

**Counselor Role-Performance in One-Counselor  
Middle and High Schools in Virginia**

by

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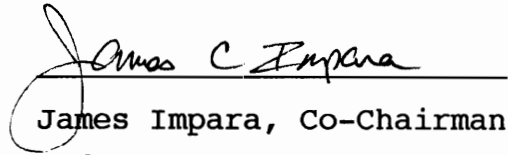
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Counselor Education and Student Personnel

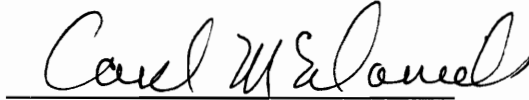
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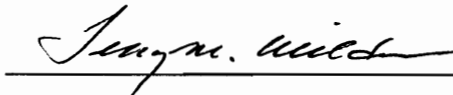
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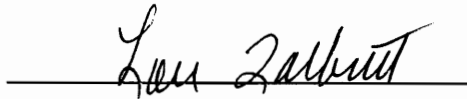
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(ABSTRACT)

This study investigated the role-performance of middle and high school counselors in one-counselor public school settings in Virginia; in particular, how these counselors use their time. One goal was to determine whether these counselors were currently meeting the state's "sixty percent counseling accreditation standard" and what impediments they encountered in their efforts toward compliance.

The researcher observed and interviewed a middle school counselor and a high school counselor to gather information about counselor role-performance in the one-counselor school which would be helpful in designing an appropriate research instrument. All counselors who work in one-counselor middle and high schools in Virginia were contacted to participate in a survey regarding their use of time. In addition, a sample of these counselors participated in the next phase of the study by recording their activities over a two day period on a counseling log provided by the researcher. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and to report the findings.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior studies of counselor time-utilization showing that counselors spend much of their time in activities considered outside their role, and less time in counseling than they would like. More than half of the counselors in this study did not meet the 60% counseling standard and identified the barriers to compliance they encountered.

Recommendations are made regarding counselor time management, educational preparation, and a system of accountability linked less to time-utilization and more to student outcomes. Additional recommendations are made for further research.

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## CHAPTER 1

### The Overview

#### Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Accountability, the principle that a practitioner should demonstrate the results or benefits that arise from the resources he uses, has become an increasingly important issue among educators. Because public school counselors work in educational settings, they too have been affected by this impetus toward accountability. Crabbs and Crabbs (1977) insist that counselors be involved in the educational accountability movement because counselors are public servants. Froehle and Fuqua (1981) point to increased conservatism, both fiscal and social, along with higher costs of education as "clear indicators that the accountability required by scientific inquiry will receive increasing priority in the school setting" (p. 509). This movement has made some educators, including counselors, feel uncomfortable, possibly even threatened (Myrick, 1984). However, counseling practitioners do need to be able to justify their use of resources, and because time is one of the resources they use to accomplish their goals, it seems reasonable to expect them to be accountable for how they spend their time.

In July 1983, Virginia's Board of Education adopted Standards for Accrediting Schools in Virginia. Standard E, number 9 of that document requires that "at least 60% of the guidance staff's time shall be devoted to counseling of students." In June 1987 this standard was amended to require **each member** of the guidance staff to adhere to the 60% counseling minimum. Standards for Accrediting Schools in Virginia (July, 1988), Standard E, item 11.d states,

Guidance and counseling shall be provided for all students as needed to . . . ensure that at least 60% of the time of each member of the guidance staff shall be devoted to counseling of students.

In July 1989 a document entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Sixty Percent Counseling Accreditation Standard in the Public Schools in Virginia" was developed by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee whose membership included counselors, administrators, counselor educators and Department of Education personnel. On pages 9-10 of that document specific documentation procedures are stipulated as follows:

Counselors are required to document their activities and time on task related to the 60 percent counseling standard. Such documentation is best accomplished through the use of individual counseling logs; these counseling logs may be developed locally. It is recommended that counseling time, relating to the 60 percent standard, be documented on a monthly basis.

The document also defines counseling, thus distinguishing

it from guidance and other educational school based activities.

The Associate Director of Administrative Reviews for the Virginia State Department of Education stated that the Department will accept documentation in any format – monthly calendars, weekly memos, or daily records – but is looking for time documentation (telephone interview, 2/12/90). The time documentation is necessary to validate that at least 60% of the counselor's time is indeed being spent counseling. The rest of the counselor's time – up to 40% – is supposed to be spent performing guidance functions. Since the mandate requires only that counseling time be documented, Virginia counselors may not be documenting how their non-counseling time is spent. Fairchild (1986) describes an accountability method called "time analysis" that reveals how counselors spend their time by recording the actual time spent performing all daily activities. A valuable outcome of conducting such an analysis is that the results would reveal the amount of time spent on duties extraneous to the functions the counselor is supposed to perform. Such documentation could serve to support a request to be relieved of those assignments that reduce the counselor's time to counsel.

What constitutes "counseling activities" for school counselors in the Commonwealth of Virginia has been categorically defined in the "Procedures for Implementing the Sixty Percent Counseling Accreditation Standard in the Public

Schools in Virginia"; therefore, by conducting time analysis, Virginia counselors can use the definition provided in the "Procedures" to measure the amount of time they spend in counseling activities as opposed to the amount of time they spend in non-counseling activities. The data gathered can provide information for making adjustments necessary for program improvement.

According to Wilkinson (1988), who conducted a time analysis for an entire school year, "Documented data can substantiate counselor recommendations for more appropriate uses of their time" (p. 376). She asserts that beneficial changes can be made only when counselors know how much time they actually spend in the variety of ways they serve their students. Similarly, Partin (1983) maintains, "Self-observation and analysis of one's time usage patterns is the first step in gaining control over wasted time and in realigning priorities" (p. 280). Counselors can also establish whether they are in control of how they spend their time by keeping track of who initiates each counselor contact.

Burton (1984) defines two kinds of time: "response time" - time spent reacting to others' requests for information and assistance - and "discretionary time" - that portion of the work day controlled by the counselor. She identifies "response time" as the largest block of time usually spent by counselors, and concludes there is a need to control "response time" in order to increase "discretionary



time." Implicit here is the view that spending the majority of counselor time in a preventive and developmental posture of planned activities that constitute a comprehensive guidance program is preferable to spending time in a mode of constant response to crisis.

In general, most researchers agree that it is good for counselors to document their functions (Bonebrake and Borgers, 1984; Furlong, Atkinson and Janoff, 1979) and be involved in evaluating their programs. A problem, however, pointed out by Myrick (1984) is that counselors often do not know how to use accountability methods at a time when there is both a mounting demand for counseling programs as well as pressure to show results. Other reasons he provides for counselors' inattention to accountability and neglect for evaluation procedures include "lack of time, money, measuring devices, substantial control group, adequate evaluation criteria and adequate training of counselors" (p. 218); also included as a reason that counselors do not engage in accountability studies is the possibility that counselors feel threatened by evaluation.

Despite the 60% counseling standard adopted by the Virginia Department of Education, according to the Annual Report on Administrative Reviews of Local School Divisions 1988-1989, seventeen of the twenty-five (68%) Virginia school divisions reviewed did not meet compliance with the sixty percent standard. If any of the schools within a division being reviewed is found in noncompliance, that division is

cited. Although the annual report lists the names of the divisions reviewed, it does not identify the number of schools within each division found in noncompliance, the names of schools that were noncompliant, nor even the names of the divisions cited. It is, therefore, not possible to determine from this source the different rates of compliance by type of school setting, such as level (middle or high), locale (rural, suburban, or urban) or size (single or multi-counselor). Seventeen of the twenty-five (68%) divisions reviewed in 1988-89 contained middle and/or high schools within their divisions that were one-counselor settings. Although this information suggests that a correlation exists between one-counselor schools and noncompliance of the 60% counseling standard, no such conclusion can be reached from the information at hand. However, an investigation of the reasons for the high percentage of noncompliance overall is warranted, and a look at how one-counselor schools in the Commonwealth fare in particular in meeting the 60% counseling mandate may offer some important insights.

At the time data were collected there were 109 one-counselor middle and high schools in Virginia which represents 21% of the total number of middle and high schools in the state. The one-counselor school is a work setting that presents special challenges not faced by counselors who work in multi-counselor schools. In accountability terms, the practitioner in the one-counselor school setting has the full measure of responsibility for the planning and delivery

of the entire guidance and counseling program. In the one-counselor setting, there is no possibility of separating the counselor's roles, as is possible in multiple counselor settings, where counselor colleagues are free, through a mutually agreed upon division of labor, to choose to specialize either by function or grade level. In the one-counselor setting, the counselor is expected to have all the skills necessary to perform the entire spectrum of services for all the students of all grades in the school, and, still, to meet the state's 60% counseling standard. How do counselors in this setting deal with this expectation and what problems do they encounter?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe the current status of counselor role-performance in the one-counselor middle and high schools in Virginia. One objective was to report on how counselors are spending their time in the performance of their duties, so that a better understanding of what counselors actually do emerges. A second objective was to report the extent that counselors are meeting the state's standard that requires them to spend at least 60% of their time in the service category "counseling," and to report on counselors' views regarding that standard and the factors that they believe contribute toward their compliance.

Further objectives were to reveal the problems typically encountered by counselors who are solely responsible for implementing a comprehensive guidance program along with its concomitant student outcomes, to identify the barriers that these counselors face that may impede their compliance with the 60% counseling accreditation standard and that may reduce their time to counsel, to focus on the question of who controls the counselor's time, and to point out the implications the findings may have for the training of counselors.

Through a survey of middle and high school counselors working in one-counselor settings in Virginia public schools, the researcher attempted to meet the purposes of this study. Counselor perceptions regarding their role-performance in the one-counselor school setting were also elicited.

### **Research Questions**

With regard to one-counselor schools:

- A. How is counselor time spent?
  - 1. What is the distribution of counselor time spent with each client category?
  - 2. What is the distribution of counselor time spent in each domain of guidance and counseling: academic; educational; career; personal/social?

3. What is the distribution of counselor time spent in the categories of "counseling," "guidance," and "other"?
- B. To what extent are counselors in control of the use of their time?
1. What percentage of time do counselors spend on activities considered outside the appropriate role of the school counselor as defined by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee?
  2. What specific duties that are considered outside the appropriate role of the school counselor do counselors identify spending time on?
  3. What is the distribution of counselor time spent in the "response" mode versus the "discretionary" mode?
- C. What is the status of counselor accountability in reference to Virginia's counseling standard
1. What percentage of counselors are documenting their time as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee?
  2. What methods of time documentation are currently practiced by counselors?
  3. What percentage of counselors claim compliance with the counseling accreditation standard and to what do they attribute their success?
  4. What factors are identified as barriers to compliance by those counselors not able to maintain the minimal counseling standard of sixty percent?

5. What views do counselors hold regarding the attainability of the counseling standard and the propriety of its placement at sixty percent?

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to the role-performance of counselors in the one-counselor, public middle and high schools in Virginia in terms of how they spend their time. It is not an accountability study in terms of the processes they use or the outcomes of their efforts.

### **Significance of the Study**

According to the Annual Report on Administrative Reviews of Local School Divisions 1988-1989, sixty-eight percent of the twenty-five Virginia school divisions reviewed for that year were cited for noncompliance with the sixty percent counseling accreditation standard. This overall lack of compliance suggests that a problem exists. Either counselors really do not spend the required amount of time counseling, or they are not providing acceptable modes of evidenciary documentation of their compliance. If they are not primarily performing counseling functions, what functions are they performing and why? If they claim to be spending at least

60% of their time counseling but are not documenting their use of time, what reasons do they provide for their failure to meet this requirement? This study describes how counselors in one-counselor settings spend their time, specifies the modes currently in use by these counselors to document their role-performance, and identifies systemic problems that may hinder these counselors' control of their role-performance.

In addressing counselor role-performance, the researcher has collected and analyzed data which includes self-report estimates by counselors of how they spend their time based on what they think they do (role-perception), as well as data on how they actually spend their time as recorded on counseling logs (role-analysis via time-analysis). The literature review has included studies of counselor role-performance based on role-perception, role-analysis, and data on ideal role-performance (what counselors believe they should be doing), since it is important, not only to report on major discrepancies which exist between the counselor's ideal and actual role, but to attempt to determine the reasons for those discrepancies so that corrective action can be taken. Counselor role-performance based on what the counselor's various publics expect of the school counselor (role-expectation) was not a focus of this study.

### Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, key terms are defined as follows:

1. Counseling Function: "a process through which a professionally trained school counselor employs specific counseling techniques to assist students in the following:
  - a. educational planning for high school and college (including course selection and program planning);
  - b. career planning and development;
  - c. developing positive attitudes and behaviors;
  - d. dealing with developmental interpersonal relationships and concerns;
  - e. developing skills related to communications, decision-making and problem-solving; and
  - f. crisis prevention/intervention" (Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Education, "Procedures for implementing the sixty percent counseling accreditation standard in the public schools in Virginia," 1989, p. 2).

"Students' dependence on parents often necessitates the involvement of parents in the counseling of students. Counselors counsel with parents on a short-term basis to address childrearing concerns and parenting skills and to assist in crisis resolution" ("Procedures, p. 3).



"Counseling functions for the 60 percent standard include individual and group counseling with students and, when appropriate, parents" ("Procedures, p. 6).

2. Counseling Domains:

- a. Academic – pertains to dealing with academic concerns of students about achievement, and choices that affect students' current academic functioning.
- b. Educational – pertains to dealing with educational and vocational planning concerns (includes counseling affecting educational decisions for the following and subsequent years).
- c. Career – pertains to counseling which stimulates students' awareness of, interest in, or exploration of occupational fields, leisure activities, and/or career planning.
- d. Personal/Social – pertains to dealing with emotional concerns of students about personal, social, or family matters.

3. High School: public school which includes any combination of grades 9 through 12.

4. Middle School: public school which includes any combination of grades 5 through 8.

5. Combined Middle High School: public school which includes grades 6 through 12 or grades 7 through 12.
6. Combined Elementary Middle School: public school which includes a combination of grades below 5 and up to 9.
7. Role-performance: how counselors actually spend their time as observed by the researcher, as reported on the research questionnaire, and/or as recorded on a counseling log.

For the definitions of guidance functions, and non-counseling/non-guidance functions see Appendix A.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter one provides an overview of the problem, states the purpose and significance of the study, defines terms, and outlines the organization of the study. Chapter two reviews the professional literature in the field. Chapter three details the methodology used in gathering the data for this study. Chapter four reports and analyzes the data obtained from the survey questionnaire. Chapter five reports and analyzes the data obtained from the counseling logs submitted by the subsample. Chapter six sets forth important

implications of the findings and presents the researcher's conclusions and recommendations. References and Appendices follow chapter six.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **The Literature**

#### **Introduction**

What follows is intended to provide a review of the professional literature on counselor role-performance, in particular the literature that addresses such issues as the appropriateness of functions within the secondary counselor's role, the ideal distribution of the counselor's time in the performance of those functions, and counselor accountability as one means toward program evaluation.

The past fifteen years have brought about a major shift in the way guidance departments are viewed and evaluated (Gysbers & Henderson, 1988). No longer viewed as service delivery systems, guidance departments are expected to offer developmental and comprehensive program models geared to achieving student outcomes. Guidance programs are supposed to effect results, and the counselor is expected to be able to demonstrate that those results have been achieved. Regardless of the evaluation perspective one takes, counselor time utilization remains a significant factor in the accountability and program evaluation equation. Counselors must have control of their use of time to effectively implement the guidance program objectives. Counselors must

also make or find the time to conduct ongoing evaluations of the program to ascertain which features of the program are contributing to success and which are not effective. The accessibility of students to counselor and counselor to students and the amount of time counselors devote to direct interaction with students are significant factors, especially relevant to time utilization by counselors. However, counselors must first have a clear perception of how their time is being spent before they can judge if it is being spent well. Only then will they be in a position to make the appropriate decisions about program revisions and adjustments in time utilization patterns.

### **Appropriate Functions and Time Expenditure of Secondary Counselors**

Bonebrake and Borgens (1984) surveyed the extant professional literature and found no consensus on appropriate functions within the school counselor's role. In the days when guidance was still being viewed from a services model Wrenn (in Bentley, 1968, p. 160) maintained that counselors should perform only the activities which fall within the following four major functions: counseling students; consulting with school staff, administration, and parents; studying the changing status of the school population and interpreting that information to staff and administration;

and coordinating those counseling resources within the school and those resources between the school and the community. He further maintained that counselors should devote two thirds to three fourths of their time to the first two functions - counseling and consultation. Hutchinson et al. (1986) point out that many studies - e.g., those of Atkinson, Froman, Romo, & Mayton, 1977; Daldrup, 1967; Fotiu, 1967; and Purett & Brown, 1966 - have confirmed school counselor functions to be those first defined in 1966 by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES). These counselor functions were "counseling," "consulting," and "coordinating" (ASCA, 1974). That the ASCA Governing Board has since continued periodically to grapple with this issue of counselor role definition (1977; 1981) demonstrates how difficult a task it is to satisfactorily and fully define counselor role and function. In its 1981 role statement, ASCA took a turn when it tried also to address what counseling was not. It urged counselors to use "time and skills in an organized and systematic way to help students and resist any effort aimed at unreasonable use of time for non-guidance activities." In its most recent publication, ASCA (1990) urged counselors to pay attention to the results of their efforts. The strong message ASCA is sending is that counselor role is inextricably tied to student outcomes. As such, counselors must refocus their counseling program components and their role performance to achieve and effect

the desirable and stated competencies in their students.

Most definitions of the counselor's role have tended to be prescriptions for what the counselor's role should ideally be, not descriptions of how counselors actually spend their time. According to Daldrup (1967), one of the earliest comprehensive studies on the appropriate functions of school counselors was that of W. W. Tennyson, completed in Missouri in 1956. Daldrup used that study as a model for his own study to determine the status of the secondary school counselor's job in Missouri in 1962, and to examine the changes that might have taken place in counselor function since the earlier study of 1956. Counselor functions were divided into four categories of service: assistance to students; assistance to teachers; assistance to the administration and general school program; and research assistance. Counselors were asked to report the percentage of time they spent in each category as well as the percentage of time they felt they should spend in each category. The results revealed that there was no significant change since Tennyson's study in the time spent by counselors on the different categories of service. There was still, however, a significant difference between the time reported spent on various services and the time counselors felt should be spent on those services. As a whole, the counselors in both studies believed more time should be spent with students, teachers, and in research endeavors, and less time should be spent in the category of assistance to administration and

general school program. How counselor time was being spent persisted as a problem; counselors, for the most part, were not content with the way they were required to divide their time among their vast range of functions (Daldrup, p. 183).

Since Daldrup's study, interest in counselor role and function has not waned but continues to be reexamined: Bonebrake & Borgers, 1984; Gysbers & Henderson, 1988; Henderson, 1989; Hopper & Schroder, 1974; Hutchinson, Barrick, & Groves, 1986; Hutchinson & Bottorf, 1986; Partin, 1990; Podemski & Childers, 1987; Suzan, 1979; Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt, & Williams, 1989; Wilgus & Shelley, 1988. A finding that appears with some consistency in many of these studies is that a discrepancy exists between counselors' actual activities/functions and their perceptions of what these roles/functions should ideally be.

