

RECIPROCAL ROLE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
TEACHER AND COUNSELOR:  
THE KEY TO COOPERATION

by 1264

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS AND PROCEDURES . . . .	1
Purpose . . . . .	1
Definitions . . . . .	2
Procedures . . . . .	3
II. REVIEW OF RESEARCH . . . . .	4
III. STAFF SUPPORT OF THE GUIDANCE SERVICES . . . .	6
Necessity of Staff Support . . . . .	6
Hinderences of Staff Support . . . . .	7
Failure of counselors to communicate their role . . . . .	7
Difficulty of defining the counselor's role	8
Working Definition of the Counselor's Role:	
An Aid to Staff Support . . . . .	9
IV. ASPECTS OF THE COUNSELOR'S ROLE TO BE	
COMMUNICATED TO THE TEACHER . . . . .	11
The Counselor-Student Relationship . . . . .	12
Limits . . . . .	12
Goals . . . . .	13
Confidentiality . . . . .	15

CHAPTER	PAGE
The Counselor-Teacher Relationship . . . . .	18
Goals . . . . .	18
Limits . . . . .	19
Special areas of concern . . . . .	20
V. ASPECTS OF THE TEACHER'S ROLE TO BE UNDERSTOOD	
BY THE COUNSELOR . . . . .	23
Work and Responsibilities . . . . .	23
Traditional Educational Views . . . . .	25
Need to Follow Routine . . . . .	27
Testing and Recording . . . . .	27
Counseling . . . . .	28
VI. COOPERATION THROUGH RECIPROCAL ROLE	
UNDERSTANDING . . . . .	31
Areas of Teacher Aid to the Counselor . . . . .	31
Referrals . . . . .	31
Information . . . . .	32
Areas of Counselor Aid to the Teacher . . . . .	33
Teacher in counseling role . . . . .	34
Conferences . . . . .	35
Referral information . . . . .	36
VII. SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING RECIPROCAL ROLE	
UNDERSTANDING . . . . .	37

CHAPTER	PAGE
VIII. SUMMARY . . . . .	40
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	44
X. APPENDIX A. Barker's Instrument . . . . .	49
XI. APPENDIX B. Gibson's Instrument . . . . .	53
XII. APPENDIX C. Russell and Willis's Instrument .	59



Dedication

To Lloyd, with whom the ancient vow--

For better, for worse;

For richer, for poorer;

In sickness and in health--

taken in apprehension and hope,

has become meaningful and joyful.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS, AND PROCEDURES

It is important in educational settings that various professional functions do not run at cross purposes to the detriment of pupil learning and development. Professional conflicts have developed in many school systems. Assuming professional interest in pupil development on the part of all concerned one might wonder why this is so. What can be done to increase the incidence of harmonious working relationships among professional educators for the benefit of teachers as well as students and the society of which they are all members.

#### I. PURPOSE

It was the purpose of this report to consider reciprocal role understanding of the teacher and the counselor. This understanding between teacher and counselor provides for a more effective working relationship than is possible where there is lack of clarity in the mind of each as to the role of the other. Reciprocal role understanding increases the effectiveness and the scope of the guidance services in the school. However, no one will conclude that reciprocal role

understanding will result in complete agreement as to role function.

## II. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this report the counselor was defined as a professional educator who had at least one year of graduate training in guidance and counseling and was certified as a guidance counselor in the state where he worked. The teacher was defined as one minimally educated at the bachelor's degree level and certified by the state in which he worked to instruct in all courses which he taught. The terms teacher and staff were used interchangeably. The functions of the counselor were taken from Moler's more complete definition and were stated in the section concerning a working definition of the counselor's role.<sup>1</sup> The report was written primarily with the secondary school setting in mind but many of the suggestions are applicable to lower as well as higher levels of education.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Moler, "Forces Influencing the Counselor's Role," (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Educational Research Information Center, ED. 010886, 1960), 11.

### III. PROCEDURES

The report was not original research. Major library sources were Educational Index, Psychological Abstracts, Educational Research Information Center, and the library card catalog at Kansas State University. The reciprocal understanding of the role of the teacher and the counselor were the focal point of the report. Causes of misunderstanding were explored as well as the results of joint efforts gained by reciprocal role understanding. A few minor suggestions for further researching of the topic were also made.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Only three studies which were earnest attempts to research the subject of teacher attitudes toward public school guidance programs were reported in recent professional periodicals. Barker made the only attempt to develop a scale to measure teacher, parent, and pupil attitudes toward school guidance programs (see Appendix A).<sup>2</sup> His article is only a defense of the questionnaire resulting from his study. No study using the questionnaire was reported. Accurate measurement of attitudes is at best difficult, however Barker's scale is a starting point to help the counselor attain a feel for the attitudes of a school staff.

Gibson studied teacher opinions of high school guidance programs in 1965.<sup>3</sup> He used questionnaires which dealt with general information, individual analysis, counseling,

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<sup>2</sup>Donald G. Barker, "Development of a Scale of Attitudes toward School Guidance," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 44:1077-1083, June, 1966.

<sup>3</sup>Robert L. Gibson, "Teacher Opinions of High School Guidance Programs," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 44:416-422, December, 1965.

occupational and educational information, group activities, placement, follow-up, and teacher-pupil opinions of high school guidance programs where pupil responses were given in addition to teacher responses (see Appendix B). Gibson made inferences from his study which were quoted throughout this report.

Russell and Willis surveyed teacher opinions of guidance services.<sup>4</sup> Their participants were given a list of eight statements to rate on a five point scale (see Appendix C). They reported the ratings of each of the eight statements. They found that teachers felt counselors overprotected students and that the guidance programs did not get support of a large majority of teachers. The implications from their study were also included.

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<sup>4</sup>Jones C. Russell and A. Willis, "Survey of Teachers' Opinions of Guidance Services," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 42:707-709, November, 1964.

