

A STUDY OF COUNSELOR INTERVIEWS FOR THE 1963-64 SCHOOL TERM
MCPHERSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, MCPHERSON, KANSAS

by

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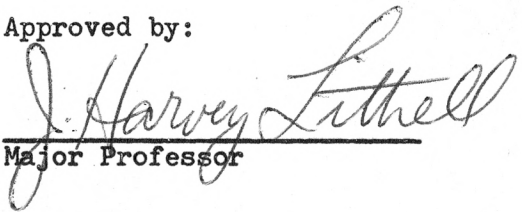
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INTRODUCTION

In providing guidance services public schools have encountered many problems such as large enrollments, shortage of trained guidance personnel, difficulty with apathetic administrations, lack of finance, planning and organizing of the guidance program, and indifference of school staffs. Even though general principles of organization and administration of the guidance program are helpful, the uniqueness and individuality of each situation has complicated the provision of an adequate program.

This study was the beginning of a plan aimed at resolving the problem of providing a guidance program that would effectively and efficiently meet the needs of pupils in a particular school. Operating on the belief that the counseling service is the most important of the guidance services, the writer felt that it should be analyzed first. In reality then, this report was the initial step of several steps designed to provide an adequate guidance program for the McPherson Junior High School.

Nature of the Problem

The necessity for a study to improve guidance services was prompted by two circumstances. First, the McPherson Junior High School in McPherson, Kansas, where the writer serves as a counselor, was in its first year of operation during the 1963-1964 school term. Prior to that school year, the McPherson school system operated a four year high school, an intermediate school containing grades six through eight, and four grade schools, each housing the kindergarten through the fifth grade. When a new senior high building was occupied in September, 1963, the organization

was changed to that of a junior high with grades seven through nine, and a senior high of grades ten through twelve. Thus the first condition prompting a study was created by the change in the organizational structure of the school system.

The second circumstance creating a need for a study was that no formalized plan for guidance services existed at the intermediate school for three years prior to the change in the structure of the school system. When the writer became counselor at the intermediate school in January, 1963, it seemed necessary that a study of existing guidance services and the demand for services be made in order to provide direction for long range development plans for the junior high school guidance program.

It did not seem possible, practical, or wise to completely reorganize and install a new program; therefore, a long term developmental effort was deemed feasible. It was reasoned that adequate services are those which evolve from continuous evaluation and from improvement based upon the evaluations.

It was believed by the writer that of the major categories of guidance services, counseling service is the "heart of the guidance process". If counseling is seen as a process where individuals are aided in understanding themselves and their environment and its opportunities, then all other guidance services seem subservient to the counseling services. A study of the counseling service was decided upon as a place to begin the task of improving the guidance program.

Purpose of The Study

This study was conducted with the following purposes in mind:

1. To describe the students interviewed according to sex and grade level
2. To determine what types of problems were dealt with by the counselor
3. To determine how counseling contacts were initiated
4. To assess the nature of students counseled on a continuing basis
5. To discover the extent of parent and teacher contacts
6. To analyze the time expended in counseling sessions

In more general terms, the purpose of this study was to find out exactly what demands were being made of the counseling service, and what portion of the guidance effort was being given to counseling during the school term ending in May, 1964. It was assumed that an analysis of the information produced by the study would provide direction for improvement.

Limits of The Study

There were three ways in which this study was limited:

1. The survey of the counseling service was conducted at the McPherson Junior High School, McPherson, Kansas, during the school year ending in May, 1964.
2. It was assumed that demands of the counseling service during the 1963-64 school year would be representative of succeeding school years, excluding the effect of enlarged enrollments and changes that might occur in the school's program.
3. Counseling included only those formally arranged interviews conducted by the school counselor during the school term.

REPORTS OF SIMILAR STUDIES

Studies of The Use of Guidance Time

Studies of the use of guidance time are of primary importance to the person doing such a study, but they also have some real value in that they can serve as guides and provide information that is of general use to guidance personnel. However, large numbers of these studies were not found in guidance literature.

Gold reported keeping a record of one month's guidance activities in Galileo High School, a school of two thousand students in San Francisco, California. The counselor's pupil load was 430 tenth and twelfth grade pupils. He found that during a one month period he spent 46 per cent of his time in activities of a clerical nature, 25 per cent of his time in activities including counseling, and 29 per cent of his time in enrollment activities.¹ Although it was not expressly mentioned in the article, it seemed that his study was primarily aimed at securing clerical assistance for the guidance program.

Gardner ran a survey in ten southern Illinois schools and found that counselors were dividing their time as follows:

1. Testing - 26 per cent
2. Records - 14 per cent
3. Counseling - 36 per cent
4. Professional Contacts - 18 per cent
5. Follow-up activities, speaking and research - 6 per cent

¹Frank Gold, "A Counselor's Time Study", The School Counselor, 10:68-70, December, 1962.

His study recorded guidance activities for a period of time beginning on April 23, 1956, and ending May 18, 1956.²

In surveying thirty-nine counselors at an institute at Purdue University, Hollis and Isaacson found that the average time expenditures by these counselors were 50 per cent for counseling, 40 per cent in testing, 15 per cent for the information service and 5 per cent for each of the following services: placement, research, follow-up, evaluation, and in-service training.³

Data from 152 certified guidance persons gathered in Missouri in 1956, by Tennyson revealed that an average of 60 per cent of time was given to assisting students, 14 per cent in assisting teachers, 21 per cent was given to assisting administration, and 4 per cent of time was spent in research. Information from this study also indicated these guidance workers found that their efforts in assisting students were divided as follows: (1) Academic planning took 38.46 per cent of the time; (2) educational and vocational problems involved 35.15 per cent of the time given to students; and (3) other problems required 26.4 per cent of the time given to assisting students.⁴

August Bohm, counselor for Clay County Community High School at Clay Center, Kansas, a four year high school, relayed information and material from an unpublished study to this writer about a counseling

²H. F. Gardner, "Time Allotments in Guidance", Journal of Educational Sociology, 31:130-33, November, 1947.

