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Students counselling and academic achievement

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Abstract

Education has a vital role in the development and abilities of students. With education expected of individuals (students) can develop to their full potential-potential qualified personal. Indicators of school success in carrying out his task can be seen from the achievement of high academic achievement and a variety of specialized skills possessed by learners and not the least of which involves issues related to academics. While students are required to continue to improve academic achievement, in the midst of busyness and density of both school assignments academic assignments and extracurricular activities are followed by the students, so students need to follow the guidance and counselling services in schools to improve academic achievement. With such conditions it is necessary to investigate in depth whether the guidance and counselling itself may play a role in improving the academic achievement of students in school. School counsellors address the academic and developmental needs of all students, not just those in need, by collaborating with students, parents, school staff and the community. School counselling programs exhibit some characteristics like: Foundational mission and goals, School counsellors design, implement, and maintain guidance programs that align with the educational mission and philosophies of their schools and school districts. These programs help every student develop competencies in academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning.

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1. Statement of the issue

The terms “guidance and counseling” have been conceived internationally in different ways. Makinde (1987) defined them as an interaction process co-joining the counselee, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance and the counselor who is trained and educated to give this assistance, the goal of which is to help the counselee learn to deal more effectively with himself and the reality of his environment. Guidance and counselling services are essential elements in discipline management of people in all societies even the most primitive societies grew out of the necessity of guiding individuals’ behavior patterns in the interests of the group. Society itself could not function without the exercise of discipline. Using guidance and counseling to promote discipline must continually be practiced if people are to work harmoniously for the achievement of common purpose. Hendrikz (1986) stressed that teachers and schools have the responsibility of ensuring that each pupil matures steadily along his own personal line. This means that they are responsible for planning the learning experiences.

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2. Effectiveness of School Counseling

Many states have made important strides in class-size reduction, higher academic standards, greater accountability and improved teacher preparation. The important missing link in these initiatives to improve student learning is the need for more school counselors and other student support services, such as school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses. In many states, students' access to counselors varies by grade level, and some school districts have no counseling programs at all. When counseling programs exist, counselors are often asked to add administrative duties such as testing, supervising and class scheduling.

School counselors provide counseling programs in three domains: academic, career and personal/social. Their services and programs help students resolve emotional, social or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus or sense of direction. Effective counseling programs are important to the school climate and a crucial element in improving student achievement.

3. Guidance & Counseling

Counsellors support students directly in their academic life to foster, promote, and increase interpersonal competencies and academic achievement. The Counselling departments believe that sound education involves the development of the whole student. This includes the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical aspects of students' lives. Counselling services are accessible to all students and their families.

The Primary School program strives to provide continuity of services from preschool through grade 5. Counsellors provide support to students, teachers and parents through individual contact and group meetings. Counsellors facilitate the PYP attitudes and social and emotional competencies through classroom contact and small group or individual skill building activities. Parenting workshops are offered throughout the year and counsellors are available to meet with parents concerning their child's academic and emotional development.

Senior School Counsellors ensure that all students in grades 6 through 12 receive support in academic, career, and personal-social development. They collaborate with teachers, students, administrators and families to optimize student success and achievement.

For those students requiring student support services, school counsellors, along with other support services and administration, facilitate the Primary School Child Study Team (CST) and the Senior School Student Study Team (SST) processes where student needs are discussed and individualized assistance plans are created.

4. Special programs to help promote successful learners

New Student Orientation focused on making new students feel welcome and prepared upon admissions into school any time during the academic year. Academic Counselling designed to help students and parents acquire knowledge of curricular choices, plan a program of studies, and interpret academic opportunities. Career counselling to help students acquire information and plan for appropriate education and training for career choices and post-secondary goals.

Personal/Social Counselling to assist students in developing an understanding of themselves and to respect the rights and needs of others. Individual counselling to help with personal difficulties which impede personal growth and satisfaction, as well as academic success. Peer Helper and Ambassador Programs train students in problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution.

Academic Support Programs such as the Homework Club support students with extra help and strategies to improve academic performance across curricula. Small Group Sessions focused on specific areas of identified need. Parent Education to support parents with frequent topics and discussion circles. Community Resource coordinates with the community in providing resource referrals for interested parents.

