CSCORE’s Annual Review: Research that Improves School Counseling Practice

Presented by:

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Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation
University of Massachusetts Amherst
1. Review current outcome research

2. Focus on the needs of practicing school counselors working in schools

3. Engage you in discussion of best practices that are supported by credible evidence
Outcomes for Session

1. Be able to leave this session with research findings and best practice suggestions that you can use right now to improve your work with students

2. Be better prepared to ADVOCATE for your work as a school counselor with key policy makers, decision makers, and public opinion makers
Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation
Was CSCOR until 2010
Founded in 2002 by Jay Carey, current Director
Carey Dimmitt is Associate Director
Housed at the University of Massachusetts Amherst
The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation (CSCORE) is dedicated to improving the practice of school counseling by developing and disseminating the research base that is necessary for responsible and effective practice. CSCORE provides national leadership in the measurement and evaluation of the outcomes of school counseling interventions and programs, and helps K-12 leaders and practitioners improve school counseling practice by providing information about implementing evidence-based interventions, measuring student outcomes, and evaluating program effectiveness.
The Big Picture: Evidence-Based Education

Evidence based Education

Professional Wisdom
  - Individual Experience
  - Consensus

Empirical Evidence
  - Scientifically-Based Research
  - Empirical Information
The judgment that individuals acquire through experience

Consensus views - what has worked before?

Professional wisdom includes identifying and incorporating local circumstances into program decisions
What is Empirical Evidence in School Counseling?

- Scientifically-based research in educational settings
- Relevant research from related fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and neuroscience
- Data on school counseling program and intervention outcomes
Without professional wisdom education cannot
- adapt to local circumstances
- operate intelligently in the many areas in which research evidence is absent or incomplete

Without empirical evidence education cannot
- resolve competing approaches
- generate cumulative knowledge
- avoid fad, fancy, and personal bias
Evidence-Based practice in school counseling integrates three sources of information:

1. Data-Based Decision-Making Evidence
   Knowing what is needed in that setting

2. Outcome Research Evidence
   Knowing what interventions work generally

3. Intervention Evaluation Evidence
   Knowing that an intervention worked in this setting
A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice

Data-Based Decision-Making Evidence and Goals

"Knowing what is needed"

Intervention and Program Evaluation

Outcome Research

Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007
A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice

Intervention and Program Evaluation

DBDM Targets and Goals “What’s needed”

“Knowing what generally works”

Outcome Research

Dimmitt, Carey & Hatch (2007)
A Model of School Counseling Evidence-Based Practice

Intervention and Program Evaluation

"Knowing how students changed"

Outcome Research

“What works”

DBDM

Targets and Goals

“What’s needed”

Dimmitt, Carey & Hatch, (2007)
Outcome Research

- Outcome research is specifically interested in the results of an intervention or program.
- “How did the classroom guidance unit impact student knowledge about post-secondary possibilities?”
- The answer to this question in one school is outcome evaluation. The answer to this question in many schools is outcome research.
- What are the outcomes of your school counseling program?
A recent meta-analysis of school counseling outcome research involving 117 studies of 153 school counseling interventions with 16,296 students found an effect size of .30.

*Students who participated in the school counseling interventions improved almost a third of a standard deviation more than their peers who did not receive the interventions.

Whiston Meta-Analysis of SC Interventions: Conclusions

- School counseling interventions are moderately effective
- Individual planning at the middle school level has a large effect size (small number of studies)
- Guidance curriculum is an important program component, especially at the middle and high school level
- Responsive services have a larger effect size at elementary level
SC interventions have large effects on:
- Career knowledge
- Problem-solving skills
- Disciplinary referrals

SC interventions contribute to academic achievement

SC interventions are moderately effective in reducing anxiety and depression, increasing interpersonal social skills, and positively influencing attendance
School Counseling Research

- Elementary school students do better on both national tests of academic knowledge and on state tests of academic achievement when there is a comprehensive developmental school counseling program in their school (sample of 5,618 students).

Career interventions that do not use school counselors (e.g. computerized career guidance programs) have been found to be significantly less effective than groups, workshops and classes run by counselors.

Students who participate in career development curriculum show significantly more understanding of career possibilities, more future orientation, and greater self-efficacy and increased school engagement.

School-based programs designed to decrease aggressive behavior show considerable success in impacting behaviors, related feelings of safety, and disciplinary events.

School counseling classroom curriculum designed to educate HS students about goal-setting, problem-solving, career exploration, and school resources has been found to significantly improve student behavior, attitude and knowledge in these areas.

Group counseling by school counselors has positive effects on academic achievement with underachieving elementary and middle school students.

Elementary and middle school students who participate in school counseling curriculum and group interventions that focus on cognitive, social and self-management skills (Student Success Skills) have consistently shown significantly stronger math and reading scores on state tests.