³J. Hollis and L. E. Isaacson, "How Counselors Spend Their Time," The School Counselor, 9:89-95, March, 1962.

⁴W. W. Tennyson, "Time: The Counselor's Dilemma," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 37:129-35, October, 1958.

and guidance activities summary that he made during the 1962-63 school term. He recorded approximately 660 hours devoted to counseling, including sessions with representatives of colleges and other post-high school training institutions. His contacts with students included 653 interviews dealing with educational and vocational matters and 143 interviews concerning personal problems. Bohm's summary shows that he devoted about 61 per cent of his time to counseling and that personal problems occupied only 17 per cent of the counseling interviews.

In a survey of 287 guidance persons assigned to at least half time duties, modal responses indicated that counseling was receiving 50 per cent of the time given to guidance activities in schools in the Rocky Mountain regions of Colorado.⁵

A study of Indiana junior high schools reported fourteen schools devoting from 34 to 75 per cent of guidance time to counseling.⁶

The examples described above do give some idea how such studies have been conducted, give an indication of the variety of classification systems that were used, and show the various ways that time was divided for the various guidance activities. Each study reported had its own design intended to meet the needs of the particular situation.

Theorized Allocations of Time

Many authors theorize as to how guidance time should be apportioned, and most also state that each guidance program is unique and will

⁵Edith Doi, Bernard Hyman, and Earl Young, "A Survey of Colorado Counselors," Counselor Education and Supervision, 2:14-16, 1961.

⁶Homer Arhelger and M.A. McGlasson, "Guidance in Indiana Junior High Schools," Bulletin of The School of Education, Indiana University, 39:28-30, July, 1963.

have its own proper time allocations to the various services. For example, Hoyt recommended that counseling receive 50 per cent of the guidance time and effort, appraisal activities should receive 10 per cent of the time available, the information service and working with teachers should each receive 10 per cent of the time available, and the remaining 20 per cent should be divided equally among group activities, administrative tasks, parents and community, and local research.⁷

In a study previously mentioned, Tennyson also asked the guidance workers to state how they felt their time should have been divided. An average of their estimates indicated that 65 per cent of the time should be spent assisting students, 15 per cent in helping teachers, 21 per cent in assisting administration, and 7 per cent of the time should be given to research. In terms of student problems these counselors felt that 36 per cent of the time given to assisting students should concern academic planning, 33 per cent should be given to educational and vocational problems, and 29 per cent of this time should be spent in helping with other types of student problems.⁸

In the survey of counselors performed by Hollis and Isaacson, the participants were also asked to suggest an ideal allocation of guidance activities in terms of time. They suggested average amounts of time for the activities as follows: (1) 50 per cent for counseling, (2) 10 per cent for testing and for the information service, (3) and 5 per cent for

⁷K. B. Hoyt, "What Should Be the Pupil Load for the School Counselor," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 34:86-88, October, 1955.

⁸Tennyson, loc. cit.

each of the following: research, follow-up, placement, evaluation, in-service education, community relations, communications, budget, and as a resource person.⁹

Recommended Student-Counselor Ratios

A very important factor affecting the allocation of guidance time to the various tasks of the guidance program is the number of pupils the counselor or guidance worker serves. A counselor attempting to serve an excessively large number of students encounters real difficulty in providing adequate services for all pupils.

Cottingham and Hopke estimated that an optimum pupil load for a counselor should be two hundred and fifty students.¹⁰ Hoyt's recommendation was that four hundred students per full-time counselor would provide for a minimum level of effectiveness.¹¹

Hatch and Steffle set the maximum ratio at five hundred students per counselor. However, they qualified their statement by adding that where the counselor also performs all of the guidance activities the ratio should be two hundred and fifty pupils to one counselor or that thirty students per period in the school day could be used as a guide.¹²

⁹Hollis and Isaacson, loc. cit.

¹⁰H. J. Cottingham and W. E. Hopke, Guidance in the Junior High School, (Bloomington, Illinois: McKnight and McKnight, Publishing Company, 1961), p. 320.

¹¹Hoyt, loc. cit.

¹²R. N. Hatch and Buford Steffle, Administration of Guidance Services, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Incorporated, 1958), pp. 213-214.

As with reported allocations of guidance efforts, there are divergent statements of theorized allocations of time. As was previously stated, the resolution of the problem of time and its allocation involves the uniqueness of each guidance program. However, merely determining the needs that a guidance program should meet in each situation often is complicated by limited staff and time. Where time and staff are limited, decisions must be made to determine what needs should be given priority.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT GUIDANCE PROGRAM

McPherson Junior High School

McPherson Junior High School is situated in a second class city of approximately ten thousand population. The community's economy is dependent upon the petroleum industry, farming, and some small manufacturing concerns. Educational institutions, other than the public schools, are a parochial eight-year grade school, McPherson College which is a four year church school, and Central College, a two year church college with some limited high school facilities. Approximately twenty-five hundred pupils are served by the public school system. There is a senior high, a junior high, a grade building where all of grades five and six are housed, and four grade schools housing kindergarten through the fourth grade. McConnell and O'Dell predicted the school population would reach three thousand by the year 1970.¹

¹J. D. McConnell and W. R. O'Dell, "A System Wide Plan for School Facilities, McPherson Public Schools". (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University, 1960), p. 26. (Mimeographed)

The junior high school during the 1963-64 school term had an enrollment of 561 students in grades seven through nine distributed as follows: Grade nine had 204 students; grade eight, 158 students; and grade seven, 199 pupils. The study by McConnell and O'Dell also projected the enrollment for the junior high school as follows: (1) For the 1964-65 term, 570; (2) for 1965-66, 612; (3) for 1966-67, 645; (4) for 1967-68, 706; (5) for 1968-69, 739; and (6) for the 1969-70 school term, 767 students.²

In addition to the traditional subject offerings for the various grade levels, a reading improvement program and special education facilities were provided. Inter-scholastic competition in football, basketball, and track was available for eighth and ninth grade boys, and similar competition in basketball and track was offered for seventh grade boys. Intramural sports were provided on a limited basis for the girls in all three grades. Other extra-class activities were minimal.

