Parent Expectations of an Elementary School Counsellor: A Concept-Mapping Approach

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Abstract

A concept-mapping process was used to understand parental expectations of an elementary school counsellor's role. The 25 parents who participated generated 91 statements that were subsequently sorted by each parent and analyzed to develop a seven-theme conceptualization of parental expectations. Parents requested that the counsellor become highly involved in providing services that involve support, referral, education, and information. In addition to perceiving the counsellor as a provider of direct counselling services, parents expected that the school counsellor would collaborate extensively with them. Additional expectations include developmental programming for all children in the school and services involving teacher consultation, special needs programming, and community liaison.

Résumé

On a utilisé un réseau cognitif des concepts pour comprendre ce à quoi s'attendent les parents du rôle de conseiller d'orientation à l'école élémentaire. Les 25 parents qui ont participé à cette étude ont produit 91 énoncés, qui ont ensuite été classés par chaque parent et analysés. Il en a résulté une conceptualisation constituée de sept thèmes décrivant les attentes des parents. Les parents ont demandé que le conseiller s'implique à fournir des services liés au soutien, à l'envoi à d'autres professionnels, à l'éducation et à l'information. En plus de percevoir le conseiller en tant que pourvoyeur de services de counseling directs, les parents comptent que le conseiller d'orientation collabore beaucoup avec eux. D'autres attentes comprennent l'élaboration de programmes pour tous les enfants de l'école au niveau de développement approprié et des services ayant trait à la consultation avec les professeurs, la programmation pour enfants ayant des difficultés d'apprentissage, et la liaison avec la communauté.

The advent of site-based budgeting and the demand for heightened accountability in school systems challenges the elementary school counsellor to create a role definition that incorporates the needs of an important group of stakeholders: the parents. Helms and Ibrahim (1985) concluded that "counsellors in the school system need to seek input from their constituents as to high-priority functions" (p. 273). As counsellors' priorities may fail to match the expectations of parents, it is critical that school counsellors demonstrate that counselling programs have a positive impact on children and their development. Unfortunately, counsellors have been criticized for their inability to communicate what they do and its impact on children in schools (O'Bryant, 1990; Synder & Daly, 1993).

In a desire to clarify the role of a counsellor as perceived by the parents in an Edmonton elementary school, a needs assessment of parents was undertaken using a method called concept-mapping. Specifically, the goal of this study was to develop an understanding of parents' expecta-

tions for an elementary school counsellor and to create a conceptual understanding of these expectations. An additional purpose was to discern the relative support for each of the identified tasks to be included in the counsellor's role.

Current role expectations of elementary counsellors suggest the need to focus activities on involving the most significant adults in the child's life (Holmgren, 1996). In light of new education policies, parents are becoming increasingly involved in establishing school priorities and participating in program planning. Indeed, in some provinces parent involvement in school decision-making is being mandated through parent advisory councils (Alberta Education, 1995). A second consideration is the growing desire of parents for all children to benefit from counselling programs. Research in this area shows strong support for elementary counsellors who provide school-wide interventions with preventive and educational components (Borders & Drury, 1992; Hardesty & Dillard, 1994; Miller, 1989). By expanding the counsellor's knowledge of parents conceptions of the counselling service, counsellors can respond more appropriately to the specific needs of elementary school children.

Although inclusion of parents' perceptions in the development of counselling programs is essential, it remains a largely untapped element in the development of the counsellor role. In a state-wide survey ofthe Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program, Hughey, Gysbers, and Starr (1993) reported that more than 80% of parents responding to the survey had visited a high school counsellor during the school year. In synthesizing 30 years of professional literature on school counselling, Borders and Drury (1992) contended that special effort should be given to increasing parents' involvement in the development of the counselling program because parents continue to be the single strongest influence on their children.

Counsellor Roles

Counsellors have multiple roles and perform a wide variety of tasks in a school. Traditionally these roles have been defined by the profession, with many of the tasks being assigned by school administration (Gysbers & Henderson, 1988). Political, social, and economic forces are also creating pressure for counsellors to change both their role and the delivery of services. In addition, the effectiveness of existing counselling services is rarely demonstrated and communicated to the community even when such programs have a significant impact on the academic and social development of the child (Borders & Drury, 1992: Gysbers, Hughey, Starr, & Lapan, 1992; Schrader, 1989).

