</u> SA	A	?	D	(SD)

I FEEL IT IS THE JOB OF GUIDANCE TO PROVIDE:

[Family]:*

Information regarding how to deal with
overdemanding parent(s)..... SA A ? D SD

[Vocational]:

Evidence regarding occupations that are
suited to one's particular interests..... SA A ? D SD

[Academic]:

Guidance regarding remedial skills in
troublesome school subjects..... SA A ? D SD

[Social]:

Guidance regarding how to say "no"
and still be accepted..... SA A ? D SD

[Personal]:

Guidance regarding how to deal with
religious problems..... SA A ? D SD

*Bracketed terms were not included on the actual scale.

The scale was administered to: (i) a 10 percent random sample of all Grade XI students in Calgary (N = 200), (ii) a 15 percent random sample

of Calgary's high-school teachers (N = 50) and (iii) all of the available (approximately 87%) Calgary, Alberta, high-school counselors (N = 40). These counselors average in excess of one year of training in counseling and educational psychology beyond a Bachelor's degree (generally of education).

Following the administration the scale was scored in accordance with an assigned weighting of SA=4, A=3, ?=2, D=1, SD=0.

Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations of the scores obtained.

TABLE 1
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SCORES
FOR EACH GROUP IN EACH AREA

Group	Subscales										
	N.	Social		Family		Personal		Vocational		Academic	
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
Counselors	40	2.84	.53	2.56	.45	2.73	.56	3.34	.36	3.43	.27
Teachers	50	2.27	.62	2.16	.73	2.35	.62	3.27	.36	3.21	.42
Students	200	2.13	.60	2.11	.64	2.14	.61	3.27	.37	3.24	.36

Table 2 provides the interfactor coefficients of correlation for each group.

TABLE 2
INTERFACTOR COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION FOR EACH GROUP

Group	Factor	Factor			
		Social	Family	Personal	Vocational
Teachers	Social				
	Family	.784			
	Personal	.830	.869		
	Vocational	.312	.366	.377	
	Academic	.019	.080	.143	.674
Students	Social				
	Family	.562			
	Personal	.683	.584		
	Vocational	.127	.039	.147	
	Academic	.0004	-.013	-.047	.486
Counselors	Social				
	Family	.777			
	Personal	.691	.619		
	Vocational	.487	.360	.317	
	Academic	.481	.406	.315	.495

TREATMENT OF DATA

An analysis of variance treatment of the data given in Table 1 revealed a significant difference ($p < .01$) among the groups tested; t 's were then calculated in order to determine the exact areas and magnitudes of these

differences. Table 3 gives the resultant *t*'s between the intergroup mean scores found to be significantly different.

TABLE 3
t's OF SIGNIFICANT INTERGROUP
DIFFERENCES IN EACH FACTOR

	Social	Family	Personal	Vocational	Academic
Teachers versus Counsellors	4.65**	3.16**	3.02**		2.97**
	←	←	←		←
Teachers versus Students			←2.17*		
Counsellors versus Students	←7.46**	←5.31**	←5.95**		←3.54**

*Significant at or above .05

**Significant at or above .01

←Indicates the group obtaining the higher score.

Blank spaces indicate no significant difference.

Table 4 gives the statistically significant intragroup differences in terms of *t*.

TABLE 4
t's OF SIGNIFICANT INTERGROUP
DIFFERENCES IN EACH FACTOR

Group	Factor	Factor				
		Social	Family	Personal	Vocational	Academic
Teachers	Social	—				
	Family	—	—			
	Personal	—	—	—		
	Vocational	←9.92**	←9.58**	←9.09**	—	
	Academic	←8.90**	←8.73**	←8.11**	—	—
Students	Social	—				
	Family	—	—			
	Personal	—	—	—		
	Vocational	←23.00**	←22.28**	←22.49**	—	
	Academic	←22.37**	←21.13**	←21.86**	—	—
Counsellors	Social	—				
	Family	↑ 2.47*	—			
	Personal	—	—	—		
	Vocational	←5.01**	←8.57**	←5.87**	—	
	Academic	←6.20**	←10.21**	←7.04**	—	—

*Significant at or above .05

**Significant at or above .01

←Area of highest mean score

Blank spaces indicate no significant difference.

(all tests were one tail)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the data compiled in Table 2 it is apparent that within the limits of the present study teachers find a negligible degree of relationship between the counselor's academic role on the one hand and his social, family, and personal counseling roles on the other. They maintain that there is but a small degree of relationship between his vocational counseling role and his social, family, and personal roles. They believe there is a high degree of relationship among his family, social, and personal guidance roles. There is also a high degree of relationship between his vocational and academic guidance roles insofar as the teachers are concerned.

Students agree with the teachers except for the fact that their scores yielded lower inter-role coefficients of correlation in every case.

Counselors, on the other hand, do not agree with either teachers or clients by maintaining that there is a high degree of relationship among all areas with the exception of the relationships between their personal and academic, personal and vocational, and family and vocational roles where the relationships are moderate to low. It is to be emphasized that in no case do counselors consider any one of the five roles divorced from any other role as do both teachers and students.

The data compiled in Table 3 seem to confirm these conclusions in that counselors feel they should provide more social, family, personal, and academic counseling than do either the teachers or the students. Again teachers and students agree on the counselor's role except that teachers wish more personal guidance for the students than do the students themselves.

The data summarized by Table 4 make clearer that which is presented in Table 2 in that it presents the intragroup opinion of the counseling role. They indicate clearly that all groups see the counselor's role as overwhelmingly that of providing vocational and academic guidance.

Counselors indicate that their role in social guidance is significantly ($p < .05$) more important than their family role, otherwise the groups are in complete accord with one another.

In general, then, the current study's findings supported all three of the hypotheses it set out to test. In doing this it failed to support the supposition that local counselors, high school teachers, and Grade XI students see the counselor's role as essentially different, one from another.

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