Guidance and Counseling in Adventist Academies: An Update

By Gary L. Dickson and Jim Wampler

There has been an increasing emphasis on accountability in education in recent years. Substantiating program effectiveness and desirable outcomes are now seen as of practical value. Guidance has been particularly vulnerable to standards of accountability because its efficacy is difficult to measure. It has suffered because administrators have been willing to make only partial commitments to support guidance programs. And guidance counselors themselves have been inadequately trained to perform their functions effectively, or have failed to articulate the relationship of guidance to the central function of the school—learning. However, these conditions are finally changing.

While formal education has often limited its concern to the development of cognitive skills, there are educators who insist that the developmental goals of guidance closely parallel the holistic philosophy of Adventist education. Principals are becoming less hesitant to sponsor selected faculty for graduate training in guidance or hire those appropriately trained. Guidance counselors are making more sophisticated attempts to demonstrate their effectiveness.

Purpose and Method

The purpose of this study was to determine the status of guidance in Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools in the United States. There were several specific objectives:

1. To determine the emphasis given to guidance services and the amount of time allotted for the performance of guidance functions;
2. To determine the professional preparation and in-service training for those responsible for guidance services.

The Guidance Service Assessment Questionnaire was sent in the spring of 1979 to the designated guidance counselors at 80 U.S. academies that had a fully accredited secondary program admitting to institutions of higher education. Sixty-five responses (81 percent) were returned. There was no follow-up effort, due to the anonymity guaranteed the respondents. The schools participating represented all nine SDA union conferences and 30 of the 35 States in which the academies were located.

The questionnaire contained six questions, categorically tabulated on the basis of the size of the school’s enrollment. Table 1 clarifies the enrollment categories and the number of respondents in each category.

Results and Discussion

A brief discussion of the results of each item on the questionnaire will be presented in sequence as follows.

1. What portion of time is allotted for the designated guidance person to perform guidance functions?

Fifty-five respondents (85 percent) reported that half-time or less was allotted for the performance of guidance functions. Put more starkly, only about 15 percent spend more than half-time at such efforts. This figure was slightly better than the figure of 90 percent reported by Senecal of guidance counselors functioning at half-time or less.

Of the sixty-five respondents, only four (6 percent) reported full-time responsibilities in guidance; and none reported less than one-quarter time in schools with 300 or more students. No schools with as many as 160 students had more than a half-time guidance person. Generally, there was a direct relationship between time allotted for guidance and the size of a school; counselors in larger schools were given more time than those in smaller schools.

Shertzer and Stone recommend a ratio of one full-time counselor to 250-300 students. However, it should be remembered that a baseline of effort is required to administer a school or any organizational unit, regardless of size. Whether the unit is food service, maintenance, registrar and records, or guidance, a basic amount of time and effort is necessary to accomplishing its goals.

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THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION
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## Results and Discussion

A brief discussion of the results of each item on the questionnaire will be presented in sequence as follows:

1. **What portion of the study was allotted for the designated guidance personnel to perform guidance functions?** Fifty-five respondents (85 percent) reported that half-time or less was allotted for the performance of guidance functions in their schools. Only 15 percent reported more than half-time at such efforts. This figure was slightly better than the figure of 90 percent reported by Sevencal of guidance counselors functioning in a half-time or less.

   Of the sixty-five respondents, only four (6 percent) reported full-time responsibilities in guidance; and none reported less than one-quarter time in schools with 300 or more students. No schools with as many as 160 students had more than a half-time guidance person. Generally, there was a gradual relationship between time allotted for guidance and the size of the school; counselors in larger schools were given more time than those in smaller schools.

2. **How many clock hours per week does the designated guidance person spend in the classroom?** Forty-two (65 percent) of the respondents reported spending ten or more clock hours in the classroom each week. Sevencal reported about 71 percent of the counselors teaching two or three periods a day. Although some variation exists in the length of class periods at different schools, it appears that the SDA guidance counselors are spending slightly less, although still substantial, amounts of time dedicated to classroom teaching, planning, and evaluation. In the present study, size of school did not seem to be a major factor in time spent in instructional activity; both small and large schools reported counselors similarly involved. However, the 100-230 range reported the greatest time spent in teaching.