Counselling, consulting, and coordinating roles have been identified as the major roles of school counsellors (Hardesty & Dillard, 1994: Pardeck & Pardeck, 1989). However, the emphasis and priority of these

roles have been shifting from direct service provider to one of linking needs and resources with coordinating and consulting as the central functions (Carroll, 1993; Paterson & Janzen, 1993; Welch & McCarroll, 1993). A change toward more indirect services means the counsellor must make a conceptual shift from a closed-systems model to an open-systems model (Welch & McCarroll, 1993). Movement toward an open-community-systems approach means more emphasis on collaborative approaches and the need to deliver services to groups rather than to individuals.

Needs Assessment

Students, parents, and school staff often have widely differing perceptions of why a counsellor is needed and of what tasks they should perform. Increasingly, school counsellors are becoming interested in assessments that identify the needs of parents, teachers, students, and administrators (Fairchild, 1993; Fairchild & Seeley, 1995). The results of such assessments provide the basis for developing an expanded counsellor role in a comprehensive guidance program models such those as outlined by Gysbers and Henderson (1988) and establishing effective methods of achieving counsellor accountability (Borders & Drury, 1992; Myrick, 1989).

The initial stages of understanding and delineating school community expectations usually begin with a needs assessment. Characteristically, when attempting to determine the needs of the school community, counsellors have used questionnaires that ask the participants to rate a predetermined set of tasks. The information possessed by the researcher limits both the scope of the questions and the participants' responses. If open-ended questions are asked and written responses are requested, respondents are reluctant to give detailed answers.

Concept-mapping was chosen as an alternate needs assessment tool in an attempt to develop a comprehensive information base that considers the expectations of the major stakeholders. One of the most important aspects of concept-mapping is that the process is participant-oriented. It allows for the clustering of qualitative data into underlying themes as they are reported by participants rather than as defined by the organization or researchers (Daughtry & Kunkel, 1993; Kunkel 1991; Trochim, 1993). This helps to reduce the limitations imposed on data collection by predetermined questionaires and open-ended questions.

As counsellors change their delivery of services, the need for additional management and administrative skills increases. Typically, counsellors have paid little attention to the management aspect of delivering counselling programs (Carroll, 1993). A recent study that identified 80 counsellor tasks in Alberta schools made no direct mention of needs assessment, program planning, or accountability functions (Calder &

Chorney, 1995), even though these are essential characteristics of an effectively administered counselling program. Also, understanding the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents of the school counsellor role could provide the basis for establishing measures of systematic accountability (Hughey, Gysbers, & Starr, 1993). Despite agreement in the literature of the importance of establishing accountability, the prevailing reasons cited among practitioners for not doing so are a of lack of familiarity with methods or an overwhelming caseload (Fairchild, 1993).

It is evident that the roles and functions of an elementary school counsellor are changing and that they are dramatically affected by the way in which tasks are perceived. It is crucial to find effective and time-efficient methods that assess the expectations of the parents and immediate community and that can be easily used by counsellors. Given the increasing importance of the parents involvement in school program planning, and the scarcity of empirical research identifying perceptions of school counselllor's role as it is conceived by parents, this study seeks to add to our understanding of parents' expectations for the elementary school counsellor.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Concept-Mapping

Concept-mapping is a relatively new methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative research strategies and actively involves research participants in generating items and gathering data (Daughtry & Kunkel, 1993; Trochim, 1989). Concept-mapping permits a group to create thematic representations of ideas and goals. In organizations it can be a useful tool for assessing expectations and delineating organizational goals. When the raw information is collected, concept-mapping allows for analyses of the information using a set of statistical methods that groups qualitative data into underlying themes as they are reported by the participants. Consequently, this approach permits a careful evaluation of the participants' perspectives regarding specific issues, goals, and expectations.

In addition, because the data are sorted by each member in the group, the potential for bias is reduced as compared with qualitative data that is sorted into themes by one or two investigators. Bias is further reduced because the analysis of card-sort groupings is not conducted by the group leaders using their own subjective interpretation, but rather accomplished through objective statistical analysis of the groupings, which are determined by the participants. This has the advantage of making it unnecessary for either the respondents or the researchers to specify any of the dimensions or attributes when sorting the data. Finally, when completed, the themes have practical utility as they suggest statistically

the organized principles implicit in participants' sorting (Daughtry & Kunkel, 1993).

