Implications for Collaboration:
An Investigation With School Counselors and School Psychologists

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Abstract

Collaboration is an interactive process that has become mandated as a part of educational decision-making. School counselors and school psychologists are now guided by professional principles that advocate interdisciplinary collaboration. This study identified activities for which these professionals currently collaborated with each other, as well as desired activities for collaboration. Demographic factors that appeared related to amounts of collaboration were also identified. Years of experience, gender, and administrative support were factors that significantly influenced collaboration. Implications for school practitioners are discussed.
Implications for Collaboration:

An Investigation With School Counselors and School Psychologists

Contemporary educational priorities oblige school counselors and other support personnel to maximize efforts toward student and organizational improvements. Collaboration represents a concept embraced by a wide array of professionals as a vehicle to support these goals (Rowley, 2000; Schwanz & Barbour, 2005; Shoffner & Briggs, 2001). For school counselors and others, collaboration requires a substantial shift from traditionally independent roles to more team-based activities.

The impetus for this movement away from the more costly, labor intensive consultative model has come in part from legislative mandates governing the ways in which educational decisions must be made. In contrast to an expert model, a teaming model for determination of needs and programs based on input from a variety of individuals has been advocated within the educational milieu (see Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004 and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). Thus, school counselors must increasingly function as team members as schools embrace this model of functioning. However, limited study has been devoted to collaboration in school settings, activities that serve as the basis for collaboration, and school counselors’ perceptions about collaboration. This investigation focused specifically on identifying the degree to which school counselors collaborated with school psychologists and other school professionals on a variety of activities. Comparison of actual to desired levels of collaboration as well as barriers and supports to collaboration were of particular interest.
Collaboration and Conceptual Foundations

Collaboration has been defined as, “…direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal” (Friend & Cook, 2003, p. 5). As described by Friend (2000), the term is “ubiquitous” with a cross-section of organizations espousing benefits from this process. A theme permeating professional guidelines from diverse arenas, collaboration is also promoted as an essential skill for professional efficacy. Based on in-depth analyses of notable organizations, Bennis and Biederman (1997) highlighted collaboration as the vital teaming activity underlying success in achieving a variety of organizational goals.

While numerous definitions of collaboration exist, common elements include shared decision-making, mutual responsibility, and problem-solving between team members. Taking the lead from business, mental health, and medical settings, educational literature has increasingly become infused with a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly due to cost-efficiency aspects of this problem-solving approach (Friend & Cook, 2003).

Increased diversity within school populations has also necessitated collaborative problem-solving. School personnel must adapt to greater cultural, socioeconomic, ecological, and experiential differences between students as well as the complex learning needs of students. For example, Miller (2002) noted the number of students with disabilities has increased by more than 50% in the past 30 years, 1 in 3 students comes from a non-European background, and socioeconomic diversity has widened, with approximately 13% of students currently living in poverty. Mental health issues represent still another area of diversity within a classroom. Wrobel (2004) summarized
results from large scale analyses of mental health problems in children ages 5 and older, which indicated that 1 in 5 children and adolescents experienced emotional problems. Thus, school personnel face multifaceted challenges in addition to promoting student progress toward academic objectives.

*School Counselors’ and School Psychologists’ Roles*

Classroom teachers are directly confronted with this range of student diversities. School counselors and school psychologists primarily function as support staff to optimize efforts toward educational success. Historically, school counselors have provided staff support as well as individual and group counseling for students with personal challenges and mental health issues, directed interest assessments, and guided students in career choices (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

School psychologists have also supported students and schools through completion of educational assessments, design of behavioral interventions, and consultation regarding social-emotional challenges demonstrated by students (Meyers, Meyers, & Grogg, 2004). Training guidelines from both the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2005) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 2000) endorse collaboration between the respective practitioners as well as other school personnel, recognizing this interdisciplinary process as a beneficial support to students and schools. Thus, collaboration, as opposed to the more traditional consultation provided independently by these respective professionals, has more recently been promoted within legal mandates.
Collaboration between School Counselors and School Psychologists

As discussed by Friend (2000), the word “collaboration” is used extensively in the vocabulary of school professionals. However, “merely saying the word is not necessarily the same as carrying out the action” (Friend, 2000, p. 130). While literature outlining the need for school counselors, school psychologists, and other school professionals to collaborate is available (see Rowley, 2000; Schwanz & Barbour, 2005; Shoffner & Briggs, 2001), minimal study has been devoted to identifying the extent to which collaboration actually occurs or the types of collaborative activities in which school counselors and school psychologists engage.