Hutchinson, Barrick, and Groves (1986) conducted a study of a sample of Indiana public schools to examine secondary school counselor perceptions regarding ideal and actual counselor functions. Fifty-six counselors were contacted for participation, and 40 responded. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which had been developed after a review of the literature on ideal and actual counselor function. They were to rank the sixteen listed activities in two ways – by those they considered ideal counselor functions and by those they perceived themselves actually performing. In general, the counselors in the study reported performing functions that they believed they were supposed to be



performing with two major exceptions. Not enough time was being spent on group counseling, career and life planning, and classroom guidance, while too much time was being devoted to scheduling, testing, record keeping and non-counseling activities. The counselors' ideal rankings showed that they were very much cognizant of what they were supposed to be doing consistent with ASCA role definition, but their rankings of their actual performance strongly suggested that they were either not in control of how they spent their time or not managing their time appropriately.

This dilemma is not unique to the counselors of Indiana. In a 1985 national study of secondary school counseling programs cited by Nugent (1990, p. 318), all thirty-seven respondents of the fifty state guidance directors surveyed reported concern over the lack of group work and career guidance and the persistent problem of "counselor role abuse." A great majority of the respondents (84%) claimed that counselors were heavily involved in duties considered outside the established, professional role of the school counselor. Tennyson, et al. (1989) found that only a "limited parallel exists between the perceptions Minnesota school counselors hold of their roles and functions and the expectations set forth in current professional guidelines" (p. 257). Medis and Wilson (1985) pointed to two major culprits to explain counselors' assuming clerical and quasi-administrative tasks: the "lack of role clarity" and the "conflicting requirements of the various guidance publics"

(p. 5).

Eddy et al. (1982) asked, "What actions are counselors taking to gain or maintain adequate time for counseling students?" (p. 122) They proposed that counselors should take a more self-directed approach than they were currently practicing, and urged counselors to plan systematically and purposefully to function more in an active than a reactive mode (p. 123). Partin (1983) strongly recommended that counselors get control over their time by conducting a self-examination of their time usage patterns by keeping a daily journal for one week. Analysis of the journal would reveal the major time wasters, any duplication of efforts, as well as the sources of habitual interruptions. From the insights gained, counselors could then proceed to set goals that were more professionally grounded, realign priorities accordingly, and become more effective time managers. Gysbers & Henderson (1988), who outlined a model of counselor functions by program components of which they delineate four - "Guidance Curriculum, Individual Planning, Responsive Services, and Support System" (p.95) - recommend an assessment approach wherein counselors identify their current activities by conducting a time study and determine the intended student competencies for each of those activities.

Partin (1990) surveyed randomly selected Ohio counselors and their principals at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to compare counselor and principal perceptions of actual and ideal use of time by counselors. Counselors

reported spending over 40% of their time in individual or small group counseling, which was consistent with the Wilgus and Shelley study (1988). The major "time robbers" of school counselors in this study, particularly at the high school level, were paperwork, scheduling, and administrative tasks. These tasks deflected time away from individual and group counseling. Partin pointed out that particularly in small, rural schools, the counselor's role had functionally become one of an assistant principal including many non-counseling, non-guidance duties (p. 6). Congruence was found between counselor and principal perceptions both in the actual distribution of counselor time usage and in counselors' expressed ideal distribution, which would allot more time to counseling, a result consistent with the findings of Bonebrake and Borgers (1984).

### **Counselor Role-Performance**

Research in the area of actual counselor role-performance of middle and high school counselors, though very limited, can prove valuable. Partin (1990) states, "While logistically a challenge, research recording the actual use of counselor time over an extended period would be most valuable in validating the counselors' self-perceptions of time usage" (p. 6). No studies were found which were conducted in Virginia.

Hopper and Schroder (1974) observed each of fifteen, urban high school counselors for four half-day periods over three months. Using six categories of functions – "individual interview"; "group guidance"; "clerical tasks"; "conferences"; "miscellaneous guidance activities"; and "other-than-guidance activities" – they found that the counselors spent only between 2.1% and 38.2% of their time in individual interviews. Much of their time was spent performing non-guidance duties. This study substantiated previous findings that counselors spend a lot of time doing clerical tasks.

Fairchild and Newell (1980) conducted an analysis of the services performed by high school counselors in the state of Idaho. Their participant pool was drawn from a sample of counselors who took a workshop sponsored by the Idaho State Department of Education on program evaluation and accountability methods for school counselors. The procedure they were taught was one introduced by Fairchild (1971; 1975). These counselors were required to record their daily work activities for one week and then submit a summary of their log findings. For the purpose of this time analysis study, these activities were to be recorded in one of six "service categories" taken from Shaw (1973): "counseling," "consultation," "testing," "professional duties," "clerical/administrative," and "non-counseling."

The counselors recorded all their activities in fifteen minute blocks throughout the day, designated a "service code"

beside each activity, and tallied the weekly totals for time spent in each service category on a summary sheet. The researchers selected the weekly summaries of sixteen of these workshop participants for collation and analysis. A major finding of this study was that only twelve hours a week (35% of the total hours) were being spent in the counseling domain, which included "academic," "educational/ vocational," "personal/social," and "behavioral/discipline" subcategories. The service category "consultation" was divided into four subcategories—"teacher conferences," "parent conferences," "administrator/professional," and "staffings." The study revealed that the counselors had spent an average of 9.9% of their time with teachers, 7.4% with administrators and professionals, 5.4% with parents, and 1.5% in staffings. Based on the data obtained through this study, the researchers questioned whether adequate time was being allotted to parents and to case conferencing. They also questioned whether professional duties, clerical/ administrative duties, and non-counseling duties should take up such a disproportionate amount of the total time (more than one third) as the counselors reported spending in these service categories during the week. The researchers recommended that counselors might choose to transfer hours spent in these categories to time spent counseling students, meeting with parents, and participating in multidisciplinary team meetings or case conferences among school staff (staffings). A primary recommendation resulting from this

study was that all counselors should use time analysis procedures such as the one used in this study to determine how their time was being spent so that they could determine if it was indeed consistent with their priorities and the needs of their clients. If the analysis revealed that too much time was being spent in low priority areas, steps could then be taken to correct the disparity between their intended role-performance and their actual role-performance. For those counselors who might object that time analysis procedures are too time consuming, Fairchild recommended the use of an "abbreviated time analysis" procedure (1986, p. 42) whereby they would record their activities only one day a week or several weeks per school year, and then conduct the time analysis on that sample.

Wilkinson (1988), a secondary school counselor, conducted a time analysis of her role performance for an entire academic year, during which she kept an itemized log documenting exactly the time she spent in various school and counseling activities. Three research questions drove her self-study: what specific activities was she spending her time on; what percentage of time was being spent on "direct" versus "indirect services" to students; and could the insights gained be used to improve the effectiveness of her use of time. This study was the first to appear in the professional literature that provided data from long-term time analysis in a secondary school.

Wilkinson's intention was to record the exact amounts of

time spent in each activity, and to categorize and summarize each entry. To that end, she devised an information sheet on which to enter her weekly log data and a five letter coding system to classify the different types of contacts. She also devised categories by type of service provided. There were three major categories on her final summary sheet:

"Counseling and Consultation," "Indirect Services," and "Other Activities." "Counseling and Consultation" was subdivided into "personal contacts" and "telephone contacts," both of which were considered direct services to students. Six services were identified as "Indirect Services": "classroom guidance"; "planning, preparation and evaluation"; "staff meetings"; "special education responsibility"; "testing"; and "coordinating special projects." "Professional meetings/activities," "records management," and "clerical tasks" were recorded under "Other Activities."

The results of this time analysis study revealed that Wilkinson had spent 44.9% of her time providing direct services to students ("counseling" and "consultation"), 28.7% of her time providing indirect services, and 26.4% of her time in other activities. The total amount of time spent in the direct services category of "counseling" and "consultation," including both personal and telephone contacts, was further analyzed to identify time spent with various publics. The results were as follows: students 19.1%; parents 12.5%; faculty 8.8%; other staff members and community residents 4.5%.

Wilkinson then set about identifying changes she could make in order to decrease the amount of time spent in "Other Activities" so that she could increase the amount of time for providing services to students. One such change was to obtain the help of parent volunteers with clerical tasks. She credited that single change with enabling her to transfer 6.4% of her time to student services. She then reordered her priorities in the indirect services category to allow more time to be spent in classroom guidance.

### **The Accountability Movement**

The accountability movement, which began in education in the 1960's, has received ever increasing attention and support, even being mandated by some state legislatures (Hawthorne, 1973). This movement has had a significant impact on counselors, creating new pressures to be accountable for their services. Because school counselors, in addition to being helping professionals, are also educators working in educational settings, they are public servants (Crabbs and Crabbs, 1977); as such, they can be expected to demonstrate the results or benefits of the resources they use and should be able to do so (Blocher, 1987). Krumboltz (1974) defined accountability as "a set of procedures that collates information about accomplishments and costs to facilitate decision making"(p. 639). He viewed



the use of an accountability system as a means to many desired ends that would greatly benefit both the counselor and the counselor's publics. Hayden and Pohlman (1981) go even further, arguing that "accountability and evaluation are necessary for survival" (p. 60). Counselors must provide their school boards and their superintendents with data that demonstrate program effectiveness. The authors offer a three-step process designed to enable counselors to justify their programs. First counselors should have a written job description that clearly and specifically states the counselor's duties. Second, counselors should keep a log of daily activities that will demonstrate quantitatively how counselor time is being spent. Third, counselors need to devise additional research projects that will serve to qualitatively evaluate components of the counseling program. Nonetheless, counselors, as Myrick (1984) points out, remain resistant to engaging in self-evaluation of their counseling procedures and programs. Some of the reasons, according to Myrick, for this inattention to accountability is counselor role overload, lack of time, and inadequate training in evaluation methods.

Beginning in the 1980's there has been a shift in accountability emphasis from documentation of activities to demonstration of positive results (Bleuer, 1983). Counselors began to be asked to provide evidence that their counseling procedures were working to bring about desired outcomes in their clients. Aubrey (1982) warned that "the very survival

of guidance and counseling in the nation's schools" (p. 52) was in jeopardy and urged counselors to turn to program planning and evaluation both of which were being underutilized. However, counselors, having been trained primarily in the use of counseling techniques, were not, as a whole, equipped to evaluate their services by measuring student outcomes. Nor had they even had, according to Gysbers and Henderson (1988), any meaningful training in how to organize or manage a guidance program. By the late 1970's the "counselor-clinical-services model" was being revamped, at least conceptually, into a "developmentally based comprehensive" model (Gysbers and Henderson, p. 28), and in the 1980's the movement to put such programs actively into place gained momentum. However, Gysbers points out that regardless of the type of program being developed, the counselor must keep in mind the realistic limitations imposed by such factors as counselor-student ratio. He also urges counselors to gather information on how they use their time by recording their "actual program behaviors" (p. 96) because this data offers concrete feedback about the design of their working guidance program.

Lewis (1983, pp. 113-115) provides a valuable overview of methods being used to evaluate guidance and counseling programs. This overview is a synthesis of methods derived from Pine (1975) and Crabbs and Crabbs (1977). He lists and describes eight product evaluation designs that measure outcomes: the *experimental* design, which measures the

differences before and after a treatment or between a group and a control group; the *tabulation* method, during which one tallies the number of client contacts, the number of group counseling sessions, etc.; the *follow-up* study, which finds out what happened to the client after exposure to the counseling program; *satisfaction surveys*, which involve the use of questionnaires to attest to clients' degree of satisfaction with the counseling program; the *case study* approach, which presents a long-term view of each student to demonstrate the individual success rates of a particular counseling strategy; *expert opinion*, which entails either an evaluation by experts or a comparison with programs deemed successful; *self-evaluations*, which are self-ratings by counselors who use acknowledged criteria as a measure of good counseling; *time/cost analysis*, which views program costs against the goals that have been accomplished.

Lewis (pp. 115-117) also provides a summary of an evaluation model created by Atkinson, Furlong, and Janoff (1979) based on four categories of accountability: *qualitative transactional data*, *qualitative product data*, *quantitative transactional data*, and *quantitative product data*. The counselor collects data that will document what he does, demonstrate that it has had an effect, show that certain measurable outcomes have been achieved, or demonstrate that a combination of these accountability criteria have been met. The goal of qualitative transactional data is to make one's own counseling program

methodology credible by demonstrating that it is modeled after an established, successful method. Qualitative product data is an accountability method that provides documentation of counselor effectiveness by surveying those served by the program. Quantitative transactional data compiles tabulation or log data to show how many clients the counselor has seen, how many group sessions were held, or how much time the counselor has spent in each area of guidance. Quantitative product data uses experimental or quasi-experimental methods to demonstrate that a desired effect or outcome has been achieved.

While the necessity for accountability has generally been accepted, Fairchild and Zins (1986) engaged in research to determine the extent to which it was being done by counseling practitioners. They randomly selected 500 practitioners from the 1984 American School Counselor Association membership roster to participate in a survey of their current accountability practices. They received usable returns from 239 respondents who were practicing school counselors. They found that 131 of these counselors (54.8%) were collecting accountability data. Analysis of the results obtained from these 131 respondents found that 90.8% were collecting enumerative data; 49.6%, process data; and 43.6%, outcome data. These percentages reflect the fact that many of the counselors reported collecting multiple types of data. The collection of enumerative data involves recording the amount of time expended on various services as well as the

frequency that various activities occur. For the most part this type of data is descriptive of the kinds of services being delivered. Process data focuses on the counselor's professional skills and provides information on the quality of services being provided. Outcome data documents the behavioral changes effected in clients as a result of the counselor's intervention and is another way to demonstrate counselor or program effectiveness. Regarding the methods of data collection in use at the time, 80.9% of the 131 respondents collecting data were using tabulation; 43.5% were conducting time analysis; 48.9% were employing rating scales and questionnaires; 24.4% were using case studies; 26% were using interviews; and 8.4% were subjecting themselves to expert and peer reviews. The two most frequently reported uses of their accountability efforts were to demonstrate their effectiveness to others (75.6%) and to improve the quality of their services (71%). The majority of these school counselors (72.6%) reported that they were voluntarily engaged in their accountability efforts for their own professional growth, while only 8.4% reported that they were required to do so by their respective state departments of education. In identifying the source of their information with regard to accountability practices and procedures, only 41.4% of the respondents indicated that they had learned about accountability procedures from university courses. Of the 108 respondents not collecting accountability data, 51.9% cited unfamiliarity with accountability methods as their

reason. A second major reason for not collecting accountability data, given by 40% of these respondents, was that these accountability procedures were cumbersome and took too much time. The researchers suggest that counselor training programs need to include courses that will equip prospective counselors, once they are in the field, with the various program evaluation and self-evaluation skills necessary to implement accountability procedures. Additionally, the researchers point to the need for in-service training, citing that the respondents' mean age was 44 years and their mean years of counseling experience was 10.5.

### **Summary**

This review of the professional literature relevant to counselor role-performance, including the major studies conducted on counselor accountability of their role-performance, provided the researcher several focal points on which to report the status of her selected research population - Virginia counselors working in one-counselor middle and high schools. Within the scope of the research questions already outlined, the researcher was able to report what the data revealed about how these Virginia counselors compared to the overall picture portrayed by the literature review on counselor role-performance and accountability.

For example, how do Virginia counselors compare to those in Fairchild and Zins' 1986 study in terms of the documentation procedures used? Does the analysis of the sample of their documented activities reveal that they, too, are assuming too many clerical and quasi-administrative tasks, and if so, are the culprits the same as those identified by Medis and Wilson (1985), or are there other "time robbers"? Are Virginia counselors heavily involved in duties considered outside the established professional role of the school counselor? If so, what factors are contributing to such a phenomenon? Is counselor role abuse one of those factors? If it is, what recommendations can be made to eliminate it? For those Virginia counselors not engaged in accountability via documentation of the time they spend counseling, are the explanatory reasons they provide consistent with those reported by Myrick (1984) - role overload, lack of time, or inadequate training? Is the lack of group work and career guidance indicated in the 1985 national study reported by Nugent (1990) also manifest in Virginia secondary schools?

Wilkinson's study (1988) raised another question for the researcher concerning the Virginia standard, which requires each counselor to spend a minimum of 60% of her time in counseling. Wilkinson had reported spending 31.6% of her time providing direct services to students and parents. Even some of that time would not have counted as "counseling" according to the definition in the Virginia standard.

Virginia counselors are being asked, at a minimum, to spend almost twice that amount of time counseling students in order to meet the counseling mandate. Do Virginia counselors believe that this standard is set unrealistically high? Where would they choose to place the standard?

These issues have been studied by analyzing the results of data collected from a sample of Virginia counselors working in one-counselor middle and high schools using two types of instruments: a survey questionnaire, and a counseling log.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Methodology and Procedures for Research**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to describe the current status of counselor role-performance in one-counselor middle and high schools in Virginia. One objective was to report on how counselors are spending their time in the performance of their duties, so that a better understanding of what counselors actually do emerges. A second objective was to report on the extent counselors are meeting the state's standard requiring them to spend at least 60% of their time in the service category "counseling," and to report on counselors' views regarding that standard and the factors that they believe contributed toward their compliance or noncompliance with it.

This chapter sets forth the procedures used to acquire an appropriate and necessary working knowledge base of the "single" counselor setting, a knowledge base from which the survey instrument subsequently used to gather relevant data was constructed. The chapter also describes the procedures used in the validation of the survey instrument, the identification of the population to be surveyed, the data gathering, and the methods used in data analysis.

### Design of the Study

During the first phase of this study, the researcher observed two secondary school counselors who worked in one-counselor school settings – one at the middle school level and one at the high school level. Fifty hours were spent in direct observation and field note-taking (twenty-nine with the middle school counselor and twenty-one with the high school counselor). Each counselor was also interviewed. The “observational” component was designed to get a first hand and close up view of how these counselors were actually spending their time, to observe the type of methods they were using to document their use of time, to identify the factors, if any, which seemed to be impinging on their time to counsel, and to determine their views toward the 60% counseling standard as well as toward the operative constraints in the one-counselor setting. This observational component served as a baseline of information for the construction of a survey instrument.

The second phase of the study involved developing and implementing a survey instrument with which to collect self-report, role-performance data from the population of Virginia counselors working in one-counselor, middle and high school settings.

In the third phase of the study a sample of the questionnaire respondents was selected for further participation in the time analysis component of the research.

The objective of this facet of the research was to collect a sample of current and detailed data on how counselors were actually spending their time in the performance of their jobs as recorded in a counseling log. The researcher designed a log for this purpose. The log permitted analysis of counselor time spent in designated categories – “counseling,” “guidance,” or “other” – as outlined by the Committee for Sixty Percent Procedures in the July, 1989 “Procedures For Implementing The Sixty Percent Counseling Accreditation Standard In The Public Schools In Virginia.”

