ABSTRACT
            This paper is concerned with making current research
in guidance more viable. Two suggestions are proposed: (1) there is a
need to police manuscripts submitted to professional research
journals for relevance and practicality; and (2) there is a need to
involve school personnel, the practitioners in the field, in the
planning, design, and conduct of viable research studies. Several
impediments to this goal are noted, e.g., little internal and
external pressure to change the status quo; the paucity of theories
of organizations and of guidance mitigates against the building of a
sound base for generating research; and organizational psychologists
have not been much more successful in solving similar problems in
their own field. Yet, the author is hopeful that a systems approach
to research will serve to alter present priorities by: (1) mandating
the necessity for a team effort; (2) maximizing the likelihood of
producing usable results; (3) creating order among present diverse
functions; (4) seeking ways to maximize benefits and minimize costs;
and (5) by compelling guidance workers to operationalize their
thinking and actions. Difficulties include prohibitive initial costs
and systematizing the process and outcomes, a de-humanizing procedure
in itself. (Author/TA)

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ABSTRACT

Impediments to guidance research in the school setting
are identified and considered. Changes in the practitioners
role and function and the press for accountability are seen
as influencing the direction and urgency of our research
commitments. The trend toward a more integrative and opera-
tional approach to research is cited and its merits and hazards
discussed.

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RESEARCH IN GUIDANCE-SOME CURRENT ISSUES*

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PROBLEMS

The survey and descriptive studies which continue to character-
ize the field, possess a very limited kind of usefulness. The
difficulty with such studies is that they yield no information about
cause and effect relationships, and fail totally to assess the
quality or effectiveness of our services and programs.

This is illustrated best perhaps by a survey conducted by a
former colleague of mine who ran a series of group counseling sessions
for volunteering college freshmen who were on academic probation.
Following completion of the sessions, my colleague reported that all
(20 or so) of the participants were removed from academic probation.
The attrition (flunk out) rate for those who failed to attend his
sessions was in the order of 90%. My colleague was well aware of
the meaninglessness of this statistic and despite efforts to convince
his faculty colleagues otherwise, they came to regard him with a kind
of awesome respect he never had before.

The point to this little anecdote is that it would appear that
we are destined to be plagued with statistical nonsense of this kind
for some time to come. Counselors find such studies easy to do, and
the naive consumer continues to be impressed with such data (e.g.,
number of college placements, local test norms, counselor : counselee
ratios, number of counselees seen, kinds and quantities of standard-
ized tests on file, etc.).

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Convention, March 1971, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The more formal studies employing statistical analysis of data and experimental control-group designs possess an aura of respectability, especially if they're published, but appearances can be deceiving. Thorensen (1969) in an intriguing review of the status of research in the guidance and counseling literature says, "Most published research is a waste - a waste of valuable time and resources. The simple fact is that most studies as they are conceptualized, designed, executed and analyzed, make no difference to counseling theory and practice" (P. 263). Hosford & Briskin (1969) in a recent and exhaustive review of research in counseling, point to the irrelevancy of such studies for practice and conclude that "It may still be hard to refute Stefflre's (1963) contention that counselors might learn more about helping adolescents from reading Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye than from reading the latest counseling journals" (P. 203).

Published studies serve the needs of the author for recognition and status which is largely a function of the fact that such studies are conducted almost exclusively by university and college affiliated investigators. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the results of their efforts have little relevance for the elementary or secondary school counselor or guidance administrator who is "out there where the action is."

SOLUTIONS

If research is going to be more viable, then at least two things will need to happen: the editorial boards of our professional research journals will need to do a better job of policing manuscripts, accepting only those articles which meet stringent criteria of

relevance and practicality; ways and means must be found for involving school personnel, practitioners-in-the field, in the planning, design and conduct of viable research studies. An elaboration of this latter point is warranted.

Staying loose: Thorensen (1969) underscores the need for "discipl inquiry" in research, that is, rigorously and systematically asking insolent but important questions before beginning and after completing the study. Too often, the formal aspects of the study receive all of our attention and our thinking becomes sterile and routinized as a consequence. Thorensen's notion is laudable but despite his intention is unnecessarily restrictive. One may argue for the need of a prior step, "undisciplined inquiry," i.e., training ourselves to become aware of the hunches we carry around in our heads, of verbalizing or rapping informally about them with our students and peers, then casual impetuously, putting them to the empirical test. An incident drawn from the personal experience of the author may be helpful in demonstra ting the importance of this preliminary step.