## CHAPTER III

### STAFF SUPPORT OF THE GUIDANCE SERVICES

#### I. NECESSITY OF STAFF SUPPORT

Staff support is absolutely necessary to an effective guidance program. Teachers carry out many guidance functions and, at the same time influence the opinions of the students. Teachers are the counselor's best source of information and referrals. Schwebel expressed the importance of a positive teacher-counselor relationship when he said,

In a very fundamental sense the success of a guidance program in an educational institution depends upon the support it receives from the faculty. The most vigorous program is that in which the professional guidance workers are not a group by themselves, set off from the line workers as on an organization chart, but one in which they are an integral part of the staff, serving by their own specialized skills to further the primary educational functions of the institution. Such a relationship among workers in any organization is a major objective of personnel practices.

Guidance workers introducing a new program to the school have sometimes neglected to consider the reaction of the faculty to this seemingly pretentious intruder. Authoritarian measures used to get teacher participation are ineffective. No administrator can compel a teacher to deal warmly with students, to observe objectively, or to counsel successfully. He can force the teacher to go through the motions, but

this action is worthless to the child and frequently generates hostility to the entire guidance program.<sup>5</sup>

## II. HINDERENCES TO STAFF SUPPORT

Failure of counselors to communicate their role. This necessary staff support is impossible when counselor's do not clearly communicate their role. The teacher who does not understand the counselor's role is threatened by the counselor-student relationship and does not know how to use the teacher-counselor relationship. He does not know when to refer students, what to expect when he does refer them, or what to discuss with the counselor. Gibson found lack of counselor role communication a hinderence and concluded,

There seems to be an accumulation of evidence from both this study and the previously cited 'Pupil Opinion' study that counselors are not communicating well concerning the role and function of the school counselor and the guidance program. Teachers and counselors both seemed to feel that where indecisiveness existed regarding role and function and program leadership, the development of the school guidance program was found to be impeded.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Milton, Schwebel, "The Faculty and the Guidance Program," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 28:364, March, 1950.

<sup>6</sup>Gibson, op. cit., 420.



Leonard also stressed that teachers needed more information regarding the counselor's role when she said,

Like all human beings, we are reluctant to admit that we are not informed; so do not take us for granted. Acquaint us with your objectives, . . . <sup>7</sup>

Difficulty of defining the counselor's role. Part of the problem of role communication is inadequate role definition. The counselor's role is difficult to define. Counselors see themselves as educators, clinicians, consultants, or therapists. Some feel allied with teachers and some with administrators. Students see counselors as confidants, authority symbols, traitors, busybodies, and friends. Parents believe counselors are experts on vocations and colleges, or sex education and teen-age marriage. Counselors have not defined guidance to the satisfaction of teachers. Yamamoto surveyed definitions of guidance among official documents of the American Personnel and Guidance Association and found none which satisfied him. He concluded, "Strangely, guidance seems to be something that everyone in the profession knows, but which no outsider can see."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Dorothy Leonard, "A Classroom Teacher Looks at Guidance," Education, 75:447, March, 1955.

<sup>8</sup>Kaoru Yamamoto, "Guidance: Education or Therapy--or What?" Educational Leadership, 30:309, January, 1967.

Moler tried to explain why the counselor's role is difficult to define. He summarized,

Defining the role of the counselor is a task which is complicated by the changing world, changing social structure, and the influence of government. The role is further complicated by the fact that counseling originated from a variety of disciplines, borrowing from the job of the teacher, administrator, the social worker, and the psychologist. . . . There is a need for greater cohesion between various counselor training programs even though they are designed to meet the needs of varying school needs and communities.<sup>9</sup>

### III. WORKING DEFINITION OF THE COUNSELOR'S ROLE:

#### AN AID TO STAFF SUPPORT

Faculty support is necessary for an effective guidance program. Support is weakened by lack of clarity in communication. Communication is weakened by poor definition. For these reasons a working definition of the counselor's role is necessary. The first three items of Moler's more complete definition were used for the purposes of this report.

1. Assistant to students with educational vocational, personal and/or social problems;
2. Consultant to teachers and administrators referring students;
3. Interpreter of guidance practices to teachers, administrators, parents and other professions;
4. Researcher on matters pertinent to student

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<sup>9</sup>Moler, op. cit., 11.

development, educational, vocational, personal and social; researcher in test development and validation; researcher in interviewing and counseling technique; researcher in counseling effectiveness;

5. Advisor to the student in matters within his sphere of competence;

6. Consultant to employers--government, industry, and community, in matters relevant to the employer.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

ASPECTS OF THE COUNSELOR'S ROLE TO BE  
COMMUNICATED TO THE TEACHER

There was a time when faithful teachers were offered the job of counselor. They were permitted to sit down, had fewer papers to grade, and helped students choose classes for the following year. The counselor as defined in this report has more guidance training and experience. His role has not remained the same and he hopes to help others perceive it differently. Today counselors and teachers usually concur that testing, placement, follow-up and information service are functions of the counselor. Perhaps the best understood is that of the information service. However, there is no area of complete communication of the counselor's role. Gibson found regarding the information services that even in this service understanding is found wanting.

While there was the greatest concensus of agreement in response to questions regarding the information services, interviews showed little knowledge of even the existence of theories of vocational development and choice, much less their application to the planning of a program on information services.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Gibson, op. cit., 420.

## I. THE COUNSELOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

More difficulty results, however, from lack of understanding on the part of the staff as to the nature and limits of the counseling process and the relationship of the counselor to the student.

Limits. The counselor certainly is responsible for making clear to the staff that his function is not to provide information, tell students what they should think and do, and take responsibility for their lives and decisions. These limits are not clear to many teachers. Gibson concluded that, "Many seem to feel that it was a 'telling' or 'directing' process which required more patience and understanding on the part of the counselor than formal training."<sup>12</sup>

The counselor must help the staff members comprehend that he tries to see problems as the student sees them and to ". . . help the student understand the disturbing forces within himself and his environment and to change himself in such a manner that he will be able to find his own solutions."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Gibson, op. cit., 423.

<sup>13</sup>Merle M. Ohlsen, Guidance Services in the Modern School, (Chicago, Illinois: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), 88.

It is important that the counselor make clear that behavior change through counseling is a process which is limited, at best, by the client's readiness for growth. The counselor must help the staff understand that his function is to help students express and cope with their feelings and attitudes. Sometimes the result will be different feelings and attitudes on the part of the student and thus different behavior.