For the past several years from twenty-five to thirty-five ninth grade pupils who graduated either from rural grade schools in surrounding districts or from the parochial school in the city have entered the ninth grade in the McPherson system.

A professional staff of thirty-eight was employed at the junior high school during the school term. In addition to the services of this staff, services of a school nurse and a county school psychologist were available. The guidance office of the junior high school was staffed by one full time counselor assisted by a secretary employed on a half time basis.

²Ibid.

Nature of The Current Guidance Program

As was previously stated, no formal outline nor plan for guidance services had been developed prior to the 1963-64 school year. However, some tentative working goals for the year under consideration were established by the writer at the outset of the school term. The objectives were somewhat hurriedly established, and as a result some were achieved and some were not. Very briefly, during the past years' planning these objectives were set:

1. Maintenance of pupils' cumulative records to facilitate the understanding of pupils by parents and teachers, to facilitate pupils understanding themselves, and to serve the necessities of record keeping.
2. Administration of selected academic and interest tests to further aid the appraisal of pupils.
3. Acquisition, maintenance, and distribution of vocational, educational, and personal-social information to aid pupils in understanding themselves, one another, and their environment and its opportunities.
4. Development of some methods and techniques for following the progress of students from grade to grade within the school to provide information which would be helpful in aiding students in academic decisions.
5. Following students who move on to the senior high school and those who discontinue their education to discover useful and meaningful data.
6. Provision of orientation procedures for new students and new classes entering the school.
7. Development of a better understanding of guidance and guidance services by teachers and parents.
8. Presentation of test information and educational and vocational information to groups of students.

The working objectives listed above constituted all of the tentative goals except those of the counseling service which have been

discussed in the following paragraph. Of the above, numbers 5, 7, and 8 were not as effectively accomplished as the others listed.

The counseling service for the guidance program was seen as a service pupils might use in bringing their understanding of themselves into a more optimum relationship with their environment and its opportunities. Plans were formulated at the beginning of school to provide the following counseling services:

1. Any student referred or seeking counseling on his own was to be given priority over other routine activities.
2. Plans were made to see every student once during the year. Seventh graders were to be seen on an informative, "get-acquainted" basis and eighth and ninth grade students were to have individual pre-enrollment sessions.
3. All new students entering school after the opening day were to be given an individual tour of the building and be introduced to their teachers prior to entering classes. Approximately one week after entering school "get-acquainted" sessions were to be scheduled with new students.
4. Ninth graders involved in a vocations unit in civics classes were to be encouraged to seek an interview for test interpretations and discussion of abilities, interests, and general vocational areas.

Most of the objectives set up for the counseling service were reached. However, it was not possible to see every student once. All eighth and ninth graders were seen in pre-enrollment interviews, but only a portion of the seventh grade could be scheduled for their interviews. Attempting to see every student once might have been too ambitious a goal, but this writer believed that it was a necessary and worthwhile one.

The guidance program was described in terms of the activities for the 1963-64 school year. The description of the junior high school, the community, and the guidance program was included to enhance the readers' understanding.

The Place of Guidance in the Curriculum

Concerning the place of guidance in the curriculum, Jones stated, "Guidance is an integral part of the educational process...The chief responsibility for guidance rests upon the home and the school. In the school every member of the staff is concerned with the guidance of the students entrusted to him."¹ Froelich, in speaking of the responsibilities of the guidance program, adds, "The responsibilities are not primarily for the operation of the guidance program as a unique and separate part of the school's program, but rather an integral part of it. The task of the guidance program is to facilitate the adjustment of the school to the pupil and the adjustment of the pupil to the school and to life."² Stoops and Wahlquist described the place of guidance as being a functional part of the curriculum and stated that by providing good guidance services the curriculum should be more effective.³

As these and many other authors have stated, guidance is a part of

¹A. J. Jones, Principles of Guidance, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1963), p. 26

²C. D. Froelich, Guidance Services in Schools, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1958), p. 22

³Emery Stoops and G. L. Wahlquist, Principles and Practices in Guidance, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1958), p. 4.

the educational process and is included in the school's curriculum. Dr. H. Leigh Baker, in guidance classes at Kansas State University, used the following definition of guidance to describe the guidance process and to show the place of guidance in the school.

Guidance is an educational process by which we assist individuals in the making of choices and adjustments in significant situations in their lives in which they need help. It has various aspects which are inter-related, yet we should recognize these as educational, vocational, and personal-social, in nature. Guidance involves a point of view which influences other educational procedures such as classroom teaching, administration, curriculum construction, and provision for extra-class activities, yet it is not synonymous with such procedures. In addition to a point of view, guidance includes provision for specific services. These guidance services include (1) development in the individual of an accurate and objective evaluation of himself; (2) of his environmental opportunities, especially those which are educational and vocational in nature; (3) counseling to bring the individual into an optimum relation to the opportunities in his environment; (4) placement; and (5) follow-up when he drops out or is graduated, that his life may bring a maximum of satisfaction to himself and be of service to others.

The Place of Counseling in Guidance

In Baker's definition, counseling seems to be considered one of the basic services of the guidance effort. The above definition views counseling as bringing the individual into an optimum relation with the opportunities in his environment.

Froelich described counseling as follows:

Counseling is the most important service offered to individual pupils...Counseling provides a relationship in which the individual is stimulated to (1) evaluate himself and his opportunities, (2) choose a feasible course of action, (3) accept responsibility for his choice, and (4) to initiate a course of action in line with his choice.