5. The role of school counselors in student's achievement

Professional school counselors ideally implement a school counseling program that promotes and enhances student achievement. A framework for appropriate and inappropriate school counselor responsibilities and roles is outlined in the ASCA National Model. School counselors, in most USA states, usually have a Master's degree in school counseling from a Counselor Education graduate program. In Canada, they must be licensed teachers with additional school counseling training and focus on academic, career, and personal/social issues. China requires at least three years of college experience. In Japan, school counselors were added in the mid-1990s, part-time, primarily focused on behavioral issues. In Taiwan, they are often teachers with recent legislation requiring school counseling licensure focused on individual and group counseling for academic, career, and personal issues. In Korea, school counselors are mandated in middle and high schools.

Professional school counselors meet the needs of student in three basic domains: academic development, career development, and personal/social development (Dahir & Campbell, 1997; ASCA, 2005) with an increased emphasis on college access. Knowledge, understanding and skill in these domains are developed through classroom instruction, appraisal consultation, counseling, coordination, and collaboration. For example, in appraisal, school counselors may use a variety of personality and career assessment methods to help students explore career and college needs and interests.

School counselor interventions include individual and group counseling for some students. For example, if a student's behavior is interfering with his or her achievement, the school counselor may observe that student in a class, provide consultation to teachers and other stakeholders to develop (with the student) a plan to address the behavioral issue(s), and then collaborate to implement and evaluate the plan. They also provide consultation services to family members such as college access, career development, parenting skills, study skills, child and adolescent development, and help with school-home transitions.

School counselor interventions for all students include annual academic/career/college access planning K-12 and leading classroom developmental lessons on academic, career/college, and personal/social topics. The topics of character education, diversity and multiculturalism (Portman, 2009), and school safety are important areas of focus for school counselors. Often school counselors will coordinate outside groups that wish to help with student needs such as academics, or coordinate a program that teaches about child abuse or drugs, through on-stage drama (.Poulou, 2005).

School counselors develop, implement, and evaluate school counseling programs that deliver academic, career, college access, and personal/social competencies to all students in their schools. It can be includes the following four main areas:

- Foundation - a written school counseling program mission statement, a beliefs and philosophy statement, and a focus on the ASCA standards and competencies and how they are implemented for every student;
- Delivery System - how lessons and individual and group counseling are delivered;
- Management System (use of calendars, time, building leader-school counselor role agreements, creation of action plans); and
- Accountability System - use of a School Counseling program audit, results reports, and school counselor performance evaluations based on 13 key competencies.

The model is implemented using key skills from the Education Trust's Transforming School Counseling Initiative: Advocacy, Leadership, Teaming and Collaboration, and Systemic Change.

6. Recommendations

Based on the discussions as a mentioned in this paper, it was recommended that:

- Ministry of education should provide a policy document on guidance and counseling to all schools.
- The ministry should strengthen the guidance and counseling units at its national, provincial and district offices. Ministry should organize in-service courses to all teachers on how to offer guidance and counseling services in all areas of guidance, to make schools employ the services in the administration and management of student discipline.
- Schools should provide facilities like counseling offices, magazines, audio and video tapes among others.
- Schools should sensitize the students on the importance of guidance and counseling in the management of student discipline.
- Effective guidance and counseling programs should be put in place as essential part of schools by the school administrators to promote student discipline.
- Leadership in guidance and counseling should be provided by trained counselors in every school.
- It should be their duty to co-ordinate efforts of several teachers and students in schools.
- The school administrators should solicit active co-operation of teachers and students interested in guidance and counseling.
- School administrators should make arrangements to enlist the support of the parents by introducing them to the idea of guidance and counseling. This is because no program can function successfully in a school unless parents are supportive.
- School administrators should provide guidance and counseling programs in school timetables as well as in the school budgets.
- School administrators should facilitate the implementation of decisions made during guidance and counseling. For instance, change in student's program, use of professional counselors, the need for more participation in co-curriculum activities and setting up school guidance and counseling committees.

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