Goals. The goals of the counseling relationship are a mystery to some staff members and especially to those who have never experienced having a counselor. The counselor tries to see the student's problems from the student's point of view. This is sometimes interpreted by the staff as a counselor-student alliance against a teacher. It is difficult to explain that to put oneself in the student's place, to see what he sees, and, in a manner of speaking, to experience what he experiences, does not imply agreement with or condonement of his point of view any more than it implies judgment. It simply means understanding which is the essence of the counseling relationship. This relationship is what the counselor must communicate to his staff.

The counselor must help the staff comprehend that he does not feel the function he performs is the only one valuable to the student. Counselor and teacher functions

are different. Both are very important. MacCarthy expressed the difference between classroom teaching and the interview when he said,

The classroom is more teacher-centered while the counseling interview is client-centered. A teacher can ill-afford to permit anyone to 'blow off steam' in class, nor can he empathize much, because he has the whole group to consider.<sup>14</sup>

Expecting and helping the student to exercise proper control of his feelings in the classroom is an important function of the teacher. Helping the student to express his feelings is an important and different function of the counselor. The counselor must communicate that he appreciates the value of the teacher's controlling function if he is to be successful with the staff.

Sometimes teachers believe that counselor's who do not discipline students are opposed to teacher discipline. The counselor must communicate that he is not opposed to discipline of students and/or punishment, simply that this is not his function. When this is not communicated it becomes an area of misunderstanding. Russell and Willis concluded,

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<sup>14</sup>Anthony C. Riccio, "The Guidance Worker and Human Relations," The National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 45:89-90, November, 1961.

First there is a significant difference of opinion among teachers as to the role of guidance concerning discipline. Many teachers feel counselors tend to overprotect students.<sup>15</sup>

The idea which the counselor must communicate is that because he remains non-judgmental toward the student does not imply condonement of disruptive behavior or judgment of the teacher for disciplining the student for such behavior.

Confidentiality. Confidentiality of the counselor-student relationship, if not handled with expertise, is sometimes insulting and threatening to teachers. Teachers fear that counselors and/or students do not trust them. They feel that their teaching situation is made more difficult because important information concerning a student is being withheld from them. Riccio expressed teacher feeling toward counselors regarding confidentiality when he said of counselors,

They expect teachers to refer students to them, but they do not inform teachers of the outcome of interviews, believing teachers to be too unsophisticated to handle the elicited information or believing that such information is to be regarded as sacrosanct.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Russell and Willis, op. cit., 708.

<sup>16</sup>Riccio, op. cit., 89-90.



Indeed the problem is a difficult one even when everyone involved is secure, well-intentioned, and professional. The counselor may have information he feels would be helpful to teachers but which students would not have divulged had they not felt their confidentiality protected. In this case the counselor may feel bound simply by the fact of his word. It is also true that when the counselor divulges information he is assuming some responsibility for how it will be used. The conscientious counselor has reason to be cautious.

Teachers justifiably expect a report on a referral. A good counselor who wished to encourage referrals would certainly reward the teacher with helpful information. However, a problem occurs when the counselor gains confidential information from a referred student. Teachers sometimes feel they have an inherent right to such information. Riccio supported this point when he said, "They fail to distinguish between information gained from a student who has been referred by a teacher and that information gained from a self-referred student."<sup>17</sup> Counselors do not always agree with Riccio's implication that they can tell

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

the teacher all information gained from a referred student.

Judgment is essential in this area. Some information which is not completely secret in nature can do great harm when used unwisely. Care must be taken that students do not feel betrayed and that teachers do not feel insulted. Flanagan and McGrew stressed the necessity for discretion and loyalty to the best interests of the student. They wrote,

Counselors should use discretion and good judgment in giving to other professional persons such information and data regarding the counselee as they are by virtue of their character, training, or competence capable of understanding and utilizing. . . for the best interests of the counselee.<sup>18</sup>

The problem definitely has not been solved. The counselor must make clear to teachers that when he has information he feels he must keep confidential it is not necessarily due to their incompetence or lack of good faith; rather it is due to the good faith he feels he must keep with the student. A partial solution that may be tried is to ask the student's permission to divulge certain information to teachers and to ask the student which information he particularly does not want divulged. All solutions to this problem

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<sup>18</sup>Mary M. Flanagan and David McGrew, "A Suggested Code of Ethics for School Counselors," The School Counselor, 8:139, May, 1961.

are imperfect, and for this reason the counselor has responsibility to be clear and patient in communicating his position to teachers.

## II. THE COUNSELOR-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

Another area of conflict is sometimes the specified professional relationship of the counselor to the teacher. The relationship defined by the administration is usually a staff relationship and was assumed to be a staff relationship for the purposes of this report.

Goals. The teacher-counselor relationship is a peer relationship. Perhaps nothing offends teachers as easily as a counselor who sets himself up as the expert willing on occasion to bend down far enough to lend an ear to their comments and questions. The counselor is one of the trained educators in a school performing a special function to help students learn and develop. Most survey books and most of the professional literature define part of the counselor's role as a peer consultant to the teacher regarding personality and behavior of his students. This role of the counselor as peer consultant to the teacher must be carefully and consistently communicated because it is a major goal of

the counselor-teacher relationship. Ohlsen expressed this point of view when he outlined the counselor's role as follows:

The counselor is a specialist in counseling pupils and helping teachers understand their pupils. He should be able to help teachers appraise a pupil's school progress, intellectual potential and growth, social development, and emotional adjustment. It also would be desirable for him to be able to help teachers diagnose learning problems and make plans for appropriate remedial instruction.<sup>19</sup>

It is also important for the counselor to be approachable. Only when the counselor has communicated that he comprehends their problems will teachers feel free to talk with him. Ohlsen concluded his discussion of the counselor's consulting role with, "Teachers feel he understands the problems which they encounter and that he understands why they act and feel as they do in that setting."<sup>20</sup>

Limits. The counselor and teacher must have a clear understanding that the counselor is not the teacher's personal counselor. There is misunderstanding regarding this point. Some teachers feel the counselor has a counseling responsibility

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<sup>19</sup>Ohlsen, op. cit., 93.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

to the faculty. Leonard, regarding the teacher-counselor relationship, went so far as to suggest that counselors be willing to advise teachers with personal problems "wisely and well" and that teachers would appreciate this help.<sup>21</sup> The writer does not agree. The teacher-counselor relationship is complicated unnecessarily when the counselor counsels the teacher with personal problems. Unquestionably teachers have personal problems with which they on occasion seek help. The counselor should be willing, in a crisis situation, to serve as the teacher's counselor, and to help the teacher find a counselor. Some may question the wisdom of serving this function for the teacher even in a crisis situation, however, one could not in good professional faith refuse immediate, needed, and sought help.