This study uses concept-mapping methodology to identify parents' perception of counsellor roles and to determine the underlying themes within which these roles can be categorized. By gathering information based on parents' perceptions, the thematic analysis should, therefore, be sensitized to the local needs of the school community. Also, large amounts of information were sorted into related themes in an objective way by allowing parents to provide direct input without the constraints of preconceived notions. In addition, experimenter bias is reduced by having many parents sort the themes rather than relying solely on the researchers.

Stages of Developing Concept Maps

Trochim (1993) outlined in his computer program manual the six specific steps that are involved in the development of concept maps: (a) preparation, which includes the selection of participants and development of focus for the conceptualization; (b) the generation of statements; (c) the structuring of statements; (d) the mapping of statements in thematic form ; (e) the interpretation of the data; and (f) the use of the themes to guide planning and evaluation.

Preparation

Before the concept-mapping process is begun, two preparatory steps are necessary: choosing the participants and deciding on the specific focus for the conceptualization. Although Trochim (1993) did not establish a minimum number of participants, on the basis of his own research he suggested a group of 20 to 30 people would provide a valid sorting of the data. The question to elicit information needs to be worded clearly, simply, and with a single focus in order to avoid confusion.

Generation

Once the focus has been established and the participants chosen, the concept-mapping process begins with the generation of a set of statements based on participants' perceptions of the question. The goal is to generate a set of statements that represent the entire conceptual domain for the topic of study. The statements themselves can be generated through a brainstorming process whereby the participants state their opinions on the question. The statements from all participants are collected, combined, and edited to remove redundancies (Trochim, 1993).

Structuring

A card-sorting procedure is conducted on the edited list of statements in order to identify interrelationships between statements. For the sorting task, each statement is printed on a separate card or paper. A further advantage of the sorting procedure is that it is easily understandable by participants and takes relatively little time to accomplish. The different grouped statements are then collected from the participants to begin the data analysis.

Mapping

The statistical procedures involved in the representation of the statements requires several steps. First, the results of the sort for each person are placed in a binary similarity matrix. Second, the individual sort matrices are added together to obtain a combined group similarity matrix that has as many rows and columns as there are statements. This final similarity matrix is considered the relational structure of the conceptual domain because it provides information about how the participants grouped the statements (Trochim, 1989). The matrix is a method of tabulating how all the participants sorted each item with all other items.

Multidimensional scaling techniques are then applied to the similarity matrix using a nonmetric two-dimensional solution. The statistical technique of multidimensional scaling is performed on the card-sort data to suggest statistically the organizational principles implicit in the participants' sorting (Trochim, 1993). Statements that are closer to each other are likely to have been sorted together more frequently.

Finally, the statements are grouped or partitioned into clusters or themes that represent conceptual groupings of the original set of statements by means of cluster analysis. Cluster analysis is used to identify conceptually similar groups of sorted items. These analyses identify the common categories that emerge from the group as a whole.

Interpretation

Interpreting involves the inspection of each group of statements or themes. Each theme grouping is given a title that seems to describe its contents. This identification process can be completed by the original sorters or by the investigators (Trochim, 1989). Clusters of statements that are closer together should be more similar conceptually than clusters that are in different thematic groupings. This final result provides a concise, simplified summary of the conceptualization of the group participants.

Use of the Themes

The results of the concept-mapping process can then be used to develop organizational plans, to understand group expectations, and to establish outcome measures for programs. In addition, Trochim (1993) stated that each category or grouping can be viewed as a measurement construct and can be used to provide direction for future research. As a result, the concept-mapping process can be used effectively for needs assessment and development of psychological constructs.

Selection of Participants

All 25 participants (16 female, 9 male) were parents or guardians of children enrolled in the same medium-sized K-6 elementary school (331 students) who volunteered to participate in generating information for the study. Each grade level was represented by at least two parents. The school is located in a large suburban area with a population of mixed socioeconomic status. Parental involvment was solicited through a letter sent home with each child in the school and by room representatives from the Parent Advisory Council telephoning all parents. Parents were invited to participate in a meeting to help gain an understanding of how best to serve the needs of their children through the school counsellor.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected at a two-hour meeting of parents that was specifically designed to use small-group processes to generate task statements, groupings, and priority ratings.

Step 1. In response to the question "What do parents expect an elementary counsellor to do?" the parents were asked to brainstorm ideas in small groups using cooperative learning strategies.