### **Instrumentation and Validation**

In the second phase of this study a questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed to elicit data on how counselors in Virginia’s one-counselor middle and high schools are spending their time. The questionnaire was divided into sections designed to address the major research questions posed in Chapter 1. Section I, “How Counselor Time is Spent,” addressed the distribution of time spent with certain client groups, the distribution of time spent by service category and by service domain, and the proportion of counselor time being spent in response to others’ requests (response time) versus counselor time spent in activities planned by the counselor (discretionary time). Section II, “Documentation of Counselor Time,” was intended to reveal

whether and how counselors were documenting the use of time, and to obtain their opinions regarding the documentation process and the 60% counseling standard. Section III, "Delivery of Student Services," was intended to determine how counselors were managing to provide various student services both with regard to domain and method. Section IV, "Counselor's View," sought to identify the major non-counseling, non-guidance duties counselors were currently being assigned, and to afford counselors the opportunity to express their views on what could be done to make more counseling time available. Section V, "Description of Work Setting," and Section VI, "Demographic Information About You," were designed to obtain specific demographic information about the school settings in which these counselors were employed and about the counselors themselves. Section VII, "Personal Statement," sought to elicit from these counselors their own, individual, personal views concerning what it is like to work in a one-counselor school.

The questionnaire developed for this study was field tested during the latter part of September, 1990. Four counselors, representative of the target population, participated in the field test. Two of these counselors worked in one-counselor middle schools in Virginia; two, in one-counselor high schools in Virginia. These counselors were from four different school divisions. They were asked to evaluate the instrument in terms of the appropriateness of the questions, the clarity and relevance of the questions,

the need for any additional questions, and the need for changes to improve the instrument as a whole. In response to the field test the instrument was shortened and its format simplified, resulting in an instrument both easier to read and to complete.

The design of the counseling log reflected the type of information needed to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. There were five major headings: "Duration of Contact or Activity," "Client Category," "Contact Initiated by," "Description of Activity," and "Type of Activity." The "Duration" heading was subdivided into three columns to allow the counselor to indicate the start and end time of each activity and whether the contact was by phone or in person. Single columns served for the remaining four headings.

### **Population and Sample**

The population included in the survey were all public middle and high school counselors employed in one-counselor school settings in Virginia. The most current directories available from the State Department of Education were used to identify those middle and high school counselors working in one-counselor settings – Guidance Personnel in Virginia Middle, Intermediate, and Junior High Schools (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1989) and Fall Membership in Virginia's Public

Schools (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1990). In addition, the 1988-1989 Virginia High School League Directory was consulted (Virginia High School League, Inc., 1988). The listing of schools and personnel obtained from these directories was cross-referenced with counselor/school address labels provided by the Supervisor of Secondary Guidance, Virginia State Department of Education. From these resources a total of 144 schools were identified as potentially one-counselor settings – ninety-four middle schools and fifty high schools.

#### **Data Gathering Procedures**

In late October, 1990, a personally addressed packet containing an explanatory cover letter; an endorsement letter from the State Supervisor for Secondary Guidance; and a questionnaire was sent to all 144 counselors initially identified as working in one-counselor middle and high schools in Virginia. The cover letter (Appendix B) briefly described the nature of the study, explained its usefulness, stressed the importance of the counselor's participation, and assured the confidentiality of the response. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided to encourage a high response rate. Recipients who wished to receive a summary of the findings at the conclusion of the study were directed to put their names and addresses on the back of the return

envelope.

In early November, 1990, nonrespondents were sent follow-up packets containing a letter encouraging their participation (Appendix C); a replacement questionnaire; and another stamped, self-addressed envelope. Both the original cover letter and the first follow-up letter requested counselors to return the questionnaire unanswered if theirs was not a one-counselor work setting.

A final packet was mailed to all remaining nonrespondents in mid December, 1990. This packet contained a letter (Appendix D) urging the recipient to complete the questionnaire. To facilitate participation, a replacement questionnaire and another stamped, self-addressed envelope were included in the packet. A second purpose of the letter was to attempt to discover why recipients chose not to participate in the study. In such cases, recipients were asked to place a check mark next to one of four reasons listed at the bottom of the letter, and to return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope.

After three mailings, 35 respondents identified themselves as ineligible. In 32 cases ( 17 middle school and 15 high school) the schools at which these counselors worked were not one-counselor settings; in two cases, they no longer served middle or high school grades; and in one case, the school to which the packet had been sent was no longer in existence. Of the 109 counselors left in the "eligible" population, five replied that they had no time to

participate; one decided not to participate because as a first year counselor, she explained, she did not believe her results would be valid; the remaining twenty-five never responded. Of the "eligible" target population of 109 schools, seventy counselors representing seventy-eight schools (54 middle schools and 24 high schools) returned completed questionnaires, a response rate of 71.6%. The researcher used Dillman's "Total Design Method" (1983) for conducting survey research with the exception that certified mail was not used for the final follow-up.

In late November twenty-four counselors who had responded to the survey instrument were contacted by telephone in an attempt to engage them in the next phase of the research study – the log component. These counselors were selected because their responses to the questionnaire indicated they were experienced in documenting their time in some type of log. They were asked if they would be willing to document, in a counseling log provided by the researcher, all of their time on the job over a two day period in early December. Twenty-three of the counselors contacted, fourteen middle school practitioners and nine high school practitioners, agreed to participate in this phase of the study.

Each of the counselors who had agreed to participate in this phase of the study was mailed a packet containing a cover letter thanking them for their willingness to participate and providing brief procedural instructions



(Appendix E); a sample of a partially completed log; two blank log sheets (Appendix F) on which to record their activities; and a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which to return their completed logs.

Nineteen of these twenty-three counselors returned completed logs, a response rate of 82.6%. Broken down by middle school and high school, eleven of the fourteen middle school counselors responded, a response rate of 78.6%; and eight of the nine high school counselors responded, a response rate of 88.9%

### **Data Analysis**

Because this study generated quantitative (numerical and "yes/no") and qualitative (short answer and brief essay) data on the current status of counselor role-performance in the one-counselor middle schools and high schools in Virginia, a variety of methods were used to enter and analyze the data. Computer entry of the quantitative questionnaire responses was performed by the researcher using *Panorama* (ProVUE Development Corporation, 1988), a combination data base/spreadsheet program. The qualitative data from the questionnaire was broken down by hand into lists which were then analyzed to identify common elements and dominant themes expressed in the counselors' comments. In working with the log data, the researcher devised a log analysis tally sheet

in order to transfer information from each participant's log to a summary data sheet for each of the two days logged. A more detailed account of log data analysis methodology is presented in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 4

### Questionnaire Results

The presentation of the results of the questionnaire data has been partially influenced by the way the data have emerged. The researcher originally assumed that the data would fall into three categories – middle school data, high school data, and the combination of middle and high school data. As the eligible questionnaires, representing seventy-eight schools, were being logged in, it became clear that there were schools in the sample that did not fit neatly into what had originally been defined as a middle school or a high school. While there were respondents respectively from thirty-four middle schools and twenty high schools as defined in Chapter 1, there were respondents from six "middle" schools that included elementary grades, and respondents from four "high" schools that combined both middle and high school grades. Each of these schools employed only one counselor, and in a full-time capacity. In addition, there were responses from six counselors who represented fourteen schools. One of these counselors served as a half-time counselor, half-time social studies teacher. The other five counselors served from two to four schools, some of which contained combined levels, ranging from two to thirteen grades. Therefore, the following categories were devised for

data entry, tabulation, presentation and analysis:

- elem/middle** - combined elementary/middle schools employing a full time counselor
- Middle** - middle schools as defined in chapter 1 employing a full-time counselor
- middle/high** - combined middle/high schools employing a full-time counselor
- High** - high schools as defined in Chapter 1 employing a full-time counselor
- All** - all schools represented in the survey<sup>1</sup>
- Exceptions** - one-counselor school settings that share a counselor who is not full-time at any one location; data from these schools (n = 14) were not included in the tabulation of results.

The number of schools in each category is as follows:

- elem/middle:** (n = 6)
- Middle:** (n = 34)
- middle/high:** (n = 4)
- High:** (n = 20)
- All:** (N = 64)

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<sup>1</sup> In the discussion, except in those cases where the differences warrant separate attention, the elem/middle category is combined with the Middle school category, and the middle/high category is combined with the High school category.

### **Demographic Information About the Sample**

The average age of the counselors who participated in this survey is 43.5 years. Females constitute 67.2% of the sample; males, 32.8%. The majority of these counselors (76.6%) have obtained their highest degree from a Virginia institution: 66% hold Master's degrees; 30% have thirty or more credits beyond the Master's; another 3% have attained either a CAGS or an EdS. One counselor has only the B.S. degree. The average number of years of counseling experience is 9.6, and the average number of years working in a one-counselor position is 6.5. 65% of the counselors were under an eleven month contract; 21% were contracted for ten months; 14%, for twelve months. Most of these counselors (76.6%) identified their work settings as rural, while 17.2% worked in urban areas, and 6.2% worked in suburban settings.

### **Analysis of the Data**

The results are organized around the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Two of the research questions center on the primary focus of this study – how counselors spend and control their time. There are six questions associated with the two major research questions that address counselor use of time as follows:

- A. How is counselor time spent?
1. What is the distribution of counselor time spent with each client category?
  2. What is the distribution of counselor time spent in each domain of guidance and counseling: academic; educational; career; personal/social?
  3. What is the distribution of counselor time spent in the categories of counseling, guidance, and other?
- B. To what extent are counselors in control of the use of their time?
1. What percentage of time do counselors spend on activities considered outside the appropriate role of the school counselor as defined by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee?
  2. What specific duties, considered outside the appropriate role of the school counselor, do counselors identify spending time on?
  3. What is the distribution of counselor time spent in the "response" (reactive) mode versus the "discretionary" (planned; preventive/developmental) mode?

Section I of the questionnaire, *How Counselor Time is Spent*, (see Appendix A) was designed to answer the six questions above. (See Table 1 for a breakdown of which questionnaire items correspond to which research questions.) Figure 1 shows the distribution of counselor time spent with client categories. Regardless of level the amount of time

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Questionnaire Items

<u>Research Questions</u>	<u>Addressed by Questionnaire Items:</u>
A. Counselor time distribution	
1. among client categories.....	#1
2. among domains.....	#3
3. among categories "counseling," "guidance," "other".....	#2
B. Counselor time control	
1. %time in non-counseling/non- guidance activities.....	#2,#20(b)
2. non-counseling/non-guidance duties performed by counselors....	#20(a)
3. %time in response mode vs. discretionary mode.....	#4,#5,#6,#27
C. Counselor accountability & views regarding 60% counseling standard	
1. %counselors documenting.....	#7
2. methods of documentation.....	#8
3. %compliance & facilitators.....	#14, 28-31
4. barriers to compliance.....	#14, 28-31
5. views regarding attainability & placement of the standard.....	#9,#12,#13,#15,#21

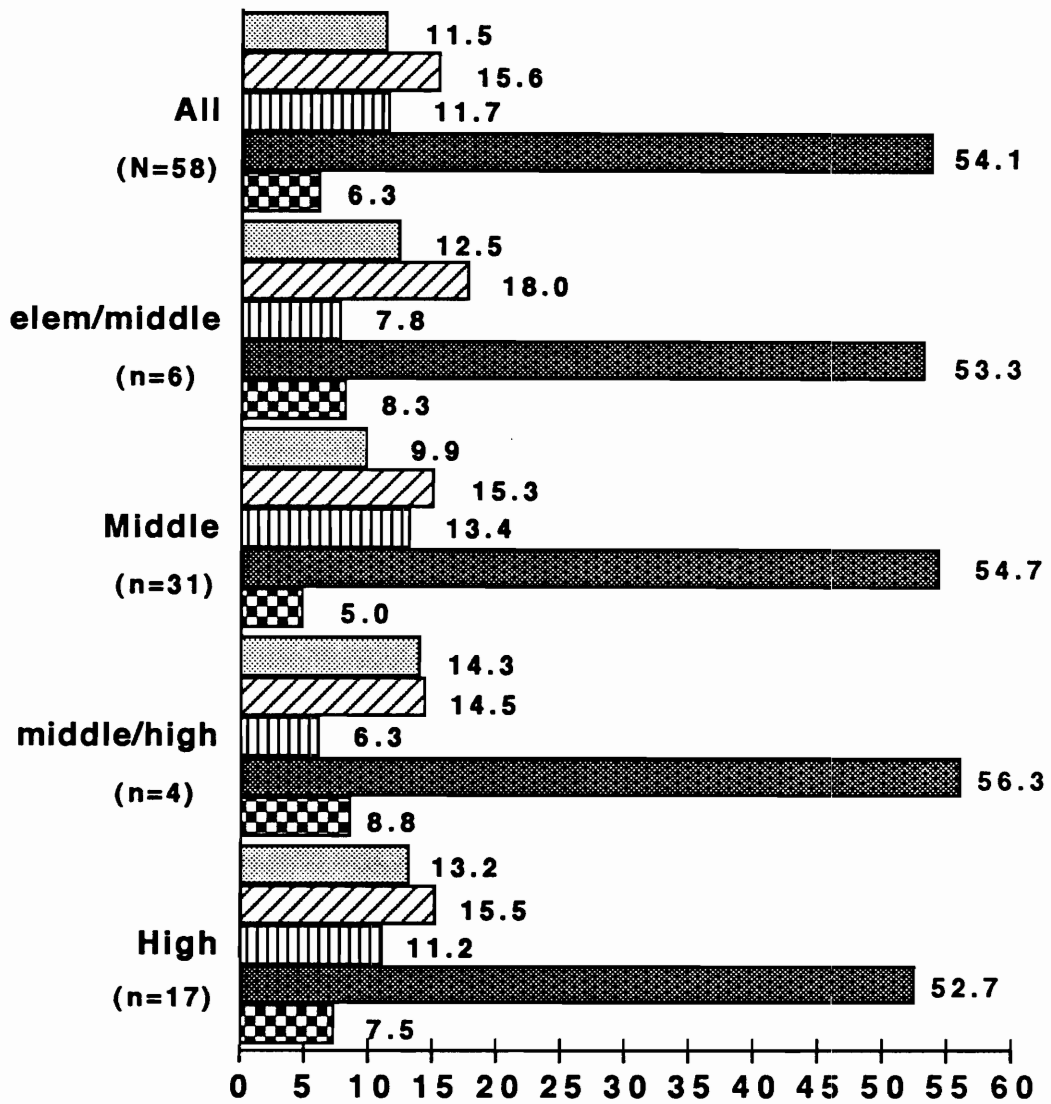







Figure 1

Percentage of Time Spent in Client Categories

LEGEND

-  administrators
-  teachers
-  parents
-  students
-  others



spent by counselors with client categories is similar. Figure 1 also makes clear that, at all levels, of the time counselors spend with people, over half of that time is indeed spent with students. Again, across levels, teachers are next in the client group with whom counselors spend the most time. Administrators come in third at all levels except middle school where parents are the group that comes in third.

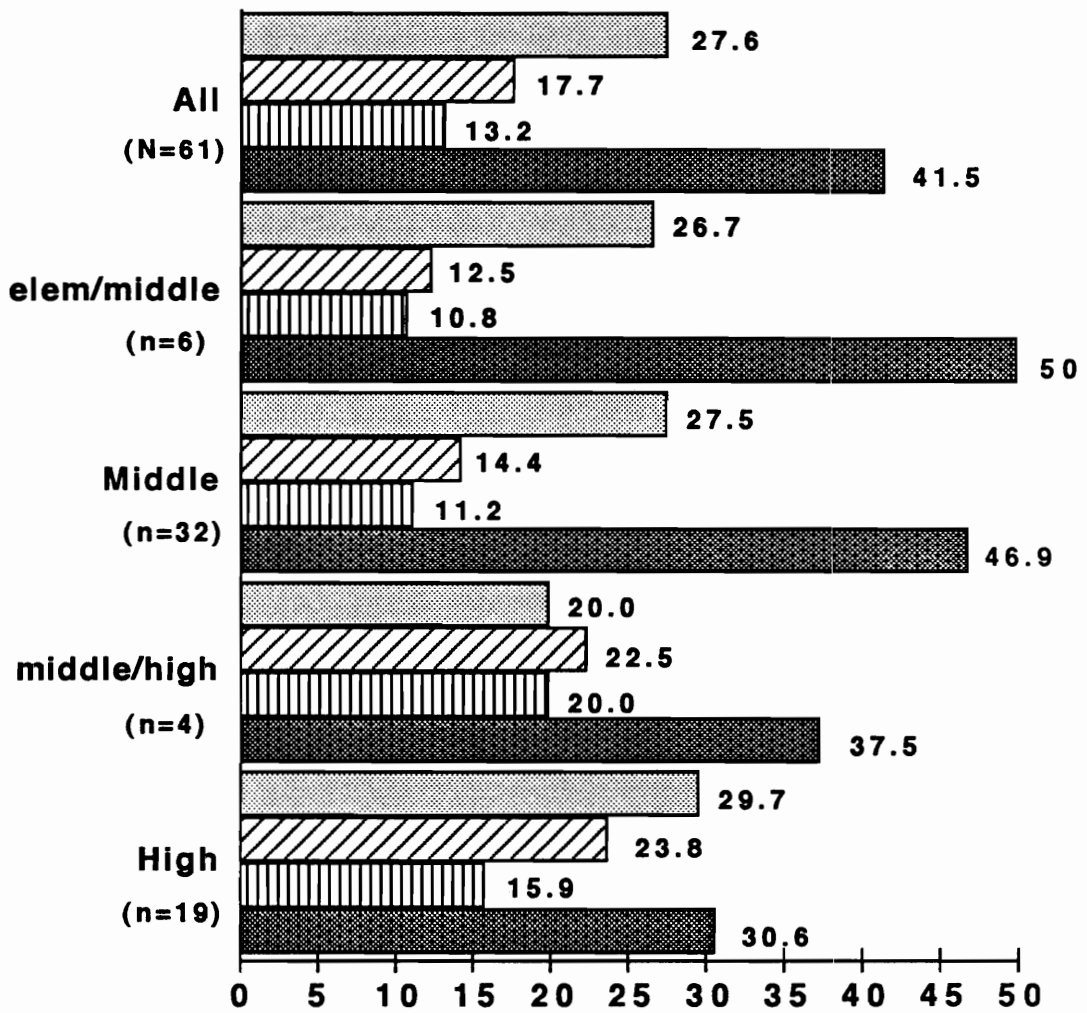
More than half of the respondents (55.2%) indicated that they spent some time with the client category "other," and identified some of the types of clients comprising this category: community agencies, court services, social services, colleagues, special education personnel, school psychologists, supervisors, mental health workers, college representatives, military recruiters, clerical assistants, school board member, school nurse, student teacher, and tutors.

Although academic and educational domains are usually treated as one, the researcher chose to differentiate (with respect to research question A2) between time spent on issues dealing with academic achievement and functioning in the current school year (academic domain), and issues dealing with educational and vocational planning decisions affecting the future (educational domain). A similar distinction was used by Fairchild and Newell (1980). Therefore, four distinct service domains of guidance and counseling were designated. Attempting to ensure a high level of

consistency, the researcher included, in each questionnaire packet, a one page Definition Sheet (see Appendix A) for survey participants to consult so that the terms used on the questionnaire would be understood as clearly and uniformly as possible and less subject to interpretation. In addition to including definitions of the four guidance and counseling domains, the Definition Sheet also defined the terms Counseling Functions and Guidance Functions, consistent with the 1989 "Procedures for Implementing the Sixty Percent Counseling Standard in the Public Schools in Virginia."