Special areas of concern. Value systems open an area of possible concern in the teacher-counselor relationship. Even when the school philosophy and the counselor's philosophy are in basic agreement, it is doubtful that all the teachers will have similar values as the counselor. The counselor may be committed firmly to the student's right to

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<sup>21</sup>Leonard, op. cit., 448.

choose against some things valued by society. The teacher may be more firmly committed to society's values. The teacher may be quite upset if the counselor does not encourage a bright student to choose higher education.

The counselor should be tolerant of varying points of view and have understanding of their origin. The counselor and the teacher, on occasion, work to serve students from different value systems. However, they can still work together for the student's welfare. From this the student has opportunity to learn the valuable lesson that different value systems have a place in society, that they may be working toward similar goals, and that co-existence and tolerance are possible and beneficial. The counselor must set an example of respect for different values.

The counselor's liaison function, as defined by Moler, is primarily interpretation of the guidance point of view to the community, teachers, administrators, and students. Practically speaking, if he is an approachable, nonjudgmental person he will frequently become a middle-man among administrators, students, parents, community, and sometimes other professional personnel. The counselor who is in this position can serve a valuable liaison function by facilitating

communication. He listens and tries to communicate with each group. He has a responsibility to communicate by his behavior and manner that this does not make him a two-faced tattler tale.

## CHAPTER V

### ASPECTS OF THE TEACHER'S ROLE TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE COUNSELOR

#### I. WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The classroom teacher is a very important professional and deserves respect. The writer once knew a successful teacher who was taking a graduate degree in classroom teaching. When the teacher related this to a friend his response was, "I didn't know there was such a thing." The areas of specialty in public education are varied but for the optimum benefit of education, more is to be gained by better personal and professional qualities in the area of the classroom teaching than in any other. The above example tends to well express the lack of publicity and credit afforded this most important area of competence and specialization. Every counselor who would have good working relations with his staff must take care to show due respect to the position of teacher as the most needed and significant professional personnel in the school.

The counselor's respect for the teacher's role is important. The teacher's work load is very heavy and much



is expected of him. Teachers must love children, and some say they must love all the children in their classes. They must be able to control students and to present subject matter in a meaningful way to each student. They must cooperate with other professional personnel for the benefit of each special case and be well prepared for each class they teach. They serve on curriculum committees, read professional literature, and attend professional meetings. Teachers should remain refreshed by rest and recreation. They should also watch their students' favorite television shows, attend school functions and athletic events, and support the Parent Teacher Association. However, they must find time to sponsor clubs and classes besides having papers carefully graded with corrective-supportive comments. They must remain happy and well adjusted to serve as moral and successful adult models to their students. Staff members should at all times be cooperative and ready to pinch hit for each other for smooth running of the school. One can readily see that any teacher who is not an incredible glutton for punishment will feel that he cannot possibly fulfill all of this role. The teacher must refuse some of this work load if he is to remain a teacher.

Teachers will sometimes protect their precious time and energy by refusing to do anything to aid the guidance program. The counselor should communicate that he understands why the teacher acts as he does. It is also important that the counselor request help which requires time when the teacher's workload is apt to be less.

## II. TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL VIEWS

Many young and many experienced teachers hold traditional views on education. These teachers were not even minimally trained in understanding of human behavior, were not taught by someone trained to understand them, and were never helped to comprehend that their teaching and their students would profit by their increased knowledge of human behavior. They feel their service is complete when they have learned their subject matter well and explained it to their students by the method it was explained to them.

Arbuckle described this traditional view when he explained,

According to this concept the job of the elementary school teacher is to teach the three R's, while the secondary teacher should limit himself strictly to certain academic subjects. . . . The traditional teacher may have acquired much knowledge in the subject to be taught, but he is not a student of human adjustment. It is interesting to note that many teachers' colleges and schools of education require a higher grade in the student's major than in any other course. Thus the

student preparing to be a mathematics teacher may be required to receive nothing less than a 'B' in his mathematics courses, while a 'D' will be acceptable in courses as 'Psychology of Adolescence' and 'Principles of Guidance.' There may be some question as to which courses will be most effective in making the student a good teacher.<sup>22</sup>

The counselor's views usually are not traditional.

To maintain patience in communicating understanding of the traditional view, while working to change it, the counselor might remind himself that a fine American educational system was built while most teachers were proponents of the traditional philosophy. Despite this expressed philosophy many teachers have always followed their visceral reaction that there is more to teaching of history than the facts and dates of a war. A student may blurt out in history class that he sees no sense in believing in a God of love in this world of centuries of human distress. Many of the most traditional teachers will plainly see that their subject matter, a joy to them, arouses deep, agonizing emotions in some. The teacher can easily see that the student's learning of history and emotional life are very much related. Many will also be ready to modify their views.

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<sup>22</sup>Dugald S. Arbuckle, Teacher Counseling (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Press, Inc., 1950), 47.

### III. NEED TO FOLLOW ROUTINE

The complex job of teaching runs more smoothly when the teacher follows a routine. For the benefit of good education as well as teacher cooperation, it is important that the counselor not upset this necessary routine. He should organize his program to accommodate the teacher's routine whenever possible. It is a thoughtless counselor who schedules a counseling session with students during a class period and does not consult the teacher regarding the youngster's capacity to be absent. Inconvenience to the teacher caused by the student's absence will cause the teacher to respect the guidance program less. The counselor must not see students during class time whenever it is possible to do otherwise.