In one of the few studies that examined collaboration between school counselors and school psychologists, Staton and Gilligan (2003) found both groups reported collaborating with each other. The researchers stated that 91% of school counselors acknowledged regular collaboration with school psychologists, while 98% of school psychologists reported regular collaboration with school counselors. Staton and Gilligan reported that both groups collaborated on a variety of activities, the most frequent being special education planning and pre-referral activities. Finally, the authors determined that effective collaboration was positively correlated with the age of the school psychologists surveyed. This same relationship was not found for school counselors.

Barriers to collaboration included the amount of time available and the level of administrative support for engaging in collaborative activities (Staton & Gilligan, 2003). Resistance to collaboration was also reported as a significant barrier for school counselors and school psychologists.
Purpose of Investigation

Friend (2000) stated, “The study of collaboration must keep pace with the increasing demand for its practice” (p. 132). The present study was designed to investigate specific activities in which school counselors and school psychologist collaborate, differences between the two groups, and influences of particular demographic factors. Research questions included:

1) Is there an overall difference between actual and desired collaboration for school counselors and school psychologists?

2) Are there differences between specific actual and desired collaboration activities?

3) Do counselors and psychologists differ in frequency of actual and desired collaboration?

4) Does professional experience make a difference in amount of collaboration?

5) Does gender make a difference in amount of actual and desired collaboration?

6) Does administrator encouragement influence collaboration?

7) Do other demographic characteristics (e.g. grade level, number of students, etc.) influence collaboration?

Method

Participants

For the purpose of this study, all public school counselors and school psychologists in six school districts were contacted. The six districts included both urban and rural schools located in two southeastern states. Of the 120 school counselors surveyed, 99 completed and returned the instrument for a response rate of 83%. Of the
57 school psychologists surveyed, 48 returned the completed survey for a response rate of 84% (Total N = 147). Forty-three percent of those surveyed worked in the elementary school while 46% worked in the middle or high school. Forty-two percent of the respondents had between 6 and 15 years of experience as a school counselor or school psychologist, while 60% had between one and five years of experience at their current school. Eighty-five percent of those surveyed were female.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was based on Staton and Gilligan’s (2003) Interprofessional Collaboration Survey (ICS). The ICS was developed by Staton and Gilligan for the purpose described below; no statistical information regarding the ICS was provided by the authors. While a substantially modified instrument was used in the present study, the overall purpose of the ICS (i.e., “to investigate the current status of collaboration between school counselors and school psychologists”, Staton & Gilligan, 2003, p. 165) guided the present investigation. Areas of collaboration among school professionals were specifically drawn from the ICS and these areas were incorporated into the current survey; specific elements included the broad domains of collaborative activities, collaboration partners, barriers to collaboration, and facilitative factors. The current survey also incorporated components described by Dillman’s (2000) methodology for survey techniques. A pilot study of the survey was used to determine readability, coherence, and expert validity. Graduate students and current faculty in the counseling and school psychology faculty at a large, public, southeastern University were asked to review the instrument. Modifications to the survey were implemented based upon information generated from the pilot study. Also, Friend and Cook’s (2003)
definition of collaboration, emphasizing a style of interpersonal interaction between at least two equal parties and focused on shared decision making, was included on the survey to provide contextual parameters for participants’ responses. The coefficient alpha statistics for Actual Collaboration and Desired Collaboration were .82 and .85, respectively, reflecting good levels of internal consistency ($N = 147$).