In answer to research question A2, of the time spent in the various guidance and counseling domains, respondents reported spending the most time in the personal/social domain and the least time in the career domain. Figure 2 shows clearly that the middle school counselors spend a greater percentage of time than do high school counselors in the personal/social domain. Also noticeable is that the pattern for the middle/high group is different from that of the others. This group spends the non-personal/social time almost equally divided among the other three domains whereas the other groups devote the non-personal social time first to academic, then to educational, and last to career topics. The high school group spends more time in the educational and career domains than does the middle school group, but as a whole little counselor time is being devoted to the career domain.

Figure 2 reveals an expected contrast between time spent



**Figure 2**

**Percentage of Time Spent  
in Domains**

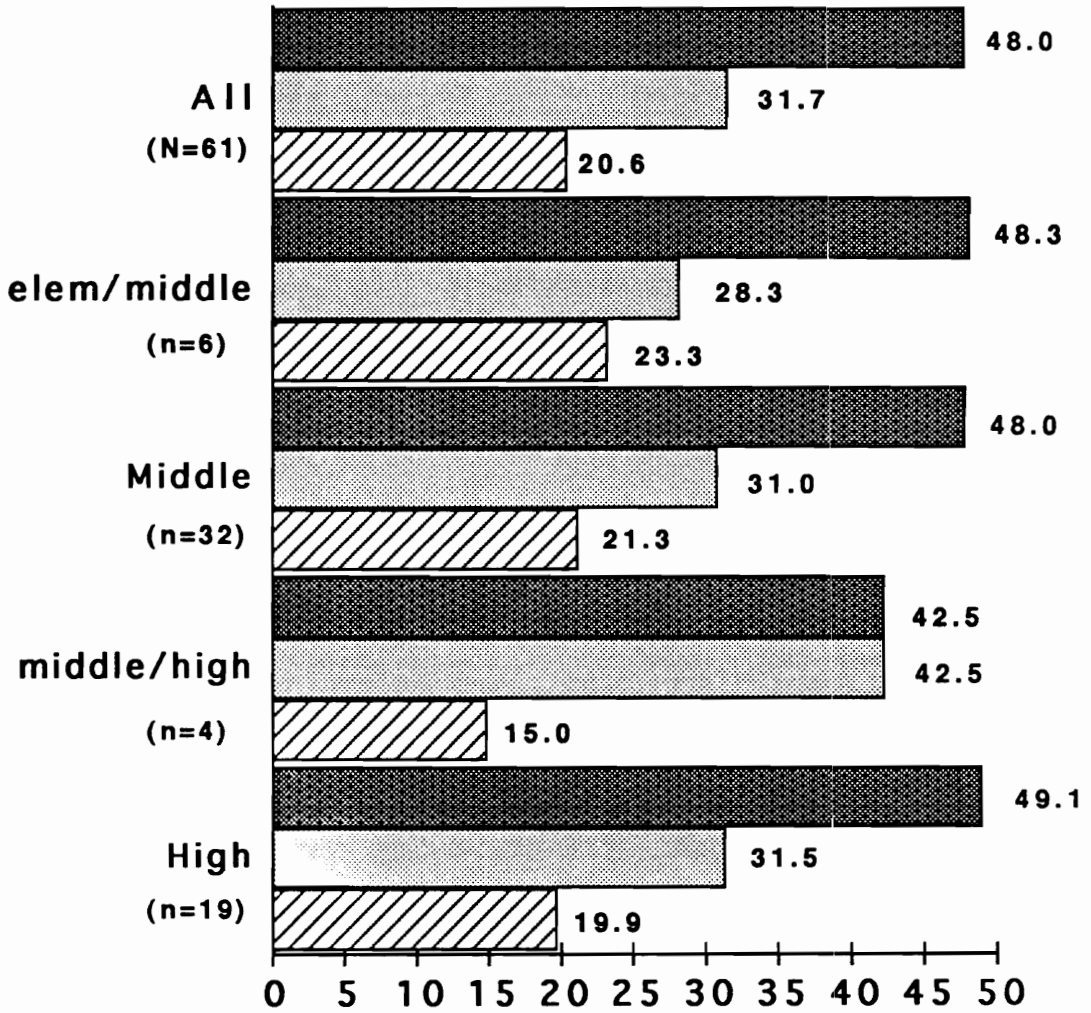
**LEGEND**

-  academic
-  educational
-  career
-  personal/social

in the educational domain and time spent in the personal/social domain. In the educational domain the time spent rises steadily from the lower grades to the higher grades: elementary/middle group (12.5%); Middle group (14.4%); middle/high group (22.5%); High group (23.8%). Conversely, in the personal/social domain the pattern is reversed, showing a decline in time spent from the lower to the higher grades: elementary/middle group (50%); Middle group (46.9%); middle/high group (37.5%); High group (30.6%).

In response to research question A3, Virginia counselors working in one-counselor schools reported spending 48% of their time in the Counseling category, 31.7% of their time in the Guidance category, and 20.6% of their time in the category designated as Other, defined as "activities that are neither counseling nor guidance." Figure 3 reveals that the pattern of time distribution is similar for all the groups, except for the combined middle/high school counselors who reported spending equal amounts of time in counseling and in guidance activities. They also spent more time in guidance than did the other counselors, and less time than the other groups in activities that were neither counseling nor guidance. What is disturbing, however, is that at all levels so much time is being spent in the category "Other," and less than 50% of the counselor's time is being spent counseling.

To answer research question B1, the respondents were asked to identify the major non-counseling and non-guidance duties to which they were currently assigned and to indicate



**Figure 3**  
**Percentage of Time Spent in**  
**Counseling, Guidance &**  
**Other Activities**

**LEGEND**

-  counseling
-  guidance
-  other

the average percent time spent on these duties. The average number of non-counseling, non-guidance duties assigned to the sixty two respondents was 2.0 (Table 2). The number of non-counseling, non-guidance duties assigned ranged from zero to seven, and the median percent time spent on these duties was 10.0. The counselors working in combined settings report spending a higher percentage of time on these assigned duties than do the other groups. A comparison of responses to questionnaire items 2 and 20 reveals a general inconsistency between the average time counselors reported spending in the category of activities considered neither counseling nor guidance. This inconsistency in responses may be due in part to the wording of questionnaire items 2 and 20, the former asking for total percentage of time spent in the category "Other," and the latter asking the percentage of time counselors specifically spend on non-counseling, non-guidance duties assigned to them. It would seem that some of these non-counseling, non-guidance duties are assigned and ongoing, and performed routinely though under pressure, while others may be assumed by the counselor even though they have not been specifically delegated to the counselor. The percentage reported for questionnaire item 2 may be higher because this figure would include both the "inappropriate" duties in the category, "Other," performed by the counselor as assigned as well as those performed that were not actually assigned. In sum, the responses to questionnaire item 20 reveal that across levels there seems to be some abuse of counselor time

Table 2

Non-Counseling and Non-Guidance Duties Assigned  
to Counselors (Quantitative)

(N = 62)

Level	Range	(Q item 20)		(Q item 2)
		Mean #Duties	Median %Time	Compared to Fig.3
elem/middle (n = 6)	1-5	2.7	15.0%	23.3
Middle (n = 32)	0-6	2.0	5.0%	21.3
middle/high (n = 4)	1-4	2.0	18.0%	15.0
High (n = 20)	0-7	1.9	5.0%	19.9
Combined (N = 62)	0-7	2.0	10.0%	20.6

with regard to the types of duties counselors are being assigned, many of which are deemed outside the appropriate role of the school counselor. Table 3 lists the duties specified in response to questionnaire item 20. Among such assignments the one most frequently named (eighteen times) by the respondents falls under the general heading of clerical tasks and includes such duties as maintenance of cumulative records, preparation of student transcripts, filing, and typing. Working on "administrative tasks," such as administrative reports, discipline, attendance, truancy, and constructing the master schedule was indicated sixteen times. The next most frequently assigned non-counseling, non-guidance duty named was in the category consisting of such activities as bus duty, hall duty, locker duty, study hall duty, homeroom duty and cafeteria duty. These were indicated fifteen times. There can be no doubt, based on these counselors' responses, that many counselors are being assigned duties that are considered outside the appropriate role of the school counselor as defined by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee. In their document (pp. 7-8), the Committee listed some of the tasks deemed non-counseling or non-guidance related (# 1-13) and tasks that should be performed, not by counselors, but by clerical workers (#14-19) as follows:

1. constructing the master schedule;
2. assuming responsibility for the administration of the school's educational testing program;



Table 3

Non-counseling & Non-guidance Duties Assigned  
to Counselors (Qualitative)

(N = 62)

Duties Named	by # Counselors	by % Counselors
Clerical	18	29.0
Administrative	16	25.8
Bus, Hall, Homeroom, Locker, Lunch, Study	15	24.2
School Test Administration	8	12.9
Club Sponsorship	7	11.3
Chairing Child Study	6	9.7
Chairing Committees	6	9.7
Coordinating Gifted Programs	4	6.5
Special Education	4	6.5

Duties named 2 or fewer times:  
covering classes, gathering  
homework, conducting social  
histories, intramural activity

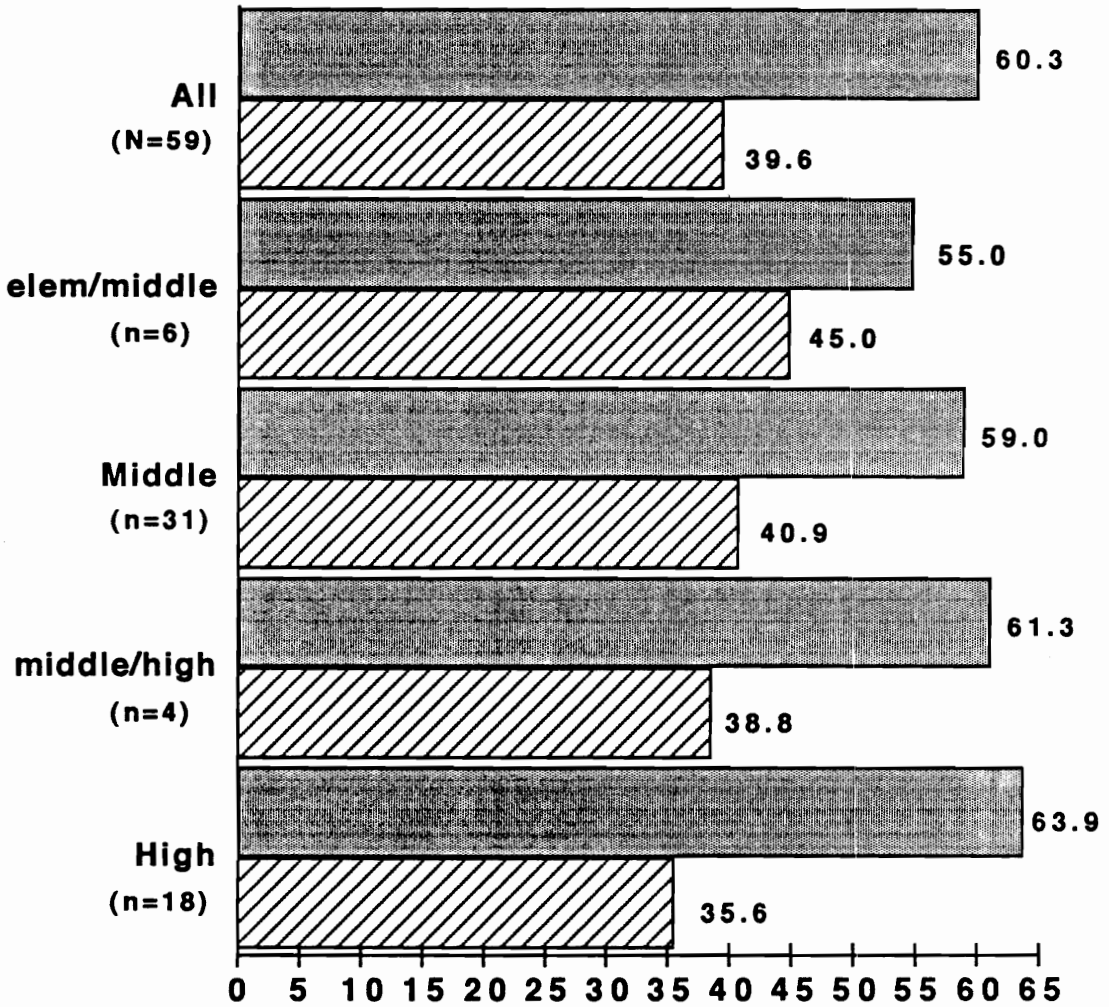
Percentages total more than 100 due to multiple responses.

3. chairing a child study or an eligibility committee;
4. acting as case managers for special education referrals;
5. testing, screening, and coordinating the application and placement for special student programs, such as programs for gifted students;
6. enforcing punishment for student misbehavior;
7. planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating non-guidance curricula;
8. preparing routine administrative reports not related to guidance functions;
9. substituting for the administration in non-guidance meetings;
10. performing hall, bus, study hall, in-school suspension/detention, and cafeteria duties;
11. coordinating homebound instruction;
12. gathering homework for absent students;
13. serving as an attendance officer, homeroom teacher, or substitute teacher;
14. maintenance of cumulative records;
15. clerical duties such as filing, typing, and completing record forms;
16. preparation of student transcripts;
17. duplication of materials;
18. searching for and recording demographic data;
19. attendance accounting.

Research question B3 inquires how counselors are spending their time, and the extent to which counselors are in control of the use of time. In response to questionnaire item 4 counselors reported spending more of their time in the response or reactive mode (60.3%) than in the discretionary mode (39.6%). This means that the majority of their time is

spent reacting to others' requests and responding to contacts initiated by others. The 39.6% figure in the discretionary mode represents the average percentage of time counselors say they are spending in activities they plan and initiate. A look at Figure 4 reveals that the pattern is the same across levels; however high school counselors report having less discretionary time than do middle school counselors.

Also addressing the issue of who is in control of the counselor's time is questionnaire item #27, which asks the counselors surveyed if they have an open door policy. There were sixty-one respondents to this question and all answered in the affirmative. Such unanimous agreement suggests that these counselors have decided that they must be available at all times, "on call," and ready to respond to their clients. Such a view of their role also suggests that these counselors would be unlikely to take a planning period or even a non-working break since that would make them unavailable during a portion of the school day. That this is indeed the case is confirmed by the responses to questionnaire items 5 and 6, which inquired whether they set aside time during the school day for a planning period and whether they take a non-working break during the school day. These two questionnaire items were completed by all sixty-four respondents, 86% of whom indicated that they did not regularly designate any school time for a planning period (Table 4). Forty-one of these counselors offered explanatory comments claiming they were either on call constantly or had no time to take a



**Figure 4**  
**Percentage of Time Spent:**  
**Response & Discretionary**

**LEGEND**

-  **Response**
-  **Discretionary**

Table 4

Number and % of Counselors with No Planning Period & Reasons

(N = 64)

	<u># Counselors</u>	<u>% Counselors</u>
<u>No Planning Period</u>	55	85.9
<u>Reasons provided:</u>	41	74.6
On call constantly	17	30.9
no time	9	16.4
plan after hours	9	16.4
not assigned a planning period	4	7.3
prevented by interruptions	1	1.8
too many needy kids & phone calls	1	1.8

planning period.

To the question of taking a non-working break, fifty-one out of sixty-four respondents answered that they did not take a break (Table 5). Thirty-six of these offered explanatory comments. Twenty of these thirty-six (39.2%) said that the only breaks they took were lunch or bathroom, while eleven explained that there was no time or that they were on call throughout the day. A few others offered the insight that even when they take a lunch break teachers will discuss student problems with them or talk shop. In other words, even breaks are not true relaxation breaks.

Although the reasons provided by these counselors for not taking a regular, daily planning period, nor a regular, daily non-working break during school hours may vary, one constant remains. These counselors on the whole share the conviction that they must be on call all the time to respond to the needs of their clients. That the counseling professional in the one-counselor school experiences a great deal of pressure, even if self-imposed, to be constantly available is clear. Moreover, this pressure may be due in part to the very fact that he or she is the only designated counselor on the premises. The pressure to be constantly available may also partially explain why these counselors are more prone to function in a response mode than in a discretionary mode.

Table 5

Number and % Counselors Who Do Not Take a Break & Reasons

(N = 64)

	<u># Counselors</u>	<u>% Counselors</u>
<u>Take Break</u>	13	20.3
<u>No Break</u>	51	79.7
<u>Reasons:</u>	36	70.6
only take lunch/bathroom	20	39.2
no time/on call all day	11	21.6
sometimes not even lunch	1	1.9
prevented by shop talk	1	1.9
students' needs come first	1	1.9
would feel guilty	1	1.9
when?	1	1.9

### Time Documentation

Another subset of five questions was developed to address research question C which dealt with the issue of time documentation and how counselors were doing in meeting Virginia's sixty percent counseling accreditation standard. These questions are:

1. What percentage of counselors are documenting their time as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee?
2. What methods of time documentation are currently being practiced by counselors?
3. What percentage of counselors claim compliance with the sixty percent counseling accreditation standard and to what do they attribute their success?
4. What factors are identified as barriers to compliance by those counselors not able to maintain the minimal counseling standard of sixty percent?
5. What views do counselors hold regarding the attainability of the counseling standard and the propriety of its placement at sixty percent?

Section II of the questionnaire, *Documentation of Counselor Time*, included nine items - 7 through 15 (Appendix A) - designed to answer the above subset of questions.

The responses tabulated in Table 6 show that a high



Table 6

Percentage and Method of Counselor Time Documentation

(N = 64)

---

<u>%</u>	<u>% Not</u>	<u>% Inconsistently</u>
<u>Documenting</u>	<u>Documenting</u>	<u>Documenting</u>
82.8	12.5	4.7

---

Of the 82.8% who document:

61% use counseling logs

30% use daily calendar

9% use teacher's planbook

Documentation Method Used:Time Analysis      Tabulation

59.4

23.4

percentage (82.8%) of Virginia counselors in one-counselor middle and high schools are documenting their use of time. Of the 17.2% remaining, 12.5% responded that they are not documenting their use of time, while 4.7% responded that they do not have time to document or that they do so only inconsistently when they do have time. Of the 82.8% of the counselors who consistently document, 59.4% record both the activities engaged in and the amount of time spent in each activity (i.e., time analysis), the method of time documentation recommended by the Virginia Department of Education. The remaining 23.4% record only the number of times an activity occurs or the number of clients seen (i.e., tabulation).

Of those counselors documenting their use of time, most (61%) are doing so in counseling logs, as recommended by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee. Seven percent of these counselors use some combination of the counseling log and other methods; for example, recording some of their documentation on a calendar or in a notebook or teacher's planbook. The second most common method of documentation reported is the use of a daily calendar on which to record how time is spent. This method is used by 30% of the counselors. The least common method is to record the use of time in a teacher's planbook, a method used by 9% of the counselors.