⁴Froelich, op. cit., p. 16

Counseling provides a situation where the student or client is free to explore his ideas and attitudes within the security of a confidential relationship. Counseling is a helping relationship where the client receives help in the decision-making processes. The chief aim of counseling is to do away with the need for such help in the future. Johnson, Busacker, and Bowman define counseling as "an encounter between two individuals through which one of them is enabled to recognize, accept, and cope with reality as it pertains to his own situation".⁵

Another similar view of counseling is given by Johnson, Steffle, and Edelfelt describing counseling as a process in which one person with special competencies assists another to better understand himself and his environment and encourages him to assume responsibility for making decisions which will lead to satisfactory adjustment or an acceptable resolution of problems.⁶ These same authors list the desired results of counseling as "(1) reduction of tensions, (2) new or better perspectives, (3) growth in social or personal effectiveness, and (4) greater maturity and independence in dealing with future problems."⁷

Much has been written about the philosophy of guidance, its part in education, and its place in the curriculum. The intent of this section of the report was not to summarize all that has been written about guidance, but rather to select a few statements to provide a background for this report.

⁵M. Johnson, W. E. Busacker, and F. Q. Bowman, Junior High School Guidance, (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1961), p. 102.

⁶W. F. Johnson, Buford Steffle, and R. A. Edelfelt, Pupil Personnel and Guidance Services, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), p. 294.

⁷Ibid., p. 297.

PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

The process of collecting the information to determine the demands placed upon the counseling service during this past school year was a fairly simple one. A form was developed so that upon the completion of each interview the data being sought could be recorded. The forms were mimeographed lengthwise on 8½ by 14 inch sheets of paper providing space to record information from thirty interviews on a single sheet. The information entered on the form about each interview was categorized as follows:

1. Sex of the client and grade standing
2. Status of the client (student, parent, or teacher)
3. Nature of the problem discussed (educational, vocational, or personal-social)
4. Source of referral (whether the client was referred by a parent, teacher, or other person, or came of his own accord)
5. Time involved for the interview
6. Name of the client

A copy of the counseling summary sheet may be found in the appendix. After each summary sheet was filled, the categories were totaled and at the close of the school term grand totals were obtained.

The totals and information from the counseling summary sheet were analyzed and put in tabular form. The tables were further studied to discover what ways they might be inter-related.

Summaries were written from the information reported and conclusions were formed about the counseling service for the 1963-64 school year from the data collected. Implications were then established for the future of the guidance program and the counseling service.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE COUNSELING SERVICE

During the 1963-64 school term, a total of 803 student interviews were conducted. In addition to the student interviews, twenty-five sessions were held with parents of students in the school and three interviews were conducted with classroom teachers in the school. Total time expended in these interviews in terms of whole hours totaled 349 hours. The time spent in counseling was approximately 32 per cent of the hours available for guidance and counseling.

Number of Interviews

Tables I and II illustrate how the student interviews were distributed between boys and girls in each of the three grade levels seven through nine. Table I provides a breakdown by numbers and Table II provides a percentage breakdown.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS BY SEX
AND GRADE LEVEL

Grade	Boys	Girls	Total Interviews	% of Total
Seventh	74	58	132	16%
Eighth	122	129	251	31%
Ninth	198	222	420	53%
Totals	394	409	803	100%

Table I indicated that fifty-three per cent of the interviews were with ninth grade pupils and eighty-four per cent of the sessions were with eighth and ninth grade students. In Table II it can be seen that the distribution of the interviews between male and female students was approximately equal with the greatest difference existing in the seventh grade interviews.

TABLE II

PER CENT BREAKDOWN OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS
BY SEX AND GRADE LEVEL

	<u>Seventh Grade</u>		<u>Eighth Grade</u>		<u>Ninth Grade</u>	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Per cent of interviews for the grade level	56	44	48	52	47	53
Per cent of all boy interviews	20		30		50	
Per cent of all girl interviews		15		31		54
Per cent of all student interviews	9	7	15	16	25	28

NOTE: This table should be read as follows: Seventh grade boys received 56 per cent of the seventh grade interviews, 20 per cent of all boy interviews and 9 per cent of all student interviews.

Nature of Student Interviews

The nature of the 803 student interviews is depicted in Table III and Table IV. The interviews were categorized as follows:

1. New student interviews; These were sessions held with students entering the junior high for the first time. They were intended to aid the new student's adjustment to the new situation.
2. Educational achievement; This type included all problems of academic achievement.
3. Educational planning; This category included pre-enrollment sessions with eighth and ninth graders and other sessions having to do with future educational choices and requirements. Also included here were interviews with ninth graders who were involved in a vocational unit of study in civics classes.
4. Personal problems; Included here was the full range of personal-social and emotional problems and concerns of students.
5. Educational-personal problems; This classification contained a few cases where the counselor found real difficulty in separating the one problem type from the other.
6. Seventh grade information; Seeing every seventh grader in this kind of session was attempted. These sessions were "get-acquainted" sessions designed to acquaint the students with the guidance program and the counselor and to acquaint the counselor with the students.

These categories were somewhat different than the counseling summary sheet illustrates, but they are actually sub-categories to those on the summary sheet with the addition of the new student interviews and the seventh grade information sessions. The number of each of the above types of interviews is presented in Table III and Table IV depicts percentage distribution of interview types according to sex and grade level.

Educational planning interviews were most numerous because of the pre-enrollment sessions scheduled for the eighth and ninth grades. From Table IV it can be seen that educational problems constituted 67 per cent of the total interviews, personal problems made up 16 per cent of the

TABLE III

TYPES OF STUDENT INTERVIEWS ACCORDING TO SEX AND GRADE
LEVEL DURING THE 1963-1964 SCHOOL TERM

Nature of the Interview	Grade Level						Total for all Grades
	Seven		Eight		Ninth		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
New Student	9	7	6	6	18	26	72
Educational Achievement	4	0	3	4	14	10	35
Educational Planning	7	7	107	94	145	144	504
Personal Problem	25	10	6	24	18	40	123
Educational- Personal	0	1	0	1	3	2	7
7th Grade Information	29	33					62
Totals	74	58	122	129	198	222	803

