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## THE DEVELOPMENT AND FORMATION OF THE INSTITUTION OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR IN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE PROCESS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

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**Abstract.** The article focuses on the development and formation of the institution of a school counselor during the process of career development of students. The transformation of terms “vocational guidance” and “career counseling” is being investigated. The preparation of school counselors in higher education establishments of the USA is in the focus. The article analyzes some programs, national standards and some models. They outline accurately the duties and functions of school counselors. It is characterized the main principles of the activity of school counselors. The main directions of their work, the distribution of their time are shown, which prove the necessity and effectiveness of their activity.

**Keywords:** school counselor, career counseling, vocational guidance, standards, USA.

Rapid changes of political and economic realities, orientation of society to European values and standards caused the necessity to reform a comprehensive school aiming at upgrading of students preparation for future labor activity. Today we have an urgent necessity to solve a task for increasing opportunities of a competence-based choice of future career promoting the development of capacities and skills and self-realization.

The preparation of students for career self-determination which is regarded in the USA today in the structure of the notion “career development” has passed a complex, evolutionary way, caused by the changes in social and economic system of the society organization, education and the development of psychology and theory of education itself.

The theoretical base of career choice is numerous theories of career choice and development, the core of which is determined by two philosophic approaches – positivism and constructivism.

“There is no part of life where the need for guidance is more emphatic than in the transition from school to work. The building of a career is quite as difficult a problem as the building of a house, yet few ever sit down with a pencil and paper, with expert information and counsel, to plan a working career and deal with the problem of building a house, taking the advice of an architect to help them”, - Frank Parsons stated, the founder of vocational guidance, emphasizing the importance of the profession of a counselor<sup>7,p.8</sup>.

At the beginning of the previous century the functions of counselors were performed by school teachers, who had no appropriate professional expertise and were not released from their main duties.

J. Brewer stated: "... in most schools two or more teachers are allowed part-time for counseling individuals, but there seems to be no committee of cooperation between the several schools, and no attempt to supervise the work. It is well done or indifferently done, apparently according to the interest and enthusiasm of the individual principal or counselor"<sup>6,p.2</sup>.

The absence of a generally accepted theory of career development and centralized programs of career development caused problems dealing with content, forms and methods of activity of school counselors, and, consequently, influenced negatively on its effectiveness.

This problem was highlighted by G. Myers in 1923: "A tendency dangerous to the cause of vocational guidance is the tendency to load the vocational counselor with so many duties foreign to the office that little real counseling can be done. The principal, and often the counselor himself, has a very indefinite idea of the proper duties of this office. The counselor's time is more free from definite assignments with groups or classes of pupils than is that of the ordinary teacher. It is perfectly natural, therefore, for the principal to assign one administrative duty after another to the counselor until he becomes practically assistant principal, with little time for the real work of a counselor... a centralized, unified program of vocational guidance for the entire school of a city is essential to the most effective work"<sup>6,p.3</sup>.

In spite of the above stated problems after the Second World War vocational guidance in schools became a part of educational process and was performed by school counselors with appropriate professional expertise.

There were 4000 counselors in American schools in 1945. After the War a set of laws was issued aiming at increasing the effectiveness of career development programs for American comprehensive school students.

At the beginning of the 60s of the previous century there were about 400 colleges and universities which prepared school counselors.

From the 1960s such a psychological and educational approach as "developmental guidance" became widespread in American schools, due to which career development was regarded as a part of general and comprehensive development of a personality.

In 1988 the first edition of N. Gysbers and P. Henderson's book "Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program" was published by the American Association for Counseling and Development (now the American Counseling Association).

In 1997 American School Counselor Association published the National Standards for School Counseling Programs <sup>10</sup>. The content of standards focuses on three aspects of a personality development: academic, career, personal/ social. The standards are regarded as a necessary element for provision of quality and effectiveness of school counseling programs, an inalienable component of a school activity that promotes equal access, universality, systemacy for all students and also define specific knowledge, attitudes and skills students should obtain. Standards within the academic, career and personal / social development domains are specified by certain competencies that promote the level or rate of performance the student will achieve during all his studying in school (standard A – elementary school, standard B – middle school, standard C – high school).

Domain	Standard level	Goal
Academic development	Standard A	Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.
	Standard B	Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college.
	Standard C	Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.

Domain	Standard level	Goal
Career development	Standard A	Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
	Standard B	Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.
	Standard C	Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.
Personal/Social development	Standard A	Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
	Standard B	Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.
	Standard C	Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Tab. 1. ASCA National Standards for Students

According to the definition of American School Counselor Association school counselors are “qualified and certified specialists in the field of human relations who hold a graduate degree giving them the right to work in school and educational establishments”<sup>2</sup>.

For certification of a counselor it is necessary to complete 2 years of full-time Master’s experience in two main majors in psychology and behavioral science, theories and technologies of consulting and social science. The time necessary for learning these subjects varies from  $\frac{1}{3}$  till  $\frac{1}{2}$  from the general number of hours required for certification. A counselor should pass such subjects as philosophy of education, theory of education, anthropology, acmeology, methodology of research work, ethics and legislation in counseling, practical experience (not less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  from the general number of hours) and highly specific optional courses (no more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  from the general number of hours).