   A good case could be made for counselors to be directly involved in some classroom instruction, however, especially if the courses are guidance-related. This keeps the counselor familiar with the perspectives and stresses faced by students. Through classroom instruction counselors avoid a narrow, unbalanced view of students having special problems. But a counselor with more than two class periods a day will be severely limited in effectively carrying out guidance services.

3. **How many clock hours per week does the designated guidance person spend in other staff functions (i.e., dean, registrar, work or attendance supervisor, etc.)?** Extra-curricular responsibilities (i.e., student association, yearbook, newspaper, recreation sponsor, etc.) are assigned. Approximately half of all respondents spend ten hours per week or more performing these additional responsibilities; one-fourth reported more than fifteen hours per week. Sevencal reported 85 percent, and this study indicates 93 percent, of the guidance counselors spend some time in other staff functions. This should not necessarily be cause for concern, given the nature of the academic major factor in time spent: instructional activity; both small and large schools reported counselors similarly involved. However, the 100-230 range reported the greatest time spent in teaching.

   **Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Categories</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-160</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161-230</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231-299</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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   [Page 38]
hysterical, unresponsive students, and the suicidal are all difficult to help with counseling in an open college setting. They may need depth therapy, 24-hour care, medication, or some combination of the three. It is therefore important that faculty or staff who do regular formal or informal counseling become familiar with local community resources, key personnel in the relevant agencies, and valid referral processes.

Most urban communities or United Fund districts print a free annual community agency directory that gives pertinent current information on all agencies including mental health and counseling services.

In making a referral it is important to be certain that the agency referred to actually provides the specific service needed for the particular age group and income level of the student being referred. It is discouraging to be sent somewhere, fill out some forms, explain the problem, and then be told to repeat the process at another, more appropriate agency. The counselor should know something about the intake process of the agency referred to and, ideally, be acquainted with some counselors at the agency.

Some important questions concerning the person referred are: Can he get to the agency on his own? Does he have transportation and clear directions? Is he too confused or lethargic to respond to instructions? Does he need someone to accompany him or even speak for him? Is there a language problem? When a referral results in a student’s temporary incarceration, someone on campus should take the responsibility for maintaining contact through a social network of fellow students and school personnel.

Changing Habit Patterns

A lot of problematic behavior is the result of negative habit patterns. Students can be encouraged to pursue a process of habit change that depends on consistency. First, the student should face the fact that he has problematic behavior and wants to change it. The student may wish to share his goal with a close friend. He then can agree on a period of time to work on the change: i.e., 30 or 60 days. He should make this the subject of daily prayer. At some time each day he should sum up his successes and failures and plan his approach the next time the behavior is likely to manifest itself. About twice a week the student should assess progress with the counselor or whoever else he is sharing the problem with. If he can maintain steady, repeated attention to the problem and has the will to change, he can alter negative ways of coping or reacting that may have persisted since puberty.

It is helpful to explain to counselees that the mind is like an iceberg—most of it is under the surface. It is therefore understandable that it may take some time and effort to understand the reasons behind certain behavior. Another helpful concept that can be shared with counselees is that there are multiple causes or reasons for every behavior. When a student says, “The reason I did that or made that decision is”—he needs to understand that there are also other, perhaps lesser reasons behind that decision or act. Sorting out the contributing reasons or factors can be helpful counseling.

Students who need counseling often play games with themselves or others. They rationalize or excuse negative behavior, beg or threaten to get their way, or are dishonest. They should be confronted with these inadequate ways of coping. Such confrontation may be very gentle, but it must be firm. Evasive devices such as rationalizations can be explained and pointed out in the student’s behavior.

The incident, behavior, or mood that precipitates a need for counseling should be viewed in perspective. When did this occur in relation to significant time periods in the student’s experience? After some loss? Close to an impending significant event? Is it part of a larger problem?

The author hopes that the college counselor, whether formal or informal, trained or just empathetic, will find some helpful ideas among the suggestions offered in this article. Emotional problems of students are likely to increase as life on campus and off becomes more complex. Everyone who deals with students should continue to improve his ability to meet this need.