TABLE IV

PER CENT DISTRIBUTIONS OF INTERVIEW TYPES
ACCORDING TO SEX AND GRADE LEVEL

	New Student	Educational Achievement	Educational Planning	Personal Problems	Educational Personal	7th Grade Information
<u>7th Grade</u>						
Boys	12*	12	1	20	0	40
Girls	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>60</u>
% for Grade	22	12	2	28	14	100
<u>8th Grade</u>						
Boys	8	8	21	4	0	
Girls	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>14</u>	
% for Grade	16	20	40	24	14	
<u>9th Grade</u>						
Boys	25	40	29	15	43	
Girls	<u>37</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>29</u>	
% for Grade	62	68	58	48	72	
Per cent of all interviews for type	9	4	63	15	1	8
Per cent of boys per type	45	60	51	39	43	40
Per cent of girls per type	55	40	49	61	57	60

*All numbers are per cents

total, and new student sessions and seventh grade information interviews accounted for 9 and 8 per cent of the total interviews respectively. Girls accounted for 61 per cent of the personal problem types and boys constituted 60 per cent of educational achievement problems. All other interview types had a fairly even distribution between boys and girls.

Extent and Nature of Referrals

Tables III and IV illustrate the number and type of student interviews conducted and their distribution among the grade levels and between male and female students. A factor of importance in analyzing the counseling service was how the interviews happened to occur. In other words, how were the interviews initiated? Ways in which interviews were initiated were classified as those where (1) a teacher made a direct referral, (2) a parent made a direct referral, (3) the counselor scheduled the interview, and (4) the student came on his own initiative. Originally it was planned to use a category for students who were referred or came in at the suggestion of other students. This category was not used because it was difficult to determine the extent of another student's influence upon the client. Table V shows the extent of the various referral sources.

From Table V it can be determined that girls received 287 counselor referrals, two parent, and six teacher referrals. Boys received 319 counselor referrals, three parent referrals, and two teacher referrals. Boys referred themselves seventy times for interviews while girls arranged 114 interviews at their own initiative.

TABLE V

WAYS IN WHICH STUDENT INTERVIEWS WERE INITIATED

Referral	Grade Level						Totals
	Seven		Eight		Nine		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Teacher	0	1	0	1	2	4	8
Parent	0	0	0	2	3	0	5
Counselor	58	48	118	107	143	132	606
Self-referral	16	9	4	19	50	86	184

Table V shows the number of referrals of various types for the different grade levels and sex of the clients. Table VI shows the distribution of referral sources between boys and girls according to their grade level on a percentage basis. Table VI is read as follows: seventh grade boys constituted 9 per cent on the self-referrals and the seventh grade accounted for 14 per cent of the self-referrals.

Of the 606 counselor initiated interviews indicated in Tables V and VI eighteen were arranged at the recommendation of the county school psychologist, six at the suggestion of the principal, and seventeen were arranged as a result of conversations with parents. From the information given in Tables V, VI, and from the raw data these facts can be determined:

1. The extent of self-referrals was 61 per cent in personal problem interviews, 47 per cent academic achievement sessions, 70 per cent in educational-personal sessions, and 17 per cent in the educational planning interviews.

TABLE VI

PER CENT OF REFERRAL SOURCES ACCORDING
TO SEX AND GRADE LEVEL

	Self	Referral Source		Teacher
		Counselor	Parent	
<u>7th Grade</u>				
Boys	9*	10	0	0
Girls	<u>5</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12.5</u>
% for Grade	14	18	0	12.5
<u>8th Grade</u>				
Boys	3	19	0	0
Girls	<u>10</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>12.5</u>
% for Grade	13	37	40	12.5
<u>9th Grade</u>				
Boys	26	23	60	25
Girls	<u>47</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>50</u>
% for Grade	73	45	60	75
Per cent of all interviews	23.5	75	0.5	1

*All numbers are per cents

2. Seventy-three per cent of the self-referrals were by ninth graders, 13 per cent by eighth grade students, and 14 per cent were by seventh grade students.
3. Sixty-two per cent of the self-referral interviews were arranged by girls.

Students With Two or More Interviews

The counseling summary sheet, in addition to providing categories of students, problems, and referrals, also gave evidence of the degree to which students made continuing use of the counseling service. In other terms, from the raw data it was possible to determine how many individual students were contacted and how many times they were interviewed. Table VII shows the number of students contacted by the counselor with the corresponding frequencies of their sessions. Interviews in Table VII represent all student interviews and may be considered misleading if used to determine the extent to which students returned to make use of the counseling service. All pre-enrollment, new student interviews, and seventh grade information interviews are included in the figures. These figures do not reflect the true manner in which students voluntarily returned to make repeated use of the counseling service.

Table VIII gives the number of students with personal problems that were counseled more than once. All interviews in Table VIII are not concerned with personal problems but they were all with students counseled with more than once and who were interviewed at least once concerning personal matters. By comparing Tables VII and VIII, it is shown that of 153 students counseled more than once, forty-three had some personal problems. The forty-three students used 193 of the 444 sessions taken by

TABLE VII

FREQUENCY OF INTERVIEWS PER STUDENT

Sessions Per Student	Number of Students	Total Sessions
1	359	359
2	93	186
3	33	99
4	9	36
5	8	40
6	4	24
7	1	7
8	1	8
9	1	9
10	1	10
11	1	11
14	1	14
Total Students	512	Total Interviews 803

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF STUDENTS COUNSELED MORE THAN
ONCE WHO PRESENTED PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Sessions per Student	Number of Students with Personal Problems	Total Sessions
2	8	16
3	13	39
4	5	20
5	7	35
6	4	24
7	1	7
8	1	8
9	1	9
10	1	10
11	1	11
14	1	14
Total Students	43	Total Sessions 193

students counseled at least twice. Further examination of data concerning students having repeated interviews depicted the extent to which students returned on their own initiative.