Procedure

The survey packets, including a cover letter and survey, were distributed to six school districts that agreed to participate in the study. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, benefits of participating, and confidentiality. Survey packets were distributed to the district school counselors and school psychologists by two methods. Professionals in five of the districts were surveyed during district in-service meetings. Participants were asked to complete and return the survey packet in the attached envelopes to a common collection point sometime during the in-service day.

In the sixth district, survey packets were distributed and returned via school mail to a district administrator utilizing self-addressed envelopes. The administrator then returned the sealed envelopes to the researchers. This approach was based upon the requirements of the school district.

Results

The survey included sections dedicated to actual collaboration activities as well as desired collaborative activities. Each of these sections evaluated the same 12 activities commonly engaged in by school counselors and school psychologists (see Appendix A for a list of survey items and format). The level of actual collaboration was examined by asking participants to rate how often they currently collaborated with other
school staff members on each of the 12 activities. Desired collaboration was determined by examining how often they would prefer to collaborate with other staff members on each activity. A five-point Likert scale was utilized to evaluate each activity: zero indicated no collaboration; one indicated collaboration once per year; two indicated collaboration once a semester; three indicated collaboration once a week; and four indicated daily collaboration. Total scores for desired and actual collaboration were calculated by summing the 12 items in each section. The results are reviewed next under the heading of each research question.

Is there an overall difference between actual and desired collaboration?

A paired sample t-test was used to examine the difference between actual and desired collaboration for the entire sample of both school counselors and school psychologists \((N = 147)\). As a group, these school professionals reported statistically more desired collaboration than actual collaboration \((t = -9.381, p < .001)\). In consideration of practical significance, these mean values were given the nearest labels used in the survey, where a total mean of 12 equaled once per year, 24 equaled once per semester, 36 equaled weekly, and 48 equaled daily. This resulted in the actual collaboration mean of 28.4 falling nearest the once per semester label, while the desired collaboration mean of 34.1 fell nearest the weekly label. Clearly, this group of school counselors and school psychologists reported preferring to do appreciably more collaboration than they were doing at the time of the survey.

Are there meaningful differences between actual and desired collaboration activities?

Again using the entire sample \((N = 147)\), means were calculated on the 12 specific collaborative activities in the survey, first for actual and then for desired
collaboration activities. Twelve actual-desired paired sample t-test comparisons were then analyzed (with Bonferroni correction to control for inflated Type I error). Using the more stringent p-value of .004, the results revealed mean desired collaboration levels being significantly greater than the mean actual collaboration level in 10 of the 12 comparisons. See Table 1 for details.

Practically speaking, these participants reported actual collaboration more than weekly when engaged in teacher consultation ($M = 3.3$) and listening to colleague concerns ($M = 3.2$). These were the two most frequently engaged in collaboration activities. Moreover, these were the only two activities that did not reach statistically significant actual-desired differences. It appears that this sample of school mental health professionals was relatively content with the amount of collaboration they have been doing in these areas. In comparison, actual collaboration was much less for in-service training ($M = 1.6$) and for demonstrating instructional strategies ($M = 1.6$). These mean levels fell between once per semester and once per year. When considering desired collaboration, teacher consultation ($M = 3.4$), developing pre-referral interventions ($M = 3.1$), and developing behavior management strategies ($M = 3.2$) were highly preferred, all reflecting a preference for at least weekly collaboration. In contrast, there was relatively little desire to collaborate on in-service training ($M = 2.1$) and individual student scheduling ($M = 2.2$). Despite this variation within the specific desired and actual activities, these results indicate that there is generally a desire for greater collaboration among school counselors and school psychologists.
Table 1
*Means and t-tests for Actual and Desired Collaboration Comparisons.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Actual Mean</th>
<th>Desired Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-referral intervention</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.83*</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist with transition</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.45*</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior management</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>5.42*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional accommodations</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.03*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student scheduling</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.13*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service training</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>6.58*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen - colleague concerns</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo. instructional strategy</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.98*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment/Evaluation</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.32*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling groups</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>10.17*</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher consultation</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reporting assess. results</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.59*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* A participant rating of 0 = Never; 1 = Once per year; 2 = Once per semester; 3 = Weekly; and 4 = Daily.

