

Public Abstract

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The requirements for school counselor certification have changed since 2000 in Missouri. Most notably, the requirement of previous teaching experience has been removed. As a result, individuals from backgrounds other than teaching have the opportunity to earn their masters' degrees in school counseling and earn the student services certificate of license to teach. Since the position of counselor developed out of teaching, many studies have examined teaching experience or lack of it as variables. Yet none has examined school counselor perceptions of the importance of professional development areas related to the MoStep School Counseling Competencies. This research study surveyed school counselors to determine if there was a relationship between teaching experience or lack of it and counselor perceived importance of 18 professional development areas derived from the MoStep School Counseling Competencies. Findings suggest that teaching experience has no relationship to counselor perceptions of the importance of professional development areas. However, an unanticipated finding was that counselor perceptions of the importance of professional development areas was related to counselor years of experience as a counselor.