Table IX presents the extent of self-referrals which occurred in sessions with students that had repeated counseling sessions. Table IX is read as follows: Of the four educational achievement interviews with seventh grade boys, 25 per cent of them were self-referrals; there were twenty-seven interviews with seventh grade boys and 22 per cent of this total were self-referrals. Table IX does not include new student interviews or seventh grade information interviews because there were no chances for self-referrals in these categories. Eleven seventh grade information interviews and fifty-one new student sessions were held with students contacted more than once. The actual proportion of self-referrals among these students was 163 out of 444 sessions, 66 per cent of the self-referrals were girls and 34 per cent were boys. The highest incidence of self-referrals occurred where personal problems were the case (60 per cent) and girls' sessions of a personal nature showed a higher ratio of self-referrals (73 per cent) than did boys (41 per cent). Also, ninth grade pupils referred themselves (49 per cent) to a greater extent than did eighth grade students (30 per cent) or seventh grade pupils (31 per cent). As is readily seen, ninth grade students were seen on a return basis to a much greater extent than were seventh and eighth grade students.

TABLE IX

EXTENT OF SELF-REFERRALS AMONG STUDENTS HAVING MORE THAN ONE INTERVIEW
 ACCORDING TO SEX, GRADE, AND TYPE OF INTERVIEW

Sex By Grade	Educational Achievement	Educational Planning	Personal Problems	Educational -Personal	Total Interviews	Total- Self-Referrals
<u>Boys</u>						
Seventh	4 (25%)	4 (0%)	19 (26%)	0	27	6 (22%)
Eighth	3 (0%)	13 (8%)	8 (50%)	0	24	5 (25%)
Ninth	12 (25%)	88 (39%)	17 (50%)	2 (0%)	119	45 (37%)
<u>Girls</u>						
Seventh	0	3 (0%)	7 (71%)	1 (100%)	11	6 (54%)
Eighth	1 (100%)	26 (12%)	23 (50%)	1 (100%)	51	17 (33%)
Ninth	8 (75%)	106 (44%)	34 (90%)	2 (50%)	150	84 (56%)
<u>Totals for all Students</u>	28 (40%)	240 (36%)	108 (60%)	6 (50%)	382	163 (43%)

Interviews With Parents and Teachers

Formal interviews concerning pupils were held with parents and teachers during the school year. Table X describes the extent and nature of the interviews that took place. All of the parent and teacher interviews were self-referrals and the one personal problem in the teacher interviews concerned the teacher's personal problems and not those of a student.

TABLE X

DESCRIPTION OF PARENT AND TEACHER INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED
DURING THE 1963-1964 SCHOOL TERM

Interview Type	Educational Achievement	Educational Planning	Personal Problems	Educational -Personal Totals	
Parent	11	8	5	1	25
Teacher	2	0	1	0	3
Totals	13	8	6	1	28

Time Involved In Counseling Sessions

Table XI shows the amount of time given to counseling sessions during the school year used in the study. Table XI indicates the time spent on each type of interview and the average length of interview for each type.

Total time requirements placed upon the counseling service during the past school term was not accurately depicted by keeping track of the

TABLE XI

TIME INVOLVED IN COUNSELING INTERVIEWS

Type of Interview	Number of Sessions	Number of Hours Involved	Average Time per Session (in minutes)
Parent	25	22	53
Teacher	3	2	40
New Student	72	17	13
Educational Achievement	35	28	48
Educational Planning	504	165	20
Personal Problem	123	95	46
Educational-Personal	7	7	60
7th Grade Information	62	13	13
Total Sessions	831	Total Hours 349	Average Time for all Sessions 25 minutes

time consumed by each interview. Such activities as going over records prior to sessions with clients, writing case reports, obtaining information not available in school records, making appointment notices, and informal conferences with staff members could have all been charged to the counseling service. However, the recording of time involved in interviews was a simple and practical matter, whereas keeping track of time spent in the other activities required by the nature of counseling was not as simple or practical. Recorded time spent in interviews during the past school year totaled 349 hours. The writer estimated that approximately an additional eighty hours was spent on counseling activities related to the actual interviews. This estimate was felt to be a moderate one as the writer believed that it was not at all impossible that one-half again as much time was spent preparing, recording and re-searching as was spent in the actual counseling periods.

Using 180 six hour days as a base, it was calculated from data given in Table XI that the time consumed by counseling during the school term approximated 32 per cent of the time available for counseling and other guidance activities. If the estimate of an additional eighty hours was added to the time given to interviews created by activities related to counseling approximately 40 per cent of available time was expended by the counseling service.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Data

In analyzing student interviews held during the past school term to determine the distribution of counseling sessions among the three grade levels and between boys and girls, these facts were produced:

1. Fifty-three per cent of all student interviews were held with ninth grade students, 31 per cent were with students in eighth grade, and 16 per cent of the interviews with seventh grade students.
2. Distribution of student interviews between male and female students was approximately equal with the greatest difference occurring in favor of boys in the seventh grade.
3. Ninth grade girls received the largest per cent of the total student interviews (27.7%). Ninth grade boys, eighth grade girls, and eighth grade boys followed in that order. The seventh grade received the fewest number of interviews, and only in the seventh grade did interviews with boys exceed the number of interviews with girls.

The following statements describe the extent of the various types of interviews held during the school year:

1. Sixty-three per cent of all interviews were of the educational planning type, 16 per cent were personal and educational-personal in nature, 9 per cent were with new students, 8 per cent of all interviews were seventh grade information sessions, and 4 per cent of the total dealt with problems concerning academic achievement.
2. Ninth grade students were more numerous than students from the other grades in all types of interviews that included all grade levels, and eighth grade students were more numerous in all categories than seventh graders in all categories except personal problems and seventh grade information sessions.
3. Girls made up 40 per cent of educational achievement interviews, 49 per cent of the educational

planning sessions, 61 per cent of the personal problem interviews, and 57 per cent of the educational-personal problems. Boys constituted the remaining per cents in each category.

In studying the counseling service it was considered important to determine how counseling contacts were initiated. Seventy-five per cent of the 803 interviews were initiated by the counselor, 23.5 per cent of the sessions were at the students' request, 1 per cent of the contacts were teacher referrals, and 0.5 per cent were referred by parents.