Step 2. As the task statements were generated, they were edited for obvious duplicates and then typed to create a complete set of statements. During the coffee break, lists of all 91 statements were printed and cut up into individual task statements.

Step 3. In the second part of the meeting, each participant was given an envelope containing a complete set of 91 statements and asked to sort them into piles that made sense to them. The only restrictions placed on the sorting were that (a) each statement could be placed only in one pile, (b) more than one pile needed to be created, and (c) some items must be sorted together, although some items could be sorted into their own pile (Trochim, 1993). When participants saw that several sort possibilities existed, they were instructed to select the arrangement that seemed most sensible to them.

Step 4. The 91 task statements were compiled into a questionnaire format with an equidistant Likert rating scale ranging from *strongly opposed* (1) *to strongly in favour* (5). Participants were asked to rate all of the task statements. The rating instructions were: circle the appropriate number to indicate whether the elementary school counsellor should be involved in this task. The questionnaires were completed by all parents at the meeting.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis of the data involves a two-step process: (a) a nonmetric multidimensional scaling procedure (MDS) is performed, and (b) a hierarchical cluster analysis is used to sort items into consistent clusters representing similar concepts. MDS is a term that refers to a "a set of procedures that can be used to represent spatially the interrelationships among a set of objects" (Fitzgerald & Hubert, 1987, p. 469). Through the MDS analysis each statement is located on a point map. Statements that are closer to each other on the map are sorted together more frequently, and conversely, statements that are rarely sorted together are more distant on the map. In the second stage of the analysis the individual statements were grouped together into distinct themes that represented similar concepts through the cluster analysis as presented by Trochim (1989).

In conjunction with the thematic analysis, mean ratings of all 91 task statements were computed to assess the relative support for each task in the parents' expectations of the elementary school counsellor role. Because the data analysis was completed several weeks after the evening meeting and the parent group was unavailable, the name of each theme was assigned by the researchers based on the content of the items contained in each thematic grouping.

Using the multidimensional scaling (MDS) procedure within the concept mapping program produces a stress value that is an overall index of the stability of the MDS solution and ranges from zero (perfectly stable) to one (perfectly unstable). According to Trochim (1989) a value of less than .30 represents a stable MDS solution whereas a stress value over .40 indicates data that are not consistently sorted into any thematic way. The analysis of this data resulted in a final stress value of .29 indicating a consistent and stable sorting for this set of data.

RESULTS

Multidimensional Scaling and Bridging Values

Additional analysis with the concept-mapping procedure generates bridging values for each of the seven thematic clusters. Bridging values represents how frequently each item is sorted with the other items in that

cluster. A low bridging value means "that the statements in that cluster were more frequently sorted with statements within the cluster than with statements in other clusters" (Trochim, 1993, p. 123). The bridging index (BI) ranges in value from 0 (low) to 1 (high) where lower values mean that the clusters are more likely to have statements that make sense together, and consequently are placed closer to each other on the concept map.   .

An inspection of the bridging values indicates that providing a communications link between school and community (BI=.21), delivery of consulting to teachers (BI=.31), developmental programs (BI=.32), and special needs programming (BI=.32) were the clusters with the lowest bridging values. These appear to represent discrete programming areas for the school counsellor. Two clusters, counselling services (BI=.47) and information resources (BI=.51), contain bridging values in the middle range, which suggests tasks and roles that were frequently sorted in other clusters. As these two clusters involve many communication and information activities, it is understandable how these items could be included in other groupings. The conflict resolution cluster (BI=.70) has the highest bridging value, which signifies that the items in this cluster were most frequently sorted in several other clusters, suggesting that the sorters often considered these theme items to be related to the other themes. In effect, a cluster with a high bridging value reflects concepts that link adjacent themes conceptually.

Thematic Clusters

The culmination of the concept-mapping process is a set of thematic groupings as shown in Table 1, which represents the conceptual framework of parents' expectations of an elementary school counsellor. An examination of the concept solution shows how the seven themes are related conceptually, whereas the items that constitute the various roles and tasks in each theme are detailed in Table 1. The mean rating of each item indicates the relative importance of that task in the theme. The higher the mean score, the more support the parents had for a particular task to be a part of the counsellor's role.