FOOTNOTES


Guidance and Counseling in Adventist Academies: An Update (Continued from page 15)

the M.A.; five reported no guidance-related degree; ten reported a degree in religion or theology; and eight were in the process of attaining an M.A. in Guidance; five made reference to no degree whatever.

The question regarding staff in-service participation seemed to be somewhat confusing to most of those responding. Eight reported in-service training with staff at their respective schools, and others listed workshops they had attended or left the item blank. About three-fourths (48) reported that they had participated in professional devel-
hysterical, unresponsive students, and the suicidal are all difficult to help with counseling in an open college setting. They may need deep therapy, 24-hour care, medication, or some combination of the three. It is therefore important that faculty staff who do regular formal or informal counseling become familiar with local community resources and the relevant agencies, and valid referral processes.

Most urban communities or United Fund districts print a free annual community agency directory that gives pertinent current information on all agencies including mental health and counseling services. In making a referral it is important to be certain that the agency referred to actually provides the specific service needed for the particular age group and income level of the student being referred. It is discouraging to be sent somewhere, fill out forms, explain the problem, and then be told to repeat the process at another, more appropriate agency. The counselor should know something about the intake process at the agency referred to and, ideally, be acquainted with some counselors at the agency. These are the questions concerning the person referred are: Can he get to the agency on his own? Does he have transportation and clear directions? Is he confused or lethargic or does he need instructions? Does he need someone to accompany him or even speak for him? Is there a language problem? When a referral results in a situation where the student is temporarily incarcerated, some counselor should take the responsibility of maintaining contact through a social network of fellow students and school personnel.

Changing Habit Patterns

A lot of problematic behavior is the result of negative habit patterns. Students can be encouraged to think of change as a habit that changes and needs to be practiced. The behavior is not identical to what has been the problematic behavior and wants to change it. The student may also have a change of view of the problem and experience. After some loss? Close to an impending significant event? A change in a life situation? He should make the student a subject of daily prayer. At some time each day he should sum up his successes and failures and plan his approach the next time the behavior is likely to manifest itself. About twice a week the student should attend progress with the counselor or whoever else is sharing the approach with. If he can maintain steady, repeated attention to the problem and has the will to change, he can alter negative ways of coping or reacting that may have persisted since puberty.

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Students who need counseling often have behaviors that are not harmful or bad or threatening to themselves or others. They rationalize or reframe negative behaviors or threat and believe their problems and solutions are not their own. Students should be approached with these inadequate ways of coping. Such confrontation may be very gentle, but it must be firm. Evasive devices such as rationalizations can be explained and pointed out to the student.

The incident, behavior, or mood that precipitates a need for counseling should be viewed in perspective. When did this occur in relation to significant events? After some loss? Close to an impending significant event? A change in a life situation? He should make the student a subject of daily prayer. At some time each day he should sum up his successes and failures and plan his approach the next time the behavior is likely to manifest itself. About twice a week the student should attend progress with the counselor or whoever else is sharing the approach with. If he can maintain steady, repeated attention to the problem and has the will to change, he can alter negative ways of coping or reacting that may have persisted since puberty.

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Describe the emphasis placed on the following guidance functions by checking the appropriate category (major, moderate, minor, none).

- Multihill identified five basic services for guidance: pupil inventory service, information service, counseling service, placement service, and research/consultation. On the basis of this classification and the other considerations, eight categories are described and presented in rank order in Table 2 according to the emphasis given on the respective category. Strong emphasis was reported for career guidance, testing, and career counseling, respectively. Moderate emphasis was given to academic counseling, personal/social counseling, and disciplinary consultation. Little or no emphasis was reported for spiritual or placement/consultation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The most encouraging trend that has surfaced in the years since the Senecal study is the increasing interest in professional development by those designated to perform guidance responsibilities. Graduate study in guidance is reported in appropriate areas, workshops and conferences supported by school administrators are real-

Table 2 Emphasis on Guidance Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Career Guidance</td>
<td>Interest inventories, career/life planning groups, information films, career days, field trips, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Personality, aptitude, achievement, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>College Entrance</td>
<td>College days, bulletin information, financial aids, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Academic Assistance</td>
<td>Advising/scheduling, tutoring, study skills, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Personal/Social Counseling</td>
<td>Roommate, boy-girl, interpersonal relations, family, self-concept, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Disciplinary Consultation</td>
<td>Student counseling, faculty/administration/parent advis., committee participation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spiritual Activities</td>
<td>Organizations, value clarification, development, retreats, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement/Placement</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>Local/regional job listings, interview, job hunting skills, alumni follow-up, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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important byproducts of such efforts.  