The certification of a graduate on the position of a counselor takes place only after the completion of all courses and the issue of the letter of recommendation from university. Besides, there is a tough demand for all the courses to be conducted by specialists in the given subject-matter.

After certification a counselor should pass in addition licensing, the peculiarities of which are defined at a state level. Each state has a licensing committee which is guided by the federal and local legislation in the field of counseling. In some states it may be required from an applicant to have more hours of practical experience and probation time, in another – completion of extra specialized courses. Besides, license is valid for some years and should be renewed periodically. For this it is required the confirmation of lifelong learning experience from a counselor, who should attend seminars, institutes of professional development, thematic conferences for the participation in them he receives scores, certain number of which is necessary for the renewal of license.

In 2003 American Association of School Counselors worked out the National Model for School Counseling Programs. The model integrated the results of work of N. Gysbers, P. Henderson, C. Johnson and Sh. Johnson and connected their approach with the national standards and the initiative to reform programs of school counseling.

The main authors of this document are Judy Bowers and Trish Hatch. The model became the base for design, development, implementation and assessment of comprehensive, developmental, systematic program of school counseling. The model regards the program as an integral component of the academic mission of a school, ensures equitable access to the school counseling program for all students provided by a state-credentialed school counselor, identifies the knowledge and skills all students might acquire as a result of the K-12 school counseling program and ensures the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic fashion to all students.

The model supports the school's academic mission by promoting and enhancing the learning process for all students through an integration of academic, career and personal / social development.

The model is built using the system of standards (the term "standard" is often used synonymously with such terms as "goal", "result", "task", "aspiration") including the content standards in the domains of academic, career and personal/social development, the standards for school counseling programs, ethic standards for school counselors. According to the above mentioned model a school counselor performs different roles:

Counselor Role	Category of Development		
	Academic	Career	Personal
<b>Leader</b>	Starting new programs to help all students do better in school.	Starting new programs to help all students obtain knowledge about college or careers.	Starting new programs to help all students with any personal problems that can interfere with doing well in school.
<b>Advocate</b>	Encouraging all students to select classes that will challenge them.	Helping all students make contacts with local business people to develop their understanding of different careers.	Bringing specialists from the community into the school to help students who are having personal problems that interfere with their school work.
<b>Collaborator</b>	Working with teachers, principals, and parents to help all students do well in school.	Bringing local business people to help all students learn more about jobs and careers.	Talking with teachers or parents about personal problems that students are unable to solve on their own.
<b>Coordinator</b>	Providing all students with a safe place to talk about problems with academics.	Assisting all students in choosing college or career paths that are right for them.	Providing all students with a safe place to talk about personal problems.
<b>Data Utilizer</b>	Gathering information on student academic progress to make sure that all students are selecting challenging classes.	Gathering information on students who need after school jobs and finding ways to get these students part-time work.	Gathering information on all students who are having personal problems to make sure they get the help they need.

*Tab. 2. Three Categories of Development, Five School Counselor Roles, and Corresponding Functions*

The table presents the roles and functions which are performed by a school counselor in an educational establishment, that gives him not only a possibility to optimize an educational process with other subjects of this process, but to provide a link with a real world, future prospects of students. A school counselor expands the possibilities of career development of students and creates the conditions for their self-realization.

A school counselor in his work is guided by the following principles:

1. Each person has the right to respect and dignity as a human being and to counseling services without prejudice as to person, character, belief, or practice regardless of age, color, disability, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.

2. Each person has the right to self-direction and self-development.
3. Each person has the right of choice and the responsibility for goals reached.

4. Each person has the right to privacy and thereby the right to expect the counselor-counselee relationship to comply with all the laws, policies and ethical standards pertaining to confidentiality<sup>9,p.121</sup>. As Shephard Johnson states: "... the new millennium affords transformative opportunities for school counselors to refine their professional identity as highly trained practitioners whose goal is to facilitate all students to become effective learners through provision of a contemporary integrated school counseling program that promotes the achievement of developmentally based competencies across academic, career and personal/social domains"<sup>7,p.6</sup>.

The rough distribution of total school counselor time is given in Tab. 3.

<b>Delivery system component</b>	<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
Guidance Curriculum	35-45 %	25-35 %	15-25 %
Individual Student Planning	5-10 %	15-25 %	25-35 %
Responsive Services	30-40 %	30-40 %	25-35 %
System Support	10-15 %	10-15 %	15-20 %

Tab. 3. *Distribution of Total School Counselor Time*

As you can see from the table the activity of a school counselor is effective enough, as it encompasses different activities taking into account the age peculiarities of students, focusing on their needs and interests. If in an elementary school students mostly acquire the knowledge about different professions at their lessons and are involved in various activities, in a high school the focus is on individual work. It reveals special attention to an independent choice of high school students, understanding of their problems and psychological support.

The problem of preparation of a student for career self-determination has always been in the center of attention. It may be proved by different legislative acts aiming at the improvement of this preparation, its organizational, professional and financial support. The organizational body, which performs this activity in school is a school system "guidance".

One of the central figures in the process of career development in a school environment is the figure of a school counselor, whose functions and role have been changing during the whole period of existence of this profession. A school counselor should have special preparation and be licensed (certified) in accordance with requirements of each state separately. The activity of a school counselor is regulated by ethical standards for his activity and other regulatory acts.

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