Questionnaire item 9 sought counselors' opinion about the documentation process required of them by the State

Department of Education. Fifty-nine of the counselors (92.2%) chose to respond to this questionnaire item, and a breakdown of their responses appears in Table 7. More than half of these respondents (57.6%) indicated that the documentation process was either "no problem" or "a necessary nuisance," while 30.5% thought it was "an unnecessary hassle." Some other opinions provided by the remaining respondents were that the documentation process "is time consuming," and that its "intent is good, but it sometimes gets in the way of doing necessary things. It does not take into account all the necessary activities of secondary counselors (Ex.-recommendations, applications, financial aid)." Another counselor's comments indicates that the documentation process helps her assess her accomplishments and time spent: "Sometimes I think I have done nothing until I start updating my log. Also helps me to be honest with myself as to how my time is spent."

In response to questionnaire item 14, which asked whether counselors were able to attain the sixty percent counseling standard, thirty-four respondents answered in the affirmative, while thirty responded that they were not (Table 8). Those who responded that they were able to attain the standard attributed it to a variety of reasons, the two most frequently cited being that they do their paperwork after school hours and that they have either very good administrative or staff cooperation. It is worthwhile to point out here that of the thirty-four counselors claiming to

Table 7

Counselor Opinion of Required Documentation Process

(N = 59)

---

<u>n</u>	<u>Phrase Selected:</u>	<u>% Counselors</u>
10	is not a problem	16.9
24	is a necessary nuisance	40.7
18	is an unnecessary hassle	30.5
7	other opinion	11.9

---

Table 8

Reasons Counselors Attribute to Success/Failure  
in Attaining the Standard

(N = 64)			
Attaining		Not Attaining	
53%		47%	
(n = 34)		(n = 30)	
Reason	Frequency	Reason	Frequency
do paperwork after hours	6	non-counseling duties	11
admins/staff cooperation	6	no secretary	8
in tune with student needs	5	paperwork & clerical	8
set that priority/make time	4	one-counselor school	6
*count some guidance time	3	high enrollment	3
careful planning	2	teacher team consultation	1
indiv & group counseling	2	no assistant principal	1
*averages over the year	2	no testing coordinator	1
leave out other things	1		
competent secretary	1		
get paid to do it	1		
no extraneous duties	1		
it's mandated	1		
make myself available	1		
*beginning of school year	1		
*count phone counseling	1		
<u>use student aides</u>	<u>1</u>		

\* not following guidelines as to what to count as "counseling"

Reasons total more than 64 due to multiple responses.

be meeting the mandate, seven made responses that suggested they were "bending the rules" in their interpretation of the State Department of Education's definition of what constitutes "counseling activities."

The three main reasons that counselors gave for not being able to attain the sixty percent counseling standard were that they were assigned too many non-counseling duties by the principal, that they had too much paperwork and too many clerical duties, and that they had no secretary. The one-counselor setting itself was named by six of the thirty counselors as a barrier to attaining the standard. In their essays describing what it is like working in a one-counselor setting, several counselors offered comments which might in part explain the phenomenon of their being assigned non-counseling duties by their principals. The counselors claimed that their administrators did not understand the appropriate role of the school counselor. One counselor wrote, "My principal seems to be very unattached and unaware of what guidance counselors are supposed to be doing." Other counselors mention this same problem: "Some principals are not guidance oriented"; "I feel like the 60% mandate will not be fully implemented until administrators are educated in the appropriate roles of a counselor"; "Counselors become the 'designee' for whomever and are often not allowed to practice effectively either guidance or counseling activities. The unknowing appear to be in charge and in positions directing those who spent years acquiring needed

skills for guidance and counseling." In a similar vein, one counselor wrote, "My principal is so overworked that he has to designate work to me that does not fit into my job description. I don't mind helping him, but it does weaken the program of guidance and counseling." Another counselor's comments reflect the unfulfilled desire to do much more counseling than is required and the accompanying reality of factors that serve to prevent it: "My ideal situation would be to spend 90% of my time counseling students without having to document how my time is spent, to be completely relieved of clerical duties, and to be relieved of all administrative duties unrelated to guidance and counseling."

One factor having impact on whether counselors are able to attain the 60% standard is access to secretarial/clerical support. As a group the respondents reported having access to clerical/secretarial assistance an average of approximately three hours daily, and indicated that in order to do an optimum job they would need twice that number of hours in additional assistance daily. Fifty-two percent of the counselors reported that they have no guidance secretary. Thirty-eight percent of the counselors reported having a full time guidance secretary, and ten percent, have a part time secretary. However, some of these counselors who have full or part time guidance secretaries report that their secretaries are not stationed in the guidance office, which makes actual access to secretarial assistance a problem. At least half of the counselors are functioning throughout most

of their day without secretarial assistance, which contributes to these counselors' expressed feelings of being overloaded and overworked.

Questionnaire item #15 asked whether more needed to be done to allow more time for counseling and, if so, what. This item was intended to allow counselors who knew what barriers in their settings were impeding their compliance with the 60% counseling standard to suggest remedies. The responses are tabulated in Table 9. Seventy-five percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Of these respondents, 31.3% indicated the need to hire a full time guidance secretary, and 22.9% pointed out the need to eliminate the non-counseling and non-guidance duties for which counselors were assigned responsibility. Specific recommendations made in this regard included: "hire an in-house special ed director"; "remove responsibility of gifted/talented program"; "hire a social worker and truant officer." A common recommendation, made by 16.7% of the counselors, was to hire an additional counselor. Another 10.4% mentioned the need to hire clerical personnel, while 8.3% noted the need to reduce paperwork. Several counselors (8.3%), all of whom worked in schools having no scheduled study hall periods, suggested that such periods be built into the school day in order to improve access to students.

Questionnaire item 21 asked the counselors to select the one response from those provided by the researcher that would most help them to spend more time in counseling, or to check



Table 9

Counselor Recommendations for Increasing Counseling Time

(N = 48)

n	Recommendation	% Counselors
15	Hire a full time guidance secretary	31.3
11	Eliminate non-counseling/non-guidance duties	22.9
8	Hire an additional counselor	16.7
5	Hire clerical personnel	10.4
4	Less paperwork	8.3
4	Improve access to students	8.3
3	Move scheduling to administrators	6.2
2	Heighten understanding of counselor role	4.2
2	Computerize records	2.1
1	Hire more responsible leaders at county level	2.1

Total percent exceeds 100 due to multiple responses

"other" and provide their own answer. The responses are tabulated in Table 10. Sixty-one counselors responded to this question. Hiring additional clerical help (36.1%) and hiring an additional counselor (37.7%) were the two most frequent selections. Hiring an additional counselor to reduce the ratio of students to counselor was selected by 19.7% while 18% preferred to split the guidance counselor position into two separate positions – a guidance specialist, and a counseling specialist. The selection of this response implied that an additional counselor would be hired allowing the position to be split by function. Even though the questionnaire item did not explicitly make this point, several respondents pointed out that an additional counselor would have to be hired before the position could be split. The table was therefore presented to reflect that implication. Six counselors (9.8%) checked "other" and wrote in their own responses. Of these, several counselors recommended a reduction in the time they were taken away from counseling activities to do non-counseling activities.

Questionnaire item 12 asked if the counselors believed it beneficial to have a minimum counseling standard in place. Sixty-one counselors (95%) responded. Forty-three (70.5%) answered "Yes"; eighteen (29.5%) answered "No."

Only forty-seven counselors (73%) responded to questionnaire item 13, which asked them where **they** would set the minimum counseling standard, if it were up to them. This question was essentially designed to elicit counselor opinion

Table 10

Counselor Selections of Most Helpful Step Toward  
Increasing Counseling Time

(N = 61)

n	Researcher's Suggestions	% Counselors
22	Hire additional clerical help	36.1
23	Hire additional counselor:	37.7
(12)	Each functions as generalist	(19.7)
(11)	Split duties	(18.0)
10	(selected combination of responses)	16.4
6	Other	9.8

of the placement of the standard at 60%. The responses ranged from 25% to 90%, with the mean at 56.6%; both the median and the mode were 50%. Response frequencies are presented in Table 11. The data here show that the majority of counselors (57.4%) believed the standard is set too high and should be set lower than 60%. The remaining respondents were evenly split, 21.3% indicating that the standard should be set higher and 21.3% that it should remain at 60%. These results are not surprising, given that 47% of the respondents also claim that they are not generally able to attain the 60% standard. Table 12 presents a cross tabulation of counselors' placement of the standard at either below 60% or at-or-above 60% with whether or not they are themselves able to attain the standard. There is no difference in counselor opinion regarding placement of the standard based on their own attainment. Of the seventeen counselors who chose not to answer questionnaire item 13, eight were attaining the standard and nine were not.

One of the factors playing a major part in hampering counselors as they try to attain the 60% counseling standard seems indeed to be the one-counselor setting itself. This claim was made by six respondents in answering questionnaire item 14, where they explained why they were not able to attain the 60% counseling standard. This factor is again suggested in the responses to Section VII of the Questionnaire, "Personal Statement," where respondents were invited to express their view of what it is like to work in a

Table 11

Where Counselors Would Set the Minimum Counseling Standard

(N = 47)

---

% at Which Counselors Set Standard	Frequency
90	2
80	3
75	1
70	3
65	1
60	10
55	1
50	20
45	2
40	3
25	1

---

Table 12

Cross Tabulation of Counselors' Placement of Counseling  
Standard by Their Attainment of the Standard at 60%

(N = 47)

Placement	#Counselors Attaining	#Counselors Not Attaining	Totals
Set at/or Above 60%	11	9	20
Set Below 60%	15	12	27
Totals	26	21	47

one-counselor school. Forty-nine counselors (77%) accepted the invitation and wrote personal essays, many of considerable length. There were some common threads woven throughout the responses, responses that ranged across all levels. Eighteen counselors specifically pointed out that being in a one-counselor setting inundated them with "too many diverse activities," "too many grade levels," and "too many responsibilities." It meant "wearing many hats," playing a "constant catch up game," "trying to be everything to everybody," and being "pulled in a thousand directions." Nine counselors singled out that there was "too much clerical work," or that they needed a secretary or additional clerical help. Several counselors wrote that an additional counselor was needed. Along similar lines, nine counselors used the terms "overloaded" or "overwhelmed." Ten counselors used words such as "hectic," "very busy," "stressful," "exhausting," and "strenuous." Eight counselors mentioned that they were involved in duties that were outside their job description. Ten counselors were concerned that there was no counselor colleague to consult with or talk to or cover for them when they were out. These counselors felt isolated and lonely, while seven enjoyed the autonomy of being totally in charge of their program. Four of the counselors expressed dismay that their principals were not informed of or tuned in to what guidance and counseling was all about. These personal responses were characterized by the very strong feelings that emanated from them. Most of the counselors

expressed a love of their work but at the same time an enormous frustration at being overloaded, especially with tasks they did not consider to be counselor functions.

Although the feelings expressed by these one-counselor school practitioners may be feelings that are experienced by counselors working in multi-counselor schools, the counselors in this study who shared their feelings attributed them to the one-counselor setting where they believed they were overloaded. Many of them expressed the connection between being overloaded with non-counseling duties, often demanded of counselors working in small, one-counselor settings, with not being able to meet the 60% counseling standard.

Although at the outset of this study the researcher did not anticipate addressing any gender issues with respect to the role-performance of Virginia school counselors, a pattern potentially relating to gender was incidentally noticed while analyzing three questionnaire items – 20a, the number of non-counseling/non-guidance duties assigned, 20b, the percentage of time being expended on these extraneous duties; and 31, the degree of secretarial assistance allocated to counselors. In brief, female counselors were assigned more non-counseling, non-guidance duties than were their male counterparts; female counselors were spending more time on these duties than were their male counterparts; and female counselors had less secretarial assistance than did their male counterparts (See Tables 13 & 14). This discrepancy between male and female counselors may, however, be due to



Table 13

Differences by Gender of Assigned Non-Counseling/Non-Guidance Duties

(N = 62)

Assigned Non-Counseling/Non-Guidance Duties			
	Range	Average #Duties	Average %Time Spent
Females (n=42)	0-7	2.2	15.3
Males (n=20)	0-5	1.7	11.4

Table 14

Differences by Gender of Degree of Secretarial Assistance

(N = 64)

---

	Secretary		
	None	Part-Time	Full-Time
Females (n=43)	62.8%	2.3%	34.9%
Males (n=21)	38.1%	23.8%	38.1%

---

factors other than gender such as school size and/or the nature of the assignments being handled by these counselors. Further research needs to be conducted to explore this finding more fully since one of the competing hypotheses suggests the possibility that sexist attitudes in the workplace may adversely affect the female school counselor's role performance.

### **Summary**

Across levels, of the time spent with people, counselors indeed spend most of that time with students, and also across levels most of that time is spent dealing with students' personal/social concerns. The academic domain, in most cases, receives the next highest amount of counselor time. The counselors in the combined middle/high school setting report spending more time in guidance activities than do the counselors in the other settings. On average counselors report spending 48% of their time in counseling activities, 31.7% in guidance, and 20.6% in other activities. They report spending an average of 10.0% of their time in assigned duties that are outside the area of counseling or guidance. Much of the time spent in activities that are neither counseling nor guidance based involves clerical tasks, administrative tasks, and the supervision of students (bus, hall, locker, lunch, etc.).

With regard to control of time, counselors report spending approximately 60% of their time in the response mode, and 40% of their time in the discretionary mode. However, 86% of the counselors do not regularly designate any school time for a planning period, and 80% say they take no break during the workday. All of the respondents have an open door policy, making themselves available to their clients all of the time that they are in their offices. These counselors share in common the view that they should be "on call," so to speak, throughout the school day.

Most of the counselors (82.8%) report documenting their use of time. Of these, 71.7% use the method of time analysis, recording both the activities engaged in and the amount of time expended in these activities, and 28.3% use tabulation, recording only the number of activities engaged in or the number of clients seen. Most of the counselors report documenting either in counseling logs (61%) or on daily calendars (30%). A little over half claim to have either no problem with the documentation process or consider it a "necessary nuisance," while 30% consider it an "unnecessary hassle." The percentage of counselors who claim to be able to attain the 60% counseling standard (53%) is only slightly higher than the percentage who claim they are unable to attain it (47%). The primary factors counselors identify as facilitating compliance with the 60% standard include administrator and staff support and cooperation, doing paperwork after hours, being in tune with students'

needs, and setting compliance as a priority. The primary factors counselors identify as barriers to compliance with the standard include assignment to non-counseling duties, lack of secretarial support, too much clerical and paper work, and the operational constraints of a one-counselor setting.

With regard to offering their own remedies toward making more counseling time available, 31% of the respondents mentioned the need for a full-time guidance secretary, and 23% pointed out the need to eliminate the non-counseling and non-guidance duties being assigned to them. Nearly 17% thought there was a need for an additional counselor, and 10% said there was a need to hire clerical personnel. When asked to select from among several choices the best route toward gaining more counseling time, nearly 38% chose hiring an additional counselor.

With regard to counselor opinion of the standard's placement at 60%, more than half of the respondents (57.4%) thought that it should be set lower. This response is consistent with the fact that 47% of the respondents reported being unable to attain the standard as currently set. Some counselors, however, thought it was correctly placed (21%), and an equal number thought it should be set higher. Idealistically, counselors seem to want the counseling standard set high, but pragmatically, given the conditions existing in their school settings, it seems an unrealistic expectation.

Most of the feelings that emanated from the counselor essays on what it is like to work in a one-counselor setting reinforce the schism between what is expected and what is deliverable. The essays reflect a common emotional experience among the counselors working in one-counselor schools. There is a duality of emotion, described in phrases such as "frustrating and rewarding," "mixed joys and frustrations." Most also express the feeling of being inundated by their work: "pulled in a thousand directions," "too many grade levels," "wear many hats," "exhausting," "hectic," "too many responsibilities," "overloaded," "overwhelmed," and "trying to be everything to everybody."

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Log Results**

#### **Organization of this Chapter**

This chapter provides demographic information about the log participants who are a subsample of the questionnaire respondents, describes the log instrument and the process used to analyze the log data, presents the log results per se, and then compares the results of the log data with that of the questionnaire.

#### **About the Log Participants**

All the log participants work in a middle school or high school setting. Initially, fourteen middle school counselors agreed to participate in the log component; eleven followed through, a response rate of 78.6 %. Nine high school counselors also agreed to participate in the log component; eight of these followed through, a response rate of 88.9 %. The combined total of log participants, nineteen out of twenty-three, represents a response rate of 82.6 %.

A composite profile of the log participants reveals that, as a group, they were very similar to the total pool of questionnaire respondents. Of the eleven middle school

participants, six identified the schools at which they worked as rural; four, as urban settings; and one as suburban. All eight high school participants identified their schools as rural. Expressed in percentages, 78.9% of log participants identified their work setting as rural; 15.8%, as urban; and 5.3% as suburban. The corresponding figures for the questionnaire respondents are 76.6% rural, 17.2% urban, and 6.2% suburban. Females constituted 68.4% of the log participants and 67.2% of the questionnaire pool as a whole. The average age of the log participants was 45.3; that of the questionnaire pool, 43.5 years. The average number of years counseling experience of the log participants was 11.2, that of questionnaire respondents, 9.6, and their average number of years working in a one counselor school 7.2. For the pool of questionnaire respondents, these figures were 9.6 and 6.5 respectively.

### **Description of the Log**

The log (see Appendix F) was formatted on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper, divided into five columns with these major headings: "Duration of Contact or Activity," "Client Category," "Contact Initiated by," "Description of Activity," and "Type of Activity." The column headed, "Duration of Contact or Activity," is subdivided into three columns with the subheadings "Time Begun," "Time Ended," and "X here if by



phone." The "Client Category" heading has a parenthetical entry below it that reads, "student, parent, administrator, teacher, etc." so that the participant would understand what type of entry was being requested in that space. Under "Contact Initiated by" there is a parenthetical explanation – "counselor or other – please specify"– so that the counselor can indicate who it was that initiated the contact. Under "Type of Activity" there is also a parenthetical entry – "counseling, guidance, or other – please specify."

Altogether the log has on each side of the page seven columns across and thirteen rows in which to enter the data for contacts or activities. From each log entry the researcher was able to determine the number of minutes of each contact or activity; whether the contact was face-to-face or by telephone; the category of client engaged in the activity (whether the client was a student, parent, administrator, teacher, or other); who initiated the contact (the counselor or some other party); the specific activity engaged in; and how the counselor labeled the activity (counseling, guidance, or other).

### **Analysis of the Logs**

The researcher devised a log analysis sheet in order to transfer information from each participant's log to a summary data sheet for each of the two days that the counselor had

logged in. The main body of the log analysis sheet was divided into three columns headed "Counseling," "Guidance," and "Other." Each counselor contact or activity was entered into the appropriate column along with a short description of the activity, who initiated it, and its duration in minutes. Total counseling minutes, guidance minutes and other minutes were entered at the bottom of each column. Percentage of time spent in each of these categories was calculated by dividing each category of time by the total minutes logged minus time spent at lunch and at break. Calculations were also made of the percentage of time the counselor spent initiating activities versus responding to others' requests in each of the three categories of counseling, guidance, and other, as well as for the total time logged. From the short description of each guidance and counseling entry provided on every log, the researcher identified the domain of each activity as either "academic," "educational," "career," or "personal/social" so that calculations of time spent in each domain could be made. Percentage of time spent with client categories was calculated in two ways - percentage of total time spent with people and percentage of total time logged.