### IV. TESTING AND RECORDING

Teachers are usually asked to proctor standardized tests. The tests are administered during class time. Teachers sometimes score tests and record results. They may be asked to give students results which the teachers themselves do not adequately understand. Test results must be recorded in an useable manner to be valuable. Counselors

have a serious responsibility regarding test results and any teacher time they use for this purpose is valuable to the teacher. Gibson concluded that testing sometimes caused misunderstanding.

. . . the study seems to substantiate the suspicion that many schools are 'over testing.' Since many of the teachers interviewed indicated a desire to better acquaint themselves with test interpretation, it would appear that the time may be opportune in many schools for in-service training in this area.<sup>23</sup>

Leonard expressed the plea for consideration by the counselor of the teacher's record keeping job when she said,

Help us see what services we may render. Then give us assistance with the methods involved. Explain channels for the relaying of information. What should we record? How may it best be recorded? Just when should it be jotted down? These seemingly insignificant techniques too often loom into distasteful chores just for the want of a few minutes explanation. We want to know what, we want to know why, and we definitely want to know how.<sup>24</sup>

## V. COUNSELING

It was not the main purpose of this report to study in depth the teacher's role as a counselor. However, it is almost always a part of the teacher's role, and it is an

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<sup>23</sup>Gibson, op. cit., 421.

<sup>24</sup>Leonard, op. cit., 447.

important teacher role for the counselor to understand. Guidance originated in schools in part because teachers listened to student's personal problems and helped students choose vocations and colleges. They have not cut these functions from their role.

The counselor must communicate to teachers that he understands that they can and do serve an important guidance function. It is also important that the counselor communicate his understanding of the teacher's role and difficulties in the guidance function so teachers will feel secure enough to enlist his aid to improve their guidance skills.

Teachers frequently feel they know students better than the counselor and therefore are in a better position to serve the guidance function. They do know some students better and have established rapport with these youngsters from many hours of daily contact. Shank and his committee agreed with this teacher opinion.

Specific personnel services can never replace the day-by-day intimate contact of teacher and students. . . . Students often will ask for help from an instructor whom they already know when they will not go to an office set up especially to help them.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>American Council on Educational Studies. The Teacher as a Counselor (State Personnel Work, Vol. XII, No. 10. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1940), p. 42.

Particular note should be given to the superb services of teachers in vocational guidance related to their own subject area. Here the teacher is quite competent to advise regarding subject related jobs. Each teacher must feel that his guidance efforts are needed, appreciated, and respected by the counselor. This is an important job in communication for the counseling staff.

## CHAPTER VI

## COOPERATION THROUGH RECIPROCAL ROLE

## UNDERSTANDING

Daily mutual assistance between teacher and counselor is important and effective for both when reciprocal understanding of role has been achieved. Each helps the other to function for the benefit of the students. Teachers are then able to help counselors with valuable referrals and information. They are not disappointed when the student is not immediately transformed by the counselor. They are not threatened and insulted by confidentiality. They are able to use their relationship with the counselor and do not expect him to be their personal counselor. Each feels respected by the other.

## I. AREAS OF TEACHER AID TO THE COUNSELOR

Referrals. Teachers see students daily and in only a few years deal with many students. Many of them quickly become adept at spotting youngsters who are in need of guidance services and their referrals are invaluable. The classroom teacher is not expected to have expertise in diagnosing student problems. However, he knows normal, average, or



usual behavior well. After seeing many youngsters every day the teacher's hunch, "That one is different--too different," is not to be taken lightly. Many psychological and medical referrals resulting from this kind of feeling have saved the sight, hearing, and emotional lives of innumerable youngsters for many years. Shank and committee expressed this incredibly important teacher guidance function well:

Valuable as a separate counseling service is, a personnel office must depend upon the teacher to identify students with problems. . . it is often the instructor's responsibility eventually to get the student to the counseling office.<sup>25</sup>

Information. The teacher also supplies the counselor with invaluable data by relating to the counselor the student's classroom behavior and peer status. The counselor then is able to work with both a picture of the student's self image, as revealed in the counseling interviews, and his image in the eyes of the teacher. This is helpful because the counselor can then see reality both as it exists for the student and as it exists in the classroom through the more objective eyes of the teacher.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

## II. AREAS OF COUNSELOR AID TO THE TEACHER

Where reciprocal role understanding exists, counselors are able to help teachers. The teacher's guidance functions are improved by counselor aid in the form of consultation and referrals. The counselor can serve as a consultant to the teachers concerning student learning difficulties. He can make more test data and information available to the teacher and can cooperate with the teacher in teacher-parent conferences.

Teacher in counseling role. Much has been written regarding the teacher's guidance functions. The competent teacher-counselor who is sensitive and has depth understanding of human behavior is praised. Others are criticized for their blunders resulting from lack of information. Many errors are made by well-intentioned efforts to alleviate fears and suffering of students which would have better been endured as growing pains. How may the counselor unobtrusively render assistance to the teacher in his guidance function?

The teacher has definite handicaps serving as part of the guidance team. He is, at best, meagerly trained for the function. He is given little, if any, extra time for it,

and his own experience may lack an adequate model of teacher-counselor. The teacher may not receive much peer encouragement, and, his best efforts may have brought little reward or even criticism. The counselor who appreciates this situation can offer encouragement. He can also cooperate and offer specific suggestions when asked. It is important for the counselor to show respect for the problems involved and the gains made. He can also aid the teacher by providing test data and offering his time and services in the form of a case study.

Student learning difficulties. The counselor should be able to assist the teacher struggling with a youngster who is not learning despite the teacher's best professional efforts. The counselor's knowledge of exceptional children, and test data will help the teacher and the counselor decide whether or not a student has an abnormal learning difficulty. The counselor may not be able to distinguish between those difficulties which are physiological, motivational, and emotional without the aid of other professionals. A part of the counselor's responsibility is to get the youngster to an agency which can diagnose and prescribe. The teacher's professional efforts are aided by this type of referral.