“As part of the research analysis, we compared the responses of young people who said that their counselors seemed to see to them as just another face in the crowd with the responses of young people who said that their counselors really made an effort to get to know them and help them.” (Sec1:9)
Young adults who had school counselors who made an effort to know them and help them (47% of those surveyed) were more likely to:

- Go directly from high school to college
- Receive financial aid or scholarships to pay for college
- Be satisfied in their college choice
- Choose their college based on its academic reputation and/or financial offers made to them
- Feel that their college would help them get a good job after graduation
Student Needs Survey results: 72% said they would like the opportunity to speak with an advisor who knows all about the different colleges and job training programs so they could make a good choice (91% African American; 82% Hispanic American)
The relationship between program implementation and student outcomes:

- Higher math & communication arts test scores
- Higher graduation rates
- Better attendance
- Fewer discipline problems
- Advantages for college and career counseling
- Principals ratings supported school counseling ratings

- Better attendance
- Fewer discipline problems
- Principals’ ratings supported school counseling ratings
Minority Student Enrollment and Individual Planning Services in High School

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<th>Minority Enrollment</th>
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4-Year College Going Rates for Students from High Schools with more than 15% Minority Student Enrollment and Program Implementation

- Low Implementing = 28%
- High Implementing = 47%

% of Students in 4-Year Colleges

Program Implementation
Paving the Road to College: How School Counselors Help Students Succeed

Rich Lapan and Karen Harrington
Center for School Counseling Outcome Research
School of Education
University of Massachusetts Amherst

www.cscor.org

Chicago Public Schools
Joyce Brown and Regina Manley
Value Added: PSCs help to promote higher test scores

Predicting PSAE Composite Scores

- Free or Reduced Lunch: 64%
- Non-Guidance Tasks: 4%
- Individual Planning: 3%
- Unexplained Variance: 29%
Value Added: PSCs help to increase enrollment in AP Courses

Predicting Enrollment in Advanced Placement Courses

- Free or Reduced Lunch: 40%
- Non-Guidance Tasks: 4%
- Individual Planning: 3%
- Unexplained Variance: 53%
Figure 4.1: Coordination and Clerical Tasks Performed by School Counselors and Principals

Tasks
- Coordinate Testing Program
- Maintaining Student Records
- Photocopy Transcripts
- School Assemblies
- Copied/Mailed Enrollment Records

Comparison between School Counselors and Principals.
Figure 4.2: Other Duties As Assigned Performed by School Counselors

Duties Assigned

- Special Ed/Gifted Testing
- Hall Duty
- Substitute Teaching
- Collect/Mail Reports/Deficiency Notices
- Administer Discipline

Means

- School Counselors
- Principals
Figure 4.3: Relationship between Free and Reduced Lunch and Non-Guidance Tasks

% of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch:
- 40% to 59%
- 60% to 69%
- 70% to 79%
- 80% to 89%
- 90% to 100%

Means for:
- General High Schools
- All High Schools
Figure 5.5: Agreement Between Principals and School Counselors on Individual Planning

Student Outcomes

- % Applying to 3 or More Colleges
- % Accepted to College
- Plan to Attend
- % Cohort Dropout Rate

Means

- No/No
- No/Yes
- Yes/No
- Yes/Yes
Four Major Findings

- CPS high school counselors play an important role in promoting student academic achievement.

- An implementation gap exists across CPS high schools in the organization and delivery of a comprehensive guidance program, thus advantaging some students and disadvantaging others.

- CPS high school counselors impact how students plan, prepare, search, apply, and enroll in college.

- CPS high school counselors play a vital role in helping 8th grade students successfully transition into high school.
Recommendations

- Close the implementation gap in the organization and delivery of a comprehensive guidance program
- Establish a working alliance with each 8th grader
- Reduce non-guidance tasks
- Enhance Individual Planning skills of school counselors for a global 21st Century economy
- Increase parental involvement
- Get principals to support implementation
10 strategies PSCs use in Inspiration Award schools to promote student success and college attainment

1. Be part of school leadership team
2. Help to establish achievement-oriented school climate
3. Provide academic and financial outreach to parents
4. Offer college-focused interventions for low-income students
5. Establish partnerships with colleges and the community
6. Share responsibility and power with colleagues and principal
7. Provide systemic, multilevel counseling interventions
8. Use data to support student achievement
9. Shape school policies and practices
10. Counselors counsel: not inundated with clerical & administrative tasks
How the very high aspirations of CPS high school students are being lost in the college preparation, search, application, and enrollment process

Four Recommended Areas for Improvement

1. Create strong college-going cultures in each high school
2. Help students and families manage the high costs of college
3. Encourage students to apply to multiple colleges
4. Have students enroll in colleges that matched their qualifications
Students need

- Meaningful engagement with adults in the building
- To feel connected and known
- To feel like they belong and are wanted
- To feel safe
Just meeting with students isn’t enough:
What you do with them makes the difference!
Good guidance makes a difference, but not all students are getting good guidance from school counselors.

Effective School Counselors:
- Provide services to all students, through classroom, group and individual interventions that develop competencies in the academic, career and personal/social domains.
Effective School Counselors:

- Support students through transitions
- Work extensively with families and communities
- Evaluate outcomes to make sure that program components are effective
- Are culturally competent
- Use data to make decisions, to demonstrate accountability, and to evaluate outcomes
Next Steps in CSCORE’s work

- International model for counseling in schools
- Better curriculum materials with evidence of impact
- Dissemination of research, resources, links, and materials that meet CSCORE criteria

Questions

Discussion