#### **What the Logs Reveal About Counselor Time**

In the November, 1990 cover letter (Appendix E) to the subsample of counselors who had agreed to be log

participants, they were reminded that the two days to be logged must be representative of "typical" days. They were instructed to be careful to choose days during which no atypical activities had been planned. To the researcher's knowledge all the logs received represent "typical" days in the workdays of these school counselors.

In answer to the research question regarding how counselor time is spent, the logs reveal that the counselors spend a large part of their time with students, which is the primary thrust behind the 60% counseling standard, but most of that time is not spent in counseling. The questionnaire asked respondents to report the time they spent with each client category as a percentage of the total time they spent with people and not as a percentage of the total time expended each day, which would have included time in activities not involving people (e.g., paperwork). The researcher, however, calculated from the log data the percentage of time spent with different client groups in both ways: time spent with each client category as a percentage of total time spent with people and time spent with each client category as a percentage of total time logged.

Of the total amount of time counselors logged in activities involving people (see Table 15), they spend more of that time (60.7%) with students than with other client groups. However, when one considers the proportion of time counselors reported spending with students out of the total time they logged for the day, the figure drops to 45.1%

Table 15

Log Data: Average %Time Spent with Client Categories  
Out of People Time

(N = 19)

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Average %Time Spent with Client Categories					
	Administrators	Teachers	Parents	Students	Others
Middle (n = 11)	8.3	14.7	11.4	61.8	3.8
High (n = 8)	9.2	8.6	12.4	59.1	10.8
Combined (N =19)	8.7	12.1	11.8	60.7	6.7

---

(see Table 16). The remaining time counselors report spending with people is divided as follows: 12.1% with teachers; 11.8% with parents; 8.7% with administrators; and 6.7% with others. Referring to Table 15, one can see that the distribution of time among client categories differed somewhat between the middle school and high school groups in their contact with both teachers and others. At the middle school level counselors spent more time with teachers than with parents, and little time with "others". At the high school level, time spent with administrators, parents and students is about the same as the middle school level, but the pattern is reversed in terms of time spent with teachers and others.

Distribution of counselor time among the categories of "counseling," "guidance" and "other" follows a similar pattern for middle and high school counselors (Table 17). For all nineteen log participants the average time spent in counseling was 38.9%, in guidance 31.8%, and in other activities 29.0%.

Table 18 summarizes the time spent among the four domains of counseling/guidance – academic, educational, career, and personal/social. Here the distribution of time spent differs for middle school counselors and high school counselors. The middle school group spent most of their time in the personal/social domain followed by the academic domain. The high school counselors spent almost equal time in the personal/social domain and the academic domain and

Table 16

Log Data: Average % Time Spent with Client Categories  
out of Total Time

(N = 19)

	Administrators	Teachers	Parents	Students	Others	Non-People
Middle (n = 11)	6.3	11.4	9.0	46.4	2.8	24.1
High (n = 8)	7.0	6.3	8.9	43.3	8.0	26.5
Combined (N = 19)	6.6	9.2	9.0	45.1	5.0	25.1

Table 17

Log Data: %Time Spent in Counseling, Guidance and Other

(N = 19)

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	Counseling	Guidance	Other
Middle (n = 11)	39.2	30.0	30.3
High (n = 8)	38.4	34.3	27.3
Combined (N = 19)	38.9	31.8	29.0

---

Table 18

Log Data: %Time Spent in Counseling/Guidance Domains

(N = 19)

	Academic	Educational	Career	Personal/Social
Middle School (n = 11)	27.7	6.9	9.4	56.0
High School (n = 8)	34.4	26.1	3.9	35.6
Combined (N = 19)	30.5	15.0	7.1	47.4



almost as much time in the educational domain, an area in which the middle school group spent only 6.9% of their time. Counseling and guidance activities in the career domain received the least attention by counselors in both groups – 9.4 % by the middle school group and 3.9% by the high school group.

To answer the research question that asks how counselors are doing in controlling their use of time, the distribution of counselor time spent in the "response" mode versus counselor time spent in the "discretionary" mode was examined. Table 19 summarizes the distribution of time between the response mode and the discretionary mode and shows that for all log participants the average percentage of time spent in the response mode was 68.2, while the average percentage of time spent in the discretionary mode was 31.8. On the whole the counselors spent a great deal more of their time responding or reacting to requests made by others than they did in activities they plan or initiate themselves.

#### **Inappropriate Duties Performed by Counselors**

Virtually all nineteen log participants documented some time spent in activities that are considered outside the appropriate role of the school counselor as defined by the Virginia Department of Education Statewide Committee. These duties include working on the master schedule; coordinating

Table 19

Log Data: % Response Time and % Discretionary Time

(N = 19)

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	% Response Time	% Discretionary Time
Middle	65.8	34.2
(n = 11)		
High	71.6	28.4
(n = 8)		
Combined	68.2	31.8
(N = 19)		

---

homebound instruction; maintaining cumulative records; performing hall and lunch duty; assuming administrative responsibility for the school's educational testing program; gathering homework for absent students; doing clerical tasks such as filing, typing, and completing record forms; serving as a homeroom teacher or substitute teacher; preparation of student transcripts; duplicating materials; working on attendance accounting; substituting for the administration; testing/screening applicants as well as coordinating applications for special student programs; and developing, implementing and evaluating non-guidance curricula. (See Appendix G.)

#### **Comparative Analysis of Logs with Questionnaires**

The log and questionnaire data were examined and analyzed in two ways: a comparison of the log data with the aggregate questionnaire data of those same nineteen participants, to see how close their own estimates were to their actual, documented record of activities; and a comparison of the log data with the aggregate questionnaire data of the entire respondent pool of middle school and high school counselors.

The log data confirmed the questionnaire data regarding percentage of time log participants spent in client categories out of total time spent with people (Table 20) –

Table 20

Comparison of Log Sample's Data with Same Group's  
Questionnaire Data Re: %Time Spent with Clients  
out of People Time

	Administrators	Teachers	Parents	Students	Others
Log (N=19)	8.7	12.1	11.8	60.7	6.7
Questionnaire (N=19)	10.5	14.9	12.9	53.4	6.7
Total Sample (N=54)	11.1	15.3	12.6	53.9	5.9

that these counselors were spending most of their time with students, followed by teachers, parents, administrators, and others. The aggregate questionnaire data provided by the entire population of fifty-four middle and high school counselors shows the same pattern. However, the log participants' documentation also revealed that they had underestimated, in responding to the questionnaire, the time actually being spent with students. More time was being spent with students than had been estimated on the questionnaire.

With regard to percentage of time spent in the area of guidance, log data was consistent with the questionnaire data (Table 21) obtained both from log participants and the larger pool. However, according to the log data much less time was actually spent in the area of "counseling" and much more time in "other" activities (neither counseling nor guidance) than had been estimated both by the log participants themselves and by the larger pool when responding to the questionnaire. More specifically, of the eleven middle school log participants, five had indicated on their questionnaires that they were attaining the counseling standard of 60%. However, none of the counselors averaged 60% counseling for both of the days they logged their activities, and only two of these counselors attained the standard on one of the two days logged. Of the eight high school log participants, six had indicated on their questionnaires that they were attaining the standard, yet none of them attained it on either of the

Table 21

% Time Spent in Counseling, Guidance & Other by Log Data, Log Participants' Questionnaire Data, & Middle and High Questionnaire Data

(N = 19)

	% Time Counseling		% Time Guidance		% Time Other	
	Log	Questionnaire	Log	Questionnaire	Log	Questionnaire
Middle (n=11)	39.2	52.2	30.0	35.7	30.3	12.1
High (n=8)	38.4	52.5	34.3	27.5	27.3	21.3
Combined (N=19)	38.9	52.3	31.8	32.1	29.0	16.2
Total Sample (N=54)	—	48.4	--	31.2	--	20.8

two days they logged their activities.

Log data also confirmed log participants' questionnaire data (Table 22) and the aggregate questionnaire data (Table 23) that among the various domains of counseling/guidance ("academic," "educational," "career," "personal/social") the greatest amount of time is being spent in the personal/social domain, followed closely by the academic domain. In addition, log data revealed that a considerably greater percentage of time was actually spent in this domain (47.4%) than had been estimated by the log participants themselves (35.9%) and by the aggregate pool (40.9%) when responding to the questionnaire. Log data also confirmed questionnaire data indicating that less time was spent in the educational domain than in the personal/social and academic domains and that the least time was spent in the career domain. The most pronounced differences at the middle school level were between time estimated and time logged in the educational and personal/social domains. Counselors spent less time in the educational domain than they had estimated on their questionnaires and more time in the personal/social domain than had been estimated. At the high school level, the most dramatic difference between time estimated and time logged was in the career domain where counselors spent only 3.9% of their time compared to their questionnaire estimate of 17.8% and that of the aggregate pool's 15.9%. They had also underestimated their time spent in the personal/social domain.

Table 22

Log Participants' Questionnaire Response to % Time in Domains  
Compared to their Logs

(N = 19)

		Academic	Educational	Career	Personal/Social
Middle	Log	27.7	6.9	9.4	56.0
	Q	29.5	12.8	12.7	45.0
(n = 11)					
High School	Log	34.4	26.1	3.9	35.6
	Q	31.3	26.4	17.8	24.6
(n = 8)					
Combined	Log	30.5	15.0	7.1	47.4
	Q	30.3	18.8	14.9	35.9
(N = 19)					
Total Sample	Log	--	--	--	--
	Q	28.3	17.9	12.9	40.9
(N = 54)					



Table 23

% Time Spent in Domains per Questionnaire of Middle & High Groups

(N = 54)

	Academic	Educational	Career	Personal/Social
Middle (n = 34)	27.5	14.4	11.2	46.9
High School (n = 20)	29.7	23.8	15.9	30.6
Combined (N = 54)	28.3	17.9	12.9	40.9

Log data also confirmed questionnaire data that counselors spend considerably more time in the response mode than in the discretionary mode. Moreover, a comparison of the log data with the questionnaire data (Tables 24 & 25) reveals that both the middle and high school log participants spent even more time in response and less time in planned activities than they themselves had estimated or that the aggregate pool had estimated when responding to the questionnaire.

Table 24

Comparison of Log and Questionnaire Data on % Response Time  
vs. % Discretionary Time of Log Participants

(N = 19)

	RESPONSE		DISCRETIONARY	
	Log	Questionnaire	Log	Questionnaire
Middle (n = 11)	65.8	63.0	34.2	37.0
High (n = 8)	71.6	55.0	28.4	45.0
Combined (N = 19)	68.2	59.7	31.8	40.2
Total Sample (N = 54)	--	60.8	--	39.0

Table 25

Questionnaire Data on % Response Time vs.  
% Discretionary Time of Middle & High Groups

(N = 54)

	RESPONSE	DISCRETIONARY
Middle (n = 34)	59.0	41.0
High (n = 20)	63.9	35.6
Combined (N = 54)	60.8	39.0

### Summary

Of the time log participants recorded spending with people, a large part was devoted to students (60.7%). However, out of *total* time logged, these counselors spent only 45.1% with students, and only 38.9% in the category of counseling. This represented significantly less time in counseling than was reported by the aggregate questionnaire pool. Guidance activities took up 31.8% of the log participants' time, and other activities took 29%.

The log data revealed that counselors spent time on duties that are considered outside the appropriate role of the counselor. These duties include working on the master schedule, maintaining cumulative records, doing clerical tasks, performing hall and lunch duty, gathering homework, and substituting for teachers and administrators. Much the same situation was reported by the aggregate questionnaire pool, but even more time was spent on inappropriate duties by the log participants than was estimated by the aggregate pool. One contributing factor is that the log participants as a whole had less secretarial assistance than did the aggregate pool. Only 21% of the log participants had full-time guidance secretaries while 38% of the aggregate pool did. Nine (47.4%) have neither a secretary nor access to any clerical assistance. Six (31.6%) have only limited access to clerical assistance or to the main office secretary.

With regard to the domains of counseling, log

participants spent the greatest amount of time addressing personal/social concerns first and academic concerns next, and the least amount of time addressing career issues which is consistent with the data gathered from the aggregate pool, although even more time was spent in the personal/social domain than had been estimated and even less time was spent in the career domain than had been estimated.

For log participants the average time spent in the response mode was 68.2% and the average time spent in the discretionary mode was 31.8%. The log participants spent even more time in the response mode and less time on discretionary activities than they themselves or the aggregate pool had estimated when responding to the questionnaire. Part of this difference between what was estimated on the questionnaire and was reported from the log data may be due to semantics. Some of the respondents in this study may be interpreting the meaning of discretionary time differently from the way it is intended in the research. For example, if a counselor chooses at some point in the school day to spend time writing a letter of recommendation for a student, the counselor may label that as discretionary time. However, the researcher labels that activity as time spent in response since it is a reaction to a request made by another. It is not a preplanned activity designed by the counselor toward achieving some developmental or preventive goal. Another example of a response mode activity that a counselor may have estimated as discretionary time is the

following: A counselor decides to call a student in to talk about a problem that was referred by a teacher. The counselor counts that as a counselor initiated activity, and codes it as discretionary because he/she chose the time to meet with the student. The researcher, however, would code that activity as response, not discretionary time.

A final revelation yielded by the log data is the large percentage of time expended by counselors in non-people oriented tasks. For the combined total of log participants the average percentage of time spent in non-people tasks was 25.1, and the average time spent in the category of "other," which includes all non-counseling and non-guidance activities regardless of whether the activity involves people, was 29%. Table 21 presents a comparison of the log data, the log participants' questionnaire estimates, and the entire middle and high school respondents' questionnaire estimates on time spent in counseling, guidance and other. This table reflects the degree to which there is agreement and disagreement between the logs and the questionnaire relevant to the issue of time spent in the categories of counseling, guidance, and other. It permits a consideration of the researcher's perceptions regarding the fidelity of the information provided from both data sources on at least this one particular issue. The greatest agreement exists among the data sources in the combined totals in the category of time spent in guidance. Both questionnaire groups' estimates of time spent in guidance were very close to the actual time

logged by the log participants. The greatest disparities exist in the categories of time spent in counseling and in other. Both questionnaire groups overestimated their time spent in counseling and underestimated their time spent in other. As a group the high school log participants were closer in their estimate of time spent in the category other than was the middle school group which spent the most logged time in that category. The estimates of the questionnaire pool as a whole were closer to the log data than were the estimates of the log participants themselves. Generally, however, there is agreement between the logs and the questionnaires in the broad patterns of time expenditure by counselors.



## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

#### Summary

This study of the role performance of counselors in one-counselor middle and high schools in Virginia had two research phases – a questionnaire phase and a time-log phase. In the first phase, 64 schools, which fell into four classification categories, were represented. In the second phase, a subsample of nineteen counselors from the questionnaire respondent pool participated further by recording their time spent on the job over a two day period.

The purpose of the study was achieved by answering three major research questions:

- A. How is counselor time spent?
- B. To what extent are counselors in control of the use of their time?
- C. What is the status of counselor accountability in reference to Virginia's 60% counseling standard?

#### Findings

From both the questionnaires and the logs, it is evident that of their time spent with people – students, teachers,

parents, administrators and others – Virginia counselors in one-counselor middle and high schools are spending most of that time with students. However, the logs reveal that out of their total time spent – which includes time engaged in people interactions as well as time spent in non-people activities – counselors are spending less than half of that time with students and less than half of that time in activities defined as counseling.

These counselors have an “open door” policy and spend most of their school day “on call,” responding to requests initiated by their various publics and reacting to their needs. Most of the counselors’ time is spent in this “response” mode, handling situations and requests as they arise. Such a posture precludes their devoting more time to the self-directed “discretionary” mode of planned, preventive, or developmental activities. However, as Burton (1984) pointed out, counselors must learn to control response time in order to increase discretionary time.

Most of these counselors (86%) do not designate a daily planning period during school hours. The one-counselor school practitioner, being the only counseling professional in the building, reports feeling pressure to be available at all times to all people. The counselor devotes more time to students’ personal crises than to planned group activities that cover academic, educational and career counseling.

On a day to day basis students deal with problems and concerns primarily in the personal/social and academic

domains, and those are naturally the kinds of concerns they bring to the counselor's attention. In their 1986 study Hutchinson, Barrick, and Groves found that counselors spent the least time in group work and in the career domain. The present study yielded similar results. If counselors continue to function primarily in a response mode, little of their time will be left to devote to group work or to issues outside the personal/social domain, especially the career domain. To spend more time in other domains, counselors must, as recommended by Burton (1984) and Eddy, Richardson, and Allberg (1982) decide to function more in a discretionary mode that would allow them to get out of their offices and present information to groups of students.

Among the domains of counseling/guidance, counselors are spending the highest proportion of their time dealing with clients' personal and social concerns. Counselors in the elementary/middle group spend the most time (50%) in this domain, followed by the Middle (46.9%), middle/high (37.5%), and High (30.6%) groups, a pattern consistent with that reported by Partin (1990). In contrast, counselor time spent in the educational domain shows the reverse pattern, with High School counselors spending the most time in this domain and elementary/middle counselors, the least time. These contrasting patterns are not unexpected. Because younger children are less concerned about educational and career issues, they are less likely to consult counselors about such matters than about personal/social problems. Adolescents,

who tend to seek out their peers to discuss personal/social problems, may not feel as great a need to consult with the counselor about these issues. They do, however, have more reason to consult the counselor concerning educational and career planning issues than do younger children.

Consistent with the findings of Hutchinson, Barrick, and Groves (1986), the present study found that counselors were spending little time in the career domain and a substantial amount of their time on non-counseling activities. Most of these counselors (62%), however, did indicate that others in the school were providing career information to students. At the middle school level, these providers included teachers, mostly through advisory periods, and volunteer speakers from the community. At the high school level, in addition to teachers and guest speakers from the community, these providers included military recruiters, college representatives, and personnel from such programs as Upward Bound/Talent Search. While the counselor's use of others to supplement and strengthen the career component of the guidance and counseling program is commendable, sporadic presentations by such resource people alone do not constitute a career program. The counselor must be actively involved in the planning and delivery of this important component of the total guidance program.

The counselors' student to counselor ratio ranges from 120:1 to 800:1, the average being 334:1. While this average ratio is somewhat better than that required by the standards

of accreditation, counselors are, nevertheless, spending between twenty and thirty percent of their time on non-counseling/non-guidance functions such as clerical, administrative, and student oversight tasks, major "time robbers" not dissimilar to those named in Partin's study (1990). Many counselors express frustration with their working conditions, which include too many assigned non-counseling duties, too much paperwork, no secretary, and responsibility for too many domains and grade levels. How counselor time is spent persists as a problem even as it did in 1962, when Daldrup found counselors to be similarly discontent with the way they were required to divide their time among their vast range of functions.

More than half of the counselors in this study are not in compliance with the 60% counseling standard. Factors most commonly named as impediments to compliance include too many non-counseling duties, lack of secretarial and clerical support, too much paperwork, and the constraints operational in a one-counselor setting. While most counselors (70%) believed it beneficial to have a minimum counseling standard in place, the majority wanted it set lower than 60%. Counselors believe administrators have a direct impact on whether the 60% standard can be attained. While several counselors credited the support of their administrators as a factor contributing to their success in meeting this requirement, several were specifically critical of their administrators' lack of understanding of the counselor's

professional role. In the 1985 national study cited by Nugent (1990), state guidance directors expressed concern that counselors were over-involved in duties outside their professional role; the present study tends to support the legitimacy of that concern.