Conferences. The teachers receive much of their support and many of their insecurities from contact with the parents of their students. Teachers usually manage routine teacher-parent conferences well. Frequently they are able to make encouraging reports to parents and receive parental praise for their efforts on the behalf of their students. However parents whose children have emotional or academic difficulties frequently do not darken the school door until and unless they are ready to vent their wrath on some member of the professional staff--more often than not their child's teacher. The counselor is likely to be consulted under such circumstances. He has a golden opportunity to serve the teacher well. The counselor may help the teacher deal with his own feeling of inadequacy to handle the student. He can help the teacher use counseling techniques to make the conference valuable. The teacher must help the parent express his feelings regarding the school and his child. The teacher must let the parent know how he can help improve the situation. The counselor also may be able to supply the teacher with additional information regarding the child and the home. The counselor should also be willing to cooperate with the teacher in joint conferences with the student, administrator and the parent.

Referral information. The counselor can refer the teacher to counseling resources available to help students. This is particularly important in cases where the student seeks out the teacher and is reluctant to see the counselor. These resources may range from Ala-Teen to the Salvation Army. It is a part of the counselor's specialty to be very familiar with referral sources. He should be liberal with his information regarding their services and mechanics of getting in touch with them.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING RECIPROCAL ROLE UNDERSTANDING

There is a paucity of research regarding this important professional relationship. What can the professionals who are struggling to improve their working rapport suggest to the educational researchers? The problems of rapport are ones of attitudes, respect, values, training, and sometimes goals. Development of adequate research scales to measure these factors is indeed difficult.

One method of studying reciprocal role understanding would be to develop and then use a questionnaire to measure role understanding of teacher for the counselor and vice versa. Statements that teachers felt expressed their problems and role would serve as the basis for developing one part of the questionnaire. Statements that counselors felt expressed their role and its particular problems would be the basis for the second part. Both parts would be administered to both teachers and counselors. The extent that they agreed in answering the questionnaires would indicate degree of reciprocal role understanding. One problem would be to develop statements and then questions which counselors and

teachers agreed among themselves expressed their respective roles.

Another possibility would be to devise a questionnaire regarding the roles of the counselor and teacher for the students to answer, first as they believed a counselor would answer it and then as they believed a teacher would answer it. Perhaps student perceptions of the way counselors and teachers perceive each other's roles would contain valuable information.

Factors relating to role communication and causes of teacher attitudes toward a guidance program are closely related. Therefore one way to approach the problem would be to first use a questionnaire to measure the degree of positive or negative feeling among teachers in various schools toward the guidance program. The second step would be to interview counselors and teachers, carefully protecting their identity, to discover the factors concerning the guidance program which seemed to be different in schools where feeling was positive and schools where it was negative. This report does not purport to consider the effect of administrative leadership on the staff attitude toward the guidance program. However a research study regarding the relationship would be seriously hampered by disregarding this factor.

A longitudinal study would be difficult but valuable. The purpose of such a study would be to discover what factors contributed to a change in attitude toward the guidance program. The process would be to make an annual survey of the staff attitude toward the guidance program while concurrently collecting data believed to influence the staff attitudes such as teacher training, perception of the counselor's role, and administration. Data believed to affect attitudes would be compiled when a change in staff attitudes toward the guidance program occurred.



## CHAPTER VIII

## SUMMARY

Staff support is needed for an effective guidance program. Support is hindered when the counselor's role is not clearly communicated to the staff. The counselor must communicate the limits and goals of the counseling relationship with students. He must help the staff understand that behavior changes are slow. The counselor must communicate that his understanding how the student feels is the essence of the counseling relationship but does not imply agreement with the student's point of view. He must communicate to teachers that the confidentiality of the relationship is not an insult to the teacher; rather, it is a commitment to the student's right to privacy.

The counselor must also make clear the professional relationship he has with the teacher by communicating the limits and goals. The counselor is not the teacher's personal counselor. He is ready to give additional information to the teacher if it is not confidential. He is a co-partner with the teacher in the educational setting. He cooperates with teachers to help them in their teaching role and needs their cooperation to help him in his counseling role.

It is equally important that the counselor communicate to teachers that he understands the various aspects of the teacher's role. The teacher has a heavy work load, may have different views on education, must follow a routine to cope with many students, and helps with testing, recording, and counseling.

The method of role communication was not the purpose of this report. However, a few suggestions to aid communication were included. Clear role definition was found to be very important. The counselor also communicates his role to the staff by his consistent behavior and by his consistent clear comments. From these the staff can see where he stands, what he does, and who he is.

Where reciprocal role understanding is achieved, the counselor and teacher work together. Their functions are not hindered by misunderstanding. The counselor knows when and how he can help the teacher. The teacher knows when to refer students, what results he can expect, and when to consult with the counselor.

Erskine expressed this kind of understanding when he said,

The body travels more easily than the mind, and until we have limbered up our imagination we continue to think

as though we had stayed home. We have not really  
budded a stem until we take up residence in someone  
else's point of view.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>John Bartlett, Ed. The Shorter Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, "John Erskine, The Complete Life, Chap. 8, 'The Foreigners,'" (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1963), p. 124.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Barker's Instrument

APPENDIX B. Gibson's Instrument

APPENDIX C. Russell and Willis's Instrument

## APPENDIX A: Barker's Instrument

This is the instrument<sup>27</sup> which Barker developed to study attitudes toward the school guidance program. No studies using it were reported.

## Attitudes Toward A Guidance Program (Form A)

Check whether you are ☐ Student  
☐ Parent or guardian  
☐ Teacher  
 Check whether you are ☐ Male  
☐ Female

INSTRUCTIONS: The guidance program of a school consists of organized services such as testing, counseling, and occupational information. The following sentences are statements that someone might make about the guidance program in your school. You will probably agree with some of these statements and disagree with others. Put a check (✓) in the blank space in front of each statement that you agree with. Please be frank. Your answers will be kept in confidence and will be used only to help improve guidance programs.

- ☐ 1. Specialized guidance personnel are "outsiders" and are therefore less able to offer guidance than regular teachers.
- ☐ 2. The students are not mature enough to take any form of guidance seriously.
- ☐ 3. The guidance program confuses students and makes them begin to doubt their individual judgments.
- ☐ 4. The guidance program takes guidance functions away from those best qualified to perform them--the teachers.
- ☐ 5. The guidance program wastes money that could better be directed toward a more adequate medical program.