Sample includes both school counselors and school psychologists, *N = 147.*

*p < .004 (Bonferroni Corrected)*
Do counselors and psychologists differ in frequency of specific actual and desired collaboration?

An independent sample t-test was not statistically significant for a total actual collaboration difference between counselors ($n = 99$) and school psychologists ($n = 48$) ($t = 1.377, p = .171$). However, individual item analyses revealed several statistically significant differences between school psychologists and counselors for specific actual collaboration activities (Bonferroni corrected $p$-value set at .004). School counselors reported significantly more actual collaboration when assisting with transition ($t = 4.600, p < .004$), when involved in student scheduling ($t = 4.09, p < .004$), and when involved in counseling groups ($t = 6.70, p < .004$). School psychologists reported significantly more actual collaboration when engaging in completing assessments ($t = 6.61, p < .004$) and when reporting assessment results ($t = 6.89, p < .004$).

It should also be noted that there was no statistically significant difference for total desired collaboration ($t = -.877, p = .382$) between school counselors and school psychologists. However, two of the 12 specific desired collaboration items were statistically significant (Bonferroni corrected $p$-values < .004), both reflecting the desire of school psychologists to collaborate during assessment activities (engaging in assessment and reporting assessment results). Although school psychologists and school counselors are similar in their overall levels of actual and desired collaboration, it is clear that collaboration varies significantly between these groups depending on the specific activity. See Table 2 for all specific school counselor and school psychologist actual collaboration means and comparison data.
Table 2
*Means and t-tests for Counselor/Psychologist Actual Collaboration Comparisons.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Counselor Mean</th>
<th>Psychologist Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-referral intervention</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.926</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist with transition</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.60*</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior management</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional accommodations</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student scheduling</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.09*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service training</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen - colleague concerns</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo. instructional strategy</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment/Evaluation</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.61*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling groups</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>6.70*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher consultation</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting assess. results</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.89*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: A participant rating of 0 = Never; 1 = Once per year; 2 = Once per semester; 3 = Weekly; and 4 = Daily. N = 147.*

* *p < .004 (Bonferroni Corrected)*
Does professional experience make a difference in the amount of collaboration?

A one-way ANOVA was used to help determine the influence of years of experience on the total actual collaboration variable for the entire sample. Three experience categories were utilized: one to five years, six to 15 years, and 15 plus years of experience. The omnibus ANOVA statistic for this analysis was statistically significant ($F = 4.281, p = .016$) reflecting the overall importance of experience on the frequency of actual collaboration. The effect size (eta squared) was .057, suggesting that roughly 6% of the difference in total actual collaboration is due to years of experience. Furthermore, Bonferroni corrected post-hoc analyses resulted in one pairwise difference between the 15 plus years of experience group ($n = 29, m = 31.7$) and the 6-15 years of experience group ($n = 63, m = 26.9$) on total actual collaboration ($p = .012$). In further consideration of practical significance, these results suggested that each of these experience groups collaborated more than once per semester; however, those with 15 or more years of experience collaborated at a mean rate nearing weekly. The 15 plus group also engaged in significantly more collaboration than the 6-15 years group in three specific collaborative activities: demonstrating instructional strategies, pre-referral interventions, and school transition (all Bonferroni corrected $p$ values were $< .004$). In the latter two cases, the means for the more experienced group neared weekly, while the means for the less experience group were nearest once per semester. Interestingly, when considering the total levels of desired collaboration, an ANOVA for years of experience was not statistically significant ($F = 1.1, p = 3.36$). In comparison to the results related to actual collaboration, this finding suggested that this sample of mental health
professionals all had a strong and similar level of desire to collaborate, regardless of years of experience.