Counselors in one-counselor middle and high schools are not spending as much time counseling with students as they would like, primarily, they report, because they are overloaded with too many non-counseling duties. This finding is consistent with that of Hutchinson, Barrick and Groves (1986) and Partin (1990). Yet a majority of the counselors want to lower the 60% counseling accreditation standard. How does one reconcile this apparent contradiction? Counselors seem to be experiencing a job performance role conflict. They want to spend more time counseling students, while at the same time they do not want to be held personally responsible for failure to be in compliance with the 60% requirement. Because most counselors, under their present working conditions, are not empowered to control their time, they are not able to spend as much of that time as they would like counseling students, much less the 60% required to meet the mandate. But if a major impediment to compliance is the fact that counselors are spending too much time in activities considered outside their professional role, simply lowering the 60% standard will not remedy the situation.

The majority of the counselors surveyed in this study (51.6%) expressed a preference to continue as "generalists,"

performing both guidance and counseling functions; 35.9%, however, would prefer to be counseling specialists; and 12.5% would prefer to be guidance specialists. It is possible that this preference to specialize by almost half of the respondents is an indication that counselors, in their own recognition of the difficulty of performing all aspects of the school counselor's role, are desiring to choose either the guidance or the counseling aspect in which to specialize in order to gain better control over the performance of their role.

There is evidence that several factors have contributed to the proliferation of abuse of counselor time. In particular, these include administrators' assigning duties to counselors inappropriate to the counselor's role; counselors' complicity in the acceptance of these inappropriate duties; insufficient secretarial and clerical personnel within the schools; and a higher student to counselor ratio than the 250:1 recommended in professional guidelines. Such working conditions are not conducive to facilitating the counselor's intended role. One working condition pattern potentially relating to gender was incidentally noticed while analyzing three questionnaire items - 20a, the number of non-counseling/non-guidance duties assigned, 20b, the percentage of time being expended on these extraneous duties; and 31, the degree of secretarial assistance allocated to counselors. In brief, female counselors were assigned more non-counseling, non-guidance duties than were their male

counterparts; female counselors were spending more time on these duties than were their male counterparts; and female counselors had less secretarial assistance than did their male counterparts. This discrepancy between male and female counselors may, however, be due to factors other than gender such as school size and/or the nature of the assignments being handled by these counselors. An additional factor mentioned by several counselors in their written comments on the one-counselor work setting was the lack of school funding, which, they believed, prevented the upgrading of conditions at their respective schools. The examples given included a lack of funds to hire an assistant principal, to access adequate secretarial help, or to computerize records. Conditions such as these contribute to work being diverted to counselors that is not appropriate to the counselor's role. Lack of school funding is a contributing factor to counselor overload and role abuse.

That 77% of the schools represented in this study are rural schools may be significant. As Partin (1990) points out, "Often [in] small rural schools, the counselor's role has evolved into that of an assistant principal. If not on paper, at least by default, the counselor's job description has grown to encompass a vast array of non-counseling/guidance duties..." (p.6). Much of the profile developed in this study of how counselors spend their time may be due in part to these schools being in rural areas, where there is often a high rate of poverty, a high



proportion of disadvantaged students, and a lack of resources. Currently there is the claim by some rural Virginia school boards that their school divisions are disadvantaged in resources due largely to an inequity in the state funding formula. These are all factors which may be affecting the time utilization of counselors.

Most of the counselors are documenting their use of time, as recommended by Virginia's Department of Education. Compared to the national sample of counselors in Fairchild and Zins' 1986 study, more of the counselors in this study use time analysis, and fewer use tabulation as their method of documentation. Only eight counselors (12.5%) in this study were not documenting their use of time. Seven of these eight counselors indicated that they would take training in documentation procedures if it were offered to them. This suggests that one of the reasons they are not documenting their use of time is inadequate training in documentation procedures, which is consistent with the findings both of Myrick (1984) and Fairchild and Zins (1986). Of the counselors who were not documenting their time, 7 of 8 also reported not being able to meet the 60% counseling standard. An implication here is that in addition to not knowing how to document their time, they also lack time because they do clerical work and administrative duties unrelated to guidance and counseling.

In sum, the counselors in this study, like those in Hutchinson, Barrick, and Groves' study (1986), did not seem

to be in control of how they were spending their time. The frustrations and feelings of being overloaded that were expressed by the counselors in the present study are probably not unique to the one-counselor school professional. Counselors who work in multi-counselor settings would probably express similar sentiments, perhaps with the exception of the feeling of isolation attributed to having no counselor colleague in the building with whom to consult. Therefore, it may be productive to look at the problem of counselor overload and role abuse as a global problem and to develop some new modalities that would work both in one-counselor and multi-counselor settings.

First, a look at a summation of the findings of this study which are consistent with those of other studies, followed by the new findings, and then the recommendations:

1. Of all their client categories, counselors spend most of their time with students.
2. Counselors spend the least amount of time in the career domain.
3. Counselors spend a substantial amount of time on non-counseling functions such as clerical, administrative and student oversight tasks.
4. Counselors are not spending as much time counseling as they would like.
5. Counselors are not in control of the use of their time, spending most of it in a response mode with no planning

period.

6. Evidence of counselor role abuse includes the amount of time counselors report spending on assigned non-counseling duties, and the insufficient amount of secretarial and clerical support.

#### New Findings:

1. A pattern potentially related to gender was incidentally noted. This pattern involves a discrepancy between male and female counselors with regard to the number of non-counseling duties assigned, the percentage of time spent on these duties and the amount of secretarial assistance provided. It is important to recognize, however, that there other competing hypotheses, such as school size and types of assigned duties, which may explain this discrepancy.
2. Rather than continue as generalists, 48.4% of the counselors in this survey would prefer to specialize as either counseling specialists or guidance specialists.

### **Recommendations**

#### Accountability

1. Move from the current quantitative transactional accountability model (60% standard) to a quantitative and

qualitative product evaluation model (comprehensive outcome based).

The Virginia Department of Education has recently discontinued its monitoring role with regard to counselor documentation of time and compliance with the 60% counseling standard, although divisions under review are still required to answer whether or not they are in compliance with the standard. Virginia seems to be moving toward a competency based guidance model. If Virginia continues in this direction, its counseling accountability system, which is now based primarily on the documentation of enumerative data, will need to add an evaluation component based on process and product data. Many states (Georgia, 1984; Idaho, 1988; Maryland, 1986; New Hampshire, 1988; Oklahoma, 1988; South Carolina, 1989) have already taken this step by developing outcome based, comprehensive and developmental guidance and counseling programs K-12 patterned after Gysber's model (1981; 1990).

In July, 1991 the Virginia Department of Education began a three-year project entitled *Secondary Guidance Program Evaluation and Development of Alternative Program Models for Services to Students* (Ayers, 1991). A sixteen person team will design and implement a secondary guidance evaluation model intended to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to access guidance and counseling services. A document entitled *A Secondary Guidance Discrepancy Evaluation*

*Model* (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1991) has been drafted and describes the discrepancy evaluation model that is to be field tested in high schools across the state during the current (1991-92) school year. This document outlines the methodology to be employed during the evaluation of each school's current guidance program. It is a collaborative effort incorporating an evaluation team that represents the counseling staff, administrators, teachers, students, parents, central office, and business and community members. The team will gather information about the guidance program in place and about student needs. This information will be used to ask questions about whether the structure of the current program is meeting the students' needs and what modifications in the program would make it more responsive to those needs. In other words, the discrepancies between what now exists and what is desired will be identified, and appropriate changes will be planned to eliminate these discrepancies.

A major objective of this evaluation project, in addition to promoting the need to evaluate guidance programs, is to move Virginia's guidance programs away from a crisis-centered model to a preventive, developmental model that will help students acquire needed competencies. The pilot studies conducted at the field testing sites are to provide data needed to revise the model. The model will be introduced in the fall of 1992 via seven regional workshops across the state, and via teleconferences in the spring of 1993.

In any program model the valuable resource of counselor time must be protected from abuse so that it can be used to greatest advantage - primarily to permit counselors to work with students to achieve desired competencies in each of the counseling and guidance domains. The counseling mandate currently in place requires only that each counselor spend at least 60% of her time counseling, but does not require the counselor to account for the outcomes achieved as a result of the counseling time expended. Consequently, the counselor's effectiveness is not being measured. A counselor might well be found in compliance with the mandate while spending an inordinate amount of time counseling with only a very few students. In the final analysis, the current mandate, even if technically complied with, does not and cannot assure that the needs of the entire student body will be effectively met. With an effective product evaluation model in place, a counseling mandate would not be necessary.

2. Take intermediate steps to restructure the delivery of the guidance program.

Because the demand for personal/social counseling in the schools is so great, it may be desirable to restructure the delivery of the school's total guidance and counseling program in order to provide the counselor more time to meet that demand. In a society that has seen the restructuring of many professions into areas of specialization in order to

effectively and efficiently serve their publics, it may be time for school counselors to consider seriously a similar approach. To expect one individual to "do it all" and still to "do it well" is not only unreasonably demanding but may be impossible, a sentiment expressed by many of the counselors in this study. A potential solution might be to hire "guidance teachers" who, in addition to their own academic discipline, are trained to fulfill the functions of an "educational, guidance specialist." These guidance teachers would cover academic concerns and educational and career planning domains during a portion of their day. The idea of dichotomizing the guidance counselor's role is not novel. Dugan (in Bentley, 1968) predicted that two types of secondary school counselors would emerge – the guidance worker and the counseling specialist. More recently, Martin (1983) recommended that counseling be offered as a regular school subject taught by "counseling instructors" using appropriate curricular materials.

In a similar vein, Nugent (1990) maintained that a dichotomy of roles that clearly assigns student personnel work to a separate team and the counseling work to counselors would produce more effective results (p. 320). Such a separation of responsibilities would transfer much of the paperwork counselors now do to a different team and free the counselor to spend more time counseling.

Budgetary constraints, however, if not philosophical opposition, may well rule out the hiring of "guidance

teachers," at least in the near future. Consequently, counselors will have to look elsewhere in the short term to remedy the overload they are experiencing. They will need to rely on others in the school to share the responsibility of carrying out the guidance program objectives. School counselors would do well to discuss their concerns with their building principals and pupil personnel supervisors. They might suggest that a team of willing teachers be trained to teach a period of guidance daily to cover academic, educational, and/or career topics in order to help accomplish some of the school's guidance objectives.

Another valuable resource not to be overlooked is the utilization of counseling practicum students from nearby universities. Practicum students are generally eager to gain guidance and counseling experience and can be especially helpful in augmenting the guidance program in one-counselor schools.

Counselors should also access the professional services available through the mental health agencies in their communities. Mental health counselors can make systematic visits to the school to provide classroom presentations on topics that promote mental health. Providing prevention programs that deal with personal/social issues may serve to reduce the number of students in constant need of crisis intervention in that domain.

While the 60/40 counseling accreditation standard is in place, innovative ways to meet compliance need to be found.



Counselors can get control of their time by restructuring how it is managed. For example, the counselor could plan to engage in counseling activities three days a week and guidance activities two days a week. This schedule would need to be advertised and posted so that all clients in the school were aware of it. The counselor could then leave the office to function in a discretionary mode of planned, preventive guidance work two days a week, and still be available for counseling on the other three days.

Aubrey (1982) stressed the need for counselors to turn to program planning and evaluation. In order to be better time managers, counselors must be concerned with program planning; yet, most counselors do not allow themselves any daily planning period. If counselors wish to alleviate the problem of counselor overload, they need to be cognizant of how they themselves may be contributing to it, for part of the problem is self-induced. Counselors must begin to take time during the work day to plan activities, and not fall prey to the notion that they must be "on call" all day.

3. Eliminate the 60% counseling accreditation standard and set a minimum standard for acceptable conditions in the public school workplace that will prevent counselor role abuse and that will promote optimal counselor time to be spent with students in counseling and guidance activities.

The rationale for establishing a counseling

accreditation standard and requiring that each counselor spend 60% of her time counseling would seem to be two-fold: to ensure that counselors spend a substantial amount of their time utilizing the professional skills they were trained to perform, and to ensure that students are the major, direct beneficiaries of those professional skills. That counselors should spend at least 60% of their time in counseling and up to 40% in guidance seems on the surface a worthwhile and sound objective. While other school employees can carry out some of the guidance functions, only a professionally trained and certified counselor can carry out the counseling responsibilities. Therefore, it is for the students' benefit that this counseling mandate is in place. Students need their counselor to be accessible to them so that they may avail themselves of the professional counseling skills their counselors have been trained to provide.

However, students also need the professional knowledge base that counselors have in the guidance area, nor is the time that counselors spend with students in guidance activities any less valuable than time spent in counseling activities. Providing needed guidance information to students, whether individually or in groups, is an important part of the counselor's role and should not be ignored to make time for administrative, quasi-administrative, and clerical duties. Yet, this is what is happening. There seems to be a lack of concern on the part of those monitoring the 60/40 standard that counselors are not spending their

non-counseling time in guidance activities. The counselor's total time should be spent practicing counseling and guidance functions. Most counselors want to do exactly that. They don't need a mandate to force them to counsel or to spend time with students. For whom, then, was the mandate intended? If it was intended as a directive to school administrators to stop delegating inappropriate duties to their counselors, it didn't work. If it was intended to provide counselors the rationale with which to refuse to take on these inappropriate, assigned duties, again, it didn't work.

While the establishment of a minimal counseling accreditation standard may have been well-intentioned, the high rate of noncompliance indicates that it cannot be achieved simply by mandate. Nor is it realistic to expect counselors in the Commonwealth to attain the standard given present working conditions in the schools where they are employed. If the standard is to remain at 60% and is to be met successfully, provisions must be made to ensure that acceptable school conditions exist to support compliance with that standard. Minimally, this means assuring that all schools hire enough counselors to comply with the prescribed maximum student-counselor ratio and that all guidance departments are provided adequate and accessible secretarial and clerical assistance.

It is not clear, however, that a mandate requiring any minimum counseling standard is necessary. What is necessary

is a mandate to provide the working conditions that would allow counselors to do the job they are intended to do, that they have been trained to do, and that they want to do, but are too often prevented from doing.

### Education

1. Provide pre-service instruction for principals in training and in-service workshops for practicing school principals to inform them fully of the appropriate role and function of the school counselor and the importance of administrator support to the success of the school's guidance program.

Because a large majority of counselors report being assigned duties that are considered non-counseling/non-guidance related and outside the appropriate role of the school counselor, steps should be taken to ensure that school administrators are knowledgeable about the appropriate role and function of the school counselor. Counselor time is a professional resource that must be protected so that the desired goals and outcomes of the school's guidance program can best be articulated, promoted, and achieved, and this objective cannot be met without the support of administrators. To this end it is recommended that a required course about the role of the school counselor be

incorporated into the principal preparation program in departments of educational administration. In addition, it is recommended that all practicing school principals be required to attend in-service workshops on the appropriate role of the school counselor.

2. Develop a certification in educational guidance so that educators who desire dual certification in an academic discipline and an aspect of guidance could pursue that training and certification.

The majority of the counselors surveyed in this study (51.6%) expressed a preference to continue as "generalists," performing both guidance and counseling functions; 35.9%, however, would prefer to be counseling specialists; and 12.5% would prefer to be guidance specialists. These preferences suggest a need for the development and implementation of programs that would train prospective educators to specialize in educational guidance. Such programs might encourage teachers to add this specialty to their certification so that they could perform the dual role of guidance/teacher once employed in the schools.

3. Offer in-service training in accountability and documentation methods to counselors in the field.

Practicing counselors should be offered in-service

training in accountability methods and documentation procedures for the same reason cited by Fairchild and Zins (1986). As long as Virginia counselors are expected to provide acceptable modes of documentation of time spent in counseling, there is a need for providing additional training in accountability and documentation procedures. More than half the counselors surveyed expressed an interest in initial or additional training in such procedures. Apart from the requirements of the counseling standard, counselors need to know how to be professionally accountable for their use of time and how to use accountability information to help them evaluate and improve the delivery of the guidance program.

4. Incorporate an assertiveness training component within the counselor preparation program.

Counselors, who are expected by the Virginia Department of Education to be accountable for their use of time, need to learn how to protect that resource, especially in situations where they might be assigned duties inappropriate to the counselor's role. Too often, however, these counselors have great difficulty saying "no." Training in assertive communication skills would therefore be a valuable addition to counselor training programs.

5. Incorporate a time management training component into the counselor preparation program.

Another area of training that could assist counselors in their daily functioning is time management. It would be very helpful for counselors to learn patterns of time management that would help them break away from the tendency to function primarily in a response mode.

### Further Research

1. Undertake research to investigate gender issues in the workplace and how they affect the role of counselors in Virginia's public schools.

Although the topic of gender was not a part of this study, a disparity was found by gender with regard to secretarial assistance provided and quantity of non-counseling duties assigned to counselors. Although there are competing hypotheses which may explain this disparity, this topic is certainly worth looking at further.

2. Maintain ongoing communication between departments of counselor education and public school guidance departments to keep counselor educators informed of the current status of guidance and counseling in the field.

If departments of counselor education are to continue to devise viable programs of instruction that will thoroughly

prepare school counselors to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's clients, counselor educators and departments of education need to maintain access to what is going on in schools' guidance and counseling programs. They need to be informed of what counselors are doing, what the greatest demands are on their time, and what conditions exist that create barriers and impediments to meeting guidance and counseling goals and outcomes.

3. Undertake additional research in counselor role-performance in Virginia to understand better the status of guidance and counseling in the state.

The present study was limited to one-counselor middle and high schools. Additional role studies should be designed and implemented that will provide information comparing one-counselor schools with multi-counselor schools and rural with non-rural schools to reveal factors about school conditions that might be impacting on counselor use of time. Such studies need to be repeated periodically not only to ensure that the data accurately reflects conditions as they are but also to ensure that the data is kept current with changing conditions.



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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A****Counselor Questionnaire & Definition Sheet****I. How Counselor Time is Spent**

1. In a typical month, please approximate the average %time you spend with each of the client categories named below:

\_\_\_ administrators    \_\_\_ teachers    \_\_\_ parents    \_\_\_ students  
 \_\_\_ others, (please identify : \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Please approximate the average %time you typically spend in each category below:

\_\_\_ %time Counseling  
 \_\_\_ %time Guidance (includes coordination, consultation, etc.; see definition sheet)  
 \_\_\_ %time Other (activities which are neither counseling nor guidance)

3. Approximate the average %time you spend with students in each of the following domains?

\_\_\_ %time academic concerns  
 \_\_\_ %time educational planning  
 \_\_\_ %time career awareness, exploration, or planning  
 \_\_\_ %time personal/social concerns

4. Approximate the average %time you spend in each of the following modes?

\_\_\_ %time responding to others' requests  
 \_\_\_ %time engaging in activities you plan

5. Do you regularly set aside time during your school day for a planning period?

\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_ No, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you typically take a **non-working** break during the school day?