> I'm reminded of the time when as a full-time counselor in
> a junior college, I was reviewing the end-of-year records
> of my 200 or so assigned counselees. Approximately thirty
> of them had not been in to see me all year. On impulse, I
> recorded their names and took them with me to my weekly
> faculty team meeting. As counselor, I was assigned to a
> faculty team comprised of five instructors, each of whom
> had responsibility for one of the five courses offered as
> part of a general education core and all of whom had the same
> students in common. This arrangement enabled us to come to
> know our students quite intimately. I asked the team, with-
> out suggesting why, if they would be willing to free associate
> about each of the names on my list. They consented and I
> proceeded to record their succinct remarks on my sheet.
> Later I reviewed their comments and it struck me that they
> fell clearly into one of two categories: one having to do
> with social reticence, e.g., "he's quiet," "never speaks in
> class," "shy," "seems frightened," "I don't know who that is,"
> etc., and the other with a motivational deficit of some kind,

e.g., "he's indifferent," "good-time Charlie," "cuts fre-
quently," "never gets his work in on time," etc. I then
decided to follow-up on my discovery by personally inviting
each of my thirty recalcitrant clients to a group rapping
session - hoping they would give expression to their
perceptions of the guidance program and other concerns they
had. In one sense, the group meeting was a disappointment,
in another, it was a revelation: those who fell in the
motivational deficit category failed to come, and those who
fell in my social reticence category came but didn't say
anything!! In effect, the group experience served as an
informal cross-validation of my previous and very tenuous
finding. My initially spontaneous hunch that there was
something quite unique about this sub-group and that the
very people who needed our services the most, were the least
likely to seek them out, led me to my cursory and whimsical
exploration of this feeling. Eventually, I pursued this
finding in a more systematic and formal way, conducting and
publishing a study (Brown & Calia, 1968) which helped inch us
along in our understanding of how we as practitioners, can
be more approachable and effective in reaching recalcitrant
clients.

Broadening our base: As our role and function change, and change

it must, our research activities will become more interesting and vital.

This writer forecasts a trend, for example, in which counselors will

continue to work primarily with youngsters in dyadic and small group

relationships, while the guidance administrator will be committed

increasingly to more systems (i.e., inter-school and school community)

oriented interventions, working essentially as a human relations con-

sultant with emphasis on team-building and organizational development

efforts and third-party consultations. As a system-based, roaming

consultant, the guidance administrator should be capable of coping with

the interpersonal difficulties which plague the schools, viz., admini-

stration - teacher - parent - pupil relationships including racial

dissension or dissension among any social unit in the school or system

where the need for collaboration is essential.

As the guidance administrator expands the limits of his role and

ense of community, his research responsibilities must change accordingly

To be successful in this laboratory of community research, says
Gellat (1968) the guidance administrator must develop new "security
operations. He must give up much that he has come to value; the
privacy of his office, the rigor of the laboratory, the publication
criterion, and the protection of a defined role" (P. 145).

As the complexity of our responsibilities change (grow), it is
increasingly evident that researching guidance means examining data
involving human behavior, structure, technology and the context of
the setting in which the program resides.   The dynamic and interacting
nature of these variables make difficult the identification of cause
and effect connections.   Isolating such variables for intensive study
has proved counter-productive.

<div align="center">OBSTACLES</div>

Some impediments to guidance research include the following:
(i) Until recently there has been little internal and external pressure
to change the status quo; (2) establishing control groups in the
schools is exceedingly difficult because the pressure is always "on"
to have everyone share in the "benefits of the treatment experience";
(3) the experts-the organizational psychologists have not been much
more successful in solving similar problems in their own field;
(4) the paucity of theories of organizations and of guidance mitigates
against the building of a sound base for generating research; (5) the
very act of researching a program changes its essence and hence
confounds the process and the results.

TECHNOCRACY POINTS THE WAY

The trend toward "accountability" and performance contracting
may serve to alter the guidance workers priorities. A development
which could give some impetus to this change is a total impact (systems)
approach to research, i. e., explicate goals, procedures, relevant
variables and an integrating model, and apply model and assess outcomes.
Cooley and Hummel (1969), Thorenson (1968) and Tiedeman (1968) discuss
the intricacies and merits of this model and foresee its increased
application in the school setting. Some of the niceties of such a
scheme (systems approach) are that it (1) mandates the necessity for
a team effort and avoids the pitfalls of isolated studies conducted by
independent investigators; (2) maximizes the likelihood of producing
results which are practical (usable); (3) helps create order among the
diverse functions labeled "guidance"; (4) constantly seeks to find ways
to maximize benefits and minimize costs; (5) compels us to operation-
alize our thinking and actions.

Some of the difficulties it presents are (1) initial costs of
establishing such a scheme in the school are prohibitive without funding
of some kind; (2) the focus of current projects have been restricted
almost exclusively to career data-dissemination and the development
of strategies for career decision-making; (3) that it makes the implicit
assumption that man is essentially a cognitive-rational being--an old
Parsonian notion which has been quite widely disclaimed and (4) system-
atizing the process and outcomes may ultimately be self-defeating since
the very process of operationalizing such phenomena has the effect of

diminishing the humanistic essence of our services as well as the
life choices and actions of our clients.

Our task in the future as "facilitators of human potential" will
be to insure optimum utilization of the benefits of our technocratic
society while safeguarding those qualities which make us unpredictably,
interestingly, feelingly, infuriatingly, implausibly, irreplaceably,
pricelessly human.

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