*Does gender make a difference in amount of actual and desired collaboration?*

Using the entire sample of both school counselors and school psychologists, two independent sample t-tests revealed statistically significant mean differences between males and females on both actual ($t = 3.152, p < .01$) and desired collaboration ($t = 3.044, p < .01$). As a group, the female participants ($n = 125$) reported engaging in actual collaboration at a rate between once per semester and weekly ($M = 29.3$), whereas the male participant mean was less than once per semester ($n = 20, M = 23.8$). Likewise, the female participants also reported a desire to collaborate ($m = 34.7$) significantly more than their male counterparts ($m = 30.1$). Interestingly, the male desire to collaborate level was very similar to the female actual level of collaboration.

*Does administrator encouragement influence actual collaboration?*

Respondents who were encouraged by their principal to collaborate ($n = 82$) reported significantly more total actual collaboration ($m = 30.4$) than those who were not encouraged ($n = 62, m = 25.9$) ($t = -3.533, p = .001$). Likewise, those who reported encouragement by administrators other than principals ($n = 67$) were significantly more likely to engage in collaboration ($m = 30.6$) relative to those who were not ($n = 77, m = 26.43$) ($t = -3.579, p < .001$). Administrator encouragement as a whole (principal or otherwise) resulted in collaboration between once per semester and weekly in this sample. In contrast, those who reported no administrator encouragement were collaborating nearest once per semester only.
How do other school characteristics impact collaboration?

The impact of several other demographic factors (school level, total number of students, and number of students receiving free lunch) was also analyzed using the entire sample ($N = 147$). However, none of the three ANOVA analyses that evaluated the impact of these factors on total actual or desired collaboration were statistically significant ($p > .05$ in all analyses).

Discussion

Researchers focused on collaboration, in areas other than education, have found that this process promoted professional efficacy, supported the achievement of organizational goals, and was vital in support of teaming (Bennis & Biederman, 1997; Friend, 2000). Meanwhile, educators continue to search for ways to deal with an increasing number of students with identifiable disabilities and mental health issues who are from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (Miller, 2002). It would seem that collaboration within schools would provide another opportunity to effectively and efficiently utilize professional resources while meeting the needs of students. However, there has been minimal evaluation of how collaboration is utilized within school systems, specifically between school counselors and school psychologists who are charged with providing support and promoting the success of students and other school professionals. This study was designed to explore current and desired collaborative practices.

The survey revealed that school counselors and school psychologists were engaging in collaboration at least once a semester at the time of the survey. However, it also showed that these professionals desired to engage in collaboration much more
often, nearly once a week. Upon closer examination of the twelve activity areas, respondents reported collaborating more often on teacher consultation and listening to colleagues, areas which would seem to lend themselves easily to collaboration. Interestingly, school counselors and school psychologists desired to collaborate more often, almost on a weekly basis, on pre-referral intervention and management strategies, as well as teacher consultation. This suggests that professionals not only want to increase the level of collaboration in areas in which they already practice, but that they would like to expand into new activities.

Examination of specific actual versus desired collaboration activities for school counselors and school psychologists revealed similar results. School counselors currently collaborated on counseling groups and school transitions, while school psychologists collaborated on assessment activities. These results suggested that professionals collaborate on activities most associated with their respective positions, but both groups reported a desire to collaborate more often and in more areas.

Given that collaboration does occur, and that school counselors and school psychologists wish to collaborate more often it was important to also investigate potential factors that might influence the amount of collaboration. Examination revealed three factors that proved to be statistically significant. First, male counselors and psychologists engaged in actual collaborative activities less than once a semester, while female counselors and psychologists collaborated many times per semester. Female professionals also reported a significantly stronger desire to collaborate when compared to male professionals. However, attempting to explain the unequal contributions of males and females suffers from the same limitations as other arguments concerning
gender differences, including how learned behavior and cultural norms are developed (Stoller, 2002).

Second, school professionals with at least fifteen years of experience were more likely to engage in actual collaboration, especially in the following three areas: (a) pre-referral interventions, (b) school transition, and (c) demonstration of instructional strategies. This suggests that school counselors and school psychologists who have the most experience doing their jobs have discovered specific areas in which to effectively collaborate, and do so.