\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_ No, explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Length: \_\_\_ minutes                      \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Documentation of Counselor Time**

7. How are you currently documenting your use of time?

- \_\_\_ a. I am not documenting it (skip to # 11)  
 \_\_\_ b. tabulation (recording the number of times an activity occurs or the number of clients seen)  
 \_\_\_ c. time analysis (recording both the activities engaged in and the amount of time spent in each activity)

If you checked "c", please also complete the following stem:  
I document:

- how all my time on the job is spent
- only the time I spend counseling
- only the time I spend in guidance
- only the time I spend in extraneous activities

d. other, please identify: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Documentation of your use of time is recorded on a:

- teacher's plan book.
- daily calendar
- counseling log\* (\* please attach a copy of one of your log forms to this completed questionnaire )

other, explain : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. In your opinion, the documentation process required by the state department of education

- is not a problem.
- is an unnecessary hassle.
- is a necessary nuisance.
- other opinion: \_\_\_\_\_

10. If you use the information obtained through your documentation efforts other than to comply with the state department of education's requirement, please indicate how: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. If you had the opportunity for initial or additional training on documentation procedures would you take it?

- Yes             No

12. Do you believe it is beneficial to have a minimum counseling standard in place?

- Yes             No

13. If you could set it, at what % would you set the minimum standard for counseling?

%.

14. In general are you able to attain the 60% counseling standard?

Yes & I attribute it to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

No & I attribute it to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Do more things need to be done in your school to allow more time for counseling?

\_\_\_ Yes, as follows: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ No, nothing more needs to be done

**III. Delivery of Student Services**

16.

For each of the **service domains\*** in the left column, place check marks under the heading **How Counselor Delivers Services** to indicate the method(s) you use to deliver that service. Under the heading **Who Else Delivers Services**, indicate in the appropriate box who else, if anyone, is involved in the delivery of that service at your school (i.e., teachers through advisory, school nurse, Upward Bound counselor, visiting Mental Health counselor, volunteer speaker, military recruiter, etc.)

<b>Service Domains*</b>	<b>How Counselor Delivers Services</b>			<b>Who Else Delivers Services</b>		
	<b>Individual Counseling</b>	<b>Group Counseling</b>	<b>Group Guidance</b>	<b>Individual Counseling</b>	<b>Group Counseling</b>	<b>Group Guidance</b>

Academic

Educational

Career

Personal/  
 Social  
 Crisis or  
 Remediation

Personal/  
 Social  
 Prevention or  
 Developmental

\* Refer to enclosed definition sheet for clarification of "counseling," "guidance," and "service domains."



27. Do you have an open door policy?  Yes  No
28. How many hours daily do you typically have clerical/secretarial assistance?  
 Hours
29. How much additional hours of clerical/secretarial assistance would you need  
in order to do an optimum job?  
 Hours
30. Is there a secretary stationed in the guidance suite?  Yes  No
31. On which of the following bases is the guidance secretary contracted?  
 there is no guidance secretary  
 part time  
 full time :  10 months;  11 months;  12 months
32. Your school is best classified as:  
 urban  suburban  rural

#### VI. Demographic Information About You

33. Age       34. Sex       35. #Yrs teaching experience
36. #Yrs counseling experience       37. #Yrs counseling in present school
38. #Yrs in a one-counselor position       39. # Months you are contracted for
40. Which best describes your level of educational attainment?  
 Master's  Master's + 30  CAGS or EdS  EdD  PhD
41. Is your degree in or related to the counseling field?  
 Yes  No
42. Year you received your highest degree?
43. Was this degree obtained from a Virginia college or university?  
 Yes  No

#### VII. **Personal Statement (please, please respond)**

44. On the back, please express your view of what it is like to work in a one-counselor school.  
(And thank you again for your time and effort in responding to this questionnaire.)

## DEFINITION SHEET

### Counseling Functions

assisting students (and when appropriate, parents), individually or in groups, with academic, educational, career, or personal/social concerns.

#### Counseling Service Domains:

Academic	pertains to dealing with academic concerns of students about achievement, and choices that affect students' current academic functioning.
Educational	pertains to dealing with educational and vocational planning concerns (includes counseling affecting educational decisions for the following and subsequent years).
Career	pertains to counseling which stimulates students' awareness of, interest in, or exploration into occupational fields, leisure activities, and/or career planning.
Personal/ Social	pertains to dealing with emotional concerns of students about personal, social, or family matters.

### Guidance Functions:

providing planned, developmental, informational activities to foster students' academic, educational, career, or personal/social growth; also includes consultation, coordination, assessment, placement, professional development, and evaluation activities.

#### Guidance Service Domains:

Academic	pertains to providing of academic information for use in the current school year and includes orientation, registration, class scheduling, study skills, tutoring referrals, etc.
Educational	pertains to the providing of information about educational and vocational programs or fields and is future oriented.
Career	pertains to the providing of information about occupational fields, leisure activities, and/or career planning.
Personal/ Social	pertains to the providing of information about personal, social, or family issues for the purpose of promoting developmentally healthy attitudes and for the prevention of emotional problems.

Additional Definitions

## 1. Guidance Functions:

- a. Classroom or Group Guidance – “a planned, sequential, developmental program of guidance activities which is informational in nature, and designed to foster students’ academic, personal-social, and career development. Group/classroom guidance is planned and provided for all students through a collaborative effort by counselors, teachers, and administrators . . . on topics such as self-understanding, interpersonal skills, and career awareness . . . problem-solving and decision-making techniques and behaviors and attitudes necessary for success in education, career, and responsible citizenship” (“Procedures,” p.3).
- b. Coordination –  
“develop a guidance program, to include plans for program implementation and evaluation;  
collaborate with other professionals in pupil personnel services to identify resources to help students;  
assist parents to obtain needed services for their children through a referral and follow-up process;  
provide staff development activities for teachers and school staff regarding the nature of the



- guidance and counseling program and their involvement in the program;
- coordinate student transitions to the next educational/career levels;
- orient new students to the school; and
- provide liaison for collaboration between the school and community agencies" ("Procedures," pp. 3-4).
- c. Consultation – "by counselors, either individually or in groups, is conducted with parents, teachers, administrators, school psychologists, school social workers/visiting teachers, medical professionals, and community agency personnel. Such consultation provides for the mutual sharing and analysis of information and ideas to assist in planning and implementing strategies to help students experiencing problems . . ." ("Procedures," p. 4).
- d. Assessment – "a guidance function which provides knowledge about individual students' needs, characteristics, achievements, and goals. . . .The counselor's role in assessment is interpreting data to students, parents, teachers, and administrators, helping students apply the results to decision-making, and promoting a positive testing situation" ("Procedures," pp. 4-5)
- e. Information Services – "provide personal, educational, social, and career information for use in helping students make decisions. These

- informational activities are progressive in nature and function and vary from grade level to grade level. . . .Counselors provide information needed by students or parents as students develop their educational or career plans" ("Procedures," p. 5).
- f. Placement – "primarily involves assisting students to plan programs of study for successive grade levels . . . and . . . in making successful transitions to further education and /or employment" ("Procedures," p. 5)
- g. Evaluation – "used to determine strengths and weaknesses of a guidance program. It demonstrates the worth of a guidance program and provides a basis for improvement. Evaluation of the guidance program is based on program objectives and counselor functions and interventions as determined by student needs, legislative mandates, and societal expectations for the school" ("Procedures," p. 5).
- h. Professional Development – "refers to activities that help counselors become increasingly effective professionals . . . . This growth may occur by increasing specific counseling competencies through courses, workshops, and seminars; learning about innovations in counseling and guidance; designing and implementing counseling or guidance programs to meet identified student needs; preparing and presenting papers at professional meetings; and

participating actively in professional associations"  
("Procedures," pp. 5-6).

2. Non-Counseling and Non-Guidance Functions:

"constructing the master schedule;  
assuming responsibility for the administration of the  
school's educational testing program;  
chairing a child study or an eligibility committee;  
acting as case managers for special education referral;  
testing, screening, and coordinating the application  
and placement for special student programs, such as  
programs for gifted students;  
enforcing punishment for student misbehavior;  
planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating  
non-guidance curricula;  
preparing routine administrative reports not related to  
guidance functions;  
substituting for the administration in non-guidance  
meetings;  
performing hall, bus, study hall, in-school  
suspension/detention, and cafeteria duties;  
coordinating homebound instruction;  
gathering homework for absent students;  
serving as an attendance officer, homeroom teacher, or  
substitute teacher;  
maintenance of cumulative records;  
clerical duties such as filing, typing, and completing

record forms;  
preparation of student transcripts;  
duplication of materials  
searching for and recording demographic data; and  
attendance accounting" ("Procedures," pp. 7-8).

**APPENDIX B****Cover Letter (Questionnaire)**

October 22, 1990

Dear Colleague,

I am a school counselor who has worked almost exclusively in a one-counselor school. As a doctoral student at Virginia Tech I am conducting research which seeks to clarify the role of the school counselor by examining how middle and secondary counselors in one-counselor schools typically spend their time. The Virginia Department of Education, which has imposed a 60% counseling accreditation standard, is very interested in knowing how counselors spend their time.

The enclosed questionnaire is designed to show how counselors are spending/ managing their time, the methods of documentation counselors are using to show compliance with the state's sixty percent counseling accreditation standard, and the views of counselors regarding this standard and their work setting. A later survey will follow-up a sample of respondents to the enclosed questionnaire.

I am requesting your help because you are a member of a unique and small population of professional counselors who can provide information from small schools. Your feedback will be combined with the responses of others and will be provided to the Department of Education. The data may also influence the preparation of future school counselors.

Please take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, preaddressed stamped envelope. As only group results will be reported, your confidentiality is assured. The number which appears on the survey and envelope will help me monitor the returns and conduct the follow-up research. You may have a summary of results by printing your name and address on the back of the return envelope. If you have any questions at all, please write or call. The telephone number is (703) 639-3150.

Thank you very much in advance for your thoughtful and prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Fran Weiss, counselor

n.b. Information for this study was provided by State Department records; if your position is no longer a "one-counselor" position at either the middle or high school level, please return this packet unanswered.



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 6-Q  
RICHMOND 23216-2060

*August 30, 1990*

*Ms. Fran L. Weiss  
11 Windstream Court  
Radford, VA 24141*

*Dear Ms. Weiss:*

*Thank you for sharing with me a copy of the Counselor Questionnaire which you will use in your survey of middle and secondary school counselors in Virginia. I understand that this survey is part of your doctoral work at Virginia Tech. Furthermore, I understand your survey will address counselor perceptions, and related issues, about the Virginia Department of Education accrediting standard which requires each member of the guidance staff to provide 60 percent of his/her time to the counseling of students.*

*My colleagues and I have a keen and strong professional interest in your findings. As of this time, there is a lack of qualitative research data that provide information on how Virginia school counselors are responding to this standard and mandate. I hope the participants in your survey will complete and return it. There is a need for such information. Finally, I hope that you will share a copy of your study with our staff.*

*Meanwhile, best wishes to you for a successful activity.*

*Yours very truly,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don S. Ayers".

*Don S. Ayers, Ed.D., Supervisor  
for Secondary School Guidance*

*DSA/trsk*

**APPENDIX C**

**First Follow-up Letter**

November 5, 1990

Dear Colleague,

About two weeks ago I wrote to you seeking your participation in a survey about how counselors in one-counselor schools spend their time, the method of documentation they use to show compliance with the state's sixty percent counseling mandate, and their views regarding this standard as well as their views about their work setting. As of today I have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

I have undertaken this study because I am very interested in the phenomenon of the one-counselor school setting and how counselors who work in that setting function. I believe that much can be learned from the opinions of one-counselor school practitioners. Since you are a member of this unique pool of counseling professionals, your input is essential in order for the results of this study to be truly representative of this particular population.

In the event that your original questionnaire has been misplaced, I have enclosed a replacement. I urge you to complete it as soon as possible. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope has again been included.

If your school now employs more than one counselor for the grade levels you serve, please return this packet unanswered in the enclosed envelope provided.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Fran Weiss, counselor

**APPENDIX D****Second Follow-up Letter**

December 11, 1990

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to you about my study of counselor role performance in schools served by only one counselor. I have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

Please respond, if only to inform me of your reason for not participating. I have included a place for you to check your reason at the bottom of this letter, and as in the past two communications, I have included a stamped, addressed envelope for your response. It is very important for me to know if your school has been incorrectly targeted as a one-counselor setting, or if you have other reasons for not responding.

This is the first Virginia study of how counselors spend their time. It is limited to the one-counselor setting because its goal is to describe the role of the counselor whose job responsibilities entail the whole gamut of counselor functions required in a public school setting. The usefulness of its results depends greatly on how accurately the data has been collected from the entire pool of counselors belonging to this unique population of counselors.

If you are indeed a member of the population of counselors necessary to this study, and have decided to participate, a replacement questionnaire is enclosed. Please complete and return it as quickly as possible.

If you would like a copy of the results, put your name and address on the back of the return envelope. I expect to have them ready to send this Summer.

Your contribution to the success of this study is greatly appreciated.

Most sincerely,

Fran Weiss, counselor

- \_\_\_ This school now employs more than one counselor for students in grades 5-8.
  - \_\_\_ This school now employs more than one counselor for students in grades 9-12.
  - \_\_\_ This is a one-counselor setting, but I do not have time to respond to the survey.
  - \_\_\_ This is a one-counselor setting, but I choose not to participate because
-



**APPENDIX E****Cover Letter (Log Participants)**

November 27, 1990

Name of Participant  
Name of School  
City, State

Dear Colleague,

I want to thank you again for agreeing to participate in the second part of my research study concerned with how Virginia counselors in one-counselor settings spend their time. I have enclosed two copies of the counseling log on which you will be recording all that you do on two "typical" school days next week. Please be careful to choose two days during which you are not planning a lengthy, atypical activity such as testing. It is very important that the log reflect how you usually spend your workday.

Also, please make several copies of the log form before you begin, especially if you typically have many contacts in a day, so that you do not run out of the form. Notice that you may use both the front and the back of the log to record your documentation of activities. I have also enclosed one sample of a partially filled out log to demonstrate how it's done and to include some explanatory notes which I hope you will find helpful.

Do not hesitate to call me collect if you have any questions about the log or if you need any clarification. My home number is 703-639-3150.

I am very excited about this research and eagerly await your results. Again, I appreciate your cooperation and your commitment to this research project.

Very sincerely,

Fran Weiss, counselor



**Appendix G****Counselor Log Entries of "Other" Activities****Middle School**

#1

pick up mail  
ran errand for principal regarding Christmas tree  
mailed transcripts  
memo to teachers to get grades on transfer students  
distributed donated winter coats  
prepared reports for special ed meetings and gifted advisory meeting

#3

paperwork  
records  
pick up mail  
special ed eligibility meetings  
checking rolls with teachers

#7

duplicated papers  
checked on student absences  
administrative meeting

#8

to office to get mail and distribute guidance materials  
delivered counselor appointment slips  
filled out counselor summary log

#14

administrative responsibilities due to absence of principal:  
discipline & substituting  
transported home a student who was trespassing and on suspension  
notes to principal on discipline problems  
displaced from office by therapist needing session with student  
paperwork  
inquiry from another system about category II records on transfer student

#30

bandaid and clean-up care of hurt child  
paperwork; lists for newspaper  
pick up mail  
computer operations on exploratories  
applied ice to arm of playground accident victim  
filled out forms  
lunch duty  
call home to pick up sick child

#33

reviewed mail  
duplicated records requested by another school  
certification of enrollment form  
paperwork  
duplicated forms  
verified medical records

#37

paperwork  
wrote notes for students to come to counseling  
went to get student for counseling  
helped principal with master schedule  
paperwork  
checked mail  
office errands  
updating files  
going through transfer files  
called special projects for students' grades  
paperwork  
duplicated grade sheets and placed in teachers' mailboxes

#60

I.E.P. meeting with teacher and parent  
office management  
scheduling with administrator

#149

TAG advisor assigned to room to oversee tardy student arrivals  
computer work to update guidance exploratory syllabus  
duties related to being the school's volunteer coordinator  
typed career letters on computer  
paperwork  
called Alternative program to give grades  
typed envelopes for career day  
covered a class

**High School**

#4

write passes for the day  
purge files  
get mail  
prepared DAT test sheets for mailing  
student files  
processed homebound application  
worked with student report cards  
covered a class

#77

fundraising  
transfer records  
clerical & filing  
took DAT tests to central office  
transcripts

#80

compiling list of seniors for diplomas  
put grades and attendance on office cards  
scheduled appointments for speech therapist to see students  
send student transcripts to colleges  
compile honor roll list  
paperwork  
contact vocational school to get assignments for homebound  
student  
correspondence and update materials

#83

checked mail and prepared transcripts  
filing records  
transcript  
reviewed applications to Governor's School  
clerical: checking grades for athletic eligibility  
filing  
wrote announcements and delivered to main office

#100

mail  
Beta Club meeting (club sponsor)

#126

went to central office to deliver Governor's School  
applications  
transcript

#127

hall duty  
follow-up surveys  
attendance report

#134

math improvement program  
applications to Governor's School  
compiled list of needy students for civic group gifts  
compiled list of student athletes with 3.0 or better  
worked on academic probation assignments for student failures  
paperwork  
organized assignments of students to teachers for academic  
probation  
reviewed budget cut propositions  
mail & paperwork  
athletic director met to review athletic scholarship awards

## VITA

### Frieda Deitell Weiss

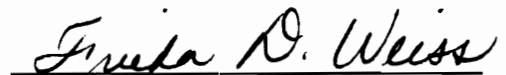
Frieda Deitell (Fran) Weiss was born in Otwock, Poland on October 27, 1944. She was one of two children born to Paul and Zelta Deitell, who immigrated to the United States in March, 1949.

After graduating from Forest Park High School in Baltimore, Maryland in 1962, she enrolled in Towson State College, Towson, Maryland. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with teacher certification in August 1965. She taught English to tenth graders at Arundel Junior High School in Odenton, Maryland during the 1965-1966 school year. In 1977, she enrolled in Radford College, Radford, Virginia to pursue a Master of Science degree in guidance and counseling. Having completed all requirements, she was awarded the degree in May 1978. From August 1978 to June 1990 she was employed as a high school guidance counselor at Shawsville High and Middle School in Montgomery County, Virginia. In Fall 1983, while still employed as a full-time counselor, she entered the Doctoral Program in Counselor Education and Student Personnel at Virginia Tech and

completed all degree requirements other than the dissertation (the present research study) in August 1990. She is currently teaching English in Montgomery County's Alternative School for at risk students.

Fran Weiss is a member of the Virginia School Counselors Association, the Virginia Counselors Association, the Montgomery County Education Association, and the New River Valley Counselor Association, of which she is a past president. She has served on the Gifted Advisory Committee of the Montgomery County School System and has served as a member of a Visiting Evaluation Team for the Virginia Department of Education. She has been inducted into several honor societies in education including Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Kappa Phi, and Phi Delta Kappa.

She is the wife of Alexander Weiss, whom she married on August 15, 1965 and the mother of two adult children - Samuel Lawrence Weiss and Pamela Rachel Weiss.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frieda D. Weiss". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Frieda D. Weiss