3. Counselors must shed their self-righteous naive about the good things they are doing, and provide evidence supporting their intuitive beliefs regarding the value of guidance services. On many campuses guidance is still viewed as desirable but nonessential. In such settings, it is imperative that being "soft on kids" is not seen as protecting them from the benefits of natural consequences. However, there must be plenty of caring confrontation—the kind that stimulates growth! And since faculty members sometimes unrealistically expect miracles with campus rascals, counselors should accept the challenges of developing strategies to bind the hearts of those who feel estranged. Where guidance is seen as a luxury, emphasis should be placed on programs whose success is observable and immediate, such as study skills and time management.  

4. Counselors need to vigorously pursue opportunities to improve their skills by expanding professional acquaintances, attending conferences and workshops, and joining such organizations as the Adventist Student Personnel Association (ASPA) and the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA).  

Lastly, it is obvious that principals have a long way to go in developing or fulfilling their commitment to student development. Qualifications of guidance counselors are not enough! Even a doctorate would be of little value if inadequate time is devoted to needed guidance services. It is safe to generalize that a campus of any size with a half-time (and usually less than half-time) guidance counselor is failing in its responsibility. Indeed, in carefully examining school priorities and guidance practices, the principal's primary gift to the counselor is time!  

FOOTNOTES  


4. Ibid.  


Proper Role of Deans  
(Continued from page 13)

Forty-five to 50 percent of each class saw the dean as being either very partial or moderately partial.  

Special Awareness Training Needed  

In dean-student relationships, partiality could be examined from several points of view. For example, the dean might be seen as partial if he selects certain kinds of persons to be resident assistants, desk monitors, or receptionists, and selects other kinds of persons as janitors. He might also be seen as partial if he is friendly to some students and not others, or if he invites only certain individuals to his apartment—for dinner, perhaps.  

Of course, we should remember that, according to research, a person is drawn to others who are similar in intelligence, ability, race, or socioeconomic status. But even more important, he is drawn to people with attitudes similar to his own. Recognizing how natural and even understandable it might be to overlook or bypass those whose background is somewhat different, a dean's preparation should include special awareness training so that as he deals with students, none of them would feel lonely or friendless because of being seen as "different." Another alternative might be that when there is more than one dean, the racial mix of the student body should be reflected.  

Often, however, despite the dean's being trained and understanding, his responsibilities are so numerous and varied that he scarcely has time for these intangibles. Yet young people need love, attention, time, and guidance, and for some boarding academy youth, these resources are limited. Teachers, who like deans are also hard pressed for time, do give some scholastic counseling and probably career counseling. However, many students must depend mostly on the dean for attention and counsel.  

Trust = Security  

Developing confidence and trust in another person takes time. In general, it takes even longer for young people to develop confidence and trust in adults. As Mercedes Dyer wrote:  

Basic trust is the most important attribute at the foundation of all good relationships. . . . When trust is absent, distrust is present. . . . Without trust people feel afraid and react in different ways. Some will be defensive and try to protect themselves; . . . or they may become so fearful that they withdraw in any one of a hundred ways.  

If a student recognizes that he has a problem, and knows that he can freely discuss this problem with someone, he feels secure. The response shown in Table 4 resulted from the question: Is your dean "a person to be confided in and trusted"?  

Note that even among seniors, more than 70 percent agreed that their dean could be confided in and trusted.  

Listening Necessary for Communication  

If a dean has little time to listen to students or is not trained in the art of listening, his trustworthiness and confidentiality will be of little value, and the students who depend on him will not be well served. The dean is at the center of the social system in the academy and must develop a position of authority, one that will pull the students to him. The attitude of the faculty and the board is to develop the position of the dean, and he must have time to develop an emotional rapport with the students.  

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