Self-referrals are an indication of students' willingness to make use of the counseling service. Information given in the study about self-referrals shows that:

1. Seventy-three per cent of all self-referrals were ninth graders, 14 per cent were seventh graders, and 13 per cent of all self-referrals were eighth grade students.
2. Self-referrals made up 61 per cent of the personal problem interviews; they accounted for 47 per cent of the academic achievement sessions, 70 per cent of the educational-personal contacts and 17 per cent of the educational planning sessions.
3. Sixty-two per cent of all self-referrals were by girls.

The analysis of the counseling service provided information in regard to the frequency of interviews with individual students. During the school term, 512 individual students were interviewed and 153 of these pupils were interviewed more than once. The students counseled more than once constituted 444 of the total of 803 sessions held during the year. The frequency of interviews ranged from one to fourteen sessions per student. Of the 153 students who had more than one interview, forty-three presented at least one personal problem to the counselor.

By comparing Table VIII on page twenty-seven and Table VII on page twenty-six it can be determined that students who were seen from three to fourteen times all presented some personal problem. The number of types of interviews with these students was as follows:

1. Educational achievement sessions totaled twenty-eight and constituted 8 per cent of the interviews with these students.
2. Educational planning sessions totaled 240 and made up 62 per cent of the interviews with students seen repeatedly.
3. Personal problems among these students totaled 108, or 28 per cent, of the total interviews.
4. In the educational-personal category, six students were interviewed and this number accounted for 2 per cent of the total interviews with students having two or more interviews.

The extent to which students counseled two or more times referred themselves was:

1. Personal problem interviews were 60 per cent self-referrals, educational-personal sessions were 50 per cent self-referrals, 40 per cent of the academic achievement problems were self-initiated, and 36 per cent of the educational planning sessions were by self-referral.
2. Forty-nine per cent of ninth grade sessions were self-referrals, interviews held with eighth graders were 30 per cent self-initiated, and seventh grade interviews with students having more than one interview contained 31 per cent self-referrals.
3. Boys referred themselves in 30 per cent of their sessions while girls referred themselves in 52 per cent of their contacts.

Interviews held with parents and teachers constituted a small portion of all interviews conducted during the year. There were twenty-five parent and three teacher interviews conducted. Of these sessions,

thirteen had to do with educational achievement problems, eight with educational planning, six were of a personal nature, and one was categorized as being an educational-personal type. They were all self-initiated interviews.

Total time required for the 831 student, parent, and teacher interviews was 349 hours, or 32 per cent of the time available for counseling. Forty-eight per cent of the counseling time was given to educational planning, 29 per cent was given to personal and educational-personal problems, 8 per cent of the counseling time was given to educational achievement problems, 6 per cent to parent sessions, 5 per cent of the time was spent with new students, and 3.5 per cent of the counseling time was devoted to seventh grade information sessions, and 0.5 per cent was devoted to teacher contacts.

Conclusions

In reviewing the distribution of interviews among the grade levels and taking into account the enrollment for each grade, it appeared that the seventh grade and to some extent the eighth grade did not receive their share of the counseling effort. There were 132 interviews for 199 seventh graders, 251 interviews for 158 eighth grade students, and 420 sessions for 204 ninth graders.

It is realized that pre-enrollment sessions were not scheduled for the seventh grade, however, "get-acquainted" sessions were planned for the seventh grade but were not completed. Only 62 seventh graders were contacted of the 199 in this type of interview.

Pre-enrollment sessions, "get-acquainted" sessions, the age of the students, and the ability of students to discuss problems were all factors affecting the number of interviews per grade. In spite of the factors, it was concluded that from the number of students in each grade, a greater number of seventh and eighth grade interviews could be expected.

From studying the extent of the types of interviews and problems encountered in counseling contacts, several insights were formulated. The counseling effort during the school term was seen as being primarily concerned with educational problems. Personal problems and orienting students received almost equal secondary consideration. Ninth grade students were most frequently counseled in all interview categories and girls were more frequently interviewed in the category of personal problems. One category, educational achievement, created particular concern. It seemed that there should have been more interviews of this type presented during the school year. A possible explanation for the low number of this type of session could be that to a considerable extent, classroom teachers were handling educational achievement problems.

The ways in which interviews were initiated provided some information as to how students use the counseling service on their own. Other insights were also obtained from this information.

The high per cent of counselor initiated interviews created some real concern. When such a condition exists, students might well come to feel that the way to see the counselor is to be called in for an interview.

It was apparent that from the high incidence of ninth grade self-referrals that the ninth grade students made better use of the counseling service than did the eighth or the seventh grade students. It was also concluded that this fact offers some explanation for the lower rate of involvement in all interviews by the seventh and eighth pupils.

Personal problems appeared to be the major factor causing students to make self-referrals. Girls appeared to be more willing to make appointments on their own than did boys where personal problems were concerned.

Parent and teacher referrals were minimal. The low proportion of teacher referrals caused some concern for it can be assumed that this can represent a lack of understanding of the guidance program or even a lack of participation in guidance activities on the part of the staff. The actual figures representing teacher referral were misleading because they represent only the formally expressed participation. Interest and participation in the guidance program was displayed by the staff during the school year. It was not assumed, however, that teacher participation and understanding did not need improvement.

An analysis of the data concerning students counseled two or more times showed that interviews were held with 512 students of the school's 561 students. Of the 153 students counseled more than once forty-three of them presented some personal problems. These forty-three students were involved in 108 of the 123 personal problem interviews held during the year. Eight of the 93 students with two interviews and all of the students seen

more than twice presented personal problems. The highest incidence of self-referrals among students with two or more interviews was in the personal problems type of interview. It was concluded from this information that personal problems constituted the basic factor in students being frequently involved in interviews.

The number of parent interviews held during the school term seemed few, but no information was available from previous years to make a comparison. It does seem sensible, however, to point out that parent interviews are extremely important to the guidance program and continual effort should be made to maintain and improve relationships and contacts with parents.