A seven-concept solution was chosen as being the most conceptually clear in understanding the expectations of the parents and in identifying the meaningful components of an elementary school counsellor's role. This concept solution is based on the operative principle that to maintain the integrity of the MDS results, one must a choose a clustering solution that partitions the items into groupings that do not overlap in multi-dimensional space (Trochim, 1989).

Information resource occupies the central location on the map. An inspection of the items in this theme suggest that counsellor activities

TABLE 1

*Themes and Items from Parents' Concept Map of
an Elementary School Counsellor*

Themes and Items	M^a	Themes and Items	M^a
1. Information Resource		**3. Consultant to Teachers** (cont'd)	
Be able to refer parents to appropriate sources	4.88	Be a resource to teachers when dealing with parents	4.28
Work with teacher/student/ parent team to solve problems	4.84	Monitor home situations for problems	4.12
Communicate among students, parents, and teachers	4.76	Be a sounding board for teachers	4.08
Share information obtained at workshops	4.52	Help teachers deal with problem parents	4.04
Participate in school functions	4.40	Identify home problems and suggest things teacher can do	4.04
Deal with conflicts among students from different schools	4.20	Help the teachers in creating new activities	3.84
Transfer information from other schools	3.76	Be a resource for teacher education	3.76
2. Conflict Resolution		Recommend new teaching methods	3.64
Parents should be informed any time a child is having a problem	4.88	Create weekly meetings with teachers regarding students	3.32
Tell parents who counsellor is	4.64	Substitute for teachers or help out in the class	3.12
Assist in conflict resolution	4.60	**4. Communication Link**	
Act as a mediator between students, teachers, and parents	4.52	Know what resources are available	4.84
Help develop guidelines for discipline policy	4.44	Be aware of referral agencies	4.80
Serve as a mediator in parent/ school conflict	4.44	Being aware of the problems in the community	4.52
Be more proactive by being more involved in the classroom	4.24	Know the needs of the school community	4.44
3. Consultant to Teachers		Know what resources the school needs	4.24
Offer suggestions for dealing with problems	4.80	Bring community members into the school to address students	4.12
Communicate openly with teachers	4.72	Bring in community professionals when needed	4.08
Give teachers ideas how to handle problems in the class room	4.72	Partnership with local police	3.80
Correspond with teachers about student behaviour	4.52	How to get students involved in the community	3.76
Teach teachers how to identify special needs children	4.44	Be the key communication link for the school	3.64
Inform teachers on how to recognize learning problems	4.40	Work with church in workshops or community league	3.64
Act as a mediator with parent/ teacher and student/teacher	4.40	Encourage volunteer relationships and create partnerships	3.64
Suggest alternative forms of discipline for teachers	4.36	Hold or suggest workshops at the community league level	3.40
		Form a community activity that involves school children	3.32

TABLE 1 (cont'd)
Themes and Items from Parents' Concept Map of an Elementary School Counsellor

Themes and Items	M^a	Themes and Items	M^a
4. Communication Link (cont'd)		**6. Special Needs Programming** (cont'd)	
Solicit local business support for student recognition	3.16	Testing and screening	4.36
		Identify children who are bright or over-achievers	4.36
5. Counselling Services		Track potential problems	4.32
Inform parents when counselling occurs	4.80	Help gifted students	4.28
Coordinate with parents regarding problem issues	4.76	Test children for learning disabilities	4.20
Involved with parents when there is testing to be done	4.76	Develop programs for students who require extra help	4.16
Communicate with parents discreetly	4.68	**7. Developmental Programs**	
Be open to parental involvement/ suggestions	4.60	Be accessible for students and parents	4.96
Act as a general resource for information	4.52	Be a support resource for all students	4.88
Teach social skills between parents and students	4.46	Guiding students to have self-worth and self-respect	4.84
Career and academic counselling	4.36	Teach children anger management skills	4.84
Help counsel parents on junior high schools	4.28	Teach students how to handle peer pressure	4.80
Information for parents about school choices	4.24	Teaching children coping skills	4.76
Give parents information on tutoring	4.20	Let children know that he is their friend	4.72
Resource person for parenting	4.16	Explain the counsellor role to students	4.72
Help parents learn to listen openly to students	4.04	Be able to recognize a small problem before it becomes bigger	4.56
Educate parents about the child's subculture	3.80	Making students aware of individual differences	4.52
Parenting courses	3.68	Have suggestion box for student input	4.48
Home visits	2.68	Advocate for students	4.44
6. Special Needs Programming		Ensure full integration of new students	4.24
Counsel in areas of concern	4.88	Help children set up proper study skills	4.20
Identify learning problems	4.72	Teaching learning techniques for students	4.00
Be able to identify problem kids	4.72	Be an impeccable role model to children	3.44
Be able to recognize behaviour symptoms related to abuse	4.68		
Identify reasons for misbehaviour	4.64		
Readiness for Grade 7	4.44		