Finally, school professionals who received support from their principals engaged in significantly more actual collaboration. Likewise, the level of collaboration was similarly strong among those who received support from any school administrator. Both groups engaged in collaborative activities much more than once a semester, compared to those without support or encouragement who reported collaborating about once a semester.

Implications for Counselors

Two encouraging results from this research for school counselors are (a) collaboration between school counselors and other professionals is already occurring in school settings on a regular basis, and (b) school counselors would like to collaborate more often. The question is how counselors become more than once a semester collaborators? First, they need to identify the areas in which they are currently, actively collaborating. Once these activities have been identified, the school counselor can begin to evaluate how to increase their current level of collaboration and explore other collaborative opportunities. Second, it appears that seeking out experienced and skilled
collaborators in the school setting is one way to gain helpful modeling and feedback about collaborative processes. The results here suggest that female educators with 15 or more years of experience may be more able to be helpful in this regard. Finally, seek out the support of administrators. Principals and other administrators are important stake-holders for promoting collaborative models and techniques in schools. By implementing these strategies, school counselors can move from once a semester collaborators to once a week collaborators.

Limitations

Some limitations exist in this study. School counselors and school psychologists in six school districts were surveyed. Although a high percentage of the professionals in these districts responded, the results do not provide a representative view of all school counselors and school psychologists. While the sample in the current study included a helpful range of participants, further investigation in additional areas of the country is warranted. In addition, based on the literature review (Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Meyers, Meyers, & Grogg, 2004) as well as direct experiences in the six districts, assumptions that were consistent with traditional roles of school counselors and school psychologists were made. However, actual role differences within and between the school districts may have existed and represent a potential confound to results. Since the study was done only in the southeast, geographical representation was also limited. Additional study across regions would add to present results.

The current survey was based on a self-report instrument created by Staton and Gilligan (2003) to examine perceptions of collaboration among school professionals. The reliability and validity of the underlying instrument has not been fully explored and
technical characteristics of the current survey instrument are also preliminary. In addition, altering the survey by adding more frequency options (e.g., every two weeks, monthly, etc.) on the rating scale would assist in more accurately reflecting actual activities in which these professionals engage. This design limitation obviously impacts mean scores obtained for frequency of actual versus desired collaborative activities.

Finally, conclusions about influence of administrative support should be viewed as preliminary. While results suggest that level of administrative support contributes to the frequency of collaboration, the practical significance of these results should not be overstated given that additional information was not obtained about ways in which administrative support was or was not provided. Further study of the impact of this variable, particularly related to specific types of support, would be beneficial for facilitation of the collaborative process in school settings.

**Future Research**

Since very limited study about collaborative activities between school counselors and school psychologists has been undertaken, additional investigations would potentially elucidate factors that facilitate or impede the process. With recent legislative requirements, school counselors and school psychologists will likely be called upon to collaborate more frequently and on a greater variety of issues. Investigations that focus on the identification of factors that contribute to collaborative efficiency are necessary for providing direction for professionals currently in these roles. Likewise, research focused on the relative contributions of various collaborative training components would support the development of greater expertise and subsequent broadening of the roles of both school counselors and school psychologists.
References


### School Collaboration Survey

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Once per semester</th>
<th>Once per year</th>
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<td>Develop pre-referral intervention strategies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Assist with school transition</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher consultation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report assessment results</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you encouraged to collaborate with school psychologists by your principal?
- Yes
- No

Are you encouraged to collaborate with school psychologists by your administrators other than the Principal?
- Yes
- No
Appendix

School Collaboration Survey

Number of teachers in your primary site
  - 1-20
  - 21-40
  - More than 41

Number of students in your primary site
  - 1-100
  - 101-300
  - More than 300

Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch
  - 1% to 20%
  - 21% to 40%
  - 40% to 60%
  - More than 60%

Number of years working in primary site
  - 1 to 5
  - 6 to 15
  - More than 15

Gender
  - Female
  - Male

School setting you primarily work in
  - Elementary
  - Middle School/Junior High
  - High School