The number of teacher interviews was very small. The formal teacher contacts represented by this study by no means was indicative of the number of informal contacts with teachers concerning pupils and the school program. It did appear reasonable, under the circumstances of this school year, to conclude that steps should be taken to increase the total teacher participation in guidance activities.

The total time expended in counseling sessions represented 32 per cent of the time available for counseling and the guidance program. Popular estimates of allotted time for counseling seem to point to 50 per cent of guidance time as a guide for expenditure of time in counseling activities. Because of the high student-counselor ratio and the fact that the seventh grade information interviews could not be completed, it was believed that more of the available guidance time should be spent in counseling and that plans should be made to improve the student-counselor ratio.

Very briefly and in a more concise form these were the conclusions established from this study:

1. More interviews should have occurred with seventh and eighth grade students.
2. Educational problems were the primary concern of the counseling effort with personal problems and orienting pupils receiving an almost equal amount of secondary effort.
3. Ninth grade students were most frequently counseled in all interview types and girls most frequently counseled concerning personal problems.
4. Sessions dealing with academic achievement appeared to be fewer than might be expected.
5. Ninth graders referred themselves for interviews much more than did students from grades seven and eight.
6. Personal problems were the most common reason for self-referral.
7. The high percentage of counselor initiated sessions requires further study and deliberation.
8. Teacher referrals of students and teacher participation could be improved.
9. More of the available guidance time and effort should be devoted to counseling and the counselor-student ratio should be improved.

Implications

Several implications were drawn from this study that should provide for the improvement of the counseling service and the guidance program:

1. Because of expected increases in enrollment, the inability to contact each student once this past year, and an already high counselor-student ratio, it seems necessary to add more clerical help and trained guidance personnel to the junior high guidance staff.
2. Effort should be increased to bring the school staff

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into greater participation in guidance and increase their understanding of guidance. Provisions for storing all pupil records in the guidance office and for the counselor to arrange parent-teacher conferences should increase teacher contacts with the guidance services.

3. Some survey to determine pupil needs and their concepts of guidance, counseling, and the counselor should be conducted to supplement the information produced by a study of this type.
4. Attempts should be made to better acquaint students with the guidance program and counseling process. What the counselor thinks he is doing is not always the same as the students' concepts. In general, students in this school this year could have easily conceived the counseling service as "a place where you talk about educational problems and you wait to be called in". Promoting better student understanding of the guidance program could be effected by group visits and explanations.
5. Academic achievement and how the school is handling the problem needs study.
6. A counseling summary should be made each year. An accumulation of this kind of data from year to year should offer a valuable basis for comparison.
7. The use of group sessions in pre-enrollment activities should be studied as a means of providing more time for counseling individual students. In studying the use of group methods, serious consideration must be given to the effects that reducing student contacts might have upon the counseling service.

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Counseling Summary Sheet _____

No.	Sex		Client				Problem			Source of Referral				TIME INVOLVED	NAME
	M	F	Student	Parent	Teacher	Other	Educ	Pers	Voc	Self	Student	Parent	Teacher		
1															
2															
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A STUDY OF COUNSELOR INTERVIEWS FOR THE 1963-64 SCHOOL TERM,
MCPHERSON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, MCPHERSON, KANSAS

by

WILLIAM D. OGG

B. S., KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, 1956

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1964

The study, a survey of formally arranged interviews held by the counselor with parents, teachers, and students during the 1963-64 school term was conducted at the junior high school in McPherson, Kansas. Conditions prompting the study were the absence of a formal plan for guidance services and a structural change in the school system's organization. It was assumed that the school year ending in May, 1964, would be representative of succeeding school terms, excluding the effect of increases in enrollment and changes that might occur in the school program.

The purposes of the study were to: (1) describe the clients interviewed, (2) determine the extent of interview types, (3) discover how interviews were initiated, (4) assess the nature of clients counseled repeatedly, (5) determine the extent of parent and teacher contacts, and (6) to determine and analyze the time devoted to counseling.

The information recorded on counseling summary forms was categorized as follows: (1) status and/or grade level and sex of the client, (2) type of problem discussed, (3) the source of referral, (4) time involved, and (5) the client's name.

A summary of data collected about interviews during the school year produced these facts:

1. Ninth grade pupils received over one-half of the interviews.
2. Approximately as many boys were interviewed as girls.
3. Two-thirds of the interviews were educational matters and the remainder were divided about equally between personal problems and orienting new and seventh grade students.
4. Girls were more often counseled in personal matters.
5. Counselor-initiated sessions were three times as prevalent as student self-referrals and parent and teacher referrals were minimal.

6. Self-referrals were most common in personal problems and ninth grade pupils accounted for almost three-fourths of all self-referrals.
7. Interviews were held with 512 students and 153 students were interviewed more than once accounting for 444 of the 803 student interviews.
8. Teacher and parent interviews totaled three and twenty-five respectively.
9. Total time consumed by the 831 interviews was 349 hours representing 32 per cent of the time available.
10. Educational problems took slightly more than half of the counseling time and personal matters consumed almost twice the time given to the remaining types of interviews.

In addition to the facts taken from the data, the following conclusions were formulated:

1. Seventh and eighth grade students should receive more of the counseling effort.
2. Sessions dealing with academic achievement were fewer than might be expected.
3. Teacher and parent participation could be improved.
4. More of the available guidance time and effort should be devoted to counseling.

Several implications were established that should provide for the improvement of the counseling service and the guidance program:

1. Additional guidance personnel and clerical assistance are needed.
2. Effort should be made to increase the school staff's participation in the guidance program and to raise the level of understanding concerning guidance among the members of the staff.
3. A survey of pupil needs and pupil concepts of guidance, counseling, and the counselor should be made to supplement the information produced by the survey of the counseling service.

4. Student understanding of the guidance program should be improved.
5. The extent and handling of academic achievement needs analyzing.
6. The use of group activities should be investigated as a means for providing more time for counseling individuals.
7. The counseling summary performed for the 1963-64 school term should become an instrument for continuous evaluation of the counseling service.