Note: [a] Participants rated each item according to its importance in their expectations of what a counsellor should do, using a 5-point equidistant Likert Scale ranging from strongly opposed (1) to strongly in favor (5).

such as referral, communication, and mediation are key, or central to the parents' expectations of the school counsellor. The remaining six thematic clusters are located around the central theme like spokes on a wheel. They start with *conflict resolution,* then with *consultant to teacher* adjacent, followed by *communication link, counselling services, special needs programming,* and *developmental programs* to complete the circle. As the location of the themes on the map is entirely determined by the sorting of the statements and not their ratings (Trochim, 1993), each of the thematic groupings provides information on how parents perceive the counsellor's role and what can be considered as essential to parents in the provision of counselling services.

DISCUSSION

Parent Conceptualizations

Parents want the school counsellor to be highly active in communicating and providing services that involve support, education, referral, and information. In addition, parents perceive that the counsellor should have extensive involvement in mediation and conflict resolution among teachers, students, and parents. Usually this has not been a role for counsellors. Parents' expectation of a counsellor as both a consultant and a communicator stress the critical need for bringing together school personnel and parents to resolve student concerns rather than for the counsellor to work in isolation.

An examination of the themes demonstrates a high demand for the provision of services through consultation and coordination that moves the counsellor away from providing direct services. These collaborative functions imply an emphasis on the family, the school, and the community as a collective resource for children that the counsellor should access.

Although parents did not diminish the roles of counselling and crisis intervention, they did expect time to be incorporated into the counselling program for all children. Developmental programming that meets the needs of all children was strongly supported. Although direct counselling of children with personal and academic problems was expected by parents, they were clear in their desire for many services to enhance the development of all students in the school.

Considerable emphasis was placed on the counsellor tasks that included consultation with and assistance to classroom teachers. Parents conceived the identification and provision of programming services to children with special needs as one of the major functions of the elementary school counsellor. A large number of task statements also refer to the need for information and referral to community agencies. In many of the tasks described parents emphasized the need for the counsellor to be a

member of the school team who facilitated learning and acted as a resource person for the staff. Although counselling remains essential, services such as communicating, consulting, and community liaison were highly emphasized.

The participants demonstrated that they were well informed and able to provide valuable information about how best to serve the needs of their children. In their discussion on the future of role of school counsellors, Welch and McCarroll (1993) predicted that "The counsellor in the schools of the future may well be a community resource specialist." These sentiments are strongly reflected in the expectations expressed by the parents in this study. The data gathered from this project suggest that a primary function of the elementary counsellor will be as a specialist who facilitates communication and consultation among the key stakeholders in the child's learning and development.

Implications

It is evident that before school counsellors implement a change in their roles, they need to reassess the needs of the community and to develop a plan of action that corresponds to specific community expectations. In this study, concept-mapping facilitated the identification of seven major areas of expectation as defined by the parents in one elementary school.

The results of this research project suggest that changes in the elementary counsellor's role would be necessary to meet the concerns of parents who participated in this study. Tasks such as those developed in this thematic analysis combined with the expectations of students and teaching staff would provide a useful framework for delineating a counsellor's role. Interestingly, parents expressed a strong desire for the counsellor to engage in mediation and conflict resolution. This is not a role usually considered to be in the realm of counsellor activities. This expectation is an example of how consulting with the various stakeholders could result in major changes in the type of services being provided. As most counsellors receive little training in needs assessment and program evaluation, this further complicates the implementation of counselling functions built on identifiable needs and expectations.

The process outlined in this study looks promising as an aid to planning and evaluation of counselling services. It should be noted that the data in this study are based solely on input from a small sample of parents and guardians. Before major changes are undertaken, it would be necessary to gather data from other stakeholder groups in the school. Once the concept-mapping method has been implemented to assess needs, the information gained could be used to develop changes in the role of the school counsellor.

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