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<sup>27</sup>Donald G. Barker, "Development of a Scale of Attitudes Toward School Guidance," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 44:1077-1083, June, 1966.

- \_\_\_6. The guidance program looks good on paper but is a flop in practice.
- \_\_\_7. Our school does not need a guidance program since all of our students are normal.
- \_\_\_8. The guidance program is just a "flash in the pan" and will become obsolete in a few years.
- \_\_\_9. The guidance program is not worth the effort it requires.
- \_\_\_10. The guidance program should be eliminated.
- \_\_\_11. The guidance program has unlimited possibilities.
- \_\_\_12. The guidance program is an important element in the value of the school as a whole.
- \_\_\_13. The removal of the guidance program would leave a void which would be extremely difficult to fill.
- \_\_\_14. The guidance program has made impressive accomplishments.
- \_\_\_15. The guidance services need to be expanded.
- \_\_\_16. The recommendations and interpretations of the guidance workers are usually accepted.
- \_\_\_17. The guidance program is not essential but does have something to offer.
- \_\_\_18. Guidance personnel tend to advise rather than counsel.
- \_\_\_19. The guidance program does not provide sufficient opportunity for everyone connected with it to offer constructive criticism.
- \_\_\_20. Guidance personnel are too busy with discipline problems to be of much help in solving personal problems.

## Attitudes Toward a Guidance Program (Form B)

Check whether you are ☐ Student  
☐ Parent or guardian  
☐ Teacher  
Check whether you are ☐ Male  
☐ Female

INSTRUCTIONS: The guidance program of a school consists of organized services such as testing, counseling, and occupational information. The following sentences are statements that some might make about the guidance program in your school. You will probably agree with some of these statements and disagree with others. Put a check (✓) in the blank space in front of each statement that you agree with. Please be frank. Your answers will be kept in confidence and will be used only to help improve guidance programs.

- ☐ 1. The guidance program is failing to reduce juvenile delinquency.
- ☐ 2. The guidance program serves only dependent people who cannot solve their own problems.
- ☐ 3. The guidance program is impractical because it requires too many specialists.
- ☐ 4. The guidance program was organized solely for the prestige of having a guidance program.
- ☐ 5. Guidance personnel are just lackeys of the administration.
- ☐ 6. The guidance program serves only those who are too lazy to make their own decisions.
- ☐ 7. The guidance personnel accomplish so little that they should be ashamed of their titles.
- ☐ 8. The guidance program has hurt our school more than it has helped it.
- ☐ 9. The only reason for the existence of the guidance program is to provide more jobs for starving teachers.
- ☐ 10. We should do away with frills like guidance.
- ☐ 11. Every school, large or small, should have a guidance program.
- ☐ 12. The guidance program plays a vital role in the making of vocational choices.
- ☐ 13. The guidance program helps the student examine himself objectively.
- ☐ 14. The guidance program deserves more and better publicity than it gets.

- \_\_\_15. The guidance program has demonstrated the importance of psychological tests.
- \_\_\_16. The guidance program interprets students to the parents.
- \_\_\_17. Most people are indifferent toward the guidance program.
- \_\_\_18. The guidance program includes too much testing and not enough counseling.
- \_\_\_19. The guidance program overstresses educational guidance at the expense of vocational guidance.
- \_\_\_20. The guidance program services are duplications which are offered more appropriately elsewhere.

## APPENDIX B: Gibson's Instrument

This is the instrument<sup>28</sup> used in the Gibson study to survey teacher opinions of the guidance program.

TABLE 1

## Teacher Opinions--General Information

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. In your opinion, does the guidance program make a positive contribution to the school instructional program?			
2. Has the guidance program of your school ever been explained, described, or outlined to you for your information?			
3. Could you tell a new student entering your school what most of the guidance services and activities are carried on in this school?			
4. Do you feel that the guidance staff in the school should be identified with the administration?			
5. Should the direction of the school guidance program be the responsibility of the chief school administrator?			
6. Should the guidance staff in the school be identified with the teaching faculty?			
7. Do you feel that the counselor should have the responsibility of interpreting the guidance program to the community?			
8. Do you feel that the guidance personnel need special training?			

<sup>28</sup>Robert L. Gibson, "Teacher Opinions of High School Guidance Programs," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 44:416-424, December, 1965.

9. Should teachers have responsibilities in the school guidance program other than those that are performed within the classroom?
10. Do you feel that an in-service training program in guidance for the teaching staff would be worthwhile?
11. Of the following activities, check those which you think should be the responsibility of the school guidance personnel. Designate the three (by number) that you feel are most important.

TABLE 2

## Teacher Opinions--Individual Analysis

	Yes	No	Not Sure
12. Do you feel pupil cumulative records would or do help you with students more effectively?			
13. Should the cumulative records be available and accessible to the teacher at any time?			
14. Should the teacher feel free to ask the guidance department to interpret information contained in the pupil cumulative record?			
14a. Should the guidance office keep its records separate from regular school records?			
15. In your opinion, should the school utilize guidance test results in pupil analysis?			
16. In your opinion, should the school utilize test results in providing a richer and more meaningful curriculum?			
17. Should the teacher participate in administering, scoring, and recording standardized tests?			
18. Are you usually informed of those guidance tests results that would be appropriate and useful to you?			
19. Do you feel these test results were adequately interpreted?			
20. Of the following areas of guidance testing, please number the three (3) that you feel are the most valuable in order of their importance.			

TABLE 3

## Teacher Opinions--Counseling

	Yes	No	Not Sure
21. Do you feel that the teacher should be able to confer with the counselor regarding the problems of students?			
22. Do you feel that the teacher should use the counselor as a referral agent when the student's problem is beyond the teacher's training or scope?			
23. Is it desirable for the counselor to furnish a review of a student interview to the teacher who made the referral?			
24. Should counseling records be available to all teachers?			
25. Should the counselor reveal to the teacher information that he receives concerning the student's attitude toward the teacher?			
26. Should the teacher share his knowledge with the counselor that he may receive from the parents of students?			
27. Do you feel that the guidance department should assist the classroom teacher in handling problems of discipline?			
28. Should the counselor be the one to administer punishment to the students if it is necessary?			



TABLE 4

## Teacher Opinions--Occupational and Educational Information

	Yes	No	Not Sure
29. Do you feel that the teacher should acquaint students with the "world of work" through his classes?			
30. Do you feel that the teacher should help students make educational plans?			
31. Should the securing, organizing, and dissemination of occupational-educational information be the primary responsibility of the guidance staff as opposed to the instructional staff?			
32. Are "Career Days" and "College Days" of value to the students?			
33. Should the teacher follow-up "Career Days" or "College Days" and other special days in the classroom?			
34. Do you think that special days and their planning disrupt the school too much?			

TABLE 5

## Teacher Opinions--Group Activities, Placement and Follow-up

	Yes	No	Not Sure
35. In your opinion, should the school guidance department identify pupil interests and assist or direct the organization of group activities appropriate to these interests?			
36. Should the school guidance department identify, record, and if necessary, limit the extent of pupil participation in co-curricular activities?			
37. Do you believe the school guidance staff should act as faculty sponsors for the student government organization?			
38. Do you feel that your school in general and the guidance office in particular has the responsibility to assist students and graduating seniors in securing part-time or full-time employment?			
39. Should the school guidance department have the responsibility of assisting graduating seniors in locating and enrolling in appropriate post-high school educational institutions?			
40. Should the guidance department conduct periodic follow-up studies of the school's former pupils (graduate and dropouts)?			

TABLE 6

Teacher and Pupil Opinions of High School Guidance Programs  
(Responses to Similar Questions from Two Studies)

	Pupil Responses			Teacher Responses		
	Yes	No	Sure	Yes	No	Sure
1. In your opinion, does the school guidance program add anything of value to your school and its instructional program.						
2. Could you tell a new student entering your school what most of the guidance services and activities are carried on in your school?						
3. Has the guidance program of your school ever been described, explained, or outlined to you for your information?						
4. Are you usually informed of the results of guidance testing taken by you (or your students)?						
5. Would you have liked further interpretations of these results?						
6. Do you feel that teachers should help students make occupational-educational plans (or have teachers ever helped you with such plans)?						
7. Should the school assist pupils in securing part-time employment?						

## APPENDIX C: Russell and Willis's Instrument

Russell and Willis surveyed teacher opinions of high school guidance services. Their participants were asked to rate each of the eight statements on a five point scale.<sup>29</sup>

1. In general, teachers understand and support the role of guidance in the intermediate school situation.
2. Teacher frequently send students to the guidance office for disciplinary action.
3. There are good channels of communication between the teachers and guidance personnel.
4. There is generally a harmonious working relationship between the teaching staff and the guidance department.
5. Counselors tend to overprotect students.
6. Many present guidance services in the intermediate schools might be handled better by teacher with more released time.
7. Teachers are usually consulted by the guidance department before a decision on the disposition of a student is made.
8. A guidance committee composed of representatives from each department in each school is needed in order to achieve better team support for guidance.

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<sup>29</sup>Jones C. Russell and A. Willis, "Survey of Teachers' Opinions of Guidance Services," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 42:708, November, 1964.

RECIPROCAL ROLE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN  
TEACHER AND COUNSELOR:  
THE KEY TO COOPERATION

by

KAREN M. WHYTE

B. S. Ed. Northeast Missouri State College, 1963

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Educational Index, Psychological Abstracts, and Educational Research Information Center, and the library card catalog at Kansas State University were researched to find studies relating to cooperation between teacher and counselor for effective guidance programs. Only three relevant studies were found. The two regarding teacher attitudes toward guidance programs were used to support the report. A third study was also included which reported efforts to develop an instrument to survey teacher opinions of guidance programs but no study using this questionnaire was reported. The studies found failure to communicate clearly the counselor's role and difficulty in defining it as hinderences to needed staff support.

Communication of the student-counselor relationship was found to be important. One of the goals of this relationship is to help the student express his feelings and be understood. It was emphasized that the counselor must communicate that this understanding relationship does not necessarily imply agreement with the student or judgment of the teacher. One of the main limits of the relationship which must be communicated to teacher is the student's readiness for growth. The counselor's ethical commitment to the student's right to privacy is sometimes threatening and

insulting to teachers and was regarded as a special area of the counselor-student relationship needing to be communicated to the teacher.

The goals and limits of the counselor-teacher relationship must be understood and communicated. The goal of the counselor was emphasized to be that of a peer consultant regarding the student's personality, behavior and learning difficulties. The necessity of limiting the relationship to professional consultation regarding problems of students rather than personal problems of teachers was stressed. Different value systems of teacher and counselor and the role of the counselor as a liaison were considered as special areas of concern.

Aspects of the teacher's role which must be appreciated by the counselor were emphasized. They included respect of the work load and responsibilities of the teacher, and indication of understanding of traditional educational views, the teacher's need for routine, and his counseling functions.

Reciprocal role understanding results in counselor-teacher cooperation for effective guidance. Referrals and information regarding the student in the classroom and among his peers are teacher aids to the counselor. The counselor's

aids to the teacher were discussed. They included aid to the teacher as a peer consultant on student learning difficulties, help with conferences and referral information.

Suggestions for further study included a proposal for comparison of teacher and counselor answers to the same questionnaires regarding roles of teacher and counselor. Similarity of answers would indicate degree of reciprocal role understanding. Another study was proposed which would obtain student answers to a similar questionnaire. The students would answer as they felt teachers would answer and then as they felt counselors would answer. Suggestions were made for two studies of teacher attitudes toward guidance services as a way to find factors related to role communication. One was to compare results of anonymous interviews with teachers and counselors in schools where teacher attitude toward the guidance program was positive and negative. Finally, a longitudinal study was suggested. Attitudes toward high school guidance programs would be measured by questionnaire. Concurrently factors such as teacher training and teacher perception of the counselor's role would be measured by a different questionnaire. Data from the second questionnaire would be compiled when a change in attitude occurred.